



## Περίληψη :

Among the first scholars of Pontus devoted to the collection of Pontic folkloric and linguistic material. In 1870 he published the *History and Statistics of Trebizond and its surrounding country*. At the Soumela monastery he also discovered the famous manuscript of *Digenis Akritas*, published in Paris in 1875 by Sathas and Legrand and in 1887 by Ioannidis himself.

## Τόπος και Χρόνος Γέννησης

1829 – Demirdesi (Demirtaş), Prousa (Bursa)

## Τόπος και Χρόνος Θανάτου

1910 – Marseilles

## Κύρια Ιδιότητα

Scholar, teacher

## 1. Biography

Savvas Ioannidis, along with [Periklis Triantaphyllidis](#), was one of the first scholars to devote his work to [the collection of Pontic folkloric and linguistic material](#). Although references to his work are numerous, we know little about his life and activity. He was born in 1829 in Demirdesi (Demirtaş), Prousa (Bursa), and died in Marseilles in the summer of 1910. He studied literature at the University of Athens, from where he graduated in 1857, and later taught in schools in Plovdiv (Filiippoupoli), [Kerasounta](#) (Giresun) and, for a longer period, at the Trebizond “[Frontistirion](#)”. After [Trebizond](#) he went to [Prousa](#) and was later appointed to [Constantinople](#) (Istanbul) where he founded the “Medieval Society” (*Mesaionikos Syllogos*). From the dedication in his book *Ιστορία και Στατιστική της Τραπεζούντος και της περί ταύτην χώρας* (History and Statistics of Trebizond and its surrounding country) (Constantinople 1870) we learn that he was married to Ypatia Laskaridou. It has also been recorded<sup>1</sup> that he wrote a “contribution” for the history of saint Theodoros Gavras.

## 2. History and statistics of Trebizond

During the school holidays Savvas Ioannidis toured the villages and small towns of Melitini, Sebasteia (Sivas) and Laziki on foot and collected historical, topographical and folkloric information which he later incorporated into the *History and Statistics of Trebizond*. The author’s national-local concerns defined the content of this life work. His basic motive was to make the history of the Trebizond area known to its inhabitants and mainly to prove their Greek origin. Thus, he dedicated the first and longest section of the book to a narrative with “[foundation myth](#)” characteristics, defining the first inhabitants of the areas as three of the sons of Japheth.<sup>2</sup> His conclusion is characteristic: “No other city throughout the enlightened Europe can boast or demonstrate a longer continuous life span, and inhabitants of the same nation with the same language and the same customs, not even the eternal city of Rome”.<sup>3</sup> In the second section the author concerned himself with a “statistical and ethnographic division” of the area, where he also added economic data. The third section relates mainly to the collection of folkloric elements and particularly to linguistic features (“living monuments”): linguistic information relating to the Pontic dialect of Trebizond, myths, proverbs and 27 folk songs of varying content.

## 3. The discovery of the manuscript of Digenis Akritas

During one of his aforementioned excursions Ioannidis found the legendary manuscript of the [epic of Digenis Akritas](#), published in 1875 in Paris by Konstantinos Sathas and Emile Legrand.<sup>4</sup> In 1887 the Pontic scholar himself published the epic at the N. G. Kefalidis printing house in Constantinople with the title *Έπος μεσαιωνικόν εκ του χειρογράφου Τραπεζούντος. Βασίλειος Διγενής Ακρίτης ο Καπαδόκης* (Medieval epic from the Trebizond manuscript. Vasileios Digenis Akritis the Cappadocian). In the prologue of this book he described the way in which the manuscript came into his possession and offered some indications regarding the



influences of this discovery on the literary world of the time and especially on Greek folklore studies ("Iaografia"). Indeed, Digenis Akritas drew the attention of scholars away from the so-called "klepht" folksongs of Epirus and Central Greece, which were of "patriotic interest" and opened out new horizons for the collection of linguistic information: according to Dawkins,<sup>5</sup> the influx of folksongs from Asia Minor and the islands of the Aegean created the conditions for the development of a view point which differed from the national-patriotic and focused on issues of folkloric interest such as the reproduction and dissemination of oral tradition.

1. Γεδεών Μ., "Ιωαννίδης Σάββας", *Μεγάλη Ελληνική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια*, vol. 13 (Athens 1927).
2. Ιωαννίδης, Σ., *Ιστορία και Στατιστική της Τραπεζούντος και της περί ταύτην χώρας, ως και τα περί της ενταύθα Ελληνικής Γλώσσας* (Constantinople 1870), p. 3.
3. Ιωαννίδης, Σ., *Ιστορία και Στατιστική της Τραπεζούντος και της περί ταύτην χώρας* (Constantinople 1870), p. 156.
4. Sathas, C. – Legrand, E., *Les exploits de Digénis Akritas, d'après le manuscrit de Trébizonde* (Paris – Maisonneuve 1875).
5. Dawkins, R.D., "The recent study of folklore in Greece", in *Papers and transactions of the Jubilee Congress of the Folk-Lore Society* (London 1930), p. 121-137.

#### Βιβλιογραφία :

	<b>Ιωαννίδης Σ.</b> , <i>Ιστορία και Στατιστική Τραπεζούντος και της περί ταύτην Χώρας, ως και τα περί της ενταύθα Ελληνικής Γλώσσας</i> , Κωνσταντινούπολη 1870
	<b>Dawkins R.D.</b> , "The Recent Study of Folklore in Greece", <i>Papers and Transactions of the Jubilee Congress of the Folk-Lore Society</i> , London 1930, 121-137
	<i>Έπος μεσαιωνικόν εκ του χειρογράφου Τραπεζούντος. Βασίλειος Διγενής Ακρίτης ο Καπαδόκης</i> , Ιωαννίδης, Σ. (επιμ.), <i>Βασίλειος Διγενής Ακρίτας</i> , Κωνσταντινούπολη 1887
	<b>Γεδεών Μ.</b> , "Ιωαννίδης Σάββας", <i>Μεγάλη Ελληνική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια ΙΓ'</i> , Αθήνα 1927, 374
	"Σάββας Ιωαννίδης", <i>Ξενοφάνης, Ζ' (Θ'-Ι')</i> , Σεπτέμβριος-Οκτώβριος 1910, 328-388

#### Γλωσσάριο :

	<b>foundation myth</b>
A narrative that describes the settlement of an area and links genealogically a social and/or ethnic group to one or more glorious ancestors, who often function also as heroes eponymous, a fact thought to be reflected in the place-names of the area appear. Foundation myths occur usually in societies with rich oral culture and tradition.	

#### Πηγές

Ιωαννίδης Σάββας, *Ιστορία και Στατιστική Τραπεζούντος και της περί ταύτην Χώρας, ως και τα περί της ενταύθα Ελληνικής Γλώσσας* (Constantinople 1870).



Ιωαννίδης Σάββας (ed.), *Επος μεσαιωνικόν εκ του χειρογράφου Τραπεζούντος. Βασίλειος Διγενής Ακρίτης ο Κατπαδόκης*  
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