



## Summary :

Club that operated in Nevşehir (Neapolis) of Cappadocia in the third quarter of the 19th century aiming at supporting education.

## Date

1866-late 19th century

## Geographical Location

Nevşehir (Neapolis)

## 1. Establishment, Organisation and Operation

The Club "Basileias" was established in 1866 in [Nevşehir](#) (Neapolis) of [Cappadocia](#) but it was soon disbanded because of difficulties. The history of the club actually started as soon as it was re-established in May 1872. Immediately it submitted its articles of association to the school board of Nevşehir, thus making public its aim, which was the establishment and operation of a nursery school and, generally, the support of education in Nevşehir.

According to its first charter, dated 14 May 1872 and composed in both Greek and [Caramanli](#), the aims of the club were both educational and charitable. The above text determined the organisation of "Basileias", the way the necessary amounts of money were collected and, finally, its first directorate, which consisted of six members including Konstantinos Anthomelidis (president), Prodromos Melagios (vice-president), A. Ferekydis (secretary), Georgios Oraiopoulos (treasurer), I. Athyros (member) and Konstantinos Ioannoglou (member).<sup>1</sup> The metropolitan of Kaisareia [Eustathios](#) was the honorary president of the club. The organisation of the Club "Basileias" was completed with representatives in Constantinople, who obviously undertook the promotion of club matters there.

The name of [Basil the Great](#), the important saint of Cappadocia, is mentioned in the club's name and on its stamp as well. The following text was engraved on the stamp's periphery: "The Club 'Basileias' of Neap. of Cappad". At the centre of the stamp was the representation of Basil the Great, while the year the club was first reestablished (1872) was engraved on its bottom part, according to the ancient Greek system of numeration. Finally, the abbreviations "ΑΓ" and "ΒΑ", standing for "Basil the Great" (in Greek: *Agios Basileios*), were engraved on either side of the representation of Basil the Great.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the general difficulties it created, the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878) also caused serious financial trouble to the club, which was incapable of finding the required resources and, as a result, suspended its operation temporarily. It was re-established again in 1879 and its revised regulations were issued on 14 February 1880. It was then an educational club. However, the club did not abandon charity, which followed the economic capacity of the club.

The economic resources of the club came from regular contributions of its members, donations of eminent people from Neapolis living in both Nevşehir and Constantinople and, finally, from loans at interest. The gradual decline in its members in combination with the progressively reduced interest of both its members and other citizens in charity created serious economic problems, which the club steadily faced already from about the mid-1870s. In the framework of their attempt to find extra steady income, some eminent members bought 3 profitable plots of land in 1883 on behalf of the club. However, despite these earnest efforts, the grave economic problems of the club continued. The climax of this situation came in 1889, when the club had to answer negatively to the requests of the local school board for economic support because of lack of resources. The inevitable decline came and led "Basileias" to its disbandment.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Club Activities and Ideology



Already from 1872, the first year it operated regularly, the Club "Basileias" offered regular public courses in ecclesiastical history, Cappadocian history, ecclesiastical music, the biography of Basil the Great and sermon on Sundays and celebration days – encouraged by the [metropolitan of Kaisareia](#) Eustathios Kleovoulou–, as well as in Ottoman language. Apart from the regular courses, there were speeches on different matters as well as public reading and comments on newspapers during the regular meetings of the club. There was also a reading room.

Both the educational and charitable activities of the club continued thanks to a donation of L. P. Oraioopoulos in 1872 intended for the poor students of Nevşehir. He promised another 5,000 kuruş annually in case a nursery school was founded. In December of the same year the club decided to found a nursery school, supervised by the local school board and financially supported by the Club. The amount collected through special collection was added to the donation of Oraioopoulos, who was proclaimed founder and patron of the nursery school and great benefactor of the club. The nursery school was founded and operated regularly for three years.

Following a relevant agreement between the members of the club and the school board, apart from the nursery school the cooperation of the two bodies included the support of the newly founded girls' school. Indeed, in 1884 the Club "Basileias" allocated an amount for its preservation. The [Club "Indiktias"](#), the other educational club of Nevşehir, acted similarly in the same year. In an attempt to promote the express tendency towards cooperation between the two clubs, the Club "Basileias" proposed their amalgamation. However, the proposal was rejected by "Indiktias".<sup>4</sup>

In order to fulfill its aims, "Basileias" cooperated with clubs from Constantinople as well and sent the budget of 1872 to the educational Club "Asia Minor" of Constantinople. Upon request of the "Greek Philological Association of Constantinople", on 7 March 1874 it sent to the capital's club a report on the cultural and economic situation of the western part of Cappadocia, that is, the communities of Nevşehir, [Sinassos](#), [Ürgüp](#), Tzallela, Potamion, [İncesu](#) and Enehil. Finally, in response to the request of the "Club of the Asia Minor Students in Athens" in 1883, 'Basileias' prepared and sent the above club a report including information about the population, social structure, culture, education and language in the communities of Anaku, Zile, İncesu, [Malakopi](#), Nevşehir, Ürgüp and Sinassos.

The establishment and operation of the Club "Basileias" was clearly influenced by the [Tanzimat](#) reforms, which undoubtedly contributed to the increase in the number of clubs all over Asia Minor. It was also part of the policy of promoting and supporting Greek education in the same region through the establishment of educational clubs. The national character of "Basileias" was also evident in the memorial service held for the "soul of the unforgettable [Konstantinos] Asopios [a Greek scholar and professor of philology at the University of Athens], moral benefactor of the nation".<sup>5</sup> Finally, the content of the public courses organised by the club expressed the belief of the members about the association between Greek and religious education. This is connected with Basil the Great as well, after whom the club was named. Basil the Great is a saint traditionally associated with both education and the connection between the ancient Greek culture and Christianity.

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1. Μαμώνη, Κ., 'Η σωματειακή οργάνωση των Ελλήνων της Μικράς Ασίας. Γ': Σύλλογοι της Καππαδοκίας και του Πόντου', *Δελτίο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών* 6 (1986-1987), p. 173. The number of the members of the board probably was not strictly defined as the board of 1874 included seven members. Similarly, p. 176.

2. Μαμώνη, Κ., 'Η σωματειακή οργάνωση των Ελλήνων της Μικράς Ασίας. Γ': Σύλλογοι της Καππαδοκίας και του Πόντου', *Δελτίο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών* 6 (1986-1987), p. 177.

3. The exact date the Club 'Basileias' was dissolved is not known. The last reference to the club dates from 1892. Μαμώνη, Κ., 'Η σωματειακή οργάνωση των Ελλήνων της Μικράς Ασίας. Γ': Σύλλογοι της Καππαδοκίας και του Πόντου', *Δελτίο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών* 6 (1986-1987), p. 172.

4. Μαμώνη, Κ., 'Η σωματειακή οργάνωση των Ελλήνων της Μικράς Ασίας. Γ': Σύλλογοι της Καππαδοκίας και του Πόντου', *Δελτίο Κέντρου*



*Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών* 6 (1986-1987), p. 178.

5. Μαμόνη, Κ., 'Η σωματειακή οργάνωση των Ελλήνων της Μικράς Ασίας, Γ': Σύλλογοι της Καππαδοκίας και του Πόντου', *Δελτίο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών* 6 (1986-1987), pp. 173-174.

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### Bibliography :

	<b>Μαμόνη Κ.</b> , "Σωματειακή οργάνωση των Ελλήνων της Μικράς Ασίας Γ': Σύλλογοι της Καππαδοκίας και του Πόντου", <i>Δελτίο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών</i> , 6, 1986-7, 155-225
	<b>Κουκίδης Γ.</b> , <i>Η Νεάπολις της Καππαδοκίας, το Νέβ-Σεχίρ</i> , Αθήνα 1975

### Glossary :

	<b>tanzimat</b>
The 19th-century reforms in the Ottoman Empire, which were inaugurated in 1839 with the edict of Hatt-i Şerif and came to an end with the Constitution of 1876. The reforms, which were considered an effort for the modernization and liberalization of the state, concerned every aspect of the political, social and economic life in the Empire. Of particular importance were the ones that equated legally Muslim and non-Muslim subjects.	