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# SPECULUM

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### THE FOUNDATION OF THE EMPIRE OF TREBIZOND (1204—1222)

By A. A. VASILIEV

#### THE GENERAL SITUATION IN THE NEAR EAST AFTER THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE IN 1204

THE foundation of the Empire of Trebizond is indissolubly connected with the Fourth Crusade and the formation of the Latin Empire in Constantinople in 1204. At that time the territory of the Byzantine Empire was divided into a great number of states, partly Greek, partly Frankish; the three Greek states were destined to play an important part in the history of the Near East after 1204. These three Greek centers originated the idea of the restoration of the Byzantine Empire with its capital in Constantinople, and one of them successfully carried it out. The Despotat or Principality of Epirus, which in 1222 was proclaimed the Empire of Thessalonica (Saloniki), after a short period of ephemeral political success in the Balkans was crushed in 1230 by the Bulgarian king, John Asen, and forced to give up its ambitious plan to take possession of Constantinople. It sank to earth never to rise again. The two other Greek centers were the Empire of Nicaea under Theodore Lascaris and the Empire of Trebizond under Alexis Comnenus. Both of these were established in Asia Minor; but the Empire of Nicaea, geographically close to Constantinople, had a better chance than remote Trebizond to accomplish the task of recovering Constantinople. In addition, as the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople, who after the Frankish invasion had withdrawn to Bulgaria, refused to come to Nicaea, a new patriarch was elected and resided there, and crowned Theodore Lascaris emperor. Thus the geographic location of the new Empire of Nicaea, the presence there of the new Patriarch, and above all the talent and energy of its first two rulers created favorable conditions for the restoration, though on a very small scale, of the Byzantine Empire. The Empire of Trebizond was too far away to enable it to carry into effect the ambitious plan of taking Constantinople. Of course the Comneni who headed the Empire of Trebizond were more famous and much better known among the Greeks than the Lascarids of Nicaea; moreover Trebizond was then economically much more important than Nicaea. But in spite of these advantages the Empire of Trebizond failed in its

original plan to organize a powerful state in Asia Minor and to take possession of Constantinople. We shall discuss this subject in more detail below.

#### THE COMNENI AND THE GEORGIAN BAGRATIDS

One of the most important elements in the problem of the founding of the Empire of Trebizond is the connection of the Byzantine Comneni with the royal Georgian house of the Bagratids (Bagrationi). This connection, always close, explains the peculiar interest of the Georgian dynasty in supporting the expedition headed by Alexius Comnenus for the capture of Trebizond. The Georgian Bagratids became related to the imperial families of Ducas and Comnenus more than a hundred years before the foundation of the Empire of Trebizond. During the Macedonian dynasty, under Emperor Romanus III Argyrus (1028–1034), the Iberian Queen Mariam visited Constantinople, and about 1032 a marriage was arranged between her son Bagrat and Helen (Elena), a daughter of Basil Argyrus, the Emperor's brother.<sup>1</sup> In the second half of the eleventh century, under pressure of the Turkish menace, still closer connections were formed between the two harassed Christian monarchs of the Black Sea; in 1065 or 1071 an Iberian princess Martha, whom Byzantine writers call Maria, daughter of Bagrat IV (about 1027–1072) and sister of George II (about 1072–1089), was married to the Byzantine Emperor Michael VII Ducas Parapinakes (1071–1078).<sup>2</sup> Under Alexius I Comnenus (1081–1118), the king of Georgia, David II, surnamed 'the Restorer' (1089–1125), sent one of his daughters, Kata, to Constantinople to be the bride of Alexius, son of Nicephorus Bryennius and Anna Comnena, the famous authoress of the *Alexiad* and a daughter of the Emperor Alexius I; thus Kata married a grandson of the Emperor.<sup>3</sup> Under the year 1116 a Georgian chronicler writes: "The same year [David] sent his daughter Cata to Greece to espouse the son of the Emperor. Before that he had sent his oldest daughter Tamar to be the queen of Shirvan; and they both, like stars, one in the east, the other in the west, illuminated the world with the beams borrowed from the sun of their father."<sup>4</sup> Kunik supposes that in the course of the twelfth century other matrimonial alliances which have remained unknown to us were established between the Byzantine and Georgian houses, or that possibly a Comnenus had illegitimate children by a Georgian princess.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cedrenus, II, p. 489. Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, I (St Petersburg, 1849), 314 and especially n. 2. Skabalanovich, *Byzantine State and Church in the Eleventh Century* (St Petersburg, 1884), p. 13 (in Russian); Schlumberger, *L'épopée byzantine à la fin du dixième siècle*, III (Paris, 1905), 106–107, 137–139; W. E. D. Allen, *A History of the Georgian People* (London, 1932), pp. 88–89; he erroneously gives the name of Michael Argyrus for Basil.

<sup>2</sup> A. Kunik, 'The Foundation of the Empire of Trebizond,' *Uchenyya Zapiski* of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg, first and third sections, II (1854), 708 (genealogical table of the Georgian Bagratids) and 710. In this period sources use indiscriminately the names Alans and Abasgians (Abkhaz) for Georgians (Iberians). Brosset, *op. cit.*, I, p. 330 and especially n. 2. Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Zonaras, XVIII, 28 (ed. Dindorf, IV, 256). Kunik, *op. cit.*, p. 710–713. Brosset, *op. cit.*, 360. Chalandon, *Les Comnène*, II (Paris, 1912), 5 and n. 9. Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>4</sup> Brosset, *op. cit.*, p. 360. The Georgian chronicler errs in supposing Kata's bridegroom to be the Emperor's son instead of his grandson.

<sup>5</sup> Kunik, *op. cit.*, pp. 714–715.

THE YOUNGER LINE OF THE COMNENIAN FAMILY

For the history of the foundation of the Empire of Trebizond the younger branch of the Comnenus family is of particular significance. This branch started with the ambitious and very well educated *sebastocrator* Isaac, son of Alexius I and younger brother of the Emperor John (1118–1143). The members of this younger line after their removal from the throne distinguished themselves by extraordinary energy in attempting to regain it. Isaac's son, Andronicus, 'the Alcibiades of the Middle Byzantine Empire,' the 'Prince-exile' of the twelfth century, 'the future Richard III of Byzantine history,' in whose soul there was 'something similar to that of Caesar Borgia,'<sup>1</sup> ultimately took possession of Constantinople and became emperor (1182–1185). In the third generation this line provided the sovereigns of the Empire of Trebizond. The whole life of Andronicus before he became emperor was marked by his unceasing and energetic struggle with the reigning emperor, his cousin Manuel I (1143–1180), by whom his imperious character and ambitious plans were distrusted. Andronicus' stormy life during this period was full of the most amazing adventures and experiences of all sorts in Russia, Cilicia, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Armenia. We must for our purpose lay particular stress upon two episodes: his sojourn in Georgia and his governorship in Pontus.

In the course of his numerous wanderings about 1170, Andronicus took refuge at the court of the king of Georgia, George III (1155–1184), where he was honorably and cordially received. A Georgian chronicler gives the following description of Andronicus' visit to Tiflis, the capital of Georgia: 'One day, indeed, [George III] was visited by Andronicus Comnenus, a cousin on his father's side of Manuel the Great, the sovereign of the whole Occident and the emperor of Greece; he was accompanied by his wife, of dazzling beauty, by his sons, and those of his sister. Thanking God for such a favor, George accorded to the prince reception fitting to his high birth, gave him as many cities and citadels as he needed and assigned to him a residence neighbouring his own.' During his sojourn in Georgia, Andronicus took part in George's military expeditions.<sup>2</sup> Later Andronicus left Georgia and took refuge at the court of the Turkish Sultan, Qilij Arslan II.

The ceremonial welcome accorded Andronicus in Georgia reveals to us the very close relations which prevailed between him and the reigning house in Georgia; the fact that Andronicus belonged to the reigning Comnenian family would not in itself have been a sufficient reason for the Georgian king to bestow upon him every kind of favor and honor and to regard him as a close friend and relative. This cordial welcome may very possibly be explained by supposing that the first wife of Andronicus was a Georgian princess of the reigning family. We have some corroborative evidence for this. We know that the Georgian Bagratids had some favorite family names, one of which was David. No Byzantine emperor ever bore this name. But beginning with the second half of the twelfth century, it occurs

<sup>1</sup> See A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, II (Madison, 1929), p. 14; French edition, II (Paris, 1932), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Brosset, *op. cit.*, pp. 396–397. Kunik, *op. cit.*, p. 715; 721. Th. Uspensky, *Outlines of the history of the Empire of Trebizond* (Leningrad, 1929), p. 29 (in Russian).

several times in the Comnenian family in the line of Andronicus. Excluding David, a son of the Emperor Heraclius in the seventh century,<sup>1</sup> three other Davids belong either to Andronicus' family or to the period of his reign (1182–1185). The youngest chronologically was the last emperor of Trebizond who was dethroned and captured by Muhammed II in 1461; the middle one, a grandson of Andronicus, was the brother of Alexius, the first Trapezuntine emperor; and the oldest was governor of Thessalonica in 1185, related both to Alexius I Comnenus and Manuel I. This unexpected appearance of Georgian names in Andronicus' family may be explained by the fact that his Georgian wife introduced them into his branch of the Comnenian family. This striking detail confirms to a certain extent the hypothesis that beginning with Andronicus I the two states, Byzantine and Georgian, were connected by ties of consanguinity.<sup>2</sup> Andronicus is at any rate believed to have left descendants in Georgia; some of these today bear the family name of Andronikov or, in its present form, Andronikashvili, and like to trace their lineage back to Andronicus Comnenus.<sup>3</sup> The close relationship of Andronicus, the grandfather of the first Trapezuntine emperor, to the ruling house of Georgia, as we shall see later, is extremely important for the better understanding of the foundation of the Empire of Trebizond.

Another episode from Andronicus' turbulent life is to be noted in connection with the future foundation of the Empire of Trebizond. Toward the end of his reign Manuel I succeeded in seizing Theodora, Andronicus' passionately beloved wife, and their children. Incapable of enduring the loss, Andronicus resolved to submit to Manuel. Pardon was granted, and Andronicus was appointed governor of Pontus in Asia Minor on the shores of the Black Sea, with his residence either at Sinope or at Oinaion (Unieh). He was there when in 1180 Manuel died, and his son Alexis II, a child of twelve, became emperor.<sup>4</sup> From Pontus in 1182 Andronicus set out for Constantinople and supported by the people who were exasperated by Manuel's latinophile policy, which the Empress-regent, Mary of Antioch, and her favorite, Alexius Comnenus, had continued, he entered the capital in triumph. Mary of Antioch, the child-emperor Alexis II, Manuel's other relatives, and his influential followers were killed at Andronicus' order. Thus in 1183 Andronicus at sixty-three years of age became sole all-powerful emperor.

<sup>1</sup> Theophanes, ed. de Boor, p. 335. *Anastasiū Bibliothecarii Historia Tripartita*, ed. de Boor, p. 210. See A. Pernice, *L'imperatore Eraclio* (Florence, 1905), p. 294.

<sup>2</sup> Kunik, 'On the Georgian origin of the grandmother of the first Trapezuntine Emperor,' *Uchenyya Zapiski of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg*, first and third sections, II (1854), 788 (in Russian). *Idem*, *The Foundation of the Empire of Trebizond*, pp. 719–720. J. Bartholomaei, *Lettres numismatiques et archéologiques relatives à la Transcaucasie* (St Petersburg, 1859), p. 37. Finlay, *History of Greece*, ed. Tozer, IV (Oxford, 1877), 318, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> See Brosset, *op. cit.*, p. 396, n. 4. Kunik, *On the origin of the Georgian princes Andronikov*, *ibid.*, pp. 789–791. *Idem*, *The Foundation*, p. 717, n. 18; 723. Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 108, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> See F. Cognasso, *Partiti politici e lotte dinastiche in Bizanzio alla morte di Manuele Comneno* (Turin, 1912), p. 236 (24) and n. 5. N. Radojčić, *Dva posljednja Komnena na carigradskom prijestolju* (Zagreb, 1907), pp. 19–20 (in Croatian). Ch. Diehl, *Figures byzantines*, II (Paris, 1909), 108–109. Cf. Chalandon, *op. cit.*, II, 221: 'Andronic . . . se retire dans ses possessions d'Asie Mineure.'

For the success of the first steps in the foundation of the Empire of Trebizond by Alexius Comnenus and for the temporary military successes of his brother David west of Trebizond in Pontus, the two-year governorship of Andronicus (1180–1182) there is of great importance. The population of Pontus was familiar with the Comnenian family; in 1180–1182, when Andronicus was governor in Pontus, his rule had not been tyrannical. At this period he was doing his best to win the hearts of the people under pretense of protecting the violated rights of the minor Alexius II. The two years of Andronicus' tyranny when he became sole emperor (1183–1185) failed to affect distant Pontus. His political interests, the bloody fight for his own power, and the final catastrophe in 1185 were all closely connected with Constantinople and the Balkans, where William II of Sicily and his Normans captured Thessalonica and began their victorious advance farther east, towards Constantinople. Pontus had not suffered under Andronicus' régime. The Angeli who had replaced the Comneni on the throne of Byzantium might have been regarded in Pontus as undesirable foreign rulers. Accordingly when in 1204 the troops headed by David Comnenus made their appearance in Pontus, most of the population met this member of the Comnenian family as an acceptable successor to Andronicus and offered no resistance.

Two of Andronicus' children are particularly interesting to us: his eldest son, Manuel, by a supposed Georgian princess, and another son, Alexius, by Theodora. A Georgian chronicler calls Alexius Thamar's (Tamara's) close relative and paternal cousin of the Emperor of Greece, who at that time, before becoming Emperor of Byzantium, was in Georgia, and reports that some nobles of Georgia wished to ask Alexius to come to Georgia to marry Thamar (Tamara).<sup>1</sup> Here once more we have a hint of Andronicus' sojourn in Georgia and new and valuable information on the possible close relationship through the male line between Byzantium and Georgia. Kunik plausibly conjectures that after the fall of Andronicus in 1185, his son Alexius might have taken refuge in Georgia for the second time; and that Thamar might also have had some relationship with him besides being the paternal aunt of his nephew Alexius, the first Trapezuntine emperor.<sup>2</sup>

A more important figure than this Alexius is Andronicus' eldest son, Manuel, the father of the first Trapezuntine emperor. It is worthy of notice that some scholars identify Manuel with a Byzantine ambassador to Russia, Manuel Comnenus, who was sent by Manuel I on a mission in 1164–1165.<sup>3</sup> In the same

<sup>1</sup> Brosset, *op. cit.*, pp. 412–413. See Kunik, *The Foundation*, p. 719. Cognasso, *Partiti politici*, pp. 235–236 and n. 1 on p. 236. Uspensky, *Outlines*, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Kunik, *op. cit.*, pp. 717–718, n. 18 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> Chalandon, *Les Comnène*, II (Paris, 1912), 481, n. 5. S. Shestakov, *A Byzantine Ambassador to Russia, Manuel Comnenus*, in the *Mélanges Korsakoff* (Kazan, 1913), p. 381 (in Russian). Other scholars reject this theory. See C. Grot, *From the History of Ugría (Hungary) and the Slavs in the twelfth century* (Warsaw, 1889), p. 328 (in Russian). G. Vernadsky, 'Relations byzantinorusses au XIIe siècle,' *Byzantion*, IV (1927–1928), 270–271. We do not know when Manuel was born. Kunik (p. 717) supposes that he might have been born before 1160, perhaps even before 1150. In another place Kunik writes: 'If Manuel, the father of the first Trapezuntine emperor, was born to Andronicus by a Georgian princess, this must have happened before 1160' (p. 720). Shestakov (p. 381) writes that since Andronicus was born about 1120, his son might easily have been a little over twenty in 1164.

year (1165) Andronicus himself was in southwest Russia with the Prince of Galich, Yaroslav, so that Manuel Comnenus' mission was no doubt connected with the wanderings of Andronicus and was induced by the eager desire of the Emperor to get back his restless relative. Manuel, who bore the very high title of *sebastocrator*, disapproved of the tyrannical régime of his father and therefore was not on good terms with him. The identity of Manuel's wife is unknown. The Georgian chronicler once only mentions that Tamar had a sister.<sup>1</sup> Kunik supposes that she might have been Manuel's wife, and perhaps in 1185 it was she who escaped with her two children from Constantinople to her sister in Georgia.<sup>2</sup> This is of course purely hypothetical though probable.<sup>3</sup> Another purely hypothetical question is whether or not Manuel visited Georgia. Kunik believes this doubtful.<sup>4</sup> True, the Georgian chronicler states that Andronicus came to Georgia accompanied by his wife, *his sons*, and those of his sister.<sup>5</sup> Since his wife at that time was Theodora, the chronicler's words 'his sons' might have referred to his sons by Theodora; Manuel was his son by another wife, probably a Georgian princess. But it is probable that Manuel also accompanied his father and his stepmother in their wanderings; and his visit to Georgia would have been especially welcome if he had married a Georgian princess.

Manuel perished in the catastrophe of 1185. Although he had opposed his father's atrocities, he was nevertheless as a member of the Comnenian family involved in his fate. He was captured and blinded by Isaac Angelus, and evidently perished from the effects of the brutal mutilation; his brother John met the same end.<sup>6</sup>

While studying at the Acropolis of Trebizond in 1916–1917, Th. Uspensky was very much interested in the tower at the north corner, where he observed traces of an old church with remnants of painting. In the frescoes upon the walls of the upper section of the tower is visible a crowned man in imperial robes. On either side of his crown is a partly erased inscription which contains the names of Andronicus and the *sebastocrator* Manuel, respectively grandfather and father of Alexius and David, founders of the Trapezuntine Empire. Uspensky is inclined to believe that the second or middle section of the tower conceals the sepulcher of the first Comneni. Unfortunately Uspensky had not enough time to carry out an exhaustive exploration of the tower, so that his speculations cannot be taken for proven. Referring to his own conjecture that the tower preserves the sepulcher of Andronicus and the *sebastocrator* Manuel, whose names are mentioned in the inscription, Uspensky writes: 'There is no question of Andronicus, for his dead body was scattered by the populace to the winds, and it is stated as to Manuel that he died in Constantinople after the brutal operation of blinding.' He adds:

<sup>1</sup> Brosset, *op. cit.*, p. 431.

<sup>2</sup> Kunik, *The Foundation*, p. 713.

<sup>3</sup> Gerland asserts positively that Tamar's sister married Manuel. E. Gerland, *Geschichte des lateinischen Kaiserreiches von Konstantinopel* (Homburg v. d. Höhe, 1905), pp. 34–35.

<sup>4</sup> Kunik, *op. cit.*, p. 722; see also p. 717, n. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Brosset, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

<sup>6</sup> Nicetas Acominatus, p. 466. See F. Cognasso, *Un imperatore bizantino della decadenza, Isacco II Angelo* (Rome, 1915), p. 5 (the name of the victims are not given); this study was originally printed in *Bessarione*, anno XIX, XXXI (1915), 29–60 and 246–289. J. Fallmerayer, *Geschichte des Kaiserthums von Trapezunt* (Munich, 1827), p. 41.

‘It would not of course be difficult to imagine that Manuel’s remains were later transported to Trebizond, that a sepulcher was made for him, and that over his body a church was erected.’<sup>1</sup> I do not yet venture to endorse Uspensky’s supposition of the transportation of Manuel’s body to Trebizond. But further thorough exploration of the northern corner tower in the Acropolis of Trebizond would be extremely desirable, the more so as the inscription was already rather faded in 1916–1917, when Uspensky saw it, and may for want of adequate precautions completely disappear.

#### THE ESCAPE OF ALEXIUS AND DAVID FROM CONSTANTINOPLE

Manuel left two sons, infants, Alexius and David. They were born just before the revolution of 1185: Alexius in 1182,<sup>2</sup> David a year or two later; there is no evidence that they were twins. Alexius was destined to become the first emperor of Trebizond. After the violent deaths of their father, uncle, and grandfather they were the legal heirs to the Byzantine throne, and therefore dangerous rivals to the new emperor, Isaac Angelus. For this reason we find it impossible to believe that the princes could have stayed in Constantinople after Isaac Angelus’ attempt to wipe out the Comnenian family.

Of the history of these two brothers between 1185 and 1204, when the Latin Empire was established, we know nothing. But we know with certainty that in 1204 they were in Georgia at the court of Thamar (Tamara). Most scholars who deal with the history of the Empire of Trebizond have endeavored to fill this gap by various methods of reasoning and to fix the moment when the children left Constantinople.

One group of scholars is inclined to believe that Alexius and David as children were safely taken away from Constantinople in the very year of the revolution of 1185 and brought to Georgia to their close relative Thamar, who according to Panaretos was their paternal aunt;<sup>3</sup> in Georgia they grew up and received their education. In 1827 Fallmerayer wrote that under cover of the confusion of the popular riot of 1185 the princess Thamar, a daughter of Andronicus, managed not only to save the infants from the fury of Isaac Angelus but also to seize gold and precious stones from the family possessions to take with them, which may explain the great wealth of the court of Trebizond of which we shall speak later. According to the same author, in the general confusion the flight east was not

<sup>1</sup> Uspensky, *Outlines of the history of Trebizond*, p. 42; also p. 34; 40–41; 155. It is important to note that the title of *sebastocrator* did not exist at the court of the emperors of Trebizond (*ibid.*, p. 41) so that the Manuel mentioned in the inscription cannot be identified with any emperor of Trebizond. If Uspensky considers the transportation of Manuel’s body to Trebizond possible, he might have said the same of Andronicus’ remains. His statement that Andronicus’ body was scattered to the winds is inexact. Our source says that after Andronicus’ death, his lacerated body was left for several days in the Hippodrome; then some charitable people removed it and deposited it ‘in a very low place’ *παρά τινι κατωτάτω τόπω* near the monastery of Ephoros, not far from the Baths of Zeuxippos. Isaac Angelus forbade the burial of Andronicus’ body (Nicetas Acom., p. 460). It might, like Manuel’s have been secretly removed to Trebizond.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Panaretos says that when Alexius Comnenus took possession of Trebizond in 1204 he was twenty-two years old. Ed. Lambros, *Νέος Ἑλληνομνημόνιον*, IV (1907), 266.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Panaretos, ed. Lambros, p. 266: *τῆς πρὸς πατρός θείας αὐτοῦ Θάμαρ*.



difficult, because the vessels supposedly prepared by Andronicus to fight the Norman fleet filled the harbor, and the regions on the south shores of the Black Sea, especially Paphlagonia and Heleno-Pontus, were devoted to Andronicus' family.<sup>1</sup> No doubt Fallmerayer based his statement that Thamar was a daughter of Andronicus on the passage of Panaretos just quoted that the queen of Georgia, Tamara, was Alexius' and David's paternal aunt, i.e., a sister of Manuel, their father, and consequently a daughter of Andronicus, their grandfather. But in 1827, when Fallmerayer printed his epoch-making *History of the Empire of Trebizond*, the Georgian chronicle published by Brosset in Georgian and in a French translation in 1849 was inaccessible to him. And this chronicle gives no data whatever to prove the existence of the second Thamar, Andronicus' daughter. Fallmerayer entirely ignores Thamar, the famous queen of Georgia, her rôle and importance in the history of Georgia and the Near East as well as in the foundation of the Empire of Trebizond. This omission was of course due to the inadequate information at his disposal. Following Fallmerayer, F. de Pfaffenhoffen wrote in 1847 that Thamar, supported by the partisans of her family, took a portion of the family treasures and the two children, and boarding one of the ships which had been prepared to sail against the Norman fleet, fled to Colchis.<sup>2</sup> In 1849, basing his information on Fallmerayer's book, a Russian scholar, P. Medovikov, wrote that Alexius and David, sons of Emmanuel Comnenus and grandsons of the great though cruel Andronicus I, saved by his daughter Thamar took refuge with their adherents and treasures in Colchis on the banks of Phasis. At the time of the conquest of Constantinople the elder of them, then a young man of twenty-two, entered and conquered the region of Trebizond.<sup>3</sup> In 1854 Kunik stated positively that the Comneni had been taken away from Constantinople when they were still infants, and he energetically and correctly rejected the theory of the existence of Thamar, Andronicus' daughter.<sup>4</sup> In 1859 Bartholomaei, evidently unacquainted with Kunik's study, wrote that if the chronicle of Panaretos had not stated that the Thamar with whose aid Alexius had levied an army to conquer Trebizond was his father's sister, consequently a daughter of a Byzantine prince, one would be tempted to believe that the whole expedition was Georgian.<sup>5</sup> In 1870 a Greek scholar, S. Ioannides, in general retelling Fallmerayer's narrative, makes some changes and adds some unproven statements concerning Thamar. According to him, the fugitive princes came to Thamar in Iberia, beyond Colchis; daughter of Andronicus and sister of Manuel, the father of Alexius and David, Thamar several years earlier had married a ruler of Georgia, David; after the latter's death Thamar began to rule, having her residence in Tiflis, a city of Georgia.<sup>6</sup> In 1898 another Greek historian, T. Evan-

<sup>1</sup> Fallmerayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 41–43.

<sup>2</sup> F. de Pfaffenhoffen, *Essai sur les aspres comnénats, ou blancs d'argent, de Trébizonde*, "Ἀσπρα λεγόμενα Κομνήνατα" (Paris, 1847), pp. 19–20.

<sup>3</sup> P. Medovikov, *The Latin Emperors in Constantinople and their attitude towards the Greek independent rulers and the indigenous population in general* (Moscow, 1849), p. 79 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> Kunik, *op. cit.*, pp. 724–726.

<sup>5</sup> J. Bartholomaei, *Lettres numismatiques et archéologiques, relatives à la Transcaucasie* (St Petersburg, 1859), p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> Σ. Ἰωαννίδης, *Ἱστορία καὶ στατιστικὴ Τραπεζούντος* (Constantinople, 1870), p. 51.

gelides, closely follows Ioannides' scheme; he falls into total confusion in saying that Alexius, the first Trapezuntine emperor, was a son of Manuel Comnenus who had reigned in Constantinople from 1143 to 1180, and a grandson of Andronicus I (1183).<sup>1</sup> Two Russian scholars, P. Bezobrazov in 1916 and Th. Uspensky in 1929, share Kunik's opinion that the infants were taken away from Constantinople in 1185; but they both erroneously attribute to Fallmerayer the theory which was later advocated by Finlay that Alexius and David left Constantinople not in 1185 but shortly before 1204.<sup>2</sup> The most recent Greek historian, G. K. Skalieres, regards the queen of Georgia, Thamar, as a daughter of Andronicus I, and calls her 'a Greek Empress of Iberia' (Georgia).<sup>3</sup>

A much smaller group of historians holds the opinion that Alexius and David left Constantinople just before 1204. The first to set forth this theory was the English historian G. Finlay. According to him, during the revolution of 1185 the infants Alexius and David were hidden in Constantinople. They were brought up and educated there in obscurity, neglected and forgotten by the imperial court until the Crusaders besieged Constantinople. Before the city was taken, the two young men escaped to the coast of Colchis, where their paternal aunt, Thamar, possessed wealth and influence. Finlay is inclined to accept two Thamar: the first one, the aunt just mentioned, may have been the widow of some Colchian prince who had maintained his independence against the second Thamar, the Queen of Georgia.<sup>4</sup> Finlay's theory was adopted in 1886 by W. Fischer.<sup>5</sup> But after the publication of Kunik's study, which was unknown to Finlay and Fischer, their theory was rejected by the majority of historians.

A third group of scholars consists of those who have not taken into consideration the question when and how Alexius and David left Constantinople. This group goes back to the seventeenth century when Du Cange, in his work on Byzantine families, briefly treated of the foundation of the Empire of Trebizond. The material which Du Cange was able to use was desperately scanty and scattered, so that we are not surprised that the great scholar's starting point was incorrect. According to Du Cange, Alexius Comnenus, surnamed the Great with the title of *dux*, had governed Colchis, i.e., the Trapezuntine province under the Constantinopolitan emperors; when Constantinople was captured in 1204 by the Franks, he decided to proclaim himself the supreme ruler of the duchy.<sup>6</sup> Following Du Cange, Gibbon stated that by the indulgence of the Angeli Alexius

<sup>1</sup> Τ. Εἰσαγγελίδης, *Ἱστορία τῆς Τραπεζούντος ἀπὸ τῶν ἀρχαιοτάτων χρόνων μέχρι τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς* (756 π. Χ. — 1897). Ἐν Ὀδησσῶ (Odessa), 1898, pp. 46–48.

<sup>2</sup> P. V. Bezobrazov, *Trebizond: its sanctuaries and antiquities* (Petrograd, 1916), pp. 4–5 (in Russian). Th. Uspensky, *Outlines of the history of the Empire of Trebizond* (Leningrad, 1929), pp. 29–30 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> Γ. Κ. Σκαλιέρης, *Ἡ αὐτοκρατορία τῆς Τραπεζούντος* (Athens, s. a.), p. 82. This book was printed in 1926. The author calls Thamar 'Ἑλληνίδι Βασιλισσῇ τῆς Ἰβηρίας (Γεωργίας).

<sup>4</sup> G. Finlay, *A History of Greece*, ed. Tozer, iv (Oxford, 1877), 317–318 and n. 1 on p. 318.

<sup>5</sup> W. Fischer, 'Trapezunt und seine Bedeutung in der Geschichte,' *Zeitschrift für Allgemeine Geschichte*, III (1886), p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Du Cange, *Familiae Byzantinae*, p. 191: 'Alexius Comnenus, cognomento Magnus, cum Colchidem, seu Trapezuntinam provinciam, Ducis titulo sub imperatoribus Constantinopolitanis regeret, capta a Francis Urbe anno MCCIV, ejusdem provinciae principatum supremo jure tenendum sibi adseruit.'

was appointed governor or duke of Trebizond; 'his birth gave him ambition, the revolution independence.'<sup>1</sup> In 1816 F. Rühls reproduced Du Cange's passage in German, but called Alexius a son of Andronicus II.<sup>2</sup> Du Cange's statement was again given in 1824 by P. Afzelius.<sup>3</sup> In 1834 we read in the new edition of the history of Lebeau that Alexis and David retired to Pontus, where their grandfather had long lived, and that with the aid of the partisans of their family, they made an independent state.<sup>4</sup> In 1907 N. Iorga wrote that David and Alexius Comnenus, grandsons of the Emperor Andronicus by their father Manuel and relations of a princess of Georgia, had settled in the dominions of their grandfather, into which they incorporated Trebizond, capital of an old Byzantine duchy.<sup>5</sup> The latest English historian of the Empire of Trebizond, W. Miller, does not discuss at all the preliminaries of the foundation of the Empire and merely says briefly that Alexius, who had left the Imperial city for Georgia, set out for Trebizond at the head of a Georgian contingent.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps it is worth while to note a misleading statement of Guy Le Strange: 'Independently of Constantinople, Emperors had ruled in Trebizond since early in the thirteenth century when Alexius Comnenus, to escape the tyranny of the Latin occupation of the capital, had established his dynasty assuming the empire of this territory.'<sup>7</sup> Of course Alexius, as we have mentioned above, escaped from Constantinople as an infant, nineteen years before the Latins took possession of the city.

#### THAMAR (TAMARA), QUEEN OF GEORGIA (1184-1212)

The person who took the most important part in the formation of the Empire of Trebizond was Thamar (Tamara), queen of Georgia (1184-1212).<sup>8</sup> This period was the heyday of the Georgian kingdom.<sup>9</sup> The king of the Georgians and Abkhaz (Ahasgians), David II the Restorer (1089-1125), had laid the foundation of the very strong political power of Georgia. The Georgian kingdom of his period was

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chapter LXI, ed. Bury, vi, 420-421. See also v, 241: 'The posterity of Andronicus, in the public confusion, usurped the sovereignty of Trebizond, so obscure in history and so famous in romance.'

<sup>2</sup> F. Rühls, *Handbuch der Geschichte des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1816), pp. 131-132.

<sup>3</sup> P. W. Afzelius, *De Imperio Trapezuntino* (Upsala, 1824), p. 12: 'Alexius, quem traditur jam ante Urbem captam, Colchidem sive provinciam Trapezuntinam, Ducis titulo, gubernasse.'

<sup>4</sup> Lebeau, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, nouvelle édition par Saint-Martin et M. Brosset, xviii (Paris, 1834), 254.

<sup>5</sup> N. Iorga, *The Byzantine Empire* (London, 1907), p. 175. The same passage has been reproduced by Iorga in 1934 in French. N. Iorga, *Histoire de la vie byzantine. Empire et civilisation*, III (Bucarest, 1934), 104.

<sup>6</sup> W. Miller, *Trebizond, the Last Greek Empire* (London, 1926), p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Guy le Strange in the introduction to his translation of Clavijo's embassy to Tamerlane (London, 1928), p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> On the chronology of the reign of Thamar see Brosset, *Additions et éclaircissements à l'histoire de la Géorgie* (St Petersburg, 1851), pp. 296-298. Finlay (*op. cit.*, iv, 318, n. 1) writes that Thamar died in 1200. This year was erroneously given by a Georgian writer of the mid-eighteenth century who lived in Moscow, Wakhushti (Wakhusht), the author of *The Geographical Description of Georgia*. See Brosset, *Additions*, p. 297. On Wakhushti see Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

<sup>9</sup> See Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

'in many ways a direct product of the Crusades,'<sup>1</sup> because the successful campaign of the western knights of the First Crusade against the Seljuq Turks in Asia Minor led to the temporary weakening of the latter and enabled David II to open a victorious campaign against the Muslims from the north. In 1122 Tiflis, the ancient Georgian capital which had been a city of Islam for nearly four hundred years, capitulated. David II incorporated within his dominions many new territories, organized a powerful state, and in order to strengthen the prestige of his dynasty concluded some foreign marriages. As we have noted above, one of his daughters, Kata, was sent to Constantinople to be the bride of Alexius, the son of Nicephorus Bryennius and Anna Comnena. If the thirty years which followed the death of David II in 1125 were years of stagnation in the political life of Georgia, some revival may be marked with the accession to the throne of George (Giorgi) III (1155–1184), though in his conflicts with the Muslims he was not always successful. But in the internal life of Georgia he succeeded in putting down most cruelly the revolt of the great nobles of the country who resented the growing power of the king.

George (Giorgi) III was succeeded by his daughter Thamar (Tamara), the most popular and picturesque figure in Georgian history and legend, according to Fallmerayer a Caucasian Semiramis.<sup>2</sup>

The characteristic trait of her rule is her successful internal and external policy; during her reign, as Allen writes, 'the nation expressed its unbounding energies in vigorous building throughout the country, and continuous victories beyond the frontiers.'<sup>3</sup> Within a decade after the Third Crusade, after the kings of France and England, defeated by the Muslims, 'had gone with contumely out of Palestine, the royal army of Georgia could carry terror and rapine through all the Muslim lands which lay between the Black Sea and the south-eastern corner of the Caspian.'<sup>4</sup> Beyond the frontiers in foreign politics Thamar made her authority felt effectively. 'David II the Restorer and the queen Thamar brought to its apogee the political power of Georgia as well as its intellectual, artistic, and scientific development.'<sup>5</sup> After her first unfortunate and childless marriage with a Russian prince, George Bogolyubski, whose father, the Grand Prince Andrew (Andrei) of Suzdal was assassinated in 1175 on account of his autocratic tendencies, Thamar married again; her husband was David Soslan, an Ossetian prince, who energetically supported the imperialistic policy of his wife.

It is not surprising that in the Georgian literary tradition Thamar has left a deep impress, and that Georgian chroniclers extol her to the skies. She is 'a second Constantine.' She is seated 'on her sublime throne, beautiful as Venus, magnificent as the sun of Apollo, ecstatically admirable to contemplate, exciting enthusiasm and rapture among those who approach her and look on her; . . . she

<sup>1</sup> Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> Fallmerayer, *Geschichte des Kaiserthums von Trapezunt* (Munich, 1827), p. 42. See also Bartholomaei, *Lettres numismatiques* (St Petersburg, 1859), p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Allen, *op. cit.*, pp. 103–104.

<sup>4</sup> Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>5</sup> N. Marr et M. Brière, *La langue géorgienne* (Paris, 1931), p. viii.

is a masterpiece of the Divinity.' Thamar possessed 'the mildness of David, the wisdom of Solomon, the energy and foresight of Alexander [the Great] . . . She was an emulator of Alexander.'<sup>1</sup> A poet of that period proclaims that 'neither Aeneas nor Homer nor Plato . . . nor Zoroaster nor Aristotle would be able to sing her praises. Thamar is political wisdom, the military glory of Georgia . . . Thamar is God.'<sup>2</sup> The same poet praises also David Soslan, Thamar's second husband, and sings his military successes. 'David gained many brilliant victories . . . Seas have submitted and wicked tongues have grown silent. No one has equalled this kingly couple . . . War has been decided: at the head of it stood a lion, David, like David (the King of Judaea), and he valiantly and successfully led the troops upon the Muslims . . . David's attack upon his enemies seemed like that of a lion upon a frightened horse or a worn-out fox.'<sup>3</sup> But the Muhammadan writers, who from Thamar's military successes over the Muslims had no reason to favor her, have given a different portrait of the Georgian queen. A writer of the thirteenth century, Ibn-al-Bibi, remarks in rather Oriental style: 'Owing to her female nature, Thamar, the queen of Georgia and Abkhaz, has given the rein of her heart into the hand of lust, so that when she hapened to hear of a handsome prince, she immediately fell in love with him without seeing him.'<sup>4</sup>

It is always to be kept in mind that towards the end of the twelfth century and at the outset of the thirteenth, Thamar created a strong Christian state and that for a time this became the leading state in the Near East.<sup>5</sup> The Byzantine Empire after its crushing defeat in 1176 by the Seljuq Sultan Kiliġ-Arslan (1156–1188), when the Emperor Manuel I barely escaped with his life, entered the fatal period of the Angeli and ended its political existence in the final catastrophe of 1204. After 1176 it was expected that the victorious Kiliġ-Arslan would occupy the leading position in the Near East; but before his death he divided his dominions among his sons, and the resulting internal disturbances led to the temporary weakening of the Sultanate of Rum. Georgia under Thamar, stubbornly pursuing her imperialistic policy and successfully advancing, especially south of the Caucasus, became, as we shall see later, the decisive element in the formation of the Trapezuntine Empire.

<sup>1</sup> Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, pp. 405, 409; 410–411; 429.

<sup>2</sup> N. Marr, *Ancient Georgian poets (odopistsy) of the twelfth century. II. A singer of Tamara. Texty i razyskaniġa po armġano-gruzinskoġ filologii*, iv (St Petersburg, 1902), 41–42; 49–50; 53 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> P. Melioransky, 'The Seljuq-Namġh, as a source for the history of Byzantium in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,' *Viz. Vremennik*, I (1894), 621 (in Russian). Allen (p. 103) remarks that 'despite the poetic licence of Lermontov (a Russian poet) there is no evidence to show that Tamara was subject to those erotic failings to which her son and daughter were addicted in their time and tasted to the full.' But Lermontov, in his verses, might have reflected the Muslim tradition.

<sup>5</sup> No special monograph on Tamara exists worthy of her activities and achievement. There is a book in Russian by M. G. Dġanashvili, *Queen Tamara* (Tiflis, 1900, pp. 127+ix); it is a Russian translation of the author's Georgian articles. I have not seen the book. For a criticism see A. Dġavakhov, in *Viz. Vremennik*, xi (1904), pp. 325–328. On Thamar see Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, I, pp. 403–480. *Idem*, *Additions*, pp. 266–298. Allen, *op. cit.*, pp. 103–108.

## SOURCES ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE EMPIRE OF TREBIZOND

The Greek sources on the foundation of the Empire of Trebizond may be divided into three groups: first, those dealing with the preliminaries of the foundation, i.e., how and when the brothers Alexius and David left Constantinople for Georgia; second, those concerned with the rôle played in this event by the Queen of Georgia, Thamar (Tamara); and third, those treating of the foundation itself. There is only one contemporary historian, Nicetas Acominatus Choniates, who died soon after 1210. The historian next to him in time is George Acropolita, who died at the beginning of the ninth decade of the thirteenth century; so that he was not a contemporary writer.

On the first point, that of the preliminaries of the foundation of the Empire, neither Nicetas Acominatus nor George Acropolita nor any other source to be discussed later gives us any information. Laonicas Chalcocondyles (Chalcocondyles, or in an abbreviated form, Chalcondyles), an historian of the second half of the fifteenth century, alone refers to it. His text runs as follows: 'The emperors of Colchis are said to have been formerly the emperors of Byzantium, of the house of the Comneni. When they were deprived of their power, Isaac, a son of the Emperor, after his father had been killed by the populace because of their hatred to him, escaped and left for Colchis and Trebizond. On his coming there, the local population made him the ruler of Colchis, so that he transferred the empire to Trebizond, [a city] of Colchis. Since then they have been reigning there up to our time, being Greeks by origin and preserving Greek customs as well as the Greek tongue.'<sup>1</sup> One of course observes at once that this narrative is in some respects incorrect. The name of the prince who escaped from Constantinople was not Isaac but Alexius; he was not a son of the Emperor (Andronicus) but a grandson. But in his rather confused record Laonicas has preserved a very valuable tradition that Alexius (Isaac in Laonicas) escaped from Constantinople immediately after Andronicus' violent death, i.e., in 1185; in addition, by pointing out three times that Trebizond was a city of Colchis and that Alexius (Isaac) became ruler of Colchis, Laonicas has preserved a reflection of the real historical fact that Colchis (Georgia) took a preponderant part in the foundation of the Empire of Trebizond.

The participation of the Queen of Georgia, Thamar, in the foundation of the Empire, is mentioned by only one Greek source, Michael Panaretos, a special 'historian' of Trebizond; he notes that Alexius Comnenus, 'marching from Iberia

<sup>1</sup> *Laonicas Chalcocondyles*, ed. Bonn, p. 461. *Laonici Chalcocondylae Historiarum Demonstrationes*, ed. E. Darkó, II, pars posterior (Budapest, 1927), 218-219: 'οἱ γὰρ Κολχίδος βασιλεῖς λέγονται μὲν γενέσθαι πρότερον Βυζαντιοβασιλεῖς, τῆς Κομνηνῶν οἰκίας, τούτους δ' ὡς ἐκπεσεῖν τῆς βασιλείας, Ἰσαάκιον τὸν παῖδα τοῦ βασιλέως διαφυγόντα, τελευτήσαντος ὑπὸ δήμου τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ διὰ τὸ ἔχθος τὸ πρὸς αὐτὸν, οἰχεσθαι ἐπὶ τὴν Κολχίδα χώραν καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν Τραπεζοῦντα. ἀφικόμενον δὲ ἐνταῦθα καταστῆναι ὑπὸ πάντων ἐπιχωρίων ἐπὶ τὴν τῆς Κολχίδος ἡγεμονίαν, καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν μετενεγκεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν Τραπεζοῦντα τῆς Κολχίδος, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦδε βασιλεῦεν ἐνταῦθα ἕστε ἐφ' ἡμᾶς διαγενομένου, "Ἐλληνὰς τε ὄντας τὸ γένος, καὶ τὰ ἦθη τε εἶμα καὶ τὴν φωνὴν προίεμενους Ἑλληνικῆν." According to a very eminent Byzantine philologist, G. L. F. Tafel, this passage of Laonicas has survived not in its original shape but with interpolations. See ed. Darkó, II (2), p. 218, note to line 19. On Tafel's unpublished study on Laonicas, preserved in Berlin, see Darkó, *op. cit.*, I (1922), vii.

supported by the zeal and efficient help of his paternal aunt, Thamar, took possession of Trebizond.<sup>1</sup> In this brief statement one detail is to be noted: Panaretos does not call Thamar the queen. But I believe there is no doubt that Panaretos meant Queen Thamar, and not another problematical Thamar who as has been pointed out above, was erroneously invented by some scholars. Panaretos wrote that Thamar supported Alexius Comnenus 'with zeal and care' (σπουδῇ καὶ μόχθῳ).

On the foundation of the Empire, most Greek sources give two brothers, Alexius and David, as the founders of the Empire, and call them the grandsons of Andronicus and sons of Manuel.<sup>2</sup> Some later sources call the brothers simply Andronicus' descendants,<sup>3</sup> or point out that they belonged to the family of the Comneni.<sup>4</sup>

Let us pass to the Georgian sources.

The large Georgian historical compilation, published in the original Georgian and in a French translation by M. Brosset in 1849, is a production of the mid-eighteenth century. The King of Georgia, Wakhtang VI, who in the eighteenth century imported to Georgia the first printing-press from Wallachia, and his son, Wakhushti, who as an impoverished refugee settled in Moscow, are responsible for the completion in 1745 of *A Geographic Description of Georgia*. This *Description*, compiled from many sources, written in different periods and of course lacking uniform historical value, has long been difficult to use because the authenticity of its sources has not been satisfactorily studied. Owing to the careful investigations of a Georgian scholar, M. G. Djanashvili, we have now a much better idea of the significance of the Georgian compilation.<sup>5</sup> For the question of the foundation of the Empire of Trebizond it is extremely important to know that Djanashvili has shown that the Georgian compilation as to the reign of Giorgi III (1155–1184) and his daughter, Queen Thamar (1184–1212) is the account of an anonymous eyewitness. The style is official; there are no details; only the most important events are indicated. The events of this period (the eleventh and twelfth centuries) in the history of Georgia presented by eyewitnesses are gener-

<sup>1</sup> Michael Panaretos, ed. S. Lambros, p. 266: 'ὁ κύριος Ἀλέξιος . . . ἐστρατεύσας δ' ἐξ Ἰβηρίας σπουδῇ καὶ μόχθῳ τῆς πρὸς πατρός θείας αὐτοῦ Θάμαρ, καὶ παρέλαβε τὴν Τραπεζούνταν.'

<sup>2</sup> Nic. Acom., p. 842. Georg. Acropolita, §7 (ed. Heisenberg, I, 12). Ephraemius, verses 7525–7527 (ed. Bonn, p. 304).

<sup>3</sup> Anonymous, *Σύνοψις χρονική*, in Sathas, *Bibliotheca Graeca Medii Aevi*, VII (Paris, 1894), 453.

<sup>4</sup> Critobulus, *De rebus gestis Mechemetis*, II, IV, 1, 4, in C. Müller, *Fragmenta historicorum graecorum*, V, 1 (Paris, 1870), 137: 'ἐκ τοῦ βασιλείου γένους Ῥωμαίων τῶν Κομνηνῶν, ἐκ Βυζαντίου ἐκπεσόντος αὐτοῦ.' Βησσαρίων, 'Ἐγκώμιον εἰς Τραπεζούνταν, in Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων, XIII (1916), p. 183: 'θεός . . . τοὺς τε Κομνηνάδας ἡμῖν ἐβασίλευσε . . . τότε μὲν εὐθὺς Ἀλέξιον προβαλόμενος.' In the separate edition of Bassarion's *Encomium* (Athens, 1916), p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> M. G. Djanashvili, *Kartlis Tzkhovreba. Life of Georgia*, in *Sbornik* (Collection) of materials for the description of the countries and tribes of the Caucasus, XXXV (1905), 113–235 (in Russian). The Georgians themselves call their country *Kartli* (*Karthli*). On the names of Georgia see M. Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie. Introduction et Tables des matières* (St Petersburg, 1858), p. IV. *Idem*, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, part I (St Petersburg, 1849), p. 1, n. 1, N. Marr et M. Brière, *La langue géorgienne* (Paris, 1931), p. VII. *Kartlos* is the eponymous hero of the Georgians. See Brosset, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 17. Allen, *A History of the Georgian People* (London, 1932), p. 16.

ally identical with the data on the same period found in Arabian, Armenian, and Byzantine historians.<sup>1</sup> The result of Djanashvili's investigation is of very great significance for the question at hand; since we know now that this portion of the Georgian historico-geographical compilation was written by an eyewitness, we may regard this source as reliable and trustworthy for the events connected with the foundation of the Empire. The anonymous Georgian points out a very interesting fact: the seizure by the Byzantine Emperor, Alexius Angelus, of rich charities sent by Thamar to some monasteries situated in the basin of the Aegean and Mediterranean. In revenge Thamar helped Alexius Comnenus to take possession of Trebizond. Although an eyewitness and contemporary of this fact, the anonymous Georgian erroneously calls Alexius Comnenus a son of Andronicus.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE FOUNDATION OF THE EMPIRE OF TREBIZOND

Based upon all the available sources which we have considered above, we may draw the following picture of the foundation of the Empire of Trebizond.

Two brothers, Alexius and David, sons of the *sebastocrator* Manuel and grandsons of the Emperor Andronicus I Comnenus (1182–1185), successfully escaped from Constantinople during the revolution of 1185 which resulted in the violent deaths of their father and grandfather. At that time the brothers were infants: Alexius was born in 1182;<sup>3</sup> his younger brother, David, must have been born shortly after, at any rate before 1185. The surmise of Finlay and Fischer is absolutely incredible that Alexius and David, hidden in Constantinople, were brought up there neglected and forgotten by the imperial court until the Crusaders besieged Constantinople.<sup>4</sup> Isaac Angelus carefully organized the complete extermination of the Comnenian family, and he knew well that Andronicus' two grandsons existed; he would never have permitted them to live in the capital unmolested. For them to remain in hiding for eighteen or nineteen years was absolutely impossible.

How the two infant brothers escaped from the terrorized and unrelentingly guarded Constantinople is unknown. If their mother was a Georgian princess, which is possible, she may have managed to save them. Doubtless they fled to Georgia by sea, perhaps on one of the ships prepared by Andronicus against the Normans. The Queen of Georgia, Thamar, was their close relative, according to Panaretos their paternal aunt.<sup>5</sup> The fugitives arrived in Georgia in the first years of the reign of Thamar, who had been associated in the government in 1178 with

<sup>1</sup> Djanashvili, *op. cit.*, pp. 123–124 (in Russian). See also Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 314 (he made use of Djanashvili's study). It is worthy of notice that in 1859 Bartholomaei remarked that the Georgian chronicler was probably a contemporary of the foundation of the Trapezuntine Empire (*Lettres numismatiques*, p. 57).

<sup>2</sup> Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, I, 464–465.

<sup>3</sup> M. Panaretos, ed. Lambros, §1, p. 266: In 1204 Alexius ἐτῶν ὧν κβ'.

<sup>4</sup> Finlay, *op. cit.*, IV, 317–318 and n. 1 on p. 318. W. Fischer, "Trapezunt und seine Bedeutung in der Geschichte," *Zeitschrift für Allgemeine Geschichte*, III (1886), 23. See above.

<sup>5</sup> Panaretos, ed. Lambros, §1, p. 266. The relationship of Thamar to the Comnenian family has not been definitely established; therefore Panaretos' reference to Thamar as the paternal aunt of Alexius and David is not entirely clear.



her father, George (Giorgi) III, and ascended the throne as sole ruler in 1184.<sup>1</sup>

We have no information whatever on the life of the two princes in Georgia till 1204, when they set out on the expedition against Trebizond. At that time, as we know, Alexius was twenty-two years of age, and his brother David twenty or twenty-one. Their childhood and youth were passed at the court of Thamar. In Georgia they had received their education and military training. Georgian became their native tongue. Probably some Greeks were among their attendants in order that they might be familiar with the language of their own country, which they had left at so early an age.<sup>2</sup> By the year 1204 the two young Comnenian princes were thoroughly Georgian in language and education as well as in political ideals, which were reflections of Thamar's. It is hardly possible to suppose that in the period preceding the year 1204 Alexius and David seriously dreamed of the Byzantine throne; they were forced to take part in Thamar's imperialistic external policy and to follow her plans and directions. And her plans did not go as far as Constantinople. For so daring an enterprise Thamar had neither troops nor means enough, and from her practical point of view such an expedition would have been useless.<sup>3</sup> But her attitude towards the Angeli, who at that time were ruling in Byzantium, could not be friendly; closely related to the Comneni, she could not forget that their line had been dethroned and destroyed under the Angeli. An event made relations still tenser.

Religiously minded, Thamar had the habit of bestowing alms on monasteries and churches not only in her own country but also all over the Near East. Her charities were generous. According to a Georgian *Synodicon*, some monks from a distance whose cells had been burned appealed to her and were given twenty ducats and two crosses each of which cost more than twenty ducats; in addition they received twenty gold coins (*perpers*) to restore an irrigating canal, build a mill, and plant a kitchen-garden.<sup>4</sup> On one occasion monks from the Black Mountain, near Antioch, from the island of Cyprus, from Mount Athos, and from other places who had been granted alms by Thamar came as usual to receive charity. Thamar welcomed them, according to a Georgian chronicle, 'as angels,' treated them generously and abundantly satisfied their needs. Finally she gave large sums of money to those monks who were from remote countries for themselves as well as for distribution among different monasteries.<sup>5</sup> On their way to Thamar and on their return, these monks had to pass through Constantinople. The Emperor Alexius III Angelus, learning of their arrival, confiscated Thamar's gifts. A Georgian *Synodicon* notes that the generous gifts sent by Thamar 'have not reached us because of wicked swinish men.'<sup>6</sup> Irritated by the action of Alexius Angelus, Thamar, according to the Georgian chronicler, sent the monks still larger sums.<sup>7</sup> Alexius' hostile act was a good pretext for Thamar to undertake her expedition against Trebizond.

<sup>1</sup> See Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Kunik, *op. cit.*, p. 726.

<sup>6</sup> Brosset, *op. cit.*, I, 464.

<sup>7</sup> Brosset, *op. cit.*, I, 465.

<sup>2</sup> See Kunik, *op. cit.*, pp. 726-727.

<sup>4</sup> Djanashvili, *Kartlis Tzkhovreba*, p. 141.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

This episode, which is told by a contemporary Georgian source,<sup>1</sup> occurred before July of 1203. On July 18 the Crusaders took possession of Constantinople for the first time and deposed Alexius III Angelus who abandoned the capital and fled, taking with him the public treasure and jewels; probably among those treasures were the gifts and alms which Thamar had given the Eastern monks and which Alexius had seized. Isaac II Angelus, brother of Alexius III, was restored to the throne, and his son Alexius IV was proclaimed his co-regent. But a few months later an insurrection burst out in the capital and at the outset of 1204 the son-in-law of the deposed Alexius III, Alexius Ducas Mourtzouphlos, was proclaimed emperor. Isaac II and Alexius IV were deposed and soon died violent deaths. The Crusaders, who had pitched their camp in the suburbs of the capital, resolved to seize the city for themselves. On April 13, 1204, Constantinople fell under the power of the Crusaders, who in the place of the Byzantine Empire established the Latin Empire.

Thus Constantinople was taken by the Crusaders for the first time on July 18, 1203 and for the second time on April 13, 1204. Alexius Comnenus took possession of Trebizond in April, 1204.<sup>2</sup> From these dates it is obvious that Alexius' taking of Trebizond was not the result of the fall of Constantinople on April 13, 1204; there was not sufficient time to receive in Georgia the news of the second fall of the Byzantine capital, to organize the expedition, and to seize Trebizond.<sup>3</sup> More probably, the first fall of Constantinople on July 18, 1203, which brought about the overthrow of Alexius III Angelus and the restoration of his blind brother Isaac II to the throne, might have seemed to Thamar an auspicious moment for carrying out her project to avenge the loss of her alms. The first fall of Constantinople might have been the final incentive for undertaking the expedition. Thamar, wishing to harass the Angeli, could see that their nearest vulnerable point of certain importance was Trebizond, very loosely connected with the central government of Constantinople. The expedition to Trebizond was the personal achievement of Thamar; she organized it and put Alexius Comnenus at its head. His younger brother David also took part in the enterprise. Bartholomaei writes that this expedition was 'the most important act of the whole reign of Thamar, so fruitful in great things.'<sup>4</sup> But at that moment she had no idea what-

<sup>1</sup> This episode is an historical fact, so that I cannot agree with Bartholomaei (*op. cit.*, p. 57) that the motive alleged by the Georgian chronicler seems puerile and is only an invention of a narrow-minded Georgian monk.

<sup>2</sup> Some Georgian genealogical records contain the erroneous information that Thamar granted Trebizond either to Andronicus or to Alexius Comnenus, Andronicus' son, in 1198. This date is wrong, and the first ruler of Trebizond was neither Andronicus nor his son, but his grandson. See Kunik, *op. cit.*, pp. 789-791.

<sup>3</sup> Brosset (*Additions et éclaircissements*, p. 297) is inexact in stating that 'in 1204 Thamar learns of the taking of Constantinople by the Crusaders, and helps Alexius Comnenus to take possession of Trebizond.'

<sup>4</sup> Bartholomaei, *op. cit.*, p. 57: 'c'est l'acte le plus important de tout son règne, si fécond en grandes choses.' He erroneously states that Panaretos attributes the foundation of the Empire of Trebizond to Thamar and to David of Georgia, whom Bartholomaei calls Comneni (p. 57). Panaretos, as we have seen, does not mention David, Thamar's husband, when he refers to the foundation of the Empire.

ever of founding an empire. 'A detachment of Georgian (*Imeret*) soldiers'<sup>1</sup> given by Thamar to Alexius for taking Trebizond does not suggest a great military campaign; originally this undertaking was a sort of punitive expedition connected with Thamar's general policy of expansion.

Another question arises in connection with the foundation of the Empire of Trebizond. How did Alexius' expedition reach Trebizond? It could not have been a naval undertaking. In Thamar's time Georgia hardly had a port on the Black Sea, her capital Tiflis being too far away from the shore. True, the port of Poti (Greek *Phasis*) existed in Mingrelia, and the great territorial Georgian princes of Mingrelia, the Dadiani, enjoying a rather loose autonomy, were yet under Thamar's strong hand. But it is improbable that the body of Georgians sent to Trebizond by the queen sailed from Poti; the more so as there is no evidence whatever for the naval character of the expedition. Panaretos plainly states that Alexius set out on his march (*ἐκστρατεύσας*) from Georgia. The Georgian chronicler listing the names of the places which were conquered by Alexius gives them in good geographical order, saying that Alexius first occupied Lazica, and then proceeded to Trebizond; in other words, the expedition reached Trebizond via Lazica. We have information that it was eight days' journey by land from Tiflis to Trebizond;<sup>2</sup> but it is not clear by which route. A very well known road leading to Trebizond was the one from Garin-Theodosiopolis-Erzerum (Arzen-er-Rum = a district or fortress of the Romans; a name applied to this city since the eleventh century; the Kalikala of the Arab writers). In a popular song about Thamar we read: 'I [Thamar] have leased Erzerum and imposed tribute upon Ispahan.' On this text Djanashvili remarks: 'Popular memory has here pointed out a historical event: the advance of Georgian troops towards Arzen (Erzerum) in order to create the Empire of Trebizond.'<sup>3</sup> According to this very plausible hypothesis Alexius marched on Trebizond from the south; following the road from Erzerum, he traversed Lazica from south to north.

#### THE *PARTITIO ROMANIAE* AND TREBIZOND

The so-called *Partitio Romaniae*, a most interesting document showing how the new possessions of the Crusaders were divided among their leaders, unfortunately is undated. The division was made several months after the election of the first Latin emperor, Baldwin, which occurred on May 9, 1204. We may plausibly conclude that the act of division was drawn up in the autumn of 1204, at the beginning of October.<sup>4</sup>

There is no mention in the *Partitio Romaniae* of Trebizond, which had already been taken by Alexius Comnenus and hence was regarded by the Crusaders as no longer belonging to the former Byzantine Empire. David, Alexius' brother, as we shall see later, undertook in 1205 a temporarily victorious campaign west-

<sup>1</sup> Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, I, 465: 'elle fit partir un détachement de soldats imers.'

<sup>2</sup> See W. Tomaschek, 'Zur historischen Topographie von Kleinasien im Mittelalter,' *Sitzungsberichte der K. Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien*, Philos.-hist. Classe, cxxiv (1891), 81.

<sup>3</sup> Djanashvili, *Kartlis Tzkhovreba*, pp. 184, 186.

<sup>4</sup> On the dating of this document see W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen-âge*, tr. F. Raynaud, I (Leipzig, 1923), 269 and n. 2. E. Gerland, *Geschichte des lateinischen Kaiserreiches von Konstantinopel*, I (Homburg v. d. Höhe, 1905), 29-30.

ward which resulted in the occupation of territory as far west of Trebizond as Pontic Heraclea; but since this was not yet begun in 1204, all the regions which David took in 1205 were included in the *Partitio* and assigned to the Latin Emperor. The regions mentioned are as follows: 'The province of Paphlagonia and the Bucellarians. The province of Oinaion, Sinope, and Pabrei.'<sup>1</sup> Another district which for many centuries had been connected with the Byzantine Empire is not mentioned in the *Partitio*, the Byzantine dependencies in the Crimea, i.e., Cherson and some places along the southern coast of the Peninsula. Several years ago I tried to show that about 1198, or perhaps between 1192 and 1198, the Byzantine possessions in the Crimea were already out of the control of the Empire, and were dependent upon Trebizond; hence it is not at all surprising that they are not included in the document of 1204.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately we are unaware how and when the Crimea became dependent upon Trebizond; but probably this dependence was established during the period of the gradual secession of Trebizond from Constantinople, so that when Alexius Comnenus founded the Empire of Trebizond, he also inherited the Crimea. The Trapezuntine emperor became the suzerain of Cherson as well as of Crimean Gothia.

#### MILITARY SUCCESSES OF DAVID COMNENUS AND HIS VASSALAGE TO THE LATIN EMPEROR (1205-1206)

In April, 1204, Alexius took possession of Trebizond, apparently without meeting strong resistance. His brother David accompanied him.

The two brothers evidently differed in character. After seizing Trebizond, Alexius in accordance with Thamar's original idea seems to have had no plans of further expansion; he remained in or near Trebizond. A contemporary source (Nicetas Choniates) compares him to Hylas, a mythical member of the expedition of the Argonauts, who landed on the coast of Mysia to fetch water for Heracles, and for his beauty was drawn down into the well by the Naiads and never seen again.<sup>3</sup> For the time being, Alexius seems to have refrained from any ambitious undertakings and held himself aloof and, like Hylas, 'invisible.'

Meanwhile his energetic and impetuous brother David opened an offensive westward along the coast on a large scale.<sup>4</sup> Proclaiming himself Alexius' 'fore-

<sup>1</sup> G. L. Fr. Tafel et G. M. Thomas, *Fontes rerum austriacarum, Zweite Abtheilung, Diplomata et acta*, XII, 1 (Vienna, 1856), 476: 'Provincia Paflagonie et Vucellarii. Provincia Oenei et Sinopii et Pabrei.' The latter name means the city of Pontus, *Paouraë* or *Pauraae*.

<sup>2</sup> See A. Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea*, in the *Izvestija* (Accounts) of the State Academy of the History of Material Culture, v (Leningrad, 1927), 273-281 (in Russian). An English edition of this work will shortly be published by the Mediaeval Academy of America.

<sup>3</sup> There is a Greek proverb, "Τλαν κρυνγάζειν, which means 'to call in vain, without being heard.' On Hylas see an article in Pauly-Wissowa, IX (1916), coll. 110-115.

<sup>4</sup> If I correctly understand Nicetas Choniates' fulsome panegyric on Theodore Lascaris, David is represented as 'a false [pseudonymous] David' instead of 'the real David of Nicaea,' an effeminate 'youth nurtured in the shade,' a 'lad thrown up on the shores of Pontus, like flotsam cast up by a wave of the sea,' etc. Sathas, *Bibl. graeca, mediæ aevi*, I (Venice, 1872), 119, 126. W. Miller (*op. cit.*, p. 18) refers this description to Alexius, and I agree that it seems more appropriate to him than to David. But since Nicetas puns upon the name of the Biblical David, he probably had in mind David Comnenus rather than Alexius. I have used Miller's translation for the passages from Nicetas. See also Meliarakis, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

runner and herald<sup>1</sup> and hiring more Georgian mercenaries, he entered Pontus where, as we have pointed out above, Andronicus, his grandfather, had been governor for a time, favorably preparing the way for David as a representative of the Comnenian family. He took possession consecutively of the flourishing commercial city of Kerasunt, the important city of Oinaion (Onio, Honio, Oeneum, Lanio),<sup>2</sup> possibly the former residence of Andronicus,<sup>3</sup> and Limnia (Liminia, Limona, Limina), a seaport which was to become a very well known center of the Empire of Trebizond, as the favorite station for the imperial fleet and one of the forts of the Empire.<sup>4</sup> After Limnia he seized Samsun (Amisos, Aminos, Simisso) and Sinope; the latter town may also once have been the residence of Andronicus. Here David entered Paphlagonia, where the ancestral castle of the Comneni was situated at Kastamon (now Kastamuni) on the river Gök-Irmak, a tributary of Kizyl-Irmak.<sup>5</sup> Under Isaac Angelus (1185–1195) a pretender to the throne had appeared in Paphlagonia, assuming the name of Alexius (Comnenus), a Pseudoalexius; he succeeded in uniting several districts under his power, but he was finally defeated and slain by Isaac's general, Theodore Khumnos.<sup>6</sup> Hence Paphlagonia was ready to welcome David. There he augmented his troops by enlisting a number of inhabitants.<sup>7</sup> Pursuing his victorious advance westward, always along the coast, he captured Kytoros (Cytoro, now Kidros), and the important port of Amastris (Amastra, Samastro), and finally took possession of a very thriving commercial fort, Pontic Heraclea ('Ηρακλεία ἡ Ποντική, ἡ Ποντηρακλεία, Ponterachia, in Turkish Erekli or Bende-regli). The whole territory of Pontus and Paphlagonia now belonged to David.<sup>8</sup> Heraclea was no limit to his ambitious pretensions. From there he sent his young

<sup>1</sup> Nic. Acom., p. 828: 'πρόδρομος ἐκείνου καὶ προκῆρυξ ἐγένετο.'

<sup>2</sup> The importance of Oinaion is also shown in the *Partitio Romaniae* a. 1204, where we read: 'Provincia Oenei et Sinopii et Pabrei.' G. Tafel et G. Thomas, *Fontes rerum austriacarum. Diplomata et acta*, xii (Vienna, 1856), 476. See Tomaschek, *Zur historischen Topographie von Kleinasien*, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> See above.

<sup>4</sup> On Limnia see a special chapter in Th. Uspensky, *Outlines of the History of the Empire of Trebizond* (Leningrad, 1929), pp. 90–99 (in Russian). Tomaschek, *op. cit.*, p. 80. Uspensky did not make use of Tomaschek's study.

<sup>5</sup> Nicephori Bryennii lib. ii, 26: '(Alexius Comnenus) περὶ δὲ τὴν Κασταμόνα γενόμενος ἐπεθύμησε τὴν τοῦ πάππου οἰκίαν ἰδεῖν' (Bonn., p. 93). Cedrenus, ii, 622: 'ἐν Παφλαγονίᾳ κατὰ τὴν Κασταμόνα οἶκος δὲ ἡ Κασταμών τοῦ Ἰσαακίου μαγίστρου τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ.' See Chalandon, *Essai sur le règne d'Alexis Ier Comnène* (Paris, 1900), p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Nic. Chon., p. 533. See Fallmerayer, *op. cit.*, p. 66. Cognasso, *Un imperatore bizantino della decadenza. Isacco II Angelo* (Rome, 1915), p. 39.

<sup>7</sup> Nic. Chon., p. 828: 'ὁ δ' ἐκ Κομνηνῶν Δαβίδ στρατολογήσας Παφλαγόνας, καὶ οἱ τὴν Ποντικὴν οἰκοῦσαν Ἡράκλειαν καὶ μοῖραν μισθωσάμενος Ἰβήρων τῶν πυνόντων τοῦ Φάσιδος.'

<sup>8</sup> The most detailed and correct list of the cities conquered by David is given by the contemporary Georgian Anonymous. See Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, i, 465. The Georgian Anonymous gives the names of the cities in the order of their consecutive occupation. Kerasunt only is misplaced in this source; instead of coming between Sinope and Kytoros (Cythora) it should be inserted between Trebizond and Oinaion. On all these cities see Tomaschek, *op. cit.*, pp. 76–81. Nic. Chon., p. 842 (he gives the names of Oinaion and Sinope). The Georgian chronicler and Nicetas also mention David's occupation of Pontus and Paphlagonia. *Georgii Acropolitae Historia*, §7; ed. Bonn., p. 14; ed. Heisenberg, i (1903), 12: 'Παφλαγονίας δὲ πάσης ἐγκρατῆς ἦν Δαβίδ, ἀδελφὸς ὢν Ἀλεξίου τοῦ τῆς Τραπεζούντος κρατήσαντος' Anonymus, in Sathas, vii, 453. Ephraemius, ed. Bonn., p. 304, 1.7522: '(ἡρχε) Δαβίδ Κομνηνὸς Παφλαγονίας δλης.'

and inexperienced general Synadenos to occupy Nicomedia on the shores of the Gulf of Nicomedia (Ismit) in the Sea of Marmora. At that time Nicomedia, which had recently been evacuated by the Latins, formed part of the Nicene Empire. But, as W. Miller says, 'Synadenos was no match for the abler Lascaris,'<sup>1</sup> who refused tamely to submit to the loss of Nicomedia. Theodore Lascaris led Synadenos to believe that he was taking an easy and usual route; but he led his troops through a rough and difficult pass, surprised Synadenos, and put his forces to flight; Synadenos himself, like a miserable sparrow 'flapping its wings in vain,'<sup>2</sup> became Theodore's captive. After this defeat David was forced to recognize Heraclea as the westward limit of his possessions.<sup>3</sup> These conflicts between Theodore and David took place in all probability in 1205.<sup>4</sup> Bury remarks: 'The Comneni never made common cause with the Emperors of Nicaea against the common enemies, either Turks or Latins.'<sup>5</sup> David as his brother's 'forerunner and herald' had occupied so many places that Alexius apparently took advantage of his brother's successes and gave up his policy of aloofness. For administration, the new territory was divided between the two brothers; in addition to Trebizond and its environs, Alexius took possession of the regions as far west as Oinaion and Sinope, that is the former Pontus, and David became ruler of Pontic Heraclea and Paphlagonia.<sup>6</sup> With patriotic ardor, after enumerating all the cities and provinces taken by the Georgian forces, the Georgian chronicler concludes that Tamar gave them to her relative Alexius Comnenus.<sup>7</sup> From the point of view of Byzantine provincial administration, the possessions of Alexius and David comprised the territory of the theme of Chaldia with the capital of Trebizond, and some sections of the themes Armeniaci with Amisos (Samsun), Paphlagonia with Sinope, and the Bucellarians with Pontic Heraclea.

Lascaris was evidently not content with making David return to Heraclea; he wished to drive him still farther east. Probably in the spring of 1206<sup>8</sup> Lascaris resolved to expel David from Heraclea; and he managed to make Plousias secede from David, a city famous for its archers and warlike spirit<sup>9</sup> near Heraclea, so

<sup>1</sup> W. Miller, *Trebizond, The Last Greek Empire* (London, 1926), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Nicetas Choniates, *Panegyric of Theodore Lascaris*, in Sathas, *Bibl. graeca mediæ aevi*, I (Venice, 1872), 116: 'τὸν μὲν στρατηγούντα μείρακα, ὅσα καὶ στρουθίον λεληκὸς οἰκτρὸν καὶ μάτην περυγίζον συνέλιψας.'

<sup>3</sup> Nic. Chon., p. 828: 'καὶ τὸν Δαβιδὸ μὴ περαιτέρω προΐεναι τῆς Ποντικῆς Ἡρακλείας παρέπεισε.' Fallmerayer, *Geschichte des Kaiserthums von Trapezunt*, p. 61. Finlay, *op. cit.*, IV, 322-324. Sathas, *op. cit.*, I, 115-116. See also 'A. Μηλιαράκης, *Ἱστορία τοῦ Βασιλείου τῆς Νικαίας* . . . (Athens, 1898), pp. 44-45. E. Gerland, *Geschichte des lateinischen Kaiserreiches von Konstantinopel*, I (Homburg, v. d. Höhe, 1905), 103-104. A. Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea* (London, 1912), p. 75. W. Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> See Gerland, *op. cit.*, p. 104, n. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Gibbon (Bury), VI, 420, n. 24.

<sup>6</sup> Nicet. Chon., p. 842: 'ὁ μὲν (David) τὴν κατὰ Πόντον Ἡράκλειαν καὶ Παφλαγόναν διέπειν, ὁ δ' Ἀλέξιος Οἰναίου τε καὶ Σνωπέων τῆς πόλεως καὶ Τραπεζούντος αὐτῆς τὴν δυναστείαν περιεξώννυτο.'

<sup>7</sup> Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, I, 465.

<sup>8</sup> On this dating see Gerland, *op. cit.*, p. 107 and n. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Nic. Chon., p. 844: 'τῆς μὲν Πλουσιάδος ἐπέβη καὶ τῆς πρὸς Δαβιδὸ φίλιας ἐκείνην ἀπέστησε, τοξότιδα πᾶσαν οὖσαν καὶ μάχιμον.' On Plousias see Th. L. F. Tafel, *Symbolarum criticarum geographiam byzantinam spectantium partes duae. Pars posterior*, in *Abhandlungen der Hist. Classe der K. Bayer. Ak. der Wissenschaften*, V (1849), Dritte Abtheilung, 102 (explicatio, 48). Tafel et Thomas. *op. cit.*, Dipl. et acta. I Theil. p. 475, n. 5. Gerland, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

that Heraclea was in a very dangerous position. According to Nicetas Choniates, Lascaris would have taken Heraclea and put David to flight, had not the latter come to an agreement with the Latins, who at Lascaris' rear seized Nicomedia and thus diverted Theodore's attention from Heraclea. But the Latins soon retired to Europe before another Bulgarian invasion. To reward the Latins for their aid, David sent to Constantinople shiploads of corn and hams. At the same time he begged that the Latins would include him as their subject in their correspondence and treaties with Lascaris, and look upon all his land as Latin territory.<sup>1</sup> 'It was his interest to prefer a nominal Latin suzerainty to annexation by the Nicene Emperor.'<sup>2</sup> Since early in 1205 the Latins pressed by the Bulgars had evacuated all Asia Minor, except the city of Pegai, where they had left a garrison, David for the time being could not count on much aid from them.<sup>3</sup>

But relying on the Latin support of about three hundred auxiliaries David reopened hostilities. He crossed the Sangarios river (the modern Sakaria), pillaged some villages subject to Lascaris, and harshly punished Plousias which had seceded from him; he took some of the inhabitants as hostages and put some in prison. Several days later he withdrew. But the Franks, advancing from the plain into the hilly country, were suddenly surprised by Andronicus Gidos, a general of Lascaris, in the 'Rough Passes' of Nicomedia<sup>4</sup> and thoroughly defeated; those who remained alive were captured in the mountains by Andronicus' ambushes, so that scarcely a man was left to tell the disaster to David.<sup>5</sup> Punning on the name of the 'Rough Passes' of Nicomedia, Nicetas Choniates declares that Lascaris made 'the rough ways' causeways.<sup>6</sup>

#### SABBAS OF SAMSUN

Before continuing the history of the beginning of the Empire of Trebizond, I must finally do away with an historical error of long standing which has perplexed many scholars, including myself. Our Greek sources report that among the Greek rivals of Theodore Lascaris at the very beginning of his rule at Nicaea was a certain Sabbas, ruler of Sampson and its neighborhood.<sup>7</sup> Sampson, Sabbas' city, has always been identified with Amisos or Samsun, on the Black Sea, which under the rule of Sabbas formed an enclave in the territory of Alexius and David, and interrupted the continuity of their possessions on the Black Sea. When and how Sabbas succeeded in seizing Amisos (Samsun), which, as we have noted above, had been taken by David, and how Theodore Lascaris dared to undertake so distant an expedition in the northeast when his rule was in its first or second year and still unstable, has always been a puzzle for historians. Now, owing to a brilliant article by G. de Jerphanion, this historical riddle is definitely solved.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nic. Chon., pp. 844–845.

<sup>2</sup> W. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> See Gerland, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>4</sup> Nicetas Chon., p. 845: 'ἐπελθόντος δ' αὐτοῖς ἀπρόοπτος περὶ τὰς τῆς Νικομηδίας Τραχείας Ἀνδρονίκου τοῦ Γίδου.'

<sup>5</sup> Nic. Chon., p. 845. Also his Panegyric, in Sathas, *op. cit.*, I, 126–127.

<sup>6</sup> Sathas, I, 126: 'τὰς τραχείας πορείας εἰς τροχιάς εὐθείας διατιθέμενος'. See W. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> See Georg. Acrop., *Hist.* VII, ed. Bonn, p. 14; ed. Heisenberg, I, 12: 'ἕτερος δὲ Σάββας τουκίκλην τοῦ ἄσπεος ἐδέσποξε τοῦ Σαμψῶν μετὰ καὶ τῶν πλησίον τυρχανῶν αὐτῶν'. Ephraemius, p. 304, ll. 7518–7519.

<sup>8</sup> G. de Jerphanion S. I. Σαμψῶν et Ἀμισος. 'Une ville à déplacer de neuf cents kilomètres,' *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, I (Rome, 1935), 257–267.

Sampson of Sabbas was a city on the western coast of Asia Minor, opposite Miletus, an ancient city of Priene, famous for its beautiful Hellenistic monuments. 'Facing Miletus, on the other side of the mouth of the river of Meander, across the alluvial plain which once was a gulf rises a mountain which the ancients called Mycale and the Turks of today call *Samsun Dagħ*. At the foot of the south slope, fairly close to the actual course of Meander, about sixteen kilometers from Miletus, are the ruins of Priene and its acropolis. The miserable village which has succeeded the ancient city is called *Samsun Qalé*, i.e. the fortress of Samsun.'<sup>1</sup> Thus Sabbas of Sampson had no connection whatever with Samsun on the Black Sea, and he must be eliminated from the history of Trebizond. We are indebted to G. de Jerphanion for clarifying this essential detail. In 1205 the continuity of the territories occupied by Alexius and David was not interrupted, though it existed only for a short time.

THEODORE LASCARIS' VICTORY OVER DAVID

After the defeat of David's allies, his situation at Heraclea again became dangerous. In September, 1208, his envoys appeared in the Balkan Peninsula before the city of Pamphylon, which at that time the Latin Emperor Henry was besieging with his troops. The envoys declared that Theodore Lascaris was so strongly pressing that if Henry did not help David he would lose his land. Henry, responding favorably to David's appeal, hastened to Constantinople with some troops, crossed the Bosphorus, and landed at Chalcedon. This movement of the Latin troops forced Lascaris to withdraw from Heraclea to Nicaea. But for the time being this manoeuver was the end of the Latin campaign, and Henry returned to Constantinople with all his troops.<sup>2</sup>

The reinforcement from the Latin Emperor merely postponed the final collapse of David's ambitious plans. In 1214 Theodore took possession of Heraclea, Amastris, Kytoros, Kromna (*Κρωμνα*, Cromena, Comena, Comana),<sup>3</sup> and all the surrounding country. For a time after this Sinope or perhaps Cape Korambis (Carambas, in Turkish Kerembe, Kerembeburun),<sup>4</sup> west of Sinope, was the westward limit of the Comnenian possessions in Asia Minor.<sup>5</sup> At Heraclea Theodore Lascaris received his own envoy, the Bishop of Ephesus, Nicholas Mesarites, who with a Spanish priest and an interpreter, came from Constantinople, where

<sup>1</sup> G. de Jerphanion, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-266.

<sup>2</sup> Henri de Valenciennes, *Histoire de l'Empereur Henri*, ed. M. N. de Wailly (Paris, 1872), pp. 335-336, §§551-554 (in Wailly's edition of Villehardouin). See Gerland, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-160; 210.

<sup>3</sup> On Kromna see Tomaschek, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>4</sup> On Cape Korambis see Tomaschek, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

<sup>5</sup> Georgii Acropolitae *Hist.*, 11: 'περιεγένετο δὲ καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς Θεόδωρος καὶ τοῦ τῆς Παφλαγονίας κρατοῦντος Δαυίδ, καὶ Ἡράκλειαν παρεστήσατο καὶ Ἀμαστριν καὶ τὴν πᾶσαν πέριξ χωρὰν καὶ τὰ πόλινια' (ed. Heisenberg, I, 18). Anonymous, in Sathas, VII, 457. Ephraemius, ed. Bonn., p. 305, ll. 7531-7537 (he adds the names of *κῶρωρος* and *κρωμνα*). See Du Fresne Du Cange. *Histoire de l'Empire de Constantinople sous les empereurs français*. Nouvelle édition revue par J. A. Buchon (Paris, 1826), p. 123 (*Collection des chroniques nationales françaises*. XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle). Cf. Fallmerayer, *op. cit.*, p. 92. Finlay, *op. cit.*, IV, 326; he says that Lascaris conquered Heraclea, Amastris, and Tios, making himself master of the whole country as far as Cape Carambis. The city of Tios, between Heraclea and Amastris, is mentioned by Pachymeres (I, 312); see Tomaschek, *op. cit.*, 77-78. Gerland, *op. cit.*, 246.



he had tried to establish closer intercourse between the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches.<sup>1</sup>

THE CAPTURE OF SINOPE BY THE TURKS IN 1214 AND DAVID'S DEATH.

ALEXIUS AND THE TURKS

Theodore Lascaris' successful advance eastward, along the coast, not only threatened the political plans of David and Alexius; it also was extremely dangerous for the further development of the Sultanate of Rum, which in case of Lascaris' occupation of Sinope would lose a free outlet to the Black Sea. At that time Izz-ad-Din Kay Kawus I (1210–1219) was the Sultan of the Seljuqs. Foreseeing Lascaris' further movement eastward towards Sinope, the Sultan did not delay in attempting to obtain an outlet on the Black Sea.

As far as I may judge from our sources, the Turkish campaign against Sinope consisted of two episodes: the first capture of Sinope by the Turks, and the second. Unless Sinope was captured twice, it would be absolutely impossible to explain and reconcile the sources.<sup>2</sup>

Evidently in the summer or early in the autumn of 1214 Sinope was suddenly captured by the Turks, and David was slain. For this fact I use the brief record of a Christian Syrian chronicler of the thirteenth century, Gregory Abulfaragius or Barhabraeus, who states: 'In 611 of the hegira (May 13, 1214–May 1, 1215) the Sultan Izz-ad-Din Kay Kawus took possession of Sinope on the coast of the Pontic Sea, and slew its ruler Kyr-Alex.'<sup>3</sup> Abulfaragius made the mistake of saying that Alexius, not David, was slain; the name of Alexius, the first emperor of Trebizond, was of course more familiar to the Syrian historian than the name of his brother David, the real ruler of Sinope at that time. But since the name of David never occurs in the sources after 1214, we may positively conclude that it was David who was slain at the first Turkish capture of Sinope. This took place, as we have pointed out, either in the summer or early autumn of 1214.

Then we have an extremely important and detailed description of the further development of events around Sinope, compiled by a Persian historian, Nasir-ad-din-Yahya-ibn-Muhammed, known by his surname Ibn-al-Bibi, after his mother. Ibn-al-Bibi lived in the thirteenth century in the Sultanate of Rum; a young contemporary of the Sultan Ala-ad-din-Kay-Kubad I (1219–1236), he held a high post under his successors, and died in 1272. His very well known work *Seljuq-Naméh* is a source almost contemporary with the capture of Sinope; and its author, living in the Sultanate of Rum in Iconium, near the scene of hostilities

<sup>1</sup> Arsenius, 'An unpublished work of a certain metropolitan of Ephesus, of the thirteenth century,' *Čteníja v občestve ljubitelei duhovnago prosvestčeniya*, xxix (Moscow, 1892), section III, p. 49 sq.; 78 (Greek text and a Russian translation). W. Norden, *Das Papsttum und Byzanz* (Berlin, 1903), pp. 222–223.

<sup>2</sup> The Greek sources are silent on the loss of Sinope. There are three Oriental sources: a Syrian, an Arabian, and a Persian. On these sources see below.

<sup>3</sup> Abulfaragius, Georgius, seu Barhebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, ed. and transl. by P. Bruns and G. Kirsch (Leipzig, 1789), II, 469. I attribute this capture of Sinope to the summer or the early autumn of 1214 because (1) the year 611 of the hegira began May 13, 1214, and (2) as we shall see later, the second capture of Sinope took place on November 1, 1214. On the incorrect translation of this passage by Bruns see Fallmerayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 94–95.

against Sinope, must have been well acquainted with the events of that period.<sup>1</sup> *Seljuq-Naméh* is a history of the Seljuqs beginning with the end of the twelfth century (1192).

According to the detailed narrative of Ibn-al-Bibi,<sup>2</sup> in 1214 during the sojourn of the Sultan Izz-ad-din Kay Kawus at Sivas there came messengers from the chiefs who were in charge of defending the region of Sinope. They brought a sealed letter stating that Kyr-alk-si (Kyr Alexius, the Emperor of Trebizond) had illegally crossed the border of his own country, taken possession of a portion of the Sultan's land, and captured Sinope. The Sultan on reading the message was worried, but unwilling to cloud the cheer of the guests who were banqueting with him did not betray his feelings. Next day he questioned some men who had seen Sinope and were familiar with its position. They answered that Sinope could be taken by siege only if the inhabitants were pressed for food; but if the region were devastated and no aid came from the sea, the city could be easily taken. Next day the Sultan's troops took the field. Some spies had been sent ahead to get information on Alexius and the region of Sinope with orders to bring back news immediately. They declared that Alexius was hunting in those regions with five hundred horsemen and that daily without taking any precautions he caroused with his friends outdoors. The Turks seized Alexius on the very spot of his revelling and brought him to the camp of 'the God-protected army' (the Turks). Some of Alexius' horsemen were slain and some imprisoned. On the third day the Sultan proceeded to Sinope. Then he commanded Alexius to be brought before him in chains, in the imperial tent near the city. On approaching the throne Alexius 'kissed the earth in lowliness and humiliation,' and the Sultan treated him kindly. The Sultan proceeded to invest Sinope and suggested that Alexius send one of his confidants to the city to persuade the inhabitants to surrender. When the messenger entered the city, those 'dull witted and wicked people' answered him thus foolishly: 'Suppose Alexius has been captured. None the less he has grown sons in Trebizond who are capable of governing. We will elect one of them as our ruler and will not surrender the country to the Turks.' The second attempt to persuade the inhabitants of Sinope also failed. Then the infuriated Sultan had Alexius tortured in the sight of the inhabitants of Sinope several times. After new negotiations the inhabitants declared that if the Sultan would swear not to kill Alexius but to release him, and to spare their own lives and property and let them go where they pleased, they would be willing to surrender the city. The Sultan swore to these terms, but proposed the following conditions: Alexius should be his vassal and send to his treasury an annual trib-

<sup>1</sup> On Ibn-al-Bibi see *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, II, 391. A. Yakubovsky, 'Narration of Ibn-al-Bibi on the campaign of the Turks of Asia Minor upon Sudak, Polovtzians, and Russians at the outset of the thirteenth century, *Vizantijski Vremennik*, xxv (1927-1928), 53-54 (in Russian). The complete original text of Ibn-al-Bibi has not yet been published; so far, only a Turkish translation and an abridged Persian version are available. The only manuscript of his complete work is to be found in Constantinople (*Aya Sofya N 2985*).

<sup>2</sup> I use the Russian translation of the Turkish version of *Seljuq-Naméh*, by P. Melioransky, 'Seljuq-Naméh as a source of the history of Byzantium in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,' *Viz. Vremennik*, I (1894), 632-637.

ute, besides as many troops as the Sultan needed; for his part, the Sultan pledged himself to recognize Alexius as ruler of the region west of Trebizond,<sup>1</sup> except Sinope, as well as of the region of Trebizond and Lazica, and to be gracious towards him. 'Otherwise there will be no quarter.' Sinope surrendered on the first of November 1214.<sup>2</sup> Solemnly the Sultan's standard was raised over the city. Before his official entrance to Sinope the Sultan gave a reception which lasted the whole night to which Alexius was invited. At the reception Alexius occupied a higher seat than any Turkish noble (*bek*). Then the Sultan made a solemn entrance and inspection of the city. According to the treaty, Alexius became the Sultan's vassal. We read in the treaty the following provisions: 'If the victorious Sultan Izz-ad-Din Kay Kawus-ibn-Kay Khusru spares my life, i.e., the life of Kyr Alexius, and recognizes my right and that of my descendants to possess the Empire of Djanita, except Sinope, with all the regions which belong to it, I pledge myself to pay an annual tribute to the Sultan of 12,000 gold coins, 500 horses, 2,000 cows, 10,000 sheep, and 50 bundles of various presents and jewelry.' After the document had been signed, the Sultan bestowed magnificent attire upon Alexius, a gold-embroidered robe and a ceremonial hat, as well as a well-trained and richly caparisoned horse with a gilded saddle and bridle. As the Sultan's vassal, Alexius shared in the ceremony when he rode out; he helped the Sultan to mount and walked before his horse. Finally, the Sultan ordered him to mount, and he rode by the Sultan's side and conversed with him. Then after a festival the Sultan allowed Alexius to leave for his own country taking with him any nobles whom he wished from the city. Ships had been prepared for them, and they sailed for Trebizond.

As to Sinope itself, fugitives were brought back to the city and provided with oxen, seeds, and land, so that they might resume agriculture. The principal church of the city was turned into a mosque. One of the Sultan's chiefs was appointed governor of Sinope; a Turkish garrison was installed; a new administration set to work; breaches in the walls were repaired. The Sultan then set out to Sivas.

With this detailed, vivid, and reliable account of Ibn-al-Bibi I connect a brief passage from an Arabian historian of the fourteenth century, Abulfeda, who under the same year, 1214 (611 year of the hegira = May 13, 1214–May 1, 1215) deals with the same event but introduces some confusion. Abulfeda's passage runs as follows: 'In this year the Turks captured the Emperor Al-Ashkari, who had killed Ghiyath-ad-din Kay Khusru; he was brought to his son, Kay Kawus-ibn-Khusru. The latter wished to kill him. But having obtained from his captive a large amount of money and the cession of many castles and cities which had never before belonged to the Muhammedans, he set him free.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn-al-Bibi calls this region *Djanita*.

<sup>2</sup> On Saturday, Djumadah 11 26, 611 of the hegira (Melioransky, *op. cit.*, p. 635). M. Th. Houtsma, 'Over de Geschiedenis der Seldjuken van Klein-Azië,' *Verlagen en Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen. Afdeling Letterkunde, 3 Serie, IX* (Amsterdam, 1893), 149: in 1214. Gerland (*op. cit.*, p. 246, n. 6) gives November 8, 1214.

<sup>3</sup> Abulfeda, *Annales Muslemici, arab. et latine* ed. Reiske, IV, 252–254 (Arabic); 253–255 (Latin). Also in *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Historiens orientaux*, I (Paris, 1872), 87.

In this account there is evident confusion as to the Emperor Al-Ashkari. It contains the tradition that Theodore Lascaris slew the Sultan of Rum in one of their clashes.<sup>1</sup> But Theodore Lascaris was never captured by the Sultan so that the name Al-Ashkari given by Abulfeda can be but a distorted Arab form of Alexius (Comnenus), Emperor of Trebizond. As Fallmerayer justly remarks, to Abulfeda, an Arabian historian who lived in Syria in the fourteenth century, the name of Lascaris might have been more familiar than that of Alexius of Trebizond.<sup>2</sup>

Combining the data of the three Oriental historians, Abulfaragius, Ibn-al-Bibi, and Abulfeda, we may draw the following conclusions: In the summer or early in the autumn of 1214 Sinope was taken by the Sultan of Rum, Izz-ad-Din, and David Comnenus, the ruler of Sinope, was slain. When the tidings of this disaster reached Trebizond, Alexius, forgetting his former vacillations, hastened to the lost city and regained it. Izz-ad-Din undertook a decisive campaign upon Sinope, captured Alexius on one of his hunting parties, and blockaded the city, which surrendered on the first of November, 1214. Finally, the Sultan dismissed Alexius to Trebizond on the conditions listed above. Thereupon the Empire of Trebizond became a sort of vassal state to the Sultanate of Iconium or Rum.

After the loss of Sinope, the western frontier of the Empire of Trebizond was limited 'by the Rivers Iris and Thermodon, the modern Jeshil Yrmak and Terme, only 155 miles in a straight line from the capital.'<sup>3</sup>

We do not know what relations Alexius and David established with Thamar, who sponsored the campaign upon Trebizond and was the leading spirit of the enterprise. Georgian troops and mercenaries took part in the expedition. But when we consider the military activities of David and the attitude of Alexius towards the Seljuq Turks, we can trace no hint of particular consideration for Thamar; they acted as rulers absolutely independent of her ascendancy. The Empire of Trebizond, a child of Thamar's imperialistic policy, forgot its moral obligations towards the mother country, Georgia. As long as Thamar lived, relations between the two countries probably remained more or less passable. But after her death in 1212, circumstances changed. Her son and successor, George IV Lasha (1212-1223), during one of his campaigns reached the upper Mktvari river (Kura) and stopped in Cola (Kola) close to the eastern border of Lazika, which was under the sway of the Trapezuntine Emperor; according to the Georgian chronicles, 'tributaries arrived from Khlat and Greece with presents.'<sup>4</sup> Khlat or Akhlat is a town with the surrounding territory on the north western shores of Lake Van. But what is Greece? I am inclined to believe that the Georgian chronicler referred to the Greek ruler of Trebizond, Alexius I, who for

<sup>1</sup> Georg. Acropol., 10 (ed. Heisenberg, I, 17). See Miliarakis, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Fallmerayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-98. Finlay follows him (*op. cit.*, iv, 326, n. 3); see also Alice Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 83, n. 3, and p. 87, n. 1. Cf. Meliarakis, *op. cit.*, p. 130. Besides Abulfeda, an Arabian historian of the fifteenth century, Makrizi, who lived in Egypt, also mentions a complete victory of the Sultan Izz-ad-Din over Lascaris. E. Blochet, 'Histoire d'Egypte de Makrizi,' *Revue de l'Orient Latin*, ix (1902), 155. Blochet's note to Makrizi's passage is rather misleading, being based on E. Muralt, *Essai de chronographie byzantine*, II (Bâle-Geneva, 1871), 315.

<sup>3</sup> W. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, I, 484.

his possession of Lazica was compelled to send George Lasha presents to dispel his menacing attitude.<sup>1</sup> Unlike Thamar, George Lasha could not reconcile himself to the independent existence of the Empire whose origin was due to his own country.

Alexius died at the age of forty-three after a reign of eighteen years, on the first Sunday in Lent (Sunday of Orthodoxy), February 1, 1222.<sup>2</sup>

The reign of the first Trapezuntine Emperor may be summarized as follows. When the expedition to seize Trebizond started from Georgia, neither Thamar nor her protégés, Alexius and David, had any idea of undertaking a campaign west to retake Constantinople from the Latins. After the capture of Trebizond the difference in the character of the brothers made itself obvious. While Alexius remained in Trebizond, David, in his daring and successful campaign westwards in 1205, reached Nicomedia on the shores of the Sea of Marmora; at that time, no doubt, David had already set himself the goal of taking possession of Constantinople and restoring the Byzantine Empire, and he was on the point of carrying out his ambitious plan. Seeing David's success, Alexius also was seized with the idea of driving the Latins out of Constantinople. The energetic policy of Theodore Lascaris of Nicaea overturned their plans and deceived their hopes. David was forced to open negotiations with his former enemy, the Latin Emperor, sought for his aid, and in 1206 declared himself his vassal. After this the Trapezuntine Comneni abandoned all plans against Constantinople. Western aid, however, was not strong enough to release them from the Nicene danger. Theodore Lascaris drove David east and probably would have decisively overcome him had not the Turkish Sultan, Izz-ad-Din, taken part in their rivalry. Anxious to get an outlet on the Black Sea, the Sultan took possession of Sinope in 1214. David was slain, and Alexius, captured by the Sultan, compelled to pay tribute to him and render him military service; in other words, in 1214 the Empire of Trebizond became a vassal state to the Sultanate of Iconium. The capture of Sinope by Izz-ad-Din cut off the Trapezuntine Empire from the Nicaean and Latin Empires. Henceforth for a considerable time, Trapezuntine foreign policy, disconnected from the west of Asia Minor, was limited to relations with Iconium and Georgia. When Alexius' reign ended, he was a vassal to the Sultan of Iconium, and he had presented gifts to George IV Lasha, King of Georgia.

#### THE TITLE OF THE EMPERORS OF TREBIZOND

The question of what title the first ruler of Trebizond and his successors assumed is not devoid of interest.<sup>3</sup>

Du Cange wrote that those are in error who ascribe the imperial title to Alexius,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Fallmerayer, *Geschichte*, pp. 59–60. Fallmerayer confounds events, believing that Thamar died in 1202 and that George Lasha was reigning in 1204 (see p. 48).

<sup>2</sup> Michael Panaretos, ed. Lambros, I (p. 266): 'καὶ βασιλεύσας ὀκτωκαίδεκα, ἑκομήθη Φεβρουαρίου α', ἡμέρα α' τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας, ἔτους σψλ', ἐτῶν γινωμένων τεσσαράκοντα.'

<sup>3</sup> The best account so far written on the title of the rulers of Trebizond is found in Fallmerayer, *op. cit.*, chapter 3, pp. 63–84.

because as many state, 'Emperor' was first usurped by his grandson John;<sup>1</sup> as we have already noted above, Du Cange incorrectly believed that Alexius Comnenus with the title of Duke had governed Trebizond during the rule of the Constantinopolitan emperors, i.e., under the Angeli before 1204. Following Du Cange, Gibbon asserted that 'by the indulgence of the Angeli, Alexius was appointed governor or duke of Trebizond; his birth gave him ambition, the revolution independence; and without changing his title he reigned in peace from Sinope to the Phasis . . . the title of Emperor was first assumed by the pride and envy of the grandson of Alexius.'<sup>2</sup> The conclusions of Du Cange and Gibbon were founded on a passage of the learned French encyclopaedist of the thirteenth century, Vincent de Beauvais (died in 1264), who in his *Speculum Historiale* mentions that about 1240 'the lord (*Dominus*) of Trebizond used to give him (i.e., the Sultan of Iconium) 200 lances' or a specified number of soldiers.<sup>3</sup> Since Vincent de Beauvais called the ruler of Trebizond not Emperor but *Dominus*, Du Cange and Gibbon came to the conclusion that in the thirteenth century the rulers of Trebizond did not bear the title of Emperor. But I doubt if this conclusion can be justified, because the French writer of the thirteenth century may have been unaware of the existence of the Greek title of *basileus* (emperor) assumed by the rulers of Trebizond; moreover, *Dominus* means lord, absolute monarch, entirely corresponding to *basileus*.

It is not to be believed that after seizing Trebizond Alexius, who belonged to the notable Comnenian family, would have contented himself with the title of Duke which the governors of Trebizond had once borne as mere representatives of the Constantinopolitan emperors. Nor would Alexius have recognized the imperial title of the Latin Emperor, who in Alexius' eyes, was in 1204 a usurper and intruder. As to the Lascarids in Nicaea, Theodore Lascaris by descent was no equal for Alexius Comnenus.

True, most Byzantine writers, such as Nicetas Choniates, George Acropolita, Pachymeres, Nicephorus Gregoras, Ephraemius, and the Anonymous published by Sathas, do not call the rulers of Trebizond emperors. As has been noted above, in his Panegyric to Theodore Lascaris, Nicetas Choniates called Alexius and David the 'fools' of Trebizond, and David an effeminate 'youth nurtured in the shade,' 'offscouring cast up by a wave of the sea,' etc. But all these writers were closely connected with the Lascarids of Nicaea and later with the Palaeologi. For them, representatives of these two dynasties were true emperors. As Fallmerayer pertinently says, 'It would have been high treason from them to allow the Trapezuntine Comneni rank equal to that of their own masters.'<sup>4</sup> Byzantine

<sup>1</sup> Du Cange, *Familiae Byzantinae*, p. 192: 'Falluntur qui Imperatoris titulum Alexio adscribunt, cum a Ioanne abnepote primo usurpatum tradant plerique.'

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon, *op. cit.*, ed. Bury, vi, 420-421 (chapter LXI).

<sup>3</sup> *Speculum hystoriale* fratris Vincentii Belvacensis ordinis Sancti Dominici, liber xxxi, caput 144: 'Item Dominus de Trapezondes cc ei (Soldano Turquie) lanceas dabat.' I used the edition of 1484, Nurnberg (Antonius Koburger). A new edition of Vincent's *Speculum Majus*, the third part of which the *Speculum Historiale*, is under consideration by the Mediaeval Academy of America. See B. L. Ullman, *A Project for a new edition of Vincent of Beauvais*, *SPECULUM*, viii (July, 1933). 312-332.

<sup>4</sup> Fallmerayer, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

writers in general attribute no special title to the rulers of Trebizond. Nicetas Choniates says that Alexius assumed power over Trebizond;<sup>1</sup> George Acropolita and the Anonymous published by Sathas: Alexius who ruled over Trebizond;<sup>2</sup> Ephraemius: Alexius who held tyrannical power over the inhabitants of Trebizond;<sup>3</sup> Nicephorus Gregoras: Alexius Comnenus ruler of Colchis.<sup>4</sup> Pachymeres calls the rulers of Trebizond princes of the Lazae,<sup>5</sup> in other words, he says their state was the principality of the Lazae. Thus from the point of view of the Byzantine writers connected with the Lascarids and later with the Palaeologi, the rulers of Trebizond were not emperors.

But the rulers of Trebizond called themselves emperors, which may be proved by a source connected with the Palaeologi. Pachymeres gives us valuable information on this subject. He writes that Michael Palaeologus, the restorer of the Byzantine Empire, sent frequent embassies to announce to John, the ruler of the Lazae, who 'paraded boastfully in imperial insignia though having no right whatever to the imperial title,' that Michael would not object to any other title for John, but urged him 'to renounce the imperial title and imperial insignia.' But 'the arrogant barbarian disdained the order, alleging that he was not the first to start this innovation and that he got the title from his forefathers.'<sup>6</sup> Trapezuntine sources, of course, call the rulers of Trebizond emperors. The Trapezuntine chronicler, Michael Panaretas, says that Alexius, the first ruler of Trebizond, passed away after being emperor eighteen years.<sup>7</sup> In his Panegyric to Trebizond, Bessarion, who lived in the fifteenth century, calls Alexius 'the first Emperor of this country, whose name is as sweet to us as the name of the Empire.'<sup>8</sup> There is no doubt that the first ruler of Trebizond, Alexius, already bore the imperial title.

In order to show that West European writers also called the state of Trebizond an empire, Fallmerayer refers to Odericus Raynaldus; he listed the four empires which were formed after the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1204 as the Constantinopolitan Empire of the Latins, the Trapezuntine Empire under David Comnenus, the Empire of Nicaea under the Lascarids, and the Empire of Thessalonica under the Angeli.<sup>9</sup> But Odericus Raynaldus or Odorico Raynaldi,

<sup>1</sup> Nic. Chon., p. 842: 'ὁ δ' Ἀλέξιος . . . Τραπεζούντος αὐτῆς τὴν δυναστείαν περιεζώνοντο.'

<sup>2</sup> Georg. Acrop., §7 (ed. Heisenberg, I, 12): 'Ἀλεξίου τοῦ τῆς Τραπεζούντος κρατήσαντος.' Anonymus, in Sathas, VII, 453: 'Ἀλεξίου τοῦ ἐν τῇ Τραπεζούντι ἐξουσιάζοντος.'

<sup>3</sup> Ephraemius, p. 304, ll. 7522-7523: 'Ἀλεξίου τοῦ κατατυραννήσαντος Τραπεζουνητίων.'

<sup>4</sup> Nicephorus Gregoras, I, 2 (ed. Bonn., I, 13): 'τοῦ τῆς Κολχίδος κρατήσαντος γῆς Ἀλεξίου τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ.'

<sup>5</sup> Pachymeres, VI, 34 (ed. Bonn., I, 519-520): 'τῷ δὲ γε τῆς τῶν Λαζῶν ἄρχοντι.'

<sup>6</sup> Pachymeres, VI, 34 (ed. Bonn., I, 519-520): 'τῷ δὲ γε τῆς τῶν Λαζῶν ἄρχοντι Ἰωάννη παρασήμιος βασιλικῶς ἐμπομπέοντι, οὐ μετὸν ὄλως βασιλείας ἐκείνῳ . . . ὀνομάτων δὲ καὶ παρασήμων βασιλικῶν φείδεται . . . ὑπερφάνει γὰρ βάρβαρος ὢν καὶ ὑπερέωρα τὴν πρόσταξιν, καὶ τινὰς προφάσεις τοῦ μὴ αὐτὸς κατάρξαι τῆς ἐπὶ τούτοις παραβασίας, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ πατέρων ἔχειν ἐπλάττετο.'

<sup>7</sup> Michael Panaretos, ch. 1 (ed. Lambros, p. 266): 'καὶ βασιλεύσας ὀκτωκαίδεκα ἐκοιμήθη.'

<sup>8</sup> Βησσαρίωνος Ἐγκώμιον εἰς Τραπεζούντα, ed. Lambros, Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων, XXIII (1916), 183-184: 'Ἀλέξιος μὲν γε καὶ ἡμῖν ὁ πρῶτος τῆς γῆς ταυτησί βασιλεύσας, καὶ τοῦτο δὴ τὸ γλυκὺ πάντων ὄνομα καὶ ἡμῖν, ὡς τοῦ τῆς βασιλείας ὀνόματος.' In the separate edition of the Panegyric (Athens, 1916), pp. 41-42.

<sup>9</sup> Baronii — Od. Raynaldi *Annales ecclesiastici*, xx (Bar-le-Duc, 1870), s.a. 1222, §25 (p. 457): 'Ita quattuor imperia ex collapsio Orientali erupere, Constantinopolitanum Latinorum, Davidum

an Italian scholar who continued the annals of Baronius, lived in the seventeenth century (1595–1671), so that he is not an original source; instead of Alexius, Raynaldus mentions David as the first Trapezuntine Emperor. Besides this, Raynaldus' information on this point, as he states himself, is taken from Nicephorus Gregoras,<sup>1</sup> who in the corresponding passage gives the correct name Alexius, whom, as we have seen above, he calls not emperor but ruler of Colchis.<sup>2</sup> For our purpose Raynaldus' statement is of no value whatever.

After finding that the rulers of Trebizond bore the title of Emperor, we shall try to determine their full title. The title of the Byzantine Emperors was Emperor and Autocrat of the Romans (Βασιλεὺς καὶ Αὐτοκράτωρ τῶν Ῥωμαίων). Gradually, in connection with David's victorious advance west when he reached the Sea of Marmora at Nicomedia, the dream of taking Constantinople began to hover before the eyes of the Trapezuntine Comneni. At that time they aspired to seize Constantinople and assume the title of *Basileus* and *Autocrator* of the Romans. But under pressure from Theodore Lascaris David was forced to open negotiations with the Latin Emperor and declare himself in 1206 his vassal. In 1214 Sinope was taken by the Turks, and the former vassalage to the Latin Emperor was replaced by Alexius' vassalage to the Turkish Sultan. The west of Asia Minor was definitely lost to Trebizond.

But after 1214 when Sinope was seized by Izz-ad-Din, all trace of the vassalage of Trebizond to the Latin Empire disappeared. The Comneni once more began to regard the Latin Emperors as usurpers, and the Lascarids of Nicaea as aggressors who had no right to become emperors of Constantinople; therefore in the thirteenth century, at any rate up to the reign of Manuel I (1238–1263), the Trapezuntine Emperors assumed the title of Byzantine Emperors, 'the Faithful *Basileus* and *Autocrator* of the Romans.' This conclusion may be drawn from an inscription seen by Finlay in the middle of the nineteenth century in the church of *Hagia Sophia* (of the Divine Wisdom) in Trebizond. The inscription accompanied a portrait of Manuel I with a medallion on his breast, bearing the figure of St Eugenius on horseback.<sup>3</sup> According to W. Miller, this picture was destroyed by the Turks in 1866.<sup>4</sup> Finlay gives the text of the inscription as follows: 'In Christ God, the Faithful Emperor and Autocrat of the Romans, the founder of this monastery, Manuel Comnenus.'<sup>5</sup> It is a great pity that this inscription has not survived; but since Finlay saw and reproduced it, I do not agree with Bezbrazov in denying the value of this information.<sup>6</sup> As the inscription states,

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Comnenorum Trapezuntinum, Lascarorum Nicaeum, Thessalonicum Angelorum.' See Fallmerayer, *op. cit.*, p. 69 and note.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*: 'ex Nicephoro Gregora colligitur.'

<sup>2</sup> Niceph. Greg., I, 2 (ed. Bonn., p. 13). The text has been given above.

<sup>3</sup> Finlay, *op. cit.*, IV, 340 and n. 2; see also a note by Tozer, the editor of Finlay's work (*ibidem*).

<sup>4</sup> W. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Ἐν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ πιστὸς Βασιλεὺς καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ Ῥωμαίων κτήτωρ τῆς μονῆς ταύτης Μανουὴλ ὁ Κομνηνός. After Finlay this inscription was reproduced by G. Millet, 'Les monastères et les églises de Trébizonde,' *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, XIX (1895), 430; and T. Εὐαγγελίδης, 'Ἱστορία τῆς Τραπεζούντος (Odessa, 1898), pp. 72–73.

<sup>6</sup> See below.



Manuel I was probably the founder of the Church of the Holy Wisdom,<sup>1</sup> and the inscription may even have had some connection with the founding. In addition, the dating of Manuel's reign, 1238–1263, is very important. Two years before his death in 1261 Constantinople was taken by Michael Palaeologus, who opened the last Byzantine dynasty. This was a fact of first importance for the Empire of Trebizond. The new Emperor of Constantinople resented the assumption by the ruler of Trebizond of the title of 'Emperor and Autocrat of the Romans' and, as we have noted above, by sending frequent embassies to his contemporary 'prince of the Lazae,' John II (1280–1285), rebuked him for using the imperial style and emblems. Finally it was agreed that Michael should give John his third daughter, Eudokia, to wife; but in return John should doff his red boots, the symbol of imperial dignity, for black, and become Michael's son-in-law with the inferior rank and symbols of Despot. John, impressed by this matrimonial alliance, consented to sail for Constantinople where in 1282 he married Eudokia.<sup>2</sup> After this marriage the title of the rulers of Trebizond was absolutely incompatible with the new state of things and was changed. But the new title was not Despot, as Michael had proposed before the marriage of his daughter. Evidently John would not consent to assume such inferior rank, and Michael yielded his point. The new title was that of 'In Christ God, Faithful Emperor and Autocrat of all the East, the Iberians, and the Transmarine Province' ('Εν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ πιστὸς βασιλεὺς καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ πάσης Ἀρατολῆς, Ἰβήρων καὶ Περσείας). John II, Eudokia's husband, was probably the first Trapezuntine sovereign to assume this title, which is to be found in the signature to the chrysobull issued by Alexius III (1349–1390) in favor of the Venetians, in March of 1364.<sup>3</sup> To date, this is the earliest mention of this title in legislative texts; but it had assuredly existed before 1364. We also find the same title both at the beginning and at the end of Alexius III's chrysobull issued in September of 1374, by which he founded the monastery of St Dionysius on Mount Athos.<sup>4</sup> In inscriptions this title is

<sup>1</sup> See Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 26: Manuel was perhaps the founder of the church. Th. Uspensky, *Outlines of the history of the Empire of Trebizond* (Leningrad, 1929), p. 14: St Sophia was built by the Great Comnenus Manuel in the first half of the thirteenth century. Millet, *op. cit.*, p. 428: The church does not date before 1204.

<sup>2</sup> A very detailed record of these negotiations in Pachymeres, VI, ch. 34 (ed. Bonn., I, 519–524) See also Niceph. Gregoras, V, 7 (I, 148–149). Panaretos, ch. 5 (ed. Lambros, p. 267).

<sup>3</sup> Miklosich et Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca*, III (1865), 134. D. Zakythinos, *Le chrysobulle d'Alexis III Comnène empereur de Trébizonde en faveur des Vénitiens* (Paris, 1932), p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> See I. Dräseke, 'Von Dionysioskloster auf dem Athos,' *Byz. Zeitschrift*, II (1893), 86 and 90. Zachariae von Lingenthal, 'Ueber ein Trapezuntinisches Chrysobull,' *Sitzungsber. der philos.-philol. und hist. Classe der K. bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München*, 1881, I, 293. In the text published by Fallmerayer, the title is given only at the beginning (*Original-Fragmente*, I, in *Abh. der hist. Classe der bayer. Ak.*, III, dritte Abth., 1843, pp. 40–49 (he refers this chrysobull incorrectly to the year 1375). In 1744 a Russian traveller, V. G. Barsky, had already copied the text of this chrysobull and made a Russian translation of it; both are published in V. G. Barsky, *The second visit to the Holy Athonian Mountain* (St Petersburg, 1887), pp. 377–387. Another Russian translation of this document was published by the Russian bishop Porphyrius Uspensky in his *First Voyage to the Athonian Monasteries*, I, 2 (Kiev, 1877), 112–114.

shorter. In 1702 Tournefort and in the first half of the nineteenth century Fallmerayer and Texier saw in the Theoskepastos Church at Trebizond the pictures of Alexius III, his wife Theodora, and his mother Irene, a daughter of Andronicus III Palaeologus; the pictures were accompanied by inscriptions, but neither pictures nor inscriptions survived repainting in 1843.<sup>1</sup> According to Fallmerayer, the first two inscriptions run as follows: (1) 'Alexius in Christ God, Faithful Emperor and Autocrat of all the East, Great Comnenus' (Πάσης Ἀνατολῆς ὁ Μέγας Κομνηνός); (2) 'Theodora by grace of Christ the most pious Empress of all the East' (Θεοδώρα Χριστοῦ χάριτι εὐσεβεστάτη Δέσποινα καὶ αὐτοκρατορίσσα πάσης Ἀνατολῆς). The third inscription gives the name of Irene, Alexius' mother, but no title.<sup>2</sup> In these inscriptions, 'the Iberians and the Transmarine Provinces' (Περατεία) are omitted from Alexius' title, probably on account of length.

Since in the thirteenth century the emperors of Trebizond styled themselves emperors of the Romans, and only after 1282 changed their title, I disagree with P. Bezobrazov, who takes the inscription seen by Finlay with the name of Manuel, 'the Emperor of the Romans,' for a forgery, 'because Trapezuntine Emperors titled themselves Emperors of the East and Iberia but not Emperors of the Romans.'<sup>3</sup> In reference to the title of the Trapezuntine emperors, N. Iorga was recently inexact in stating that their original title was lord of 'All the East, the Iberians, and the Maritime (sic!),' and that it was only later that the Emperor Manuel I (1238–1263) began to call himself 'Autocrat of All the East.'<sup>4</sup>

As sometimes happens, these titles do not always correspond to reality. The title of 'Emperor and Autocrat of All the East, the Iberians, and the Transmarine Provinces' hardly fitted conditions in the fourteenth century. 'All the East' is an amazing exaggeration; Iberia, i.e., Lazica, a territory on the southeastern coast of the Black Sea, had probably been lost in the reign of Andronicus I (1222–1235); the 'Transmarine Province' or 'the Oversea Land' meant the Crimean possessions, Cherson and the Gothic *Climata*, whose dependence upon Trebizond in the fourteenth century was almost null.

We have also some chrysobulls with imperial titles which are considered spurious by most scholars. One of these is a chrysobull issued in 1296 by the Emperor and Autocrat of all the East, Manuel, to one of the monasteries near Trebizond. Since the date is wrong (in 1296 there was no Emperor Manuel)

<sup>1</sup> Tournefort, *Relation d'un voyage du Levant, fait par ordre du roi*, II (Amsterdam, 1718), p. 103. Fallmerayer, *Original-Fragmente, Chroniken, Inschriften und anderes Materiale zur Geschichte des Kaiserthums Trapezunt*, I, in *Abhandlungen der hist. Classe der K. Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, III, 3 (Munich, 1843), 66. Ch. Texier, *Asie Mineure* (Paris, 1862), pp. 596–597. Ch. Texier and R. P. Pullan, *Byzantine Architecture* (London, 1864), p. 201, plate LXVI.

<sup>2</sup> The inscriptions are also reproduced in G. Millet, 'Les monastères et les églises de Trébizonde,' *Bulletin de corr. hellénique*, XIX (1895), 438. See also Fallmerayer, *Geschichte des Kaiserthums von Trapezunt*, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> P. Bezobrazov, *Trebizond. Its sanctuaries and antiquities* (Petrograd, 1916), p. 32, n. 1 (in Russian). Bezobrazov remarks, 'One may believe that the inscription which no longer exists referred to the Byzantine Emperor Manuel (1143–1180).'

<sup>4</sup> N. Iorga, *Histoire de la vie byzantine*, III (Bucarest, 1934), 104.

this chrysobull is regarded either as questionable (*verdächtig*) or spurious.<sup>1</sup> Another diploma issued by Alexius III in July of 1386 which granted some territory to the monastery on the mountain of Zabulon, near Trebizond, gives the following entirely antiquated title: 'In Christ God, the Faithful Emperor and Autocrat of all the East, Alexius, Grand Comnenus, Germanicus, Alamanicus, Gothicus, Vandalicus, glorious, victorious, triumphant, faithful, always august.'<sup>2</sup> This in my belief is a falsification made by someone who wished to imitate a well-known Trebizond inscription praising Justinian the Great.<sup>3</sup>

The particular appellation of the Trapezuntine Comneni was the Great or Grand Comneni (Οἱ Μεγάλοι Κομνηνοί).<sup>4</sup> A misunderstanding existed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries on this epithet. Du Cange attributed it to the first emperor, Alexius Comnenus, personally; he wrote, 'Alexius Comnenus cognomento Magnus.'<sup>5</sup> Gibbon also thought it was confined to Alexius and added that 'the epithet of Great was applied perhaps to his stature, rather than to his exploits.'<sup>6</sup> It goes without saying that the epithet of Great was not confined to Alexius I Comnenus but was applied to all the members of this branch of the Comnenian family, from the first emperor to the last, from Alexius I to David, who in 1461 was captured by Muhammed II. Georgius Acropolita wrote that Alexius was called a Great Comnenus.<sup>7</sup> In his Chronicle Michael Panaretos calls almost all the emperors Great Comneni; the last words of his chronicle in reference to David's first marriage are 'David, the Great Comnenus.'<sup>8</sup> According to Panaretos not only the Emperors were called Great Comneni but also their wives, in spite of the fact that they were Comneni only by marriage, as well as their daughters; for instance Irene, wife of Basil; Maria, first daughter of the Emperor Basil, who married a Turcoman chief; the *despina* Eudokia in 1396; Theodora Cantacuzena, wife of Alexius IV.<sup>9</sup> There are also West European sources which show that the epithet of Great Comneni was known in the West. A French historian of the thirteenth century, Joinville, who compiled a history of Louis IX the Saint, says that after his unfortunate crusade to Egypt the King landed in 1253 at Sidon, and that envoys came to him there from a great sover-

<sup>1</sup> See Zachariae von Lingenthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 294–297 (text); the date of the chrysobull, 1297, is inexact (p. 293); the document is *verdächtig*. Miklosich et Müller, *Acta et diplomata*, v (1887), 261–264; appendix XII, p. 466: 'tota ratio scribendi redolet falsariam.' Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ueber ein Chrysobull von Trapezunt*, in *Sitzungsberg. der phil.-philol. und hist. Cl. der K. bayer. Ak. der Wiss. zu München* (1886), pp. 299–302; perhaps the document may be genuine? (p. 302).

<sup>2</sup> Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 'Ἐγγραφα ἀναφερόμενα εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν καὶ τοπογραφίαν τῆς αὐτοκρατορίας Τραπεζούντος Μαυρογορδάτιος Βιβλιοθήκη,' Παράρτημα τοῦ ΙΖ' τόμου τοῦ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Ἑλληνικοῦ Φιλολογικοῦ Συλλόγου (Constantinople, 1886), p. 77. Miklosich-Müller, *op. cit.*, v (1887), 468.

<sup>3</sup> Zakythinos believes this title is genuine and remarks: 'This fact is significant, because it shows that the Emperors of Trebizond did not cease to consider themselves legitimate descendants of the Roman Emperors. Zakythinos, *Le chrysobulle d'Alexis III Comnène*, p. 92, n. 5. On Justinian's inscription see A. Vasiliev, 'Zur Geschichte von Trapezunt unter Justinian dem Grossen,' *Byz. Zeitsch.*, xxx (1929–30), 385–386.

<sup>4</sup> See Fallmerayer, *Geschichte*, pp. 81–84.

<sup>5</sup> Du Cange, *Familiae Byzantinae*, p. 192.

<sup>6</sup> Gibbon (Bury), vi, 420–421 (ch. LXI).

<sup>7</sup> Georgius Acropolita, cap. VII (ed. Heisenberg, p. 12): 'Ἀλεξίου . . . ὁσ καὶ Μέγας ὠνομάζετο Κομνηνός.'

<sup>8</sup> Panaretos, ch. 57 (ed. Lambros, p. 294).

<sup>9</sup> Ἡ Μεγάλη Κομνηνή, Panaretos, ch. 16 (p. 276); ch. 38 (p. 286); ch. 55 (p. 293); ch. 56 (p. 293).

eign of 'Profound Greece' who was called 'the Grand Comnenus and Lord of Trebizond.'<sup>1</sup> The Trapezuntine Emperor who sent envoys to Louis IX was Manuel I (1238–1263), the second son of Alexius I. We have an interesting mention in the fifteenth century. In his letter to Pope Eugenius IV of October 18, 1434, which has survived in a Latin version, the Trapezuntine Emperor John IV styles himself 'Aloiane Megatomeneno Dei gracia imperator Trapesundarum.'<sup>2</sup> In *Aloiane* we have of course the distorted name *Ioannes*, and from *Megatomeneno* we can easily reconstruct Megas Comnenus, i.e., Great Comnenus.

How the epithet of Great Comneni arose we do not know. It may with probability be explained by the greatness of the idea of Alexius I and David to restore the Byzantine Empire. The project failed; the idea vanished; but the epithet survived.

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<sup>1</sup> Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, ed. N. Wailly (Paris, 1882), ch. cxvi, 591; 'li messaige à un grant signour de la parfonde Grece, liquex se fesoit appeler le Grant Commenie et signour de Trafentesi.'

<sup>2</sup> The text of this letter has been several times printed. See Raynaldi, *Annales ecclesiastici*, ix [xxviii] (Lucca, 1752), 177–178 (§xviii). Mansi, *Conciliarum Collectio*, xxix, coll. 648–649. From Mansi the text has been reproduced by Fallmerayer, *Geschichte*, pp. 346–347. E. Cecconi, *Studi storici sul Concilio di Firenze. Parte prima. Antecedenti del Concilio* (Florence, 1869), p. civ (Doc. xxxv). See also *Concilium Basiliense*, I. *Studien und Dokumente zur Geschichte der Jahre 1431–1437*, ed. Johannes Haller (Basel, 1896), p. 350. Haller does not publish the text, but gives the address with the name *Aloiane*. In other editions instead of this is printed *Morame* or *Morane*, which is not understandable. Fallmerayer refers incorrectly the letter not to John IV but to his predecessors, Alexius IV and Alexander (p. 347).