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The Mint of Trebizond under Alexius I and the Gabrades

SIMON BENDALL

[PLATES 6-7]

THE purpose of this paper is to put forward an attribution to the mint of Trebizond for thirteen issues of Byzantine copper coins during the period roughly covered by the reign of Alexius I. All the types are scarce, some are very rare and no less than five are apparently unpublished. All have certain features in common and these are, apart from rarity,

- (i) Method of production and the consequent form of the flan.
- (ii) Provenance.
- (iii) Style and, to a certain extent, content.
- (iv) Overstriking linking six of the issues.

These points are considered below.

FORM OF FLAN. As can clearly be seen from the plates, all the coins have clipped polygonal flans. Most have between six and nine sides although Issues 1 and 2 and one specimen of Issue 3 have twelve sides. This is no doubt an attempt to give the coins a more rounded appearance. The flans of Issue 13 will be discussed later as they have certain aberrant features.

There can be little doubt that the mode of production for all these issues was to strike the coins, presumably in rows, upon sheets or strips of copper and subsequently to cut them out with a pair of shears. Sometimes they appear to have been cut into squares and then to have had the corners clipped (**Pl. 6, 7**). It will be appreciated that coins cut from strips will have two sides parallel. On the other hand, where there are flans with more or less than eight sides and with none parallel, then it appears that the coins may have been cut out from sheets by holding the sheet in one hand, alternately cutting and rotating. It would appear more likely that shears were used rather than a cold chisel.

It is certain that clipping was generally done after striking, for where coins are off-centre there is no distortion of the crisply cut edge which would have occurred if striking was subsequent to the preparation of the flans. There is further evidence for this sequence of manufacture which will be noted in the discussion of Issue 13b.

PROVENANCE. Although all the issues are rare or scarce, they are not usually found among those accumulations of Byzantine coins formed in the west, south, or south-east of Turkey, or in Syria or Lebanon. The clue to the proposed mint was found when the author had the good fortune to examine

TABLE
The sources of provenanced coins of Trebizond

Issue	Trebizond		Konya	Corinth	Athens	Other finds
	TC	TA				
1	1	—	—	—	—	—
2	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	—	—	—	3	1	—
4	2	—	—	—	—	—
5	—	—	—	1	2	2
6	—	—	—	1	—	—
7	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	6	—	—	2	2	1
9	3	—	—	1	—	—
10	6	1	2	—	—	—
11	7	1	2	—	—	—
12	3	—	—	—	—	—
13A	1	—	1	—	—	—
13B	4	—	1	—	—	1
Norman	1	—	1	—	—	—
14	8	1	7	—	—	—

a collection of coins formed in Trebizond many years ago, mainly of single finds. Two more smaller acquisitions of Trapezuntine coins, one from Konya and the other from Trebizond itself, yielded more of the types under discussion. This last source is listed in the Table as TA.

The remaining columns of the table represent finds in the American excavations at Corinth and Athens. As will be seen, not only were Issues 5–7 unrepresented in the Trapezuntine collections listed in the first three columns, but Issue 3 is known only from the Corinth and Athens excavations. It may seem surprising that many of these coins appear in Corinth and Athens, but in view of their general absence in Asia Minor there is possibly some particular reason for the distribution pattern. It is interesting to note that other coins of the same period, produced in a similar manner and from as far afield, were found in the Corinth excavations—a hoard of sixty-nine coins of the Seljuks of Syria, struck probably in Aleppo. It could be that the thirteen Trapezuntine coins from Athens and Corinth are the dispersed remnants of a single group of coins transported by one traveller.

Apart from the collections listed in the following table, other provenanced specimens known to the author are: one of Issue 13B from Diyarbakr;

one of Issue 5 from Avanos (Goreme valley); one of Issue 5 from Kayseri; and the Dumbarton Oaks specimen of Issue 8 from Trebizond.

Of course many coins from all over Turkey find their way to Istanbul, losing their provenance on the way, but even so it often happens that these issues are found together, which, considering the scarcity of the coins, is perhaps an indication of a common source. Again, those occurrences known to the author are: (i) Istanbul—one specimen of Issue 4 and three of Issue 11 acquired together; (ii) Istanbul—one specimen of Issue 12 and one of Issue 5 acquired together; (iii) Grierson¹ notes the fact that the Italian dealer Kunz had a specimen each of Issues 4 and 8 (Anonymous types L and M), both unpublished at the time, which suggests that they may have been found together.

STYLE AND CONTENT. Close examination of the plates will show the similarities, the most notable of which are:

- (i) a rather coarse 'sausage' shaped head of Christ on Issues 1–4.
- (ii) A small neat cross, with or without pellets at the end of each arm, on Issues 1, 2, 8, 10, and 13B.
- (iii) a fine style bust of Christ on Issues 7 and 8—so similar that it would not be surprising to eventually find these two issues die-linked.
- (iv) the use of a jewelled cross on Issues 3, 4, and 13A.
- (v) the use of a ligatured NH and KA on Issues 3, 6, and 8 and an idiosyncratic X on Issues 3, 5, 6, and 8 where the upper angle is more obtuse than the lower, thus: χ .
- (vi) the portrait of Alexius I on Issues 6 and 7, while being recognizably that of the emperor, has a much longer and thinner face than the Constantinopolitan issues.

OVERSTRIKES. Issues 8–12 can be arranged in sequence as a result of the following overstrikes: issue 10 over 8 (**Pl. 6, 11**); issue 10 over 9 (**Pl. 6, 12**); issue 11 over 10 (**Pl. 7, 14**); issue 12 over 10 (**Pl. 7, 16**); and issue 12 over 11 (**Pl. 7, 21**). It is hoped that further overstrikes come to light which will enable other issues to be fitted securely into the sequence.

DIES. In view of the comparative rarity of most of the issues it ought to have been feasible to identify the dies, but unfortunately the poor state of preservation of many of the coins makes this very difficult. What can be gleaned is listed here:

Issue 1. Only a single coin examined.

Issue 2. Also only one coin examined.

Issue 3. Apparently known from four specimens—three from Corinth, and one from

¹ *DOC III*, 705 n.

Athens. From examination of photographs, it appears that all obverse dies are possibly different but that two coins could share the same reverse die.

Issue 4. Known from two specimens—all dies different.

Issue 5. Five specimens illustrated or examined by the author, from Dumbarton Oaks, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Athenian Agora, and two in private collections. All dies are different.

Issue 6. Two specimens illustrated or examined—Corinth excavations and a private collection. The obverses are too poor to compare, but the reverse dies are different.

Issue 7. Known from two specimens, struck from one pair of dies.

Issue 8. Of nine photographs or coins examined, three were too poorly preserved to form any conclusion. Of the remainder, all the reverse dies were different. This is possibly true of the obverse dies also, although with the irregular shape of the flans, weakness in striking, wear, and patches of corrosion, it was often difficult to find similar diagnostic features on each coin.

Issue 9. Four coins examined—all dies different.

Issue 10. Eight coins examined. Two were too poorly preserved while on a further two, overstriking on previous types had distorted the design. Of the remaining four, two appeared to share both obverse and reverse dies, making three obverse and three reverse dies for the four coins.

Issue 11. Twelve coins and four photographs examined. Four were coins too worn and corroded to be useful. For the remaining twelve pieces there appear to be five obverse dies (A–E) and four reverse dies (a–d) with the coins disposed as following:

A/– One coin with reverse too poor to identify. B/– one coin with reverse too poor to identify. B/a five coins. B/b one coin. C/c two coins. D/b one coin. E/d one coin.

Issue 12. Five coins were examined but on only one was the obverse clear. On four of them, however, the reverse dies were clear enough to show that they were all different.

Issue 13A. Four coins—all dies different.

Issue 13B. Six specimens examined—all apparently different. With one exception, all the specimens of the two varieties 13A and B are so worn that it is difficult to make definite identification, but there appear to be two coins, of 13A and 13B, which, while not sharing obverse dies, have two that are extremely similar, sharing the unusual feature of Christ lacking a nimbus but with three short arms radiating from his head, each ending in a pellet.

Considering the rarity of the issues, the number of die-identities are comparatively few, which suggests that the coins were commoner than they might seem, possibly due to the fact that the area of circulation is rather remote and seldom visited.

TREBIZOND IN THE REIGN OF ALEXIUS I. The history of Trebizond in the late eleventh century is obscure but the bare facts seem to be as follows.²

The city fell to the Turks after the battle of Manzikert in 1071. In 1075 it was recaptured by Theodore Gabras, an expert soldier and member of a local notable family. He was in Constantinople at the beginning of Alexius's reign and was appointed Duke of Trebizond perhaps in the mid or late 1080s. Alexius kept Theodore's son Gregory in the capital as a hostage.

Anna Comnena remarked that after capturing the city Theodore regarded it as his own property. In about 1091/2 he made an unsuccessful visit to

² W. Miller, *Trebizond, the Last Greek Empire*, Chicago, 1969. A. A. M. Bryer, 'A Byzantine family: the Gabrades, c. 979–c. 1653', *The University of Birmingham Historical Journal* XII (1970). A. A. M. Bryer, S. Fassoulakis, and D. M. Nicol, 'A Byzantine family: the Gabrades, an additional note', *Byzantinoslavica* XXXVI (1975).

Constantinople in order to try to take his son back to Trebizond. Failing to do so, he seems to have returned to this Theme of Chaldea less inclined than ever to co-operate with the central government. In 1098 he was captured and killed by the Turks.

He was replaced as Duke of Trebizond by Dabatenus, who was already Governor of Heraclea and Paphlagonia and who was presumably more amenable to the central government.

In c. 1103 he was replaced by Gregory Taronites (who may possibly be the same person as Gregory Gabras, the son of Theodore Gabras). Gregory revolted against Alexius and held out until c. 1106 when he was captured. He was imprisoned for some years and later pardoned but we do not know if he was reinstated at Trebizond. There is therefore a lacuna in our information from 1106 until some time just before 1119 by which time Constantinople Gabras (a son, brother, or nephew of Theodore Gabras) was Duke of Chaldia after a successful career as a general under Alexius I. In view of the fact that from the 1070s until the 1140s Trebizond was obviously controlled by the Gabrades family, it may be that they also held power from 1106 to c. 1118.

CATALOGUE

Issue 1

Obv. $\overline{\text{IC}} \overline{\text{XC}}$. Bust of Christ, nimbate, wearing tunic and himation.

Rev. No legend. Small Latin cross with pellets at the end of each arm, with floral ornaments to left and right at base; the whole in a border of large pellets.

Ref. —.

Pl. 6, 1

This type is known from a single specimen found in Trebizond weighing 4.38 g and with a die-axis of 180°. This issue is placed at the head of the series partly because of its similarity to the Constantinopolitan Anonymous types I and K and, while it is not noticeably heavier than subsequent issues, there is a certain diminution in the size of the flans as the series progresses. Finally, this and the subsequent type both have twelve-sided flans. This seems to be an attempt to produce a round coin which was presumably found to be too much trouble and unnecessary and was simplified in succeeding issues.

Issue 2

Obv. As Issue 1.

Rev. A small cross with wedges in the angles; a greek letter above, below, to left and right, all barely legible except for Δ below and Δ to left.

Ref. —.

Pl. 6, 2

Another type known from only a single specimen, unfortunately without provenance; weighing 4.91 g and die-axis 180°. The letter above on the reverse has at least one stroke on the diagonal while that to the right has a vertical. It is possible there-

fore that the arrangement of the letters could be Δ $\overset{\text{A}}{\text{P}}$ expanding to read $\text{AA}\epsilon\text{E}\text{I}\Omega$
 $\Delta\epsilon\text{C}\text{I}\text{O}\text{T} \text{P}\Omega\text{M}\text{A}\text{I}\Omega\text{N}.$ $\underset{\Delta}{\text{A}}$

Issue 3

Obv. A large Latin cross on steps with $\overline{\text{IC}} \overline{\text{XC}} \text{NH KA}$ in the angles.

Rev. Uncertain legend. Bust of emperor, wearing stemma, collar piece, divitision and chlamys; holds in right hand, a sceptre cruciger, and in the left, globus cruciger.

Ref. Corinth, vol. VI, no. 175.

Pl. 6, 3

Four specimens of this type are recorded—three from Corinth and one from the Athenian Agora excavations (no. 1891). Although none are at present known from Asia Minor, in style and format this issue must be Trapezuntine. Here it is placed as the third issue, as the Athenian coin has twelve sides as do the previous issues, while the obverse type is very similar to that of Issue 4.

Issue 4

Obv. as Issues 1 and 2.

Rev. Large jewelled cross with $\overline{\text{IC}}\text{-}\overline{\text{XC}}\text{-}\text{NH}\text{-}\text{KA}$ in the angles.

Ref. —.

Pl. 6, 4

Both the known specimens are from Trebizond and weigh 6.02 and 5.84 g. Die-axes are 0° and 270°. Unfortunately the known coins of Issues 1, 2, and 4 are poorly preserved, but the obverses are so similar that given finer specimens it might be possible to find shared dies.

Issue 5

Obv. $\overline{\text{IC}} \overline{\text{XC}}$. Christ seated on throne with back, bearded and nimbate with a pellet in each arm, wearing tunic and himation, holding Gospels in right hand.

Rev. Jewelled Latin cross, having one large and two small pellets at the end of each of the upper three arms, and a large crescent at the base of the lower arm.

Ref. Anonymous type M; Sabatier, pl. lix/1.

Pl. 6, 5

One specimen from the Athenian Agora has a ten-sided flan and it might be that this type, following the twelve-sided coins, was the point at which the flans were generally reduced to eight sides for simplicity's sake. As Grierson notes, there are affinities with Anonymous types D and J. Weights: 4.55, 3.45, 2.79 g.

Issue 6

Obv. $\overline{\text{MP}} \overline{\text{ΘV}}$. Bust of the Virgin, nimbate, wearing tunic and maphorion.

∴ Φ ∴

Rev. Φ—M

∴ X ∴

Ref. Schlumberger, pl. xix/24; RN 1938, p. 20, no. 24.

Pl. 6, 6

Longuet expanded the letters on the reverse to read *φως χριστου φωτιζει παντα*. Weights: 6.9 to 3.7 g.

Issue 7

Obv. $\overline{\text{IC}} \overline{\text{XC}}$. Bust of Christ, nimbate with a pellet in each arm, wearing tunic and himation.

Rev. +AΛΕΞΙΟ ΔΕCΠ

Bust of emperor, wearing stemma, divitision, collar piece and chlamys; holds in

right hand, sceptre cruciger with pellet at the end of each of the three upper arms, and in left, globus cruciger.

Ref. —.

Pl. 6, 7

Two specimens of this type are known, without provenance, and both struck from the same pair of dies, which shows that what looks like a letter M in the place usually occupied by the Gospels held by Christ is an integral part of the design, and indeed is found on the succeeding issue. Mr. R. A. G. Carson has suggested, and Mr. M. Hendy has subsequently confirmed, that the 'M' feature on Issues 7 and 8 represents the opened book of the Gospels. Hendy pointed out that Christ holding the open Gospels occurs extremely rarely—in fact only on two other issues; both tetartera of Alexius I, one of Constantinople (Hendy, pl. 7/10–11) and one of Thessalonica (Hendy, pl. 8/7–8). Both these issues were apparently the first post-reform productions at the two mints and thus date to 1092. As it is impossible that this innovation could have taken place in Trebizond, Issues 7 and 8 must post-date 1092. On the Trapezuntine issues this feature is much more exaggerated and the spine of the book is not defined, so that the author feels perhaps that the die-engraver at Trebizond had not quite grasped the full significance of the design. The weights of the coins are 4.75 and 5.83 g and the die-axes 0°.

Issue 8

Obv. As Issue 7.

Rev. Latin cross flanked by IC (above), XC (below), NH (to left), and KA (to right).

Ref. Anonymous type L; Hendy, pl. 2, 22.

Pl. 6, 8

A preponderance of the known specimens come from Trebizond. The weight of eight coins range from 4.84 to 2.40 g. with die-axes generally 180°. The use of ligatured NH and KA are similar to those on Issues 3 and 4 while the form of the letter X with the upper angle more obtuse than the lower is as on Issues 6 and 7. The style is fine and the bust of Christ very like that on the preceding issue, with the same M feature in place of the Gospels.

Issue 9

Obv. Patriarchal cross on single step; four X's in the angles.

Rev. As the obverse but with four E's in the angles of the cross.

Ref. Sabatier, pl. lxx/16.

Pl. 6, 9

Weights vary between 2.0 and 3.5 g with die-axes 0° and 180°. It seems possible that the X's on the obverse refer to Christ, and the E's to St. Eugenius, the patron saint of Trebizond.

Issue 10

Obv. ☉ € . Bust of St. Theodore, nimbate, wearing tunic, breast plate, and sagion,

⊖ ○
△

holding in right hand, a sword over right shoulder, and in left, a shield.

Rev. Small Latin cross with a pellet at the end of each arm.

Ref. —.

Pl. 6, 10

Although apparently unpublished, this type seems comparatively common. Weights vary between 5.13 and 1.84 g. The type is found overstruck on Issues 8 and 9 (Pl. 6, 11 and 12). It is also the prototype of a rare coin of Salduk ibn Ali of Erzerum (A.D. 1153–64)—Pl. 7, 24.

Issue 11

Obv. $\overline{\text{IC}} \overline{\text{XC}}$. Bust of Christ facing, bearded and nimbate, wearing tunic and himation.

Rev. O
 A Θ
 Γ ϵ
 O O
 C Δ

Full-length figure of St. Theodore, nimbate, wearing tunic, breastplate, and sagion; holds in right hand, a spear, and in left, a shield.

Ref. Sabatier, pl. lxvi/5.

Pl. 6, 13

Another comparatively common issue; weights of 13 coins vary between 5.13 and 1.84 g, with die-axes of 0° (7) and 180° (3). The type is found overstruck on the preceding issue (Pl. 7, 14).

Issue 12

Obv. $\overline{\text{IC}} \overline{\text{XC}}$. Bust of Christ facing, bearded and nimbate with a pellet in each angle, wearing tunic and himation.

Rev. O Δ
 I
 M

Bust of St. Demetrius, nimbate, wearing tunic, breastplate, and sagion, and holding spear over right shoulder.

Ref. Sabatier, pl. lxvi/6.

Pl. 7, 15

Sabatier recognized this as a companion issue to the previous type but considered that the reverse depicted St. Theodore. This seems to be because he published the British Museum specimen (Pl. 7, 16) where the letters ΔIM failed to obliterate $\text{O}\Delta$ on the undertype, Issue 10.

This coin is also found overstruck on type 11 (Pl. 7, 21) which shows the reverse of Issue 12 over the obverse of 11. This must be the correct sequence—the coin cannot be a simple double striking of Issue 12 with the coin turning over in the die, for the bust of Christ on Issue 12 has a cross nimbus with pellets, while on this overstrike Christ has the simple nimbus of Issue 11.

Issue 13A

Obv. $\overline{\text{IC}} \overline{\text{XC}}$. Bust of Christ facing, bearded and with cross nimbus with two pellets in each arm, wearing tunic and himation. holding Gospels in right hand.

Rev. Jewelled cross with A- Δ -B-P in the angles.

Ref. —.

Pl. 7, 18

Weights of two specimens, 1.16 and 1.87 g, with die-axes of 0°. For other comments on this type see the notes for type 13B.

Issue 13B

Obv. $\overline{\text{IC}} \overline{\text{XC}}$. Bust of Christ, bearded and nimbate, wearing tunic and himation and holding Gospels in right hand.

Rev. Latin cross on steps with A- Δ -B-P in angles.

Ref. Schlumberger, pl. ii/5.

Pl. 7, 19

Schlumberger read the letters on this type as A-N-B-P and expanded them as

Antiochia Bohemundus Princeps and published it as a crusader coin. The correct reading should be *Αλεξω Βασιλευς Ρωμαιων*. While the provenance of these last two issues leaves little doubt that they should be attributed to the mint of Trebizond, type 13B especially presents certain anomalies when compared to the previous issues. Firstly, the coins, unlike other Trapezuntine issues, seem often to be found overstruck on much earlier Constantinopolitan coins (Pl. 7, 17), which therefore gives the type a wider range of weights from 5.54 to 1.22 g. On one specimen (Pl. 7, 20) a much larger anonymous bronze coin was used and an attempt was made to cut out the new coin (see arrows), but presumably the thickness of the original coin proved too much for the shears. The declining depth of the notch left in the coin surely indicates the use of shears rather than a chisel, whose cut would not only have been uniform in depth, but probably also successful. This coin also indicates that clipping was carried out after striking.

Type 13B also differs from 13A and the previous issues in that a number of coins not only have very crude lettering but are also cut square (Pl. 7, 25). All these are the marks of hurried production and one wonders whether there may have been some event at Trebizond which accounts for all these features on this particular issue, or whether it was perhaps struck by the army of Alexius on the move in north-east Asia Minor, when methods of production were rather slipshod and when the mint personnel were reduced to using old coins for a proportion of their flans. The campaigns of Alexius's forces against Gregory Taronites in c. 1105/6 could possibly have been the occasion for this issue. But Mr. Hendy has, in subsequent discussion, cast doubt on the theory of a travelling mint at this period, pointing out that Alexius's field armies were too small and loosely composed to either support or need a mint.

While it is the coins of 13B that are overstruck on earlier Constantinopolitan coins, there is a specimen of 13A which seems to be overstruck on an earlier Trapezuntine issue (Pl. 7, 26). While the undertype is totally illegible, the size and shape of the flan suggest that it is one of the issues between nos. 7 and 12. As issues 8 to 12 are linked by overstrikes, and types 13A and 13B, when not overstruck on earlier issues, are the smallest and lightest types in the series, it seems probable that they are also the latest.

The busts of Christ vary somewhat on Issues 13A and 13B. On many there is no outer circle to the nimbus, the rays extending to the border of the die, and on some they stop short, ending in pellets, while on others the nimbus is present. These types seem interchangeable and it is the form of the reverse alone which differentiates the varieties.

It should be mentioned that the foregoing conclusions have been made from the study of relatively few coins.

CHRONOLOGY. As has been seen, while six of the issues can be arranged in a sequence from overstrikes, it is not possible to be certain of their exact place in the complete series. In the catalogue the linked issues have been placed at the end of the series, as Issues 1 to 5 are larger in size, often with more facets to the flan and are more closely comparable to some of the Constantinopolitan anonymous issues. Thus generally, although weights remain constant if erratic throughout the series, the size of flan shrinks and the number of sides of the flan declines.

With the over-all dating of the series, we seem to be on slightly firmer ground. Three or perhaps four issues are in the name of Alexius I while most of the others follow the general format of the late Anonymous bronzes. According to Hendy, at Constantinople they would not have been struck after 1092, the date he assigns to the Alexian reform of the coinage. However,

it appears that the reform, whatever its date, was not reflected in the coinage of Trebizond.

It seems unlikely that any of the issues antedate the recapture of Trebizond in 1075, and is also uncertain whether any antedate the reign of Alexius I. Issues 10 and 11 depicting St. Theodore perhaps belong to the period 1092–8 when Theodore Gabras, already ruling Trebizond as though it was his by



FIG. 1

right, returned from Constantinople even more disenchanted with the central government after his failure to recover his son. It may be that his independence just extended to placing his own effigy on the coinage in the guise of his name saint.

There can be little doubt that Issue 10 was the prototype for an issue of Tancred struck at Antioch which is certainly a portrait of the crusading prince (Pl. 7, 22). As this effigy is named as Tancred, perhaps it was also generally recognized at the time that the prototype also, although described as St. Theodore, was similarly a portrait of Theodore Gabras, at least in popular belief. The seal of Theodore Gabras, as described by Schlumberger in his *Sigillographie byzantine* (but unfortunately not illustrated) seems exactly similar to the obverse of Issue 10. A further issue of Tancred (Fig. 1c) is also possibly derived from a Trapezuntine prototype (Fig. 1a), the obverse of issue 7 or 8 perhaps, having passed through an intermediate stage in the form of a coin of the Danishmend Amir Ghazi Gumushtigin, perhaps struck in Malatya (Fig. 1b). It is also just possible that the reverse of Issue 2 provided some inspiration for two issues of Richard and Bohemund of Edessa (Schl., pll. ii, 1 and i, 3–4, and Pl. 7, 23). All these Crusader issues fall between c. 1104 and

1112, so that a date before 1100 for many of the Byzantine issues, in whichever order they were struck, seems appropriate.

If the suggested sequence of issues is roughly correct, it is interesting to note that the finds recorded from Athens and Corinth end with Issue 9, which might be called the last of the early 'imperial' issues (before those with Saint Theodore) and could perhaps indicate a certain self-imposed isolation at Trebizond where contact and the accompanying flow of money was subsequently reduced.

To summarize, it seems probable that in view of the isolation of Trebizond after its recapture from the Turks, a mint was opened by Alexius soon after his accession, striking Issues 1–8 or 9 in the first ten years, followed perhaps by Issues 10–11 during the 1090s (their comparative commonness indicates a longer period of production than other issues), Issue 12 c. 1100, and Issues 13A and B c. 1105.

APPENDIX

BMC Vandals, etc., pl. XLII, 9

Although no doubt lying outside the reign of Alexius I, there remains one further issue in the series of cut flan coins to be touched upon, namely the type depicting a crude cross on each side (*BMC Vandals* pl. xlii, 9). These coins were definitely considered Trapezuntine by Sabatier who tantalizingly mentioned that they made up portions of two hoards that he had had in his hands, unfortunately without mentioning what the other types were. Inquiries of Madame Morriison and Mr. Kuršanskis have failed to reveal any further information.

No less than eight specimens were present in the Trebizond collection, and seven in the Konya group. (See the Table, where they are listed as Issue 14.) If Sabatier recognized the accompanying coins in his two hoards as Trapezuntine, it might be thought that they would certainly be post 1204 issues, but as we do not know the composition of the hoards, all is uncertain. They are totally unlike any other Trapezuntine coin, but there are two overstrikes which may help elucidate the type. The first (Pl. 7, 27), is overstruck on a coin of Tancred of Antioch—the type itself copied from the earlier Issue 10 of Trebizond. The \overline{XC} and right-hand arm of the cross on the reverse can just be observed. That Antiochene coins found their way to Trebizond can be seen from the Table. Specimens were found with Trapezuntine coins in the Trebizond collection and in the Konya and Trebizond acquisitions. All these types must still have been circulating to some extent for Salduk ibn Ali to have copied Issue 10 in mid century.

The second overstrike (Pl. 7, 28) is more problematical. On one side there is a bust of Christ, while on the other can be seen a border made up of large pellets, the arm of a jewelled cross extending to the border, and above, in the top left angle, a crude letter A or Λ . The only coin that this under type resembles seems to be Schl., pl. i, 17, and even here there are differences. The most notable is that on the Schlumberger coin the arm of the cross does not extend to the border of the coin. Schlumberger described the coin as barbarous and recorded a Syrian provenance. To the author it seems to be barbarous indeed, and to be a copy of Trebizond issue 13A. Thus the coin under discussion is Trapezuntine, and overstruck on two early-twelfth-century coins which probably circulated beyond the mid century. Could these crude coins perhaps have been struck by Constantine Gabras, who seems, during the period 1126–40, to have gained even more independence than Theodore Gabras had done?



BENDALL, TREBIZOND (1)



14



15



16



17



18



19



20



21



22



23



24



25



26



27



28



BENDALL, TREBIZOND (2)