

Alexios G. C. Savvides, *Οι Μεγάλοι Κομνηνοί της Τραπεζούντας και του Πόντου. Ιστορική επισκόπηση της Βυζαντινής Αυτοκρατορίας του μικρασιατικού Ελληνισμού, 1204-1461*, 3rd edn. Thessaloniki: Kyriakidis Editions, 2016. Pp. 412.
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The work under review is the third revised edition of Alexios Savvides' volume on Trebizond that first came out in 2005. The book is suitable for a range of audiences: the author states that it is aimed at the general reader who is keen to learn about Trebizond, but the book also contains extensive annotation allowing for scholarly exploration of the topic. The volume is useful as a textbook for students taking a course on Trebizond, or even for scholarly readers who are non-specialists in Trapezuntine studies. The latter have recently become spoilt for choice.

For a long time, William Miller's *Trebizond: The Last Greek Empire* (1926) has been the go-to English-language overview on Trebizond used by scholars working on neighbouring areas of study.¹ Nearly a century old, needless to say it is dated in terms of its bibliography and scholarly perspective. Another oft-cited study on Trebizond is Emile Janssens' *Trebizonde en Colchide* (1969), which - along with Miller's work - is indebted to the ideas expressed in Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer's *Geschichte des kaiserthums von Trapezunt* (1827) and merely updates it in terms of scholarship.² Anthony Bryer's *The Society and Institutions of the Empire of Trebizond* (1967) still constitutes an insightful introduction to Trapezuntine studies and has suffered little from the passage of time. As an unpublished doctoral thesis it is, however, inaccessible to most readers. Bryer's other seminal works, notably the *Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos*, constitute a milestone in Trapezuntine studies yet exceed the scope of the reader looking for a brief general introduction. Only in the last two decades has the need for an updated introduction to Trapezuntine history been addressed for the Greek and Russian readership.

In 1999, Vasileios Lymperopoulos published *Ο Βυζαντινός Πόντος*, which out of three recent introductory works is best suited for the general reader.³ Lymperopoulos' book covers a surprising variety of topics related to Trapezuntine history such as the life of Michael Panaretos or fourteenth-century factional rivalries. In 2007, Sergey Karpov's *История Трапезундской империи (Istoriya Trapezundskoi Imperii)* marked the apex of forty years of scholarship.⁴ This monumental monograph synthesises Karpov's arguments, the most recent research on Trebizond and both a chronological and thematic overview of the Trapezuntine period and has recently been translated into Greek.⁵ Savvides' work fits between those by Karpov and Lymperopoulos. The author promises an overview of the history of the Trapezuntine period and the various scholarly issues associated with it, such as the foundation of the Trapezuntine polity or its relationship with Constantinople. This is an ambitious task for 150 extensively annotated pages of text and therefore, as expected, the analysis does not engage in depth with the present scholarly debates in Trapezuntine studies. The volume provides a well-rounded and up-to-date overview of the history of the Trapezuntine polity. The reader should not expect novel theories about questions such as the relationship between the Trapezuntine and Constantinopolitan rulers or political ideology. The author's perspective on the various questions addressed could have been more strongly articulated in the main text of the monograph. Savvides has published significantly on various topics related to the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, such as prosopography, and although references to his original research are included in the annotations, his contribution to Trapezuntine studies merits a greater emphasis. The deeper exploration of this late medieval polity can be undertaken by the avid reader through the extensive footnotes, appendices and bibliography, which form a useful resource.

The main text is divided into three chapters that approach Trapezuntine history through a selection of conventional dates. Chapter 1 discusses the foundation and establishment of the

1 W. Miller, *Trebizond, the Last Greek Empire of the Byzantine Era, 1204-1461* (London 1926).

2 J. P. Fallmerayer, *Geschichte des Kaiserthums von Trapezunt* (Munich 1827); E. Janssens, *Trebizonde en Colchide* (Brussels 1969).

3 V. Ch. Lymperopoulos, *Ο Βυζαντινός Πόντος. Η Αυτοκρατορία της Τραπεζούντας (1204-1461), ο χώρος, οι άνθρωποι, η οικονομία* (Athens 1999).

4 S. P. Karpov, *История Трапезундской империи* (St Petersburg 2007).

5 S. P. Karpov, *Ιστορία της Αυτοκρατορίας της Τραπεζούντας*, E. Kritsefskagia and A. Eustathiou (trans.) (Athens, 2017)

Trapezuntine polity in 1204-1297. The second chapter focuses on the fourteenth century as a period of the uneasy preservation and temporary heyday of the polity, in 1297-1390. The final chapter addresses the 'seven decades of contest and diplomatic inconsistency' in 1390-1461 and the demise of Trapezuntine rule. These chapters are followed by useful appendices including a list of the rulers, a survey of Trapezuntine authors, the family of the Tzanichitai and the practice of Trapezuntine marriage alliances. Each of these topics could be addressed in a depth beyond the scope of the current work. The book contains extensive reproductions of historical sources, such as Fallmerayer's rendering of Panaretos' chronicle and colour plates of Trapezuntine coins and art. The reasons for the selection of this material are not explained in the main text nor do the reproductions contain references to their original publications. These additional materials would have worked better as textbook illustrations, in a more limited selection.

In addition to corrections of typographical errors, the additions to the third edition mainly consist of bibliographical additions, as was the case with the additions to the second edition. The emphasis on a Greek audience is evident in the forewords to the new editions and in the bibliographical notes, where literature published in Greece since the first edition are singled out. It would have been more useful for the author to include the significant number of international publications in Trapezuntine studies in the past decade, which has opportunely seen a surge of scholarly interest in the field.⁶

The book is written in elegant yet easily readable Greek. Its translation into any language in which undergraduate or Masters level courses on Trebizond are available would be justified.

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Tom Papademetriou, *Render unto the Sultan. Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries*. Oxford: OUP 2015. Pp. 272 + 9 illustrations
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In recent years the late Ottoman era has become an increasingly popular topic in research and fiction. Despite what might be called an Ottoman revival, the early Ottoman centuries have so far not attracted much attention. Thus Tom Papademetriou's *Render unto the Sultan* is a most welcome contribution to the growing body of research on Ottoman historiography and the Greek Orthodox communities in the Ottoman Empire.

Papademetriou's study proposes a new approach to interpreting the role of the Orthodox Church during the first centuries of Ottoman rule by consulting Ottoman sources such as tax registers in combination with the traditional Greek chronicles and Western travelogues that have hitherto formed the basis of central works of history by Runciman, Vakalopoulos and others whom he accuses of orientalism, anachronisms and ethnocentrism. Thus the famous agreement between Mehmet the Conqueror and Patriarch Gennadios Scholarios in 1454 has been mistakenly interpreted as a symbol of the Ottoman state's recognition of the Patriarch's role as community leader. According to Papademetriou, the sources that exist from the first centuries of

6 Some examples of recent publications include S. P. Karpov, 'Was Trebizond Really Captured by Uzun Hasan after 1461? New Archival Evidences', *Byzantina Mediterranea: Festschrift für Johannes Koder zum 65. Geburtstag* (Vienna 2007) 295-302; G. Peers, 'Art and Identity in an Amulet Roll from Fourteenth-Century Trebizond', *Church History and Religious Culture* 89 (1) (2009) 153-781; P. Melichar, 'Sins of Female Founders in Late Byzantium and Trebizond', *Wiener Jahrbuch Für Kunstgeschichte* 60 (2012) 409-16; A. Alexakis and G. Mavromatis, 'Eleven Documents from the Acta of the Monastery of St. John the Forerunner of Vazelon in Trebizond', *Myriobiblos. Essays on Byzantine Literature and Culture* (Berlin; Boston 2015) 1-24; A. Tzavara, 'Conflicts, Caravans and Silk: Some Aspects of the Venetian Presence in Trebizond (1371-1376)', *Union in Separation. Diasporic Groups and Identities in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Rome 2015) 287-310; A. Eastmond (ed.), *Byzantium's Other Empire: Trebizond* (Istanbul 2016); R. Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks, 1204-1461* (Leiden 2016).