



Summary :

Member of the dynasty of the Grand Komnenoi and emperor of Trebizond. Born in 1283. In 1297 he succeeded his father John II to the throne of Trebizond and remained emperor until his death (1330). He is also known as Alexios Palaiologos and Alexios Komnenos.

Other Names

Alexios Palaiologos, Alexios Komnenos

Date and Place of Birth

1283, Trebizond

Date and Place of Death

May 3, 1330, Trebizond

Main Role

Emperor of Trebizond (1297-1330)

1. Biography

Alexios II Grand Komnenos was born in [Trebizond](#) in 1283. He was the son of the emperor of Trebizond, [John II Grand Komnenos](#) (1280-1285/1287-1297) and [Eudokia Palaiologina](#), daughter of the Byzantine Emperor [Michael VIII Palaiologos](#) (1261-1282); he was also brother of the future emperor of Trebizond, [Michael Grand Komnenos](#) (1344-1349). In 1301¹ he married Pekai, daughter of Bekha Jaqeli, ruler of Samtskhe, a subject of the king of Iberia (Georgia), and had three children, [Eudokia Grand Komnene](#) and the future Emperors [Andronikos III Grand Komnenos](#) (1330-1332) and [Basil Grand Komnenos](#) (1332-1340). He also had two children, Michael and the future empress, [Anna Anachoutlou](#) (1341-1342), from his second marriage to the daughter of Anachoutlou, ruler of the [Laz](#). Finally, from his third marriage with the otherwise unknown Sargale he had one son, George Achpougas. In 1297 he succeeded his father John II to the throne of Trebizond. He died on 3 May 1330, while the funeral oration composed in his honour by [Constantine Loukites](#) has been preserved.

2. Reign

2.1. Policy concerning his allies

In 1297, Alexios II Grand Komnenos succeeded his father to the throne. His mother Eudokia and his youngest brother Michael were sent to [Constantinople](#), while Alexios himself was placed under the regency of his uncle, the Byzantine Emperor [Andronikos II Palaiologos](#) (1282-1328). Andronikos' policy was to separate Alexios from his mother and marry him to Irene, daughter of the [epi tou kanikleiou](#) Nikephoros Choumnos. Alexios, however, in an effort to avoid internal troubles in Trebizond, refused this proposal and married Pekai.²

2.2. Policy toward his enemies

During his reign, Alexios II Grand Komnenos (1297-1330) successfully challenged the [Turcomans](#), who had occupied the area of Chalybia and the city of [Cerasous](#); later on he also confronted the [Genoese](#). In September 1301³ he won an important battle against the Turcomans in the environs of Cerasous, where their leader Koustogannes was captured. After this battle he did not remain idle, decisively organising the area's defence. He also confronted the [Genoese merchants](#), who after establishing their first colony around 1250, in the area of [Kaffa](#) in Taurike, they aimed to gain a monopoly in the transit trade of [Pontos](#). Alexios remained firm toward the Genoese demands in 1306 for relief from custom duties and did not back down, despite their importance for the trading activity in the area and their threats to depart from the Empire of Trebizond. This discord between the two parties resulted in the destruction of the



Genoese warehouses in Trebizond and their temporary submission to the emperor. However, soon afterwards, open war broke out. The Genoese were dominant in the sea and forced Alexios to sign a peace treaty in 1314, and to issue several privileges for them in 1316. In 1319 he also gave privileges to the [Venetians](#).

2.3. Internal affairs

Alexios II Grand Komnenos greatly contributed in the strengthening of the defence of Trebizond. He established the lower city of Trebizond, extended the [walls](#) until they reached the sea, and he reconstructed and strengthened the fortifications. His work on this aspect is commemorated in reliefs and inscriptions from a rectangular tower he built in the western wall. In addition, he introduced a night guard corps, called the *nyktolalioi*, while he also reorganised the army and the navy. Alexios was also the benefactor of the monasteries of [Panagia Soumela](#) and [St Eugenios](#), where he is also depicted. He is also considered responsible for the renewal of the [cult of St Eugenios](#) and the establishment of a [feast](#) in the saint's honour on 24 June, which he organised as part of his economic policy.⁴

During his reign, the Empire of Trebizond was at its peak: Alexios II Grand Komnenos was a patron of art and science, especially [astronomy](#) and mathematics, and he was surrounded by a court of intellectuals, who taught in the [schools](#) of the monasteries of [St Sophia](#) and St Eugenios: the priest Manuel, the [protovestiaros](#) Constantine Loukites and the monk [Gregory Chioniades](#), who was assigned with composing the hymn of the 24th of June feast in honour of St Eugenios' birthday. This great surge of power in the Empire during his reign had been commemorated by the metropolitan [Joseph Lazaropoulos](#) in his *encomium* to the emperor, which was part of his homily for the birthday of St Eugenios.⁵

2.4. Ecclesiastical policy

During the reign of Alexios II Grand Komnenos the relations of the [Church of Trebizond](#) with the [Patriarchate of Constantinople](#) were generally good and the two hierarchs collaborated well. In 1317 the Patriarch asked Alexios to allow the newly-elected [Metropolis of Amaseia](#) Kallistos to live and guide his flock from Limnia, until he could be allowed to return to his seat, which was under Muslim rule.

As for Trebizond's relations with the Roman Catholic Church, it is worth mentioning that in 1329, Pope John XXII (1316-1334) tried to accost Alexios, with plans to control the Church of Trebizond. In a letter to Alexios he expressed to his 'highness the Emperor of Trebizond' the desire to unite the Church of Trebizond and the Roman Catholic Church, under the latter's control. Alexios II Grand Komnenos never replied to the pope and the matter was laid to rest.

1. The editors of the *Εγκυκλοπαιδικό Προσωπογραφικό Λεξικό Βυζαντινής Ιστορίας και Πολιτισμού* 1 (Athens 1996) place the marriage of Emperor Alexios II Grand Komnenos to the Iberian princes in 1300. See Νικολούδης, Ν., «Αλέξιος Β' Μέγας Κομνηνός», *Εγκυκλοπαιδικό Προσωπογραφικό Λεξικό Βυζαντινής Ιστορίας και Πολιτισμού* 1 (Athens 1996), p. 244.

2. When Andronikos II Palaiologos found out about his nephew's wedding, he turned to the Church and asked the patriarch and the synod to consider the marriage invalid, on the grounds that Alexios' regent had not consent; his demand was rejected by the Church. See Miller, W., *Trebizond. The Last Greek Empire* (London 1926), pp. 32-33.

3. The editors of the *Εγκυκλοπαιδεία του Ποντιακού Ελληνισμού* place the capture of Cerasous by Alexios II Grand Komnenos in 1302. See Γεωργιάδης, Θ. (ed.), *Εγκυκλοπαιδεία του Ποντιακού Ελληνισμού. Ο Πόντος. Ιστορία, Λαογραφία και Πολιτισμός* 1 (Thessaloniki 1991), p. 122.

4. Bryer, A.A.M. – Winfield, D., *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos* I (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 20, Washington DC 1985), p. 168.

5. J.Ph. Fallmerayer and I. Papadopoulos believe that the *enkomion* by the metropolitan Joseph Lazaropoulos refers to Alexios III Grand Komnenos. Fallmerayer, J.Ph., "Original-Fragmente, Chroniken, Inschriften und anderes Materiale zur Geschichte der Kaisertum Trapezunt", *Abhandlungen der historischen Classe der K. Bayerischen Akademie* 1 Abth. (München 1843-1847), p. 35- Παπαδόπουλος, Ι., *Γρηγορίου Χωνιάδου του Αστρονόμου*



επιστολαί (Thessaloniki 1929), pp. 10-11.

Bibliography :

	Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D. , <i>The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos, 1 (With Maps and Plans by R. Anderson and Drawings by J. Winfield)</i> , Washington D.C. 1985, <i>Dumbarton Oaks Studies</i> 20
	Hendy M.F. , <i>Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300-1450</i> , Cambridge Mass. 1985
	Miller W. , <i>Trebizond. The Last Greek Empire of the Byzantine Era, 1204-1461</i> , London 1926
	Γεωργιάδης Θ. (επιμ.) , <i>Εγκυκλοπαίδεια του Ποντιακού Ελληνισμού. Ο Πόντος. Ιστορία, Λαογραφία και Πολιτισμός, 1</i> , Θεσσαλονίκη 1991
	Talbot A.M. , "Alexios II Komnenos", A. Kazhdan, <i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium 1</i> , Oxford, New York 1991, 64
	"Κομνηνός Αλέξιος II Παλαιολόγος", E. Trapp, H. Beyer, I. Leontiades, <i>Prosopographisches Lexicon der Palaiologenzeit, 5</i> , Wien 1981, 224
	Νικολούδης Ν. , "Αλέξιος Β' Μέγας Κομνηνός", <i>Εγκυκλοπαιδικό Προσωπογραφικό Λεξικό Βυζαντινής Ιστορίας και Πολιτισμού, 1</i> , Αθήνα 1996, 243-244

Webliography :

	EMPIRE of TREBIZOND. John II, with Alexius II. 1280-1297 http://www.coinarchives.com/a/lotviewer.php?LotID=75907&AucID=80&Lot=1824
--	---

Glossary :

	epi tou kanikleiou An imperial official who closely collaborated with the emperor, head of the imperial chancery, in charge of controlling all imperial documents before and after they were signed. The holder of the office played an important role in the imperial court, as well as in the administration.
	Laz Ethnic group of the south-eastern shores of the Black Sea. Their language belongs to the South Caucasian Language group. Most of the Laz live in Turkey, while some live in Georgia.
	protovestiaris (and protovestiarites) Honorific title given to high-ranking officials and future emperors during this period. The protovestiaris was originally responsible for the imperial wardrobe, but in the 9th-11th centuries the holders of the title could command an army or conduct negotiations with foreign states.

Sources

Nicephoros Gregoras, *Historia Romana*, Bekker, I. – Schopen, L. (ed.), *Nicephori Gregorae, Historiae Byzantinae 1 (Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1830)*.

Vita of St. Eugenios, Rosenquist J.O. (ed.), "The Hagiographical Dossier of St. Eugenios of Trebizond in Codex Athous Dionysiou 154. A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Commentary and Indexes", *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis* 3 (Uppsala 1996).



Lampsides, O. (ed.), «Μιχαήλ του Παναρέτου περί των Μεγάλων Κομνηνών», *Αρχαίον Πόντου* 22 (1958), pp. 1-124.

Chronological Table

1283: Birth of Alexios II Grand Komnenos in Trebizond.

1297: Alexios II rises to the throne of Trebizond.

1301: First marriage of Alexios II to Pekai, daughter of Bekha Jaqeli.

After 1301: Second marriage of Alexios II to the daughter of Anachoutlou, ruler of the Lazoi.

After 1301: Third marriage of Alexios II to Sargale.

1314: Alexios II signs a peace treaty with the Genoese.

1316: Alexios II accords commercial privileges to the Genoese.

1319: Alexios II accords commercial privileges to the Venetians.

1329: Letter from Pope John XXII to Alexios II proposing the union of the Church of Trebizond and the Roman Catholic Church, under the latter's control.

3 May 1330: Death of Alexios II Grand Komnenos in Trebizond. Rise to the throne of Andronikos III Grand Komnenos.

Auxiliary Catalogs

List of the emperors of Trebizond

Alexios I (1204 -1222)

Andronikos I (Gidon) (1222 - 1235)

John I (Axouchos) (1235 -1238)

Manuel II (1238 -1263)

Andronikos II (1263 -1266)

George (Planos) (1266 - 1280)

John II (1280 -1285)

Theodora (1285)

John II (again 1285 - 1297)

Alexios II (1297 -1230)

Andronikos III (1330 -1332)



Manuel II (1332)

Basil (1332 -1340)

Eirene Palaiologina (1340 - 1341)

Anna (Anachoutlou) (1341-1342)

John III (1342-1344)

Michael (1344 -1349)

Alexios III (1349 - 1390)

Manuel III (1390 -1417)

Alexios IV (1417 - 1429)

John IV (1429 - 1458)

Alexios V (1458)

David (1458-1461)