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## Summary :

The bandon of Trebizond was an administrative division covering a small area around Trebizond. Due to its key position, the most important events of its history are connected with the historical fate of the city and the Empire of Trebizond. It is reported on a chrysobull of Alexios III Grand Komnenos (1386). It is not certain whether that late reference corresponds to a pre-existing division of the theme of Chaldia in the Middle Byzantine period.

## Geographical Location

northern (central) Turkey (northeastern Asia Minor)

## Historical Region

Pontos Polemoniakos

## Administrative Dependence

theme of Chaldia (?) – Empire of Trebizond

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### 1. General about the Bandon

The word bandon (plural: banda) originally meant flags, the banners of military units.[1] It then indicated a part of the tourma and a small military unit (50-100 people in case of a mountain troops and 200-400 in case of infantry). It also denoted the region the unit had undertaken to protect, and that is how the word came to mean the smallest administrative division of a theme.[2] Although the rest of the Byzantine themes disintegrated and actually disappeared from the years of the Angelos dynasty, the terms theme and bandon survived in the Empire of Trebizond indicating the administrative territory.[3]

### 2. The Bandon of Trebizond

The specific bandon of Trebizond is reported on a chrysobull (of 1386) issued by Emperor Alexios III Grand Komnenos, which granted privileges to the Vazelon Monastery.[4] Among others, the document reports that the pinkernes (ἐ πικέ ρνιος) Georgios Simates was present and signed in the capacity of doukas and kephale of the bandon: ‘the doukas and kephale of the entire bandon of Trebizond and epikernios Georgios Simates’.[5] In earlier times, the metropolitan of Trebizond, Chrysanthos, had reported that the bandon of Trebizond was one of the banda of the theme of Chaldia and occupied an area equal to the area of the sancak of Trabzon.[6] However, his source of information remains unknown and it should be noted that the bandon is not reported in the Middle Byzantine period. Taking into account that the contemporary administrative divisions of the prefecture of Trebizond –due to the geomorphology of the region– are generally based on the banda of the Empire of Trebizond, the lack of evidence concerning the Middle Byzantine years does not mean that we should exclude the possibility of the the bandon preexisting in the Middle Byzantine theme of Chaldia.[7] As for the size, according to Bryer – Winfield, who recently estimated the area –as the boundaries are not accurately defined by the sources–, the bandon occupied the area around the city of Trebizond, while to the west and southwest it bordered the bandon of Trikomia (from the monastery of St. Barbara, little outside Trebizond, as far as Kitharaina –modern Kisarna). To the east the Pyxites River was the natural border with the bandon of Gemora (Yomra). Finally, the bandon of Matzouka extended to the south.[8] The most important city was Trebizond, which gave its name to the territory, while the history of the bandon is indissolubly connected with the history of the city of Trebizond and the surrounding area. The institution of the bandon dates to the years of Alexios III Grand Komnenos (1349-1390), when the Empire of the Grand Komnenoi reached its heyday, despite the adverse conditions that prevailed almost throughout their reign due to invasions of Turkish tribes,[9] revolts and conspiracies of the nobles of the area and the problems with the communities of Venetian and Genoese merchants.[10]

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5. Trapp, E. (ed.), *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*, vol. 10 (Wien 1900) no. 25350, entry 'Georgios Simates.

6. See Chrysanthos, metropolitan of Trebizond, 'Η Εκκλησία Τραπεζούντος', *Αρχείον Πόντου* 4-5 (1933), pp. 52, 79. The particular sancak included the regions of Trebizond, Kerasounta and Kotyora (Urdu): Bryer, A.A.M. – Winfield, D., *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos*, I, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection (Washington D.C. 1985), p. 3. It should be noted that the exact meaning of the word sancak in Turkish is 'flag' and renders the term bandon: Κυριακίδης, Σ., 'Βυζαντιναί Μελέται V', *Σύμμεικτα, Επιστημονική Επετηρίς Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης* 3 (1939), p. 538.

7. Bryer, A.A.M., 'Rural Society in Matzouka', in Bryer, A.A.M. – Lowry, H. (ed.), *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society* (Birmingham-Washington D.C. 1986), p. 53; Bryer, A.A.M., 'The Estates of the Empire of Trebizond', *Αρχείον Πόντου* 35 (1979), p. 428.

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## Glossary :

**chrysobull**

(gold seal) Imperial document of the Byzantine state which was so named because it bore the gold seal of the emperor.

**kephale, kephalatikevon**

A term denoting the highest official of the Late Byzantine provincial administration. From the mid-13th century on, the office of the kephale gradually substituted that of the doukas. From the 14th century on, the kephale was political and military head of the *kapetanikion*, an administrative division smaller than a theme, or of the castle. In the Empire of Trebizond the officer was also called kephalatikevon.

**pinkernes**

[also pikernes or epikernes, possibly from the Latin pincerna, a word deriving from the greek verb *epikerannymi*, meaning to mix (wine)]). Cup-bearer of the palace. Official at the personal service of the emperor. In the Late Byzantine years, the pinkernes was a very honorary title, while in the 14th century it was awarded to very important figures, such as Alexios Philanthropenos.

**tourma**

(lat. *turma*, meaning squadron) Administrative division of a theme in the Middle Byzantine period. A tourma was further subdivised into *droungoi* and *banda*.

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The Chronicle of Michael Panaretos *"Περὶ τῶν τῆς Τραπεζοῦντος βασιλέων, τῶν μεγάλων Κομνηνῶν, ὅπως καὶ πότε καὶ πόσον ἕκαστος ἐβασιέλευσε" ("On the Kings of Trebizond and of when and for how long has each of them reigned")*, ed. Λαμψίδης Ο., «Μιχαήλ του Παναρέτου,

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## Quotations

Reference to the bandon of Trebizond in the chrysobull of Alexios III Grand Komnenos, in 1386:

ἦσαν δὲ συμπαρόντες καὶ οἱ δούκιδες καὶ κριταὶ τῆς θεοσώστου καὶ θεοσυντηρήτου πόλεως Τραπεζοῦντος.
ὁ μέγας κοντόσταυλος καὶ κεφαλὴ τοῦ ὅλου βάνδους Ματζουκάων Κωνσταντῖνος ὁ Τζανιχίτης.
καὶ ὁ τατᾶς τῆς βασιλικῆς αὐλῆς Θεόδωρος ὁ Εὐνοῦχος
[59 ]|ὁ δοὺξ καὶ κεφαλὴ τοῦ ὅλου βάνδ(ους) Τραπεζοῦντος καὶ ἐπικέρνιος Γεώργιος ὁ Σιμά(της)
ὁ μέγας σκευοφύλαξ Κωνσταντῖνος ὁ Λαζαρόπουλος.

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