



Fig. 1.

I may add that there exists an important variety, represented in my collection by two specimens, of which I also enclose illustrations, *Figs. 2 and 3*. These pieces show many differences: the Christ does not lift His right hand; there is no decoration in the fields, on the sides of His throne; the Virgin holds the infant Saviour on her knees, not on her left arm; the two B's are missing; both figures are surrounded by two borders of dots instead of one; the style is less rude. Their size is mm. 22; the weight respectively grammes 1.80 and 2.



Fig. 2.

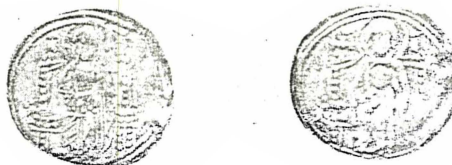


Fig. 3.

NEW BYZANTINE COIN.

By T. BERTELÈ.

I have read with interest the short notice on "A new Byzantine coin" published by M. Elagin in the November issue of the "Numismatic Circular." May I point out that it is not a new coin but a new specimen of a rare coin?

The same type was published, apparently for the first time, by Prof. S. Ljubic, in 1875, in his well known work on the Jugoslav coins (p. 27, n. 5; Pl. III, n. 11): he has placed it among the uncertain pieces of the Bulgarian series.

In 1881, the same type was published by Baron de Koehne in the "Revue Belge de Numismatique" (p. 345, n. 12; Pl. XV, n. 13). He gave it to Andronicus IV Palaeologus but adding (without mentioning Ljubic): "Cependant, la monnaie diffère du type byzantin. Peut-être appartient-elle à un roi de Bulgarie du milieu du XIVe siècle?"

In 1925, Prof. G. Castellani published again the same type in his catalogue of the Papadopoli collection (vol. II, p. 236, n. 16058; Pl. XII), but included it among the anonymous pieces of the Gattilusios, lords of Mytilene. Its size was mm. 22 and the weight grammes 1.96.

Many years ago I saw a similar specimen (with overstruck rev.) in a private collection in Constantinople; from the illustration, *Fig. 1* (which I had then taken) it may be noticed that the two B's on the sides of the throne of the Virgin are here replaced by one B (reversed, on the left) and K (on the right). Its size was mm. 22 and the weight grammes 1.74.

These types belong to the category of the so-called anonymous religious coins, well known in the Byzantine series and which lasted down to the period of the Palaeologi (I have a bronze coin, small and concave, showing on one side the Virgin, turned to the right of the observer, with lifted hands, and on the other the monogram of the Palaeologi); they are clearly related and probably contemporary; they may be Byzantine and (on account of the weight) belong preferably to the beginning of the XIV century. It is difficult, I believe, to go further. Only the accumulated evidence of many pieces and of their origin may lead us, perhaps, to a more precise conclusion. Herein lays the value of the notice contributed to the "Numismatic Circular" by M. Elagin, who has added another piece to the few already known.

One thing, however, seems certain to me: these coins cannot belong to Constantine XI, the last emperor of Byzantium. The assumption (which goes back to de Saulcy) that we ought to expect only anonymous coins (if any) of this emperor because he was not crowned in Constantinople and is supposed not to have taken the title of emperor, is highly misleading. We do not want to go here into the general question of the importance and significance—juridical and political—of the ceremony of the coronation of the Byzantine emperors by the hand of the Patriarch, nor into the particular question of the coronation of Constantine XI: these subjects have been discussed at length by Byzantine scholars in recent years. Suffice it to recall that in his documents and seals Constantine XI assumes the full titles of *basileus* and *autokrator* (see

references in the "Byzantinische Zeitschrift," 1939, vol. 39, p. 202) : therefore the same titles may well appear on his coins—or the usual title of *despotēs*.

Moreover, after the important monetary reform which has produced the well known heavy pieces, of quite a new type, belonging to Manuel II and John VIII, we ought to expect a similar type also for the coins of Constantine XI. That these coins have not yet come to light may be due merely to chance : for nearly six centuries the coins of Anna of Savoy and her son have remained unknown ; no coin has yet been published of John and Matthew Cantacuzenus ; and we have yet practically no coins for a very long period (1355-91) of the reign of John V. Let us hope that sooner or later these grievous gaps may be filled through the finding of hidden hoards or a better examination of the coins buried in existing collections.

Meanwhile, a not very clever forger (of ancient or modern times) has taken care to provide us with at least one coin of Constantine XI, as will appear from the attached illustration,



Fig. 4.

Fig. 4, taken from a cast sent to me years ago by a friend. The inscription reads : *KONCTANTN ΔCΠ (=despotēs) O ΠΑΛΑΕΟΛ*, and ought, therefore, to refer to the last Constantine. The general style, some at least of the letters of the legend (for inst. *A*), the form of the crown of the emperor, the forked beard of Christ, etc., do not correspond to the time of the Palaeologi. The piece might rather be modelled (although not quite faithfully) on some silver coins of the Serbian king Stephen Dusan.

* * *