
Giorgio Rota
In 1896 an Ottoman embassy left Constantinople to take part in the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the reign of Nāṣero’d-Dīn Šāh. They arrived in time to congratulate his successor for his accession to the throne and to offer their condolences for the death of the murdered Shah. The Author presents a short biography of the mission chief, Mehmed Tahir Münif Pasha, who however was not the author of the report submitted to the Sultan, since he stayed on in Tehran as the permanent Ottoman ambassador. The account itself describes both Tehran and Iranian politics of the time. The Qajar capital “from a distance appeared as a forest” owing to the great number of trees (p. 430). As for the political situation, the Ottoman Empire was witnessing the rise of the “Armenian question”, and the Ottoman envoys to Tehran did not fail to notice the presence at the Qajar court of Armenian exiles wanted by the Ottoman authorities. Later, in his turn, the Sultan would shelter Jámmāl’Dīn al-Afgānī, wanted in relation to the murder of the Shah. The Author detects a “tone of superiority” (p. 429) in the report: on the whole, Iran is portrayed as less developed than the Ottoman Empire. As far as politics is concerned,
and although Qajar-Ottoman relations at the time can be probably described as friendly, the author of the report regarded the Iranians (probably also on account of their stance on the Armenian problem) as “very much exaggerators and capricious and deceivers, as is their fame, [and] it is very difficult to trust them” (pp. 438-439).

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Thèmes : 4.2.1. Safavides et Qâjârs

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