Manana Gabachvili. *Politique de la reine Tamar envers la Perse et l'Occident*

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Manana Gabachvili. « Politique de la reine Tamar envers la Perse et l'Occident », in : Florence Hellot-Bellier and Irène Natchkebia, eds., *La Géorgie entre Perse et Europe*. Paris, L'Harmattan, 2009, p. 19-35.

- 1 Very few people now know that the kingdom of Georgia used to be a great regional power during the period between the fall of the Great Seljuks and the first Mongol invasions, in particular during the reign of Queen Tamar (1184-1210 or 1213). Gabachvili sees a close connection between the founding of the Empire of Trebizond in 1204 with the active support of Tamar (the first emperor's aunt) and the Georgian invasion of Azerbaijan in 1210. The author rightly states that the latter campaign, if seen alone, seems little more than a pillaging raid but that its real meaning is to be found in the international context and Georgia's foreign policy (p. 24). For Gabachvili, the idea of invading northwestern Persia dated back at least to the great Georgian victory over the Ildegozids at Šamkori (1195); and it was later abetted by the political fragmentation in northern Persia – this is quite plausible. Accordingly, the raid that brought Georgian troops as far as Qazvin was just a show of force, the real aim being control of the route between Trebizond and Tabriz, a major highway for trade that would become increasingly important during the subsequent Ilkhanid period. Georgia reached the height of its political and military power, and experienced a golden age in its literature and arts. The Mongol invasion would soon put an end to the country's ambitious plans.

- 2 Although this contribution describes in brief but quite well Georgia's strategically understandable attempt to establish itself as the dominant power in this region (the Black Sea basin, the southern Caucasus and northwestern Persia), it is not free of flaws. The author could have been more generous with footnotes and bibliographical references, especially for episodes such as the planned Georgian campaign against Baghdad or a hypothetical Georgian "march to the Mediterranean Sea" (p. 32-33). Taking both for granted, Gabachvili provides few references for the first and none for the second. Given the importance of the historical context for improving our understanding of events, we cannot help remarking that the Fourth Crusade, the fall of Constantinople (1204) and the Rom Seljuks are never mentioned, and that *Rokn ed-Din* (Rokno'd-Din Suleymān II, 1196-1204) is mentioned once (p. 27), namely his defeat at the battle of Basiani (1202) whereas some unnamed "Turks" appear several times. This article would have benefitted from proper editing. Apart from points of style and terminology that cannot be listed here, *Tamariani* and *Abdulmesiani* are, for example, not two historians but the titles of works by the poets Čaxruxadze and Ioane Šavteli, who were mentioned somewhat earlier in the text (p. 29); the *Ouzbeks Atabeg* of Azerbaijan are simply the Ildegozid *atābeyg* Moẓaffaro'd-Din Uzbek (1210-1225) (p. 33). Finally, one wonders why the *Cheybanides* are mentioned in relation to Azerbaijan (p. 31).
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