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REFERENCES


The Russian annexation of Georgia and subsequent modernization of the country took advantage of, and reinforced, Tbilisi’s traditional role as a commercial hub between Persia, Europe and Russia. Majdūd’s-Saltānāt visited Tbilisi in 1894, and settled there in 1903. In 1894, he wrote a thorough description of the city (of which only a Georgian translation seems to have been published) that tells about the local Persian general consulate and the contribution of the thousands of Persian emigrants to the economy of the Georgian capital, illegal activities included (In this respect, this contribution is a companion piece to the one by Hellot-Bellier) [cf. c.r. n°241]. Majdūd’s-Saltānāt expressed admiration for the Georgians and their achievements, and was impressed by modernity as he saw it in Tbilisi, and he criticized the backwardness of his own country. The second author discussed herein, Yahyā Dowlatābādī, described the city in a chapter of his memoirs (Ḥāyat-e Yahyā). Focusing on the activities of the Persian mojāheds during the Constitutional Revolution, he mentioned the support provided by the Georgians and Armenians. He also noted both the political indifference of most of the local Persian community and Tbilisi’s importance as a base for Persian liberals. Ter-Oganov concludes that these two descriptions “complete each other perfectly” (p. 272) and portray in detail Tbilisi and its place in the social, economic, political and cultural life of Persia at the turn of the 20th century.

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