

ANTONY EASTMOND: *Royal imagery in Medieval Georgia*. xx, 268 pp. (incl. 20 colour plates, 85 b/w photographs, map of early 13th century Georgia, 2 royal genealogies, 3 appendixes, references, index). Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press. 1998.

The book describes and offers an explanation for the nature of the surviving, or at least recorded, representations mostly in ecclesiastical sculpture or painting but also on coins of members of the Georgian Bagratid (Bagrat'ioni) dynasty from the first such attested, King Ashot' II (891-918) of T'ao province (now in Turkey), through to Queen Tamar (1184-1213), incorporating in this last discussion her son Giorgi IV Lasha (1213-1223). The result is as gripping as any detective-story, and if not exactly seeking to reveal 'Who done it?', Eastmond keeps readers enthralled with his attempts to answer the why and wherefore of it all.

Part 1 deals with the monuments and is itself divided into accounts of royal imagery before the unification of Georgia (888-1008; pp. 9-40), whilst the unified period is split into pre-Tamar (1008-1184; pp. 41-92) and the reign of Tamar herself (1184-1213; pp. 93-196). Part 2 then deals with (i) the themes of the functions of royal imagery (pp. 187-204) and (ii) the patronage and creation thereof (pp. 205-16). The short conclusion (pp. 219-200) is followed by three appendixes: I is entitled 'Royal imagery before 1050 (pp. 221-34), II is 'The dating and identification of the donor portraits in the Sioni church at At'eni' (pp. 235-7), whilst III presents the text and translation of the mid-13th century description of 'The rule and order for the blessing of kings' (pp. 239-44). Published in America, US spelling is followed throughout. Where relevant, parallels are drawn from Byzantium, Serbia and occasionally even further afield.

Such questions are addressed as the nature and significance of: the dress (Byzantine vs Georgian) of the royals; the membership of the family-groupings; their placement (viz. on the north wall); their association with biblical scenes/personages, saints and private donors; the relationship between sovereign depicted and sponsor of the church/decoration where the latter was not the sovereign in question; the changes to the representation of Queen Tamar in her five extant contemporary images from the earliest at Vardzia to the last at Bertubani. Only at Bertubani is Tamar not preceded by her father, Giorgi III. Though this has led some to suggest that the painting was effected after her death, Eastmond argues that, whilst she may initially have needed to be portrayed in the company of males (her father, her son, or, as at Natlismcemeli, her second husband, the Ossete Davit Soslan) to buttress a perceived weakness in her feminine gender, she eventually so established her position as the head of a universally flourishing state that towards the close of her reign she was strong enough to be depicted alone, herself legitimising the succession to Giorgi IV. Problems with the image at Betania (e.g. lack of haloes around the royal family) are ascribed to 19th century renovation. Regarding the much debated identity of the first person in the royal

scene at At'eni, Eastmond advances the persuasive hypothesis that this is Giorgi II, in priestly dress as he entered a monastery following unsuccessful military activities to enable his young son, Davit IV the Builder (1089-1125), to assume the crown and carry out his destiny of defeating the Turks and expelling the Arab emirate from Tbilisi. The extent of the responsibility of Demet're I (1125-1154) for completing his father's building/decoration of the magnificent Gelati monastery is analysed, as is the scene of Demet're's own coronation in a typically tiny and remote but sumptuously decorated Svanetian church (Macxvarishi) at Lat'ali. The importance of local elements is plain to see here -- St. Demetrios (playing on the king's name), local dignitary K'virik'e, and the saints Katherine and Barbara figure prominently. Vera Bardavidze postulated in the 1940s that the New Year celebrations in Svaneti might have begun on St. Barbara's day (4th Dec), which would explain her importance here, a point that might have merited a mention.

In general Eastmond believes that, whilst there was nothing approaching a centralised Ministry of Propaganda, royal imagery will have played an important role in presenting an appropriate view of the royal family to the population at large -- surviving images in churches, on coins or in manuscript-illuminations will form but a part of what will have been available at the time across a range of public venues. The need to appeal to non-Kartvelians as the extension of borders took in a variety of peoples will account for such features as use of Arabic on coins and the incorporation of oriental titles (Sharvanshah, Shahanshah, Atabeg) in the list of the sovereign's powers. Whilst the royal family will not necessarily have controlled the way they were depicted, those commissioning the designs will probably have known what was felt appropriate via links with the itinerant court and central administration.

All criticisms are minor. As observed on p. 39, 'The unification [of the mediæval Georgian kingdom] was first marked in 978, when Bagrat' III, who was heir to King Gurgen of Kartli, inherited Abxazeti from his mother, Queen Guranduxt' -- the sculpted images of Guranduxt' and her brother King Leon III are depicted on the K'umurdo church in Dzhavaxeti (Figs. 24, 25) and, as stated on p. 232, K'umurdo 'provides the only evidence of the royal imagery of the kings of Abxazeti'. Since the relationship of the Abkhazian Kingdom (8th-10th centuries) to the history of Georgia has become extremely sensitive in connection with the ongoing Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, it is a pity to find (p. 6) the statement that during this historical period 'the Anchabadze family ruled in Abxazeti' (cf. also p. 12). Though Abkhazia's then-rulers are not normally referred to by surname, it has been suggested that their family-name was Achba, which is what should have appeared here. Whilst the Georgian equivalent happens to be Anchabadze, to quote only this Georgian version without elucidation might be interpreted as implying that the rulers were ethnically Georgian rather than native Abkhazians. In the centuries between the Mongols, which caused the unified

mediæval kingdom to disintegrate into separate kingdoms or princedoms (of which Abkhazia was one) and the abolition of home-rule by Russia in 1864 independent Abkhazia's ruling dynasty had the surname Chachba. But neither does it follow that this family was ethnically Georgian just because the Georgian form of Chachba is Shervashidze; equally impermissible would be the proposition that, because the Mingrelian equivalent is Sharashia, they were ethnically Mingrelian.

Whilst there are just a handful of technical slips in the English text, some inexactnesses creep into the transliterations of Georgian. Indeed, there are two errors in the representation of the Georgian alphabet on p. xv: the 3rd item down column 2 should be *k'* (the printed character lacks the glottalising apostrophe) and the final item in column 4 should read *q* (instead of *x*). The glottalising apostrophe is occasionally omitted elsewhere (e.g. on p. xiii we need *Nik'o...K'alandadze*), and sometimes it appears where it should not (e.g. the root *k't'it'or-* 'donor', which should passim read *kt'it'or-*). The frequently cited chronicle I would translate (cf. comment on p. 109) as 'Life of Tamar, sovereign of sovereigns' should end in *Tamarisi* (as correctly given on p. 245), though everywhere else it appears as *Tamarisa*.

All remaining quibbles concern the interpretation of inscriptions, in the reproduction of all of which erased letters or abbreviated words that have been reconstructed should have been indicated in the standard ways. On p. 66 read 'in the reign of Marcian' (not 'before the emperor Marcian'); on p. 74 I would translate 'took great trouble in painting the superstructure of this church' (not '..trouble organizing the painting of this church'); on p. 110 add the two marked words '..offering of me your servant...on the Great Day of Judgment' -- the omission of the 1st person pronoun in this translation leads to the slip on p. 113 to the effect that the text is 'partly couched in the third person'; on p. 125 read 'first builder of this desert' (not 'monastery'); on p. 223 read 'I, Ashot', had the work carried out' (not 'I..carried out'); on p. 225 the second inscription is stated to follow W. Djobadze's reconstruction, which seems to require the translation 'Oh Jesus Christ, our kings built this holy church in 4005 days' (not 'Jesus Christ [help] our kings...the builders of this holy church at the Last Judgment'); in the third inscription the verb *მეოქმედებულნი* is either 'they were created' (for the more accurate *მეოქმედებულნი*) or 'they created X (for themselves)' rather than '[This] was created'; on p.227 the translation should be '..may our kings be exalted...; may God glorify them! They despatched our honourable, worthy Father Stepane to Trebizond in Greece and consecrated him..'; on p. 228 read in translation 1 'I beseech all you entering' and in translation 2 '..salvation and remembrance of my soul...and I built it by the hand...'; on p. 229 the first inscription mistakenly copies the first three lines of the one starting the previous page, whereas we need a copy of the following inscription with change of king's name and title -- in the translations we need 'May God exalt them in both lives', for the verb-form clearly shews that the direct object is plural (referring to both kings

Bagrat' and Davit); in the third inscription the word მონანი seems to have dropped out (assuming the translation 'your humble slaves' to be correct); on p. 231 in the 4th line of the first inscription the expected form for the genitive-dative of 'Zviad' would have been ზუიადისასა, whilst the following verb should read დ(ა)იდვა; in the translation of the second inscription add the marked pronoun 'Remember me poor Giorgi'.

Corrigenda

p.xiii l.9: started life; l.7up: Nik'o...K'aladadze; p.xiv l.3: Xint'ibidze; l.11: as have the British; p.xviii l.16up: KC'K'; p.xix l.20: Arméniennes; p.3 l.1up: Centuries)"; p.5 l.10up & p.189 l.18up: Vaxt'ang; p.6 l.8up: Century)"; l.4up: K'ak'abadze; p.9 l.9: eristavt-eristavi; p.22 l.3up: rabotax v Ani; p.38 l.2up: masala; p.47 l.3up: წელნი; p.53 l.4: (?)Tornik'e; p.61 l.8up: Mart'vili; p.67 l.9up (and References): kt'it'oris gamosaxuleba; p.74 l.3up (& p.210): ვინცა ამ]ას...მამასახლისი იყო[ს]: კვამლისაგან... 'Whoever will be *mamasaxlisi* in this church: protect the painting from smoke so that it not be deprived of colour'; p.94 l.8: women's; p.96 l.16 *et passim*: Čaxruxadze; l.13up (and References): Nucubidze's book was published in Tbilisi; p.97 l.2up (and References): xelnac'erta; p.124 l.5up (and References): Again on the donor images of Natlismcemeli; p.127 ll.2&1up: the words should surely read ასული...ლაშა; p.175 l.15: a vulnerable; p.179 l.6up & p.211 ll.8up & 15up: T'imotesubani; p.194 l.4up (and References): k'ost'iumi; p.226 l.14up: წარუმართენ; in this text there are two instances of the 3rd person plural pronoun მათსა, which Eastmond translates in the singular (his soul...After him). Since the context seems to require a singular, perhaps the Georgian should be emended to მისსა; p.227 l.11: surely the inscription should read აღარნასე კურაპალატი; l.15: again surely needed is აღარნასე კურაპალატისაჲ; p.228 text 1: ღმრთისაჲთა...ჩუენთაჲსა...მფარველ...გვექმენ; in the translation the phrase 'King Giorgi and his children' occurs twice, but in the Georgian the possessive pronouns are plural (მათნი...მათთა) -- either the translation needs 'their' or the Georgian is to be emended (მისნი...მისთა); p.236 l.7: 'gave [the vines belonging to the village] of Degeuli'; l.11: Guram; p.245 l.14up: Asc'lovani; l.8up: Mat'iane.

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