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Rudi Matthee



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- ¹ This interesting study analyses the little-known revolt of Hajji Davud, the rebel Lezghi leader who in 1721 took Shamakhi, the capital of Shirvan, from the Safavids, in a prelude to his conquest of the entire province. Hajji Davud's rebellion has been variously interpreted. Some have seen it as a religious uprising, presaging later Muslim jihad movements against the expansionist tsarist state. Iranian and pre-revolutionary Russian historians have tended to dismiss it as ordinary plunder raids, whereas for Soviet scholars Hajji Davud became an anti-colonial guerilla leader. The author convincingly demonstrates that, in reality, the revolt was caused by socio-economic and religious grievances. The Daghistanis represented a minority Sunni population in Shirvan within the larger and increasingly emphatic Shi'i framework of the Safavid state, and suffered growing pressure from the central government. The corrupt local Safavid authorities overtaxed the local population. These conditions generated a joint operation of oppressed Sunni Shirvanis and the Lezghi warriors of Hajji Davud. Hajji Davud's rebellion had far-reaching consequences: it provided an excuse for Tsar Peter to invade Iran and, in the long run, it inaugurated the autonomy of this part of the Caucasus.

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Thèmes : 4.2.1. Safavides et Qâjârs

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