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# CONSTRUCTION OF FEMALE AUTHORITY IN THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE AND MEDIEVAL GEORGIA: COMPARATIVE APPROACH TO THE REPRESENTATION OF QUEEN TAMAR (R.1184 –1213) AND BYZANTINE IMPERIAL WOMEN

## Abstract

This article concerns the construction of female authority and female power in the Byzantine Empire and Medieval Georgia. In comparative framework, I analyze various communicative mediums by means of which the image and authority of female rulers were constructed and communicated to the audience in Byzantium and Medieval Georgia. After discussing the evolution of female rulership in the Byzantium from eight up to the end of the eleventh century, I move to explore the ideology of queenship in medieval Georgia under Tamar. I try to argue that idealized image of Tamar was constructed as a result of successful court propaganda which utilized to a large extent adopted and adapted Byzantine imperial ideal and rhetorical traditions.

**Keywords:** Byzantium, Medieval Georgia, imperial ideology, court rhetoric, female power, queenship

The high middle ages witnessed growing number of women who became socially more active, exercised power and participated directly and indirectly in the governance of the states. This change occurred not only in Medieval Western Europe and the Byzantine Empire, but in the distant periphery of the Eastern Christendom, namely in Medieval Georgia.<sup>1</sup> While one can recall a number of influential women in high Medieval West and Byzantium, only one woman stands out in case of Medieval Georgia. This woman is queen Tamar, or we may refer to her

as king Tamar, because this is the way she was known and is known in Georgia. In contrast to high medieval western and Byzantine women, Tamar is believed to rule in her rights and exercise power during her entire reign. Furthermore, queen Tamar is considered as one of the most successful Georgian rulers and architect of Georgian Golden Age. During her reign, Medieval Georgia reached the apex of its military and political power. Soon after her death, Tamar was canonized, and throughout centuries her name was held in high esteem. Consequently, queen Tamar is one of the most celebrated and eulogized Georgian ruler. But how come that female Tamar became so dominant and subject of veneration in masculine and patriarchal society?

This article concerns the construction of female authority and female power in Medieval Georgia and the Byzantine Empire. I decided to take a comparative approach for the following reason. For centuries, Byzantine Empire dominated Eastern Mediterranean and the Caucasus, and consequently, Byzantium had powerful impetus on neighboring people and polities.<sup>2</sup> Territory of Georgia for a long time was under the political and cultural domination of the Byzantium. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that Byzantine political culture inspired ruling elite of Medieval Georgia. Holistic approach and contextualization of Georgian ideology of rulership may reveal similarities as well as differences between Byzantine and Georgian paradigms of power representation. In this article, I try to argue and demonstrate that Byzantine imperial idea played an important role in the construction of queen Tamar's authority.

The article consists of three parts and proceeds in the following order. Firstly, I will briefly summarize the dynamics of Byzantine-Georgian relations to provide the reader with historical context. Secondly, I discuss the evolution of female rulership in Byzantium and Byzantine visions on female power. In this part, I scrutinize visual and literary representation of Byzantine empresses from the eight up to the second half of the twelfth century. Thirdly, I study female power in Medieval Georgia under queen Tamar. I examine various strategies by means of which female ruler's authority was constructed and negotiated in Georgia. This part will be based on analyzes of Georgian literary texts as well as non-narrative sources. But to maintain comparative context, I will frequently bring in Byzantine examples.

## **Dynamics of Byzantine-Georgian Relations**

Throughout early medieval up to the end of the eleventh century, the western part of Caucasus and significant part of contemporary Georgia was the distant periphery of the Byzantine empire. Byzantine/Eastern Roman emperors claimed the entire Caucasus as their sphere of influence and claimed supreme authority over local rulers. From the Byzantine perspective, local kings and princes were unequal Christian allies of the empire and subordinates of the Byzantine emperors. During the long-term Byzantine-Arab confrontation, the empire lost temporarily grip over strategically important Caucasus. But, the imperial court was trying to re-established its supremacy in the region by securing loyalty and support of local Christian rulers.

By the end of the eighth century the Caucasus became a battlefield between various players; one the one hand, tension intensified between Christian political elite and Arab officials, and on the other hand local Arab officials' aspiration for power erupted into open conflict with central power in Bagdad. Frequent intrusions of Arab punitive armies, which sometimes targeted Christen princes but more often recalcitrant local Arab officials, destabilized the entire region. It is against this background that we should discuss strengthening of Christian identity among local elite. In the destabilized environment, local princely houses, as well as secular and ecclesiastical elite, felt more compelled to embrace their Christian identity. Medieval Georgian literary narratives heavily emphasized clear-cut boundaries between Christian self and Muslim otherness. Furthermore, because of Arab domination, Caucasian rulers started perceiving Byzantine emperor as only authority who could challenge Muslim domination. Destabilization of the eastern Caucasus forced eastern Georgian/Iberian secular and ecclesiastical elite as well as ordinary people to migrate towards southern-western regions of Tao-Klarjeti. By the end of the eighth-century regions of Tao and Klarjeti were distant from Arab power base and seemed relatively safe from incursions. Located at the proximity of the Byzantine empire, Tao-Klarjeti became safe-haven for eastern Georgian emigres. The fact that region bordered Byzantine empire gave hope to migrated populous that they would be better protected.

By the beginning of the ninth century emergence of new political center in Tao-Klarjeti did not go without Byzantine involvement. Local aristocratic family of Bagratids rose in prominence and consolidated power in Tao-Klarjeti with the help of Byzantine emperors' military and political/

ideological support. In subsequent centuries Bagratid rulers became subordinated allies of Byzantine emperors and expressed their power by means of Byzantine imperial language. Affiliation with Byzantium and authoritative Byzantine emperor earned prestige to Bagratid family in the Caucasus. At the end of the tenth century, Bagratid family started executing strategic plan aiming at unifying all Georgian speaking lands under their domination.

From the tenth up to the beginning of the thirteenth century maturation of Georgian kingship ideology was linked to gradual employment of the Byzantine literary and visual concepts of power representation. Large-scale appropriation of Byzantine imperial language for the promotion of Georgian ruler's image took place during the reign of Davit IV (r. 1089–1125). Davit IV was the first Bagratid king to appropriate full extent Byzantine imperial language to model himself equal to Byzantine emperor and openly challenge emperor's authority in the Caucasus. However, it was only during the reign of female Tamar that exploitation of Byzantine paradigms of power reached an ultimate point in Medieval Georgia.

### **Evolution of the Female Power and Authority in the Byzantine Empire**

According to Byzantine conventional belief, women were not supposed to rule and exercise power. Instead, they were expected to be good mothers, exceptional wives and practice piety and devotion to the family. Byzantine norms valorized women's seclusion and reticent. John Chrysostom (c. 349–407) was one of the vehement spokesmen against the women. Chrysostom represented women as cruel, uncertain and of contemptible nature.<sup>3</sup> In contrast to the established believes, however, long history of Byzantine Empire remembers number of the influential empresses/imperial women who actively participated in the governance of the empire and exercised power. These Byzantine women usually had access to power through their male partners, or as regents of young emperors, but rarely they ruled in their own rights and as sole rulers.

When discussing powerful and ambitious Byzantine women one cannot avoid mentioning empress Irene (780–802). Eirene was not a member of ruling Isaurian imperial dynasty (717–802) and could claim legitimacy only as the wife of emperor Leo IV (r.775–780) and mother of emperor Constantine VI (r. 780–797). After her husband, Leo IV's death



(780) Irene started exercising power as regent and participated in the governance of the empire. Furthermore, Irene succeeded in usurping the imperial throne from her son emperor Constantine VI whom she had ordered to blind. After she disqualified the only male heir to the imperial throne, Irene asserted power and ruled the empire as sole ruler for five years (797-802).<sup>4</sup> To emphasize her new position Irene minted golden coin in this way becoming the first Byzantine woman to issue coin in her capacity as sole ruler. Both sides of empress Irene's gold *nomisma* depicts her portraits in full power.<sup>5</sup> She is dressed in emperor's consular dress and holds imperial regalia: scepter and *globus cruciger*. *Globus cruciger* was important imperial regalia which symbolized Byzantine emperor's earthly domination.<sup>6</sup> The legend on both sides of Irene's golden coin celebrates her as *eirene basilissa* (i.e., Empress Irene). It is important to bear in mind that in the Byzantine empire coinage often mirrored existed political reality, and coinage was one of the mediums that communicated rulers image to the audience. While golden coin celebrated Irene with the female imperial title of *basilissa* (empress), the contrary case is demonstrated in her imperial charters (chrysobuls). In imperial charters, Irene adopted the male title of *basileus* (emperor) to communicate her power and authority to high echelons of Byzantine society. In the long history of Byzantine state, empress Irene is considered to be the only female ruler to adopt the title of *basileus* (emperor). However, Irene refrained herself from using male imperial title extensively and choose words carefully when addressing a wide audience.

During her sole reign empress Irene faced multiple challenges: coup attempts and rebellions. However, for five years Irene successfully handled the matters; she managed to keep her foes divided and to forge a network of alliances with reliable social groups. Irene surrounded herself with powerful eunuchs. Empress was perfectly aware that eunuchs could never aspire for the imperial throne because of their physical deficiency. Furthermore, eunuchs for their benefits would be interested in keeping Irene's powerful position intact. However, patriarchal and male-centered Byzantine society did not tolerate sole rule of a woman for a long time. In 802 Irene was deposed and banished to the Lesbos island.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout centuries Byzantine world kept ambivalent attitude towards empress Irene's personality. On the one hand she was remembered as a mother who blinded her own son Constantine, and on the other hand, she was revered because of her central role in the convocation of the seventh ecumenical council in 787. The church council of 787 ended the first

period of iconoclasm and reiterated veneration of Icons. Without doubt Irene's sole reign and ambition to rule in her own rights set a precedent in Byzantine empire. Her example paved the way for subsequent generations of Byzantine women to be more engaged in the governance of the empire.

Empress Theodora (842–855) is another example of the ambitious Byzantine woman who attempted to keep a grip on power.<sup>8</sup> After the death of her husband emperor Theophilos I (r.813–842), Theodora acted as regent to her son Michael III, the legitimate heir to the imperial throne. Like Irene, Theodora tried to marginalize her son Michael and govern empire in her own rights. Coinage of Theodora from the period of her regency demonstrates well her political ambitions. On the obverse of golden coin image of empress Theodora comes to the fore. She is garbed in imperial dress and wears a crown. In the right hand, she holds *globus cruciger* and in the left one *labarum*. The circular inscription above her image hails her as *Theodora basilisa* (i.e., Empress Theodora). It is noteworthy that Theodora's portrait is depicted on the obverse of the coin, whereas the legitimate heir to the imperial throne Michael III's appears with his sister Tecla on the reverse. In accordance with Byzantine numismatic traditions, a senior ruler was depicted on the obverse of the coin. Besides, on the coin, only Theodora is referred with imperial title.

In 843 Theodora—most probably emulating empress Irene—initiated convocation of the ecumenical council which ended the second phase of Iconoclasm. Because of her crucial role in the final restoration of icons and triumph of orthodoxy, empress Theodora was canonized. She is still venerated as the saint in the Orthodox world. Theodora, like empress Irene, did not hide her will to rule the empire and communicated her image as powerful woman widely. However, Theodora's ambitions to govern in her own right was challenged. In 856 She was removed from power and exiled to the monastery.<sup>9</sup> The negative attitude to the sole rule of Theodora was articulated in the comprehensive account of eleventh-century historian Ioannes Skylitzes. In his *synopsis historion*, Skylitzes downgraded Theodora's contribution to the council of 843. Moreover, Skylitzes represents banishment of Theodora from the imperial palace (ca. 856) as a return to the natural, masculine order.<sup>10</sup>

From the eleventh century, Byzantine imperial women started to enjoy more political power which was caused by the changed attitude towards women.<sup>11</sup> As it has been pointed out, for the most of the eleventh century Byzantine imperial women could express their attitude freely over marriages, and they could be master over their future. Imperial women

in the eleventh century could voluntarily agree on political marriages, believing that it was beneficial for the family interests.<sup>12</sup> New ideology coined in the eleventh century Byzantine empire conferred power and promoted visibility of women.<sup>13</sup>

Promotion of imperial women's image as shareholders of imperial power is associated with emperor Constantine VIII (r. 1025–1028). Before his death, Constantine arranged a marriage between his daughter Zoe and Romanos Argyros. Romanos was legitimized as new emperor through his marriage to Zoe. Even though Zoe was the member of Macedonian imperial dynasty, her husband Romanos marginalized her and limited her access to power. After several years of isolation, Zoe with the help of her lover Michal organized coup d'état and murder Romanos. Zoe married Michael and legitimized him as a new emperor. However, Michael IV followed in footsteps his predecessor and marginalized Zoe. During her lifetime, Zoe the Macedonian married and legitimized four Byzantine emperors, and she never ceased attempts to dominate them and become de facto ruler of the empire.<sup>14</sup>

Empress Zoe chose a certain strategy to overcome seclusion and increase her public authority. She became an active philanthropist, distributing money and alms in the imperial capital. In Byzantium philanthropy was social act often performed publicly to help person to earn good reputation and prestige. Michael Psellos, one of the eminent Byzantine intellectual and men of letters, admits that Zoe was spending a lot of money on charity and philanthropic activities. Through philanthropic activities, empress Zoe enhanced her legitimacy as a member of the Macedonian dynasty and secured the loyalty of populace of the imperial capital. In 1042 when emperor Michal V exiled Zoe from Constantinople, city population rose in her defense and stormed imperial palace. Emperor and his entourage were probably caught by surprise to uncover that marginalized empress had such support. Zoe was saved from complete isolation because of her well-crafted public image. The events of 1042 demonstrated that empress, with denied access to power and with restricted access to imperial treasury could established unchallenged authority.

After the events of 1042, Zoe believed that she finally got chance to rule. But senate and court officials forced her to share power with her sister Theodora.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, Zoe had to marry again and legitimize Constantine IX Monomachos (r.1042–1055) as a new emperor of the Byzantine empire. Empress Zoe's wish to govern empire in her own rights never came into being. However, it was Zoe's young sister

Theodora who got chance to govern empire as a sole ruler. After emperor Constantine IX Monomachos' death in 1055, Theodora the last member of the Macedonian dynasty, acted swiftly. She secured the support of the imperial bodyguards and was acclaimed as *autokrator* (emperor).<sup>16</sup> After several years of political isolation, Theodora assumed full power, and she categorically refused to marry to avoid marginalization from a male partner. Theodora was second Byzantine female ruler to adopt male imperial title. Theodora fashioned herself as autokrator on her coinage to emphasize her sole rulership. In this instance, Theodora contrasts empress Irene who never dared to employ male imperial title on coinage.

Contemporary Byzantine narrative sources are critical about Zoe and Theodora. Eleventh-century intellectual Michael Psellos in his historical narrative *Chronographia* expresses his skepticism on female ability to rule. Psellos stated that the Byzantine Empire started to decline after Macedonian sisters, Zoe and Theodora, participated in the governance of the empire. From Psellos' point of view women were not intelligent enough to handle governmental matters, and consequently, empire had to be governed by man. Ioannes Skylitzes, another eleventh-century intellectual and historian, also questioned female ability to rule. He believed that women lacked moral characteristics and self-control of man. In his *synopsis historion*, Skylitzes uses harsh language and characterizes Zoe as Eva and witch. Skylitzes further argues that Zoe had only one virtue, she was a transmitter of imperial blood.<sup>17</sup> Only at one instance Skylitzes praises Zoe, allegedly when empress admits her feminine ineptitude.<sup>18</sup> In order to downgrade Zoe further, Skylitzes omits those episodes of Zoe's life which could have caused sympathy towards her.<sup>19</sup> In Skylitzes *synopsis historion*, Byzantine empresses are represented as an embodiment of Eve, and ambitious women are generally despised. Ioannes Skylitzes was a child of his time and shared conventional stereotypes about women.

It can be argued that Macedonian sisters' struggle for political power and their joint ruler change Byzantine attitude towards those women who fought to have access to power. In all likelihood, Zoe and Theora inspired other eleventh and twelfth century Byzantine imperial women to struggle for their place at imperial court. It is against this background that we should discuss another powerful woman, empress Eudokia Makrembolitissa (1067–1071).

Eudokia is sinning example of the eleventh-century imperial woman who wield power with significant confidence. Eudokia married two Byzantine emperors Constantine X Doukas (r. 1059–67) and Romanos IV

Diogenes (r. 1068–71). She never hid her political ambitions and widely propagated her image as a powerful woman. Eudokia's contemporary visual media demonstrates her strong position. The silver coin specimen of the period depicts images of emperor Constantine X Doukas and empress Eudokia.<sup>20</sup> Both images are equal in size. Interestingly image of empress takes the traditional place of honor, to the spectators left.<sup>21</sup> The imperial couple holds labarum in their hands. The inscription hails imperial couple as *pistois basileis Romaion* (faithful emperors of the Romans). It is noteworthy that designation of Byzantine empress with the male title, while she was not a sole ruler, is an exceptional case. The legend on silver coin implied that Eudokia and Constantine governed the empire on equal bases. When Constantine X was at his death bed in 1067, he entrusted rule of the empire to Eudokia rather to his son Michael who was approximately seventeen years old and perfectly suitable for the rule. The fact that power transfer went smoothly, without objection from senate and high ranking court officials, indicates how well established was Eudokia's authority. After the death of Constantine X Eudokia acted as regent and concentrated all power in her hands. It is even assumed that Eudokia took position of emperor, *basileus autokrator*.<sup>22</sup> The fact that Eudokia did not share power with her adult son Michael, legitimate heir to the imperial throne, indicates that woman could govern Byzantium as sole ruler. A new political reality that emerged after 1067 was reflected on the gold coinage. In the Byzantine Empire, golden coin was the main medium of exchange, and unlike silver coin that had pure ceremonial purpose, it circulated widely. Therefore, by means of golden coinage imperial court communicated message to the entire population of the empire. On the obverse of the gold coin, one sees the dominant image of Eudokia who stands in the middle of her two sons.<sup>23</sup> The dominant figure of Eudokia aimed to emphasize her elevated position in contrast to her sons. Coin inscription celebrates all three rulers as 'emperors of the Romans.' Eudokia's wish to be visualized as a sole ruler is reflected on her lead seal as well.<sup>24</sup> The seal contains only the image of Eudokia whereas images of her sons are absent. Neither are Eudokia's sons mentioned in lead seal inscription. An ivory panel is another visual media that celebrates and communicates a powerful image of Eudokia. On the ivory, Eudokia is depicted with her second husband emperor Romanos IV.<sup>25</sup> Both images are equal in size and both rulers are blessed by Christ. The inscriptions in Greek hails imperial couple as 'Romanos emperor of Romans' and 'Eudokia empress of Romans.'<sup>26</sup>As it has been pointed out Romanos

Diogenes and Eudokia Makrembolitissa are the only Byzantine couple to rule as 'Romans and Eudokia.'<sup>27</sup> It should also be emphasized that in Byzantine visual culture Christ was traditionally blessing emperors and rarely empresses. After marrying Romanos IV, Eudokia did not cease attempt to dominate her second husband. Golden coin issued after their marriage demonstrates Byzantine empresses' strong position. The reverse of the coin depicts images of Eudokia and Romanos in equal size.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, both ruler hold *globus cruciger* (an important imperial symbol that highlighted Byzantine emperor's ecumenical aspirations). The coin inscription hails Eudokia as *basillissa* (i.e., empress) and Romanos as a *despot* (emperor).

It seems however that Eudokia pushed to the extremes her attempts to dominate male partners and rule empire in her own rights. This resulted in her downfall. Eudokia's marginalized son Michael VII with the support of court officials organized *coup d'état* and banished ambitious empress to the monastery. Without a doubt, empress Eudokia's rule had a great impact on subsequent generations of Byzantine imperial women. It is believed that eleventh and twelfth century Byzantine imperial women were inspired by Eudokia's personality.<sup>29</sup>

Usurpation of imperial power by Komnenoi dynasty (ca. 1081) created fertile ground for Byzantine imperial women to participate more in the administration of the empire. During the Komnenoi rule innovations were introduced not only in representation of emperor but empress/imperial women as well. Under the Komnenian regime, governance of empire became family business. Consequently, male and female members of the dynasty were actively involved in power politics.<sup>30</sup> For example, Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081–1118) gave to his mother Anna Dalassene high position in imperial administration and granted her title of *despotina*. Moreover, when Alexios I was going on military campaigns he was leaving Anna in charge of the empire. Eleventh century intellectual and rhetorician Theophylact of Ohrid in his imperial oration characterized shared rule of Alexios and his mother Anna as a perfect division between two suns. Theophylact in his capacity as court rhetorician attempted to persuade the audience that new political configuration was not at odds with the established norm and it did not harm imperial stability. After decades, Anna Komnene, emperor Alexios I's daughter and one of the eminent female Byzantine intellectual, in her historical narrative the *Alexiad* praised Anna Dalassene's governmental skills.

His mother [i.e., Anna], however, was capable of managing not only the Roman Empire, but every other empire under the sun as well ... She had vast experience and a wide understanding . . . She was a most persuasive orator . . . She was the legislator, the complete organizer and governor . . . not only was she a very great credit to her own sex, but to men as well; indeed, she contributed to the glory of the whole human race.

It is believed that powerful and authoritative Anna Dalassene emulated her predecessor Eudokia Makrembolitissa.<sup>31</sup>

I have talked much about Byzantine imperial women in order to demonstrate that each ambitious empress who participated in the governance of empire paved the way for subsequent generations of Byzantine women to be more visible and influential. It goes without saying that if empress Irene and Theodora were not bold in their wish to dominate their male partners most likely, we would not be talking that much about Macedonian sisters (Zoe and Theodora) nor Komnenoi women.

### **Constructing Female Authority in Medieval Georgia: Idealized Image of Tamar (r. 1184–1213)**

Tamar was the only child of king Giorgi III (r. 1156–1184), and in accordance with the established rule of primogeniture, she had right to inherit the throne. But there were certain obvious flaws in Tamar's legitimacy. The first problem was Tamar's sex that disqualified her from ruling in her own rights. Medieval Georgian society was patriarchal, where masculine virtues were valorized. Georgia was traditionally governed by marshal rulers whose authority rested much on their personal charisma. To prove that they were worthy leaders, Georgian rulers had to demonstrate good generalship and gain victories on the battlefields. During coronation ceremony among another royal regalia, Georgian ruler received a sword that symbolized his role as head and leader of the army.

By the end of the twelfth century, Georgia kingdom was one of the dominant powers in the region, surrounded by the belt of dependent and semi-dependent Muslim polities. In an anarchic environment of Caucasus balance of power was fragile, and Georgian royal court had to make efforts to maintain kingdom's dominant position in the region. During the second half of the twelfth century the leaders of the Muslim world had several attempts to challenge the power of Georgian kingdom. Thus,

Tamar's father king Giorgi was successful in his military campaigns and kept Muslim foes in check. Georgian king owed his authority to his military victories. It is not difficult to imagine that when Tamar inherited the royal throne after her father's death, social groups that played a significant role in Georgian power politics had legitimate concerns. From their point of view, kingdom was at a critical juncture. The realm was left without the male leader and army without the nominal commander. It was first time in kingdoms' history that woman aspired for power, who could neither demonstrate her military prowess nor lead an army in the battlefields. Besides, elevation of woman to the throne could have been perceived by Muslim subjects and foes as a sign weakness.

In 1184 Georgian aristocrats and high ranking ecclesiastics might have brought forward another argument that would question Tamar's right for the throne; Namely, the ambiguous legitimacy of Tamar's father Giorgi III. The thing is that Giorgi III usurped the throne from his nephew Demetre, who had far more legitimate right to claim power than Giorgi. After being marginalized and banished from royal court, Demetre decided to strike back and claim the throne for himself. In 1177 Demetre backed by the majority of Georgian influential aristocrats against Giorgi. Giorgi III managed to quell rebellion with difficulties and punished leaders severely; Demetre was blinded and died soon from the injuries. It is not difficult to imagine fury Giorgi's actions caused in high echelons of Georgian society. By this action, Giorgi disqualified only rightful male pretender for the throne and he put the kingdom in dire straits. After the disqualification of Demeter, female Tamar was the only person who could have a legitimate claim for the throne. We do not get a full picture from Georgian narrative sources about the nature of the disagreement between Tamar and her opposition. Neither we learn in details what accusations opposition made against Tamar. But, it is reasonable to believe that denigration of Giorgi as usurper would be a logical strategy of the opposition. Revisiting Giorgi's rights to rule and his posthumous denunciation as usurper directly questioned Tamar's right to govern. By pulling this issue opposition was getting leverage to press Tamar and make her submissive to their demands.

So, by 1184 Tamar had to tackle two major problems; issue of her gender and legitimacy of her father. Tamar was not naive to believe that power transfer would be smooth. Possibly she expected challenge and was ready to strike back. Six years of co-rulership (1178-84) with her father Giorgi gave her insight into power politics, and she likely had plans how to tackle with the problems. It should not go without saying that by 1184



Tamar had her inner circle of supporters and had secured the loyalty of some influential players. A scarcity of sources enables us to identify many of her supporters as well as to elaborate further on their social status. But, it is obvious that a number of Tamar's supporters were members of the second-tier aristocracy as well as intellectuals. Tamar was one of the first Georgine rulers to rely on a number of intellectuals who contributed to the creation of her reputation and crafted her powerful public image.

Scholars take Tamar's reign for granted. They fail to provide in-depth analyzes how she managed to retain a grip on power and rule in male-centered Georgian society. Strategy by means which Tamar legitimized herself and imposed her authority over various strata of society remains un-researched.<sup>32</sup> More importantly, there is still no answer to the question as to why Tamar is one of the most celebrated Georgian rulers. Rhetorical texts, both in prose and in verse, dedicated to Tamar and composed by her contemporary intellectuals dwarfs those rhetorical narratives dedicated to Tamar's predecessors and successors. Though being one of the most celebrated Georgian monarchs, Tamar remains enigmatic figure. In what follows, I try to argue and demonstrate that one of the cornerstones of Tamar's reign was carefully staged propaganda of legitimation aiming at persuading Tamar's subjects in her capability to govern. Royal court communicated and negotiated Tamar's authority to the targeted audience by means of following media: Rhetorical narratives, coinage and royal titulature (*intitulatio*).

Blossom of literary activism during Tamar's rule had clear-cut ideological purpose. Rhetorical narratives, namely political poetry and economic historiography, were vehicles for propagating positive image and political authority of female ruler to high echelons of Medieval Georgian society. Namely, court officials, military aristocracy, and high ranking ecclesiastics. During a public performance, rhetoricians by means of rhetorical strategies manipulated public audience and transmitted propagandistic and political messages. In order to understand better social function of literature (rhetorical narrative) in the Medieval Mediterranean, I will allude to the Byzantine examples. In the Byzantine empire power was displayed in performative context, and oral performance of rhetorical compositions had the crucial role in ritualized Byzantine court culture. Rhetorical narratives (imperial panegyrics) had a function of newspaper and the lubricated governmental machinery. They celebrated emperor's persona in a laudatory manner, informed the audience about emperor's achievements and communicated political messages to the audience.

Byzantine intellectuals employed a diverse rhetorical technique to eulogize emperor and persuade audience in emperor's outstanding qualities and virtues. In the Byzantine world rhetoric was honored as an art of persuasive use of language and rhetoric was considered as political discourse. Twelfth-century Byzantine intellectuals argued that rhetoric had ability to transform and manipulate society.<sup>33</sup> I am inclined to believe that Georgian rhetorical texts, like in Byzantium, were composed by Tamar's inner circle and performed orally on special occasions at royal court. The primary goal of these texts was to influence audience and change established ways of viewing reality.

To turn Tamar's sex from disadvantage to advantage, her inner circle pushed to the further extremes and surrounded Tamar's persona with an aura of sacrality. All rhetorical narratives demonstrated and praise in extolled manner Tamar's devotion to Christianity, exceptional piety, chastity, humility, and philanthropy. Further, court rhetoric as expressed in encomiastic narratives asserted Tamar's role as enforcer of divine order and mediator between God and her people. The audience was persuaded that Tamar's permanent practice of royal virtues secured God's benevolence and brought peace and prosperity to her subjects. Tamar was declared as the only person who could guaranty divine benevolence. Georgian court rhetoric probably reflected certain distorted reality. It is reasonable to assume that Tamar adopted and cultivated certain modes of behavior to increase her authority in male-dominated society. Namely, she could have performed her Orthodoxy and pity publicly. The practice of spirituality and performance of personal piety was method often applied by Byzantine imperial women to improve their status and become more visible. One cannot exclude that Byzantine practice was cultivated in Medieval Georgia. If this holds true, Tamar earned the name of a saintly person during her lifetime, which facilitated the development of her personal cult. Cult of Tamar was a powerful tool in the discourse of legitimation and secured obedience and loyalty of her subjects.

In order to understand better the nature of Georgian court rhetoric, it is essential to analyze the strategy and rhetorical technique applied by the authors of these texts. Each text has its strategy of persuasion and focuses on a different aspect of Tamar's life. Thus, apart from a differences, these texts have certain things in common. All these texts narrate idealized image of Tamar, and they make use of Byzantine rhetorical traditions. To be more precise, Georgian men of literature adopted and adapted to their needs Byzantine imperial language.

Anonymous authors concise *Life of King of Kings Tamar* is a generic hybrid that combines features of imperial/royal biography and hagiography. Consequently, the narrative focuses on the representation of Tamar's Christian virtues. In this text, Tamar's authority is buttressed on her practice of virtues such as piety, philanthropy, justice, moderation.<sup>34</sup> The author tries to persuade the audience that through the practice of Christian/political virtues Tamar attained perfection and reached saintliness in her lifetime. Unlike Byzantine hagiographical narratives dedicated to women that emphasizes female weakness, *Life of King of Kings Tamar* is free from gendered language. The anonymous author represents Tamar as unconventionally strong and independent woman. Further, in entire narrative, Tamar's stoic calmness and self-control are several times praised. According to medieval believes women were weak as they could not control their emotions. Byzantine authors often represented exuberantly how women fall into panic, burst into tears and lose control of behavior in critical situations. For instance, empress Anna Komnene who constructed the image of powerful women in her *Alexiad* was a victim of her contemporary stereotypes about women. Anna describes her grandmother and mother as intelligent and capable people, who could wisely govern the empire. Thus, they also fall into despair and burst into tears in critical situations. As I have pointed out, *Life of Tamar* demonstrates contrary case. Even in the most critical circumstances, Tamar remains calm and wisely handles the governmental matters. The same rhetoric is maintained in other literary texts dedicated to Tamar. They unanimously extoll her self-control, stoic behavior, and wise judgment.

Another encomiastic text *the Histories and Eulogies of the Sovereigns* applies a different rhetorical strategy for construction of Tamar's image. *Histories and Eulogies* is classicizing history and is focused on warfare. With Homeric fictionalization *Histories and Eulogies* narrates Georgian army's and army leaders' heroic performance on the battlefields. In this narrative, the anonymous author dedicates much space to Tamar's ancestors and buttresses her legitimacy and authority on her noble lineage and sacred progeny. One may think that in this regard, the author of *Histories and Eulogies* followed rhetorical tradition coined by ancient rhetorician Menander Rhetor. Menander in his rhetorical handbook suggested his peer rhetoricians praise emperor's ancestors and noble lineage.<sup>35</sup> In the poem *Histories and Eulogies* introduces Tamar as a worthy offspring Old Testament king-prophet David and Solomon.

Like Solomon ... I will blow the trumpet and render 'the praise of praises' to the one, who came from the seed of Solomon, the one, for whom praise of her glory and Olympian grandeur, and even (the gift of) Solomon, would never be adequate. I mean Tamar, famous among the monarchs, and the glory of the first David, a prophet.<sup>36</sup>

By this statement, the author wanted to remind the audience that Bagratid was sacred dynasty bloodily related to Biblical David and Solomon. Bagratid family formulated their alleged biblical ancestry in the tenth century, and claimed biblical progeny became one of the cornerstones of Bagratid royal propaganda.<sup>37</sup> After introducing Tamar in this elevated manner, the narrative describes the ceremony of her coronation. The audience is persuaded that Tamar was sitting on Biblical-David's throne and she received biblical Solomon's seal. At the end of coronation ceremony, Georgian aristocrats acclaimed Tamar as worthy offspring of prophet-king David.<sup>38</sup>

Typological co-relation between Old Testament and Bagratid kinship is also nourished in *Life of King of Kings Tamar*. The author of narrative states that during coronation queen Tamar was invested with the Old Testament kings' royal insignia. Tamar is claimed to receive the crown and standard of Biblical David. Moreover, the author of *Life of Tamar* goes as far as to state that by Tamar's elevation to the throne biblical David's prophecy came into being: "For her countenance had been glorified in the beginning in the fulfilment of David's words, who has said that the kings and princes would pay homage with prayers and supplications, and the tribes would bring her presents."<sup>39</sup> These two episodes are interesting as they point out for the first time that Georgian rulers allegedly possessed the Old Testament royal insignia. It is well known that Byzantine emperors claimed to be in possession of the Old Testament royal insignia, Rod of Moses and Solomon's throne. These relics were kept in the imperial palace of Constantinople and displaced for the audience during important ceremonies.

Apart from Old Testament imagery, *Histories and Eulogies of the Sovereigns* is heavily imbued with solar and astral symbolism. The text frequently sets typological relations between Tamar and sun and light. This hermeneutical strategy aimed to articulate a conception of solar kinship and maintain Tamar's sun-like image in the entire narrative. Metaphors of sun, light and life-giving sun had deep conceptual connotations. The sun and light were symbols of divinity in the ancient world, and after

Christianization of the Roman empire, sun/light started to be associated with Christian God. Christian apologists and theologians frequently used solar symbolism to refer to God. In Byzantine imperial rhetoric emperor was frequently likened to sun and light, and was associated with the sun that brings warmth and light to his subjects.<sup>40</sup> Allegorization of emperor with light-giving sun aimed to signify his sacredness and likeness to Christ.<sup>41</sup> Employment of sun and light metaphors for celebration of emperor's persona reached its apex during the reign of emperor Manuel I Komnenos (r. 1143–1180).<sup>42</sup> Emperor Manuel I's court poet 'Manganeios' Prodromos in his panegyric poetry used extensively sun and light as rhetorical metaphors to highlight emperors sacred and Christ-like nature.<sup>43</sup>

Christ-oriented kingship was another important theme and intricate aspect developed by Georgian royal propaganda. Rhetorical texts claimed Tamar to be Christ-like figure and deputy of Christ on the earth. These narratives furthermore persuaded the audience that Tamar was constantly imitating Christ through her behavior. Particularly bold in their statements were authors of Georgian panegyric poems (*Abdulmesiani* and *Laudation of Tamar*) who claimed that Tamar like Christ assumed flesh and came on earth from heaven for the salvation of her people. Neither did Georgian literati restrained themselves from calling Tamar a fourth member of holy trinity.<sup>44</sup> Employment of theological vocabulary for the articulation of ruler's sacredness was no novelty in the Byzantine empire. According to Byzantine imperial ideal emperor was charged with mystical power and acted in his capacity as representative of Christ on earth.<sup>45</sup> Byzantine imperial rhetoric frequently set co-relation between emperor and Christ and by this token emphasized sacred nature of Byzantine imperial office. The ideal emperor was expected to imitate Christ and follow Christ in footsteps. Thus, Byzantine authors were careful in their statements. We do not have any evidence in Byzantine imperial rhetorical that celebrates emperor either incarnated Christ or fourth member of Trinity. Even when sacralization of emperor's persona reached its apex in the twelfth century Byzantine empire, Byzantine intellectuals never become as bold in their statements as Georgian literati. More importantly, it is impossible to find any literary or visual evidence in Byzantine world that allegorizes Byzantine empress/imperial women with light-giving sun. Neither can we find reference to Byzantine empress as Christ-like figures or earthly representative of Christ. In Byzantine thought, it was only Byzantine emperor-Christian basileus-who represented Christ on earth and whose authority directly came from Christ. One should bear

in mind that Byzantine authors used gendered language when referring to empresses/imperial women, and they maintained a clear cult division between modes of behavior and language applicable to man and women. While Byzantine emperor could be wise, philanthropic, pious, just, brave and moderate, empresses/imperial women were denied the majority of imperial virtues. Moreover, if during court ceremonials emperor was set in typological relation with biblical figures and classical heroes, this privilege was denied to Byzantine empress. For instance, emperor in his capacity as head of church and guaranty of doctrinal purity was perceived as second Constantine.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, Byzantine emperor was second Moses, second biblical David, and Solomon. In addition to this, ideal Byzantine emperor was an embodiment of Alexander the Macedonian.

In contrast to Byzantine imperial rhetoric that addresses women, Tamar's contemporary rhetorical narratives explicitly and implicitly set the typological relation between Tamar on the one hand and Christ, biblical David, Solomon, and Moses on the other hand. All these rhetorical texts assert Tamar's role as a head of Church and her key role in matters of faith. Because of her alleged central role in ecclesiastical matters, she is declared to be second Constantine. "In the matter of religion, she was the second Constantine and, like him, she intended to embark on God's work; for she began to whet her two-edged sword to destroy evil at the roots, and desired to convene an assembly to discuss the findings of the great ecumenical councils."<sup>47</sup>

When Georgian rhetorical narratives likened Tamar with biblical and classical figures, they not only ascribed the virtues and modes of behavior of the past heroes to Tamar, but they forged the causal relationship between their own deeds and the deeds of Tamar. For instance, according to the Byzantine imperial ideology, an emperor was expected to merge multiple bodies and personalities by sharing them with his mythical prototypes. Emperor's persona was shaped by participation in the mythical personae of earlier rulers. The Byzantine emperor was a temporal incarnation of hero's image.<sup>48</sup> Surprisingly, Georgian rhetorical narratives buttressed Tamar's image on characteristics which had long been the cornerstone of ideal Byzantine emperor rather than empress.

Apart from communicative rhetorical narratives, Tamar's powerful image is cast through her bi-lingual (Georgian-Arabic) copper coinage. The coinage asserts Tamar's position of the ruler in her own rights. The first issue coin specimen was minted in the first years of Tamar's sole reign. The obverse of the coin is embellished with Tamar signature which is in

the center of a wreathed frame.<sup>49</sup> Georgian abbreviated legend reads as follows: In the name of God, this silver piece was struck in the K'oronikon 407 (i.e., 1187). On the reverse of this bi-lingual coin runs Arabic legend in five lines: "The great queen, the glory of the world and faith, Tamar, daughter of Giorgi, champion of the Messiah, May God increase her victories." Circle around and marginal Arabic legend: "May God increase her glory, and lengthen her shadow, and strengthen her prosperity."<sup>50</sup>

The next coin specimen under scrutiny was issued around ca. 1200 (fig. 1). The obverse of the bi-lingual copper coin depicts undefined monogram. On the left side of the monogram is inscribed two letters in Georgian TR (i.e., Tamar). On the right side are inscribed two initials DT (i.e., Davit). This coin was minted during the shared rule of Tamar and her second husband, Davit. However, certain details on the coin highlight Tamar's seniority and Davit's subordinated position. For instance, on the coin senior ruler's name was always inscribed to the spectator's left, whereas co-ruler's to the spectator's right side. Furthermore, the reverse legend in Arabic reiterates Tamar's senior position. The Arabic legend in four lines reads as follows: "Queen of the Queens, glory of the world and faith, Tamar, daughter of Giorgi, champion of the Messiah." As one can see the long inscription on coin reverse omits the name of Tamar's husband Davit. The omission of Davit's name in the main communicative message of the copper coin indicates Georgian royal court's strategy to set a clear-cut boundary between Tamar as a senior ruler and Davit as subordinated one. Besides, adoption of epithet "champion of messiah" which had strong ideological connotation—by the female ruler is indicative. By this epithet, Tamar informed Muslim audience that she was the guardian of faith and defender of Christians. Epithet "sword of messiah/champion of messiah" was adopted by Georgian kings in the second quarter of the twelfth-century when Georgia was on the offensive against Seljuk Turks and neighboring Muslim leaders. Georgian kings thought of themselves to be charged with special the mission as defenders of Christianity and the guardians of Christian-Muslim frontier. Formula "champion of messiah" or "sword of messiah" was predominantly inscribed in Arabic on the reverse of the Georgian kings' bi-lingual coins.

In addition to rhetorical texts and coinage, Tamar's official royal titulature (*intitulatio*) also had communicative function and aimed to negotiated her authority. Mural inscription next to Tamar's fresco from Vardzia monastery refers to her as "King of Kings of the entire east, Tamar, daughter of Giorgi." Tamar is referred with similar titulature from St. John

the Baptist Church mural inscription: “King of Kings Tamar, daughter of the great King of Kings.” In comparison to coinage and epigraphic inscriptions, Tamar’s royal charters offered more space for the articulation of her laudatory *intitulatio*. In a royal charter to the Gelati Monastery (ca. 1193) Tamar boldly models herself as: “by the will of God, Tamar Bagrationi, King and Queen of the Abkhazians, Kartvelians, Radians, Kaxetians, and Armenians; Sarvansah and Sahansah and Ruler of the entire east and west.” This long titlature reflected Tamar’s ambition to be seen as a great Christian monarch of the East.

Tamar’s royal titlature varied and this was determined by different audience it was destined for. For the Georgian audience, she was king and king of kings. This is the way she was referred in her contemporary rhetorical narratives and mural inscriptions. For the Muslim audience, she was hailed as queen and queen of queens. However, a female title of queen, which Tamar seemed to avoid for the Georgian audience, was strengthened by the formula- “champion of the Messiah.” Through this title, Tamar emphasized her special position in Christendom.

## Conclusion

To conclude, it will not be an exaggeration to state that Tamar was exceptional female ruler in the eastern Mediterranean, who wielded power with certain confidence and managed to established her unchallenged authority. Unlike Byzantine empresses who ruled the empire as sole rulers in their capacity as wives and mothers of the emperors, Tamar ruled the kingdom as the only legitimate heir to the throne. Furthermore, Tamar adopted the male royal title of king and king of kings rather than queen to emphasize her elevated position. In this regard, she contrasts with Byzantine empresses who never succeeded in adopting and retaining male imperial titles (*basileus*, *autokrator*). While in long rune ambitious Byzantine empresses were either marginalized or banished to the monasteries by their male partners, Tamar maintained domination and visibility during her entire life.

Most probably Tamar emulated Byzantine imperial court tradition. She secured the loyalty of men of literature and turned Georgian royal court into a hub of literary activities. Re-conceptualized Georgian kingship under her reign utilized to full extent Byzantine paradigms of imperial power. Presence of Byzantine imperial language and rhetorical traditions



were particularly visible in panegyric literature and royal imagery. With the help of utilized Byzantine rhetorical language, Georgian panegyric literature created two-natured personae of Tamar who united in herself characteristics and modes of behavior of ideal women and man. Idealized image of Tamar resembled more to Byzantine emperor rather than Byzantine empress.

In the end, it seems likely that well-devised court propaganda succeeded in challenging Medieval Georgian society's conventional believe in female inability to govern and immortalized Tamar as a great ruler. It will not be an exaggeration to state that success of Tamar's contemporary court rhetoric and propaganda was shaped by adopted and reworked Byzantine literary and visual culture of power representation.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For Medieval See: L. James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (London: Leicester University Press, 2001); L. James, ed., *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997); Z. Rohr and L. Benz, eds., *Queenship, Gender, and Reputation, in the Medieval and Early Modern West, 1060–1600* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016);
- <sup>2</sup> For Byzantine influence of Slavic world see: D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe in 500–1453* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971); See also: G. Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).
- <sup>3</sup> C. Galatariotou, “Holy Women and Witches: Aspects of Byzantine Conception of Gender”, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 66
- <sup>4</sup> J. Herrin, *Unrivalled Influence: Women and Empire in Byzantium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013): 194-204.
- <sup>5</sup> For coin image see: <https://www.doaks.org/resources/online-exhibits/byzantine-emperors-on-coins/the-isaurian-and-amorium-dynasties-717-867/solidus-of-irene-797-802>
- <sup>6</sup> P. Grierson, *Byzantine Coinage* (Washington, D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1999), 26-27.
- <sup>7</sup> T. Gregory. *A History of Byzantium* (Malden MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 202.
- <sup>8</sup> M. Vinson. “The *Life of Theodora* and Rhetoric of Byzantine Bride Show”. *JÖB* 49 (1999): 52-63.
- <sup>9</sup> T. Gregory. *A History of Byzantium*, 211.
- <sup>10</sup> E. Strumgell, “The Representation of Augustae in Skylitzes,” in *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honor of Roger Scott*, ed. J. Burke (Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2006), 128.
- <sup>11</sup> B. Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025–1204: Power, Patronage and Ideology* (New York: Longman, 1999), 17.
- <sup>12</sup> B. Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025–1204*, 60.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibidem.*, 60.
- <sup>14</sup> Zoe Macedonian legitimized following emperors: Romanos III Argyros (r. 1028–1034), Michael IV (r. 1034–1041), Michael V (r. 1041–1042) and Constantine IX Monomachos (r. 1042–1055)
- <sup>15</sup> T. Gregory. *A History of Byzantium*, 248.
- <sup>16</sup> L. Garland, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527–1204* (London: Routledge, 1999), 166.
- <sup>17</sup> E. Strumgell, The representation of Augustae in Skylitzes, 130.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibidem.*, 130
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibidem.*, 131

- 20 For coin image see: L. Kalavrezou, "Eudokia Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 31 (1997): 320-321.
- 21 L. Kalavrezou, "Eudokia Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory," 311.
- 22 L. Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, 171.
- 23 For coin image see: <https://www.doaks.org/resources/online-exhibits/byzantine-emperors-on-coins/the-macedonians-and-their-immediate-successors-867-1081/nomisma-histamenon-of-eudokia-1067>
- 24 <http://www.doaks.org/resources/online-exhibits/gods-regents-on-earth-a-thousand-years-of-byzantine-imperial-seals/rulers-of-byzantium/eudokia-1067-or-1071>
- 25 L. Kalavrezou, "Eudokia Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory," 320-321.
- 26 Ibidem., 305-325.
- 27 Ibidem., 307
- 28 <https://www.doaks.org/resources/online-exhibits/byzantine-emperors-on-coins/the-macedonians-and-their-immediate-successors-867-1081/nomisma-tetareron-of-romanos-iv-1068-1071>
- 29 L. Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, 168.
- 30 A. Riehle, Authorship and Gender (and) identity: Women's writing in Middle Byzantine Period in *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature: Modes, Function and Identity*. Ed., A. Pizzone, De Gruyter (2014): 261.
- 31 L. Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, 168
- 32 [Metreveli, R.] რ. მეტრეველი. დავით აღმაშენებელი; თამარ მეფე. [David the Builder and Queen Tamar]. (Tbilisi: Tbilisi State University Press, 2002): 501-607.
- 33 P. Roilos. *Amphoteroglossia: A Poetics of the Twelfth Century Medieval Greek Novel* (Washington, D.C: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2006), 29.
- 34 *Kartlis Tskhovreba: A history of Georgia*, eds., R. Metreveli and S. Jones. Tbilisi: Artanuji Publishing, 2014, 287-305.
- 35 *Menander Rhetor*, ed. D. Russell and N. Wilson (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 1981): 76-96.
- 36 *Kartlis Tskhovreba: A history of Georgia*, 227.
- 37 For sacred genealogy of Bagratid see: "the Life and Tales of Bagrationis" in *Kartlis Tskhovreba: A history of Georgia*, 211-227;
- 38 *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, 287.
- 39 K. Vivian. *Georgian Chronicle: Period of Giorgi Lasha* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert Publisher, 1991), 56; *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, 288.
- 40 G. Dennis. "Imperial Panegyric: Rhetoric and Reality". In *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*. Ed. H. Maguire, 131-140 (Washington, D.C: Harvard University Press, 1997).
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- Hierotopy of Light and Fire in the Culture of the Byzantine World*, ed., A. Lidov (Moscow, Feoria publisher, 2013), 168.
- 42 M. Jeffreys. "The Comnenian Prokypsis". *Parergon*, N.S. 5 (1987): 38-53.
- 43 P. Magdalino *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 413-488.
- 44 *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, 227-228.
- 45 For Byzantine imperial ideology see: P. Magdalino *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos*, 413-488; M. Jeffreys. "The Comnenian Prokypsis", 38-53; M. Mullett, "The Imperial Vocabulary of Alexios I Komnenos", in *Alexios I Komnenos*, ed., M. Mullett and D. Smythe (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, 1996), 359-397; G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: the Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); F. Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy: Origins and Background*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 1966); D. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007);
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- 47 *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, 288.
- 48 A. Sivertsev. *Judaism and Imperial Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Presses, 2011), 157.
- 49 Online English-Georgian Catalogue of Georgian Numismatics: <http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=68>
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