TELAVI HOARD:
NEW DATA ON THE OTTOMAN COINAGE
MINTED IN THE GEORGIAN KINGDOM OF K’AKHETI

Abstract

Recent discoveries have provided us with new numismatic material elucidating the coin-minting activities in the easternmost Georgian province of K’akheti (mints Zagam and Kākhed). However, so far we had no contemporary monetary complexes / hoards, as opposed to the plethora of single finds, unfortunately deprived from the proper archeological context. Our objective is to discuss and publish one of the rare hoards of the epoch, predominantly comprised of the coins minted there in the name of the Ottoman sultan.

The hoard (137.90 g) was discovered back in 2016 in the vicinity of the city of Telavi. It constituted an accumulation of 56 silver coins in total (110.25 g, 79.97% of hoard weight); hacksilver (19.18 g; 13.91%); bronze pendant and a small bead, 0.13 g (3.55 g, 2.57%); gold ring with turquoise (4.89 g; 3.55%) – it constituted up to 35-40% of the hoard’s total value (parallels with contemporary Georgian icon-art art were analyzed). Monetary part of the hoard: 1/56 (1.79%) Muscovy coin (0.32 g, 0.29% of the weight of the monetary part of the hoard); functionally, probably hacksilver; 39/56 (69.64%) Ottoman coins minted / countermarked in K’akheti (77.52 g, 70.31%); 12/56 (21.43%) Ottoman coins of distinguishable type, with no mint (26.76 g, 24.27%); 4/56 (7.14%) unidentified coins (5.65 g, 5.12%). We provide the description of the coin types, incl. two previously unknown ones. The Moscow denga constituted a negligible and probably accidental admixture to the main body of Caucasian/Georgian-Ottoman coins. Only two mint-names were indicated on the coins: Kākhed (11 coins; 22.78 g; 19.64% of the total number of coins, 20.66% of
INTRODUCTION

Being debilitated by the repetitive invasions of Tamerlane, and later the Qarā Quyunlū and Āq Quyunlū turkmans, the united Georgian Kingdom collapsed and disintegrated into several minor kingdoms / principalities. Political disintegration naturally had some economic and monetary consequences; we can observe the following:

• Increase in imports of foreign currency (Shirvanshahs’, Ottoman and Safavid coinage) and its increasingly dominant role on the national monetary market;

• Disintegration of national economy as testified to by the emersion of the so called numismatic provinces, i.e. regions with predominance of some specific (either Georgian or foreign) money. Since the collapse of the united state the economy of correspondingly western and eastern provinces of Georgia was based on mostly different currencies, Ottoman in the west and Shirvanshahs’, later Safavid in the east;

• Proliferation of the mints. We can only conjecture, whether the united Georgian kingdom had been supplied with currency produced by just one mint (located in the capital city of Tiflis), or not; but we know for sure, that after the disintegration several mints were set up in various Georgian principalities and provinces occupied by foreign powers;

the weight of the monetary part of the hoard), Zagam (28; 54.74 g; 50%, 49.65%). We also made an attempt to establish the weight standard of the coins represented in the hoard. The host coins with Zagam c/m pertained to the same, or similar weight standard. All the coins were the Ottoman dirhams of 1.80-2.80 g, of declining weight-standard. We tentatively dated the hoard with the early 1600s. This was a short-term accumulation hoard (a momentary snapshot of the local contemporary monetary circulation).

The historical significance of the Telavi hoard is multifaceted: The non-monetary items may be helpful for studying the history of Georgian art and craftsmanship; we obtained additional factual evidence for the contemporary numismatic history (incl. the discovery of new types and new data for the metrology analysis, insight into contemporary monetary circulation and coin-minting activities). The very fact of the Ottoman type coinage minted in Georgia/K’akheti constitutes an extremely remarkable historical evidence, and its significance exceeds the relative limitedness of “pure” numismatics.

Keywords

Georgian coinage, Kingdom of K’akheti, Zagam mint, Kakhed mint, Ottoman coinage, monetary circulation
Remarkably, the Georgian authorities were obliged to acknowledge the suzerainty of the invading neighbors as reflected by the produce of some of the contemporary Georgian mints, bearing the names of a foreign overlord but not that of the local king / prince, and typologically pertaining to the field of Iranian or Ottoman numismatics.

For the time being we focus on the numismatic legacy of the easternmost Georgian province of K’akheti. Two (newly established?) mints were located on its territory, in the cities of Bazari and Kaki, constituting a particularly significant coin-producing cluster.¹

The city of Bazari was first mentioned in 1392 (“27 [serf] households of merchant Armenian and Jewish men at Bazari”); gradually, it became one of the two capital cities of the Kingdom of K’akheti² (Gremi was another). From numismatic point of view, it is noteworthy, that Bazari (or Ts’aghma-Bazari [i.e. Bazaar-on-the-other-side]³) was the major urban and mint producing center of K’akheti, frequently designated on coins (and by foreign authors employing the Arabic graphemes) as Zagam, namely “Zakam” or “Zakām” (ژاکام or ژاکام).⁴ Bazari started issuing money at least since 1552/3 (AH 960), understandably, in the name of the Šāfavid sovereign.⁵ The Zagam coinage was first studied by Tinatin Kutelia and Levan Ch’ilashvili;⁶ however, the 21st century has witnessed a multitude of new publications dealing with various aspects of Bazari / Zagami numismatic history (under the Safavids).⁷

Recent sensational discoveries elucidated, that Zagami was not the only mint on the territory of the Kingdom of K’akheti. The mint “Kākhed” (کاخد) was read on several copper and silver coins published in 2012/2015⁸ by Alexandr Akopyan and David Alexanyan. The authors considered this toponym to be derived from the des-

¹ Paghava I., 2016a.
³ Chaghma-Bazari, [i.e. Downside-Bazaar], in Temo Jojua’s opinion.
⁴ Кутелия Т., 1979: 14-25; ჭოფიძა ჯ., 2012b.
⁵ Paghava I., Bennett K., 2015.
⁶ Perhaps the degraded silver, billon or copper coins of the kings of K’akheti had been minted there before as well?
⁸ Акопян А., Алексашиян Д., 2015. The initial version of the article was available online already in 2012: it was intended for publication in the collection of articles – Путями средневековых монет: Археолого-нумизматический сборник памяти Алексея Владимировича Фомина; however, as far as we know, the latter has never been published.
ignation of the entire province of K’akheti (ქახეთი), i.e. “Kākhet” (კახეთ). In their opinion, the Kākhed coinage was minted at Zagam mint. A silver coin also minted at “Kākhed” (კახეთ) was published by Irakli Paghava and Goga Gabashvili in 2015; the authors (erroneously) attributed it to Muḥammad Khudābandah and conjectured that “Kākhed” could designate Gremi, yet another capital of the Kingdom of K’akheti; it became also clear that Kākhed was issuing both copper and silver coinage.

However, eventually “Kākhed” turned out to be something absolutely different. In 2016 Irakli Paghava discovered a new (Georgian) mint (or at least mint-name), namely “Kākhetābād” (კახეთაბად). In that very year the same author proved that both Kākhed and Kākhetābād designated the (mint of) the Georgian city of K’ak’i (in K’akheti). Being first mentioned in the first third of the 11th c. (“… and IB (12) merchants at Kaki”), by the 16th century it became one of the major mints of K’akheti in the east of the country.

Up to this point it was considered that all the coins minted at the mints of the Kingdom of K’akheti, both Zagam and Kākhed, were issued in the name of the Safavid overlord, or, at least (in case of civic copper coinage) within the framework of the Safavid monetary tradition.

However, minting the coinage in the name of the Ottoman intruders could not be excluded either: Kingdom of K’akheti had to manoeuvre between the Safavids and Ottomans to retain at least internal autonomy and immunity from invasions (on condition of paying a tribute). Already back in 2012 Irakli Paghava analysed this possibility in his article (in Georgian) devoted to Georgian-Ottoman Numismatic Relations; he reverted to this issue in yet another article (in English) published in 2013: in both cases a note by Ibrahim Rahimizadeh was employed; the latter was an Ottoman Chronicler accompanying Lala Mustafa Pasha’s army invading the Caucasian provinces of the Safavids, who directly mentioned minting Ottoman coins by Alexandre II, king of K’akheti.

Contrary to expectations, within a time span of only 2-3 years, the narrative source was confirmed by the hands-on numismatic material: in 2015 Irakli Paghava and Giorgi Gogava were the first scholars to discover and publish the so called K’akhetian-Ottoman coins, i.e. the coins minted in the name of the Ottoman sul-

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10 Ibid.: 155-156.
12 Paghava I., (in print, a).
13 Paghava I., 2016b.
14 Paghava I., (in print, b).
16 Paghava I., 2013.
tan at K’akhetian mints – their article was devoted to the monetary series issued in K’akheti in the name of the Ottoman sultāns Murād III (1574-1595 / AH 982-1003) and Muḥammad (Mehmet) III (1595-1603 / AH 1003-1012) at two different mints – “Zakam” (زکام) and “Kākhed” (کاخد). A new chapter of Georgian (and Ottoman) numismatic history was opened – the so called K’akhetian-Ottoman series.

Two years later, in 2017, David Alexanyan and Dmitri Yanov published several new K’akhetian (and Caucasian)-Ottoman coin types (along with re-publishing and reviewing the coin types already published by Irakli Paghava and Giorgi Gogava). A Countermark of Zagam (certainly a novelty, at least as far as it regards the published evidence) was made public most recently by Giorgi Gogava in the same issue of the Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society.

Evidently, new discoveries have provided us with plentiful new monetary data, certainly amplifying the Georgian numismatic history typologically and providing a valuable monetary material serving as primary historical source.

However, the chronology of minting for many coin types can be established only approximately (2nd half of the 16th century – 1st third of the 17th century?); more importantly, their role and interrelation in the contemporary monetary circulation is equally vague. The major reason is the absence of the contemporary monetary complexes / hoards, as opposed to the plethora of single finds, unfortunately deprived from the proper archeological context. Correspondingly, few hoards available for study constitute potentially extremely significant primary sources of information.

Our objective is to discuss and publish one of the rare hoards of the epoch, discovered on the territory of K’akheti (eastern Georgia), and predominantly comprised of the coins minted within the Kingdom of K’akheti and in the name of the Ottoman sultan.

Telavi Hoard: Composition and Analysis

This hoard was discovered back in 2016 somewhere in the vicinity of the city of Telavi (in K’akheti, Georgia). Unfortunately, the precise find location and circumstances could not be established. However, we were provided an opportunity to take pictures of the coins and artifacts from the hoard, as well as to weigh them.

17 Alexanyan D., Yanov D., 2017.
18 Gogava G., 2017. The author evidently inclined to the idea that the countermark was applied to the coins in the period of Safavid dominance (“The countermark is of a traditional Persian style showing the influence of the Safavid dynasty”). At least theoretically, we would not exclude that it was applied under Ottoman control.
The Telavi hoard constituted an accumulation of silver (billon) coins and artifacts (jewelry) from precious metals (both silver and gold), as well as hacksilver, also a tiny bronze pendant and tiny non-metallic bead. The composition of the hoard (137.90 g in total) was as follows (Charts 1-2):

- Silver coins (Figs. 1.1.1-4.1.4): 56 in total (110.25 g in total, 79.97% of total hoard weight);
- Hacksilver (Fig. 5): slightly deformed silver ring (3.69 g); fragments of silver necklace, with some incrustations, in one case; silver flan, holed twice (19.18 g in total, including the ring; 13.91% of total hoard weight).

Silver generally, both coined and bullion (hacksilver, ring) constituted 129.43 g (93.86% of total hoard weight);

- Bronze pendant (Fig. 5, details) (fragment of some other necklace?), 3.42 g, and a small bead, 0.13 g (Fig. 5, details) (3.55 g in total, 2.57% of total hoard weight);
- Gold ring with turquoise (Figs. 6.1-6.4): 4.89 g; 3.55% of total hoard weight).
Silver coins (Figs. 1.1.1-4.1.4)

Fig. 1.1.1 – 0.32g.

Fig. 2.1.1 – 2.17g.

Fig. 2.1.2 – 1.94g.

Fig. 2.1.3 – 1.96g.

Fig. 2.1.4 – 2.12g.

Fig. 2.1.5 – 2.04g.

Fig. 2.1.6 – 1.93g.

Fig. 2.1.7 – 2.12g.

Fig. 2.2.1 – 2.18g.

Fig. 2.2.2 – 2.20
Hacksilver (Fig. 5)
Fig. 5, details: bronze pendant, 3.42 g (left); small bead, 3.55 g (right)

Gold ring with turquoise (Figs. 6.1-6.4)
MONETARY PART OF THE HOARD

We will discuss the monetary part of the hoard first, later proceeding with a short section on the non-monetary (mostly jewelry) part.

The monetary part can be divided into following categories (Charts 3-4):

Chart 3 – Monetary part of a hoard: composition (by coin number)

Chart 4 – Monetary part of a hoard: composition (by coin weight, g)
– Group 1: 1/56 (1.79%) Muscovy coin, with total weight of 0.32 g (0.29% of the weight of the monetary part of the hoard); functionally, probably also hacksilver (vide infra);

– Group 2: 39/56 (69.64%) Ottoman coins minted / countermarked in K’akheti, with total weight of 77.52 g (70.31% of the weight of the monetary part of the hoard);

– Group 3: 12/56 (21.43%) Ottoman coins of distinguishable type, possibly minted in K’akheti, with total weight of 26.76 g (24.27% of the weight of the monetary part of the hoard);

– Group 4: 4/56 (7.14%) unidentified coins of similar weight, flan size, and alloy (de visu); most probably also the monetary issues from K’akheti, with total weight of 5.65 g (5.12% of the weight of the monetary part of the hoard).

Chart 5 – Monetary part of a hoard: composition (number of coins vs. their weight, in %)
As we see, the Telavi hoard comprised only silver coins, and almost exclusively the Oriental ones; by latter we presume in case of perhaps all the coins the Ottoman issues. On the other hand, the majority of the coins in this hoard (discovered in a Georgian province) pertained to the group of Georgian-Ottoman, or, more precisely K’akhetian-Ottoman coinage. For the composition of the monetary part of the hoard, in percents, cf. Chart 5.

We proceed with description of the coin types.

For the list of the hoard coins, incl. individual characteristics, cf. Table 1.

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Table 1 – List of (silver) coins from the Telavi hoard

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Coinage groups</th>
<th>Mint</th>
<th>Fig. #</th>
<th>Weight (g)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1, Russian (Muscovite) Coinage</td>
<td>Moscow</td>
<td>1.1.1</td>
<td>0.32</td>
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<td>2.2.3</td>
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<td>2.3.1</td>
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<td>Sug-group 4</td>
<td>Zagam</td>
<td>2.4.1</td>
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<td>Sub-group 6</td>
<td>Group 2, Georgian(K’akhetian)-Ottoman coinage</td>
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<td>c/m of Zagam</td>
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<th>Group 3, Ottoman coinage of identifiable type, but NM?</th>
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<th>Group 4, unattributed coins (Caucasian-Ottoman?)</th>
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Group 1 was represented by a sole coin, a сабельница, i.e. a sabre coin, according to the effigy of the ruler, i.e. denga (1/2 copeck) of the Muscovite Russian State, minted in the name of Ivan IV the Terrible (1533-1584). AR, 0.32 g, holed. Fig. 1.1.1
Obverse: Mounted figure of a Prince with sabre in hand
Reverse: Russian legend in three lines:

КНЭЬ
ВЕЛИКИ
ІВАНЬ
i.e. Prince / the Great / Ivan

This is the early coin type with the title of Great Prince. It was introduced by the 1535-1538 monetary reform of Elena Glinskaya, Ivan IV’s mother, who was the regent of the state while her son was still a minor, and was minted till 1547, when Ivan IV started to indicate on the coinage additionally his title of Tsar. The coins were produced from high-standard silver (at least 900/1000) with standard weight of 0.34 g. Intended to replace the previous issues, they were minted in quantities, and circulated until at least till the beginning of the 17th century. Being struck from high-standard silver, they could penetrate the areas beyond the boundaries of the Muscovite State. Single finds are known in Crimea and North Caucasus. Possibly, this is the southernmost find of the Russian coinage of the epoch. This denga constitutes the oldest coin of the hoard. Being minted before 1547, it reached eastern Georgia and was hoarded with other coins by the end of the 16th – early 17th century.
We incline to the idea that it was imported into the Kingdom of K’akheti within the context of Georgian-Russian diplomatic, military and cultural contacts in the 2nd half of the 16th century, rather than due the trade relations between the Kingdom of K’akheti and the Muscovite State.

Group 2 comprised 39 silver coins, pertaining to various types, issued at the mints of Kākhed (Kaki, major city of the Kingdom of K’akheti, later of the Elisu Sultanate) and Zagam (capital city of the Kingdom of K’akheti, Bazari, according to Georgian sources).
We will assign these coins to sub-groups corresponding to coin types.

19 Information was kindly provided by Vasilii Zaytsev. Cf. Мельникова А., 1989: 14-28.
The general coin type will be described, based on the extant specimens and available literature (if published, already). The metrology data will also be analyzed: we will attempt to establish the average weight of each coin type.

**Sub-group 1:**
Kâkhed mint, in the name of Mehmet III (1595-1603, AH 1003-1012); coin type: Alexanyan and Yanov, 2017, type X.\(^{20}\)

**Obverse:** A toughra of Mehmet III (سلطان محمد بن مراد خان), additional legend above / around, possibly صاحب العز و النصر في البر و البحر

**Reverse:** Mint formula within central horizontally elongated cartouche: ضرب

and beneath it: كاخد

Above: fragments of a legend (starts with و؟).

Surrounded by linear and then beaded circles.

7 specimens (Figs. 2.1.1-2.1.7).

Average weight 2.04 g calculated by 7 specimens from the hoard.

If we take into account also 3 specimens published by Alexanyan and Yanov, the average weight would be slightly lower, 2.02 g.

**Sub-group 2:**
Kâkhed mint, in the name of Mehmet III (1595-1603, AH 1003-1012); coin type: Alexanyan and Yanov, 2017, type XI.\(^{21}\)

**Obverse:** A toughra of Mehmet III (سلطان محمد بن مراد خان)

**Reverse:** Within central cartouche, the mint formula with graphemes distributed in two lines:

ضرب كاخد

Additional legend above: عز أبيه و نصره

3 specimens (Fig. 2.2.1-2.2.3).

The average weight: 2.10 g.

If we take into account also 2 specimens published by Alexanyan and Yanov, the average weight would be identical.

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\(^{21}\) Ibid.
**Sub-group 3:**
Kākhed mint, in the name of Mehmet III (1595-1603, AH 1003-1012); coin type: Paghava and Gogava, 2015, type 2\(^22\) (= Alexanyan and Yanov, 2017, type IX\(^23\)). First published by Akopyan and Alexanyan in 2015, but erroneously attributed to Ismail I Safavid.\(^24\)

**Obverse:** A toughra of Mehmet III entitling his father as sultan along with khan

عَزْ نِصْرِهِ (سلطان محمد بن سلطان مراد خان)

**Reverse:** Within central circle.

Additional legend around: خلد الله ملكه وسلطنته؟

It is remarkable, that on the specimen from the hoard the legend starts at 3:30 from the ornament and is oriented centrifugally, whereas on two specimens published by Alexanyan and Yanov it started at an ornament at 5:30 and was oriented centripetally.

1 specimen only (Fig. 2.3.1).

Weight of the sole specimen: 2.18 g.

If we take into account also 2 specimens published by Paghava and Gogava in 2015 and 2 more specimens published by Alexanyan and Yanov in 2017, the average weight would be slightly lower, 2.13 g.

**Sub-group 4:**
Zagam mint, in the name of Mehmet III (1595-1603, AH 1003-1012); coin type: Paghava and Gogava, 2015, type 1.\(^25\)

**Obverse:** Within Solomon’s Seal-like cartouche: 

**Reverse:** Within central horizontally elongated oval cartouche: [effigy of a rosette]

Illegible legend above and below.

2 specimens (Fig. 2.4.1-2.4.2).

The average weight: 2.17 g.

If we take into account also 5 specimens published by Paghava and Gogava in 2015, the average weight would be somewhat lower, 1.96 g.

**Sub-group 5:**
Zagam mint, in the name of Mehmet III (1595-1603, AH 1003-1012); coin type: Paghava and Gogava, 2015, type 3\(^26\) (= Alexanyan and Yanov, 2017, type VIII\(^27\)).
Obverse: سلطان محمد within central circle.
Fragments of a legend around (Alexanyan and Yanov claimed it was خلد الله ملكه و سلطنته – we are not convinced).
Reverse: ضرب زكم within a hexagonal star (no contrary to description in Alexanyan and Yanov, 2017, type VIII). Dots within star rays. Stars between the rays. 7 specimens (Fig. 2.5.1-2.5.7).
The average weight calculated by 7 specimens: 2.11 g.
If we take into account also 1 specimen published by Paghava and Gogava in 2015 and 1 more specimen published by Alexanyan and Yanov in 2017, the average weight would be slightly lower, 2.06 g.

Sub-group 6:
Zagam mint, in the name of Mehmet III (1595-1603, AH 1003-1012); new coin type:
Obverse: محمد within a small central circle.
Fragments of a legend around.
Reverse: ضرب زكم (mirrored) within a hexagonal star. Dots within star rays. Stars between the rays. Similar to the reverse of Sub-group 5.
8 specimens (Fig. 2.6.1-2.6.8).
The average weight calculated by 8 specimens: 2.01 g.

Sub-group 7:
Zagam mint, in the name of Mehmet III (1595-1603, AH 1003-1012); coin type: Paghava and Gogava, 2015, type 2\(^{28}\) (= Alexanyan and Yanov, 2017, type VII\(^{29}\)).
Obverse: A toughra of Mehmet III entitling his father as sultan along with khan عز نصره (سلطان محمد بن سلطان مراد خان)
Reverse: خلد الله ملكه و سلطنته. ضرب في زكم within a circle.
5 specimens (Fig. 2.7.1-2.7.5).
The average weight calculated by 5 specimens: 1.58 g.
If we take into account also 4 specimens published by Paghava and Gogava in 2015 and 6 more specimens published by Alexanyan and Yanov in 2017, the average weight would be slightly higher, 1.66 g.

Sub-group 8:
A countermark of Zagam mint on unattributed host coins. A new countermark (different from that published by Giorgi Gogava\(^{30}\)).

\(^{28}\) Ibid.: 276.
\(^{29}\) Alexanyan D., Yanov D., 2017: 25. The colleagues considered the types to be different?
Octagonal countermark: عدل زكم
Both Obverse and Reverse of the host coins illegible. In terms of weight, flan size, alloy and calligraphy of the extant fragments of the legends, the contemporary Ottoman issues, probably issued at the same (Georgian) mints.
6 specimens (Fig. 2.8.1-2.8.6).
The average weight calculated by 6 specimens: 1.94 g.

Group 3: No mint? In the name of Mehmet III (1595-1603, AH 1003-1012); coin type: Alexanyan and Yanov, 2017, type XV\(^{31}\)). The mint name is not indicated or has not been read so far. However, we might conjecture it originated at one of the Georgian mints in K’akheti: Zagam or Kakhed. The arguments are as follows: All or almost all known specimens were discovered in the corresponding area; as far as we take into consideration only the coins with legible mints, the hoard we are describing comprised exclusively the coins produced in Zagam or Kakhed (except for a sole Russian denga). Nevertheless, at the moment it would be better to discuss the coins of this type separately, as a separate sub-group.

Obverse: The area divided into 9 (not 6, as in Alexanyan and Yanov, 2017, type XV, the specimen they studied seemingly had been struck twice or overstruck) sectors.

Reverse: Four linear elements (possibly stylized letters of the Arabic alphabet, similar to ٤-٤), dividing the area into four quadrants. Fragments of a legend therein.

We would prefer to abstain from discussing the legends in more detail for the moment, and would prefer to await having available for study more and better preserved specimens (cf. description in Alexanyan and Yanov, 2017, type XV).
12 specimens (Figs. 3.1.1-3.1.12).
The average weight calculated by 12 specimens: 2.23 g.

Group 4 comprised 4 coins. As we have already mentioned, in view of the similarity in weight, flan size, alloy and calligraphy of the extant fragments of the legends, they most probably pertain to the same epoch and perhaps were also issued at Caucasian mints.
As we could not read the legends, we provide only weights.
4 coins (Figs. 4.1.1-4.1.4): 1.51, 1.61, 1.20, 1.33 g.

\(^{31}\) Alexanyan D., Yanov D., 2017: 24-25.
NON-MONETARY PART OF THE HOARD

The non-monetary part of the hoard comprised silver ("hacksilver", in a sense), elements of a necklace (globular pendants, and also a circular artifact), silver ring, silver blank; base metal pendant of different shape, and non-metallic small bead (Fig. 5), as well as gold ring with turquoise (Figs. 6.1-6.4).

There are 14 globular pendants; the weight of 12 of them fluctuates within the range of 0.30-0.41 g. These light-weight pendants have to be hollow. There are 2 heavy-weight ones too: one globular pendant weights 3.48 g, probably because of incrustation or being made from a solid piece of metal (second from the left in the middle row); another (third from the left in the middle row) weighs 2.14 g, probably being solid. The latter globular pendant is remarkable for its workmanship: granulation in silver (on a solid globule of silver?).

Silver ring bears no legends or ornamentation and does not constitute a particularly fine piece of artisanship.

Silver flan (in the upper row) bears absolutely no traces of legends, and has perfectly smooth surface. Therefore, we have not placed it into the monetary part of the hoard and we would not risk conjecturing that was a blank intended for striking.

On the other hand, the Russian denga, reviewed above along with other coins, possibly was considered by the owner to be rather a piece of (high-standard) silver, rather than a currency. Our arguments are as follows: 1) heterogeneity of this denga to other coins of the hoard, all pertaining to Oriental, most probably, exclusively Ottoman numismatic tradition; 2) heterogeneity of this denga to local monetary circulation, which until the 18th century never knew mass-imports of Russian coinage; 3) uniqueness of this denga – a single coin out of 56, only 0.32 g, 1.79% of total coin number, but just 0.29% of the weight of the monetary part of the hoard (Charts 5, 7-8); 4) more or less demonetized condition: holed (to transform into a pendant?) (only two other coins were holed, Figs. 4.1.3-4.1.4. By the way, those two coins, and perhaps all the coins with effaced surfaces could be valued also rather by weight than by tail). That denga might have found better place within the non-monetary part of the hoard, but due to its monetary past we still reviewed it along with other coins.

We do not know the reason/s, but whoever interred this hoard, deposited also a base-metal pendant (3.42 g), and a tiny bead (0.13 g). Perhaps being in a hurry he made a mistake by considering them to be made of silver (with dark patina).

The gold ring with turquoise (Figs. 6.1-6.4) seems to be the most interesting (and valuable) non-monetary item in this hoard. Possibly being produced by a local goldsmith (or was it imported from Iran?), it fits the epoch (16th century) ideally. We know that in this period the Kingdom of K’akheti enjoyed relative political stability and consequently achieved a remarkable economic prosperity. Arts and religious feelings flourished; inter alia, a special K’akhetian type of Georgian icons was born (possibly,
under Persian influence). It was quite remarkable in terms of differing from the previous Georgian tradition of icon-making by employment of turquoise and rubies for jewelling the metal mounting of the icon, made from gold (instead of silver, as it had been normally done earlier); also of a different technique for decorating the metal mounting, and painting the faces of the saints instead of chasing them in metal as earlier (Cf. Fig. 7).

Fig. 7 – Georgian icon of K’akhetian type
HOARD COMPOSITION: SOME ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

Evidently, the hoard contained mostly silver (93.86% by weight). However, it has to be noted, that the gold had much higher value than silver (ratio of approximately 1:15\(^{33}\)); as to turqoise, we do not know its precise value in that epoch (vide infra), but tentatively, it was more or less on par with gold (?). Therefore, we can perhaps conjecture, that the gold(-turqoise) part of the hoard was probably equal in terms of value to approximately 75 g of silver (as compared to 129.43 g in silver or even bil-lon coins and bullion; we would assume that the single gold-turqoise ring constituted up to 35-40% of the hoard’s total value.

Coined silver probably had higher value (per weight) than hacksilver (bullion). We would assume that the former cost by approximately 5% more than the latter.

The value of the base metal / non-metallic artifacts undoubtedly approximated nil and they were included by mere association.

The conventional value of individual constituents of the hoard (vs. their weight) is represented in a Chart 6.

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33 The ratio for the late 16\(^{th}\) century and the region has certainly to be researched thoroughly; the figures 1:15 are somewhat conventional and constitute a retrograde extrapolation of the late 18\(^{th}\) century data. ფაღავა ი., ბიჭიკაშვილი ი., ჩაგუნავა რ., 2014: 224-226.
When studying the distribution of the hoard coins by mint, it becomes clear that Moscow denga constituted a negligible (both numerically and in terms of silver content) and probably accidental admixture (as hacksilver element?) to the main body of Oriental / Caucasian-Ottoman / Georgian-Ottoman coins. As to the latter when the mint name could be read or was indicated on the coins, it was exclusively either Kākhed (11 coins; 22.78 g; 19.64, almost 20% of the total number of coins, 20.66% of the weight of the monetary part of the hoard), or Zagam (28 coins; 54.74 g; exactly 50% of the total number of coins, 49.65, almost 50% of the weight of the monetary part of the hoard). (Charts 7-9).

We can add, that that the hoard comprised approximately 2.5 times more coins of Zagam than of Kākhed and the weight of the former was approximately 2.5 times more than that of the latter.

Chart 7 – Monetary part of the hoard: distribution by mints (by coin numbers)
Chart 8 – Monetary part of the hoard: distribution by mints (by total weight of the coins represented in the hoard)

Chart 9 – Monetary part of a hoard: composition by mints (number of coins vs. their weight, in %)
WEIGHT STANDARD OF THE COINS AND THEIR DENOMINATION

We made an attempt (*vide supra* for calculations per coin type) to establish the weight standard of the coins represented in the hoard. For mean weight of the coins pertaining to various coin types, including the type with no mint, refer to Chart 10. Descriptive statistics for the oriental coins are presented in Table 2.

The average weight of all three of the Kâkhed coin types, as well as that of three Zagam coin types fluctuates within the range of 1.94-2.17 g; the difference seems to be insignificant. Just one Zagam coin type (Sub-group 7) was issued in much lighter weight, the average being 1.58 g (1.66 if considering all the extant coins, and not only the hoard material). The no mint coins of Mehmet III (Group 3) on average (2.23 g) tend to be somewhat heavier. It is hard to say, whether the coins of this type were issued to a truly different standard than the coins of Kâkhed and the majority of the Zagam coins.

It is remarkable, that the host coins countermarked with عدل زکم seemingly pertained to one and the same, or at least similar weight standard, with mean weight of 1.94 g (range 1.89-1.99 g) (Table 2).

As to the denomination, we are inclined to consider that all these coins represent the Ottoman *dirham* of 1.80-2.80 g, perhaps reflecting consequent stages of its ever-declining weight-standard against the background of the economic turmoil within the Ottoman Empire in the reign of Mehmet III, when “the expenses amounted to three times as much of the revenues”.

![Chart 10 – Mean weight of coins from various sub-groups](image-url)
Table 2 – Descriptive statistics for the Ottoman (incl. Georgian-Ottoman and Oriental unidentified) coins of the hoard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Sub-group 1</th>
<th>Sub-group 2</th>
<th>Sub-group 3</th>
<th>Sub-group 4</th>
<th>Sub-group 5</th>
<th>Sub-group 6</th>
<th>Sub-group 7</th>
<th>Sub-group 8</th>
<th>3rd Group</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.04</td>
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<td>2.18</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.11</td>
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<td>Standard Error</td>
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<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median</td>
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<td>2.18</td>
<td>2.17</td>
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<td>2.02</td>
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<td>Mode</td>
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<td>#N/A</td>
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<td>1.99</td>
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<td>Skewness</td>
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<td>Range</td>
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<td>Minimum</td>
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<td>1.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
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<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.20</td>
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<td>1.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.03</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HOARD CHRONOLOGY

In terms of chronology of the hoard, we have to underline that the jewelry pieces, albeit pointing to the same epoch (we mean the gold ring), do not provide solid basis for dating the hoard.

However, the coins can serve as sufficiently precise indicators therefore.

The denga of Ivan IV the Terrible issued in the 1535-1547 time period constitutes an interesting element of the hoard, but does not help much in dating it, since the Russian coins of this period remained in circulation for many decades.
The presence of 6 unattributed host coins with applied countermark ÙÆ q Íl μ does not help, since the countermark is undated.

But, generally, the Ottoman / Oriental coins of the hoards are quite helpful. As to the identifiable major part of the hoard, comprised entirely of the K’akhetian-Ottoman coinage, it is clear that historically, it could not be issued before Lala Mustafa Pasha’s invasion in 1578; hence a terminus post quem; moreover, all the identifiable coins, even those with no mint were issued in the name of Mehmet III (1595-1603 / AH 1003-12). No coins of Ahmed I (1603-1617 / AH 1012-1026) or ‘Abbas I the Safavid (1587-1629) found their way into this hoard. That means that this monetary complex was most probably hoarded during the reign of Mehmet III proper, or shortly after his death. Therefore, we would date this hoard with the first decade and probably even first half of the first decade of the 17th century.

On the other hand, there were no coins (minted either in K’akheti or elsewhere) of Murad III (1574-95 / AH 982-1003) represented in this hoard (we know that Murad III issued coins at least at Zagam mint35). That means that either the earlier coins (like the issues of Murad III) had already been banned, which is hardly probably for the region and epoch; or, that this is a short-term accumulation hoard, constituting a momentary snapshot of the monetary circulation in the Kingdom of K’akheti in the first years of the 17th century.

THE COUNTERMARK Ù Æq Íl μ: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The gravimetric uniformity of the host coins (vide supra) supplied with this countermark may indicate that only some specific group of coins was intended for countermarking; or, more likely, that the countermarking with this countermark was performed in a relatively short period of time, when only a relatively homogenous coinage was submitted to the mint for this operation.

It is also noteworthy, that the host coins look like Caucasian-Ottoman (by remnants of the legends, general style and metrology). There is not a single Safavid coin with this countermark. Therefore, we consider it would be safe to presume that this countermark was applied to the coins not long after the death of Mehmet III, or, more likely, during his reign, and constitutes a Georgian(K’akhetian)-Ottoman countermark.

Why was this countermark applied? We do not know the answer. The standard responses like reviving the worn-out specimens or legalizing the foreign currency are hardly acceptable, since 1) the legends on the host coins became indiscernible probably because of the pressure inflicted by the countermark-punch, rather than wore

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out; and if not for suffering the countermarking process, they probably would had been not worse in terms of preservation / legibility than the coins of the hoard with no countermarks; 2) the host coins seem to be Ottoman as well.

NUMEROITY OF THE COIN TYPES

This aspect of the K’akhetian coinage in the name of Mehmet III (and his predecessor too) merits some attention. What made the mint authorities (whoever they were – local Georgian officials appointed by the King of K’akheti, or the commanders of the deployed Ottoman garrison?) issue at least three coin types at the mint of Kākhed and three coin types at the mint of Zagam within the relatively short period of time of 1595-1603 (approximately 9 years)? Let alone the countermark, probably applied to the coins in the same period.

Theoretically, the alteration of the coin design could herald the alteration of the weight standard. However, if our calculations with regard to weight standards of various coin types above are correct and future discoveries confirm them, we may conjecture, that the weight standard has never been altered at the Kākhed mint, and was altered once or twice at the Zagam mint. In this case, what made the authorities change the coin design, i.e. the coin type at least in case of Kākhed? And in some cases at the Zagam mint too?

The bullion for the minting could have been submitted to the mints intermittently, leading to coin-striking activities of uneven intensity, probably occasional and even frequently coming to a more or less lengthy break. But even so, why the already produced dies could not be employed for minting the coins anew? Why the celators were assigned with a repetitive task of engraving new dies? Even if the old ones were out of order, why the design had to be changed significantly?

So far we have no response to the question we put ourselves. Nevertheless, hopefully the very raising of this issue might be helpful.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HOARD

The historical significance of this hoard is seemingly multifaceted.

The non-monetary items (particularly the globular silver pendants, including the one with granulation; and the gold ring) have some historical as well as esthetical value and may be helpful for studying the history of Georgian art and craftsmanship.

The hoard provides us with additional factual evidence for expanding our understanding of the contemporary monetary issues; a discovery of a new Ottoman type of Zagam (Sub-group 6) and a new (Ottoman dominance period?) countermark of
Zagam (Sub-group 8) is of particular significance. More information, including the metrology analysis was provided for the other coin types too, specifying the weight-standard and the protocol.

The hoard provides us with a rare insight into the monetary circulation on the territory of the Kingdom of K’akheti (also eastern Georgia and adjacent regions in general). Being a short-term accumulation hoard, it reflects veraciously the contemporary situation.

Russian denga from this hoard indicates some influx of the Muscovite coins into the country constituting specific numismatic reflections of the contacts between the states in the 16th century.

The very fact of issuing K’akhetian-Ottoman coinage indicates the availability of specific technical expertise and resources, which sheds some light on the contemporary economic history of K’akheti.

The hoard implies that the mint of Zagam was much more prolific than that of Kākhed, or, at least, that the internal area of K’akheti consumed primarily the produce of the former rather than that of the latter. Certainly, this is just an approximation, and further data are required for accessing this issue and establishing the output of these two Georgian mints.

We may also conjecture, that the monetary market of the Kingdom of K’akheti was more or less saturated by the Ottoman type currency issued at Zagam and Kākhed: no other mints were detected on the coins of the Telavi hoard; all the other coins (except for the 0.32 g Russian denga) either had not indication of the mint place, or were unattributable. They could be minted both in K’akheti and at other Caucasian-Ottoman mints. But even so, almost 70% (comprising slightly more than 70% of coined silver) of the hoard coins originated from Zagam and Kākhed.

We encounter both geographical and chronological homogeneity of the local monetary circulation in the Kingdom of K’akheti: predominantly the local mints are represented, and only by means of recent issues.

And finally, it would not be inappropriate to stress it out once again, that the very fact of the Ottoman type coinage minted in K’akheti constitutes an extremely remarkable historical evidence, and its significance certainly exceeds the relative limitedness of “pure” numismatics.

Last but not least, new data on the Ottoman type coin issues from Georgian mints provided by the Telavi hoard would be of some interest for those interested and researching the Ottoman numismatic history.

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