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THE FIRST ARABIC COINAGE OF GEORGIAN MONARCHS:
REDISCOVERING THE SPECIE OF DAVIT IV THE BUILDER (1089-1125),
KING OF KINGS AND SWORD OF MESSIAH

Summary

We discovered, presented and reviewed seven completely new specimens of the coin type issued by a certain Davit, King of Kings and Sword of Messiah, and represented by a unique piece before.

The study of this coinage is far from being complete due to the poor state of preservation of the extant specimens, particularly of their margins (future discoveries of the bigger pieces may shed more light upon this issue). However, the reexamination and reconsideration of the central legends led to their alternative reconstruction, providing valuable data and indicating that Davit V, son of Dimitri (I) minted no coinage (or that none survived), and the coin type previously attributed to this Georgian King was in effect issued by Davit IV the Builder, son of Giorgi (II); most probably, despite some discrepancies, it constituted the currency described, albeit somewhat imprecisely, by Al-Fāriqī. The incessant, as it was thought earlier, 12th-13th c. emissions of the Georgian monarchs now are interrupted at the short reign of Davit V; however, on the other hand, the numismatic legacy of Davit IV reign was enriched by a very noteworthy coin type, providing very valuable information for the research of the numismatic, and, more generally, political, economical and cultural history of Georgia and the whole region in that epoch.

It is clear now, that it was Davit IV who initiated a revolutionary monetary reform (along with the other ones), by issuing the so called Georgian-Arabic coinage, following the capture of Tiflis. This initially purely Arabic coinage gradually evolved into the well-known half-Georgian half-Arabic currency of

Queen Tamari and her children (Giorgi IV and Queen Rusudani) by the 1st third of the 13th c.

The reviewed money was issued after the conquest of Tiflīs, dating back to 1122 or 1123, and the emission was probably continued until the demise of Davit IV, i.e. 1125.

The circulation of this new coinage was not limited to Tiflīs and its hinterland only. It entered the economical life of the Kingdom and, seemingly, circulated country-wide (or, for the least, all over the eastern provinces of the Georgian Kingdom, including the ones remote from Tiflīs). We would even conjecture that this new currency, perhaps, de facto constituted the general national means of exchange.

The Georgian-Arabic coinage, issued from the last years of Davit IV's reign and inclusive of Queen Rusudani's rule, originated from the late Ja'farid coinage and the subsequent emissions of the Muslim Tiflīs. In our opinion, Its oriental appearance and nature, including the language of the legends (exclusively Arabic, at least initially), acknowledgement of the Seljuk Sultan (and the 'Abbasid Caliph later on) was possibly predetermined by this very legacy, as well as the desire to favour the domestic trade, by reconciling the economically influential Muslim merchants (and artisans?) from Tiflīs and Dmanīs (but reminding them of the resurgent military might of the Christian Georgian Kingdom, by including the King's militant laqab the Sword of Messiah).

Generally speaking, the changeover to the Arabic types may be considered as an impartial testimony to the Georgian advance onto the wider political arena, reflecting the altered Georgian Weltanschauung in view of the achieved and continuous expansion of the Christian Georgian Kingdom, becoming one of the hegemons of the region.

INTRODUCTION

The capture of Tiflīs by Davit IV the Builder in 1122¹ constituted one of the most significant events in Georgian history². The significance of the liberation of this major east-Georgian city from the five-century-long Muslim domination was not limited to the mere territorial expansion, but heralded quite unequivocally Georgia's de-facto status of the major³ Christian nucleus

¹ Or 1123? The exact date is still a subject of a scientific discussion, cf. ზაგუნიძე 2007.

² Georgian history could certainly be different provided the capital remained in Kutaisi, western Georgia.

³ And, essentially, the only one, after the Manzikert defeat of the Byzantine.

of power in the Caucasus, at times providing “the second front” diversion for the Crusaders’ foes in Palestine and Syria⁴.

In addition to its political, ideological and military importance for Georgians, the annexation of Tiflīs turned out to be quite consequential from cultural point of view. The capital was transferred there⁵ from Kutaisi in west-Georgia, perhaps to facilitate the assimilation process of this populous, but alien urban center. However, this decision seemingly strongly favoured the increasing orientalization of the court and administration⁶ (and the populace in general?⁷).

From numismatic point of view, the transformation was quite obvious, both reflecting and constituting the evolving cultural paradigm. When comparing the standard silver coinage of Bagrat IV (1027-1074), Giorgi II (1074-1089) and Davit IV the Builder (1089-1125) (Figs. 2.1-2.3) with that of Dimitri I (1125-1155, 1155-1156) (Figs. 2.4-2.6) it becomes clear that significant alterations were applied in terms of the following:

- Language employed: Georgian and Greek being replaced with Arabic, the omission of such a national and popular feature as the legends in Georgian being very remarkable;
- Design: Iconography being abandoned in favour of the mono-epigraphic design;
- Visual dechristianization: The effigy of the Holy Virgin being omitted;
- Titulature: Omission of the Byzantine title (*nobelissimos* / *sebastos* / *caesar*), and the “national” Georgian ones (King of Abkhazs, Kartvels, Rans and Kakhs⁸), but appearance of the Arabic *Malik al-Mulūk* (ملك الملوك) and *Sword of Messiah* (حسام المسيح);

⁴ For the history of Davit IV the Builder’s relationship with the Muslim world cf. ჯაფარიძე 1995: 12-59.

⁵ The capital of Georgia is still Tbilisi, ancient Tiflīs.

⁶ Cf. Пахомов 1970: 75; მუსხელიშვილი 1966; გაბაშვილი 1981: 84-89. The latter author reviewed the extensive amount of data, but attempted to interpret them as a testimony to the ongoing *Georgianization* of the formerly Islamic administrative institutes; in our opinion these data indicate quite the opposite – the strong influence of the Muslim Tiflīs legacy upon the evolving administrative structure of the expanding Georgian Kingdom.

⁷ We are currently researching more general aspects of the Muslim cultural influence in Georgia.

⁸ These titles reflected the integration of various Georgian provinces and kingdoms into a single polity.

- Acknowledgment of the foreign rulers: There were none acknowledged previously, although the indication of the Byzantine titles positioned Georgian kings within the Byzantine political oikoumene, in a subordinate position with regard to the Byzantine emperor; the name of the Seljuk Sultan (and the ‘Abbasid Caliph) emerged in their stead;
- Coin metal: Silver being replaced with copper;
- Nature of currency: The more or less uniform, regular coins (constituting thin and broad flans) being replaced with the irregular ones (relatively thick lumps of metal of varying weight, size and shape).

The transformation may be summarized as certain denationalization and Arabization, as well as visual dechristianization of the state coinage and adoption of the irregular copper coinage (instead of the regular silver dirhams). The extent and nature of these changes provides sufficient ground for concluding that the major monetary reform was implemented, by introducing the so called *Georgian-Arabic coinage*.

Chronologically, it was hard to establish, whether this reform was carried out by Davit IV (at the end of his reign), or by his son and successor, Dimitri I's (soon after the demise of his kingly father).

Al-Fāriqī, Arab man of letters, who visited Georgia and served for a while as a secretary⁹ of Dimitri I in AH 548-549 (1153-1154)¹⁰, left an extremely interesting testimony, attributing the reform to Davit IV and to the time period after the capture of Tiflīs; depicting the situation in Tiflīs after its transfer under the direct Georgian rule and the still effective rights granted by the conqueror to the local Mohammedan populace, Al-Fāriqī noted, that Davit IV “guaranteed to the Muslims everything they wished, according to the pact which is valid even to-day. ... He struck dirhams for them, on one side of which stood the names of the sultan and the caliph, and on the other side stood the names of God and the Prophet, on him be peace, (whereas) the king's own name stood on a side of the dirham”¹¹.

⁹ One more instance of the evolving relations with the Muslim world. Cf. MINORSKY 1949: 31.

¹⁰ Ibid.; სიხარულიძე 1999:15.

¹¹ MINORSKY 1949: 33-34. Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, the late epitomizer of the 1st half of the 13th c. also touched upon this activity, mentioning not only *dirhams*, but *dinars* as well. ცქიტიშვილი 1967: 204-205. However, this information is most certainly derived from that of Al-Fāriqī, and constitutes a certain creative elaboration of the latter's primary information; we hardly think that the gold coins were minted. Moreover, even the *dirhams* mentioned by Al-Fāriqī were evidently the irregular copper coins (as shown below) – we have already postulated that *dramas*, the Georgian equivalent of *dirhams* could designate the irregular copper coinage. ფაღავა 2011: 324-327. The terminology used by Al-Fāriqī confirms our supposition.

However, so far, no Arabic coin type was discovered to fit the description, or, for the least, to be attributed to Davit IV the Builder reliably.

Some scholars considered the following copper coin type (Fig. 2.14) to be the one recorded by Al-Fāriqī¹²:

OBVERSE: The effigy of the crown-bearing rider identified by the initials D (or DT, i.e. “Davit”) in Georgian Asomtavruli script (Ⴃ or ႣႥ)

REVERSE:

ملك الملوك
حسام المسيح
داود بن كيوركى

We fully agree with the numismatists, who attributed this coin type to Davit VI Ulu (1247-1270)¹³, Davit IV’s direct offspring who was enthroned in about 170 years after the demise of this great ancestor: The Naskh calligraphy, iconography (horseman’s effigy)¹⁴, monetary technique (regularity of the flans, technology employed for producing them), all these point to the epoch of the Mongol dominance, whereas the presence of the arrogant titles *King of Kings* and *Sword of Messiah* does not render this attribution impossible, as the Mongol administration frequently abstained from the stringent regulation of the coinage issued by the subdued political units¹⁵.

Therefore, according to the extant numismatic artifacts brought into knowledge, and despite the direct testimony of Al-Fāriqī, it seemed that the first Georgian coinage of the new, Arabic, type was issued by Dimitri I¹⁶, son of Davit IV, despite the fact that Tiflīs had already been captured by Georgians several years earlier, at the end of the latter’s reign.

However, the new data provide us with an opportunity to establish the missing link between the 11th c. Georgian-Byzantine and the 12th-13th c. Georgian-Arabic coinage, and clarify exactly who implemented the monetary reform.

¹² Капанадзе 1958. Cf. ქუთელია 2005.

¹³ Cf. ჯაფარიძე 1989b: 89-90, სქოლიო 3.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ G. Japaridze conjectured that this coin type was issued during the anti-Mongol uprising of Davit VI Ulu in 1260-1261, hence the arrogant titulature. ჯაფარიძე 1989b: 89-90, სქოლიო 3. Our monitoring of the Georgian numismatic market indicates that these coins are not particularly rare, which may perhaps be explained by their relatively prolonged and/or mass emission, which does not quite fit the *the revolt hypothesis*.

¹⁶ TURKIA-PAGHAVA 2009; PAGHAVA-TURKIA-ZLOBIN G., 2011; Пахомов 1970: 74-79.

Our objectives are

- To review and reattribute the copper coin type with Arabic legends, acknowledging certain *Davit, King of Kings and Sword of Messiah* as well as certain *Seljuk Sultan*, which was considered to be the numismatic vestige of the short reign of Davit V (1155)¹⁷, son of Dimitri I and grandson of Davit IV;
- To analyze the numismatic, and, generally, historical significance of our discovery.

RESEARCH HISTORY

Evidently, the priority in *discovering* this coin type belongs to Ye. Pakhomov, who trusted his student, I. Jalaghania with the right to *publish* it¹⁸.

I. Jalaghania published this coin type first in 1958 (without providing any images), describing it as follows¹⁹:

OBVERSE:

O

ملك...وك
حسام الم...
داود

REVERSE:

محمد
السلطان الها...²¹
بر...

Based on the titles and epithets, as well as names (Sultan Barkyāruq (1094-1105) and Sword of Messiah, King Davit), the honourable scholar confidently attributed this coin to Davit IV the Builder (1089-1125)²². Later on, in 1979, she repeated it once again²³.

In 1964 the same coin type was dealt with in passing by D. Kapanadze (in one of his articles devoted to the Georgian numismatics of the Mongol

¹⁷ For the history of his reign cf. სტეფანაძე 1990: 19-23; სიხარულაძე 1999.

¹⁸ კაპანაძე 1966: 64.

¹⁹ Джалагания 1958: 40-41.

²⁰ The description does not correspond to the coin (Fig. 1.0).

²¹ According to the Russian translation, **المعظم** was implied.

²² *Ibid.*: 41.

²³ Джалагания 1979: 77-78.

period); D. Kapanadze provided the translation of the legends differently, namely, in the following form: “King of Kings, Davit, son of Giorgi, Sword of Messiah”²⁴. It is unclear, where did D. Kapanadze read “son of Giorgi” – there were two specimens of this coin type in Ye. Pakhomov’s collection, reportedly²⁵, and D. Kapanadze mentioned Ye. Pakhomov’s collection²⁶, but without specifying whether he studied the coin (or its imprint) *de visu*, or relied on the words of Ye. Pakhomov. The latter is more probable, as in 1970 D. Kapanadze expressed a regret for not having seen it²⁷. Additionally noting that the coin was irregular, the author considered the aforementioned Davit to be Davit IV the Builder²⁸.

In any case, already by 1966 D. Kapanadze renounced his initial version, proclaimed I. Jalaghania’s interpretation to be erroneous, and described the coin (now providing the Arabic legends) as follows²⁹:

OBVERSE:

O . . .
 . . . حسان الم . . .
 . . . داود . . .

REVERSE:

“Sultan” is the only fragment legible unambiguously”³⁰.

Initially, D. Kapanadze, seemingly, rejected the reading of “Sultan Barqiaruq”, whose rule (1094-1105) coincided with that of Davit the Builder (1089-1125). He also noted, that based on the established minting chronology of the irregular coppers, theoretically two Georgian monarchs could issue this coinage, either Davit IV the Builder or Davit V son of Dimitri. Therefore, D. Kapanadze disputed “the unwarranted categoricalness” of its attribution to Davit the Builder³¹, and, seemingly, did not exclude that it was issued during the reign of Davit V.

²⁴ Капанадзе 1964: 67, примечание 11; კაპანაძე 1966: 65.

²⁵ *vide infra*.

²⁶ Капанадзе 1964: 67, примечание 11.

²⁷ Капанадзе 1970: 295.

²⁸ The Arabic text provided reduplicated the description of I. Jalaghania almost entirely. Капанадзе 1970: 295.

²⁹ კაპანაძე 1966: 65.

³⁰ G. Japaridze justly noted that the image available provided an opportunity for the more complete description. ჯაფარიძე 1989b: 90-91, სქოლიო 7.

³¹ *Ibid*.

However, at a later date, the honourable researcher of Georgian numismatics shared I. Jalaghania's attribution, including reading the legends of the name of Sultan "Barkyāruq"; however, he had some reservations with regard to the indication of "Muḥammad", and supplied this reading with a question mark in both of his works dealing with this issue³².

A new stage in the research of this coin type was related to G. Japaridze³³. He was the first to pay attention, that there were marginal legends on the obverse (unfortunately, mostly off-flan), and some unclear symbols laterally from the central legend of the obverse ("possibly, a fragment of the Arabic legend, or an ornament"); whereas the calligraphic style of legends (Kufic) also dated the emission to the 12th c., along with the irregularity of the coin and the title (sultan) employed, and confirmed that the foreign ruler acknowledged on the coin was no one else but the Seljuk Sultan³⁴.

Even more importantly, G. Japaridze noted that the presence of the name of *Barqiaruq* (ruled in 1094-1104) made it impossible to match this coin to the testimony of Al-Fāriqī (capture of Tiflīs in 1122 as the *terminus ante quem non* for issuing this currency)³⁵.

G. Japaridze also established the adequate key to the proper attribution of this coin type: The meaning and significance of the names acknowledged not just in the bottom line, but in the top one as well. He was the first to note³⁶ that

- There was no *Barkyāruq* in the bottom line (especially as there is no wāw (و) within this name - برکیارق), but:

بن محمد . . .

(i.e. son of Muḥ[ammad] or Maḥ[mūd]);

³² Капанадзе 1970: 294-295.

³³ This honourable scholar first published his findings by means of an oral report titled "About the copper coins of Davit the Builder", on 25 April, 1989, at the Scientific session of the Acad. G. Tsereteli State Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Georgian SSR, dedicated to the 900th anniversary of Davit the Builder's appearance on the arena of the public and political activities. ჯავარძე 1989b: 89, სქოლიო *. Later on his research was published thrice on paper, first in Georgian, (ჯავარძე 1989b), and then in Russian, in brief (Джапаридзе 1990), and entirely (Джапаридзе 1997).

³⁴ ჯავარძე 1989b: 91-92; Джапаридзе 1997: 158-159.

³⁵ Ibid.: 158. Cf. ჯავარძე 1989b: 93, სქოლიო 15, where the author considers that there is no sense in searching for Davit IV's Arabic language currency minted before 1122.

³⁶ ჯავარძე 1989b: 91; Джапаридзе 1997: 158-159.

- The person whose name was indicated in the top line³⁷ (which G. Japaridze also interpreted as *Muḥammad* like I. Jalaghania and D. Kapanadze), was the son of the person indicated in the bottom line.

These observations led the scholar to the conclusion that the person indicated on the reverse of this coin type could be only Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd, the Seljuk sultan of Iraq (and Western Iran) (1153-1160), as there was no one else with this combination of *ism* and *nasab*. The only Davit, King of Georgia, whose reign coincided with that of Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd, was Davit V, son of Dimitri I (seemingly reigned for about 6 months only in 1155³⁸), who, as it was considered, issued no money of his own, in contrast to all the other Georgian monarchs of the epoch. Therefore, G. Japaridze attributed this coin type to Davit V, and reconstructed the coin type legends as follows³⁹:

OBVERSE:

ملك [الملوك]
حسام الم [سيح]
داود

REVERSE:

محمد
السلطان الا [عظم]
بن مد [مود]

G. Japaridze's version was acknowledged and reproduced in the subsequent Georgian historiography⁴⁰.

However, the new data contradict the conclusions of the honourable scholar and provide the ground for the alternative attribution of the coin type in question.

³⁷ And the significance of which was not researched by the other scholars (ჯაფარიძე 1989b: 91), perhaps because of difficulty in finding a relation of *Muḥammad* to *Barkyāruq*, whose name they read in the bottom line; alternatively, they could considered it to be the name of the Prophet.

³⁸ სტეფნაძე 1990: 19-23; სიხარულიძე 1999.

³⁹ ჯაფარიძე 1989b: 92-93; Джапаридзе 1997: 160.

⁴⁰ დუნდუა-დუნდუა-ჯავახიშვილი-და სხვ., 2003: 44-45, 64, 210. დუნდუა-დუნდუა-ჯავახიშვილი-და სხვ., 2003: 33, 64. Curiously and incomprehensibly enough, the authors of one of the recent major works devoted to Georgian numismatics described this coin type twice, only one page apart, attributing it once to Davit IV the Builder and Barkyāruq, and to Davit V and Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd the second time. დუნდუა-დუნდუა 2006: 199-200, 202-203.

MONETARY MATERIAL

In the first place, we have to present the available numismatic artifacts, including the new specimens.

It is somewhat unclear, how many specimens of this type were known before the publication of the new ones – just one or two.

In 1958 and 1979 I. Jalaghania noted the existence of two coins in Ye. Pakhomov's collection, one of them being transferred to the holding of the Georgian History Museum (Inventory #4076)⁴¹. D. Kapanadze dealt with the coin type four times, in 1964, 1966, 1969 and 1970⁴². However, it is hard to establish whether he covered one and the same specimen, as he mentioned the other one (referring to I. Jalaghania's work) only in 1970⁴³. In our opinion, D. Kapanadze enjoyed an access to the sole specimen⁴⁴, the one published first by I. Jalaghania⁴⁵.

As to the other specimen, its reproduction has never been published, and its current whereabouts are unknown⁴⁶. Nevertheless, its existence is not questionable; we can provide two arguments therefor:

⁴¹ Джалагания 1958: 40-41; Джалагания 1979: 77.

⁴² Капанадзе 1964: 67, примечание 11; კაპანაძე 1966: 64-65; კაპანაძე 1969: 70, #55; Капанадзе 1970: 295.

⁴³ *Ibid.*: 294-295.

⁴⁴ Ye. Pakhomov died in 1965, and the Georgian part of his collection presumably entered Georgian History Museum immediately (?). So, it is unclear why D. Kapanadze had to publish the photoreproduction of the alebaster cast and not the coin proper in 1966. კაპანაძე 1966: 65. Could the coin enter the museum later on? In any case, by 1969 the coin was already preserved in the museum holding with the inventory number 4076 and available for the photographer. კაპანაძე 1969: 70, #55, Plate 5.

⁴⁵ Cf. ჯაფარიძე 1989b: 90; Джапаридзе 1990: 157. This derives from D. Kapanadze's complaint that the other specimen, which had been mentioned in I. Jalaghania's work could perhaps help in interpreting the legends, but had not entered the Museum holdings... Капанадзе Д., 1970: 295. Therefore we may conclude that #4076 was the only specimen accessible to D. Kapanadze. As to the (low-quality) photoreproduction which he published back in 1966 (კაპანაძე 1966: ფოტოტაბულა, #5), comparing it with the reproduction in the paper of G. Japaridze (ჯაფარიძე 1989b: 93) compels us to consider both to represent one and the same coin: In both cases the diagonally elongated flan has identical edge impressions at 9:00 o'clock on the obverse and 6-7:00 on the reverse, whereas the legends are also arranged in the same way; it is noteworthy that illustration in D. Kapanadze's paper of 1966 constitutes the photoreproduction of the alebaster cast (კაპანაძე 1966: 65), hence some minor difference between the obverse bottom-right and reverse top-left edges.

⁴⁶ Evidently, it did not enter the holdings of the Georgian History Museum along with the other Georgian coins from Ye. Pakhomov's collection.

1. The testimony of I. Jalaghania, Ye. Pakhomov's student⁴⁷;
2. D. Kapanadze's mentioning *in passim* of that very coin type, specifically, of the coin with the legends "King of Kigins, Davit, son of Giorgi, Sword of Messiah"⁴⁸. There is definitely no "son of Giorgi" on the specimen (Fig. 1.0) published by D. Kapanadze and later on by G. Japaridze⁴⁹, so that should have been another specimen, supposedly read by Ye. Pakhomov, as in 1970 D. Kapanadze expressed regret for not having seen it⁵⁰ (unless D. Kapanadze erred)⁵¹.

In any case it is clear, that *seven new coins* of this coin type⁵², of which only *one* specimen was available for study formerly, would serve as a source of valuable information.

But before presenting the new ones, it would be prudent to describe the once unique specimen once again (our representation / interpretation of the ambiguous graphemes is marked by grey colour; the graphic elements which do not yield to interpretation are conveyed with a question mark; the ellipsis marks the legends which are off-flan or illegible):

Specimen 0: Fig. 1.0.

Find location is unknown⁵³.

AE, Weight: 6.09 g, dimensions: 14-23 mm, die axis unknown.

OBVERSE:

. . . ملك الملوك
. . . حسام الم.
. . . داو

⁴⁷ Джалагания 1958: 40-41; Джалагания 1979: 77.

⁴⁸ Капанадзе 1964: 67, примечание 11; კპანადე 1966: 65.

⁴⁹ Ex Ye. Pakhomov collection, now preserved at the Georgian History Museum (Inventory #4076).

⁵⁰ Капанадзе 1970: 295.

⁵¹ Perhaps, the other (now lost?) specimen from Ye. Pakhomov's collection did bear the clearly stated name of Davit's father. It is quite regretful that it disappeared; otherwise, it could have been possible to attribute this coin type correctly much earlier.

⁵² The coins are preserved in Georgia, in three private collections. We would like to express our gratitude to the owners for their assistance.

⁵³ Perhaps the provenance information for this coin is recorded in Ye. Pakhomov's card index, now preserved at the State Hermitage, Russian Federation (currently unavailable for us).

REVERSE:

...⁵⁴ محمد
السلطان ...
... بن محمد

The new specimens are as follows:

Specimen №1: Fig. 1.1.

Discovered at the unspecified location within the Akhmeta municipality⁵⁵.

AE. Weight: 3.54 g, dimensions: 16.9-18.9 mm, die axis: 5:45 o'clock.

The coin is preserved sufficiently well:

OBVERSE:

... ملك
... حسام
داود

?

Vertically oriented vignette on the right.

All surrounded by a double linear border?

Traces of geometrical orientation (angle bars?) on the right at 5 o'clock?.

REVERSE:

...⁵⁶ محمد
... لسلطان ا ...
... بن محمد

Specimen №2. Fig. 1.2.

Discovered at the unspecified location on the Mtkvari riverbed within the Tbilisi territory.

AE. Weight: 2.50 g, dimensions: 11.2-19.6 mm, die axis: 12:30 o'clock.

⁵⁴ Our reading of the grapheme marked by the grey colour is quite original; previously it was always read as dāl (د), probably due to the low quality of the photograph available. However, as all the specimens pertain to the same and seemingly identical coin type, after comparing with the new pieces (Figs. 1.5, 1.5enlarged, 1.7), there can be no doubt, that the grapheme in question is wāw (و).

⁵⁵ According to the current Georgian administrative terminology, *municipality* is the term designating a complex of some urban center with the adjoining, sometimes quite vast hinterland.

⁵⁶ Our reading of the grapheme marked by the grey colour may be disputable. However, comparison with the new pieces (Figs. 1.5, 1.5enlarged, 1.7), indicates that the grapheme in question is truly wāw (و), and not dāl (د).

The coin is preserved well:

OBVERSE:

... ملك
... حسام الم...
... اود بن كو ...

REVERSE:

...
... لسلطان ال...
... بن مد ...

Fragment of a linear border at 5 o'clock.

Specimen 3. Fig. 1.3.

Discovered at the unspecified location on the Mtkvari riverbed within the Tbilisi territory.

AE. Weight: 0.85 g, dimensions: 8.6-14.1 mm, die axis: 7:00 o'clock.

The coin is very small, but preserved very well – all the on-flan legends are legible:

OBVERSE:

...
... سام الم...
... او ...

REVERSE:

...
... لطان ...
... مد ...

Specimen 4. Fig. 1.4.

Discovered at the unspecified location within the environs of Dmanīsi (medieval Dmānīs).

AE. Weight: 4.07 g, dimensions: 18.3-22.9 mm, die axis: 10:00 o'clock.

Multiple incrustations and corroded areas. Only minute fragments of the legends were legible; the coin was not cleaned; off-center strike on both sides:

OBVERSE:

... وك
... المس...
... د... بن كو ...

REVERSE:

... سلطان ا...
... بن محمد

Fragment of a linear border at 5-6 o'clock.

Specimen 5. Figs. 1.5, 1.5enlarged.

Discovered at the unspecified location within the Akhmeta municipality.

AE. Weight: 5.20 g, dimensions: 11.7-25.5 mm, die axis: 7:00 o'clock.

The coin is worn-out, but the legends are still quite legible:

OBVERSE:

... ملك
... حسام
... اواد بن ؟

Vertically oriented vignette on the right.

Fragments of the double linear border at 1-3 o'clock.

REVERSE:

... محمود
... السلطان ال...
...

Fragments of the double linear border at 1-3 o'clock.

Specimen 6. Fig. 1.6.

Discovered at the unspecified location on the Mtkvari riverbed within the Tbilisi territory.

AE. Weight: 0.91 g, dimensions: 8.5-11.0 mm, die axis: 5:45 o'clock.

The coin is very small, but preserved well enough – all the on-flan legends are legible:

OBVERSE:

... ك الملك...
... ال...
...

REVERSE:

... سلطان ا...
... صد...

Specimen 7. Fig. 1.7.

Discovered at the unspecified location within the Akhmeta municipality.

AE. Weight: 9.18 g, dimensions: 20.0-21.0 mm, die axis: 10:30 o'clock.

The coin constitutes an overstrike. The dies were applied to an unascertained coin (some fragments of the design, e.g. circular elements (?), and even (illegible) fragments of the legends are still visible; nevertheless, we cannot establish the host coin). Most of the overstruck legends are legible:

OBVERSE:

... لملو ...
... حسام الم ...
... اود ...

REVERSE:

... مود ...
... لطان المع ...
... حمد ...

Due to the unsatisfactory preservation state and minute size of some of the preserved specimens, it was almost impossible to establish how many different dies were employed for minting these coins; however, it is clear that more than one pair of dies was utilized.

All seven of the new specimens (Figs. 1.1-1.7) constitute the so called irregular copper coins, with highly variable size (dimensions) and weight⁵⁷ (the range, including the already published specimen being correspondingly 0.85-9.18 g).

RE-ATTRIBUTION OF THE COIN TYPE

Taking into consideration the absence of the minting date on this coin type (theoretically, it could be indicated in the marginal legend, which is virtually completely off-flan on all the known specimens), the starting point for chronological and issuer attribution are naturally the following factors: Coin metal, coin type, metrology, legends. The coin metal (copper), the calligraphic style of the legends (Kufic), irregularity of the coins (in terms of weight, size, shape), and the title *Sultan* – by virtue of all these criteria all the scholars attributed this coin type to the 12th c. (possibly, the 2nd half of the 11th c. and the early 13th c. as well). As to the issuer, the acknowledged *Dāwud*

⁵⁷ Cf. ჯაფარიძე 1989b: 93-94; ჯაფარიძე 1995: 160; Джапаридзе 1997: 160.

(one should think – *Davit*), *Sword of Messiah* should be a Christian monarch, whereas the Sultan acknowledged on the reverse should be the Seljuk one.

The coin type was issued in Georgia (Georgian kingdom), since all the coins brought into knowledge were discovered there, and we know three Georgian monarchs named Davit for the 2nd half of the 11th c.- early 13th c. – Davit IV, son of Giorgi II; Davit V, son of Dimitri I; and Davit Soslan, consort of Queen Tamari; and no other Christian monarch bearing this name. Davit Soslan, not a King in his own right, seems to be quite an improbable candidate for issuing currency exclusively in his own name (he is only mentioned on the joint issues with Queen Tamari – AE dirhams bearing the Georgian initials of both of them, and acknowledging just Tamari in the Arabic legend of the reverse⁵⁸, Fig. 2.8); moreover, by the early 13th c. Seljuk sultans were not acknowledged on the Georgian coins anymore. Therefore, we should concentrate on the first two candidacies.

We have already reviewed the arguments of other scholars with regard to the identity of the Seljuk Sultan acknowledged on the reverse, and its significance for attributing the coin type. First, this coin type was attributed to Davit IV the Builder, though based on a clearly erroneous arguments; later on, it was re-attributed to Davit V. Our attribution is different, we consider this coin type to be issued by Davit IV the Builder, but our arguments are different, and are as follows:

1. Taking into consideration the new specimens that we have presented above it is beyond any doubt that the *ism* of the Sultan is Maḥmūd (محمود), and not Muḥammad (محمد)⁵⁹: On one of the new specimens (Fig. 1.1) the fourth grapheme of the reverse top line legend is at-least partially on flan and it resembles wāw (و) more than dāl (د); actually in retrospect, it becomes clear, that the fourth grapheme on the first published specimen from Pakhomov's collection, significant part of which is still legible, also bears much more resemblance with wāw (و) rather than dāl (د) (Fig. 1.0)⁶⁰. However, that would not suffice to dispel the uncertainty, were it not for yet another two specimens (Figs. 1.5, 1.5 enlarged, 1.7), presenting the reverse top line almost completely, and, most importantly, bearing clear wāw (و) at the fourth position from

⁵⁸ Пахомов 1970: 94.

⁵⁹ D. Kapanadze's scientific intuition and prudence merit special attention: In one of his works, while reading *Muḥammad*, he still supplied this reading with a question mark. Капанадзе 1970: 294.

⁶⁰ Although if judging by the poor quality image this interpretation could be somewhat equivocal.

the right, and seemingly followed to the left by dāl (د), the name becoming the explicit Maḥmūd (محمود).

All eight specimens available for study resemble each other so much (in terms of legends and their calligraphy), that undoubtedly they all belong to one and the same coin type, and hence bear the same legends, i.e. Maḥmūd in the reverse top line. As to the *nasab* of that Maḥmūd, on five specimens just the first two graphemes are visible – mīm and ḥā' (م. هـ) (Figs. 1.0-1.3, 1.6), whereas on another two specimens final mim and dal (مد) seem to be visible, though unclearly (due to the unsatisfactory preservation of these coins) (Figs. 1.4, 1.7). In any case, the *nasab* could not be Maḥmūd (محمود), as there was no Seljuk sultan bearing the names *Maḥmūd b. Maḥmūd* (محمود بن محمود). However, we know certain *Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad* (محمود بن محمد), Seljuk Sultan of Iraq and Western Iran (1118-1131). But his regnal years did not coincide with the short reign of Davit V (1155); they concurred with those of Davit IV the Builder (1089-1125).

2. Yet another argument in favour of attributing this coin to Davit IV the Builder is the fragment of the obverse bottom legend, which follows the name of the Monarch (Dāwud), as visible on some specimens (Figs. 1.2, 1.4, 1.5?, 1.7?). In our opinion, that could be none other but the *nasab* of this Dawud.

On some coins (Figs. 1.2, 1.4, 1.5) the vertically oriented grapheme is discernible, and we incline to interpreting it as bā' (ب) of بن. The calligraphy is peculiar, but not impossible, particularly if we take into account how heterodox was the rendering of this word on the early coins of Dimitri I (1125-1155, 1155-1156), Davit IV's son and successor (cf. Figs. 2.4-2.5)⁶¹.

Farther to the left two (?) graphemes are visible on the Coin №2 (Fig. 1.2). We interpret them as interlinking kāf and wāw (كو). Seemingly, the same two graphemes are discernible on yet another specimen (Fig. 1.4). These two graphemes should constitute the *nasab* of the King Dāwud acknowledged on the obverse. And we incline to read this name as *Giorgi*.

As far as it regards the correctness of our interpretation, it has to be noted that seemingly there were no strict and / or universal rules for transcribing Georgian personal names by means of the Arabic graphemes. For instance, the coinage of the famous Georgian Queen Tamari as well as that of her children and successors – King Giorgi IV and Queen Rusudani bore her name in the form of تمار, as far as we know, unexceptionally (Figs. 2.8-2.13);

⁶¹ TURKIA-PAGHAVA 2009: 9, Figs. 1-2; PAGHAVA-TURKIA-ZLOBIN 2011. As far as it regards the coinage of both Kings, such an orientation of بن might be explained by celator's desire to save some space in the line.

however, the forms like *طامارا* / *طامار* / *تمرا* are also recorded in the Arabic texts of the epoch, as well as *تمرو* / *تمر* in the later Ottoman primary sources⁶². Moreover, even the mint administration of the Georgian Kingdom exhibited no consistency with regard to this issue, let alone the foreign Arab authors: It is very well known, that the copper coins of Queen Rusudani bore the name of Rūsudān (روسدان), whereas the (rarer) silver coinage acknowledged Rūsūdān (رسودان)⁶³ (Figs. 2.12-2.13).

As to the transcription of the name *Giorgi*, on the coins of Giorgi III, his daughter Queen Tamar and his grandson Giorgi IV it was done in the following form: *كيوركى*⁶⁴ (Figs. 2.7, 2.10-2.11). However, that very Al-Fāriqī who left us the notorious note on Davit the Builder's minting activities, used quite a peculiar (and distorted?) form of *كركور*⁶⁵. Taking this into consideration, we have no doubts that *Giorgi* could be transcribed as *كوركى* as well.

In any case, the legends to the left from Dawud bear much more semblance of *Giorgi* / *Kūrki* (كوركى) than of *Dimitri* (ديمطرى)⁶⁶, i.e. the nasab of Davit V.

Clearly, the coins acknowledge the Georgian King Dāwud (Davit) b. Kūrki (Giorgi) and the Seljuk Sultan Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad (1118-1131). Davit V's nasab was different (b. Dīmītrī), and his short reign (1155) concurred with that of the Seljuk Sultan Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd (1153-1160). Undoubtedly, this coin type was issued by Davit IV the Builder (1189-1125).

It does not conform entirely with Al-Fāriqī's description (*vide supra*), but certainly constitutes the most plausible candidate therefor. One shall also keep in mind that Al-Fāriqī visited Georgia much later, in almost 30 years after the demise of Davit IV the Builder, and in the testimony of the former the appearance of the actual coin type could easily become perverted, at least in part. We consider that Al-Fāriqī's note was based on the issue of this very currency.

⁶² Берадзе-Смирнова 1988: 50, комментарий 10. We are very indebted and grateful to G. Beradze for this hint.

⁶³ Пахомов 1970: 106. Ye. Pakhmov imputed to V. Langlois the publication of the variant *Rūsūdān* (روسودان), and considered it to be an inaccuracy. Ibid. D. Kapanadze, in his comment noted that the multitude of the known specimens made all type of deviations possible. Капанадзе 1970: 301. However, seemingly, some misunderstanding occurred: V. Langlois had indicated the standard variant - Rūsudān (روسدان). LANGLOIS 1860: 72. *Inter alia*, this inconsistency may indicate that these two groups of Rusudani's coinage were minted either noncontemporaneously or (and?) at different locations.

⁶⁴ Пахомов 1970: 81-82, 90-91, 94, 96, 99-100.

⁶⁵ სიხარულიძე 1999.

⁶⁶ or *دلوطرى* as it was rendered on the early purely Arabic coin type of DIMITRI-TURKIA-PAGHAVA 2009: 9-10, Fig. 1; PAGHAVA-TURKIA-ZLOBIN 2011.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE COIN TYPE

It is noteworthy, that some unidentified symbol is visible below the obverse bottom line. Its significance is unclear; hopefully, future discoveries (of the new specimens) would afford us an opportunity to elucidate this issue.

The same expectation applies to the margins of both obverse and reverse of this coin type. It is still unclear, whether there are some legends or just ornaments: There is something outside the linear border of the obverse on the earlier specimen (Fig. 1.0), either another linear border or the marginal legend (in Arabic?); and there is the clear-cut double linear border with either the legend (in Arabic?) or the geometrical pattern⁶⁷ laterally on one of the new specimens (Fig. 1.2). There are traces of some marginal legend (?) on the reverse right on the earlier specimen (Fig. 1.0), and single linear border is quite clear on the new specimens №2, 4, with №4 perhaps bearing the traces of some marginal legend as well (Figs. 1.2, 1.4).

As far as it regards the title of the sultan, being partially illegible on the “unique” specimen published before, it was believed to be

السلطان الاعظم (the Sultan the Greatest)

rather than

السلطان المهظم (the Sultan the Supreme)⁶⁸.

Right from the beginning we inclined to the opposite: Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad (to whom we have re-attributed this coin) employed the latter title (السلطان المهظم) unexceptionally on his gold coinage minted at various non-Caucasian mints⁶⁹, and he was acknowledged with this very title on the early, purely Arabic coinage of Dimitri I, son of Davit IV⁷⁰ (Fig. 2.4-2.5)⁷¹. None of the new specimens in the name of Davit IV shows it completely, except for the most recent one (7, Fig. 1.7); this coin shows it unambiguously that the title (central obverse line) was *the Sultan the Supreme* indeed.

Based on the data and arguments presented above, we reconstruct the coin type as follows (our hypothetical reconstruction of certain words/graphemes is marked by grey colour; the graphic elements which do not yield to

⁶⁷ A somewhat similar geometrical pattern is present on some of the coins of Dimitri I, Davit V's father, albeit centrally. TURKIA-PAGHAVA 2009: Figs. 6-7.

⁶⁸ ჯაფარიძე 1989b: 92.; ჯაფარიძე 1995: 159-160.

⁶⁹ Cf. Ходжаниязов 1979: 138-139.

⁷⁰ TURKIA-PAGHAVA 2009; PAGHAVA-TURKIA-ZLOBIN 2011.

⁷¹ We have presented the arguments set forth above at the 3rd Simone Assemani Symposium in Vatican, on 24 September, 2011.

unambiguous interpretation are conveyed with a question mark within square brackets):

OBVERSE:

ملك الملوك
حسام المسيح
داود بن كوركس
[?]

Vignette on the right (also on the left?).

Within a (double?) linear border, surrounded with geometric ornamentation (marginal legend?)

REVERSE:

محمود
السلطان المعظم
بن محمد

Within a (double?) linear border, surrounded with marginal legend (?).

MINTING PLACE AND TIME

The note of al-Fāriqī, as well as the oriental, Arabic, mono-epigraphic appearance of these coinage of Davit IV the Builder convince us of its relation to Tiflīs, the city having been the outpost of the 11th c. Mohammedan oikoumene on the territory of Georgia for centuries. As this coin type, at least according to Al-Fāriqī's testimony⁷², was intended for the Muslim residents of Tiflīs, and was issued after the capture of the city, it would be logical to assume it was minted exactly there - in the new capital of the Georgian kingdom.

Tiflīs acknowledged Davit IV the Builder's suzerainty (at least nominally⁷³) at some point even before being stormed and conquered. However, the arguments set forth above (particularly the explicite testimony of Al-Fāriqī) persuade us that the coinage in question could not be issued before that. And Tiflīs was conquered by Georgian troops in 1122 (or in 1123⁷⁴), whereas Davit IV deceased in 1125. Therefore, this Arabic coin type could be issued within the 1122/3-1125 time span.

As the specimens brought into knowledge were seemingly struck with different dies, it seems that the emission was not a sporadic one, but rather of a somewhat longer duration.

⁷² Minorsky 1949: 33-34.

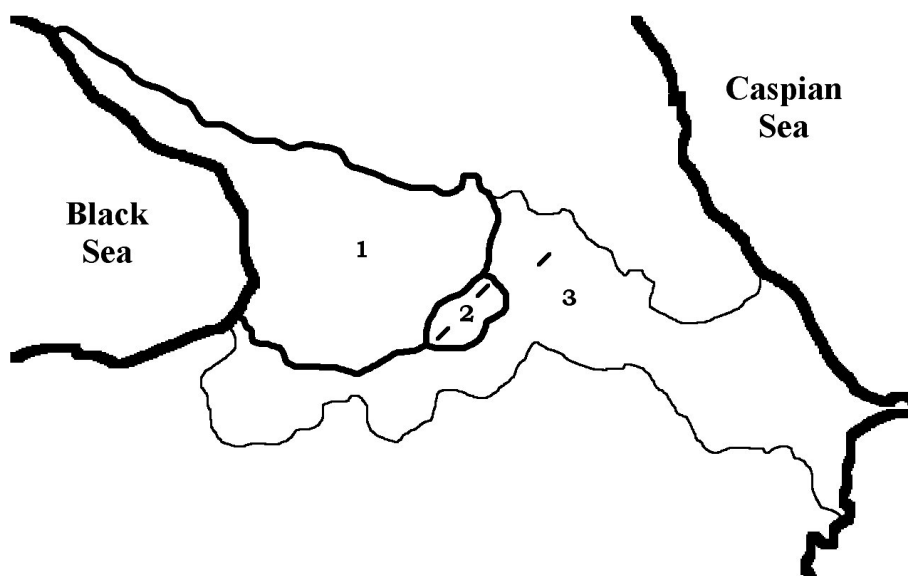
⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ ჩაგუნავა 2007.

CIRCULATION AREA

As indicated above, eight or, more probably, nine specimens of Davit IV the Builder's Arabic language coinage have been recorded for the moment. To our regret, we have no data on the find location for the one or two coins from Ye. Pakhomov's collection. However, fortunately, we know at least the approximate location where the new seven specimens that we discovered were found. These are as follows (the find locations are plotted on the *Map 1*):

- Mtkvari riverbed (within the boundaries of Tbilisi/Tiflīs): 3 specimens (№2-3, 6);
- Ahmeta municipality or, generally, Kakheti (region): 3 specimens (№1, 5, 7);
- Dmanisi area: 1 specimen (№4).



Map 1. Symbol book: / - Find location;

1 - West-Georgian Kingdom by 1089 when Davit IV the Builder ascended the throne;

2 - Territory controlled by the Muslim polities of Tiflīs and Dmanīs;

2-3 - Expansion of the West-Georgian Kingdom under Davit IV the Builder (1089-1125).

The extreme rarity of the specimens with established find location, approximate as it is, impedes our efforts to research the role of this coinage within the monetary circulation of the contemporary Georgian Kingdom (and, potentially, adjacent regions). Unfortunately, not a single coin hoard containing the specimens of this coin type has ever been discovered; the analysis of such a hoard would at least partially elucidate the significance (function of this coinage) for the national (also regional?) monetary circulation. Nevertheless, the new specimens provide us with at least the approximate reference points for researching this issue.

The Arabic coinage of Davit IV the Builder was minted in Tiflīs (*vide supra*). But the territorial distribution of the find locations of six new coins indicates, that their circulation was not limited to just Tiflīs and its *hinterland*.

They circulated in the relatively remote areas, far enough from Tiflīs, all over the eastern Georgia for the least (Akhmeta municipality, Dmanīs area).

It seems to be of a particular interest that three out of seven new specimens (i.e. 43%) were discovered in northern Kakheti (Akhmeta municipality), presumably, and in contrast to Tiflīs and Dmanīs, populated exclusively with Christians. This observation in our opinion most certainly indicates that this coinage was employed not only by the Muslim merchants from Tiflīs and Dmanīs emporia; mayhap being really distributed by the latter, they infiltrated the monetary circulation even in the areas populated with Christians. It would not be unsuitable to mention here, that the currency of the Ja'farids also apparently used to penetrate the areas beyond the boundaries of the shrinking in terms of territory, but economically still blooming Tiflīs⁷⁵.

It is hard to say, whether these coins entered the monetary circulation of western and south-western Georgia, or the northern provinces of Armenia as well as Shirvan, all conquered by Davit IV the Builder. All the known finds pertain to the eastern Georgia only, but we cannot exclude that some more coins were discovered elsewhere too, but did not enter the Tbilisi numismatic market or the private collections available to us for study, in contrast to the ones discovered in the relative proximity from Tbilisi, the current capital of Georgia and center of the numismatic activities within this country. On the other hand, the irregular coppers of Georgian monarchs of the later epoch (the 12th c, early 13th c.) seemingly predominantly circulated in the eastern provinces of the realm⁷⁶. Not a single coin type bears the mintname, but probably they were minted in Tiflīs, the capital. Therefore, theoretically, the copper coinage of Davit IV the Builder, also issued in Tiflīs (*vide supra*), could

⁷⁵ We purport a hoard of the Tiflis emirate coins from Kvakhvrelī. სტობი 1986.

⁷⁶ Пахомов 1926: 26-27; КΟΥΥΜJIAN 1969: 119-123, 128. This is a very interesting issue *per se*, which certainly merits special research and verification.

follow the same circulation pattern. The new discoveries (in Georgia, and abroad?) would hopefully elucidate this issue.

Nevertheless, there remains no doubt, that the circulation of the Arabic coinage of Davit IV was not limited to Tiflīs exclusively; it participated more actively in the economic life of the Georgian Kingdom. The relatively wide dispersion of this coin type including the areas relatively remote from Tiflīs (as well as those populated by Christians) is particularly remarkable on the understanding that it was issued over the period of no more than 3 years (1122/3-1125).

MONETARY REFORM AND GENESIS OF GEORGIAN-ARABIC COINAGE

The coinage in question, which we can safely attribute to Davit IV the Builder now, constituted an original point for the subsequent Georgian coinage of the 12th-13th c., to the reign of Queen Rusudani for the least inclusive. It presents all the distinctions between the 11th c. coinage of Bagrat IV, Giorgi II and Davit IV himself on the one part, and the coinage of Davit IV's successors on another, as delineated above in the *Introduction*, i.e. in terms of language, design, omission of the iconography (specifically, the effigy of the Holy Virgin), titulature, acknowledgment of the foreign rulers, coin metal, change-over to the irregular coinage. It is clear, that Davit IV the Builder, in addition to the other reforms, undertook the monetary one as well.

Under this reform, the *Georgian-Byzantine* money was replaced with the drastically different coinage; we consider that in view of the Arabic language predominance (and its general design – *vide infra*), it can be identified as *Georgian-Arabic*.

Linguistically, Davit IV's new coin type certainly constituted an initial point, bearing all the legends only in Arabic, abandoning, somewhat surprisingly, the national script and language, for the sake of that of the foes (or, that of the new subjects from the subjugated city of Tiflīs). One of the early coin types of Dimitri I (1125-1155, 1155-1156), his son and successor, was also competely Arabic (when publishing, we considered it to be the earliest issue of Dimitri I, exactly for language reasons)⁷⁷; The following four coin types of Dimitri I already featured his initial in Georgian: D (Ⴃ)⁷⁸. The coinage of Giorgi III (1156-1184) also featured the monarch's initials G (Ⴃ) or GI (ႣႣ) or ႣႣ⁷⁹⁸⁰, the obverse already becoming exclusively Georgian, whereas the

⁷⁷ TURKIA-PAGHAVA 2009; PAGHAVA-TURKIA-ZLOBIN 2011.

⁷⁸ Пахомов 1970: 74-79, ##45-47.

⁷⁹ In Asomtavruli and Mkhedruli script on the AE dirhams.

coinage of the following Georgian monarchs (Queen Tamari, Giorgi IV, Queen Rusudani) featured more of the Georgian text, like the date formula, facsimile or the monogram of the ruling monarch, name and sometimes parent's name of the ruling monarch, but the reverse still remaining all-Arabic⁸¹.

But we coined the term *Georgia-Arabic* not only in consideration of the language employed for the legends. The acknowledgement of the Seljuk Sultan; the titulature employed, i.e. the Arabic *Malik al-Mulūk* (ملك الملوك), instead of the Byzantine title or the lengthy Georgian royal formula; the purely epigraphical design, - all these factors attach a certain *Oriental*, one would even say an *Islamic*, in a sense, appearance to this coin type, on the analogy of the contemporary, verily Islamic coinage. Certainly, the presence of the title *Sword of Messiah* (حسام المسيح) renders it completely impossible and incorrect to call this Georgian coinage *Islamic*⁸². The title proper was probably created in spite to the more or less contemporary Muslim *Sword of Islam* (سيف الاسلام), *Sword of Allah* (سيف الله), *Sword of Religion* (حسام الدين)⁸³.

Nevertheless, despite the presence of the *archi-Christian* title of *Sword of Messiah* the coinage was in our opinion “dechristianized” to some extent: The effigy of the Holy Virgin was omitted indeed, and although this omission was partially compensated by the inclusion of the aforesaid title/laqab, for the illiterate people (the majority of the population in Georgia? In the neighbouring countries?⁸⁴) the latter remained, undoubtedly, unrecognized. The message, or its popular (?) perception could be as follows: The Georgian King ceased minting the overtly Christian money, eliminating the icon of the Virgin Mary, and issued some foreign (Muslim) looking coinage; alternatively, despite circulating over vast areas of the Kingdom (cf. Circulation area) the new currency could be even misinterpreted by the Georgian subjects as well as illiterate Muslim ones as being imported from some neighbouring Muslim country.

However, Davit IV's reform can not be reduced to the visual oriental-ization of the coinage. The employment of copper as the currency metal as well as the changeover from the regular-flan coins to the irregular ones constituted the alterations of equal significance, albeit of rather economical

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*: 80-83, ##48-51.

⁸¹ With the sole exception of the enigmatic coin type bearing the Georgian legends, i.e. names of Giorgi (Giorgi III, Giorgi, the first husband of Queen Tamari, or Giorgi IV?) and Tamari on *both* sides. *Ibid.*: 87-88.

⁸² We would like to express our gratitude to Dr V. Nastich who stressed this circumstance out when we presented our work at the 3rd Simone Assemani symposium.

⁸³ CODRINGTON 1904: 60, 62; ჯავახიშვილი 1995: 246.

⁸⁴ We know no research on comparing the literacy rate among the Christian and Muslim population of the Caucasus and in this epoch.

than political / cultural nature: The (first ever⁸⁵) transition to the irregular coinage perhaps reflected the oncoming silver crisis. However, this feature of the reform helps us in establishing the roots of the new, post-reform coinage.

Three different types of coinage were issued on the territory of Georgia in the 11th c.: The silver regular-flan coins of the Georgian Kings⁸⁶ (Figs. 2.1-2.3); the sporadic issue of the Armenian Kwirikids⁸⁷ (Fig. 3.2) in Samshvilde or Lore; and the numerous issues of the late Ja'farids, emirs of Tiflīs, constituting the copper (originally silver-washed?) irregular currency⁸⁸ (Fig. 3.1). It is clear enough, that the Georgian-Arabic coinage was the direct descendant of the latter. Evidently, the monetary traditions of the Ja'farids outlived the dynasty proper⁸⁹. The coins of the last Ja'farid ruler⁹⁰, Manşūr II b. Ja'far (III) did not bear the name of the contemporary Seljuk ruler⁹¹, but the monetary emissions in Tiflīs seemingly continued later on as well, presumably until the Georgian conquest, and acknowledged both the Seljuk Sultan and the 'Abbasid Caliph⁹². The viability of the currency typology reflects the lasting significance of the Arabic / Muslim administrative / cultural heritage following its engraftment upon the tree of the Georgian statehood in 1122, when Tiflīs was seized, looted, and then transformed into the capital of the Christian Kingdom of Georgia.

We deem it probable, that the carriers of the aforesaid Arabic / Muslim tradition were the representatives of the old Muslim administration; many of them should have been retained in service even after the conquest of the city. The documented survival of the Arabic administrative titles⁹³ favours this concept. In our opinion, the Tiflīs mint was staffed with the local workers (celators, for the least), experienced in producing the Muslim type coinage, whereas the artisans involved in minting the Christian silvers with the effigy

⁸⁵ We are not convinced that the enigmatic irregular copper coins with Georgian letter B (Ⴀ) (cf. Пахомов 1966; Капанадзе 1970: 292-293) were minted by any Georgian monarch preceding Davit IV. We are currently researching this issue.

⁸⁶ Пахомов 1970: 57-74.

⁸⁷ ქუთათელაძე 2001: 127-128.

⁸⁸ TURKIA-PAGHAVA 2008; PAGHAVA-TURKIA 2011; MAYER (bearbeitet von), 2005: 110-111; PAGHAVA-TURKIA (in press).

⁸⁹ It is unclear, what were V. Minorsky's arguments for claiming that the "amirs", mentioned even after the capture of Tiflīs were "apparently offspring of the house of Ja'far". Minorsky 1949: 29.

⁹⁰ In our consideration, the relation of certain *Sitilaraba*, the last emir (?) of Tiflīs, to Ja'farids is unconfirmed. TURKIA-PAGHAVA 2008: 9.

⁹¹ MAYER (bearbeitet von), 2005: 110-111; PAGHAVA-TURKIA (in press).

⁹² PAGHAVA-TURKIA (in press)b.

⁹³ მუსხელიშვილი 1966; გაბაშვილი 1981: 84-89.

of the Holy Virgin were underemployed, for the least, or absent⁹⁴. One would think that the background of the mint personnel (administration?) affected, at least partially, the design of the Arabic coinage of Davit IV and his successors, as well as the content of legends they bear.

ANALYSIS OF THE LEGENDS (WHY ACKNOWLEDGING THE SELJUK SULTAN?)

The legends present on this coin type feature some innovations, introduced by the glorious Davit IV the Builder (his administration) in the heyday of his military power.

Firstly, these coins demonstrate and prove, that Davit IV the Builder was the first Georgian monarch to assume the title *Sword of Messiah*⁹⁵. It is interesting, that Davit IV was glorified as *Sun of Christianity* (მზე ქრისტიანობისაჲ) as well⁹⁶, this epithet characterizing both the national self-image as well as the *de facto* situation in the region with regard to the significance of Georgia within the contemporary context of the (at least partly) religious confrontation. The title *Sword of Messiah* put more emphasis on the military constituent of the latter, and reflected the successful expansion of the Georgian Kingdom by military means at the expense of the neighbouring, predominantly, Muslim polities (except for the Christian east-Georgian Kingdom of Hereti and Kakheti, also incorporated in 1104⁹⁷).

The emergence of the Arabic legends (engraved by the Muslim celators?) seemingly resulted in the adoption (for the first time in Georgian numismatic history) of a typical *Islamic* tradition of indicating the *nasab* of the ruler. The tradition was maintained in case of the early (probably, the earliest) coin type of Dimitri I⁹⁸ (Figs. 2.4-2.5), being temporarily suspended afterwards, probably because the four later coin types presented the King's initial in Georgian, rather than his full name in Arabic, and the Georgian monetary tradition did not request indicating the father of the ruler incumbent. Later on, however,

⁹⁴ A. Bykov mentioned, referring to some unspecified source, that by the end of his reign Dimitri I invited craftsmen from Shirvan in order to expedite coin minting. Быков. 1938: 80. However, unfortunately, we did not manage to find his source.

⁹⁵ To our knowledge, no other primary source has ever attested this title to him. We are grateful to Dr G. Beradze for stressing this point out.

⁹⁶ თაყაიშვილი 1949; Чубинашвили 1959: 483.

⁹⁷ It is noteworthy, that the Kingdom of the Kvirikids was not annexed by Davit IV directly, but conquered by the Seljuks first, and then occupied by the King of Georgia. ჯაფარიძე 1995: 32-36.

⁹⁸ TURKIA-PAGHAVA 2009; PAGHAVA-TURKIA-ZLOBIN 2011.

the tradition was restored when the mint/s started indicating the name of the ruling monarch in Arabic in addition to Georgian; so, the coins of Giorgi III, Queen Tamari, Giorgi IV and Queen Rusudani all bear the name of the predecessor (interestingly enough, those of Giorgi IV and Queen Rusudani acknowledge their mother, Tamari, and not her consort Davit Soslani)⁹⁹. It is quite remarkable, that the coinage (both regular and irregular) of Giorgi IV feature the name of Tamari in the Georgian legends as well¹⁰⁰; this may be explained by the adoption of the Arabic tradition into the Georgian protocol (?), or, perhaps, by the still uncertain circumstances of the power transfer in the Kingdom¹⁰¹.

One of the most intriguing and obscure feature of the new, Arabic coinage of Davit IV the Builder was *the acknowledgment of the Seljuk Sultan of Iraq and Western Iran* (but not the 'Abbasid Caliph, whose name is absent in the central legend, and could hardly be placed in the marginal ones). This habit (along with additionally acknowledging the Caliph) was continued by Dimitri I and Giorgi III¹⁰². The appearance of the Seljuk Sultan and 'Abbasid Caliph on the Georgian coins minted in the 12th c. was paid the appropriate scholarly attention before. For instance, Ye. Pakhomov interpreted it (with regard to the coinage of Dimitri I) as an indicator of Dimitri's forced subordination to Muslims¹⁰³.

This idea of the venerated coryphaeus of Georgian numismatic scholarship became a subject of a sharp, though, seemingly, not unfounded criticism¹⁰⁴. The new data obviously indicate, that the Seljuk Sultan was first acknowledged by Davit IV the Builder himself. But we are acquainted with the peripeteias of the latter's reign much better than those of his son and successor, Dimitri I. We know, that Davit IV was the one who liberated the country from the Seljuks, expelling them even farther, beyond the Georgia proper, by conquering Shirvan and the northern provinces of Armenia¹⁰⁵. One of the most powerful Georgian monarchs, Davit IV the Builder certainly was not a vassal of Seljuks; moreover, he even confronted Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad personally, roughly at the same time when acknowledging him on his coinage, this military confrontation resulting in the evacuation of the Seljuks and the

⁹⁹ Пахомов 1970: 80-111.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*: 96-101.

¹⁰¹ Cf. ფაღავეა 2011: 298-303.

¹⁰² Пахомов 1970: 74-86; Žaparize-Gvinžilia 1999; ჯაფარიძე-ღვინჯილია 2002; Джапаридзе-Гвинджилия 2002.

¹⁰³ Пахомов 1970: 75. This idea was considered by other scholars as well, Cf. გაბაშვილი 1981: 93.

¹⁰⁴ Джавахов (Джавахишвили), 1910.

¹⁰⁵ ჯაფარიძე 1995: 12-59.

conquest of Shirvan by the Georgian troops¹⁰⁶. The pointedly militant title of *the Sword of Messiah*¹⁰⁷, adopted as it has become clear, already by Davit IV, manifests Georgia's independence quite obviously. Therefore, *the dependance* should certainly be in our opinion excluded from the list of the possible causes of acknowledging the Seljuk Sultan on the coinage of the victor King and, most probably, his successors as well.

On the other hand, *indifference* could hardly be a reason, since Davit IV's administration manifested enough interest in the form and substance of the new coinage and its legends, to order the inclusion of a very specific (and previously seemingly unknown) laqab *the Sword of Messiah*.

Carelessness, i.e. the looseness of the control over the workers of the new (Tiflīs) mint seems to be quite improbable as well. Al-Fāriqī, albeit having visited Georgia only about 30 years later, testified quite explicitly to the deliberate and conscious inclusion of the name of the Seljuk Sultan (and that of the Caliph?)¹⁰⁸.

Naturally, the alternative/s to *dependance* versions were suggested (by the Georgian scientists, generally). According to the popular interpretation the Seljuk Sultan and the Caliph were acknowledged for the purpose of *facilitating trade, both international/interstate and / or domestic*¹⁰⁹.

The analysis of the coin finds elucidates that the irregular copper currency of Georgian Kings never participated in the interstate trade, since they were hardly ever found in any significant number beyond the Georgian borders (and were underrepresented even in the southernmost, Armenian provinces of the Kingdom)¹¹⁰. This argument is probably even more valid for the scarce coinage of Davit IV, as all the known specimens were discovered in the eastern Georgia only.

However, the Georgian coinage could truly be supplied with the names of the Supreme Muslim leaders (the Sultan and the Caliph) in order to favour the *domestic* trade, rather than *international*; the point was that although we lack the precise data for this epoch, we can perhaps presume that the Muslim merchants of Tiflīs and Dmanīs played the significant part (incomparable to their absolute numbers with regard to the general population of the state?) of the trade both within the Georgian Kingdom and with foreign states¹¹¹. The

¹⁰⁶ ჯაფარიძე 1995: 85-100, 245.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. the relatively peaceful title of the Norman Kings of Sicily. Codrington 1904: 75.: *Protector of Nazarenes* (Christians) (ناصر النصارانية).

¹⁰⁸ Minorsky 1949: 33-34.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. ჯაფარიძე 1995: 245; გაბაშვილი 2007.

¹¹⁰ Пахомов 1926: 26-27; KOUYMJIAN 1969: 119-123, 128; Мушегян 1962: 116.

¹¹¹ The local Muslim merchants of Tiflīs and Dmanīs, along with their partners from

new data indicate that the Arabic coinage of Davit IV certainly circulated in Tiflīs and Dmanīs areas, albeit also penetrating the Christian regions of the Kingdom (perhaps being distributed there by the Muslim merchants?). Al-Fāriqī was explicit that the new currency was created for the Tiflīs Muslims¹¹². Theoretically, it could be truly reasonable to create for them a currency familiar in terms of design and language, i.e. irregular, mono-epigraphic, with legends in Arabic. An attempt to force these Muslim merchants, the barely tamed new subjects of Davit IV, to accept and utilize the unfamiliar, especially Christian type, coinage would have been counterproductive (alienating them even more). We know, that despite all the conciliations granted by Davit IV, many local Muslims apparently preferred to emigrate from Tiflīs and Dmanīs following the conquest of these cities by Georgians¹¹³. Moreover, since the intrinsic value of this irregular copper coins was supposedly significantly lower than their face value, some special effort could be invested into their credibility, i.e. the names of the leaders of the contemporary Muslim world could be indicated for that reason.

We have already discussed the genesis of Georgian-Arabic Coinage, pointing out that it was a direct descendant of the Ja'farid currency, or, more precisely, of the Muslim Tiflīs. We have also conjectured, that the mint was staffed by the local, Muslim workers (celators, for the least), experienced in producing the Arabic coinage. Taking this circumstance and our assumption into consideration, we think that *the legacy* inherited (and utilized!) by Davit IV could be yet another reason for issuing such a coinage.

Describing the coinage minted by Davit IV for the Muslims of Tiflīs, Al-Fāriqī did not mention the laqab *the Sword of Messiah* (attesting it to Dimitri I, the contemporary Georgian monarch elsewhere), but implied that minting the *Islamic* money (bearing the names of the Sultan and Caliph, as well as Allah and the Prophet) was one of the *conciliations* granted to the local population. However, the presence of **حسَنُ الْمَسِيحِ** would certainly have balanced the implication of the names of the Seljuk and Caliph. Therefore, we do not consider this coinage to be of an *autonomous* nature, in a sense, the less so, as it entered the general circulation of the Kingdom (which was we would presume, hardly avoidable).

Last, but not least, the indication of these Muslim names could be a result of a certain, let us designate it as a *comme il faut* policy: In the reign of Davit IV the Georgian Kingdom entered the wider international political arena,

Ganja, are listed among the initiators of the Muslim coalition against Davit IV in 1121. ჯაფარიძე 1995: 40-41. This fact highlights their significance (influence?).

¹¹² MINORSKY 1949: 33-34.

¹¹³ Cf. სიხარულაძე 1976; ჯაფარიძე 1989; ჯაფარიძე 1990; ჯაფარიძე 2003.

which could affect the self-awareness with regard to the desirable appearance of the national currency.

The reasons for minting the Georgian-Arabic coinage can not be considered to be elucidated completely; however, we feel that the discovery of the Arabic coinage of Davit IV has shed some light on this issue.

NUMISMATIC LEGACY OF DAVIT V (1155)

The coin type that we researched by means of this paper, was the only one ever ascribed to Davit V¹¹⁴. The arguments presented above indicate that it was issued by his grandfather, and this means that Davit V either minted no coinage, or not a single specimen of the latter survived. Therefore, he still remains the only Georgian monarch of the epoch (the 12th-early 13th c.¹¹⁵) whose reign, albeit short and turbulent¹¹⁶, left no numismatic vestiges of his own.

Nevertheless, taking into consideration that issuing currency in one's name constituted one of the most significant monarchical regalia, we would not exclude completely that Davit V still minted some yet undiscovered original coinage despite ruling for about 6 months only (?).

However, this was not mandatory. Georgian numismatic history knew the precedent of initiating one's coinage quite tardily: Davit V's grandniece, Queen Rusudani, who usurped the throne in 1223, started minting the coins in her name only in 1227 (albeit she seemingly used to countermark the coins of her predecessors before that)¹¹⁷. Similarly, minting Davit V's own currency could be postponed until it was too late.

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¹¹⁴ ჯაფარიძე 1989b; Джапаридзе 1990; Джапаридзе 1997.

¹¹⁵ The period of the consolidated Georgian Kingdom, a hegemon in the whole of South Caucasus.

¹¹⁶ სტეფანაძე 1990: 19-23; სიხარულიძე 1999.

¹¹⁷ Пахомов 1970: 104-107.

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PLATES

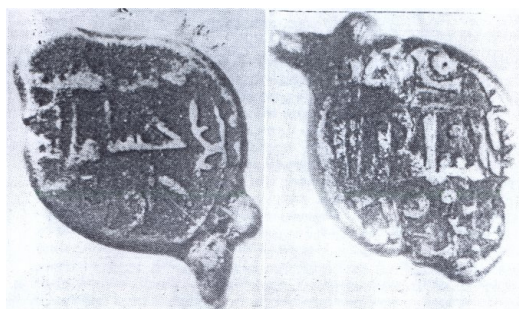


Fig. 1.0. Arabic copper coin of Davit IV (previously attributed to Davit V)



Fig. 1.1. Arabic copper coin of Davit IV (previously attributed to Davit V). New specimen



Fig. 1.2. Arabic copper coin of Davit IV (previously attributed to Davit V). New specimen



Fig. 1.3. Arabic copper coin of Davit IV (previously attributed to Davit V). New specimen



Fig. 1.4. Arabic copper coin of Davit IV (previously attributed to Davit V). New specimen



Fig. 1.5. Arabic copper coin of Davit IV (previously attributed to Davit V). New specimen



Fig. 1.5enlarged. Enlarged reverse fragment of the Arabic copper coin of Davit IV (previously attributed to Davit V). New specimen



Fig. 1.6. Arabic copper coin of Davit IV (previously attributed to Davit V). New specimen



Fig. 1.7. Arabic copper coin of Davit IV (previously attributed to Davit V). New specimen



Fig. 2.1 Silver coin of Bagrat IV



Fig. 2.2 Silver coin of Giorgi II



Fig. 2.3 Silver coin of Davit IV



Fig. 2.4. Irregular copper coin of Dimitri I, early entirely Arabic type



Fig. 2.5. Irregular copper coin of Dimitri, early entirely Arabic type



Fig. 2.6. Irregular copper coin of Dimitri



Fig. 2.7. Regular copper coin of Giorgi III



Fig. 2.8. Irregular copper coin of Queen Tamari



Fig. 2.9. Regular copper coin of Queen Tamari and her 2nd husband Davit



Fig. 2.10. Regular copper coin of Giorgi IV (Lasha)



Fig. 2.11. Irregular copper coin of Giorgi IV (Lasha)



Fig. 2.12. Irregular copper coin of Queen Rusudani



Fig. 2.13. Silver drama of Queen Rusudani



Fig. 2.14. Copper coin of Davit VI Ulu



Fig. 3.1. Irregular copper coin of Manşūr b. Ja'far



Fig. 3.2. Copper coin of Kwirike II (or I)