

CHRISTIAN-ISLAMIC SYMBIOSIS EMERGED IN MONEY: COINS AS A TOOL FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROPAGANDA

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ABSTRACT:¹

This paper discusses the political and economic compromises of Near-Eastern rulers of XI – XIII centuries as reflected in contemporary coinage. An analysis of reasons that enabled hybrid coinage combining contemporary Islamic and Christian motifs is also offered in this essay. From this point of view, a special significance must be attached to the role of local Christian or Muslim communities, their relationship with each other, an adequate perception and tolerance exercised by local rulers in terms of medieval multi-ethnic and multi-confessional society. On the other hand, international trade would demand for rulers to secure paradigms commonly used in Islamic coinage, in order to allow a coin participate in both near and faraway trade.

INTRODUCTION:

Every ruler in the medieval Near-East had at his disposal a wide range of tools that he used to achieve an effective control in different aspects of governance. In due course, the local administration focused on local communities and applied various compromises to suit multi-cultural society. In medieval society a doctrine of “compromise” received more significance in XI – XIII centuries, especially in the time of the invasion of Near East by *Seljūqs*, Crusaders and finally Mongols, who facilitated a penetration of a number of Turkic elements into the region. Initially, the migrants seemed rather antagonistic to local peoples in both ethnic and confessional adherence. In comparison with the existing Muslim and Christian population of the Near-East, *Seljūqs*, Mongols and even Crusaders fell well behind in their inter-cultural evolution. In fact, the alien ruling elite faced with some serious obstacles in their attempts to impose “traditional rule” in the newly conquered lands. In the medieval society one of the most effective tools for achieving compromise was the contemporary coinage. In the Middle Ages coinage was not only a source of payment, but also a tool of governmental propaganda. It was a symbol of the legitimacy for the ruling aristocracy that brought promises of the contemporary ruler, his attitude towards his subjects, religious preferences etc. to the population. The coins also played a significant role in the formation of social opinion, as well as demonstrated rulers’ tolerance towards their society.

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In general, a concept of compromises was especially characteristic for the states where the Muslim ruling elite represented minority. It was also practiced in countries where Christians ruled over a mixed population which combined a strong Muslim enclave with diverse Christian communities. Thus, one should distinguish two reasons leading toward “compromises” under discussion; political and economic components. It is also worth of noting that the political component was closely connected with economic realities of the time. From numismatic point of view, an apogee for such kind of policy in the Near East took place in the XI–XIII centuries, though the precedents for it can be seen in *arabo-sasanian* and *arabo-byzantine* coinage back in the VII-VIII centuries. A series of common coin types reflecting the so-called “compromise” policy exercised by the ruling elite towards their subjects in XI–XIII centuries is offered in this paper. Another aim for this essay is an attempt to discuss both political and economic reasons for striking such coins.

1. *Byzantine Empire, Constantine X (1059 – 1067), AE Folles with Inālid countermark τÖν, NM, ND.*



Zeno, no. 81921, 3.50 g.

From the beginning of the X century onwards byzantine copper coins became the main source for payments in local markets of the Near East. This was a result of a considerable output of copper from the mines located in Asia Minor and Armenia on one hand² and a reduction in copper coinage of the ‘*Abbāsīd* Caliphate by the mid-IX century on the other hand.³ Yet in the mid-X century byzantine copper coins were struck without mentioning the name of the contemporary Byzantine Emperor. Such anonymous coins were struck in huge numbers spanning a period of time from the mid-X century till the *Seljūq* invasions and even some decades after it. Their circulation area expanded over huge territories going as far as *Māwarānnahr* and India in the East and *Maghrib* countries in the West. Already in the XII century, a huge bulk of anonymous byzantine folles was over-struck by contemporary *Zangīds*, *Artuqīds* and the *Inālid* Lords of *Āmid*. Several thousands of byzantine coins bearing various Islamic countermarks of XII–XIII centuries derive from the so-called “*Mardin hoard*”.⁴ These coins continued to be accepted throughout the whole Near East even after the influence of Byzantine Empire in the region was waned.

2. *Kakheti-Hereti Kingdom, Kwirike III, Billon Dirham, NM, ND.*



Ref.: Alexander Akopyan coll. (Moscow), 3.45 g.

This coin was found in *Syunik'* region of the Republic of Armenia in 2012. It bears the image of St. George on one side and the Arabic inscription *al-malik al-'adil / Abū al-Faḍl Qur / qī ibn Dā'ūd* on another side. The marginal section has the title (*laqab*) of the contemporary caliph *Al-Qa'im bi-amr Allah* (1031–1075). Two other coins of the same type, but with Georgian characters referring to the St. George on the obverse, were found in 2013 in the Republic of Azerbaijan.⁵ *Qurqī* can be identified with a king of the *Kakheti-Hereti* Kingdom *Kwirike III* (1014–1037/9), described in the sources as a mighty ruler whose power extended over vast areas.⁶ In the mid-1030s his state included some eastern parts of Georgia, certain regions of Armenia and *Arrān* (*Aluank'* of Armenian sources). He died childless and his Kingdom was inherited by his nephew *Gagik*, who represented the neighboring Armenian Kingdom of *Loři*.⁷ A combination of Christian hagiography with Islamic traditions in coinage helped the local Christian rulers to achieve a compromise with their Muslim suzerains. In this regard, such coins carried a political rather than economical propaganda. However, the appearance on coins of caliph's title demonstrated the existence of certain vassalage of *Kwirike III* to the *Seljūqs*. For instance, the King *Hetoum I* of *Cilicia* abandoned himself from placing the title of the contemporary caliph on his coins, although the narrative sources confirm that *Hetoum I* paid a tribute to *Rūm Seljūqs* and even agreed to mint a coin in the name of *Seljūq* Sultans.⁸

In a hoard found in Republic of Azerbaijan in 2013 which included *Shaddādid* and *Shirwānshāh* coins struck before AH 425, there was also one billon coin of *Kwirike III* that represented another unknown coin type. For this time, *Kwirike III* abandoned himself from placing any Christian motifs on his coins that were issued according to Islamic standard, *i. e.* with inscriptions only. While striking coins of this type *Kwirike III* pursued mere economical purposes.⁹

3. *Kingdom of Loři, Kuirike II, AE Folles, NM (Loři?), ND.*



Ref.: Roma Numismatics VIII, 2014, lot 1199, 6.76.

Another case for a political compromise emerged in the XI century can be found while observing the copper coins struck by the Armenian King of *Loři*, *Kuirike* II (1048–ca. 1100). By their design, they copied the earliest byzantine anonymous type of Class A and B of bronze coins dated as early as the second half of the X century. They have a bust of Christ on one side and Armenian inscription ՏՐ ՈԳ / ՆԷ ԿՈՐԻԿ / ԷԻ ԿՈՐԱ / ՊԱՂԱ / ՏԻՆ - “*God, help Kuirike Kuropalate*” in five lines on the other, another detail borrowed from contemporary byzantine copper coinage.¹⁰ The geographical situation of the Kingdom of *Loři* on the eastern borders facilitated cross-cultural contact between the westernmost Armenian provinces and byzantine World. Additionally, *Kuirike* may have been a vassal of Byzantium. However, this status *quo* changed with the appearance of *Seljūq* armies in the region. In 1064 *Seljūqs* sacked Ani and put an end the period of byzantine domination in Armenia, which was thoroughly finalized by *Alp Arslān* in the battle of *Manazkert*. Yet, some years before the byzantine fiasco, perhaps in 1064 or 1065, *Kuirike* II married his daughter to the *Seljūqid* Sultan *Alp Arslān* and then his powerful *wazīr Nizām al-Mulk*.¹¹ This was definitely a political maneuver; in order to keep his country from plundering and robbery, *Kuirike* II had to express his loyalty to *Seljūqs*. In this regard, I would follow the idea expressed by previous scholars who connected the issues of *Kuirike* with the period preceding the *Seljūqid* campaign of 1064 and therefore, placing this emission between 1048 and 1064, i.e. during the byzantine domination in Armenia.¹² Unlike another Christian monarch *Kwirike* III, who ruled over *Kakheti* and some parts of *Aluank*, *Kuirike* II did not use Islamic prototype for striking his coins, and copied a byzantine coin, which was commonly accepted by local population and in peripheral markets.

4. *Crusaders, Kingdom of Jerusalem, Imitation of AU Dinar, Acre.*



Zeno, no. 97863, 3.52 g.

The arrival of the Crusades in the Eastern Mediterranean in the very end of the XI century adversely affected the administrative system and religious life of the entire region. It took several decades for the local population to accept their new suzerains. In the initial phase, the Crusaders faced difficulties with the adequate perception of domestically developed Christian values that were distinct from those in Medieval Europe. The first half of the XII century the Franks discovered the principal features of the “oriental faith” on one hand and practiced “theological ignorance” and “tolerance” towards the Christian communities living in their lands on another hand. They also had serious problems understanding and accepting their indigenous population, which was divided into many confessional factions and groups.¹³ Although the Crusaders were familiar with monetary system that existed in the contemporary Europe, they abandoned from issuing coins according to a pure European *denarius*. On the contrary, in order to be involved into

the general monetary system of the Near East, they initiated traditional Islamic currency. Moreover, they used to imitate the *Fāṭimid* gold dinars of *al-Amīr al-Manṣūr* (1101–1130) minted in Egypt (*Miṣr*) in AH 506 and 515. The significance of *Fāṭimid* gold coinage in the Levantine trade and Near-Eastern economy in general cannot be overestimated.

5. *Crusaders, anonymous AU Bezzant, Acre, mid-XIII century.*



Baldwin's (London) Auction 49, 2006, lot 1895, 2.91 g.

In the XIII century the perception of Crusaders in the Eastern Mediterranean was already changed. The European knights became a part of the local community and were considered by both Christians and Muslims as natives. This impacted their coinage too. Crusaders now struck coins representing a hybrid model, where Christian legends and symbols appeared along with the stylistic features that were characteristic for the previously developed Islamic coinage. A general design of these coins still resembled that of *Fāṭimid* gold dinars. One side of such coins had the Christian symbol of faith (*to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit*) written in Arabic, while the reverse bore a cross placed in a small circle in the centre.¹⁴ In the XIII century the Crusaders contented themselves with a massive imitation of the *Ayyūbid* silver coins struck at Syrian mints. A classification of Crusader imitations of *Ayyūbid* silver dirhams was offered to numismatists more than 40 years ago.¹⁵ Particularly, in the period AH 598 – 614 they imitated the *Ayyūbid* dirhams struck at *Aleppo*, while in later periods *Crusaders* used dirhams struck in *Damascus* in AH 635, 637 – 640 as prototype. A characteristic feature of such imitative coins dated 640s AH, was the appearance of the name of late caliph *al-Mustaṣir billah* (AH 623 – 640).¹⁶

6. *Normans of Sicily, Roger II, AR Ducale, Madīnat Ṣiqilīyya (Palermo?), AH 535.*



Zeno, no. 128200, 0.81 g.

7. *Normans of Sicily, Roger II, AE Fals, Palermo, AH 532-534.*



In private coll., 6.90 g.

In 1130 AD Roger II (1130 – 1154) of the *Hauteville* dynasty founded a *Norman* Kingdom in Sicily, Apulia and Calabria that survived till 1194 when Sicily passed to German Emperors of the *Hohenstaufen* family. Norman possession of the island marked the end of Muslim rule in southern Italy and Maltese islands that existed for almost three and half centuries. However, even if the *Fāṭimid* ruling elite was replaced with Norman aristocracy, the population of the island still remained multi-ethnic. The Christians represented a majority in Sicily; however as *dhimīs* they had to pay *jizya* and other taxes. They also had limitations placed on their occupations, dress and ability to participate in public affairs. In Muslim Sicily there was also a minor Jewish community. Initially, the coinage on the island was bimetallic. There were no silver coins in circulation, while copper coins called *romesinae* circulated with the gold *tarīs* that had been in use before Roger II succeeded his father on the throne.¹⁷ However, the fragmented population in Sicily may have forced Roger II to introduce new coins that would satisfy Sicily's multi-ethnic society and local authorities politically and economically. By AH 535 (1039/40 AD) Roger II initiated a monetary reform.¹⁸ He introduced a new silver coin (*ducale*) which appeared to be a mix of both European *denarius* with a cross placed in the small circle surrounded by Latin inscription (DVCALIS TERRIA) and the Islamic model resembling *Fāṭimid* gold and occasionally struck silver coins. These new copper coins combined elements of both Christian symbolic and Islamic coinage simultaneously. In fact, the reformed coinage of Roger II resulted in circumstances of multi-cultural processes that ran in Sicily in the XII century. Undoubtedly, they answered both political and economic concept of the Norman rule in the southern Italy.¹⁹

8. *Dānishmandids of Malatya and Sīwās, Malik Muḥammad, AE Dirham, NM, ND.*²⁰



Classical Numismatic Group (London) Auction 88, 2009, lot 1792, 5.22 g.

After the battle of *Manzikert* (Arm: *Manazkert*) in 1071 the *Seljūqs* streamed into Asia Minor, establishing new states in the region. *Dānishmandids* settled in the areas around the cities of *Malatya*, *Sīwās* and *Qayṣaria*. The population of the region in the XI century consisted of

Greek, Armenian and Jewish enclaves that belonged to various confessional groups. To achieve an effective rule in the conquered lands, *Dānishmandids*, who represented a minority in the region, had to set up a new kind of relations with their local Christian communities. During the rather long byzantine rule in central Anatolia, its population has been accustomed to byzantine fiscal administration and currency. It is therefore not surprising that *Dānishmandid* early coins were struck in Greek alphabet. *Amīr Ghāzī* (1104-1134 AD), the son of *Dānishmand*, whose mother may have originated from an old Armenian princely house,²¹ was the first in the family who issued coins with Greek inscriptions on one side and the bust of Christ on the other.²² From this period, some lead seals with either Greek inscriptions or bust of Christ are known from the Dumbarton Oaks collection.²³ Coins and seals with Greek legends and Christian motifs pursued political and economical purposes simultaneously. On one hand it served as a tool of propaganda to win local Christian population's trust, while the economic purposes of this policy could be explained as attempts of Muslim rulers to provide own coins with a competent circulation along with byzantine folleses. Additionally, numismatic evidence and seals can be characterized by rather complicated relationship between Byzantine Empire, *Dānishmandid ghāzī* Turks and neighboring *Rūm Seljūqs* in the first half of the XII century.²⁴

9. *Mangujakids of Arzinjān and Divrikī, Sulaymān ibn Ishāq, AE Dirham, ND, NM (Divrikī?).*²⁵



Jim Farr coll. (USA) = Zeno, no. 23199, 1.92 g.

Mangujakids, who came to Asia Minor with *Seljūqs* and settled in the areas lying around *Arzinjān*, *Kemakh* and *Divrikī*, ran a similar policy in regard of their Christian subjects, especially when the majority of population in these areas was still Armenian.²⁶ The ruling elite of this *ghāzī* dynasty needed assistance of local communities to maintain their possessions in the region. Their coins with a decorated cross in the middle confirm aspirations of *Mangujakid* lords to cajole their Christian population, or by a chance, to highlight their tolerance towards their non-Muslim subjects. The coins struck by *Sulaymān ibn Ishāq* (ca. 1142 – 1175), the founder of the *Mangujakid* state at *Divrikī*, designated his attitude towards the Christian communities which survived in big number in the XI century in both central and eastern Anatolia. In this regard, the coinage of *Sulaymān ibn Ishāq* with Christian symbolic was an essential tool for political propaganda.

10. *Saltuqids or Arzarūm, Saltuq ibn ‘Alī, AE Dirham, NM, ND.*²⁷ex. *Sphinx Numismatics, 6.20 g.*

Saltuqids were a dynasty of Turkmen origin that appeared in the XI century eastern Anatolia thanks to *Seljūq* penetration into Asia Minor. *Saltuqids* settled in *Arzarūm* (Karin of Armenian sources) and surrounding territories. Although the population of *Arzarūm* was predominantly Armenian, there were also rather big Muslim and Georgian enclaves in the city. The *Saltuqid* coinage was initiated by *Saltuq ibn ‘Alī* who chose for his coins a unique prototype with Christian scene of investiture. One side of his coins had inscriptions in Arabic with proclamations to the contemporary Iraqi *Seljūq* Sultan *Mas‘ūd* (1134–1152 AD) and the *Saltuqid* ruler himself, while the other side was borrowed from byzantine coinage. It represented a scene where Jesus Christ endowed a Byzantine Emperor with a cross symbolizing both power and glory. Although, the scene of investiture was a common feature for byzantine coinage, it also played an important role for general perception of Eastern Christianity in the middle Ages. Numismatic evidence demonstrating *Saltuq ibn ‘Alī*'s adaptation of a byzantine design for own coinage may speak in favor of *Saltuq*'s loyalty to Byzantium. This coinage demonstrated political compromise that local Muslim rulers emphasized in their relations with both local communities and neighboring Christian states.

11. *Artuqids of Mayyāfāriqīn, Fakhr al-dīn Qarā Arslān, AE Dirham, NM (Mayyāfāriqīn?), ND.*²⁸*Zeno, no. 25643, 5.74 g.*

After the battle of *Manazkert*, *Seljūqs* streamed into Asia Minor and *al-Jazīra*, where they subsequently established their states. In some parts of *al-Jazīra*, *Artuqids* created a motley multi-confessional state which survived in *Diyār Bakr* till the beginning of the XV century. Like in previous cases, money played a significant role in the chain of compromises undertaken by *Artuqids* in regard of their non-Muslim subjects. Coins with Christian motifs issued during the reign of the *Artuqid* *Fakhr al-dīn Qarā Arslān* (1148–1174 AD) and *Najm al-dīn Alpī* (1154–1176 AD) appeared not only due to monetary reasons, and in fact were a product of economic challenges, but thanks to other reasons, particularly of political and religious matter. This phenomenon is closely connected with aspirations of the Byzantine Emperor *Manuel I Komnenos* (1143–1180 AD) to create a unified Byzantine World which should have included some parts of

the Mediterranean and the Near East. In the discussed period, the Empire aspired to spread its influence over *Cilicia*, *Frankish Levant* and *al-Jazīra* by means of ecumenical negotiations with local Christian communities, particularly the Armenian, Jacobite and Latin churches simultaneously.²⁹

12. *Bagratids of Georgia, Queen T'amar, AE Dirham NM (T'iflis?), 1200 AD.*³⁰



ex. Numismatica Ars Classica, 1995, lot 3351, 5.92 g.

Georgian Queen *T'amar* (1184–1213 AD), the daughter of *Georgi III*, was the most powerful Christian ruler in the *Caucasus* in the early XIII century. During a short period of time her commanders *Ivane* and *Zak'aria* of *Mkhargrdzeli* family by means of absorbing the neighboring territories that had previously been controlled by *Ildegizid atabeks of Arrān* and *Adharbayjān* expanded the borders of Georgian state as far as *Dvin* and *Ani*. At the same time, the political achievements had roughly economic developments in common. The queen did much for promoting urban life, facilitated the taxes, as well as emphasized the importance of local and faraway trade. *T'amar* had a huge emission of copper coins that supplied the economy of not only Georgia and Armenia, but also some adjacent regions, particularly *Arrān* and *Shirwān*. In order to facilitate circulation of her coins outside Georgia, *T'amar* struck bilingual coins. One side of such coins had the inscriptions bearing *laqabs* and the name of the queen inscribed in Arabic language. The other side was filled in with a figure, which by some scholars representing a Georgian numismatic school has been identified with an ancestor of the Georgian Bagratids,³¹ and date of issue given in Georgian era (*khoronikon*) and written in Georgian letters. A combination of Christian motifs with Islamic standard protocol used for contemporary *Seljūq* coinage was a result of regional economic challenges and had presumably nothing to do with political attitudes of Georgian monarchs toward neighboring Muslim rulers.

13. *Cilician Kingdom, Hetoum I / Rūm Seljūq Kay Qubādh I, AR Tram, NM (Sis?), ND.*



Levon Vrtanesyan coll. (USA), 3.00.

14. *Cilician Kingdom, Hetoum I / Rūm Seljūq Kay Khusrū II, AR Tram, Sis, AH 637.*



Zeno, no. 150312, 2.76 g.

Another case for political compromise reflected in contemporary coinage can be found while considering the coinage of medieval *Cilicia*. In the very end of the XII century the Armenians established a Kingdom that survived till 1375 AD. From the period of the first *Cilician* king we have very rare billon coins resembling European deniers. These coins were no doubt the witnesses of aspiration of Armenian kings to be involved into the Near-Eastern both political and economic life of the time.³² Many cases of inter-dynastic marriages concluded between Armenian nobility and Crusaders of Antioch and Tripoli should be considered as a proof for this statement.³³ However, an even more outstanding case for “compromise” policy is found for the second quarter of XIII century. In 1226 AD, the prince of *Lambron*, *Hetoum I* (1226–1270 AD) married the daughter of the King *Levon I* (1198–1219 AD) of the *Rubenid* dynasty and became a new king of *Cilicia*. The geographical situation, Mongol emergency in the region and ongoing *Ayyūbid* threat from the south, particularly their Syrian possessions, forced *Hetoum* to apply a wide range of compromises for keeping the country away from local conflicts. Thus, the Armenian nobility concluded several marriages with the counts of Antioch what allowed Armenians to keep the southern and south-eastern frontiers of the state secure from the *Crusaders* invasions. In the northern direction *Cilician* authorities had to maneuver with the *Rūm Seljūqs* in face of their powerful sultan *Kay Qubādh I* (1219–1237 AD) and then his son *Kay Khusrū II* (1237–1245 AD). From this period bilingual silver trams minted by Armenian King *Hetoum I* at *Sis*, the capital of *Cilicia*, are so far attested for AH 635–644.³⁴ On one side of these coins there is an image of the riding king and Armenian inscription “Թագաւոր Հայոց Հեթում/Armenian King *Hetoum*” in margins, while the standard protocol referring to the *Rūm* sultan is on another side. There is little doubt that such coins appeared being a political compromise that Armenian kings undertook in the first half of XIII century, the period when the *Rūm Seljūq* sultanate was at the peak of its prosperity. The emission of bilingual coins at *Sis* lasted till AH 644 (1245 AD) and was over with the death of sultan *Kay Khusrū II* and *Mongol* further expansion westwards. On the other side, the bilingual coins are frequently found in hoards registered outside *Cilicia* what indicates that silver trams were also accepted for a faraway trade.³⁵ In fact, the initiatives of the monarchs caused by political challenges could also serve economical purposes. The importance of metrological standard *Cilician* trams for the regional trade can be confirmed by a tradition by neighboring states to overstrike trams taken in tribute, rather than to melt them and then produce own coins.³⁶

Paul Bedoukian suggested that the bilingual coins were produced upon an agreement concluded between *Hetoum* and the sultan, while the vassalage of the Cilician king from *Rūm Seljūqs* was nominal.³⁷ Another idea has also been developed in recent times that Armenian Kingdom in *Cilicia* was not in vassal dependence from the *Rūm Seljūq* state, though it might frequently suffer from *Seljūq* campaigns deep into the country.³⁸ However, these hypotheses do not explain why *Hetoum* continued striking coins in the name of *Kay Khusrū II* even after the battle of *Köse Dagh* (Arm: *Chmankatuk*) of 1243 AD, when the Sultan punished the Cilician king with invading and devastating his country.³⁹ It is also obvious that *Hetoum* met his obligations for striking coins in the name of the sultan, even if a casual shortage of silver was an obstacle for that. We know that some bilingual silver dirhams dated AH 637 appeared as a result of over-striking of the *Rūm Seljūq* dirhams minted at *Qonya* in AH 619.⁴⁰ These observations may lead to a suggestion that *Hetoum*'s duties with respect to the *Seljūqs* overstepped the borders of a mere treaty concluded between two monarchs.

15. *Armenian nobility (išxans?), in the name of the Ilkhānid Abāqā, AR dirham, NM, ND.*



Gorny&Mosch (München) Auktionskatalog 192, 2010, Nr. 4085, 3.00 g.

A creation of the *Ilkhānid* state by 1260 AD impacted the whole administrative and fiscal system of the Near East. Mongols, who by their nature were nomads, brought with them the *ulusal* administration, invented their own system of taxation, began to use *Uyghur* script for both state divan and coinage, *Abāqā* (1265–1280 AD), *Hūlākū*'s son and successor, had a Nestorian mother whose name was *Doquz khātūn*. She brought the young prince up in Christian traditions and supported Christians otherwise. Furthermore, thanks to a marriage with a Byzantine Princess *Despina* (1265 AD), *Abāqā*, who was a Buddhist by faith, became very tolerant toward other religions.⁴¹ At least he abandoned from appointing Muslim aristocracy to the highest posts in the state leaving them for Christians and Jews. *Abāqā*'s tolerance towards other ethnic and religious groups may have also resulted in striking by local non-Muslim rulers coins with Christian crosses and religious inscriptions, showing the Christian symbol of faith: to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This inscription appears on nearly all coins struck by Georgian kings of the XIII century in the name of *Ilkhānid* Sultans.⁴² Simultaneously, coins having the name of *Abāqā* in *Uyghur* script on one side and Christian cross surrounded by Armenian characters ՏԸ/ՍԻՄ/ՔՍ in segments, as well as the Christian symbol of faith inscribed in Arabic around it are rather well known today to numismatists thanks to publication by B. Garabetian.⁴³ Based on topographical data one can assume that such coins could have been struck in the areas lying very close to Georgian border.⁴⁴ After the *Mongol* invasion into Armenia in 1236 AD some local feudal houses

preserved their possessions in different parts of the country. The city of Ani and adjacent territories up to Georgian border were still administered by descendants of *Zak'arid* family who owned the city till 1267 AD when it was sold to the contemporary *Şāhib Dīvān*, the *wazīr Shāms al-dīn Juwaynī* (1285 AD).⁴⁵ Being one of the most powerful princely houses in Armenia, *Zak'arids* may have initiated an emission of coins under discussion, though we do not have yet literary confirmations for this hypothesis.

16. *Georgian Kingdom, Vakhtang III in the name of the Ilkhānid Ghāzān Maḥmūd, AR dirham, NM (T'iflis?), AH 698.*⁴⁶



Zeno, no. 26824, 1.95 g.

Simultaneously, coins with Christian symbolic were issued by Georgian kings presumably in *T'iflis*. In comparison to coins struck from *Abāqā*'s times onwards and having a Christian formula and small cross engraved in the lower part of the field, the silver dirhams of *Vakhtang III* (1298?–1308 AD) had an equilateral cross placed in a small circle surrounded by the Christian symbol of faith written in Arabic. By its style this cross resembles European crosses of the *Crusade* epoch. Meanwhile the side bearing the name of the *Ilkhānid* sultan has *Uyghur* inscriptions and lacks the inscription in Arabic. With the appearance of *Mongols* in Caucasus, the Georgian Kingdom entered a period of temporary political instability. A reason for that occurred when the *Ilkhāns* bestowed Kingdom's throne to the rivalling members of the *Bagratid* family. The first precedent emerged when two Davids, nephews David VI Narin and David VII Ulu, both hurried to present their loyalty to the *Mongol* Khan *Möngke* (1251–1259 AD) and, as a consequence, were both granted by *Mongol* authorities with an appropriate *yarligh* to rule in the country. In the end of the XIII century *Mongols* took an advantage of the Georgian King David VIII's (1292–1311 AD) political shortsightedness spread *Mongol* influence over the Kingdom. For his political maneuvers and excessive loyalty towards the Golden Horde, *Mongols* soon deposed David VIII from the throne, leaving him only some parts of Georgia to rule.⁴⁷ In opposition to David VIII, they appointed to eastern Georgian provinces his brother Vakhtang III.⁴⁸ It is still unclear when this division of the Kingdom took place. However, if one take into account that some of Vakhtang's dirhams minted in the name of *Ghāzān* are dated AH 698 and 699 (1298/9 AD), one can assume that David's dismissal could have happened in the very end of XIII century.

17. *Zak'arids of Ani (?), in the name of the Ilkhānid Ghāzān Maḥmūd, AE Fals, Ani, ND.**Diler, no. GA307, 5.49 g.*

Unlike his predecessor and grandfather, the *Ilkhānid Abāqā*, sultan *Ghāzān Maḥmūd* (1295–1304 AD) after having converted to Islam, humiliated infidels, particularly Christians and Jews, by means of restoring the renowned *Umar*'s regulations.⁴⁹ The Armenian sources tell about massive destructions of monasteries conducted by sultan's commander *Nawrūz* in 1295 AD. Only after Cilician King *Hetoum II* (1289–1307 AD) interfered in affairs taking place in Armenia, *Ghāzān Maḥmūd* stopped the violence.⁵⁰ However, in the last years of sultan's rule there was a period when *Mongol* authorities facilitated the taxes for Christians. In one colophon written in 1304 AD we find that the end of *Ghāzān Maḥmūd*'s rule was peaceful while the taxes were removed.⁵¹ It must have been during this period when Armenian lords (*iṣḫans*) from the *Zak'arid* princely family struck beautiful copper coins bearing the name of *Ghāzān Maḥmūd* in Arabic placed between *Uyghur* inscriptions on one side and a bust of Christ Pantocrator on the other side.⁵² The appearance of Christ on coins struck in the name of *Ilkhānid* sultan suggests a severe presence of Christian population in the city and adjacent areas. In XIII century copper coins were normally struck with purposes to supply the needs of local markets in small coins, so that they rarely left the place where they were minted. From this point of view, one can suggest there behind this emission there were pure economic reasons.

A short discussion on the image of Christ's bust on this particular coin may represent certain importance for studying Near-Eastern Christian art in the *Mongol* epoch. It is a well-known fact that the Near-Eastern rulers used to place on their coins an image of Christ Pantocrator, abandoning by this from the image of Christ Antifonetes which frequently appeared on byzantine copper coins and seals of XI–XII centuries.⁵³ However, if even pursuing the same portrait, we have got certain differences in stylistic peculiarities of the Christ Pantocrator's performance on coins, especially in regard of the nimbus and its decoration. For instance, the image of Christ's bust used for copper coins of *Ghāzān* at the turn of XIII–XIV centuries is somehow different from the composition that other rulers engraved on their copper coins struck more than a century ago. On *Ilkhānid* coppers from Ani the nimbus is divided into sections by single straight lines and points between them. This comes different from the classical nimbuses used in byzantine iconography where the space is divided by two parallel lines and a point between them. It is quite certain that other analogies for this imagery with Armenian routes should be sought in contemporary art and architecture. Meanwhile, the nimbus of Christ emerging on the early *Dānishmandid* and *Artuqid* coins of *al-Jazīra* was borrowed from classical byzantine imagery of

XI–XIII centuries. Due to these iconographic details Turcoman coins stay very close to copper coins of the Norman lord Roger II struck in Sicily during almost the same period of time. Finally, the image of Christ emerging on the XI century copper coins of *Kuirike* II of *Loři* Kingdom is diverse from all those that will appear after. In this case, the nimbus of Christ has no sectional division and appears as a simplified circle setting the head in a frame.

CONCLUSION:

In XI–XIII centuries the Near-Eastern rulers struck hybrid coins for gaining their both political and economic goals. In most cases, a specific structure of local society, its multi-cultural diversity and peculiarities in faith's doctrines stipulated the development of composition used for producing such coins. From this point of view, a symbiosis of Christian religious symbolic and Islamic monetary tradition, basically rejecting any kind of imagery in coinage, can be considered as a unique phenomenon. Thus, a special design of money facilitated a distribution of governmental propaganda to the population. Hybrid coins were accepted by different groups of people within one community. At least, it guaranteed the tolerance of central authorities towards its inhabitants, secured their religious and ethnic rights as minorities. Simultaneously, a hybrid nature of such "compromise" coins answered not only political but also economic challenges of the time. The so-called bilingual coins or those have Islamic and Christian religious symbolic, inspired local population and merchants with confidence. This provided coins with a broad circulation. For instance, silver coins struck by Christian rulers may have gone outside the country better if they would bear Arabic inscriptions. Likewise, copper coinage that would otherwise be reduced to a limited circulation within the area of its origin could have been accepted in provinces with a diverse population.

NOTES:

¹ This is a revised version of my talk presented at the Numismatic seminar held on 18th-19th of April, 2014 at the Fayoum University (Egypt) and which initially bore the title “*Political and economic compromise reflected in Islamic coinage of XI –XIII centuries: Numismatics as a source of propaganda*”. While revising the text I have gradually limited myself to a particular topic, emphasizing the phenomenon of appearance of compromise coinage in the Medieval Near East. I would like to thank my colleague and friend Prof. Atef Mansour (Fayoum University) for an occasion to participate in that event. I also owe words of gratitude to Levon Vrtanesyan (New Jersey, USA) for editing my English.

² Vryonis, Speros Jr., “The question of the Byzantine mines”, *Speculum* XXXVII/1 (1962), 4 – 7.

³ Only a few cases when copper coins were struck by local governors in the provinces under ‘*Abbāsīd*’ control is known so far. Particularly, an extensive copper emission existed in Cilicia in the early AH 300s (Miles, 1956, 297 – 312). A rather huge copper production under *Sāmānīds* in *Māwarānnahr* is attested for the late AH 200s onwards, however, these coins did not find a broad circulation in the provinces lying to the East from *Khurāsān*.

⁴ Lowick, Nicolas, Bendall, Simon, Whitting, Philip, *The Mardin Hoard*, London, 1977.

⁵ A brief discussion on these coins can be found in Akopyan, Alexander, Vardanyan, Aram, “Monety Kwirike III, tsarya Kakheti i Ereti”, in: *Vsesoyuznaya numizmaticheskaya konferenciya*, 22 – 26 of April 2013, Moscow, 43 – 44; Vardanyan, Aram, “The evidence of coins on the history of Ani in the 14th – 15th centuries”, *Journal of Armenian Studies* 2-3 (2013), 43 – 44.

⁶ Arevelc’i, Vardan, *Vseobshchaya istoriya Vardana Velikogo*, ed. N. Emin, Moscow, 1861, 126.

⁷ Anonymous chronicle (IX AD), in: *Vrac’ albyurnery Hayastani ev hayeri masin* (Georgian sources about Armenia and Armenians), vol. I, ed. L. Melik’set’-Bek, Yerevan, 1934, 205.

⁸ Ibn Bībī, in: *Recueil de textes relatifs l’histoire Seldjoudes*, ed. M. Houtsma, vol. IV, Leiden, 1902, 141.

⁹ One part of this hoard (93 coins) including the discussed specimen has recently been published in Vardanyan, Aram, Zlobin, Gennadiy, “A mixed hoard of eleventh century coins found in Azerbaijan (A contribution to the study of Shaddādid and Shirwānshāh coins)”, *NC* 174 (2014), 352 – 361 (for this particular coin see no. 41 of the article).

¹⁰ Main publications on the topic are: Bedoukian, Paul, “A rare Armenian coin”, *ANS Museum Notes V* (1952), 181 – 184; Lang, David, “Supplementary notes on Kiurike II, king of Lori in Armenia and his coins”, *Museum Notes VI* (1954), 183 – 191; Grierson, Philip, “Kiurikē I or Kiurikē II of Lori-Armenia?”, *American Journal of Numismatics* 10 (1962), 107 – 112; Seibt, Werner, “Der armenische Münztypus des Korikē Kuropalates aus dem 11. Jahrhundert”, in: *Vindobona Docet*, hrsg. H. Emmerig, Wien, 2005, 283 – 286.

¹¹ al-Bundārī, al-Fath ibn ‘Alī, *Kitāb tārikh al-daulat Āl Saljūq*, Cairo, 1900, 31.

¹² Pakhomov, Yevgeniy, “O monetakh Korike kuropalata”, *Izvestiya kavkazskogo istoriko-arkheologicheskogo instituta* 3 (1925), 37 – 45; Lang, David, “Supplementary notes on Kiurike II, king of Lori in Armenia and his coins”, *Museum Notes VI* (1954), 191; Stepanenko, Valeriy, “Iz istorii armyano-vizantiyskikh otosheniy vtoroy poloviny X–XI v. (k atribucii monet Kurike kuropalata)”, *Antichnaya drevnost’ i srednie veka* 15 (1978), 49.

¹³ MacEvitt, Christopher, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East: Rough Tolerance*, Philadelphia, 2008, 21 – 26.

¹⁴ Metcalf, David, *Coinage of the Crusades and the Latin East*, London, 1983.

¹⁵ Bates, Michael, “Thirteenth century Crusader imitations of Ayyūbid silver coinage: a preliminary survey”, in: *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History*, ed. D. Kouymjian, Beirut, 1974, 393 – 409.

¹⁶ Bates, Michael, “Thirteenth century Crusader imitations of Ayyūbid silver coinage: a preliminary survey”, in: *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History*, ed. D. Kouymjian, Beirut, 393 – 409.

¹⁷ Balog, Paul, “A follis struck in Messina following the monetary reform of Roger II (536H/1140)”, *Rivista Italiana di Numismatica* 83 (1981), 155.

¹⁸ See more in Travaini, Lucia, “La riforma monetaria di Ruggero II e la circolazione minuta in Italia meridionale tra X e XII secolo”, *Rivista Italiana di Numismatica* 83 (1981), 133 – 153. Paul Balog

considered that the reasons for monetary reform had economical background and was caused by worsening of coins (Balog, Paul, “A follis struck in Messina following the monetary reform of Roger II (536H/1140)”, *Rivista Italiana di Numismatica* 83, 1981, 156), whereas the changes undertaken by Roger II in coinage could also have been caused by other reasons. There is also a little doubt that the reform was conducted in AH 536 and not in 535.

¹⁹ Grassi, Vincenza, “Notes on ideology and religious beliefs in the Islamic and Norman coinages circulating in Sicily”, in: *The 4th Simone Assemani Symposium*, Trieste, 2010, 111 – 126.

²⁰ Sallet, Alfred von, “Die griechischen Münzen der türkischen Dynastie der Danischmende”, *ZfN* 6 (1879), 45 – 54; Whelan, Estelle, *The Public Figure. Political Iconography in Medieval Mesopotamia*, London, 2006, 52.

²¹ Urhaec’i, Matt’eos, *Zhamanakagrut’yun* (Chronicle), ed. H. Bartikyan, Yerevan, 1991, 309.

²² Schlumberger, Gustave, “Monnaie à légende Greque”, *RN* VI (1888), 264 – 265; Whelan, Estelle, *The Public Figure. Political Iconography in Medieval Mesopotamia*, London, 2006., 51.

²³ Oikonomidès, Nicolas, “Les Danishmendides, entre Byzance, Bagdad et le sultanat d’Iconium”, *RN* XXV (1983), 191 – 193.

²⁴ Oikonomidès, Nicolas, “Les Danishmendides, entre Byzance, Bagdad et le sultanat d’Iconium”, *RN* XXV (1983), 189 – 207.

²⁵ Tübingen, inv. Nr. FE3B6, FE3C1, 2002-16-89, 2003-6-16, 91-20-36; BM inv. No. 1977-5-7-1; ANS, no. 0000.999.7811.

²⁶ Sara Nur Yildiz, *The Seljuks in Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East*, London, 2013, 47.

²⁷ Artuk, Ibrahim, Artuk, Cevriye, *Istanbul arkeoloji müzeleri teşhirdeki*, c. I, Istanbul, 1970, 389.

²⁸ Whelan, Estelle, *The Public Figure. Political Iconography in Medieval Mesopotamia*, London, 2006, 160 – 161.

²⁹ Vardanyan, Aram, “Ecumenical negotiations reflected in the Artuqid Christian coin imagery: On the role of local Christian communities in the twelfth century Near East”, *Beiträge zur Münz- und Geldgeschichte*, Bd. 10 (2015) (*in press*).

³⁰ See other variations of this type in: Bennett, Kirk, *A Catalog of Georgian Coins*, Santa Rosa, 2014, 69 – 71.

³¹ Kapanadze, David, “Rodovoy znak Bagrationov na gruzinskikh srednevekovykh monetakh”, *Numizmaticheskii sbornik* II (1957), 77 – 81.

³² Georganteli, Eurydice, “Transposed images: Currencies and legitimacy in the late medieval eastern Mediterranean”, in: *Byzantines, Latins, and Turks in the Eastern Mediterranean World after 1150*, ed. J. Harris, C. Holmes, Russel E., Oxford, 2012, 160 – 161.

³³ Moutafian, Claude, *L’Arménie du Levant: (XIe – XIVe siècle)*, vols. 1–2, Paris, 2012

³⁴ Bedoukian, Paul, *The Coinage of Cilician Armenia*, New York, 1962, 776 – 784; Nercessian, Yeghia, *Attribution and dating of Armenian bilingual trams*, Los Angeles, 1983, 8. Coins dated AH 638 is unknown so far. In that year the sultan *Kay Khusrū* II invented the so-called “*lion & sun*” type of coins. Coins with two lions under the sun and then a single lion to right under the sun began to be struck at *Qonya* and *Sīwās* simultaneously (Izmirliler, Yilmaz, *Anadolu selçuklu paraları*, Istanbul, 2009, nos. suz 65; 393 – 397, 457 – 463. In this regard, the evidence of Gary Leiser on the invention of the “*lion & sun*” type as early as in AH 635 and 637 (Leiser, Gary, “Observations on the <<*Lion and sun*>> coinage of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kai-Khusraw II”, *Mésageios* 2 (1998), 96) could not have been verified). *Hetoum* did not follow the newly designed examples of *Qonya* but continued to strike bilingual trams in accordance with previously exercised design. However, the invention of a new type in *Qonya* could be a reason why Cilician authorities abandoned from issuing bilingual coins in that particular year.

³⁵ Cilician silver coins were used for operations with not only neighboring states but also faraway trade, particularly Genoa and Venice in the West and Mongol states in the East. There is evidence that Cilician coins in the eastern direction reached as far as Pakistan (Vrtanesyan, Levon, “A small hoard of Armenian and Mamluk coins found in Pakistan”, *Armenian Numismatic Journal* 1 (31) (2005), 75 – 79).

³⁶ Bedoukian, Paul, “Some Armenian coin overstruck in Arabic”, in: *Armeniaca*, Venice, 1969, 138 – 147.

³⁷ Bedoukian, Paul, “The bilingual coins of Hetoum I, (1226–1270) king of Cilician Armenia”, *ANS Museum Notes* 7 (1957), 230.

³⁸ Sara Nur Yildiz, “Reconceptualizing the Seljuk-Cilician frontier: Armenians, Latins, and Turks in conflict and alliance during the early thirteenth century”, in: *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis. Frontiers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Curta F., Brepols, 2005, 119.

³⁹ Smbat Sparapet, *Chronicle*, ed. R. Bedrosian, New Jersey, 2005, 106.

⁴⁰ Rhodes, Nickolas, “Some Armenian notes”, *NCirc* 84, no. 10 (1976), 370 – 371.

⁴¹ Gandzakeci, Kirakos, *Patmut'yun hayoc'* (History of Armenia), ed. K. Melik'-Ohanjanyan, Yerevan, 1961, 398 – 399.

⁴² Diler, Ömer, *Ilkhans. Coinage of the Persian Mongols*, Istanbul, 2006, 278, 294, 320, 333, 341 and 374; Bennett, Kirk, *A Catalog of Georgian Coins*, Santa Rosa, 2014, 132 – 148.

⁴³ Garabetian, Berj, “Monnaies quadrilingues au nom d'Abagha, khan de Perse”, in: *Congres International de Numismatique*, t. II, Paris, 1953, 497 – 502.

⁴⁴ Depending on topographical data of single coin finds some scholars, mainly representing the Georgian numismatic community, suggest that such coins could have been struck in the vicinity of Dmanis or even in the city itself (a private discussion at online coin-database Zeno.ru), but I think this hypothesis is rather tentative due to the lack of other case-based reasoning.

⁴⁵ Vardanyan, Aram, “The evidence of coins on the history of Ani in the 14th – 15th centuries”, *Journal of Armenian Studies* 2-3 (2013), 206.

⁴⁶ Bennett, Kirk, *A Catalog of Georgian Coins*, Santa Rosa, 2014, 154.

⁴⁷ He preserved his influence over some parts of Georgia until his death in 1311. It is likely that his copper coins were produced in these areas he controlled (Bennett, Kirk, *A Catalog of Georgian Coins*, Santa Rosa, 2014, 151).

⁴⁸ There is evidence in Georgian sources that Vakhtang's installment in the region was not peaceful. It seems as if the newly appointed king took the cities of T'iflis, Dmanis, Šamsvilde and some parts of Armenia by force (Anonymous chronicle (XIV AD), in: *Vrac' albyurnery Hayastani ev hayeri masin* (Georgian sources about Armenia and Armenians), vol. II, ed. L. Melik'set'-Bek, Yerevan, 1936, 62).

⁴⁹ Bat Ye'or, *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide*, Cranbury/Ontario, 2002, 93.

⁵⁰ Sebastac'i, The chronicle of Sebastac'i, in: *Armyanskie istochniki o mongolakh*, ed. A. Galstian, Yerevan, 1962, 31.

⁵¹ Sanjian, Avedis, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 1301 – 1480*, Cambridge (MA), 1969, 48.

⁵² Vardanyan, Aram, “The evidence of coins on the history of Ani in the 14th – 15th centuries”, *Journal of Armenian Studies* 2-3 (2013), 220.

⁵³ See more on this topic in: Guruleva, Vera, “Obraz Xrista Antifonita na vizantiyskikh monetakh i pechatyakh”, in: *Vizantiya v kontekste mirovoy kul'tury*, Trudy gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha LXIX, 2013, 363 – 369.