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Meta-Analysis of the Monetary Complexes Comprising the Sirma Tetri Coins of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti

Sirma tetri¹

The kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti (1744-1801) plays an outstanding role in the history of the Georgian nation. This Georgian kingdom was a flagship of the Georgian statehood of the modern epoch. It could serve as a basis for the national restoration (which, unfortunately, failed to happen). It is logical that currently, after the restoration of Georgia's independence (although with great losses), every aspect of history of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti is worth special attention.

This article focuses on the numismatic-monetary component of the history of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti, namely, emission of domestic currency in the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti and its circulation in the chronologically and geographically boundless space. The paper also dwells upon the role of imported currency in the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti. Special focus is made on silver (Sirma tetri), the unique coinage of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti; this silver coinage of high standard was issued after the monetary reform carried out by Irakli II in 1765/6-1768/9 (AH 1179-1182).

The **goal** of the research is to study the circulation of Sirma tetri coins in the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti. Based on the outcomes of our

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research, we will identify the historical importance of this Georgian currency and study the circumstances leading to its emission.

The material used in the research process is as follows: 1) The data regarding separate coins and hoards containing these coins (such complexes can be exclusively monetary or mixed – containing coins and other objects) (the information is provided by either archeological excavations or accidental discoveries); 2) Official i.e. state documents of various types (reports made by Georgian or Russian officials); deeds signed by private persons (in case of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti, many of the official documents must have been lost, whereas private documents have been preserved in sufficient amount); 3) Narrative sources (diaries of foreign travellers or local residents; historical works).

With regard to the Sirma tetri, the discoveries of separate coins or hoards comprising various coins comprise an important source of information. Our article is primarily based on the above-mentioned sources.

Naturally, the preserved documents represent an important source. The documents issued in the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti as well as the Russian Empire provide interesting data regarding the circulation of the Sirma tetri coins in the entire region.

It should also be noted that the research material provides an opportunity for applying various methodological approaches. Distribution of separate coins or monetary complexes provides an opportunity to identify the chronological and geographical dissemination of the Sirma tetri coins. Besides, the discoveries of monetary complexes provide more information than discoveries of separate coins. This is quite natural, because, unlike separate coins, monetary complexes have not just geographical but also chronological dimension: the internal structure of a hoard enables a researcher to establish a more or precise depositing dates. Significant information is also provided by the data regarding the place of discovery (even if approximate).

The research material comprises information regarding 23 hoards containing Sirma tetri coins. Additional data have provided an opportunity to develop the classification of hoards comprising Sirma tetri coins made in 2021 on the basis of analysis of 13 monetary complexes (Paghava 2021).

The hoards are classified based on two parameters of monetary complexes: geographical (a place, albeit approximate, of discovery) and chronological (time of depositing, traditionally defined based on the

youngest coin, i.e. the absence of coins emitted later). In all, four groups have been distinguished.

Group 1: this group embraces 12 hoards. All of them have been discovered on the territory of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti (current political borders are ignored); the youngest coin pertains to the 18th century; there are no coins of the 19th century. Thus, the hoards of this group reflect the monetary circulation in the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti.

24.Lalakend (1897): 73 Georgian silver coins, most probably Sirma tetri coins, emitted during the reign of Irakli II (AH 1213 coin was not present in this hoard?); unfortunately, the nominal value of the coins was not indicated (Pakhomov 1926, 71, #231); the tesauriation must have occurred at the end of the 18th century;

25.Gori uyezd (1906): about 60 abazi coins issued during the reign of Irakli II, copper coins weighing over 5 poods, mostly 5-kopecks coins of the Russian empire (of the 1760s, 1770s, 1780s), and 2-kopeck coins issued during the reign of Catherine II, bistis and half-bistis emitted by Irakli II, mostly with the image of one-headed eagle (1796), and, in small number, with the image of double-headed eagle (with various dates) (Pakhomov 1926, 71, #230; Kebuladze 1969, 96-97, #2); the tesauriation must have taken place at the end of the 18th century;

26.Chikaani (1927): >100Sirma abazis; the oldest one dated AH 1182 or 1184, the youngest coin dated 1213 (1798/9) (1 coin was dated AH „1166“) (Pakhomov 1938, 58, #537; Pakhomov 1949, 79, #1216); the tesauriation must have taken place at the end of the 18th century;

27.With find location unknown I (2004): >100Sirma abazis (according to our records), the youngest is dated AH 1213 (Paghava 2021); the tesauriation must have taken place at the end of the 18th century;

28.With find location unknown II (2005): >100 Sirma abazis (this was a different hoard and not a fragment of the previous hoard), the youngest coin dated AH 1213 (Paghava 2021); the tesauriation must have taken place at the end of the 18th century;

29.Bolnisi (2010s): exclusively consisting ofSirma tetri coins - 33 abazis (comprising 94.3% of the total amount): AH 1183 (perforated), 1184, 119x, 1190, 1192, 1193, 1202, 1205, 1206, 1207 (6 pieces), 1208 (2), 1209, 1211 (15); 2 uzaltunis (5.7%): the date cannot be identified, AH 1206. Mention should be made of the high amount of abazis dated AH 1211 (45.5% of the total amount). The hoard is quite compact: the oldest coin is

- dated AH 1183, the youngest 1211 (1796/7); the tesauration must have taken place at the end of the 18th century (Paghava 2021);
30. Manavi (2009): at least 116 coins, all of them were Sirma abazis: AH 1182 (2 pieces); 1183 (6); 1184 (10); 1189 (1); 1190 (15); 1191 (8); 1192 (16); 1193 (20); 1194 (6); 1195 (5); 1203 (1); 1205 (1); 1206 (1); 1207 (6); 1208 (1); 1210 (1); 1211 (8); 1213 (1); the date cannot be identified (7). The latest coin is dated AH 1213 (1798/9), there are no coins dated by 19th century. Hence, the tesauration must have taken place at the end of the 18th century (Paghava 2022);
31. Kojori II (2022): 36 Sirma tetri coins - 35 abazis (AH 11xx: 1, 1182: 1; 1183: 1; 1184: 1; 1193: 2; 12xx: 2; 1202: 1; 1206: 1; 1207: 1; 121x: 1; 1211: 4; the date cannot be identified: 19¹), and 1 Sirma type abazi of Ganja (Paghava 2013, 227-233), AH 1204, or rather, 1205 (cf. Paghava 2013, 228-229, Pic. 18, 23). Interestingly enough, all the coins bear a trace of soldering, i.e. they constituted part of certain jewellery prior to tesauration (with the exception of 2 Sirma abazis, the remaining 24 coins bear a trace of soldering on the dated side, which frequently makes it impossible to read the date). The youngest coin is dated AH 1211 (1796/7). The hoard does not contain coins of the 19th century. Thus, the tesauration must have taken place at the end of the 18th century (Paghava 2022);
32. Dusheti (2005): exclusively consisting of silver sirma coins - 4 Sirma abazis: AH 118x (style of AH 1182, 1183, or 1184 / 1768-1771), 1201 (1786/7), 1205 (1790/1) and 1207 (1792/3) (80% of the total amount); and 1 Sirma uzaltuni (20% of the total amount): AH 1211 (1796/7). The youngest coin is the abazi dated AH 1211 (1796/7); the tesauration must have taken place at the end of the 18th century. This is probably the so-called *purse*, i.e. a minor hoard (cf. Paghava 2020), comprising the coins employed by its owner for minor spending on daily basis and not as a deposit (Paghava, currently in print, -B);
33. Kartlian hoard with find location unknown (2017?): 4 (or 5?) Sirma abazis: AH 1184 (1770/1), 1192 (1778/9), 1201 (1786/7) (2 pieces). Based on the youngest coins, we can conclude that tesauration of this *purse* took place at the end of the 1780s or beginning of the 1790s (Paghava, currently in print-B);

¹ In the original publication, the number is given incorrectly.

34. Mtianeti (2020?): pieces of silver artifacts and 23 silver coins (mostly perforated or worn out): Georgian coin of late feudal period with an image of an animal and uncertain (Asomtavruli?) legend (1.30 g) (cf. Paghava, Spanderashvili 2018); 2 Ottoman billon paras (issued by Mustafa III and Selim III); coins of the Russian empire: 5-kopeck coins of Elizabeth (1756), grivenniks of Catherine II (1174?, 1783, 1794, 1796); shauri of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti in the name of Shakhruh (AH „116“); Sirma tetri coins: 8 abazis: AH 1182 (1768/9), 1196 (1781/2) (3 pieces), 1205 (1790/1), 1211 (2), 12xx; 3 uzaltunis: H. 11xx, 1213 (1798/9) and hybrid (struck with obverse and reverse dies intended for producing abazi and uzaltuni coins); 2 shauris: undated (?), [121]3? (1798/9), and hybrid (struck with obverse and reverse dies intended for producing abazi and uzaltuni coins). The tesauration must have taken place at the end of the 18th century (Paghava, currently in print-B);
35. Pshaveli (1963): 3 Sirma abazis, 3 Ottoman coins of the end of the 18th century, 11 Russian Empire coins: grivenniks of Elizabeth (2 pieces: 1747, 1748); grivenniks of Catherine II (7: 1770 – 2, 1779, 1791, 1795 – 2, 1796); a coin worth 15 kopecks issued by Catherine II (1784); 5-kopeck coin of Paul I (copper? The date is given as 1796?) (detailed description of the coins is not given) (Kebuladze 1969, 14). The tesauration must have taken place at the end of the 18th century.

Group 2: this group embraces 7 hoards. All of them were discovered on the territory of historical Khanates, the Caucasian states adjacent to the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti (current political borders are ignored); in some cases, the youngest coin is dated by the 18th century. There are no coins of the 19th century. Some hoards include coins of the 19th century. Based on this criterion, the hoards of this group are divided into two subgroups: IIa (5 hoards) and IIb (2 hoards), reflecting monetary circulation in the Khanates prior to the annexation of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti in 1801, and afterwards, when, as a result of policy of Irakli II, the Russians had overcome the barrier of Major Caucasus.

IIa:

36. Daralagyoz (1934): silver objects, 33 buttons made from modified silver coins and 631 silver coins (mostly perforated or soldered, with defects): the majority of coins were produced in Tiflis (most likely, Sirma abazis), the latest dated AH 1211 (1797/8). There are some Sirma uzaltunis produced in the same time period. There are only a few 'abbasis

minted in Ganja, muhammadis of Khowayza, Afsharid and anonymous Iranian silver, 1 Russian grivennik (1796). The tesauration must have occurred at the end of the 18th century (Pakhomov 1940, 64-65, #918).

37. Sovetashen (1938): 2 Sirma half-marchili coins (AH 1182 and 1184), 12 'abbasi coins of Yerevan (AH [11]81, 1185 – 2 pieces, undated – 9 pieces), 1 Tabriz 'abbasi (AH 1185); the oldest coin is dated AH 1181 (1776/8), the youngest – 1185 (1771/2); tesauration must have taken place in the 1770s (Pakhomov 1949, 77, #1209);
38. Chaykend (1953): tinned copper bowl and 1266 silver coins, including: Safavid - 819 pieces, Afsharid - 2; Shirvan 'abbasis – 79, Ganja coins – 295, Sirma abazis – 71: AH 1182, 1183 (3 pieces), 1184 (7), 1189 (perforated), 1190 (10, 1 perforated), 1191 (7, 1 perforated), 1192 (5, 1 perforated), 1193 (17, 1 clipped), 1194 (8, 1 perforated), 1195 (8), 1196 (4). The oldest coin is the Safavid shahi dated AH 1071 (1660/1), the youngest is Ganja coin dated AH 1201 (1786/7) (Pakhomov 1959, 27-32, #2022); tesauration must have taken place at the end of the 1780s;
39. Qarabagh I (2015): >400 abazis / 'abbasis produced in Ganja, Shirvan and the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti; the share of Sirma abazis is about 25%; we have studied only 14 pieces: AH 1183. (1769/70), 1184 (1770/1) – 2 pieces, 1190 (1776/7) – 3, 1193 (1779/80) – 2, 1194 (1780) – 4, 1195 (1780/1) – 2. We cannot say whether tesauration occurred after 1801 or before 1801 (Paghava, currently in print, -B);
40. Yerevan II (beginning of the 2010s): unidentified number of silver coins. We have examined only 4 (all of them bore a trace of soldering; it is obvious that they formed part of a jewelry) - 3 Sirma abazis: [120]7 (1792/3), [12]11 (1796/7), the date cannot be identified; and 1 Sirma type abazi of Ganja: AH 1205 (1790/1). The youngest coin is dated AH [12]11 (1796/7). The monetary complex must have been formed at the end of the 18th century (Paghava, currently in print-B).

IIb:

41. Qarabagh II (2013): 102 coins - 3 could not be identified (even the metal was not indicated); 1 copper coin with the image of St. George on a horse (of Russian Empire?), 98 silver coins: Safavid – 11 coins of Khowayza (including the ones dated AH 1088 / 1677/8, xx08), 5 coins of Sultan Hussein, 2 coins of Tahmasb II; Afsharid coins – 2 of Nadir-Shah, 1 of 'Adil-Shah; Ottoman – Ganja muhammadi/beshliq of Mehmet I; coins of the second half of the 18th century produced in the Khanates and the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti: Tabriz khanate - 2 pieces, Shamahi - 9;

Qarabagh - 46 (the latest coin is dated AH 1223 / 1808/9); Ganja - 10; Shakki - 2; Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti - 1 Sirma abazi (AH 1192 / 1778); Russian Empire - Elizabeth (1756; A coin of 25 kopecks), Catherine II coins (20 kopecks and one rouble) and Paul I coin (1801 rouble) (Akopyan 2015, 119, #20; Paghava, currently in print-B). The youngest coin is that of Qarabagh, dated AH 1223 (1808/9); tesauration must have taken place by the end of the first decade of the 19th century (Paghava, currently in print-B);

42. Yerevan I (2008): 20 silver coins, out of which, 17 were Sirma abazis (85%), including the one dated aH 1202 (1787/8), 1 Ganja 'abbasi (10%), 1 Georgian-Russian half-abazi dated 1819 (5%); the approximate time of tesauration is the end of the 1810s and beginning of the 1820s (Akopyan 2015, 120, #24; Paghava, currently in print-B);

Group 3 embraces 3 hoards. All of them have been discovered on the territory of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti; all the monetary complexes comprise Sirma tetri coins as well as coins of the 19th century, hence, tesauration took place in the 19th century. Hoards of this group provide information regarding monetary circulation in Kartli and Kakheti (i.e. eastern Georgia) after the annexation of 1801.

43. Pkhoveli (1955): 111 silver coins, out of which 8 were Sirma abazis, 60 Russian coins, 24 Georgian-Russian and 19 Polish-Russian silver coins. The oldest coin was Sirma abazi dated AH 1193 (1779/80), the youngest a Russian rouble dated 1842. The portion of Sirma coins comprised 7.2% of the total amount of coins. Tesauration must have taken place in the 1840s (not earlier than 1842) (Kebuladze 1975);
44. Pasanauri (1970s): 576 silver coins and 2 (also silver?) bowls. The coins were: Sirma silver coins of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti - 9 half-marchilis („AH 1182-1192 (1768-1778)“), 136 abazis (AH „1166-1213 (1752-1799)“), 4 uzaltunis (AH „1213 (1798-1799)“), 1 shauri (the date could not be identified); Ottoman - 1 para (frozen date AH 1143); „Iranian“ - 1 „ ‘abbasi“ (AH 1209 / 1794/5); Georgian-Russian - 13 double abazis (1812-1833), 1 abazi (1812); Polish-Russian - 3 2-zloty (1835-1836), 20 1 zloty coins (1835-1840), „1 coin worth 50 half-kopecks (1816)“ (it is unclear what coin is meant); Russian - 11 worth rouble coins (1764-1842), 1 poltina (1818), 1 half-poltina (1786), 22 grivenniks (1770-1795), 14 25-kopeck coins (1829-1858), 167 20-kopeck coins (1784-1878), 32 15-kopeck coins (1788-1877), 138 10-kopeck coins (1813-1877). The

oldest coins are Sirma abazid dated 1760s and rouble coins of Catherine II dated also 1760s. The youngest coin is the 20-kopeck coin emitted by Alexander II in 1878. Tesauration must have taken place at the end of the 1870s or beginning of the 1880s (according to Revaz Kebuladze, in 1890s) (Kebuladze 1975, 121). The share of Sirma tetri coins is 26.0% of the total number of coins, although the share would be less than that if calculated based on value or weight;

45. Kojori I (2019): 1 Sirma abazi (AH 1202 / 1787/8), Georgian-Russian coin emitted in 1805 (with filled hole) and double abazi of 1816; silver coins of the Russian empire: 20-kopeck coin issued in 1826, 2 20-kopeck coins issued in 1834; non-silver coins of the Russian empire: 1810-1830 coins (the date cannot be read) with nominal value of 2 kopecks, 1830-1839 type coins (the date cannot be read) with nominal value of 5 and 10 kopecks, 1840 coin with nominal value of 1 kopeck “by silver”, 1841 coins, 2 pieces, with nominal value of 3 kopecks “by silver”. The oldest coin is Sirma abazi dated AH 1202 (1787/8). The youngest coins are the 1841 3-kopeck ones. The total nominal value comprises 1 rouble 64 kopecks. The share of Sirma coins is equal to 20 kopecks, i.e. 8.3% of the total number of coins and 12.2% of the total value. Tesauration must have taken place in the 1840s (Paghava, currently in print-A);

Group 4: this group embraces one hoard found in Western Georgia. It contains coins of the 19th century; hence, it reflects monetary circulation in Western Georgia. Unfortunately, at this stage, it is impossible to make a distinction between monetary complexes of the 18th and 19th centuries and analyze the monetary circulation in the corresponding periods separately.

46. Sokhumi (1899): 10 Sirma abazis: AH „1155“ (? , this must be a misprint, and probably the year 1185 was implied), 1190, 1201, 1206, 1211, 1213, unidentified date (4 pieces); Ganja ‘abbasis, Ottoman, Russian and Georgian-Russian coins (9 double abazis, 4 abazis, two of them dated 1818 and 1828) (Pakhomov 1957, 88, #868). Tesauration must have taken place in the 1830s – 1840s.

Let us discuss the hoards reviewed above and comprising Sirma coins. What conclusions can we make?

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Analysis of the 12 hoards of the first group has proved that after the reform implemented by Irakli II, the national Georgian currency - Sirma tetri dominated on the territory of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti. In

any case, Sirma tetri was employed for average-scale transactions (it is likely that copper coins were used for petty trade, whereas major transactions were implemented using gold coins, above all, Dutch ducats. However, research of these issues is beyond our goal). 10 hoards out of the 12 (with the exception of Pshaveli and Mtianeti hoards, but including the silver component of Gori district) are comprised exclusively (100% of the total number) of Sirma coins (only one specimen from the Kojori II hoard, comprising 2.8% of the total number, was issued in Ganja. This coin was also of Sirma type i.e. visually similar and metrologically identical) (the above-mentioned 2 hoards will be analyzed separately).

The chief nominal unit (out of the four) intended for tesaurization in the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti was the *abazi*. With regard to Sirma tetri coins, we have information on 11 hoards. In the majority of cases, Sirma tetri is represented in the form of *abazis*. If we compare the data of all the 11 hoards, we can calculate the frequency of this nominal unit (quantitatively) - 99.47%. In general, small denominations (*uzaltunis* and *shauris* are found only in the hoards of Bolnisi, Dusheti and Mtianeti. Their share in Bolnisi hoard is only 5.7% (according to the number of coins, whereas, according to the weight, it is even less). In Mtianeti hoard the share comprises 26.1% of the total amount of all monies and 42.9% of Sirma coins (naturally, their share by weight is less). Such high share can be explained by the nature of the hoard, see below; in Dusheti hoard, their share comprises 20%, because this complex is most probably a lost purse and not a planned deposit. Naturally, minor nominal units took part in the circulation, but the *abazi* coins played a major role. *Abazi* was a chief nominal unit beginning from Shah 'Abbas' time. It should be noted that major nominal units are not found in the above-mentioned hoards.

As we have mentioned, the leading (if not the only) nominal unit in this group of hoards is Sirma tetri. An important exception is an admixture of Russian silver coins in Mtianeti and Pshaveli hoards: 21.7% and 62.5% of the total number of coins respectively. Yet, attention should be paid to the small nominal value of the Russian coins. Other coins are of small weight too, especially in Mtianeti hoard (the nominal value of 3 Ottoman coins in Pshaveli hoard is not mentioned in the original publication; however, as in case of Mtianeti hoard, the billon akçe-para type coinage should be implied). Mtianeti hoard (and also Pshaveli hoard?), which is discussed in detail in other work (Paghava, currently in print-B), may represent a long-term monetary deposit of ethnographic-religious nature. However, due to the

existence and place of discovery of Sirma coins, it is certain that these coins were saved within the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti. The contents of the hoard, despite the nature of the complex, reflect local monetary circulation. Hence, it seems possible, that the minor Russian nominal units emitted in large numbers in the 1790s penetrated into the monetary market of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti. However, unlike Sirma coins of small nominal value, they failed to gain the status of currency worth depositing, although they did represent the objects worth sacrifice.

We encounter a different phenomenon with regard to Gori uyezd hoard: parallel to Sirma coins, the hoard contains numerous coins emitted in the Russian Empire and the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti (the hoard does not contain silver coins issued in Russia). The given monetary complex is especially interesting. Yet, as we are not researching copper coins at this stage, this complex will be analyzed in another paper.

Hoardings of the first group are chronologically more or less identical but different in nature. Based on the latter criterion, they can be grouped as follows:

- a) Standard economic deposits (with the exception of Dusheti, Kartli hoard with find location unknown, Mtianeti and Pshaveli hoards). The aim of the owner was to save essential amount of money in (purposefully selected), most widespread, leading, liquid and valuable (silver) currency (Sirma abazis). The aim was to extract the hoard later and use it according to the needs. These hoards are complexes of comparatively short-term saving, entirely formed in the period after the reform implemented by Irakli II;
- b) Purses (hoard with find location unknown found in Kartli and the hoard of Dusheti) (lost accidentally?) comprise the money intended for daily spending. The coins are not selected on purpose. The hoards contain coins of minor nominal value. These are short-term, even extremely short-term savings, representing a very brief period of monetary circulation of the given epoch (naturally, after the monetary reform of Irakli II);
- c) Ethnographic-religious complexes (of Mtiuleti and probably also Pshaveli). These hoards must have been sacrificed to sacred places in the Georgian highlands during a long period (maybe decades). It seems, the coins intended to be sacrificed could be of small nominal value / weight, even deficient (soldered, perforated), but obligatorily made of precious metal (silver). For the purpose of economizing, the population used to sacrifice such coins. Despite their ethnographic-religious nature, such monetary complexes provide important information on the economic history. These

are complexes of long-term saving, embracing the coins emitted before and after the reform of Irakli II and reflecting a long period of local monetary circulation.

Attention should be paid to the frequency of Sirma abazis dated AH 1211 (1796/7). For instance, in Bolnisi hoard, 45.5% of coins were issued in this period (but Sirma abazis were also issued in AH 1179-1180, 1182-1184, 1190-1213,¹ i.e. in the period embracing at least 29 years). Empirically, the abazis emitted in this year are very frequent. What is the reason? Maybe the necessity of both the authorities and the population to mobilize silver deposits after Agha-Mohammad Khan's plunder of Tiflis?

Identification of frequency of Sirma abazis based on various data is possible only in case of Bolnisi and Manavi hoards. We have studied the abazis (but not other denominations) with diverse dates (ignoring the coins on which dates cannot be read) in absolute numbers as well as percentage (diagrams 1-2). It has turned out that the compositional structure of the above-mentioned two hoards is quite different. Bolnisi hoard has a traditional one, with its diagram scews towards later coins, which is logical (mostly later, i.e. more contemporaneous coins rather than the earlier ones are represented in the majority of hoards): there are 5 abazis in the group emitted in AH 1183-1184 and 1190-1193, (15.6%), whereas there are 27 such coins in the group emitted in AH 1202-1211, (84.4%). The situation is contrary in Manavi hoard: the diagram scews towards the earlier coins: in the group emitted in AH 1182-1184 and 1189-1194, there are 89 abazis (81.7%), whereas there are only 20 abazis in the group of AH 1203-1213, (18.3%). Unfortunately, we have no further information regarding similar monetary complexes, hence, we cannot carry out appropriate analysis. Manavi hoard consists of two components. The major portion was saved by AH 1194. Later, by the end of the 18th century, the saving was enriched with later coins. There are obvious gaps in both hoards: Bolnisi complex does not contain any of the AH 1194-1201 abazis, whereas Manavi hoard does not contain any of the AH 1196-1202. We assume that Manavi hoard had two components, but we cannot say the same about Bolnisi hoard. The absence of coins of corresponding years in the above-mentioned hoards (empirically, the abazis issued in these years are rare) can be explained by the restriction of emission in the given period. Is this due to military-political events (for

¹ We have never come across „Sirma“ coins emitted in H. 1180 and 1213, therefore we cannot verify their existence.

instance, the raid of Omar Khan in 1785) or fluctuations in the output of the mining industry?

Attention should also be focused on the time of tesauration of hoards reflecting the monetary circulation of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti. Based on the content, tesauration time can be identified in case of 9 complexes out of 12 (we have ignored 2 purses – Dusheti and Kartli without passport, because in these purses Sirma coins are scarce; we have also ignored Lalakened hoard which contains Sirma coins but their date cannot be identified). Tesauration of all 9 complexes took place at the end of the 18th century, in a small period of time, from 1796/7 or 1797/8 until the beginning of the 1800s (the youngest coins are Sirmas dated by AH 1211 and 1213 and minor Russian silver coins emitted in 1790s. The hoards do not contain coins of the 19th century). Why did tesauration of “Sirma” coins take place at the end of the 18th century? The Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti had always been suffering from war and high death rate (unexpected death) of the population. Was the situation aggravated during the reign of Giorgi XII? Maybe, due to the lack of safety, the population started saving money, but many of them could not extract their deposits later.

Each coin of Kojori II hoard bears the trace of soldering (similar hoards are also typical for the monetary circulation in the Khanates, see below). This complex is found on the territory of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti. Had it been brought from the Khanate, it would not consist exclusively of Sirma coins of Tbilisi and Ganja (a single coin). It should be mentioned that, with the exception of 2 coins, soldering affected the side bearing the mint name and date of emission (and invocation). The other side, bearing a formula from Quran (albeit, acceptable for Christians as well), is left unaffected on 34 coins (94.4%). This cannot be accidental. Either the artisan or the client must have been Muslim, and the buttons (?) were designed to present the Quranic formula. Such artifacts were probably widespread among Muslim population. Thus, the given monetary complex is also important from the ethnographic-culturological viewpoint.

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Analysis of the 7 hoards of the second group proves that in the Khanates adjacent to the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti (eliminated later as a result of Russian expansion) the role of Sirma coins was more modest. There are data regarding 5 monetary complexes out of 7 (the second complex of Yerevan is very small and, most probably, became known only

fragmentarily, hence, it would be reasonable to ignore it). In the 5 monetary complexes, the share of Sirma coins vacillates to a great extent (within the total number of identified silver coins) between 0.98% of the second hoard of Qarabagh and 85% in the first hoard of Yerevan. The share of sirma silver is generally low: Chaykend: 5.8%, Sovetashen: 13.3%, Qarabagh I: 25%? (according to 5 complexes, the frequency of Sirma abazis is 10.6% of the total amount, or, 10.6% not counting Sovetashen hoard, which contained Sirma silver coins of different nominal value). Real figures are even lower, because the given analysis does not take into account the hoards of Khanates which did not include “Sirma” coins. As it seems, outside the borders of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti, in other regions of the Caucasus, Georgian sirmas were overshadowed by the silver coins of the Khanates (north of Arez, the most active emittents were the Khanates of Ganja, Nukhwi, Qarabagh and Shirvan). However, the hoards may not adequately reflect the dissemination and role of Sirma coinage within the Khanates: this can be indirectly proved by high vacillation of the ratio of Sirma coins in the hoards of the second group (in this regard, there is probably no difference between the hoards of group IIa and group IIb). In my opinion, the Sirma coins made of high standard silver in the Khanates constituted the main source used as raw material: their majority fell victim to smelting.

With regard to the dissemination of Sirma coinage in the Khanates, we should take into account Davit Kapanadze’s opinion, according to which, imitations of Georgian Sirma coins were struck in the Nukhwi Khanate (Kapanadze 1969, 159).

Interestingly enough, like in case of the hoards of the first group, abazi was the most widespread nominal value among the Sirma coins of the hoards of the second group was . Not counting Sovetashen hoard, its share is 100%. In the hoards deposited on the territory of Khanates, coins of small nominal value are not found altogether. Instead, (unlike the hoards deposited on the territory of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti), there is a hoard of Sovetashen, where both of the two “Sirma” coins are of larger nominal value (1½ *abazi*). As mentioned above, this was a special transitional nominal value of 6-dangs connecting Georgian 4-dang abazis and 6-dang ‘abbasi coins of the Khanate of Tebriz. It was emitted to facilitate trade with southern neighbours (Paghava 2021a, 354-355).

Like the second hoard of Kojori, all the four specimens of the monetary complex of Yerevan II bear the trace of soldering and, in all four cases (100%), the side with Quranic formula is unaffected (see above).

In general, tesauration of deficient coins (perforated, soldered) points to the internal value of coins made of precious metals. Such coins, at least partially, performed the function of both goods and money, despite the defects and traces of soldering.

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Group 3 embraces only three hoards. Undoubtedly, after the annexation of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti and termination of emission of Sirma coins, alongside with the abundance of coins of the Russian Empire (including Polish-Russian and Georgian-Russian coins), the role of Sirma coins in the local monetary circulation declined. However, the role of Sirma coins was still significant. Even in the two hoards deposited in the 1840s (Pkhoveli and Kojori I), the share of Sirma coins (in the total amount) was 7.2 and 8.3%; moreover, in the hoard of Pasaauri, deposited in the beginning of the 1880s, the share of Sirma coins was 26.0% (sic).

The hoard data fully correlate with the available documents. Persistence of “Sirma” coins is proved by two purchase deeds issued in 1851 and 1853. Alongside with other coins, Sirma coins were mentioned in these deeds (Kebuladze 1969, 759). According to the official data of 1851, in Tbilisi province “coins of the period of Georgian kings” were in circulation in the amount of 48,750 roubles (plus 6,390 roubles of Char-Balakan military district) (Gugushvili 1956, 86). In the 1840s and beginning of 1850s, the Russian administration made attempts to extract these coins from circulation. Yet, as Pasaauri hoard has proved, they did not achieve much success (Gugushvili 1956, 83-88; Kebuladze 1969, 758-759).

With regard to the distribution of nominal value, we should point out that the hoards of the 1840s embrace only Sirma abazi coins (100%), while Pasaauri hoard of the 1880s embraces coins of all four denominations, including 9 half-marchili coins (apart from Pasaauri hoard, the only case of tesauration of Sirma coins of this nominal value is the Sovetashen hoard) (see Diagram 3). The hoard may have been accumulated for a long time (church/sacred place?). Apart from Sirma abazis, it comprises one-rouble coins emitted by Catherine II in the 1760s (unfortunately, we do not know how the hoard was discovered).

Such persistence of “Sirma” coins on the territories of Eastern provinces of Georgia is due to the number of coins emitted in the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti as well as their high standard. It should be noted that the purity and weight standard of the so-called Georgian-Russian coins

emitted by the mint opened by Russians in Tbilisi in 1804 was selected based on the metrology of Sirma coinage (Pakhomov 1970, 271-272; Paghava, currently in print-C).

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So far, group 4 embraces only one hoard. Unfortunately, its content is known only partially. The monetary complex discovered in Sokhumi in 1899 must have been tesaurated in the 1830s-1840s. All the ten Sirma coins found in this hoard were abazis; so, this denomination was dominant in this hoard as well. Attention should be paid to the circulation of Ganja 'abbasis in the north-western region of Georgia.

There are documents proving the circulation of "Sirma" coins emitted by Irakli II and Giorgi XII in western Georgia in the 19th century, when Georgia was part of the Russian Empire. In Tbilisi province, the value of circulated "Sirma" coins comprised 48,750 roubles in 1851, whereas in Kutaisi province the nominal value of circulated "Sirma" coins comprised 22,000 roubles (Gugushvili 1956, 86).

There is no precise information regarding the Western Georgian regions in the period of existence of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti. Did Sirma coinage circulate in the Kingdom of Imereti (in the narrow sense) or Racha? In this regard, we should also study the labour migration of Imeretians to the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti (Gogoladze 1966, 15). Was the monetary market dominated by Ottoman money (and Dutch ducats)?

How can we explain the discovery of only one (at least so far) hoard with "Sirma" coins on the territory of Western Georgia? Is it due to less intensive circulation of Sirma coins or a smaller number of unexpected deaths, at least in the 19th century? In my opinion, further research should be implemented regarding the monetary circulation in the Western Georgia in the second half of the 18th century and first half of the 19th century.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that meta-analysis of hoards containing Sirma coins, taking into account alternative sources, provides original and essential information regarding the economic life of the Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti. The analysis of this type is a valuable tool for researching the economic history in general.

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