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**NEW MINTNAME “GEORGIA” (“JURZĀN”):
RESEARCHING THE HISTORY OF GEORGIA
AND THE ‘ABBĀSID NORTH IN THE 8TH-9TH CENTURIES**

**НОВИЙ МОНЕТНИЙ ДВІР “ГРУЗІЯ” (“ДЖУРЗАН”):
ДО ВИВЧЕННЯ ІСТОРІЇ ГРУЗІЇ
ТА АБАСИДСЬКОЇ ПІВНОЧІ У VIII-IX СТ.**

Abstract.

*The history of Arab sway in Georgia has been researched thoroughly by many scholars throughout the 20th and 21st century. However, further research in this field has been impeded by the dearth of original sources. Fortunately, numismatic material serves as a specific but informative primary source. **The goal** of this work is to publish two ‘Abbāsid coins, anonymous AH 152 fals (weight 2.42 g, dimensions 22.5 mm, die axis 9 o’clock) and AH 240 dīnar (weight 4.38 g), citing al-Mutawakkil and the heir al-Mu‘tazz Billāh, both bearing the previously unpublished and unresearched mintname Jurzān; also re-publish AH 248 dīnar (weight 4.21 g) citing al-Musta‘īn Billāh, of Tiflīs mint. Jurzān mintname is being published and discussed for the first time by means of this article.*

Jurzān was the term the Arabs employed for designating Georgia / east-Georgian region of Kartli. We knew the mintname pairs of province - major urban

center of the province type, like *Armīniya – Dabīl* for Armenia, and *Arrān – Barda‘a* for Albania; now we have similar pair for Georgia as well: *Jurzān – Tiflīs*. We presume that all *Jurzān* coins were minted at *Tiflīs*, the major Arab stronghold in the contemporary eastern Georgia.

The significance of discovering the new Georgian / Caliphal mintname extends beyond the framework of exclusively numismatic history and is determined by 1) the date the aforesaid coins bear; 2) the coin metal employed; 3) their mintname, i.e. *Jurzān*, substituted for *Tiflīs* for some reason.

The AH 152 (14/I/769-3/I/770) fals was minted in Georgia in the epoch of major Khazar-Arab confrontation and anti-Arab insurrection / activities of the Georgian mountaineers, the *Ts'anars*, following the major Khazar invasions of AH 145 and 147. We discuss the political, military and administrative changes based on the narrative and numismatic data. The campaign of AH 147 / 764 (*Rās Ṭarkhān's* invasion) culminated with Arab defeat. The northern provinces of the caliphate were pillaged by the Khazars who seized and ravaged *Tiflīs*; eastern Georgia and the *Bāb al-Abwāb* area were affected the most. The Caliph decided to re-conquer the 'Abbāsīd North, and resumed hostilities in AH 148 / 765: new army was led by *Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba*; however, by AH 148 the Khazars had evidently already evacuated eastern Georgia and *Tiflīs*. The Arabs created a network of fortified centers against the Khazars, probably including *al-Yazīdyah* (issuing the *fulūs* in AH 149 and 150). It is unclear, who governed the province *Armīniya* in AH 148-152 (27/II/765-3/I/770) - *Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba*, then again *Yazīd b. Usayd*? According to *al-Kūfī*, appointing *Bakkār b. Muslim* the Caliph dismissed none other than *Yazīd*. *Bakkār* was the governor in AH 152-153; he was replaced with *al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba*, who remained the governor in AH 154-158. *Al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba* was probably dispatched because of the *Ts'anar* revolt. The *Ts'anars* attempted to make use of the political vacuum caused by the Khazar invasions and gain independence from the Arabs, however, unsuccessfully. The Caliph initiated the reconquest of the northern provinces, in particular, the *Bāb al-Abwāb* and *Jurzān*, two key areas, controlling the passes through the Caucasus mountains which the Khazars could make use of to invade the 'Abbāsīd North at some point in the future.

It is clear now that by 769 / AH 152 *Tiflīs* (and, undoubtedly, significant part of *Jurzān*) was recovered by the Arabs, to such an extent, that they could operate a mint there (no matter who was the governor then).

It is significant, that *Jurzān* was indicated as the mintname, not *Tiflīs*. That could constitute a declaration of a kind, reflecting the Arab ambition and desire to control all of *Jurzān* (far from reality because of the *Ts'anars*). However, gold or silver currency would presumably have had more declarative value. The authorities had some reason for issuing the copper currency. In the decade and a half after *Rās Ṭarkhān's* invasion minting of the 'Abbāsīd coppers in the region intensified. Copper currency possibly served as a public media outlet in a sense, in addition to its purely

economic role, hence it was expedient to indicate the name of the current governor (or his deputy). However, we are inclined to consider that the intensive issuing of copper currency in the aforesaid cities within the aforesaid time frame reflects and indicates the increased Arab military presence (involving a number of Arab warriors, resp. settlers with families?) and ensuing local economic activities.

The Jurzān dīnar of AH 240 (2/VI/854-21/V/855) and Tiflīs dīnar of AH 248 (7/III/862-23/II/863) pertain to the time period when Bughā affirmed and restored the ‘Abbāsīd control over the northern provinces, in particular, the Tiflīs area in eastern Georgia (Jurzān).

When the anti-Arab revolt in Armenia started, Al-Mutawakkil assigned the governorship of the North to Bughā the Turk, who first suppressed the revolt in Armenia and then moved to Georgia, where he seized Tiflīs and killed local recalcitrant ruler, Ishāq b. Ismā‘īl. This happened on 5 August, Saturday, 853. Having captured Tiflīs and decapitated Ishāq, Bughā attempted to expand Arab control in Georgia. He gained victory over the army of west-Georgian kingdom, but was defeated by the Ts’anars. Eventually Bughā was replaced by Muḥammad b. Khālīd. Bughā was the governor in AH 237 (?) – AH 240 or 241. Muḥammad was the governor from AH 241 or 242 till he was replaced by ‘Isā b. al-Shaykh in AH 256.

The AH 240 dirham of Jurzān was minted when Bughā was still active in the region, specifically in Jurzān, while the AH 248 dirham of Tiflīs was minted in the governorship of Muḥammad. We know Tiflīs dirhams of AH 248-250, also issued in the governorship of Muḥammad. Dīnars were issued in Dabīl in AH 241 and in Armīniya in AH 243, 246 and 252; dirhams were issued in Armīniya in AH 241, 243, 246-253, 255-256. In both Armīniya-Dabīl and Jurzān-Tiflīs cases the coin-minting activity clearly intensified during and in the wake of Bughā’s stay in the region: the coin-minting activities ceased and were resumed well before and after that period.

The name of the entire province was indicated on the AH 240 Jurzān dīnar because Bughā considered it expedient to declare the Arab control all over Jurzān (which remained merely an ambition, since Bughā was defeated by the Ts’anars). The metal employed for minting both Jurzān and Tiflīs (as well as Armīniya and Dabīl) dīnars perhaps also indicates that the authorities employed the mint/s for declarative purposes. However, the more or less regular issue of silver currency at Tiflīs, and particularly Armīniya mints may rather reflect the more mundane intention to supply the local residents (including, no doubt, the military) adequately with means of exchange.

The discovery of the new mintname “Jurzān” (Georgia / Kartli), probably designating Tiflīs, expands our knowledge on the numismatic history of Georgia and the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate. Two coins presented by means of this article probably constitute the earliest artifacts bearing the ethnotoponym Jurzān. Employing the name of the province as a mintname evidently emphasized the Arab control of not just the Arab outpost Tiflīs, but rather the entire province of Jurzān, i.e. eastern Georgia, or,

rather the 'Abbāsīd ambition thereof. The unique copper and gold coinage of Jurzān along with the unique gold dīnar of Tiflīs provide us with an intimate insight into the contemporary political, military and economic proceedings in Georgia, or, generally speaking, the 'Abbāsīd North.

We consider the Jurzān coins, published and analyzed by means of this article, as one of the primary sources on the history of Georgia and the 'Abbāsīd North in this epoch. Comprehensive analysis of all the available and upcoming data would hopefully lead to the more up-to-date historiographic narrative of the rise and fall of the Arab sway in Georgia and the region.

Key words: Georgian numismatics, new mint name, "Jurzān", Abbasid dynasty.

Анотація.

Вивченню історії арабського панування у Грузії приділило увагу чимало вчених ХХ і ХХІ ст. Однак, подальшій роботі в цьому напрямку перешкоджала малочисельність джерел. На щастя, специфічним, але інформативним періоджерелом залишається нумізматичний матеріал. **Мета** нашої роботи полягає в науковій публікації двох унікальних Аббасидських монет анонімного фельсу 152 р.х. (Вага 2,42 г, діаметр 22,5 мм, співвідношення сторін на 9 г) і динара (вага 4,38 г) 240 р.х. з іменами аль-Мутаваккіля та його спадкоємця аль-Мутаazza – на обох монетах вказано раніше невідомий і невивчений монетний двір Джурзан. Ми також повторно публікуємо унікальний динар (вага 4,21 г) 248 р.х. монетного двору Тифліс.

Джурзаном араби позначали Грузію, зокрема східну частину країни – Картлі. Нам відомі пари монетних дворів по типу провінція – основний міський центр провінції, наприклад – Армінія-Дабіль для Вірменії, Арран-Бардаа для Албанії. Тепер же перед нами пара для Грузії – Джурзан–Тифліс. Ми вважаємо, що всі монети Джурзану карбувалися в Тифлісі, основний твердині арабів у Грузії.

Значення наукового відкриття нового грузинського / халіфатського монетного двору виходить за рамки виключно нумізматичної історії і зумовлюється: 1) датою вищевказаних монет; 2) їх металом; 2) вказівкою як монет двору Джурзану, а не Тифлісу.

Фельс 152 р.х. (14/І/769-3/І/770) карбували у Грузії в добу хазаро-арабського протистояння та анти-арабського повстання цанарів, грузинських горців, після хазарських вторгнень 145 та 147 рр.х. Ми розглядаємо політичні, військові та адміністративні зміни, спираючись на нарративні та нумізматичні джерела.

Кампанія 147 р.х. – 764 р. (уторгнення Рас Тархана) закінчилась поразкою арабів. Хазари спустошили північні провінції халіфату, захопили і розграбували Тифліс. Найбільше постраждали східна Грузія та область Баб-ал-Абваба.

Халіф прийняв рішення відвоювати Північ, у всякому разі Грузію, і відновив військові дії у 148 р.х. – 765 р. На чолі армії став Хумайд б. Кахтаба. Однак на той час хазари вже залишили східну Грузію і Тифліс. Араби створили мережу укріплених пунктів проти хазар, ймовірно, включаючи і Аль-Йазідію (де випускалися фельси у 149–150 рр.х.). Незрозуміло, хто керував провінцією Армінія у 148-152 рр.х. (27 / II / 765–3 / I / 770). Чи спочатку Хумайд б. Кахтаба, а потім знову Йазід б. Усайд? За Ал-Куфі, призначаючи Баккара б. Мусліма, Халіф змінив саме Йазіда. Баккар був правителем у 152–153 рр.х. Його замінив ал-Хасан б. Кахтаба і правив протягом 154–158 рр.х. Ал-Хасан був, очевидно, посланий на північ через повстання цанарів. Цанари скористалися політичним вакуумом після вторгнення хозар і спробували домогтися незалежності від Халіфату, але марно. Араби повторно завоювали північні провінції, зокрема, Баб ал-Абваб і Джурзан, дві ключові області, контролюючи проходи через Великий Кавказ, територією якого хазари могли знову скористатися для вторгнення на Аббасидську Північ.

Немає жодних сумнівів, що до 769 р. – 152 р.х. Тифліс (і, безсумнівно, значна частина Джурзана) знову контролювався арабами, причому до такої міри, що там почав працювати їх власний монетний двір.

Важливий той факт, що за назву монетного двору вказали Джурзан, а не Тифліс. Ми вбачаємо в цьому рішенні бажання арабської адміністрації контролювати Джурзан цілком (здійснене не до кінця через протидію цанарів). Однак, карбування золотої та срібної монети мало б мати більш декларативне значення. У влади повинна була бути якась причина відкарбувати саме мідну монету. Випуск арабських фельсів на монетних дворах Південного Кавказу явно зростала протягом півтора десятка років після вторгнення Рас Тархана у 147 р.х. Зрозуміло, що мідна монета, можливо, слугувала і як своєрідне мас-медіа для тогочасних органів влади, не кажучи вже про неї в економічному значенні. Виходячи з цього, доцільним було вказувати на фельсах ім'я відповідного правителя. Однак, ми схильні розглядати інтенсивний випуск мідної монети в зазначений часовий інтервал і як показник розширеної арабської військової присутності в регіоні, значне зростання кількості арабського етнічного населення (військових та їх сімей?), що у свою чергу стимулювало місцеву економічну активність.

Динари Джурзану 240 р.х. (2 / VI / 854-21 / V / 855) і Тифлісу 248 р.х. (7 / III / 862-23 / II / 863) відносяться до того часу, коли Буга старший знову затвердив владу аббасидів на Аббасидській Півночі, особливо в Тифлісі та його околицях (тобто, в Джурзані).

Після того, як у Вірменії почалося повстання проти арабів, аль-Мутаввакіл організував похід Буги, який спершу подавив повстання, а потім пішов далі у Грузію, спалив Тифліс і вбив норавливого місцевого еміра Ісхака б Ісмаїла. Це сталося суботнього дня 5 серпня 853 р. Після цього Бука спробував

розширити територію контрольовану арабами в Грузії. Він здобув перемогу над армією Західно-грузинського царства, але, у свою чергу, був переможений цанарами. Насамкінець його замінив на посаді правителя Мухаммад б. Халід. Буга був правителем протягом 237 (?) – 240 або 241 рр.х. Мухаммад був правителем з 241 або 242 до 256 р.х., коли його замінив Іса б. аль-Шайх.

Динар Джурзану 240 г.х. був викарбуваний в той час, коли Буга ще активно діяв в Грузії, особливо в Джурзані, в той час як динар Тифліса 248 р.х. відноситься вже до правління Мухаммада. Нам також відомі тифліські дирхеми 248–250 рр.х., також викарбувані за правління Мухаммада. Динари також карбувалися в Дабілі у 241 р.х. і в Армінії в 243, 246 і 252 рр.х. Дирхеми випускалися в Армінії у 241, 243, 246–253, 255–256 рр.х. Так само як Армінії-Дабіля, так і Джурзану-Грузії, карбування монети явно збільшилось в обсягах як під час перебування Буги в регіоні, так і безпосередньо після цього.

Ім'я провінції, а не міста, було, ймовірно, вказано на динарі Джурзану 240 р.х., виходячи з бажання Буги заявити про контроль над усім Джурзаном (що, зрозуміло, слід вважати лише амбіцією правителя, переможеного цанарами). Метал – золото – використаний для карбування динарів Джурзану і Тифлісу (а також Армінії і Дабіля), можливо, вказує на бажання арабської адміністрації надати цим грошовим емісіям особливу декларативність. І в той же час більш регулярний випуск срібла в Тифлісі і, особливо, в Армінії, служив більш прозаїчній меті – забезпечити місцеве населення (до складу якого, безсумнівно, належали й війська) платіжним засобом.

Відкриття нового монетного двору Джурзан (Грузія / Картлі), ймовірно так називали Тифліс, проливає додаткове світло на нумізматичну історію Грузії і Аббасидського халіфату. Дві монети, розглянуті в нашій роботі, очевидно, становлять найбільш ранні артефакти з етнопонімом Джурзан. Використання імені провінції, а не міста, повинно було, очевидно, підкреслити контроль арабів не тільки над Тифлісом, а й над усією східною Грузією, проте воно найперше відображає бажання завойовників ніж реальний стан справ.

Унікальні мідна і золота монета Джурзану так само, як і унікальна золота монета Тифлісу, розглядаються нами як важливе періоджерело свідчень про політичну, військову та економічну історію Грузії та Аббасидської Півночі в цілому. Маємо надію, що комплексний аналіз опублікованого і підготовленого до публікації додаткового нумізматичного матеріалу внесе свій внесок у відновлення історіографічної картини історії Грузії та Аббасидської Півночі зазначеної епохи.

Ключові слова: нумізматика Грузії, новий монетний двір, «Джурзан», династія Аббасидів.

The history of Arab sway in Georgia has been researched thoroughly by many scholars throughout the 20th century.¹ Various issues have been researched relatively recently as well.² However, further research in this field has evidently been impeded by the dearth of original sources, let alone them having had already been analysed thoroughly by predecessor scholars.

Fortunately, recently discovered numismatic material constitutes a novel, specific but original and informative primary source. For instance, the circulation of Kufic coinage in both western and eastern provinces of Georgia was analyzed (Paghava & Turkia, 2017; Пагава & Лемберг, 2015; ფაღავა, ვარშალომიძე & თურქიას, 2016); copper and gold Kufic coinage minted in Georgia was discovered (Paghava & Turkia, 2009b; Turkia & Paghava, 2009; ფაღავა, 2016-2017); new data on the monetary policy of ‘Alī b. Ja‘far were published (Paghava, 2018; Paghava & Bennett, 2012; Paghava & Turkia, 2009a); it was established, that the coins were issued by the 11th century Ja‘farid emir of Tiflīs, Ja‘far III (Turkia & Paghava, 2008; Paghava & Turkia, 2011); that Ja‘far III’s sons, Abū al-Hayjā and Mansūr did rule in Tiflīs and even issued their own coinage (Paghava & Turkia, 2012; Пагава & Туркия, 2014); that Mansūr acknowledged the Great Seljuk suzerainty and that Tiflīs remained under the Great Seljuk aegis until Georgian re-conquest (ფაღავა, 2015; Paghava & Turkia, 2015; Paghava, 2017).

The aforementioned numismatic discoveries provided us with an opportunity to clarify not only certain issues of Georgian numismatic history exclusively, but also many aspects of the more or less obscure general history of the Georgian-Arab relations in the 7th-12th centuries. Nevertheless, the exact and comprehensive chronology and extent as well as nature of Arab dominance in Georgia remain to be further ascertained. The register of Georgian (or ‘Abbāsīd) mintnames has seemingly been incomplete as well.

The goal of our present work is to publish two ‘Abbāsīd coins, a fals and a dīnar, both bearing the previously unpublished / unresearched mintname: “Jurzān”, i.e. the contemporary Arabic designation of *Georgia*, or, perhaps, *eastern Georgia - Kartli*; and to analyze the historical significance of these discoveries.

We provide the description of **the numismatic material** first.

AE, fals, Jurzān mint, AH 152, Anonymous. Weight 2.42 g, dimensions 22.5 mm, die axis 9 o’clock.

Reportedly, accidental find in the vicinity of modern Tbilisi (2021). Currently preserved in private collection.

¹ For the general history thereof cf. (ჯანაშია, 1933; ლორთქიფანიძე, 1952; სილაგაძე, 1991).

² For instance, the role of Tiflīs in Shi‘i Tradition (Beradze, 2020), or the novel periodization of Arab sway in Georgia (ფაღავა, 2014; Пагава, 2016).



Obverse: Central area:

لا اله
الا الله

within central circle.

The legend continues centrifugally
at 7:30 o'clock in the margin:

وحده لا شريك له

All within beaded circle.



Reverse: Central area:

محمد
رسول
الله

surrounded by centrifugal marginal legend
starting at 1 o'clock:

بسم الله ضرب هذا الفلاس جرزان سنة اثنتين و خمسين و مئة

All within beaded circle.

AV, dīnar, Jurzān mint, AH 240, al-Mutawakkil ‘Ala Allāh, citing the heir al-Mu‘tazz Billāh. Weight 4.38 g.

Auctioned by Morton & Eden Ltd (Sale 99, Important Coins of the Islamic World, lot 23) on 2 May 2019 (Morton & Eden, 2019a, lot 23; Morton & Eden., 2019b). Provenance and current whereabouts are unknown.



Obverse: Central area:

لا اله الا
الله وحده
لا شريك له
المعترف باله

surrounded by inner centrifugal marginal legend
starting at 1 o'clock:

بسم الله ضرب هذا الدينر بجززان سنة اربعين و مائتين
surrounded by outer centrifugal marginal legend
starting at 1 o'clock: Al-Qur‘ān 30:4-5

الله الامر من قبل ومن بعد و توئمذيفرح المومنون بنصر الله
Surrounded by circular border.

Reverse: Central area:

الله
محمد
رسول
الله

المتوكل على الله

Surrounded by circular border.

surrounded by centrifugal marginal legend
starting at 12 o'clock: al-Qur‘ān 9:33:
بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون
محمد رسول الله لرسله
Surrounded by yet another circular border.

It would not be inexpedient to provide the image and description of one more dīnar, but of Tiflīs mint, dated AH 248. This so far unique coin has already been published (in 2020), but without the analysis of local political situation in the ‘Abbāsīd North, and in Georgian (ფაღვავა, 2016-2017); it therefore may remain relatively unknown for the international scholarly community; however, its historical significance is remarkable, and it may have immediate relation to our current research. So we would re-publish this coin.

AV, dīnar, Tiflīs mint, AH 248, al-Musta‘īn Billāh. Weight 4.21 g.

Auctioned by Morton & Eden Ltd (Sale 85, Important Coins of the Islamic World, lot 40) on 26 April 2017 (Morton & Eden, 2017, lot 40). Provenance and current whereabouts are unknown.



Obverse: Central area:

لا اله الا
الله وحده
لا شريك له

surrounded by inner centrifugal marginal legend
starting at 12:15 o'clock:

بسم الله ضرب هذا الدينار بتفليس سنة ثمان و اربعين و مائتين
surrounded by outer centrifugal marginal legend
starting at 12:15 o'clock: Al-Qur'ān 30:4-5

لله الامر من قبل ومن بعد و تومئذ يفرح المومنون بنصر الله
Surrounded by circular border.



Reverse: Central area:

الله
محمد
رسول
الله

المستعين بالله

Surrounded by circular border.

surrounded by centrifugal marginal legend
starting at 12 o'clock: Al-Qur'ān 9:33:
بالهدي ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون
محمد رسول الله لرسله
Surrounded by yet another circular border.

Both the AH 152 (769/70) fals and the AH 240 (854/5) dīnar read very clearly the mintname “Jurzān”. The AH 152 Jurzān fals was the first coin which came to our attention. The mintname was read as “Jurzān” by Severiane Turkia. Search for other Kufic coins with the same mintname revealed yet another ‘Abbāsīd coin, dīnar dated AH 240, auctioned by Morton & Eden, Ltd, and listed in the Sales catalogue as “Jurjān” (Morton & Eden, 2019a, lot 23). However, the coin illustration in the Sale catalogue left no doubt that the mintname on the coin was “Jurzān”. In response to our inquiry Steve Lloyd kindly informed us (personal e-mail communication)¹, that the mintname had been read correctly by Aram Vardanyan, and its reading as well as the accompanying text were updated and presented as such in the Saleroom Notices (Morton & Eden., 2019b). Nevertheless, to our knowledge, no scholarly work has ever been devoted to this new *Jurzān* mint previously; the *Jurzān* mintname is being published and discussed for the first time by means of this article.

¹ We would like to express our gratitude for his kind support of our research.

It has already been researched and established, that *Jurzān*¹ was the term the Arabs employed for designating Georgia, or, at least the east-Georgian region of Kartli (in a broader sense; i.e. the provinces of Kartli and K'akheti, both being part of ancient Kartli / Iberia) (ჯაფარიძე, 2012ა, გვ. 11-16).

In this case we have a clear instance of the name of an entire province indicated on the coinage as the mintname. This is not certainly unheard of as far as it regards the numismatic history of the Arab dominions in the Caucasus. We know other mintnames of this type, for instance, *Armīniya* and *Arrān*, reflecting the Arab coin-minting activities in correspondingly Armenia and Albania, in the same epoch. We knew the mintname pairs of *province - major urban center of the province* type, like *Armīniya – Dabīl* for Armenia, and *Arrān – Barda'a* for Albania²; now we have similar pair for Georgia as well: *Jurzān – Tiflīs*. It is a common view that the coins with provincial mintname were minted in corresponding urban centers. It would be logical to presume the same for the *Jurzān – Tiflīs* pair, i.e. that all *Jurzān* coins (both in AH 152 and 240) were minted at *Tiflīs*, the major and seemingly unrivalled urban center in the contemporary eastern Georgia. It is true, that al-Ya'qūbī who clearly employs the term *Jurzān* to designate the land, once, in his *Geography* speaks about *the city (madīnat) of Jurzān*, along with *the city of Tiflīs* (sic) and *the city “Masjid Dhī l-Qarnayn”*: [the province of] “Armenia is divided into three parts. ... The third part includes the city of Jurzān, the city of Tiflīs, and the city known as Masjid Dhī l-Qarnayn (The Mosque of Alexander the Great)”³ (al-Ya'qūbī, 2018, p. 206). Nevertheless, we do not know any other urban center in eastern Georgia in this epoch, comparable to Tiflīs in terms of economic and military or political significance.

Despite (most probably) being minted at *Tiflīs*, these new coins bear a previously unknown mintname – *Jurzān = Georgia / Kartli*. This discovery seems to be a valuable addition to the numismatic history of both Georgia and the Arab Caliphate.

Moreover, two coins presented by means of this article probably constitute the earliest artifacts bearing the ethnotoponym “*Jurzān*”.

The significance of discovering the new Georgian / Caliphal mintname and dated coins bearing it extends beyond the framework of numismatic history in the narrower sense.

Historiographic value of these two unique coins minted by Arab administration in Georgia is determined by
the date they bear;

¹ Interestingly enough, in some relatively rare cases *Jurzān* also designated Georgia / Kartli, rather than the area at the south-eastern shore of the Caspian Sea (ჯაფარიძე, 2012ა, გვ. 16-18).

² In the AH 142-256 time period. Later the situation changed (Vardanyan, 2014, pp. 10-12).

³ Al-Mas'ūdī, for instance, also writes about “the place” in Georgia, called “Masjid Dūl-Karnān” (al-Mas'ūdī, 1841, pp. 452-453).

the coin metal employed for producing them;

the mintname they bear, i.e. *Jurzān*, substituted, as we think, for *Tiflīs*.

Clearly enough, the aforesaid coins constitute the vestige and indisputable proof of Arab dominance in Georgia, or more precisely, of their being in possession of the corresponding coin-minting urban (?) center (most probably, Tiflīs). It is very convenient, that, in accordance with extremely historian-friendly Islamic monetary tradition, this numismatic evidence is *dated*. AH 152 (14/I/769-3/I/770) and 240 (2/VI/854-21/V/855), as well as AH 248 (7/III/862-23/II/863), indicated on the coins date quite precisely when exactly the Arab possession of (eastern) Georgia (Tiflīs, for the least) was steady enough to provide them with an opportunity *and* either political or economic (perhaps military related) reason to strike coins there.

The commonest currency minted by Arabs in Georgia (and at Caucasian mints, in general) were silver dirhams, with copper fulūs being relatively scarcer, and gold dīnars being rare. The need to mint copper fulūs could be perceived as a marker of relatively intensive petty trade, typical for major urban centres, but perhaps also stimulated by influx of numbers of paid personnel, i.e. soldiers), whereas minting high value gold coinage can perhaps be interpreted as having at least to some extent a declarative significance.

Traditional mintname *Tiflīs* could hardly be substituted with *Jurzān*, if not for some reason. We fully agree with Steve Lloyd's opinion (expressed with regard to the AH 240 dīnar): "It is interesting that the provincial name, Jurzan, should be used as opposed to the name of the capital Tiflis ... It seems plausible to suggest that the use of the provincial name was intended to emphasise that Bughā's victories were not confined to defeating the emir of Tiflis alone, but that he had also subjugated a number of other local rulers and princes in the region." (Morton & Eden, 2019b).

*

The **AH 152** (14/I/769-3/I/770) fals was minted in Georgia in the epoch of major Khazar-Arab confrontation and anti-Arab insurrection / activities of the Georgian mountaineers, the Ts'anars¹.

The conflict between the Arabs and the Khazars recommenced in **AH 145** (1/IV/762-20/III/763), when according to al-Ṭabarī, "the Turks and the Khazars revolted at Bāb al-Abwāb and killed a great many Muslims in Armenia." (Al-Ṭabarī, XXVIII, 1995, p. 292). The same information we can find in a number of other primary sources: Ibn al-Athīr, Michael the Syrian, Agapius of Manbij, Theophanes the Confessor: Ibn al-Athīr dates this event also with AH 145; Mihael the Syrian dates it with year 1074 of the Seleucid era (corresponds to 763)²; Agapius dates it with the

¹ On the Georgian / non-Vainakh ethnicity of the Ts'anars, cf. Gocha Japaridze's article (ჯაფარიძე, 2012b).

² "Les Khazares firent une incursion et s'emparèrent de 50 mille hommes des Gourzaye." (Michel le Syrien, 1901, p. 522, 539).

“year 9 of Abdallah-al-Mansour”¹, i.e. 762 or 763; Theophanes the Confessor dates it with Annus mundi 6255, i.e. September 1 of 763 – August 31 of 764².

In our opinion the military operations were conducted in **late spring – autumn of 762** period (but not in the first three months of 763).

Seemingly, the Khazar threat was so imminent, that the Caliph attempted to resolve the conflict peacefully. According to al-Kūfī, Yazīd b. Usayd (having a residence in Barda‘a), was urged by al-Manṣūr to establish kinship with the Khazars securing peace for Arrān by evading the Khazar invasion (Ал-Куфи, 1981). Probably, that should have happened after the AH 145 (1/IV/762-20/III/763) invasion, as the Khazars attacked again in AH 147 (10/III/764-26/II/765) (*vide infra*), and the peace secured by marriage lasted for about two years only: Yazīd obediently asked and married the daughter of Khazar khaqan, paying 100,000 dirhams as bride price. The marriage was consummated and lasted for two years and four months;³ the Khazar princess gave birth to two sons, but all three of them eventually died (Ал-Куфи, 1981). Al-Balādhurī also confirms (albeit provides no exact date) that: “In compliance with al-Manṣūr’s orders” Yazīd [b. Usayd] “married the daughter of the king of al-Khazar. She gave birth to a child which did not live; she herself died in child-birth.” (Al-Balādhurī, 1916, p. 329).

The demise of the Khazar princess spurred the conflict anew. The Khazars attacked on the Bāb al-Abwāb side and Yazīd b. Usayd, having an army of 7,000 could not repel them, and had to apply for help to al-Manṣūr. Yazīd b. Usayd was reinforced with more than 10,000 from Siria, and later with troops from Iraq (Jibra‘īl b. Yaḥyā with 10,000; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan with 10,000, Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba with 10,000 and Ḥarb al-Rāwandī with 5,000). Eventually Yazīd b. Usayd managed to amass up to 60,000, crossed the Kur (Mt’k’vari) river and entered Shirwān, but was defeated by the “200,000-strong army”⁴ of the Khazars (Ал-Куфи, 1981).

Ghewond narrates the same story of the marriage, initiated by Yazīd (sic), of the death of the Khazar princess, perceived by the Khazars as “a result of wiliness”, i.e., presumably, murder, and of the punitive Khazar invasion led by certain Razh Tarkhan. Ghewond even lists the areas in Armenia and Georgia affected by the Khazars, who ravaged the area and enslaved people (ГЕВОНД, 1862, с. 92-93).

The undated romantic story involving the Khazars and narrated by Georgian chronicle⁵ could be a corrupted reflection of the same events (ბოლნისი, 1991, გვ.

¹ “Then the Khazars made a raid against Haroun (?), Laziqah and all the Gates of the Alans and made captive 50,000 Arabs with great wealth and herds. Mousa-ibn-Ka‘b went to battle them. But the ... Khazars overcame him and killed most of his soldiers” (Agapius, 1909).

² “In the same year the Turks emerged from the Caspian Gates, killed many people in Armenia, took many prisoners, and withdrew”. (Theophanes the Confessor, 1982, pp. 122-123).

³ Which does not quite fit the period between late autumn of 762 (the aftermath of the first Khazar invasion) and late spring – autumn of 764 (when the Khazars again invaded the ‘Abbāsīd North).

⁴ The numbers were certainly exaggerated.

⁵ Mat’iane Kartlisay: “Juansher and his two sisters remained in the country of Kartli and K’akheti [eastern Georgia – I. Paghava]. His younger sister was beautiful in appearance. Rumours of her beauty reached the

124): there are some clear parallels, like the similar time span (three years), and Khazar occupation of Tbilisi / Tiflīs. In any case, the Georgian source seems to be significant in terms of illustrating the relations between the Khazars and local Georgian political elite, and their potential for anti-Arab alliance. Certain attempt has even been made to interpret the Georgian source as a testimony to anti-Arab policy of Juansher, Georgian ruler in K'akheti, who presumably made an attempt to forge an alliance with the Khazars and seal it by marriage (თავაძე, 2020, გვ. 147-150).¹

Apparently, the aforesaid second Khazar attack occurred in **AH 147** (10/III/764-26/II/765), since more or less the same story is told by al-Ṭabarī and dated accordingly - among the events of the year 147 al-Ṭabarī lists “the attack by Istarkhān al-Khwārazmī with a body of Turks on the Muslims in the area of Armenia and his taking of many of the Muslims and the ahl al-dhimmah prisoner, their entry into Tiflīs, and their killing of Ḥarb b. ‘Abdallāh al-Rāwandī after whom the Ḥarbiyyah in Baghdad is named. It is said that this Ḥarb was stationed in Mosul with 2,000 soldiers because of the Khārijites in al-Jazīrah” (Al-Ṭabarī, XXIX, 1990, p. 14).

Al-Ya‘qūbī provides less details: “The Khazars grew active in the region of Armenia and fell upon Yazīd b. Usayd al-Sulamī. He wrote to Abū Ja‘far to inform him that Rās Ṭarkhān,² the king of the Khazars, had marched toward him with a huge force and that his second in command had been defeated.” (al-Ya‘qūbī, 2018, p. 1105-1106).

Theophanes the Confessor also covers the second invasion of the Khazars (under Annus mundi 6256 / *September 1, 764 – August 31, 765*): “In this year the Turks once more sallied forth into the area of the Caspian Gates and Iberia. They battled with the Arabs, and many on both sides lost their lives” (Theophanes the Confessor, 1982, pp. 124).

khak'an or king of the Khazars. He sent an envoy to ask for the hand of Shushan, promising aid against the Saracens. When the *khak'an's* envoy arrived, Juansher advised his brother and mother of his mission. But they refused the *khak'an's* request, saying: “If our situation becomes untenable we should better retreat into Greece and appeal to Christians rather than have our daughter defiled by heathens.” And Shushan too spurned the King of the Khazars.

Three years later the *khak'an* sent his *sp'asalar* Bluchan who, taking the road of Leketi, entered K'akheti and besieged the fortress in which Juansher and his sister Shushan resided. He captured them both in a few days. Then he ravaged the city of Tbilisi, devastating the entire land of Kartli. As Bluchan was travelling along the Darialan road (with his captives), Shushan said to her brother: “It is better for me to die so that the Lord might grant me a place among the holy women rather than be defiled by the heathens.” Then plucking the gem out of her finger-ring, she sucked the deadly poison under it and died instantly.

Bluchan arrived at the *khak'an's* residence, bringing Juansher with him and telling the story of his sister's death. The *khak'an* was angered at his failure to bring Shushan's corpse along, for he had desired to view it. Bluchan was seized, a rope thrown round his neck, and two riders were ordered to pull the ends in opposite directions, mercilessly severing his head. After keeping Juansher for seven years, the *khak'an* released him and sent him back home with many gifts.” (Mat'iane Kartlisay, 2014, p. 141).

¹ However, there is seemingly no solid evidence to support this *hypothesis*; even the dating of Bluchan's invasion is more or less conjectural.

² On the identity and name / title of this person cf. (ბოლვაძე, 1991, pp. 116-123).

The Caliph had send reinforcements, but those were also defeated by the Khazars - al-Ṭabarī: “When Abū Ja‘far heard about the gathering of the Turks in those areas, he sent Jibra‘īl b. Yaḥyā to fight them, and he wrote to Ḥarb ordering him to go with him. He went with him, and Ḥarb was killed and Jibra‘īl was put to flight, and those Muslims whom I have mentioned were killed” (Al-Ṭabarī, XXIX, 1990, pp. 14-15); al-Ya‘qūbī: “Abū Ja‘far sent Jibrīl b. Yaḥyā al-Bajalī to him at the head of twenty thousand men from Syria, the Jazīra, and Mosul. He fought the Khazars, but a number of Muslims were killed, and Jibrīl and Yazīd b. Usayd, defeated, retreated to Khirs” (al-Ya‘qūbī, 2018, p. 1106).

The military campaign was probably conducted mainly in **late spring – autumn of 764**, and ended before the winter of 764-765 started.

Seemingly the campaign of AH 147 / 764 culminated with Arab defeat. The areas in the northern provinces of the caliphate were pillaged by the unimpeded Khazars; inter alia, they seized and ravaged Tiflīs. Provided we trust the Georgian chronicle, and the Juansher-Bluchan story (*vide supra*) did occur and occurred in that very period of time, then the contemporary Georgian ruling elite (naturally) suffered as well. We presume that eastern Georgia and also the Bāb al-Abwāb area were seemingly affected the most, as “the Turks once more sallied forth into the area of the Caspian Gates and Iberia” (Theophanes the Confessor, 1982, pp. 124). If nothing else, both Arrān and Armīniya mints continued regular issue of the ‘Abbāsīd dirhams seemingly without encumbrance in correspondingly AH 145-155 and AH 145-155, 158, 161-162.

The Caliph decided to re-conquer the ‘Abbāsīd North, and resumed hostilities in **AH 148** (27/II/765-15/II/766), i.e., in **765**: new army was dispatched led by Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba (who fought already in AH 147); however, by AH 148 the Khazars had evidently already evacuated the region, including eastern Georgia and Tiflīs;¹ according to al-Ṭabarī: “In this year [AH 148 – I. Paghava] Al-Manṣūr sent Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba to Armenia to make war on the Turks who had killed Ḥarb b. ‘Abdallāh and ravaged Tiflīs. Ḥumayd went to Armenia and found that they had gone, so he left without meeting a single one of them.” (Al-Ṭabarī, XXIX, 1990, p. 40).

Al-Ya‘qūbī provides no exact date (possibly 765 and the ensuing years), but narrates the events somewhat differently, emphasizing the Caliph’s efforts to create a network of fortified centers serving as basis for both defense and counter-offensive against the Khazars: “When word reached Abū Ja‘far of what had befallen the Muslims, the success of the Khazars, and their entry into the lands of Islam, he released seven thousand imprisoned men and sent word to gather large forces of men from each province, and he sent them off, along with laborers and masons. He built the towns of Kamkh, al-Muḥammadiyya, Bāb Wāq, and a number of other towns that he intended as bulwarks for the Muslims, and he settled the fighters in the towns. They

¹ Which means they probably had no intention to *conquer* the ‘Abbāsīd North.

repelled the enemy; the enemy fighters fought them, but the Muslims gained strength because of those towns, and so he lived in tranquillity.” (al-Ya‘qūbī, 2018, p. 1106).

The Georgian chronicle may have also reflected the Arab efforts of creating a fortification system: “When many years had passed the Hagarene *emir*, Khusrau [? – I. Paghava] by name, who ruled Armenia, Kartli, and Hereti came. He rebuilt the city of Tbilisi ravaged by the Khazars.” (Mat’iane Kartlisay, 2014, p. 142).

Al-Kūfī reports that al-Manṣūr accepted Yazīd’s plan to reinforce the defences of Bāb al-Abwāb and the latter did that, with the army of 30 or 37 thousands, first entering Barda‘a, crossing the Kur river and proceeding to Bāb al-Abwāb (Ал-Куфи, 1981). Yazīd did fortify Bāb al-Abwāb (the names of the gates / forts coincide to an extent with the toponyms indicated by Al-Ya‘qūbī), as well as garrisoned them, i.e. settled his troops there (Ал-Куфи, 1981).

Most probably it was Yazīd b. Usayd who founded *al-Yazīdyah* as one more Arab outpost in the area; we know the AH 149 and 150 fulūs from this mint (Vardanyan, 2016, pp. 213-214). We have summarized the available information on the ‘Abbāsīd North coinage in AH 145-256 in Table 1.

It is certainly unclear, who governed the province Armīniya in AH 148-152 (27/II/765-3/I/770). Was that Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba (perhaps, only in AH 148? / 27/II/765-15/II/766), dispatched by Caliph, to expel the Khazars, according to al-Ṭabarī (Al-Ṭabarī, XXIX, 1990, p. 40); and then again Yazīd b. Usayd¹? According to al-Kūfī, appointing Bakkār b. Muslim (*vide infra*), the Caliph dismissed none other than Yazīd b. Usayd (Ал-Куфи, 1981). The issue is, whether the anonymousness of the AH 149 and 150 *al-Yazīdyah* fulūs implies they were truly issued in “the transitional period between Yazīd’s dismissal from the province and his replacement by Bakkār in AH 152” (Vardanyan, 2016, p. 214)? Or *they were* issued in the governorship of Yazīd b. Usayd but by some minor local official, without indicating Yazīd’s name? One has to note, the AH 152 *Jurzān* fals is also anonymous. Considering the unbiased and contemporary primary source, i.e. the numismatic data, we would incline towards the idea of Yazīd’s early dismissal, and the idea of the *interim period*, save for al-Kūfī’s testimony.

We have already mentioned, that Yazīd b. Usayd was dismissed and replaced with Bakkār b. Muslim al-‘Uqaylī, who ruled the province for a year and four months, according to al-Kūfī (Ал-Куфи, 1981). Al-Ṭabarī indicates that “al-Manṣūr appointed Bakkār b. Muslim al-‘Uqaylī governor of Armenia” in AH 153 (4/I-23/XII/770) / 770 (Al-Ṭabarī, XXIX, 1990, p. 66), but numismatic data correct this: we know Bakkār’s Arrān and Armīniya dirhams dated AH 152² (14/I/769-3/I/770) and 153 (4/I-23/XII/770) (Vardanyan, 2011, pp. 26, 61-62), as well as Arrān (Vardanyan, 2011, p. 105) and al-Bāb fulūs dated AH 153 (Vardanyan, 2016, pp. 211, 214-215). Therefore,

¹ Then we would have one more governorship period of Yazīd b. Usayd in the ‘Abbāsīd North.

² Seemingly, Bakkār put his name on the local coinage immediately upon his arrival to the region.

we have to conclude, that **AH 152** (14/I/769-3/I/770) is the *terminus post quem non* for Yazīd's dismissal and the exact date for Bakkār's appointment.

Bakkār b. Muslim al-'Uqaylī was replaced in his turn with al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba al-Ṭā'ī (Ал-Куфи, 1981) (i.e. in **AH 154** or **at the end of AH 153**). al-Ḥasan's name is indicated on the Arrān and Armīniya dirhams of AH 154 and 155 (Vardanyan, 2011, pp. 27, 62), al-Bāb fulūs of AH 154 and 158, and Barda'a fulūs of AH 158 (Vardanyan, 2011, p. 110; Vardanyan, 2016, pp. 211, 218, 220-221); while al-Ḥasan's son's name *Qaḥṭaba* (probably serving as his father's deputy) is indicated on the al-Bāb fulūs of AH 155 (Vardanyan, 2016, pp. 211, 218), and also on the Arrān fulūs (Vardanyan, 2012, p. 15) possibly of the same year.

According to al-Kūfī, as soon as al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba entered Arrān - i.e. that occurred in AH 153, or, more probably, in **771 / AH 154** (24/XII/770-12/XII/771) - with a new army of 50,000, the Ts'anars, residing in Jurzān, revolted (Ал-Куфи, 1981). Al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba could not defeat them, and al-Manṣūr had to dispatch reinforcements of 30,000 (Ал-Куфи, 1981). With this new army al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba invaded Jurzān once again; in the ensuing battle the Arabs defeated the Ts'anars (Ал-Куфи, 1981). However, al-Ya'qūbī's text makes an impression that the Ts'anar rebellion antedated and probably even predetermined al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba's arrival: "Then the Ṣanāriyya grew active in Armenia. Abū Ja'far sent al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba to govern Armenia. He engaged them ..." (al-Ya'qūbī, 2018, p. 1106). Otar Tskitishvili also considered that al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba was dispatched because of the insurrection in Georgia (გვიტოშვილი, 1986, გვ. 74-75). Al-Ya'qūbī additionally indicates, that al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba had to request reinforcements from the Caliph: al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba engaged the Ts'anars, "but he had no strength against them. He therefore wrote to Abū Ja'far about them and their great number, and Abū Ja'far sent 'Āmir b. Ismā'īl al-Ḥārithī to him with a force of twenty thousand men. Engaging the Ṣanāriyya, he fought them fiercely for several days, until God granted victory over them. Of their forces, in one day he killed sixteen thousand people before returning to Tiflīs. He put to death all of his prisoners and sent out men to pursue the Ṣanāriyya wherever they were." (al-Ya'qūbī, 2018, p. 1106).

Evidently, the Ts'anars attempted to make use of certain political vacuum caused by the Khazar invasions and gain independence from the Arabs, however, were defeated by the latter, when the Caliph initiated the reconquest of the northern provinces, in particular, the Bāb al-Abwāb and Jurzān, two key areas, controlling the passes through the Caucasus mountains which the Khazars could make use of to invade the 'Abbāsīd North at some point in the future.

Having defeated the Ts'anars, al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba summoned his sons, appointing Qaḥṭaba to govern Bāb al-Abwāb, *Ibrāhīm to govern Jurzān, including Tiflīs*, and Muḥammad as a governor of Armīniya (sic) (Ал-Куфи, 1981; გვიტოშვილი, 1986, გვ. 78). In our opinion, that should occurred either in **771 or 772 / AH 155** (13/XII/771-1/XII/772), perhaps it would be precise to claim "by **AH**

155 (13/XII/771-1/XII/772)”, as Qaḥṭaba’s al-Bāb (possibly also Arrān) fulūs bear the date AH 155.

It has to be noted that for some reason (?) no coins from the ‘Abbāsīd North dated AH 156 or 157 have been discovered / published so far. Cf. Table 1. Nevertheless, it is presumed that al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba was the governor in AH 154-158.

By AH 159 (31/X/775-18/X/776) (probably, in 776) al-Ḥasan b. Qaḥṭaba was replaced with Yazīd b. Usayd, who became the governor for one more time. Yazīd’s name is indicated on the Dabīl and Barda‘a fulūs of AH 159, while his son’s name *Khalid b. Yazīd* is indicated on al-Bāb fulūs of the same year; Yazīd’s name is also indicated on the Dabīl and Barda‘a fulūs of AH 163, and on the AH 164 fulūs presumably minted in Tiflīs, Georgia.

*

Considering the political, military and administrative proceedings in the ‘Abbāsīd North in AH 145-163 provides us with an opportunity to specify the historical significance of the Jurzān fals dated AH 152.

The silence of the sources may indicate that no Khazars ravaged the northern provinces of the caliphate in AH 148-154, after the Khazar invasions in AH 145 and 147 (certainly, an argument *ex silencio*, though). Therefore, the Arabs could reconstitute their rule in Tiflīs already in AH 148 (27/II/765-15/II/766), when Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭaba found there were no Khazars in the area anymore. In any case, it is absolutely clear now that by 769 / AH 152 (14/I/769-3/I/770) Tiflīs (and, undoubtedly, significant part of Jurzān / eastern Georgia, or Kartli, for the least, if not K’akheti) was recovered and secured by the Arabs, to such an extent, that Arab mint could be reopened there. Functioning of an institution like mint was already employed to demonstrate and prove that the Arab rule was established in Tiflīs / Georgia already by AH 85 (704/5), when the first Umayyad dirhams were issued there (ფაღვავა, 2014, გვ. 251-254). Discovery of the AH 152 (14/I/769-3/I/770) Tiflīs fals additionally demonstrates once again that the Arab administration was established in Georgia earlier than in the 670s, as it had been claimed in historiography (აღასანიძე, 2007, p. 11-12).

Conjecturally, the *anonymous* AH 152 Jurzān fals could be issued by order of either Yazīd b. Usayd or, less probably, Bakkār b. Muslim (who hastened to indicate his name on the local coins immediately after arrival). Alternatively, it could be issued by order of someone else, perhaps some minor / local Arab military commander or official; either in the governorship of Yazīd b. Usayd (?), or, already after his dismissal, in the *interim period*. The same is valid with regards to the *anonymous al-Yazīdyah* fulūs of AH 149 and 150, and perhaps also the *Arrān* and *Armīniya* dirhams dated AH 152 but bearing no name of Bakkār (Vardanyan, 2011, pp. 26, 61).

In any case, the AH 152 Jurzān fals proves that in 14/I/769-3/I/770 Tiflīs and at least its hinterland were controlled by the Arabs. Realizing this fact might be helpful in the analysis of the Ts’anar anti-Arab revolt.

It seems also significant, that *Jurzān* was indicated as the mintname, rather than *Tiflīs*. As already mentioned, that could constitute a declaration of a kind, reflecting the Arab ambition and desire to control all of *Jurzān* (which was far from reality because of the Ts'anars).

However, gold or silver currency would presumably have had more declarative value. The authorities certainly had some reason for issuing the *copper* currency.

There may be no coincidence, that the decade and a half after Rās Ṭarkhān's invasion of AH 147 / 764 was the time period when minting of the 'Abbāsīd coppers in the region clearly intensified: We encounter *for the first time* the fulūs of al-Yazīdyah and *Jurzān*; for the first time in the 'Abbāsīd epoch the fulūs of al-Bāb and Arrān; new fulūs of Barda'a. Cf. Table 1.

What were the reasons? In our opinion, copper currency possibly also served as a public media outlet in a sense, in addition to its purely economic role, hence it was expedient to indicate the name of the current governor (or his deputy, as in case of Qaḥṭaba, summoned and appointed by his father). However we are inclined to consider that the intensive issuing of copper currency in the aforesaid cities within the aforesaid time frame rather reflects and indicates the increased Arab military presence (involving a number of Arab warriors, *resp.* settlers with families?) and ensuing local economic activities (instigating the [local] authorities to start issuing low-value copper currency appropriate for minor but frequent day-to-day transactions on local markets). The cases of the *al-Yazīdyah* fulūs of AH 149 and 150 and the *Jurzān* fals of AH 152 are perhaps particularly decisive; the former were issued for the first time ever in the new Arab outpost in the region, in the strategic rear of the Bāb al-Abwāb pass; the latter was minted also for the first time ever in the reconquered or better say re-occupied urban center, which suffered much from the recent Khazar invasion, but still retained its strategic value as an immediate rear of the Bāb *al-Lān* pass and the Arab stronghold in eastern Georgia against both Khazars and Ts'anars; the al-Bāb fulūs of AH 153, 154, 155, 158, 159 were minted for the first time ever at that very refortified point of the northern border of the 'Abbāsīd North, where the Khazars had crossed it more than once to invade the provinces of the Caliphate. The fulūs were issued also at Barda'a (AH 158-159, 163), Arrān (AH 153, 155?), and Dabīl (AH 159, 163), more rearward and traditional Arab strongholds, possibly also due to the extra influx of the Arab paid personnel (with families?).

*

The *Jurzān* dīnar of AH 240 (2/VI/854-21/V/855) and *Tiflīs* dīnar of AH 248 (7/III/862-23/II/863) pertain to the time period when Bughā affirmed and even restored the 'Abbāsīd control over the northern provinces, in particular, the *Tiflīs* area in eastern Georgia (*Jurzān*).

According to al-Ṭabarī, the anti-Arab revolt in Armenia¹ started in AH 237 (5/VII/851-22/VI/852) (Al-Ṭabarī, XXXIV, 1989, pp. 113-116). Al-Balādhurī claims that “Al-Mutawakkil assigned to the governorship of Armenia Bughā-l-Kabir”² (al-Balādhurī, p. 331); who was dispatched in AH 237, according to Ta’rīkh al-Bāb wa-Sharvān (Минорский, 1953, с. 46; ՆՅՆԱՐԱԿՆԵՐ, 1976); according to al-Ya‘qūbī, “The situation in Armenia became unstable. A group of local chiefs (*baṭāriqa*) and others became active, taking control of their areas. ... the situation in the province worsened. Al-Mutawakkil therefore dispatched Bughā the Elder. When he reached Arzan, Mūsā b. Zurāra, who had taken control of Badlīs, approached him under a guarantee of safe-conduct. Bughā had him bound and transported to al-Mutawakkil. Then he made his way to a place called Albāq, where Ashūṭ b. Ḥamza was located. He laid siege to him; then he gave him a guarantee of safe-conduct and had him transported to Samarra, where he was beheaded. Then he made his way to [...] b. [...] and fought him for some days; he defeated him without granting him a safeconduct and sent him to Samarra, where he was beheaded at the Bāb al-‘Āmma and his body gibbeted.

Bughā then wrote to Ishāq b. Ismā‘īl, who held sway in Tiflīs, ordering that he come to him. Ishāq wrote back that he had never been disobedient; if Bughā desired revenue he would provide it, and if he desired men he would supply them, but he could not come in person. Bughā marched against him, fought him, and defeated him. He was beheaded”³ (al-Ya‘qūbī, 2018, pp. 1266-1267). Al-Ṭabarī’s date – AH 238 (23/VI/852-11/VI/853)) is wrong, but his account is the most voluminous one providing us with many details.⁴

¹ Cf. (Шагинян, 2011: 297-305).

² According to al-Ṭabarī al-Mutawakkil send Bughā al-Sharabi – that may be a mistake, or, he “participated in the early stages of the campaign” (Al-Ṭabarī, XXXIV, 1989, p. 115).

³ according to Al-Balādhurī, Ishāq was “kept in confinement until his death” (Al-Balādhurī, p. 332).

⁴ “It is reported that when Bughā went to Dabīl because of the murder of Yusuf b. Muhammad by the inhabitants of Armenia, he stayed there for a month. On Saturday, 10 Rabī‘ I, 238 [August 30, 852], Bughā sent Zīrak the Turk, who crossed the Kur [River]. It is a large waterway, the size of the Ṣarāt [Canal] in Baghdad, even larger, and it is between the town [of Dabīl] and Tiflīs on the west side and Ṣughdbīl on the east side. The camp of Bughā was on the east side [of the river]. Zīrak crossed the Kur to the Hippodrome (*maydān*) of Tiflīs. Tiflīs had five gates : the Hippodrome Gate, the Qarīs Gate, the Small Gate, the Suburb Gate, and the Ṣughdbīl Gate. The Kur is a river that flows down along the town.

Bughā also sent Abū al-'Abbās al-Wāthī al-Naṣrānī against the inhabitants of Armenia, Arab and non-Arab alike. Zīrak assaulted them near the Hippodrome [Gate], and Abū al-'Abbās, near the Suburb Gate. Ishāq b. Ismā‘īl went out to [confront] Zīrak and engaged him in battle, while Bughā stood on a hill overlooking the town near the Ṣughdbīl [Gate] to see what Zīrak and Abū al-'Abbās were doing. Bughā sent fire hurlers (*naḥḥāṭīn*), who bombarded the town with fire. The [buildings in the] town [were made] of pine wood, and the wind fanned the flames, which ignited the pine.

When Ishāq b. Ismā‘īl came to the town to observe [what was happening], he noticed that the fire, which had engulfed his palace and surrounding area, had trapped him. Then the Turks and Maghāribah attacked him, took him captive, seized his son 'Amr, and brought them to Bughā. Bughā ordered that Ishāq be remanded to the Gate of Thorns, where he was decapitated. His head was brought to Bughā, and his body was suspended on a cross at the Kur [River].

The fate of Tiflīs and Iṣḥāq was researched by Gocha Japaridze who analyzed both Arab and Georgian primary sources (ჯავახიძე, 2014, გვ. 32-34): including *Kitāb al-Awrāk* by Abu Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥya aṣ Ṣūlī is, the only Arab primary source indicating AH 239 as the date of Iṣḥāq's death; Georgian sources, like the fresco inscription in At'eni Sioni and Mat'iane Kartlisay, which confirms al-Ṭabarī's story: "Bugha the Turk, a slave, came from Baghdad with a great army, sent by the *amir al mu 'minin*. He devastated the whole of Armenia, taking captive all of her rulers. And he came and laid siege to the city of Tbilisi, for Sahak' the *emir* refused to submit to him. He slew Sahak', razed Tbilisi, set it on fire, and ravaged all its environs." (Mat'iane Kartlisay, 2014, p. 142). The inscription of At'eni Sioni¹ provides exact date: 5 August, Saturday, year 73 of [Georgian] Koronik'on [= 853], "Upper" [= AH] year 239 [12/VI/853-1/VI/854]; i.e. Tiflīs was burnt and captured by Bughā in **853 / AH 239** (12/VI/853-1/VI/854), more precisely, on **5 August, Saturday, 853** (Джавახовъ, 1912, с. 277-285; სოლოგაძე, 1974, გვ. 116).

Having captured Tiflīs and decapitated Iṣḥāq, Bughā the Turk continued expanding or re-expanding Arab control in Georgia. According to Al-Balādhurī, "Bughā reduced Jurzān, and carried away those Christians and non-Christians of Arrān, of the elevated region of Armenia ["Text corrupt"], and of as-Sisajān, who belonged to the revolutionary party. Thus the political state of affairs in that frontier region became so quiet as never before." (al-Balādhurī, p. 332). Al-Ya'qūbī specifies, that after capturing Tiflīs Bughā attacked the Ts'anars: "Bughā marched against the Ṣanāriyya and fought them, but they defeated him and routed his troops, so he turned away from them in disarray." (al-Ya'qūbī, 2018, p. 1267). However, according to al-Ṭabarī, "In this year [AH 239 ()], the ruler of the Ṣanāriyyah was killed at the Public Gate in Jumādā II (November 7-December 6)." (Al-Ṭabarī, XXXIV, 1989, p.

Iṣḥāq b. Ismā'īl was a stocky old man and had a large head. He was tattooed with blue (indigo) markings, and was ruddy, bald, and cross-eyed. His head was raised over the Gate of Thorns. Barghāmush, deputy of Bughā, supervised his execution. About 50,000 men were burned in the city. The fire burnt itself out in a day and a night, for it was a pine-wood fire that does not last. The Maghāribah arrived in the morning. They took the living captive and plundered the dead.

The wife of Iṣḥāq lived in Ṣughdbīl. It is opposite Tiflīs, on the east side ... Iṣḥāq had fortified it, dug its defensive trench, and manned it with Khuwaythiyyah warriors and others. Bughā gave them a guarantee of safe-conduct, stipulating that they lay down their arms and go where they wished. The wife of Iṣḥāq was the daughter of the Lord of the Throne (Ṣahīb al-Sarīr).

Then Bughā reportedly sent Zīrak to the fortress of Jardmān, which is between Bardha'ah and Tiflīs, along with a contingent of his troops. Zīrak conquered Jardmān and took captive its Patrikios, al-Qitrīj, on the Jardmān Road, and brought him to the army camp (Al-Ṭabarī, XXXIV, 1989, pp. 121-123).

¹ We provide the translation:

On August 5, on the day of Saturday

in Koronik'on 73, in Upper year 239

Bugha burnt the city of T'pilisi, and captured

the emir Sahak' and killed him; and in the same month

on the day of August 26, also on the day of Saturday Zirak

captured K'akha and his son Tarkhuji

128); was that *K'akha* mentioned in the At'eni inscription as being captured by Zīrak on August 26 of 853 (this time al-Ṭabarī may be indicating the correct date)? And was that the person known in Georgian hagiography as the martyr K'onst'ant'i K'akhi? In any case, according to al-Ṭabarī, the Ts'anars suffered some losses as well.

The Georgian source provides some additional information, indicating that Bughā made attempts (in Autumn 853?) to expand / re-expand Caliphal authority upon not only K'akheti (easternmost Georgian province), but also west-Georgian provinces; Mat'iane Kartlisay confirms that Bughā was defeated by the Ts'anars (but gained upper hand in western Georgia): “Tevdosi, King of the Abkhazians [west-Georgian kingdom – I. Paghava], marched out against him, taking up a position at K'vertskhobi. Learning this, Bugha sent his *sp'asalars* Zirak and Bagrat', son of Ashot' the Kuropalate. A battle was fought and the Abkhazians [i.e. the west-Georgian army – I. Paghava] were put to flight; a countless number of men perished. The fugitive King Tevdosi took the Dvaleti road.

The returning troops (of the Saracens) were intercepted at Jvaris-gverdi by the Gardabanians [i.e. K'akhetians, or Ts'anars – I. Paghava]; the latter inflicted heavy losses on them. When Bugha received tidings of this, he broke camp and came to Ch'artaleti, and established himself there. He took hostages from the Mtiulis – three hundred men – and, in a bid to invade Ossetia, he advanced to Tskhavat'i. But Abulabaz, the *eristavi* of the Armenians, and Guaram, son of Ashot', wrote to the Mtiulis, asking them to keep the enemy out. They abandoned the hostages to their fate. God helped the Mtiulis, for there was a snowfall. They were able to bar the way to the enemy; a battle was fought and God gave them victory. A countless number of Saracens died. Their horses ate azalea and many were lost. However, no diminution of the (Arab) army was apparent, for it numbered one hundred and twenty thousand men.

Withdrawing, Bugha wintered at Bardavi.” (Mat'iane Kartlisay, 2014, p. 143).

Evidently, in the following year (after having had wintered) - i.e. in **854 / II half of AH 239, I half of AH 240 (?)** - Bughā was still active in the region; i.e. when the AH 240 Jurzān dīnar was minted; however, his relations with the Khazars rose certain suspicions (?): “He captured a certain priest's son who had become the ruler, and razed Gardabani to the ground. He opened the Gate of Daruband and brought over the Khazars – over- three hundred households – settling them at Shankor. He brought the Ossetes – about one hundred households – through Darialan and settled them in Dmanisi. He was planning to enter Ossetia in the summer. When the amir al mu'minin learnt of his negotiations with his kindred Khazar tribe, he advised Bughā to leave Kartli to Humed, son of Khalil. Bughā departed and Humed, son of Khalil, took over the office of *emir*.” (Mat'iane Kartlisay, 2014, p. 143). Al-Ya'qūbī narrates the events differently: “He tracked down those to whom he had extended a guarantee of safe-conduct and seized them; but a group of them managed to escape and wrote to the ruler of the Byzantines, the ruler of the Khazars, and the ruler of the Slavs (*Ṣaqāliba*), and they came together with a large force. Bughā wrote regarding this to al-

Mutawakkil, and he appointed Muḥammad b. Khālid b. Yazīd b. Mazyad al-Shaybānī over the province. When he arrived, the troublemakers ceased their activity, so he renewed their guarantees of safe-conduct.” (al-Ya‘qūbī, 2018, pp. 1267).

We have to note, that according to Ta’rīkh al-Bāb wa-Sharvān, Muḥammad b. Khālid had been given Bāb al-Abwāb as iqtā‘ already in AH 237 (5/VII/851-22/VI/852) (being dispatched along with Bughā¹); Muḥammad b. Khālid attacked both the Khazars and the infidels living in the vicinities of Bāb al-Abwāb (Минорский, 1953, с. 46).

According to al-Balādhurī, Bughā came (i.e. left the northern province) to Surra-man-ra‘a in AH 241 (22/V/855-9/V/856) (al-Balādhurī, p. 332); i.e. he left the ‘Abbāsīd North either in early 855, or late 854?. That means that Bughā was the governor in **AH 237 (?) – AH 240 or 241**.

Correspondingly, Muḥammad b. Khālid replaced Bughā¹ also in **AH 241?** Ta’rīkh al-Bāb wa-Sharvān indicates **AH 242** (10/V/856-29/IV/857) (Минорский, 1953, с. 46).

Eventually, Muḥammad b. Khālid was replaced in his turn by ‘Īsā b. al-Shaykh al-Shaybānī – “Humed, son of Khalil, took over the office of *emir*. The amir al-mu‘minin dismissed Humed and appointed Isa, son of Shikh, and a relative of Humed.” (Mat’iane Kartlisay, 2014, p. 143). According to al-Ṭabarī, who provides some interesting details on ‘Īsā’s previous actions, that happened in **AH 256** (9/XII/869-28/XI/870). (Al-Ṭabarī, XXXVI, 1992, p. 117); cf. the story narrated by al-Athīr (Ибн ал-Асир, 1940).

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The AH 240 dirham of Jurzān was evidently minted when Bughā was still active in the region, not just in the province of Armīniya, but specifically in Jurzān.

The AH 248 dirham of Tiflīs was minted in the governorship of Muḥammad b. Khālid b. Yazīd b. Mazyad al-Shaybānī.

We have to note also the existence of *Tiflīs* dirhams dated AH 248, 249, 250 (Джалаганиа, 1987, с. 59-62; Zeno, #13779), also issued in the governorship of Muḥammad b. Khālid.

Comparing with other mints of the ‘Abbāsīd North, we can note the Dabīl dīnar of AH 241 (Vardanyan, 2011, p. 19) and Armīniya dīnars of AH 243, 246 and 252 (Vardanyan, 2011, pp. 19-20; Vardanyan, 2012, p. 10); as well as Armīniya dirhams of AH 241, 243, 246-253, 255, 256 (Vardanyan, 2011, pp. 50-54; Vardanyan, 2012, p. 11).

In both *Armīniya-Dabīl* and *Jurzān-Tiflīs* cases the coin-minting activity was clearly intensified during and in the wake of Bughā’s stay in the region (during the governorship of Muḥammad b. Khālid): the coin-minting activities ceased and were

¹ Cf. (Шагинян, 2011: 309).

resumed well before and after that period. We have summarized the available information on the ‘Abbāsid North coinage in AH 240-256 in Table 2.

We agree with Steve Lloyd that the name of the entire province was indicated on the AH 240 dīnar because Bughā considered it expedient to declare the Arab control all over Jurzān (Morton & Eden, 2019b) (which remained merely an ambition, since Bughā was defeated by the Ts’anars).¹

The metal employed for minting both Jurzān and Tiflīs (as well as Armīniya and Dabīl) dīnars also indicates that the authorities employed the mint/s for declarative purposes. However, the more or less regular issue of silver currency at Tiflīs (AH 248-250), and particularly Armīniya (AH 241, 243, 246-253, 255, 256) mints may rather reflect the more mundane intention to supply the local residents (including, no doubt, the military) adequately with means of exchange.

The discovery of the new mintname “Jurzān” (*Georgia / Kartli*) expands our knowledge on the numismatic history of Georgia and the ‘Abbāsid caliphate. *Jurzān* probably constituted the alternative designation of *Tiflīs*. Employing the name of the province as the mintname evidently emphasized the Arab control of not just the Arab outpost *Tiflīs*, but rather the entire province of *Jurzān*, i.e. eastern Georgia, or, rather the ‘Abbāsid ambition thereof. The unique copper and gold coinage of *Jurzān* dated correspondingly AH 152 (14/I/769-3/I/770) and 240 (2/VI/854-21/V/855), along with the unique gold dīnar of *Tiflīs* dated AH 248 (7/III/862-23/II/863) provide us with an intimate insight into the contemporary political, military and economic proceedings in Georgia, or, generally speaking, the ‘Abbāsid North.

We consider the *Jurzān* coins, published and analyzed by means of this article, as one of the primary sources on the history of Georgia and the ‘Abbāsid North in this epoch. Comprehensive analysis of all the available and upcoming data, including the yet unpublished numismatic material that we are currently researching, would hopefully lead to the more up-to-date historiographic narrative of the rise and fall of the Arab sway in Georgia and the region.

¹ It is remarkable, that *Armīniya* and not *Dabīl* was the *standard* mintname in the *Armīniya-Dabīl* pair. One may conjecture, that in that case it was significant to emphasize the Arab control over all of the province of *Armīniya*. But why was the AH 241 dīnar marked as minted in *Dabīl*? Why was it significant in AH 241 to indicate that the Arabs controlled *Dabīl*?

Table 1.

Silver dirhams and copper fulūs issued in the ‘Abbāsīd North in AH 145-164

| NM ([Tiflis]?) | Jurzān | al-Yazīdiyāh | al-Bāb | Armīniya | Dabīl | Arrān | Bardā‘ah | AH date | |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|----------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-----|
| | | | | | | | | Mint name | |
| | | | | d. | | d. | | | 145 |
| | | | | d. | | d. | | | 146 |
| | | | | d. | | d. | | | 147 |
| | | | | d. | | d. | | | 148 |
| | | <i>Anon.</i> | | d. | | d. | | | 149 |
| | | <i>Anon.</i> | | d. | | d. | | | 150 |
| | | | | d. | | d. | | | 151 |
| | <i>Anon.</i> | | | Bakkār | | Bakkār | | | 152 |
| | | | <i>Bakkār</i> | Bakkār | | Bakkār <i>Bakkār</i> | | | 153 |
| | | | <i>al-Ḥasan</i> | al-Ḥasan | | al-Ḥasan | | | 154 |
| | | | <i>Qaḥṭaba</i> | al-Ḥasan | | al-Ḥasan <i>Qaḥṭaba? (DM)</i> | | | 155 |
| | | | | | | | | | 156 |
| | | | | | | | | | 157 |
| | | | <i>al-Ḥasan</i> | d. | | | <i>al-Ḥasan</i> | | 158 |
| | | | <i>Khalīd b. Yazīd</i> | | <i>Yazīd b. Usayd</i> | | <i>Yazīd b. Usayd</i> | | 159 |
| | | | | | | | | | 160 |
| | | | | d. | | | | | 161 |
| | | | | d. | | | | | 162 |
| | | | | | <i>Yazīd b. Usayd</i> | | <i>Yazīd b. Usayd</i> | | 163 |
| <i>Yazīd b. Usayd</i> | | | | | | | | | 164 |

d. = dirham;
 Bakkār = dirham reading Bakkār’s name, and similar;
 Bakkār = fals reading Bakkār’s name, and similar

Table 2.
Gold and silver coinage issued at the Armīniya-Dabīl and Jurzān-Tiflīs mints in the AH 200s.

| Mint name | Coin-minting ceased | Governorships of Bugha (AH 238 - 240 or 241), and Muhammad b. Khālid (AH 241 or 242 - 256) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Coin-minting resumed | | | |
|-----------|---------------------|--|-------|-----|-------------|-----|-----|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|----------------------|-------|-------|-----------|
| | | 240 | 241 | 242 | 243 | 244 | 245 | 246 | 247 | 248 | 249 | 250 | 251 | 252 | 253 | 254 | 255 | 256 | |
| Armīniya | dirh. 218 | | dirh. | | dirh. dīnar | | | dirh. dīnar | dirh. | dirh. | dirh. | dirh. | dirh. | dirh. dīnar | dirh. | | dirh. | dirh. | dirh. 262 |
| Dabīl | dirh. 201 | dirh.* | dīnar | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jurzān | | dīnar | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tiflīs | dirh. 210 | | | | | | | | | dirh. dīnar | dirh. | dirh. | | | | | | | dirh. 287 |

* Aram Vardanyan mentions this coin (Vardanyan, 2014, p. 10), but the literature he refers to (Vardanyan, 2011, #252; Vardanyan, 2012, #255a, 251) has no indication thereof (?)

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