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THE GOLD COINS OF THE LAST SIX OTTOMAN SULTANS

A.H. 1259 - 1341 / A.D. 1844 - 1922

A TRIAL LISTING

BY SAMUEL LACHMAN

Introduction

While we have a very detailed study of the silver coinage of the last six Ottoman sultans (1), there is no similar description of the gold coins. In view of the high value of the gold coins, many collections contain only one specimen of each type. It is therefore rather more difficult to arrive at a complete listing of the gold coins, than for the corresponding silver and bronze coins.

The following sultans reigned during this period:-

Abdul Mejid	A.H. 1255 - 1277	A.D. 1839 - 1861
Abdul Aziz	A.H. 1277 - 1293	A.D. 1861 - 1876
Murad V	A.H. 1293	A.D. 1876 (3 months)
Abdul Hamid II	A.H. 1293 - 1327	A.D. 1876 - 1909
Mehmed V	A.H. 1327 - 1336	A.D. 1909 - 1918
Mehmed VI	A.H. 1336 - 1341	A.D. 1918 - 1922

During the reign of the Sultan Mahmud II (A.D. 1223 - 1255 / A.D. 1808 - 1839) the Ottoman Empire found itself in financial difficulties. The suppression of the Janissaries in 1826 and the subsequent formation of a new army of the "victorious soldiers of Muhammad" (asakir-i mansure-i muhammediye), needed considerable amounts of money. The many wars exerted much pressure on the treasury, and in consequence both the fineness and the weights of the coins were successively reduced. Sultan Abdul Mejid ascended the throne on 19 Rabi' al-akhir 1255 (3 July 1839) and with the Hatt-i Sherif of Gülhane of 3 November 1839 set about a number of reforms. A coinage reform was necessary in order to make an end to the debased coinage but for the first 5 years of the reign the old standards were maintained. In the Ferman-i Ali (Imperial edict) of 26 Safar 1256 (29 April 1840), the issue of a new coinage was proclaimed and special medals were issued to mark this event bearing the regnal year 5 (2).

The new coinage was based on European models and new mint machinery was brought in from Great Britain. The gold was 22 carat fine (916 $\frac{2}{3}$) alloyed with copper, and coins with the mint name Kostantiniye (Istanbul) were authorized as follows:-

<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Diameter</u>	<u>Weight (a)</u>	<u>Date of First Issue (b)</u>
500 Kuruş	35 mm	36.082 g	18 Şubat 1272 (2 March 1857) (4)
250 Kuruş	27.2 mm	18.041 g	18 Şubat 1272 (2 March 1857) (4)
100 Kuruş	22.3 mm	7.216 g	5 Kanun-i sâni (18 January 1844) (5)
50 Kuruş	18.2 mm	3.608 g	17 Haziran 1260 (29 August 1844) (5)
25 Kuruş	14.9 mm	1.804 g	2 Haziran 1271 (14 June 1855) (4)

(a) tolerance of 2/1000 above and below these weights (3).

(b) dates are according to the Turkish Civil Calendar (see appendix).

During the period covered by this note regular gold coins were minted to the specification above, but in addition gold coins were struck on the occasions of the Sultan's visits and as especial Monnaie de Luxe coins.

The first Sultan's visit coins celebrate a ten days visit of Sultan Mahmud II to Edirne on 11 Muharram 1247 (22 June 1831) (6). Between 1844 and 1922 the following visits were commemorated in this way:-

Abdul Mejid to Edirne (Adrianople) year 8, Abdul Aziz to Bursa year 1, Mehmed V to Bursa year 1, Edirne year 2, Kosova (in Yugoslavia), Manastir (Bitolj in Yugoslavia) and Selanik (Thessalonika) all year 3.

All these coins were struck in Istanbul, although they bear an inscription denoting that they were struck at the localities visited (7).

The Monnaie de Luxe coins, called in Turkish 'Ziyet Altini' (= Ornamental Gold Coins), were issued in the reigns of Abdul Hamid II, Mehmed V, and Mehmed VI. These coins are on larger and thinner flans and were given as presents, by the Sultan himself or by other persons, often as marriage gifts. Large ornamental gold coins such as these were first minted in the reign of Ahmad III (A.H. 1115 - 1143/A.D. 1703 - 1730) and were struck in all reigns during the eighteenth century. Mahmud II also issued small ornamental coins. It seems that in the reign of Abdul Hamid II, the old custom was revived.

All coins bear the mint name 'Kostantiniye' (Istanbul) but the weights and diameters vary. The following table is based on Pere and Haffner. (9).

	500 k		250 k		100 k		50 K		25 k		12½ k	
	g	mm	g	mm	g	mm	g	mm	g	mm	g	mm
Abdul Hamid II	35.00	50			6.90	34						
Mehmed V	35.00 (9)	46	17.50 (10)	43.5	7.10 (9)	30.5	3.508	22.75	1.754	18.5	0.877	16
	35.080	45.5	17.17 (pierced)	43.7	7.016	30.5						
			17.54 ⁽⁹⁾	44.5	(9)					(10)		
Mehmed VI	35.03 (9)	48.5	17.30 (9)	43.5	7.016	35			1.659	20		
	35.080	49.0	17.54 ⁽⁹⁾	44.5						(pierced)		

Sylvia Haffner obtained particulars from the Turkish authorities, including the quantities of the regular coins issued each year of the reigns of Mehmed V and Mehmed VI. However, it is not known which regnal years were actually minted.

References

- (1) Cüneyt Ölçer. Son alti Osmanli Padişahi zamanında İstanbulda basılan gümüş paralar. İstanbul 1966.
- (2) Nuri Pere. Osmanlılarda Madeni Paralar. İstanbul 1968. Nos. 1087/8.
- (3) M. Belin. Essais sur l'histoire économique de la Turquie. Journal Asiatique 6me sér. Vol.V, p.151 (Jan./Feb. 1865).
- (4) Nuri Pere, loc.cit. p.19.
- (5) Abbas al-Azzawi. History of Iraqian Currency. Baghdad 1958. p.162 (in Arabic).
- (5) Cüneyt Ölçer. Sultan Mahmud II zamanında darp edilen Osmanli madeni paraları. İstanbul 1970. p.53, note 66.
- (7) Nuri Pere, loc.cit., p.257.
Cüneyt Ölçer. Son alti Osmanli Padişahi zamanında İstanbulda basılan gümüş paralar. İstanbul 1966. pp.23, 41.
- (8) Nuri Pere, loc.cit.
- (9) Sylvia Haffner. The History of Modern Israel's Money. Tarzana, Calif. 1970.
- (10) The writer's collection.

List of Known Coins.

The following tables list all gold coins which the writer was able to trace noting where each was seen or referred to. In a number of cases indicated thus +, it is probable that other coins exist but no specimen was seen by the writer or is listed in any of the catalogues used.

Nearly all the coins are illustrated in Nuri Pere's book *Osmanlilarda Madeni Paralar*, where details of the inscriptions also appear.

It will be noted that although the 500 kuruş and 250 kuruş coins were issued for the first time in 1857, specimens exist with regnal years 6 (500 kuruş) and 7 and 9 (250 kuruş). No explanation can so far be given for this anomaly. It may be that all denominations exist of year 6 this being the year officially intended as the first year of the new coinage, but no reference to this has been found.

Attention is drawn to the existence of counterfeit gold coins, especially those of Mehmed V with the word 'Reşad' near the tughra. To the best knowledge of the writer, all coins shown in the tables are genuine. The list is tentative and it is obvious that many more coins were issued. Any information regarding coins not included in the list, particularly proofs or patterns, will be much appreciated.

Abbreviations used in the Tables

- ANSNL American Numismatic Society Numismatic Literature.
- BM Uncatalogued coins in the British Museum Collection.
- BMC Stanley Lane-Poole. *The Coins of the Turks in the British Museum. Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum.* Vol. VIII, London 1883. (Additions), Vol. X London 1895.
- CAIRO Stanley Lane-Poole. *Catalogue of the collection of Arabic Coins preserved in the Khedivial Library in Cairo.* London 1897.
- COP J. Østrup. *Catalogue des Monnaies arabes du cabinet Royale des Med ailles du Musée National de Copenhague.* 1938.
- du Quesne- Bird. Collection Mr. Nicholas du Quesne-Bird, to whom I am grateful for the information.
- FRI Robert Friedberg. *Gold Coins of the World.*
- GAL Ismail Galip. *Takvim-i Meskukat-i Osmaniye.* Istanbul 1307 (1890).
- Hüsçh Collection Mr. Walter Hüsçh, to whom I am grateful for the information.
- LAC The writer's collection.
- NCirc Numismatic Circular.
- PAL Egypt Palace Collection.
- Pere Nuri Pere. *Osmanlilarda Madeni Paralar.* Istanbul 1968.
- SCH I Anton Schaendlinger. *Münzprägungen des Osmanischen Reiches.* Dissertation. Wien 1962.
- SCH II Anton Schaendlinger. *Osmanische Numismatik.* Braunschweig 1973.
- SCHL H. Schlumberger. *Goldmünzen Katalog,* Munich 1971. (illustrations).
- YKB I Yapi ve Kredi Bankasi A.S. *Numismatik Yayinlari No. 1*
Nadir Osmanli Madeni Paralari. Istanbul 1972.

Regnal Year	Abdul Mejid					Abdul Aziz					Kostantiniye				
	500 kuruş	250 kuruş	100 kuruş	50 kuruş	25 kuruş	500 kuruş	250 kuruş	100 kuruş	50 kuruş	25 kuruş	500 kuruş	250 kuruş	100 kuruş	50 kuruş	25 kuruş
1							PAL 1406	LAC				GAL 1202		GAL 1203	
2						GAL 1199		LAC							
3								LAC						du Quesne-Bird.	
4															
5				Hüsch										BMC 1155	
6	GAL 1156			BMC 1054	BMC 1056							Pere 918			
7		FRI			COP 2841	SCHL 351	BMC 1151	GAL 1200	LAC			Pere 919		COP 1883	
8				LAC			PAL 1404	BMC 1152	LAC						
9		GAL 1157		Pere 878	CAIRO 2097		Pere 916	PAL 1406	LAC			BMC 1154			
10							PAL 1405								
11							PAL 1405			FRI					
12					BM(1913-12-4-309)					LAC					
13							LAC								
14				LAC								COP 2889			
15				LAC											
16				SCH 1	LAC										
17				LAC										COP 2844	
18	BMC 1053m	BMC 1053t		LAC										LAC	
19														Pere 880	
20															
21															
22				LAC										CAIRO 2098	
23														BMC 1056f	

Murad V					Kostantiniye				
Regnal Year		100 kuruş	50 kuruş	25 kuruş					
1		LAC	Pere 959	Pere 960					

Abdul Hamid II

Kostantiniye

Flower near tughra.

Regnal Year	500 kuruş	250 kuruş	100 kuruş	50 kuruş	25 kuruş	Regnal Year	500 kuruş	250 kuruş	100 kuruş	50 kuruş	25 kuruş
1	GAL 1248	COP 2925	Pere 965	Seen LAC		16			LAC	LAC	
2	COP 2926	GAL 1249	LAC			17					
3					COP 2928	18			LAC		
4						19					LAC
5						20			LAC	COP 2931	
6			LAC	BMC 1198	BMC 1199	21					
						22					
						23					

El Gazi near tughra.

7	GAL 1261	GAL 1262	BMC 1197a	GAL 1264		24					
8			GAL 1263	SCHL 521		25					
9						26					
10						27	PAL 1408			BM(1935-4-1-13087)	
11						28			LAC	SCH I	
12						29	Seen LAC		LAC		Pere 972
13						30	PAL 1408		LAC		
14		PAL 1409	NCirc May 72		GAL 1265	31	PAL 1409	Pere 969	LAC		SCHL 579
15						32	Pere 968	Seen LAC	LAC		
						33			LAC	SCH I	SCH I
						34			LAC	Pere 971	

Mehmed V		Kostantiniye			
Regnal Year	500 kuruş	250 kuruş	100 kuruş	50 kuruş	25 kuruş
Reşad near tughra.					
1	FRI 42	PAL 1413	LAC	SCHI	SCHI
2	PAL 1413	SCH II	LAC	+	+
3	+	Pere 1021	LAC	Pere 1025	+
4	Pere 1019	+	LAC	+	+
5	SCH I	+	LAC	+	+
6	+	PAL 1415	LAC	+	PAL 1027
7			LAC		
El Gazi near tughra.					
7		Pere 1022	LAC		Pere 1028
8			LAC		
9			LAC	Pere 1026	
10	Pere 1020		LAC	+	+
Mehmed VI		Kostantiniye			
Regnal Year	500 kuruş	250 kuruş	100 kuruş	50 kuruş	25 kuruş
Regular Issue.					
1		Pere 1068	LAC	Pere 1070	COP 2973
2	Pere 1067				Pere 1071
3	YKB I	SCH II			
4					
5				YKB I	

SULTAN'S VISITS COINS				
Regnal Year	500 kuruş	100 kuruş	50 kuruş	25 kuruş
Abdul Aziz Bursa				
1		Pere 912	Pere 913	
Abdul Mejid Edirne				
8		Pere 870	Pere 871	
Mehmed V		Reşad near tughra.		
Bursa				
1	-	Pere 1004	Pere 1005	Pere 1006
Edirne				
2	Pere 1007	Pere 1008	Pere 1009	-
Kosova				
3	Pere 1010	Pere 1011	Pere 1012	-
Manastir				
3	Pere 1013	Pere 1014	Pere 1015	-
Selanik				
3	Pere 1016	Pere 1017	Pere 1018	-

Abdul Hamid II - El Gazi near tughra.

Regnal Year	500 kuruş	250 kuruş	100 kuruş	50 kuruş	25 kuruş	12½ kuruş
24		PAL 1412				
25						
26	Pere 978					
27					SCHL 628	
28		PAL 1412		Seen LAC		
29	PAL 1412	ANSNL 44 p.193	PAL 1412			
30		PAL 1411	PAL 1411	PAL 1411	PAL 1411	PAL 1411
31			Pere 979	PAL 1412		
32	PAL 1411					
33	PAL 1411	PAL 1412	PAL 1412	BM(1935-4- 1-13094)		
34					PAL 1412	

Mehmed V Reşad near tughra.

1		SCHL 715				
2		Pere 1030			LAC	
3	PAL 1417		Seen LAC	PAL 1418		
4	Pere 1029	LAC	PAL 1418		PAL 1418	SCHL 741
5	PAL 1417	PAL 1418	Pere 1031			
6	PAL 1419					
7						

El Gazi near tughra.

7						
8	PAL 1419		Seen LAC			
9						
10						

Mehmed VI

1						
2	PAL 1421	PAL 1421	SCHL 773		PAL 1421	
3	Pere 1072	Pere 1073			SCHL 776	
4						
5						

APPENDIX

The Turkish Civil Calender

The reformed Turkish Civil Calender was introduced by Sultan Selim III (A.H.1203 - 1222 / A.D. 1789 - 1807) in 1789. It was based on the Julian Calender and began in March. The following new names were given to the months:-

Mart	Eylûl
Nisan	Tişrin-i evvel
Mayis	Tişrin-i sâni
Haziran	Kânun-i evvel
Temmuz	Kânun-i sâni
Agustos	Şubat

The introduction of a solar calendar led to a discrepancy of a whole year every 33 years, and in order to keep in step with the Muhammadan (sacred) calendar, it was decided to omit one year in thirty three. For this reason years 1221 and 1255 were omitted. The next year for omission - 1288 - was, however, not omitted - nor were subsequent years discarded. A further reform took place in March 1917, when the Turkish Calender was synchronised with the Gregorian Calender and the beginning was moved from March to 1st January. (the last 13 days of the month of Şubat were omitted in 1917). The Turkish year 1334 began on 1st January 1918. Turkey adopted the ordinary calendar in 1926. Besides the dates according to this calendar, found in various Turkish publications, the last Ottoman paper money issued between 1915 and the end of the Sultanate bore dates according to the Turkish Civil Calender.