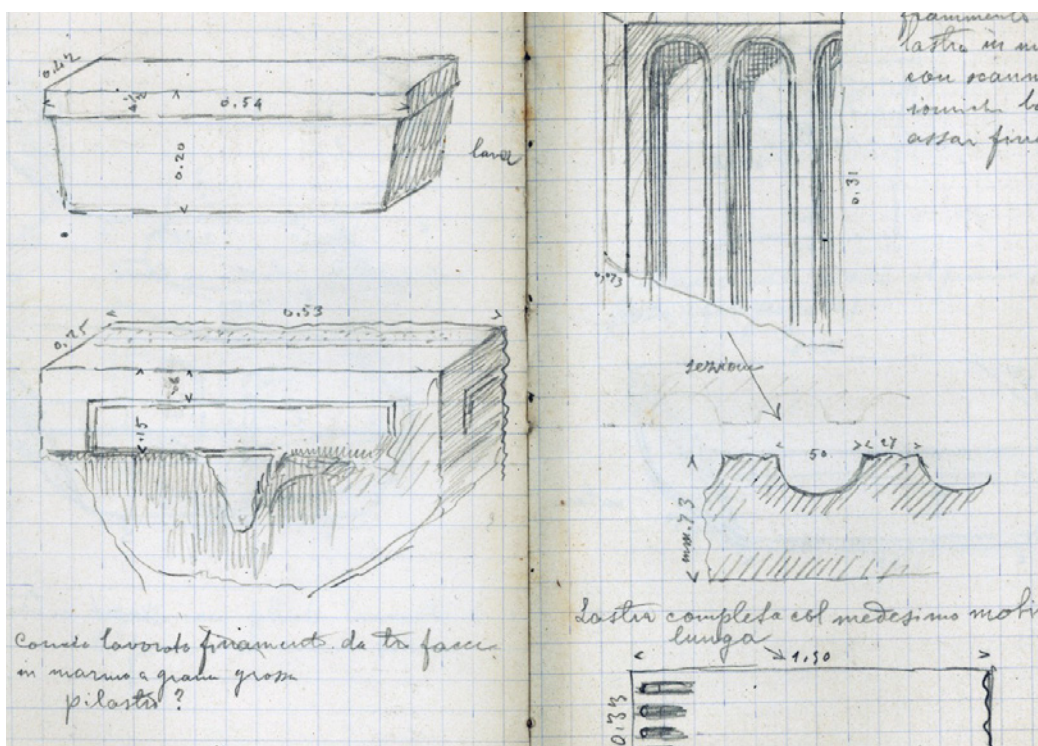


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Estratto

Ottoman coins (15th – 17th century) from the depository of the Park-Museum of Military Friendship - 1444 in Varna

Nevyan Mitev

The Park-Museum of Military Friendship – 1444 is a memorial complex in Varna, Bulgaria. It was built at the centre of the battlefield, where, on November 10, 1444, the Ottoman army, led by Sultan Murad II, and the crusader army of the Polish-Hungarian King Wladyslaw III Jagiellonian, faced each other. The young Christian ruler was killed during the battle and the united European army was defeated. Posthumously the King received the name Varnenchik because of the place of his death. That was the last attempt for the liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman invaders. In memory of the King and all fallen soldiers for the Bulgarian freedom, at the place where these decisive events took place, a memorial complex was built, better known as the Park-Museum “Vladislav Varnenchik”.

The exposition of the museum is thematically related to its history and the battle of Varna, but the depositories contain various archaeological artifacts. Here the author will present a group of Ottoman coins from the second half of the 15th – 17th century, which the museum acquired at different times, but have not yet been published.

At the end of the 14th – the beginning of the 15th century the medieval Bulgarian state fell under Ottoman rule for almost five centuries. The liberation of Bulgaria came only on March 3, 1878, after another Russo-Turkish war. During this long period the Bulgarian lands were in the centre of the Ottoman Empire, and the Ottoman monuments (movable and immovable) are one of the most numerous cultural properties that have been found in the Bulgarian lands. Naturally, coins are the most numer-

ous among them. Still, despite some generalizing research in recent years, Bulgarian numismatics has not done enough to study and promote these findings. The author hopes that this publication is a step in that direction.

From the coins presented here chronologically, the earliest is an akche of Sultan Mehmed II (1444–1445; 1451–1481), struck in 865 AH. Mehmed II, the conqueror of Constantinople, ruled the Ottoman state twice. In the first, rather short period from 1444 to 1445, he minted akches with the year 848 AH, which corresponds to the Christian calendar of his one-year reign. After the Janisaries revolted and internal strife broke out in the Empire, Murad II returned to the throne and ruled until his death in 1451, when Mehmed ascended the throne again. Numerous issues are known from his second period of rule (1451 – 1481). There were various akches, which were struck in the years 855, 865, 875, 885 and 886. Copper manghirs were also produced in various mints, and Sultan Mehmed II struck the first Ottoman gold coin, called “Sultani”, a product of the new Ottoman capital, Constantinople¹. In the Bulgarian lands the coins of this sultan have been found both as single specimens and as collective finds². Most common are his silver coins. Thirty years ago, Luchezar Lazarov found an interesting fact about the coins of Sultan Mehmed II discovered in the hoards from Bulgar-

1 DAMALI 2010, pp. 263-305.

2 ТЕОДОСИЕВ 2017, p. 698; ДИМОВ 2020, pp. 92-98. Sometimes the coins of this ruler are found in collective finds mixed with other issues.

ia. The author concludes that the extremely few treasures with specimens from this ruler (at that time only 4 hoards were known to him) are related to the economic stagnation in the region and the decline of the Bulgarian lands at that time. According to him, it is possible that there was a practice of decommissioning the old akches, which were paid for with new ones. In this way, the population kept the old coins for a relatively short period of time. But even those reflections cannot explain the extremely small number of finds from the 50s and 70s of the 15th century³. In the last three decades, the number of the commented hoards have significantly increased and became about 10. However, this is still a small amount that cannot confirm or refute Lazarov's point of views. Certainly, new discoveries will be made in the future that will bring more clarity to this problem.

The next monetary issues published in the present study are four coins of Sultan Bayezid II (1481 – 1512): three akches, that were minted in Kostantiniye and Novar (2 pcs), and one manghir, minted in 1498. Bayezid ascended the throne in 1481, after winning the civil war over the legacy of Sultan Mehmed II against his brother Jem, who had previously ruled for only 20 days. Sultan Bayezid ruled for 31 years. He minted gold, silver, and copper coins. The characteristic of his akches is that they are all the same type. A straight line is drawn on the obverse and reverse in the middle. The obverse's text on the upper side is "Sultan Bayezid" and below the line – "bin Mehmed han". On the reverse is written "Azze Nasruhu duribe" and below – "the name of the mint, sene 886"⁴. The coins of this ruler, which have been found in the Bulgarian lands, are more numerous than the copies of his predecessors. This fact is clearly evidenced in the hoards and confirms the opinion that at the end of 15th - beginning of the 16th century a certain economic growth began in this geographical area⁵.

The coinage of Selim I (1512 – 1520) is represented by 1 akche, minted in Constantinople with the year 918 AH. Selim I ascended the Ottoman throne in 1512 after the abdication of his father Bayezid II.

During the conquering he undertook, new mints were established, where coins were minted. Among his most significant successes was the conquest of Egypt. The Sultan produced significant coinage. His emissions are common in the Bulgarian lands⁶, and the specimen published here complements the emissions of the ruler from the Varna Region.

During the reign of Suleyman I (1520 – 1566) the Ottoman state reached its apogee. Millions of coins were minted on three continents⁷. The ruler's emissions also reflected the economic condition of the Empire. It is logical that Suleyman's specimens from the Bulgarian lands correspond to the general context of the epoch. His coins are common in the Balkans, and the following issues from his time are published here: three akches with year 926 AH – one of them is double-printed and the other two pieces are from the mints in Üsküp (Skopje) and Kratovo, and one manghir struck in 972 AH.

Sultan Murad III (1574 – 1595) led several major military campaigns, which led to difficulties in the Ottoman treasury due to the high expenses, which led to the escalation of the crisis in the Ottoman state. At the time of this ruler there were about 40 mints⁸, which were located throughout the country, but their density was highest in Rumelia and Anatolia⁹. A total of two-coin issues of this ruler are kept in the depository of Park-Museum "Vladislav Varnenchik": one akche with the year 982 AH and an interesting dirham from the mint in Haleb (Aleppo) with the year 982 AH.

The last specimen is an akche of Sultan Mustafa I (1617 – 1618; 1622 – 1623) with the year 1026 AH, struck in Adrianopol (Edirne). This Sultan ruled the empire twice. The first time in 1617 – 1618 for the short period of only three months. The second time from 1622 to 1623 for 16 months. Mustafa I suffered from a mental illness, his ascension and removal from the throne were accompanied by many emotions, and the ruler himself spent most of his life in a cage and not on the throne. Because of that

3 ЛАЗАРОВ 1992, p. 39.

4 DAMALI 2010, p. 319.

5 ЛАЗАРОВ 1992, pp. 39-40.

6 LAZAROV 2008, pp. 37-38.

7 For detailed information about the coinage of Suleyman I see DAMALI 2010a.

8 Shefket Pamuk believes that at that time there were 38 mints: PAMUK 2000, p. 45, while Anton Shendlinger gives the number 45: SCHAENDLINGER 1973, pp. 103-104.

9 КРЪСТЕВ 2015, p. 97.

his emissions are generally rare, and specimens from his first coinage, such as the pattern published here, are very scarce¹⁰. Lazarov supposed that it is possible for the capital's mint to reduce the quantity of its emissions during the reign of Osman II (1618 – 1622) and Mustafa I, which would have resulted in the increased production of the Balkan mints at that time and that could explain why those specimens are more common in the Bulgarian lands¹¹.

The most numerous of the published coins are the issues of Bayezid II and Suleyman the Magnificent – a total of 4 pieces, followed by Murad III (two issues). Mehmed II, Selim I and Mustafa I are presented with one issue each. The dominant denomination is the akche (10 pieces), then the manghirs (2 pieces) and one dirham. This was a normal trend common throughout the Empire, because the akche was the most used Ottoman coin in the 15th – 16th centuries. Because of the coin wear, not all of the mints are visible on the coins. Among the legibles are: Kostantiniye (Constantinople), Adrianopol (Edirne), Üsküp (Skopje), Kratovo, Novar (Novo Bardo), Haleb (Aleppo). Those names confirm that in the 16th – 17th century one of the most numerous coins, circulating in this part of the Ottoman Empire, were in fact minted in the Balkan mints. Among the specimens discussed in the article are some rare coins such as the issue of Mustafa I and the dirham of Murad III.

According to the information the author has, all the coins were found in the region of Varna. Although not numerous, they are a small illustration of the distribution of Ottoman coins in this geographical area and complement the already known numismatic monuments from the Classical period of the Ottoman Empire, which have survived to the present day.

Catalogue

Mehmed II (1451 – 1481)

Akche

O. In the middle – a star, and around it the following inscription: Mehmed bin Murad Han azze nasruhu 865.

R. In the middle – a star, and around it the following inscription: Hullide mulkehu duri be...¹²

1. AR; PMMF – 1444, collection I, inv. № 285/2. The coin was found with a metal detector in the field between Varna Airport and “Vladislav Varnenchik” city district in the spring of 1993. It was handed over to the museum by an anonymous donor through the former director Shanko Apostolov. The specimen is perforated and, at some places, erased. Dimensions: D. 10 – 11 mm. W. 0.5 g. (fig. 1).



Fig. 1.1.



Fig. 1.2.

Bayezid II (1481 – 1512)

Akche

Kostantiniye

O. Sultan Bayezid / bin Mehmed Han

R. Azze nasruhu / duribe Kostantiniye sene 886¹³

2. AR; PMMF – 1444, collection III, inv. № 50. The specimen is cut off, but with good relief. The coin is handed over by Vladimir Bekov from Varna. Dimensions: D. 10 – 11 mm. W. 0.9 g. (fig. 2).



Fig. 2.1.



Fig. 2.2.

¹⁰ DAMALI 2012, p. 1475; КРЪСТЕВ 2015, p. 105.

¹¹ ЛАЗАРОВ 2004, p. 39.

¹² SREČKOVIĆ 2000, Type D/III.

¹³ DAMALI 2010, p. 329.

Novar

O. Sultan Bayezid / bin Mehmed Han

R. Azze nasruhu / duribe Novar sene 886¹⁴

3. AR; PMMF – 1444, collection III, inv. № 36. The coin is handed over by Aleksandar Rusev from Varna. Dimensions: D. 10 – 11 mm. W. 0.56 g. (fig. 3).



Fig. 3.1.



Fig. 3.2.

Novar

O. Sultan Bayezid bin Mehmed han.

R. Azze nasruhu duribe Novar sene [886]¹⁵

4. AR; PMMF – 1444, collection III, inv. № 43. The condition of the coin is good, but the part with the emission cut off, so some of the inscriptions and years are not visible. The coin is handed over by Vladimir Bekov from Varna. Dimensions: D. 10 – 11 mm. W. 0.71 g. (fig. 4).



Fig. 4.1.



Fig. 4.2.

Manghir

Kostantiniye

903 (1498)

O. Sultan Bayazid b. Muhamad Han

R. Azze nasruhu duriba Qostantaniyya sene 903¹⁶

5. AE; PMMF – 1444, collection III, inv. № 58. The specimen is cut off and slightly worn out. The coin is handed over by Vladimir Bekov from Varna. Dimensions: D. 12 – 13 mm. W. 1.3 g. (fig. 5).



Fig. 5.1.



Fig. 5.2.

Selim I (1512 – 1520)

Akche

Kostantiniye

O. Sultan Selim Shah bin Bayezid Han

R. Azze nasruhu duribe Kostantiniye sene 918¹⁷

6. AR; PMMF – 1444, collection III, inv. № 49. The coin is cut off and worn out at one end. The coin is handed over by Vladimir Bekov from Varna. Dimensions: D. 10 – 11 mm. W. 0.7 g. (fig. 6).



Fig. 6.1.



Fig. 6.2.

Suleyman I (1520 – 1566)

Akche

Üsküp (Skopje)

O. Sultan Suleyman Sah bin Selim Sah

R. Azze nasruhu duribe Üsküp sene 926¹⁸

7. AR; PMMF – 1444, collection III, inv. № 46. The condition of the coin is not good. The imprint is not in the centre of the core and some of the inscrip-

14 DAMALI 2010, p. 330.

15 DAMALI 2010, p. 330.

16 KABAKLARLI 1998, p. 212.

17 DAMALI 2010, p. 390.

18 DAMALI 2010a, p. 739.

tions are not visible. The coin is handed over by Vladimir Bekov from Varna. Dimensions: D. 11 – 12 mm. W. 0.6 g. (fig. 7).



Fig. 7.1.



Fig. 7.2.

Novar

O. Sultan Suleyman Sah bin Selim Sah
R. Azze nasruhu duribe Novar sene 926
8. AR; PMMF – 1444, collection III, inv. № 47. The coin is in good condition, slightly cut off and double reprinted. The coin is handed over by Vladimir Bekov from Varna. Dimensions: D. 12 – 13 mm. W. 0.7 g. (fig. 8).



Fig. 8.1.



Fig. 8.2.

Sah bin Selim Sah

O. Sultan Suleyman
R. Azze nasruhu duribe Kratova sene 926. With a star in the middle¹⁹.
9. AR; PMMF – 1444, collection III, inv. № 48. The condition of the coin is good. The specimen is handed over by Vladimir Bekov from Varna. Dimensions: D. 11 – 12 mm. W. 0.7 g. (fig. 9).



Fig. 9.1.



Fig. 9.2.

Manghir

Kostantiniye

O. Azza nasruhu duribe Kostantiniye 972

R. Ornament.

10. AE; PMMF – 1444, collection III, inv. № 59. Cut off and worn out coin. The specimen is handed over by Vladimir Bekov from Varna. Dimensions: D. 14 – 16 mm. W. 3.7 g. (fig. 10).



Fig. 10.1.



Fig. 10.2.

Murad III (1574 – 1595)

Akche

Sidrekapsi

O. Sultan Murad bin Selim Han

R. Azze Nasruhu duribe Sidrekapsi sene 982²⁰

11. AR; PMMF – 1444, collection III, inv. № 55. The condition of the coin is not good. The imprint is not in the centre of the core and some of the inscriptions are not visible. Slightly worn out specimen. The coin is handed over by Vladimir Bekov from Varna. Dimensions: D. 11 – 12 mm. W. 0.4 g. (fig. 11).

19 DAMALI 2010a, pp. 627-635.

20 DAMALI 2011, pp. 1055-1057.



Fig. 11.1.



Fig. 11.2.

Dirham**Haleb**

O. Sultan Murad bin Sultan Selim Han

R. In the center: Duribe Haleb. Hallede mulkuhu ve sultanehu ve eyyede hilafetehu ve adaletehu fi. Sene 982²¹

12. AR; PMMF – 1444, collection III, inv. № 57. The condition of the coin is good. Slightly broken and slightly worn out specimen at the ends. The coin is handed over by Vladimir Bekov from Varna. Dimensions: D. 19 – 23 mm. W. 3.6 g. (fig. 12).



Fig. 12.1.



Fig. 12.2.

Mustafa I (1617 – 1618; 1622 – 1623)

Akche**Edirne**

O. Sultan Mustafa bin Mehmed Han

R. Azze Nasruhu duribe Edirne sene 1026²²

13. AR; PMMF – 1444, collection III, inv. № 54. The condition of the coin is not good, it is slightly broken, and the obverse is almost completely erased. The coin is handed over by Vladimir Bekov from Varna. Dimensions: D. 11 – 12 mm. W. 0.3 g. (fig. 13).



Fig. 13.1.



Fig. 13.2.

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21 DAMALI 2011, p. 999.

22 DAMALI 2012, p. 1493.

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RIASSUNTO - Lo scopo di questo studio è quello di presentare un gruppo di monete ottomane della seconda metà del XV-XVII secolo, conservate nel deposito del Parco-Museo “Vladislav Varnenchik” di Varna, in Bulgaria.

L'esemplare più antico è un akche del sultano Mehmed II (1444-1445; 1451-1481), coniato nell'865 AH. Le emissioni monetarie successive sono quattro monete del sultano Bayezid II (1481-1512): tre akche coniate a Kostantiniye e Novar, e un manghir, coniato nel 1498.

La monetazione di Selim I (1512-1520) è rappresentata da 1 akche, coniato a Costantinopoli con l'anno 918 AH. Le monete di Suleyman I (1520-1566) sono comuni nei Balcani, e le seguenti emissioni del suo periodo sono pubblicate qui: tre akche con anno 926 AH – uno di essi è a doppia stampa e gli altri due pezzi provengono dalle zecche di Üsküp (Skopje) e Kratovo, e un manghir battuto nel 972 AH. Nel deposito del Parco-Museo “Vladislav Varnenchik” sono conservate in totale due emissioni di monete del sultano Murad III (1574-1595): un akche con l'anno 982 AH e un interessante dirham della zecca di Haleb (Aleppo) con l'anno 982 AH. L'ultimo esemplare è un akche del sultano Mustafa I (1617-1618; 1622-1623) con l'anno 1026 AH, battuto ad Adrianopol (Edirne).

Le più numerose tra le monete pubblicate sono le emissioni di Bayezid II e Suleyman il Magnifico – un totale di 4 pezzi, seguite da Murad III (due emissioni). Mehmed II, Selim I e Mustafa I sono presentati con un'emissione ciascuno. Il taglio dominante è l'akche (10 pezzi), poi i manghir (2 pezzi) e un dirham. Si tratta di una tendenza normale, comune a tutto l'Impero, perché l'akche era la moneta ottomana più utilizzata nel XV e XVI secolo. A causa dell'usura della moneta, solo alcune zecche sono visibili sulle monete. Tra queste ci sono: Kostantiniye (Costantinopoli), Adrianopol (Edirne), Üsküp (Skopje), Kratovo, Novar (Novo Bardo), Haleb (Aleppo). Questi nomi confermano che nel XVI-XVII secolo una delle monete più numerose, circolanti in questa parte dell'Impero Ottomano, era in realtà coniate nelle zecche balcaniche. Le monete presentate confermano l'opinione che tra la fine del XV e l'inizio del XVI secolo iniziò una certa crescita economica in quest'area geografica. Tra gli esemplari discussi nell'articolo vi sono alcune monete rare come l'emissione di Mustafa I e il dirham di Murad III. Secondo le informazioni in possesso dell'autore, tutte le monete sono state trovate nella regione di Varna. Sebbene non siano numerose, esse rappresentano una piccola illustrazione della distribuzione delle monete ottomane in quest'area geografica e completano i monumenti numismatici già noti del periodo classico dell'Impero Ottomano, che sono sopravvissuti fino ai giorni nostri.

SUMMARY - The aim of this study is to be presented a group of Ottoman coins from the second half of the 15th – 17th century, which are kept in the depository of the Park-Museum “Vladislav Varnenchik” in Varna, Bulgaria. The earliest specimen is an akche of Sultan Mehmed II (1444 – 1445; 1451 – 1481), struck in 865 AH. The next monetary issues are four coins of Sultan Bayezid II (1481 – 1512): three akches, that were minted in Kostantiniye and Novar (2 pcs), and one manghir, minted in 1498. The coinage of Selim I (1512 – 1520) is represented by 1 akche, minted in Constantinople with the year 918 AH. The coins of Suleyman I (1520 – 1566) are common in the Balkans, and the following issues from his time are published here: three

akches with year 926 AH – one of them is double-printed and the other two pieces are from the mints in Üsküp (Skopje) and Kratovo, and one manghir struck in 972 AH. A total of two-coin issues of Sultan Murad III (1574 – 1595) are kept in the depository of Park-Museum “Vladislav Varnenchik”: one akche with the year 982 AH and an interesting dirham from the mint in Haleb (Aleppo) with the year 982 AH. The last specimen is an akche of Sultan Mustafa I (1617 – 1618; 1622 – 1623) with the year 1026 AH, struck in Adrianopol (Edirne). The most numerous of the published coins are the issues of Bayezid II and Suleyman the Magnificent – a total of 4 pieces, followed by Murad III (two issues). Mehmed II, Selim I and Mustafa I are presented with one issue each. The dominant denomination is the akche (10 pieces), then the manghirs (2 pieces) and one dirham. This was a normal trend common throughout the Empire, because the akche was the most used Ottoman coin in the 15th – 16th centuries. Because of the coin wear, not all of the mints are visible on the coins. Among the legibles are: Kostantiniye (Constantinople), Adrianopol (Edirne), Üsküp (Skopje), Kratovo, Novar (Novo Bardo), Haleb (Aleppo). Those names confirm that in the 16th – 17th century one of the most numerous coins, circulating in this part of the Ottoman Empire, were in fact minted in the Balkan mints. The presented coins confirm the opinion that at the end of 15th - beginning of the 16th century a certain economic growth began in this geographical area. Among the specimens discussed in the article are some rare coins such as the issue of Mustafa I and the dirham of Murad III. According to the information the author has, all the coins were found in the region of Varna. Although not numerous, they are a small illustration of the distribution of Ottoman coins in this geographical area and complement the already known numismatic monuments from the Classical period of the Ottoman Empire, which have survived to the present day.

Keywords: Park-museum “Vladislav Varnenchik”, Ottoman state, coins, Varna.

Parole chiave: Parco-museo “Vladislav Varnenchik”, Stato ottomano, monete, Varna.