THE INDEPENDENCY ACTIVITIES
OF AHMED PAŞA AL-KRCHĪ AND THEIR REFLECTIONS
ON THE OTTOMAN COINS IN EGYPT (929 A.H./1524 A.D.)

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Abstract
At the beginning of the reign of Sultan Sulaymân I ibn Selîm I in Egypt and the Levant, the Ottoman Empire faced many tribulations and independence movements which aimed to restore the power of the Mamluk State and show noncompliance to the Sultan’s orders. However, these movements were toughly faced, thus could not stand in front of the Ottoman Empire. From this point, coins played an important role in studying separatism through studying revolutionaries’ coins. Thus coins have been important documents and records preserving the history of revolutions throughout the different ages. One of the most important revolutionary movements was the one by Khaīn Paşa, the Egyptian governor during the era of Sultan Sulaymân who declared the rebellion against the Sultan’s power, underestimating the Sultan by declaring himself the Sultan of Egypt, and struck coins under his name. But the Ottomans faced this movement forcefully until it was eliminated and Khaīn Ahmed Paşa was executed. Among the most important results were the successive monetary versions of gold and silver coins during the reign of Sultan Sulaymân, beside the emission of law which specified the transactions of the Egypt mint ‘darbkhâne’ or ‘dâr al-darb’, and its minters ‘darrâbun’.

Keywords
dinar – Zer – maḥbūb – mint

ملخص
يلقي البحث الضوء على حركة أحمد باشا أحد مماليك السلطان سليم الأول الذي استمر في خدمة السلطان سليمان القانوني، وكان يأمل أن يتولى منصب الصدارة العظمى، ولكن لم ينجح السلطان سليمان الأول بتعيينه. وأصبح واليًا على مصر في 18 شوال 929 هـ، ولقب نفسه بلقب ‘الملك المنصور أحمد خان’، ووصل به الأمر إلى تغيير علم الدولة العثمانية إلى علم خاص به. وجعل لونه أحمر بالوستة سيفين عربين، وأجر شيخ الإسلام باكون الخطبة باسمه على المنابر، وضرب السك المختار باسمه على المزون في أوائل شهر ربيع الأول 930 هـ/17 يناير 1524 م. وكان لحركة أحمد باشا الكرجي آثرًا واقعة على نفود التي ضربت في مصر، ومنها سمي السلطان سليمان القانوني لإجراء تعديلات أدبية على نظام الحكم بمصر خشية قيام أعمال عصيان وتمرد أخرى تؤدي إلى فقدانها إلى الأبد، والتي أطلق عليها ‘قانون تامة مصر’ عام 931 هـ/1524 م، والذي أهتم بالنظر في كل الأمور المتعلقة بكسب النقود الذهبية والفضية ودار الضرب والصرافين.

الكلمات الدالة
dinār – Zer – maḥbūb – dār al-ḍarb
Introduction

At the beginning of the reign of Sultan Suleyman I ibn Selim I in Egypt and the Levant, the Ottoman Empire faced many tribulations and independence movements which aimed to restore the power of the Mamluk State and show noncompliance to the Sultan’s orders. However, these movements were toughly faced, thus could not stand in front of the Ottoman Empire. From this point, coins played an important role in studying separatism through studying revolutionaries’ coins. Thus coins have been important documents and records preserving the history of revolutions throughout the different ages.

One of the most important revolutionary movements was the one by Khāin Paşa, the Egyptian governor during the era of Sultan Suleiman who declared the rebellion against the Sultan’s power, underestimated the Sultan by declaring himself the Sultan of Egypt and struck coins under his name. But the Ottomans faced this movement forcefully until it was eliminated and Khāin Ahmed Paşa was executed.

One of its most important results was the successive monetary versions of gold and silver coins during the reign of Sultan Suleyman I, beside the emission of law which specified the transactions of the mint in Egypt and its minters.

Khāin Ahmed Paşa was one of the Mamluks for Sultan Selîm I, then he continued serving Sultan Suleyman I ibn Selim I, as he aimed for the great land after the great leader Mohamed Paşa Sādqī retired for his old age. Thus, Ahmed Paşa applied for this position, but Sultan Suleyman I employed Ībrahim Paşa instead of him, despite the supremacy of Ahmed Paşa and his exceptional personality.

Ībrahim Paşa pushed Ahmed Paşa away from his great position by giving him the management of Egypt as he became the governor of Egypt on 18 Shāwal 929 A.H./ 19 August 1523 A.D. After that, he tried to kill Ahmed Paşa by sending letters to the princes in Egypt asking them to cut Ahmed’s Paşa throat and send him his head. In return, he will choose one of them to take the leadership of Egypt. But Ahmed Paşa revealed the conspiracy and saw the letters, and cleverly got rid.

Then, Ahmed Paşa started to protect himself and killed some of Sultan Suleyman’s Mamluks, controlled the trader’s role and took possession of the cabinet money. He also asked Ghanem Al-Hmzaui to present 150,000 Dinars and the Senate to pay 100,000 Dinars, and took more coins from the Al-mghrīb. Christians and Jewish continued his rebellion when he gathered some of the Arab brats and headed to the citadel and besieged it for 20 days, then arrested some of the Ottoman soldiers.

In order to have full control over the reign of Sultan Suleyman I, he underestimated him by trying to be independent from the Ottoman reign, and regain the power of the Burji Mamluk State. He declared himself the Sultan of Egypt on 11 Rabi’ II 930 A.H./17 January 1524 A.D., and titled himself al-Malîk al-Manṣūr Ahmed Khan (the victorious king Ahmed

1 Ibn Abdel Moaty, Akhbar al-ʿawl fīmn tsrf fī miṣr arbab al-dawl, p. 135.
3 Al-Ghazy, Al-kawkib al-saʿra; baʿʾayn al-mʿ al-ʾahrā, pp.159; Al-Bakri, Al-rawḍa Al-m nawṣ a; f akhbar Miṣr, p.82; Mousa, Sfḥat mṭaya mn Tarīkh Miṣr al-ʿUthmāniya, pp. 34-35; Sayed, Miṣr fī al-ʿaṣr al-ʿUthmānī fī al-qrn 16 al-Mīlādī, pp.118:119.
Khan), al-ʿAdl⁴ (the fair), and ‘malik al-umara naʿib al-dyār al-maḥriyah’.⁵ He also changed the flag of the Ottoman Empire and introduced a new flag for his new state: red colored with two Arabian swords.⁶

Ahmed Paşa started to instill his policy and ordered that the Imams to make their sermons in his name in mosques. He also struck dinars and dirham with his name for two weeks at the beginning of Rabi’1 in 930 A.H./ January 1524 A.D.⁷

Along with the challenges faced by Ahmed Paşa Al-Krchī, he did not find any support. At the international level, the Levant was not satisfied and armed the Damascus Citadel to face his movement,⁸ while the Mecca royals saw that he was aiming at destroying the Egyptian Kingdom.⁹ The Ottoman State did not stand still, but began to collide against him and agreed with Cairo princes, on top of whom was Chānim Al-ḥmzaway, to get rid of him upon the command of Sultan Sulaymān I. He was attacked beside Citadel in Cairo the on 17 Rabi’ 1930 A.H./23 January 1524, but he ran away until he reached the Arab Sheikh ʿAbd al-Dāım bin Bakr.¹⁰

General upraise was announced to fight Ahmed Paşa, in which the Roman, the Levant, the Moroccan, and the al-ʿūam tribes rose, called the judges, went to the citadel, and Ahmed Paşa’s actions were revealed. The announcer called for attack against him, and simultaneously a thousand soldiers came from Istanbul to Alexandria, sent by Sultan Sulaymān I ibn Selīm I. Everyone united against him, and he was captured and slaughtered. His head was hanged on Zuweila Gate on 29 Rabi’ 1930 A.H./ 5 March 1524 A.D, then it was sent to Sultan Sulaymān on 3 Jūmada 1930 A.H./ 8 March 1524 A.D.¹¹

Among the factors that aided Ahmed Paşa in his revolt was Egypt’s location- being far from the Ottoman State, and having great material resources and vast lands. All these factors led him to announce his revolt and rebellion against the Ottoman State. This is in addition to the existence of the Mamluks who were against the Ottoman reign, mistakenly believing that such privileges will be enough to achieve victory and independence from the Ottoman State.¹²

**Ahmed Paşa al-Krchī Movement and its Reflection on Coins in Egypt**

The movement of Ahmed Paşa al-Krchī had its apparent impact on coins struck in Egypt, as Sultan Sulaymān I strove to make administrative amendments in the ruling system in Egypt in fear of any revolt or rebellion leading to its total loss. He called it Egypt’s Development Law in 931 A.H/ 1524 A.D.,¹³ focusing on everything concerning remint gold and silver

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¹² Abdel Kareem, *The Arabs and the Ottomans*, p.86
coins, the mints, and accountants, as follows:

1- Controlling the Mint

On top of the precautionary developments after Ahmed Paşa al-Krcî was controlling the mint through Sultan Sulaymân I ibn Selîm I who solely had the right to appoint the mint secretary, and the Head of Princes of Egypt may fire him if he sensed any shortage, carelessness or treason in his work. The case is then forwarded to the Sultan, but the latter does not have the right to appoint another; I ask for a trusted person to be appointed in his place.14

Since that decision, controlling mints has become one of the most important occupations given high significance on behalf of the Ottoman State in all the states under its rule through one of its officers, workers, or a specific representative sent from the royal family.15 The reason behind this might be the importance of such an organization at the political and economic levels for the Ottoman State, as it has been traditionally administered by the state.16

As for the source of metal for the mint, Sultan Sulaymân I issued a decree banning and forbidding the accountants transfer through the cities to buy gold from anyone to preserve it, then resell it to the officer Thus, he who does not find it with anyone else and has no choice but to resort to the accountants. Such accountants in turn sell it with the value they estimate, and their punishment is withdrawing their money.17

The importance of this decree lies in banning the accountants’ monopolization of gold import to the mint, leading to the stabilization of the gold price used to struck the gold coins without any increase.

2- Sultan Sulaymân I Policy in remint Gold Coins

The gold Ottoman coins are considered one of the main pillars of the financial system in the Ottoman State, and since their issuance, they strove to have a unified financial form in resemblance to the gold coins terms of weight and standard.18 The gold Ottoman coins were different from other states’ coins by the distinguished type of inscription of the dates recorded on them. Such dates refer to the crowning of the Ottoman Sultan to the throne without registering the actual issuance date,19 through a decree by the Sultan to struck new coins. This process was known as the Renewed Struck, in which the old coins are banned and exchanged from the mint with the new coins.20

14 Ahmed, Qanûn nama Miṣr, p. 77.
15 Samuel, Al-nqud wa Al-mawazayn, p. 257; Akmal, Al-dawlh al-‘Uthmāniya, pp. 669-670.
16 Shawkat, Al-Tarîkhal-malî, p. 79.
17 Ahmed, Qanûn nama Miṣr, p. 77.
18 Shawkat, Al-Tarîkhal-malî, p. 240.
19 Raafat, Al-tarîkh al-hjrî, p. 240.
20 Akmal, Al-dawlh al-‘Uthmāniya, pp. 666; Shawkat, Al-Tarîkhal-malî, p. 240.
Since Sultan Sulaymân I came to the throne, the Egyptian mint proceeded in issuing gold coins with the date of his crowning in 926 A.H/1520 A.D. Two coins belonging to this type are preserved in the Egyptian National Library and Archives, while Artuk published another one which belonged to this type as well. The inscriptions and decorations of this type were as follows (pls. nos.1-2):

Four coins which belong to the same type are preserved in the British Museum, while William Qazan published another two coins belonging. Among the main goals that Ahmed Paşa strove to achieve was proving his legitimacy through striking coins with his name and changing the type of coins struck by Sultan Sulaymân I, having in mind that coins are one of the major powers of ruling. He is considered the first to cut the ckañ of Ottoman coins milled in Egypt. Sources agreed upon the coinage of a new Egyptian currency of dinars and dirham with Ahmed Paşa’s name, with the inscription of the statement Long Live Sultan Ahmed’s Power.

Among the main coins reform by Sultan Sulaymân I to control Ahmed Paşa al-Krchî’s coins are:

1- The confiscation of Ahmed Paşa al-Krchî’s funds, as no coins of such unique numismatics have been found in the history of the Ottoman rule in Egypt. The reason behind this might be the short period of time Ahmed Paşa ruled, being known as the traitor. Views have differed, for some believed he ruled for six months, while others saw that he ruled for a year. Egypt’s new ruler Gûšcha Kasm Paşa collected all the coins issued by Ahmed Paşa as soon as he arrived to Egypt in 931 A.H/1524 A.D.

2- Sultan Sulaymân I determined the coinage of the Sultan Coin (the Ottoman Dinar) from the gold imported from Tkrur countries, struck in the special standard mint based on the law followed in Constantinople, as each Sultan strikes with a standard of 18.5 carats of alloy or

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22 Record No. 3518, 2.5 g 19 mm, record No. 3521, 3.4 g 20 mm.
23 Artuk, *İstanbul Arkeoloji*, No. 153
30 Al-Šâwî, *Al-Nuqud al-Mutadâwala*, p. 27.
32 Al-Bakri, *Al-rawda Al-mʾ al-ʿahrra*, p.82.
33 Al-Šâwî, *Al-Nuqud al-Mutadâwala*, p. 27.
golden pots and receives a fee of ten golden coins for each hundred mithqal. What made Sultan Sulaymān I do so was his attempt to fix the standard that was low at the beginning of his age when he sent a letter to Prince Khaīr Bīk to amend the exchange of gold and silver in 926 A.H / 1520 A.D, along with connecting the standard of the gold coins struck in Egypt with those struck in Constantinople for the Ottoman State to preserve a fixed exchange rate of the coins struck in Egypt.

3- Sultan Sulaymān I was keen on striking the gold coins in the same year when Ahmed Paşa al-Krchī’s coins were banned in 930 A.H, and it was followed by searching museums, catalogues, and private collections. This led to the Egyptian mint did not issue any gold coins of Sultan Sulaymān I dated 927 A.H and 928 A.H., in addition to 929 A.H. in which Ahmed Paşa al-Krchī was appointed to rule Egypt. Thus, it can be concluded that the coins struck since 930 A.H. represent the new coins issued after getting rid of Ahmed Paşa al-Krchī’s coins with the aim of restoring confidence in the Ottoman gold coins after removing the statements inscribed by Ahmed Paşa of Long Live Sultan Ahmed’s Power.

The New Coins Struck by Sultan Sulaymān I

One of the most important results of Ahmed Paşa al-Krchī’s revolution was the struck of new types of gold coins of Sultan Sulaymān I with the inscription of the struck date instead of the date of crowning the Sultan to the throne since 930 A.H. until 933 A.H. This is considered a very important alteration, in giving up the struck of the date of crowning the Sultan to the throne on coins for the aim of getting rid of Ahmed Paşa al-Krchī’s coins, as follows.

1- The First Type of Gold Coins Struck in Egypt in 930 A.H.

This type can be witnessed in two coins preserved in the Egyptian National Library and Archives, in which the inscriptions and decorations of this type were as follows (pls. nos.3/4):

This type was distinguished in terms of the general form as the inscriptions on the obverse and reverse were in horizontal lines inside a prominent lined circle. On the observe, the names of Sultan Suleiman and his father Sultan Selîm were inscribed given the title Shah, along with the actual date of striking in 930 A.H, in addition to the location of striking in

33 Ahmed, Qunûn nama Miṣr, p.92; Shawkat, al-Tarīkhal-malī, pp. 80-81; Shaw, The Financial and Administrative, p. 367.
34 Ibn Iyas, Bdaʾʿal-zhur, p. 354
35 Samuel, Al-nqud wa Al-mawazayn, pp. 161-162.
37 Record No. 3524, 3.2 g 19.5 mm , record No. 3525, 3.5g , 20 mm.
38 Raafat, Al-Nuqud al-ʾIslāmiyya ft Miṣr, p.240.
Egypt that was usually preceded by the preposition (in). On the reverse, the old Ottoman inscription was added stating the succulent minter the glorious and victorious in the land and seas. William also published three coins belonging to this type.

2- The Second Type of Gold Coins Struck in Egypt in 931 A.H.

This type can be witnessed in a coin preserved among a private collection in the United Arab Emirates in which the inscriptions and decorations of this type were as follows (pl. no.5)

3- The Third Type of Gold Coins Struck in Egypt in 932 A.H.

This type can be witnessed in a coin preserved in the Egyptian National Library and Archives published for the first time, and Artuk published another coin belonging to the same type, in which the inscriptions and decorations of this type were as follows (pl. no.6)

4- The Fourth Type of Gold Coins Struck in Egypt in 933 A.H.

This type can be witnessed in a coin preserved among a private collection in which the inscriptions and decorations of this type were as follows (pl. no.7)

3- Reforming Silver Coins

Sultan Sulaymân I started reforming silver coinage by the beginning of his rule in 926 A.H./1520 A.D., due to the major decrease in weight and standard. Sulaymân I determined that coinage would be minted in Egypt mint from Ottoman alloy or from silver topical alloy in which each hundred dirham of it equals eighty four dirham of pure silver and sixteen fake silver, deducting what the fire burns, and for each hundred dirham 250 para are minted.

39 Al-Ṣāwī, Al-Nuqud al-Mutadawala, p.25.
41 United Arab Emirates, Private Collection, 2.9g , 20mm.
42 Record No. 3526, 2.6g , 19.5 mm.
43 Artuk, Istanbul Arkeoloji, No. 155.
44 Private Collection, 3.3g, 20mm.
46 Ahmed, Qanūn nama; Miṣr, p. 92.
This procedure depends on the Ottoman State’s responsibility to provide the silver raw material from Anatolia and Balkan mines to be sent to Egypt in order for Egypt mint to struck Aqcha. The single bāra contained 1.075 gm. of pure silver, which is almost 50% more than that what the contemporary aqcha contained.

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Pl. no. 1: Dinar struck in Egypt in 926 A.H. with the name of Sultan Sulaymān I, preserved in Egyptian National Library and Archives No. 3518, 2.5 g 19 mm.

Pl. no. 2: Dinar struck in Egypt in 926 A.H. with the name of Sultan Sulaymān I, preserved in Egyptian National Library and Archives No. 3521, 3.4 g, 20 mm.

Pl. no. 3: Dinar struck in Egypt in 930 A.H. with the name of Sultan Sulaymān I, preserved in Egyptian National Library and Archives No. 3524, 3.2 g 19.5 mm.

Pl. no. 4: Dinar struck in Egypt in 930 A.H. with the name of Sultan Sulaymān I, preserved in Egyptian National Library and Archives No. 3525, 3.5 g, 20 mm.

Pl. no. 5: Dinar struck in Egypt in 931 A.H. with the name of Sultan Sulaymān I, preserved in United Arab Emirates (private collection), 2.9 g, 20 mm.

Pl. no. 6: Dinar struck in Egypt in 932 A.H. with the name of Sultan Sulaymān I, preserved in Egyptian National Library and Archives No. 3526, 2.6 g, 19.5 mm.

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47 Shawkat, *Al-Turīkhal-mali*, p. 82-83.
CONCLUSION

The Paper confirmed that Sultan Sulaymân I ibn Selîm I solely had the right to appoint the mint secretary. It also established that Sultan Sulaymân I Issued a decree banning and forbidding the accountants transfer through the cities to buy gold from anyone to preserve it. The Study revealed that Sultan Sulaymân I was keen on striking gold coins in the same year when Ahmed Paşa Al-Krchi’s coins were banned in 930 A.H. The Research shed light on new types of gold coins of Sultan Sulaymân I which emerged with the inscription of the date of issuance form 930 A.H. until 933 A.H.
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