In 1975, Ariel Berman published a short article concerning the earliest Ottoman coinage of Egypt, based on a few specimens he had been able to purchase locally in Jerusalem and one or two others seen in private collections. Coinage from this brief period of early Ottoman rule in Egypt had received little notice from numismatists and historians in the past and neither has much further study been done up to the present day. Berman is the first person of whom I am aware who actually looked at the coins in comparison with textual sources concerning conditions in the first decade after the Ottoman conquest.

Prior to the coming of Sultan Selim I to Egypt, the Mamlūk bureaucracy administered a coinage consisting of gold sulṭānis, silver half dirhams and copper fulūs. The gold coins weighed about 3.2-3.4 grams, the half-dirhams ranged in weight from about 1 to 1.2 grams, whereas the copper coins by the early 10th/16th century were not of any set weight, but rather are known in a wide range of weights.

The Ottoman advance was rapid and at the battle of Marj Dābiq in Syria on 25 Rajab 922/24 August 1516, they handed defeat to the Mamlūks. Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī died on the battlefield and was succeeded by al-Ashraf Ṭūmānbāy. Selim continued his advance into Egypt and again defeated the Mamlūk forces at Raydānīya on 29 Dhū al-Ḥijja/23 January 1517. Ṭūmānbāy

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was captured and hung from one of the city gates. The five-month rule of this last Mamlūk sultan, with the ensuing chaos and dread of the Ottoman advance, allowed little time or resources to be put into the coinage and there is little wonder that Ṭūmānbāy’s issues are hardly known.

I. Mamlūk, Ṭūmānbāy, gold ashrafi, al-Qāhirah 922 H. SICA6:1583 (20 mm, 3.24 g)², Balog 904³. This coin from the Ashmoelan collection was illustrated by Balog as his number 904a on Plate 41. Balog recorded only nine specimens and two were in his own collection: ANS 1956.1131.1⁴ (18 mm, 3.35 g); Balog (20 mm, 3.30 g; 17 mm, 3.20 g); NLC⁵ 3120 (19 mm, 3.39 g), 3121 (14 mm, 3.38 g, mint and date missing); Lavoix⁶ 1141 (18 mm, 3.25 g). Balog knew of no silver or copper coinage for this ruler (ill. no. 1). All lines on both sides are divided by cables flowing to the left.

The earliest Ottoman gold coinage dates from late in the reign of Mehmed II, the sulṭānī having been struck in the Istanbul (Ḳusṭanṭīniyya) mint bearing the years 882, 883 and 885 AH. Mehmed’s successor, Bayezid II issued coins struck in both Ḳusṭanṭīniyya and Serez, but only dated with his accessional year of 886 AH. Selim I had gold struck in numerous mints, including Miṣr (Cairo) after the conquest of Egypt, which brought the Ottoman régime abundant supplies of the metal. The Egyptian emissions were produced in two

parallel series, one modeled in the style of the former Mamlūk dinars and the other in that of other Ottoman mints⁷.

II. Ottoman, Selim I, gold, sultanī, Miṣr 923 H. NLC 3479 (19 mm, 3.30 g) (ill. no. 2). The lines of text on the obverse are divided by single lines, whereas those on the reverse are divided by cables flowing to the left. There is a six-pointed star in the north of Xān on the obverse and a Seal of Solomon in the middle line of the reverse.

III. Ottoman, Selim I, gold sultanī, Miṣr 924 H. NLC 3482 (19 mm, 3.35 g) (ill. no. 3). The upper line on the obverse is divided from the lower inscriptions by a line having a small knot in the middle. The other ornaments on both sides are found on the previous coin. The reverse inscriptions are divided by cables flowing to the left.

IV. Ottoman, Selim I, gold sultanī, Miṣr 924 H. NLC 3483 (20 mm, 3.34 g) (ill. no. 4). The upper line on the obverse is divided from the lower inscriptions by a single line. Ornaments and cables are as found on the previous two coins.

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V. Ottoman, Selim I, gold šultānī, Miṣr 924 H. (Peus 392:4788, 3.36 g)\(^8\) (ill. no. 5). The upper line on the obverse is divided from the lower inscriptions by a line having a small knot in the middle shaped like an inverted heart. The lower line on the reverse is divided from the upper inscriptions by a line with a small knot in the middle, which is the extension of the tail of the ی at the end of the second line.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{سultan}\text{ سليم خان} \\
\text{ابن بابا زيادة خان نصره} \\
\text{حضر كنسر ب سنة 924} \\
\text{رب النضرية} \\
\text{صاحب العز و النصر} \\
\text{البر و البحر}
\end{align*}
\]

There is no apparent difference between the two series. Both are about the same size and the weights range mostly between 3.3 and 3.4 grams. It is possible that two groups of die engravers were working side by side in the Cairo mint. Some of them were probably continuing in that capacity from the former Mamlūk administration, while others were brought by the Ottoman conqueror from either Istanbul or one of the provincial mints. The Mamlūk style sulṭānī was struck only in 923 and 924 H, whereas the Ottoman style coins were issued under Selim I in each year after the conquest (923-926 H)\(^9\).

As stated above, Balog was not aware of any existing silver or copper coins issued under Ṭūmānbāy’s short tenure. A number of years ago, the owner of a hoard of silver coins made it available to me for study with the proviso that I not publish it for some time. That constraint has lapsed and I am now able to include some of the data from the hoard in the present work. The hoard which was found in the Yemen, consisted of 430 silver coins dating from the end of the Mamlūk sultanate and the beginnings of Ottoman rule in Egypt and Syria. The coins were mostly the product of the Cairo and Damascus mints, with one specimen from Aleppo. Among the Mamlūk issues were four coins of al-Ashraf Ṭūmānbāy struck in Cairo (see hoard listed below, numbers 36-39).

The earliest Egyptian silver issues of Selim I, while scarce, are known in some small numbers. Berman listed thirteen specimens in the above-mentioned article, while Ȫlçer published a further nine from various sources in his 1989 catalog of Selim’s coinage. Rather than introduce the Ottoman akçe, which weighed about 0.7 grams and used in most other parts of the

\(^8\) Dr. Busso Peus Nachfolger (Frankfurt am Main), Auction 392, 4 May 2007, Lot 4788.
empire, Selim continued the Mamlūk dirham, although at a reduced weight of about 0.9-0.95 grams, to the end of his reign. This caused no small amount of problems for the populace when the it came time for the Ottoman provincial government to collect taxes, as shall be discussed below (see hoard, numbers 43-51).

The problem of the taxes is ably detailed by Stanford Shaw in his book on the administration of Egypt under the Ottomans\textsuperscript{10}. Prior to the Ottoman conquest, taxes paid in coin were assessed at four or five dirhams per feddān, depending on a given piece of land’s fertility. The silver half dirhams were reckoned as 25 to the gold ashrafī. The lower weight of the silver maydin issued under Selim I was a decrease of about 20 percent and effectively raised the silver to gold coin ratio to 30 maydins to one sultānī. Beginning with the reign of Suleyman I in 926 H., new silver paras were issued weighing only about 0.7 grams with the same value as the contemporary akçes struck in the rest of the empire. The ratio eventually rose to 50 of the old half dirhams to the sultānī or 90 of the new paras. The crux of the problem was one of bureaucratic manipulation: the taxes were levied on the basis of the new paras, but were usually paid in the older Mamlūk half dirhams as they were much more common than the new coins. The tax collectors demanded payment at the official rate of one Mamlūk half dirham for each two and a quarter of paras tax in the newly issued paras. The tax burden became so onerous that many people fled from the countryside to the cities and large areas of land fell out of cultivation. Trade and commerce were threatened and the uprising was not abated until a new governor arrived in 931 H who abolished the newer taxes and reverted to the basic tax of four or five paras per feddān.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RULER</th>
<th>GOLD COINAGE</th>
<th>SILVER COINAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late Mamlūk</td>
<td>1 <em>ashrafī</em></td>
<td>= 25 half dirhams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qanṣūh al-Ghūrī (906-922 AH)</td>
<td>7 specimens average weight 3.327 g</td>
<td>10 specimens average weight 1.096 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ṭūmāmbāy (922 AH)</td>
<td>7 specimens average weight 3.327 g</td>
<td>7 specimens average weight 0.967 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Ottoman Egypt</td>
<td>1 <em>sulṭānī</em></td>
<td>= 30 maydins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selim I (918-926 AH)</td>
<td>Mamlūk style (923-24 AH) 7 specimens average weight 3.327 g</td>
<td>Ottoman style (923-26 AH) 31 specimens average weight 0.095 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ottoman style (923-26 AH) 21 specimens average weight 3.336 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table summarizes the several exchange rates between gold and silver coinage from the Mamlūk into the early Ottoman period in Egypt.

**THE LATE MAMLŪK–OTTOMAN SILVER HOARD**

The hoard of 430 small silver coins discovered in the Yemen provides some insight into the state of currency circulating in the recently conquered provinces of Egypt and Syria during the first years of Ottoman rule.

**Mamlūk: al-Ashraf Qanṣūh al-Ghūrī (906-922 AH)**

1. (al-Qāhira) 912, type as Balog 887, but with (۴۱) bottom reverse, 15 mm, 1.035 g;
2. (al-Qāhira) 914, type as Balog 887, but with (۴۱) bottom reverse, 15 mm, 1.104 g; 14 mm, 1.115 g;
3. (al-Qāhira) 915, type as Balog 887, but with (۴۱) bottom reverse, 16 mm, 1.057 g; 13.5 mm, 1.14 g;
4. (al-Qāhira) 916, type as Balog 887, but with (۴۱) bottom reverse, 14 mm, 1.138 g;
5. (al-Qāhira) 917, type as Balog 887, but with (۴۱) bottom reverse, 16 mm, 1.092 g;
6. (al-Qāhira) 919, type as Balog 887, but with (۴۱) bottom reverse, 16 mm, 1.104 g;
7. (al-Qāhira) 91x, type as Balog 887, but with ۱۹ – bottom reverse, 15 mm, 1.102 g;
8. al-Qāhira, date illegible or off flan, type Balog 887, 8 specimens, 14-17 mm, average weight 1.091 g;
9. (al-Qāhira), date illegible or off flan, type Balog 887, 34 specimens, 13-18 mm, average weight of ten, 1.001 g;
10. (al-Qāhira?), 913, similar to Balog 887, but upper and lower dividers on both sides are straight lines, with date ۱۹۱۳, 15mm, 0.929 g (ill. no. 6);
11. al-Qāhira, date illegible, but as previous, 16 mm, 0.943 g;
12. (al-Qāhira?), 913, similar to Balog 887, but all dividers on both sides are straight lines, with date ۱۹۱۳, thick flan, 12 mm, 1.128 g;
13. (al-Qāhira?), date illegible or off flan, as previous, one with thin, oblong flan, 9.5x16.5mm, 0.87g; two round and thick flan, 12.5mm, 1.073g; 12.5mm, 0.962g;
14. al-Qāhira, 919, similar to Balog 887, but only reverse has straight line dividers, with date ۱۹۱۹, 16.5mm, 1.155g (ill. no. 7);
15. (al-Qāhira), date off flan, but as previous, 13mm, 0.944g;
16. (al-Qāhira?), date off flan, similar to Balog 887, but all dividers on both sides are rows of pellets, 14 mm, 1.157 g;
17. (al-Qāhira), (91)7, similar to Balog 887, but central divider on both sides is a line of pellets between two straight lines, with date (۱۹)۱۷ bottom reverse, 15 mm, 0.974 g;
18. (al-Qāhira), 919, as previous, but date ۱۹۱۹ at bottom reverse, 15mm, 0.965 g (ill. no. 8);
19. (al-Qāhira), 919 (?), as previous, but date is questionable, 16 mm, 0.964g; 16.5 mm, 1.087 g;
20. al-Qāhira, date illegible or off flan, but as no. 17, ten specimens, 14-16.5 mm, average weight 0.961 g (ill. no. 9);
21. (al-Qāhira), date illegible or off flan, as no. 17, 140 specimens, 12-17.5 mm, average weight of ten, 0.985 g;
22. al-Qāhira, date illegible or off flan, as Balog 888, but with mintname visible, 13 mm, 1.158 g; 13.5 mm, 1.12 g; 13.5 mm, 1.123 g;
23. (al-Qāhira), date illegible or off flan, Balog 888, seven specimens, 12.5-14 mm, average weight 1.13 g;
24. Without visible mint or date, obverse as Balog 889, reverse similar to Balog 887, but straight line dividers, mostly oblong flans, nine specimens, 14-16 mm, average weight 0.98 g (ill. no. 10);
25. (Dimashq?), no date visible, obverse as Balog 889, reverse similar to Balog 887, but heart knot in cable divider above of رسول، mostly oblong flans, ten specimens, 15.5-16 mm, average weight 0.981 g (ill. no. 11);
26. Dimashq, 916, obverse similar to Balog 887, but straight line dividers, reverse: مسجد بدمشق / سنة ٩٢٦ and margin as Balog 889, all oblong flans, four specimens, 15-17 mm, average weight 0.925 g;
27. Dimashq, 918, as no. 26, but with ٩١٨ on reverse, all oblong flans, 25 specimens, 14-17 mm, average weight 0.982 g (ill. no. 12)
28. Dimashq, 919, as previous but with ٩١٩ on reverse, all oblong flans, 11 specimens, 15.5-16.5 mm, average weight 0.915 g;
29. Dimashq, 91x, as previous, but with ٩١٠ on reverse, all oblong flans, four specimens, 15-18 mm, average weight 1.008 g;
30. Dimashq, 921, as no. 26 but with ٩٢١ (sic) on reverse, all oblong flans, three specimens, 15 mm, 0.96g; 15 mm, 0.959 g; 17 mm, 0.928 g (ill. no. 13);
31. Dimashq, date illegible or off flan, as no. 26, all oblong flans, 14 specimens, 15-17 mm, average weight 0.949 g;
32. Dimashq, without date, Balog 889, 62 specimens, all oblong flans, one holed, 14-17 mm, average weight of ten, 1.109 g;
33. Dimashq, without date, Balog 890, 11 specimens, all oblong flans, one holed, 15-17 mm, average weight of ten, 1.197 g;
34. No mint or date visible, Balog 892, all round flans, 17 specimens, 11-15 mm, average weight 1.18 g;
35. No mint or date visible, Balog 892A, somewhat oblong flan, 16 mm, 1.151 g.

Mamlûk: al-Ashraf Tûmâbây (922 AH)
36. al-Qâhira, (922), 16mm, 0.99g (ill. no. 14)
 (cables to left)
    ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- 
  ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- 
  ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- 
   ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- ﷺ- 

37. (al-Qâhira), 922, 14.5mm, 0.953g (ill. no. 15)
38. (al-Qāhira), 9 (22), 17 mm, 0.935 g

39. (al-Qāhira, 922), 15 mm, 0.929 g; 16 mm, 1.031 g; 15.5 mm, 0.98 g.
Similar to previous but mint and date completely off flan.

**Ottoman:** Selim I (918-926 AH)

40. Dimashq, 923, Ölçer 9400, 15.5 mm, 0.915 g;
41. Dimashq, (923?), type Ölçer 9400, 15.5 mm, 0.922 g;
42. Ḥalab, 9(22), cf. Ölçer 9470, 16 mm, 0.867 g;
43. Miṣr, date off flan, Ölçer 9641, six specimens, 13-14.5 mm, average weight 0.885 g;
44. (Miṣr, 923), as Ölçer 9644, 14 mm, 0.90 g;
45. (Miṣr, 923), similar to Ölçer 9645, 14.5 mm, 0.933 g;
46. Miṣr, 923, Ölçer 9647, ten specimens, 14-17.5 mm, average weight 0.914 g (ill. no. 16);
47. (Miṣr, 923), as Ölçer 9647, 14 mm, 0.861 g;
48. “Miṣr, 923”, silver-washed copper, contemporary counterfeit, 14 mm, 0.739 g;
49. (Miṣr), 924, Ölçer 9649, 15 mm, 0.968 g;
50. (Miṣr), 924, as previous, but cable to left across lower obverse, 15.5 mm, 0.89 g; 15.5 mm, 0.888 g (ill. no. 17);

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11 CÜNEYT ÖLÇER, Sultan Yavuz Selim Şah bin Bayazid Han Dönemi Osmanlı Sikkeleri 918-926 AH/1512-1520 AD, İstanbul, Yenilik Basımevi, 1989.
51. (Miṣr), date off flan or illegible, similar to Ölçer 9647, but cable divider across lower obverse, 14 mm, 0.844 g; 14 mm, 1.118 g;
52. Unidentifiable, either Mamlūk or Ottoman silver coin, 12.5mm, 1.13 g.

The following table summarizes the contents of the hoard based on the issuing authority and mint.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DYNASTY</th>
<th>RULER</th>
<th>CAIRO</th>
<th>DAMASCUS</th>
<th>ALEPPO</th>
<th>MINT?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mamlūk</td>
<td>Qaṣṣūh al-Ghūrī (906-922 AH)</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tūmānbāy (922 AH)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottoman</td>
<td>Selim I (918-926 AH)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Late Mamluk - Early Ottoman Transitional Coinage of Egypt