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**FRENCH AND SPANISH COINS (17TH–18TH
CENTURIES AD) FROM THE COLLECTION
OF THE MUSEUM OF HISTORY IN
PROVADIA**

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ФРЕНСКИ И ИСПАНСКИ МОНЕТИ
(XVII-XVIII В. СЛ. ХР.) ОТ КОЛЕКЦИЯТА НА
ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЯ МУЗЕЙ – ПРОВАДИЯ

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French and Spanish Coins (17th–18th Centuries AD) from the Collection of the Museum of History in Provadia

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Френски и испански монети (XVII–XVIII в. сл. Хр.) от колекцията на Историческия музей – Провадия

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Abstract: During the Ottoman period, Provadia became a major trade and economic centre, where the largest colony of Dubrovnik in North-east Bulgaria was located. From here, the Dubrovnik merchants carried out their trade (regional and international). For a period Provadia was one of the European mints of the Ottoman Empire, which clearly speaks for the significant role of the city. This fact is also supported by the source material from that period, where one of the most frequently mentioned kazas is those of Provadia. Various coins were circulating on the market in this significant Ottoman city. In addition to domestic – Ottoman emissions, there were foreign – European ones. The purpose of this study is to present the main types of European coins that were in circulation in the kaza of Provadia in the 16–18 centuries including eight French issues mostly of Louis XIV (1643–1715), nine Spanish coins of Philip V (1700–1746).

Keywords: European Coins, 17th–18th century, French Mints, Spanish Mints, Ottoman Provadia kaza



In several other studies, the authors of this article have published various European coin issues kept in the collection of the Museum of History in Provadia. As a continuation of this activity, we will present the French and Spanish specimens, thus enriching the understanding of the coin circulation in the Provadia geographical area during the Ottoman period.

There are a total of eight French issues, all of them of the small denomination of 1/12 écu. Six specimens are coins of Louis XIV (1643–1715). They are distributed as follows: one piece struck in 1659 at the Limoges mint; three pieces, one struck in 1659 and two in 1663 at the Lyons mint; one piece struck at the Grenoble mint; and one piece struck in 1661, with no visible mintmark to appear on either side.

In recent years, there has been a debate among Bulgarian historiographers about 1/12 écu coins of the French kings Louis XIII (1610–1643) and Louis XIV. K. Krastev has proposed an interesting interpretation of these issues. In the author's opinion, they can be considered as imitations of the Polish *troyaks*. In his works, he questioned the secondary use of pierced coins as jewellery, as they had holes in a variety of locations, thus losing symmetry. They included the head of Jesus Christ and the Christian cross, and, according to the researcher, that such decoration would have been worn by Christian, let alone Muslim, women was out of the question. (Кръстев 2015, 59-60) Such an assumption that poor Christian women or ordinary peasants (including Muslim women) would have worn pierced coins of 1/12 écu due to the inability to afford more expensive jewellery has already been made by other researchers (Pamuk 1997, 349; Hasluck 1921, 56; Пенчев 2014, 136). The piercing of coins and their subsequent use as jewellery is a tradition that has been known for centuries. In our opinion, this is the most probable reason for 1/12 écu coins to have been pierced, but it is hard to say who exactly wore them. One of the plausible explanations is that a large part of the population of the Ottoman Empire might have worn them, and it can be assumed that these people were representatives of the lower class; certainly, it included Christian and Muslim women, which was also mentioned by the Englishman Edward Braun, who passed through the Bulgarian lands in 1669 (Тодорова 1987, 184).

Krastev's opinion that the coins of 1/12 écu (10 sols) were an imitation of the Polish *troyaks* is not shared by N. Markov. The monetary reform of Louis XIII in 1641 marked the beginning of the official coinage of these issues and, according to the author, such an imitation at the time was out of the question. Markov wrote: "If we could trust Kr. Krastev's words, the French King Louis XIII didn't know that his edict marked the beginning of the imitation of Polish *troyaks*, nor did he realise that he was minting coins worth 10 sols instead of five sols." (Марков 2017, 259). And in note 2 on p. 58 we can read that this statement cannot be accepted because of the following circumstance: "... and because of the difference between the weight and the purity of the metal of five-sol coins and the Polish ones, the so-called *troyaks*. While the five-sol coins had a standard weight of 2.26 g and a metal purity of 91.66%, the weight of the Polish coins was 2.44 g and the purity of the metal was 84.4%" (Марков 2017, 258). Later on, K. Krastev recalculated the content of silver in the coins and found out that it was almost the same in both coin issues – those of 1/12 écu contained 2.07 g of pure silver, and the three-groschen coins contained 2.06 g (Кръстев 2019, 187). It is not our intention to enter into polemics on this matter. However, we can't help but mention that in the documents from the period one can find an issue of five sols, and as mentioned by K. Krastev, in the Krause Publications catalogues, the official coins of Louis XIV are marked as 10 sols (Кръстев 2019, 187). Due to the uncertainty as to which is the most correct denomination, in our humble opinion it is more acceptable to use 1/12 écu to denote this coin.

The French coins of 1/12 écu, as well as a significant amount of their imitations and counterfeits, were used for trade with the Levant, and their high number in circulation in the Ottoman Empire is evidenced by the coin finds from the Bulgarian lands (Герасимов 1964, 212-213; Григорова 1973, 16-17; Томова 2017, 288; Пенчев 2014, № 176-217 и др.). They were known in these places under the names "*luigini*" and "*timuni*" (Пенчев 2014, 136). In parallel with the official coins minted during the reign of Louis XIV, a number of French feudal estates began to mint similar coin issues. Two such coins are kept in the collection of the Museum of History in the town of Provadia – a specimen of the Principality of Orange, minted in 1660 during the reign

of William Henry of Nassau (1650–1702), and another one of the Principality of Dombes minted in 1668 during the reign of Anne Marie Loise de Orleanse (1650–1693). Coins of these principalities, though less frequently, have been discovered in Bulgarian lands (Карайотов et al. 2000, 80–81; Кръстев 2015, 60; Пенчев 2014, № 222–227).

During this period, the above-mentioned coin issues became so popular in the Ottoman state that they even displaced the local akche. Most of the coins kept in the Museum of History in Provadia are not in good condition, which is most likely due to the low density of silver and their long-term circulation. Some of the specimens have inscription errors as well as significant deviations in weight (**Cat. № 1, 5, 6, 7, 8**). It seems that these coin issues are imitations.¹

There are nine Spanish coins kept in the collection of the Museum of History in Provadia. All of them are of one and the same denomination – two reales, minted by Philip V (1700–1746). In the article, we will pay attention to eight of them.² They are distributed as follows: two pieces, struck in 1725 at Madrid mint; three pieces, struck in 1717, 1718, and 1721 at the Segovia mint; and three pieces, one of them struck in 1721 and the other two in 1725 at the Seville mint.

Philip V is one of the longest-reigning monarchs in Spanish history. He was the first representative of the Bourbon dynasty to sit on the Spanish throne and to replace the previous Habsburg dynasty. This act met the disapproval of many European monarchs and provoked the War of the Spanish Succession, which lasted for 13 years. It ended with the signing of the Union of Utrecht. As a result, Spain lost all of its European possessions outside of the Iberian Peninsula. Philip V was able to get out of the difficult situation, and by the end of his reign managed to carry out a number of reforms and regain control of southern Italy and the island of Sicily. In 1724, the monarch abdicated in favour of his son, Louis, who was officially proclaimed King of Spain on the 9th of February. Louis' reign was very short – he contracted smallpox and died on August 31st. Under these tragic circumstances, Philip had to ascend the throne once more. That is why nowadays, one can come across coins struck in 1724 bearing the portrait and inscriptions of both rulers. The reign of Philip V is also associated with the economic stability of Spain, and one of the main tasks of the authorities was to check for counterfeit coins in circulation.³ One such counterfeit coin is also kept in the Museum in Provadia. The coin is a fourrée with a copper core and plated in silver (**Cat. № 13**). Similar specimens have been registered in earlier Spanish issues found in the Bulgarian lands (Томова 2017, 288).

In most of the mints, Philip V's coins are characterised by inscribing a letter, which represents the city where they were minted. The image of the Segovia mint is of great interest. The depiction of the Aqueduct mintmark comes in two variations (Kays, VA 2001, 2187) Both types are present among the coins from the Museum in Provadia.

Six of the Spanish coins were donated by the same person, Stanyu Marinov.⁴ All of them are pierced, which makes us think that they may have been together on the same string jewellery.

In total, there are 17 French and Spanish specimens (17th–18th centuries AD) in the collection of the Museum of History in Provadia.⁵ This is a small amount to give a general idea of the circulation of these coins in the region. However, some conclusions can still be drawn. The most numerous issues from the French specimens are those of Louis XIV, a fact also confirmed by the finds in the Bulgarian lands, also including the Provadia region. The Spanish issues of Philip V show that the coins of this ruler had their place among the foreign issues in circulation in the Ottoman state during the first half of the 18th century. In the future, we hope that new European specimens from the Provadia region will be discovered to increase the sample size and enrich

¹ A number of the other French coins might be considered imitations as well.

² Not included here is the specimen of Philip V minted in Segovia in 1723, which comes from the coin hoard discovered in 1966 in the Bozluka locality, near the village of Nevsha, see Лазаров 1990.

³ For more detailed information on the reign of Philip V and his reforms, see Kamen 2001.

⁴ One of the French specimens was also donated by Stanyu Marinov, but it is not pierced.

⁵ The old inventory number is written on a white or yellow ink with a black marker on the obverse or reverse of 12 coins, which undoubtedly has a negative effect on them and sometimes makes the coin identification more difficult.

the coin issues which were in circulation in the Provadia kaza during the Ottoman period.

CATALOGUE

French Coins

Louis XIV (1643–1715)

1/12 écu

1659

Limoges Mint

Obv. LVD•XIII•D•G - FR•ET•NAV•REX Laureate, draped, cuirassed infantine bust of Louis XIV right, star above.

Rev. SIT•NOMEN•DOMINI•BENEDICTVM•1659•Crowned shield of France, dot above, I below. (KM# 166.9)

1. AR, 20,5 mm, 2.29 g, Inv. № 146. The coin is scratched, Submitted by Ivan Kometov – Provadia.



Fig. 1. 1/12 écu of Louis XIV (1643–1715) struck in 1659 at Limoges Mint (author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).

Lyons Mint

Obv. LVD•XIII•D•G - FR•ET•NAV•REX Laureate, draped, cuirassed infantine bust of Louis XIV right, star above.

Rev. SIT•NOMEN•DOMINI•BENEDICTVM•1659•Crowned shield of France, D below. (KM# 166.4)

2. AR, 20-21 mm, 2.16 g, Inv. № 150. Submitted by Stanyu Marinov – Provadia.



Fig. 2. 1/12 écu of Louis XIV (1643–1715) struck in 1659 at Lyons Mint (author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).

Obv. LVD•XIII•D•G - FR•ET•NAV•REX Laureate, draped, cuirassed juvenile bust of Louis XIV right, star above.

Rev. SIT•NOMEN•DOMINI•BENEDICTVM•1663• Crowned shield of France, I above, D below. (KM# 199.3)

3. AR, 20.5 mm, 2.19 g, Inv. № 147. Submitted by Second school – Provadia.



Fig. 3. 1/12 écu of Louis XIV (1643–1715) struck in 1663 at Lyons Mint (author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).

Obv. LVD•XIII•D•G - FR•ET•NAV•REX Laureate, draped, cuirassed juvenile bust of Louis XIV right, star above.

Rev. SIT•NOMEN•DOMINI•BENEDICTVM•1663• Crowned shield of France, rose above, D below. (KM# 199.3)

4. AR, 20.5-21 mm, 2.21 g, Inv. № 148. Submitted by Stefan Apostolov – Provadia.



Fig. 4. 1/12 écu of Louis XIV (1643–1715) struck in 1663 at Lyons Mint (author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).

Grenoble Mint

Obv. LVD•XIII•D•G - FR•ET•NAV•REX Laureate, draped, cuirassed juvenile bust of Louis XIV right.

Rev. SIT•NOMEN•DOMINI•BENEDICTVM•166[?] Crowned shield divided into four fields. There are three lilies in two of them and two dolphins in the other two, Z below. (KM# 210)

5. AR, 23 mm, 1.63 g, Inv. № 151. Submitted by Venko Apostolov, Second school – Provadia



Fig. 5. 1/12 écu of Louis XIV (1643–1715) struck at Grenoble Mint (author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).

No Visible Mintmark

Obv. LVD•XIII•D•G - FR•ET•NAV•REX Laureate, draped, cuirassed juvenile bust of Louis XIV right.**Rev.** SIT•NOMEN•DOMINI•BENEDICTVM•1661• Crowned shield of France.

6. AR, 20 mm, 2.9 g, Inv. № 141. Submitted in by Ivanka Boneva, Second school – Provadia

**Fig. 6.** 1/12 écu of Louis XIV (1643–1715) struck in 1661 (author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).**Principality of Orange****William Henry of Nassau (1650–1702)**

1/12 écu

1660

Obv. GVIL•HNR•DG PRI NAV A bare headed and draped bust of William Henry right.**Rev.** ...I•DEO•ONOR•ET•GLO. 1660 Crowned shield, three lilies. (KM# 115)

7. AR, 20 mm, 1.95 g, Inv. № 135. Handed in by Dimitar Ivanov. The coin is pierced.

**Fig. 7.** 1/12 écu of the Principality of Orange minted in 1660 during the reign of William Henry of Nassau (1650–1702) (author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).**Principality of Dombes****Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans (1650–1693)**

1/12 écu

1668

Obv. AN MA [LO]V•DE•BOVRBON Bust of Anne Marie Louise right.**Rev.** PRINC+SOVV A•DE+DOMBES Crowned shield with three lilies, dividing the date 1668. (KM# 41)

8. AR, 20 mm, 1.425 g, Inv. № 152. The coin is pierced. It was found during excavation work while constructing the house of G. Lambov, 1971.



Fig. 8. 1/12 écu of the Principality of Dombes minted in 1668 during the reign of Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans (1650–1693) (author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).

Spanish Coins

Philip V (1700–1746)

2 reales

Madrid

Obv. PHILIPPVS+V+D+G+ In the centre – crowned arms. On both sides the denomination R II, below it on the left – the mintmark crowned M, on the right – the initial A.

Rev. 1725 +HISPANIARVM+REX+ In the centre – a cross with castles and lions in octolobe. (KM# 296)

9. AR, 28 mm, 5.20 g, Inv. № 136. The coin is pierced. The digit 5 in the inscription of the year on the reverse is upside down. Donated by I. Venkova Doikova.



Fig. 9. 2 reales of Philip V (1700–1746) struck in 1725 at Madrid Mint (author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).

Obv. PHILIPPVS+V+D+G+ In the centre – crowned arms. On both sides - the denomination R II, below it on the left – the mintmark crowned M, on the right – the initial A.

Rev. 1725 +HISPANIARVM+REX+ In the centre – cross with castles and lions in octolobe. (KM# 296)

10. AR, 27-28 mm, 4.87 g, Inv. № 140. The coin is pierced. Donated by Stanyu Marinov – Provadia.



Fig. 10. 2 reales of Philip V (1700–1746) struck in 1725 at Madrid Mint (author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).

Segovia

Obv. PHILIPPVS+V+D+G+ In the centre – crowned arms. On both sides – the denomination R II, below it on the left – aqueduct mintmark, on the right – the initials of the mintmaster J – Jose (Garcia) Caballero.

Rev. 1717 +HISPANIARVM+REX+ In the centre – a cross with castles and lions in octolobe. (KM# 297)

11. AR, 22 mm, 4.94 g, Inv. № 137. The coin is pierced. Donated by Stanyu Marinov – Provadia.



Fig. 11. 2 reales of Philip V (1700–1746) struck in 1717 at Segovia Mint (author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).

Obv. PHILIPPVS+V+D+G+ In the centre – crowned arms. On both sides – the denomination R II, below it on the left – aqueduct mintmark, on the right – the initials of mintmaster J – Jose (Garcia) Caballero.

Rev. 1718 +HISPANIARVM+REX+ In the centre – a cross with castles and lions in octolobe. (KM# 297)

12. AR, 26 mm, 5.09 g, Inv. № 143. The coin is pierced. Donated by Stanyu Marinov – Provadia.



Fig. 12. 2 reales of Philip V (1700–1746) struck in 1718 at Segovia Mint (author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).

Obv. PHILIPPVS+V+D+G+ In the centre – crowned arms. On both sides – the denomination R II, below it on the left – aqueduct mintmark.

Rev. 1722 +HISPANIARVM+REX+ In the centre – a cross with castles and lions in octolobe. (KM# 297)

13. AR, 27–28 mm, 5.36 g, Inv. № 142. The coin is pierced and highly oxidised, which is why some of the inscriptions and images cannot be read. Donated by Stoyanka Obretenova – Dalgopol.



Fig. 13. 2 reales of Philip V (1700–1746) struck in 1721 at Segovia Mint (author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).

Seville, Type I

Obv. PHILIPPVS+V+D+G+ In the centre – crowned arms. On both sides – the denomination R II, below it on the left – the mintmark S, on the right – the initials of the mintmaster J – Juan Jose Garcia Caballero.

Rev. 1721 +HISPANIARVM+REX+ In the centre – a cross with castles and lions in octolobe. (KM# 307)

14. AR, 27-28 mm, 5.24 g, Inv. № 139. The coin is pierced. Donated by Stanyu Marinov – Probadia.



Fig. 14. 2 reales of Philip V (1700–1746) struck in 1721 at Seville Mint (author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).

Obv. PHILIPPVS+V+D+G+ In the centre – crowned arms. On both sides – the denomination R II, below it on the left – the mintmark S, on the right – the initials of the mintmaster J – Juan Jose Garcia Caballero.

Rev. 1725 +HISPANIARVM+REX+ In the centre – a cross with castles and lions in octolobe. (KM# 307)

15. AR, 27.5 mm, 5.34 g, Inv. № 138. The coin is pierced. Donated by Stanyu Marinov – Probadia.



Fig. 15. 2 reales of Philip V (1700–1746) struck in 1725 at Seville Mint (author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).

Obv. PHILIPVS+V+D+G+ In the centre – crowned arms. On both sides – the denomination R II, below it on the left – the mintmark S, on the right – the initials of the mintmaster J – Juan Jose Garcia Caballero.

Rev. 1725 +HISPANIARVM+REX+ In the centre – a cross with castles and lions in octolobe. (KM# 307)

16. AR, 27.5 mm, 5.78 g, Inv. № 144. The coin is pierced. Donated by Stanyu Marinov – Probadia.



Fig. 16. 2 reales of Philip V (1700–1746) struck in 1725 at Seville Mint
(author: N. Mitev/D. Georgiev).

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