

Coins of Arab Kingdoms before Islam

(General characteristics and common features)

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The Arab Kingdoms have been striking coins since the mid-fifth century BCE. The Kingdom of Qataban, in the south of the Arabian Peninsula, was the first Arab Kingdom to strike coins, and its first coin dates back to the years 475-400 BCE. Then, the Kingdoms of Saba, Hadramout, Hamira, and Kinda followed in its steps.

The Nabatene Kingdom, in the north of the Arabian Peninsula, has been striking coins since the reign of King Harith II (120-96 BCE). Other Northern Kingdoms have also struck coins: the Kingdoms of Palmyra, Edessa, and Al Hadar. In the eastern Arabian Peninsula, where there was not a unified kingdom, coinage took place in the main cities, such as Omana (Aldor), Maliha, Thaj, Kinzan, Failaka and others. However, in the northern parts of the eastern Arabian Peninsula, the Kingdom of Maysan has been striking coins since the reign of King Hayspausnis (125-124 BCE).

This research aims at shedding light on the general characteristics and common features of the coins of the Arab Kingdoms before Islam, in terms of the effects of the foreign impact, their names, the role played by minting, the monetary values of coins and their circulation among the Kingdoms, the graphics, fonts, and symbols engraved on the coins, and the commercial laws and regulations of the Arab Kingdoms.