

The Byzantine Currency

Mahmoud Omran

For modern historians, the Byzantine currency term refers to the metal golden, silver, or copper Byzantine coins struck by the Byzantine Empire, that lasted for about one thousand-and-one-hundred-and-fifty years (305-1453 CE).

During that period, the Empire has minted several coins that had about eighteen names. Although none of these coins were called the Bezant, this is how the traders of other countries referred to the Byzantine currency throughout the Medieval Period.

In fact, the Crusade kingdom of Jerusalem has minted a golden coin named The Bezant in the city of Acre, dating back to the period of 1148-1165 CE. Moreover, the Kingdom of Cyprus has also issued a golden coin called The Bezant in the Middle Ages, dating back to the reign of King Henry II 1218-1253 CE. Thus, there should not be any confusion between the Byzantine currency that was called metaphorically, The Bezant, and the currency minted by the kingdom of Jerusalem and the Kingdom of Cyprus.

In a very important note, the Byzantine currency was one of the most reliable currencies for its pure metal. Also, it had many religious, civil and military inscriptions.