A Guide to the Bibliography of Yemeni Coinage

Michael L. Bates

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Yemeni coinage was formerly little known, with a literature consisting of a few scattered articles. There has been an explosion of interest and new discoveries in the last three decades. This is a very informal bibliography extracted from my notes, with important help from others. Additions, corrections, and comments are welcome and will be added to future editions. This list incorporates substantial material supplied by Jim Farr. Ed Hoehertz and Jorgen Somod also provided helpful suggestions. I am grateful to all of them.

general references

Michael Mitchiner, Oriental Coins and Their Values. London: Hawkins Publications, 1977-79. Each of these three massive volumes provides a pictorial representation of a huge sector of Eurasian coinage, making them convenient for coin identification. The author's original and stimulating synthetic historical-geographical organization is noteworthy.

   III. Non-Islamic States and Western Colonies, AD 600-1979 (1979).

ancient Yemen

This section incorporates material compiled by Roxani Margariti of Princeton University, ANS Hamad Fellow 1997-98.

- Mitchiner, Ancient and Classical, 95-96.

Aksum

It is a fairly safe bet that some of the coins of the Aksumites (and some of the imitations of their coins) were struck in Yemen. The question is, which ones? The Aksumite series is one of those very difficult ones in which the number of attributions for any given coin is approximately 1.5 times the number of specialists who have written about it.

- Mitchiner, Ancient and Classical, 96-100.

Islamic period general

- Stephen Album, A Checklist of Islamic Coins (2nd edition; Santa Rosa, CA: The Author, 1998), 55-61. "Until about 1980, medieval Yemeni coinage was seldom seen in the market. Since then, large quantities have emerged, large numbers of new types, few of which have been published... At first... Yemeni coins sold for far more than other Islamic coins of comparable rarity. Further increases in supply have depressed the market and eliminated much of this disparity." The Checklist only lists what is known, without descriptions, but includes a mass of commentary, often of the greatest utility. Illustrations have been postponed to a supplemental volume to follow.
- Ramzi J. Bikashi, "Coins of al-Yaman, 132-569 A.H.," al-Abhath (Beirut) 23 (1970), 1-127. The offprint, a substantial booklet, is often found as a separate publication. This was an excellent survey and critique of the existing literature. It is still useful today as a reference, although it has been superseded on many points.
third/ninth century: Abbassid governors
- Album, Checklist, 55.
- Ilișch, The Turath Collection, 36-37. Identifies the earliest Abbassid dinars of Yemen in their historical context.

fourth/tenth century: Rassid and Abbassid
- Album, Checklist, 56.
- David W. Sorenson, “The History of the Yemen in the Tenth Century,” in Medieval Coins XXXI (Alex G. Malloy Price List, 1995), 4-9: a large selection of suds or sudaysi 1/6 dirham coins, excellent listing of the varieties.

fifth/eleventh century; Fatimid and Sulayhid
- Album, Checklist, 56-57.
- Sihâm Muḥammad al-Mahdî, Dînâr Fāṭimî Nâdirî ḥurîba fi Zabîd ‘ân 447 h., al-Ma’arrîkh al-Mîsrî 2 (July 1988), 63-66. Since the texts say that Zabid was in Najahid Sunni control, she believes this coin struck in Egypt as a propaganda coin.

sixth/twelfth century: Isma‘ili, Najahid, Mahdîd, Ayyubid
- Album, Checklist, 57-58.

seventh/thirteenth century: Ayyubid, Zaydî, Rasulid
- Album, Checklist, 58-59.

Rasulids
- Album, Checklist, 58. With a brief introduction and comments.
- Mitchiner, World of Islam, 228.

Zaydî and Ottoman Yemen, general
- Album, Checklist, 58-60.
- Chester L. Krause and Clifford Mishler, Standard Catalogue of World Coins. Iola, WI: Krause Publications, annual editions. This is the reference for dealers and collectors. It gives a good overview of modern Yemeni coinage. It is now organized into century volumes, one each for the 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. The latter is updated annually to include new entries.
- Mitchiner, World of Islam, 229.


- Dick Nauta, “Ottoman Copper Coins Minted in San’a’, the Yemen: Part II: The thick, later coins,” ONS Newsletter 153 (Summer 1997), 6-12.


ninth/fifteenth century


ten/thirteenth century


eleventh/eleventh century


twelfth/eighteenth century


centenarian/centenarian

- Lachman, Samuel, “The Coins of the Zaidi Imams of the period 1224-1265H/1809-1849,” Spink’s Numismatic Circular 98 (1990), 1-7. coinage in Mocha, 1833: [in the coffee-houses] “They pay only three or four commassées [khumāsi] for their refreshments. This small coin, and cowries, are the only currency used in the bazaars for small transactions; but Spanish dollars and German crowns are almost wholly used in larger ones; and Persian rupees, and those of Bombay and Surat, and foreign gold, are no strangers.” Roberts, Embassy, 348.


fourteenth/fifteenth century

- Mitchiner, World of Islam, 230-31 (Imams), 235-36 (Hadramawt), 238 (Ra’s Bab al-Mandab, Shaykh Sa‘id).


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Surfs Up on Yemen