



Coinage of the Caravan Kingdoms Project

Coinage of the Caravan Kingdoms An interdisciplinary project on early Arabian coinage

This new project at the Orient Institute focuses on the indigenous coinage that was produced in the Arabian peninsula from the fourth century B.C. to the third century A.D. Until recently, the numismatic material from this region continued to grow with the emergence of many new and previously unknown types and series such as the early coinage of the Qatabanians. Apart from this largely undocumented increase in new and mostly South Arabian material, no study exists as yet that integrates the coinage of the Nabataeans, of North and South Arabia and of the Gulf region. Due to the fact that no interdisciplinary research has been undertaken on these coins, many of the fundamental questions relating to dates and attribution of individual series have not been solved satisfactorily. The Institute's CCK project therefore aims at both documenting the material in an accessible manner and at bringing together a number of internationally renowned experts on the history, numismatics and epigraphy of ancient Arabia for an interdisciplinary workshop. This workshop, which will take place from October 27 to 29, 2005, will put the coinage in its historical and numismatic context (trade routes and monetary systems), tackle epigraphic and linguistic problems related to the coinage and deal with economic aspects and questions of monetary circulation. It is hoped that, together with the presentation of the material, such a study would not only become a standard handbook, but provide the basis for future numismatic research such as die-studies, metrological and metallurgical studies. Moreover, by making use of coins as primary historical sources it will represent a significant contribution to research in other fields and generally advance our knowledge of ancient Arabia. The proceedings of the workshop, together with a catalogue, will be published in a comprehensive volume.

Project coordinator: Martin Huth



1. Gaza, c. 330 B.C., drachm of Athenian type with additional Aramaic letter 'ayin in addition to the usual Greek inscription



2. North Arabia, c. 250 B.C., drachm showing strong local influence and bearing an uncertain Aramaic inscription, possibly the name of a local ruler, Geshm/Gashmu



3. Kingdom of Nabataea, Rabbel II (AD 70 - 106) and Queen Shuqailat, small bronze coin equalling a Roman Quadrans



4. Gulf Area, c. 240 - 200 B.C., silver tetradrachm in the name of 'Abi'el, son of Tlbs'



5. Kingdom of Saba, c. 150 B.C., silver unit ('drachm') with uncertain cursive legend on the reverse



6. Kingdom of Qataban, c. 350 - 300 B.C., Attic didrachm with royal Qatabanian monogram on the reverse



7. Kingdom of Qataban, c. 30 - 45 A.D., silver unit of King Hawfi'amm Yuhan'am with mint-name HRB (i.e. Harib in Wadi Beihan)



8. Himyarite Kingdom, c. 80 - 100 A.D., King 'Amdan Bayyin Yuhaqbid, silver unit with mint-name RYDN (i.e. Zafar near modern Yarim)