

Some Coins of the Outremer

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This blog is based on some coins I collected 15 to 20 years ago.

The 1st Crusade was strongly supported by the Normans from Southern Italy and Sicily. Early successes brought them control of the wealthy coastal cities of Antioch and Tripoli.

Slide 1



Bohemond I of Taranto struck coins similar in design to the Byzantine coins already in circulation. This style was carried on by Tancred and Roger who acted as Regents for him during his absences.

The first coin has a portrait of Tancred wearing a turban and holding a sword. The second coin is of Roger of Salerno and depicts St. George slaying a dragon, possibly the first coin to portray St. George.

The middle two coins of Bohemond III reflect the adoption of the European-style denier. The bare-headed type and the helmeted figure in chainmail are the most familiar and commonest types.

Tripoli issued European-style deniers thirty years before it became popular in the other Crusader States. The bottom two coins are from Tripoli. The designs are based initially on the coinage of Toulouse and Provence. The left coin, bearing the image of a horse with a cross behind it, was inspired by an issue struck at the monastery of St. Gilles by the Marquisate of Provence under Alphonse Jourdain (1112-48). The star and crescent were used on the coinage of the Counts of Toulouse, though

there is a school of thought which suggests this design may have originated in Tripoli and was then adopted by subsequent Counts of Toulouse.

Slide 2



The second slide shows a variety of the designs used on the coinage of Jerusalem:

- The Tower of David on a denier of Baldwin III (1143 – 63);
- The Holy Sepulchre on a denier of Amaury (1163-97);
- a Fleur-de-Lys on a copper pougeoise of Henry of Champagne (1193 -1174);
- and a denier of John of Brienne, the King of Jerusalem from 1210 to 1225, which was struck in Damietta - a city at the mouth of the Nile which he captured during the 5th Crusade.

The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia



The Christian Kingdom of Armenia was situated in South-Eastern Asia Minor. The Armenians were allies of the Crusaders from the 1st Crusade onwards and Levon I became the first King of Armenia Cilicia by the authority of Henry VI, the Holy Roman Emperor, in 1198.

The coins have a very distinctive style, and the legends are in Armenian script. Here we have a silver tram and a copper tank of Levon I and a tram of his daughter Zabel and her co-ruler Hetoum.

Slide 4

Islamic (Ayyubids)



al-Nasir Salah al-Din Yusuf (Saladin) 1169-1193 AR Dirham Damascus



al-Ashraf I Muzaffar al-Din Musa 1210-1220 AE Dirham Mayyafariqin

This slide shows two coins struck by the Muslim Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt and Syria.

The first is a silver dirham of Saladin minted in Damascus; these coins were imitated in large quantities by the Crusader States.

The second coin was struck in Northern Syria and depicts a prince seated on a throne and holding a globe; it is most unusual for an Islamic coin to bear a human figure.

I hope that this short introduction to the coins of the Crusader States give a little insight to this fascinating series.