



THE BANKNOTE BOOK: Hedjaz

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2018

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Hedjaz

For earlier issues, see Egypt, Great Britain, India, and Ottoman Empire.



Al-Hejaz, also Hijaz (English, “the barrier”), is a region in the west of present-day Saudi Arabia. It is bordered on the west by the Red Sea, on the north by Jordan, on the east by Nejd, and on the south by Asir. Its largest city is Jeddah, though it also encompasses the Islamic holy sites of Mecca and Medina. From the 7th century, the region was under the control of Egypt and the Ottoman Empire through much of its later history.

Although originally aligned with the Ottomans, during the turmoil of World War I, Sharif Hussein ibn Ali, Emir and Grand Sharif of Mecca, proclaimed himself king of an independent Hedjaz with the support of British High Commissioner Henry McMahon. The ensuing Arab Revolt (June 1916 - October 1918) overthrew the Ottoman Empire. In 1917, Hussein adopted the title of King of the Arab Countries, which did not sit well with other regional leaders and colonial powers. In 1920, Hussein’s son Faisal was made king of Syria, but after only a few months the kingdom came under mandate rule of France. The British government subsequently made Faisal and his brother Abdallah kings of Iraq in 1921 and Transjordan in 1923, respectively. But the British grew weary of Hussein and did not support him against ‘Abd al-Aziz ibn Sa’ud.

Two days after the Turkish Caliphate was abolished by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 3 March 1924, Hussein declared himself Caliph at his son Abdullah’s winter camp in Shunah, Transjordan. The claim to the title had a mixed reception, and in 1924 Hussein was driven out of Arabia by the Saudis, a rival clan that had no interest in the Caliphate. Hussein was then forced to flee to Cyprus, before going to live in Amman, Transjordan, where he died in 1931. After Hussein’s abdication on 6 October 1924, another of his sons, Ali, assumed the throne of the Hedjaz, but on 19 December 1925, he fled to Iraq as Saudi forces advanced.

Issuer

The Arabian National Bank of Hedjaz (ANBH)B101

Starting Number

Monetary System

The Arabian pound had no subunits.

Arabic Numbers

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
٠	١	٢	٣	٤	٥	٦	٧	٨	٩

Arabic Months of the Year

يناير (January)	فبراير (February)	مارس (March)
أبريل / أبريل (April)	مايو (May)	يونيو / يونيو (June)
يوليو / يوليو (July)	أغسطس (August)	سبتمبر (September)
أكتوبر (October)	نوفمبر (November)	ديسمبر (December)

The Arabian National Bank of Hedjaz

Prior to Sharif Hussein ibn Ali’s January 1920 declaration that the Indian rupee was the only legal tender in the Hedjaz, British, Egyptian, Indian, and Ottoman coins and notes circulated informally. In September 1923, Hussein introduced his own coins, from a 1/8-piastre coin in bronze to a 1-dinar coin in gold, intended to replace Turkish coins. The Hedjaz coins weren’t well received due to their questionable precious metal content and short supply.

On 23 Shawwal 1343 (7 May 1925) Ali bin Hussein and his advisors signed a decree granting an exclusive 101-year right to form a bank and issue notes under the stated name of La Banque Nationale du Hedjaz et d’Arabie (The National Bank of Hedjaz and Arabia), which was to be headquartered in Jeddah, Hedjaz, with an initial capital of 200,000 Egyptian pounds. The new bank was to be run by H. Habib Lotfallah, an Egyptian diplomat from a prominent Middle Eastern family. Lotfallah’s lofty ambitions of establishing an issuing bank serving many Arab countries, including the Hedjaz, are obvious when one considers the subtle change to the institution’s name as it appears on notes and checks: The Arabian National Bank of Hedjaz (ANBH).

ANBH Signature Varieties

1



GOVERNOR
H. Habib Lotfallah

1925 Issues

These notes were printed in 1925 by Draeger in Paris, France, all with imprint, and all bearing the decree dated 23 Shawal 1343 (7 May 1925) with English and Arabic text. The notes are denominated in Arabian pounds, which were intended to be equal to Egyptian pounds. The vignettes on the fronts of the notes depict significant places outside of the Hedjaz, an indication that Lotfallah hoped that these notes would enjoy pan-Arab circulation.

After the notes had been ordered, but before they could be delivered, on 19 December 1925, Ali was overthrown by Saudi forces, and Ibn Sa'ud became king of the Hedjaz and sultan of the Nejd. Because there was no Hashemite government in the Hedjaz under which the notes could be authorized to circulate, they were placed in storage (presumably in France). Lotfallah attempted to open the Arabian National Bank of Hedjaz as an issuing bank, but based upon the existence of several cancelled checks which survive, it appears that it operated only as a private bank in Cairo, Egypt for a number of years.

In November 1929, Lotfallah shipped a batch of notes from France to Egypt in the hopes that they would eventually be used in Iraq and Transjordan. Egyptian customs authorities impounded 200,000 pounds' worth of banknotes and promised to release them if the Arabian National Bank of Hedjaz commenced business. Lotfallah struggled for more than a decade to find a way to open his bank in the Middle East, at one point claiming that 500,000 pounds' worth of notes had been printed. However, no notes were ever issued, and only a few specimen notes are known to exist, all extremely rare. A set of notes with *Specimen* handwritten in red across the front is in the National Archives of Great Britain (these are the notes illustrated in this chapter). Another set of notes without overprint but with all-zero serial numbers is owned by the Jordanian government (the current Jordanian royal family are from the same Hashemite family as Ali bin Hussein who granted the original concession for the bank). Another partial set (lacking the 1- and 100-pound notes) is in private hands (likely from lot 2760 of the February/March 1954 Sotheby & Co. auction of King Farouk's famed numismatic collection). Incidentally, the SCWPM lists a 1/2-pound note (P1), but there is no evidence to support such a note exists anywhere.

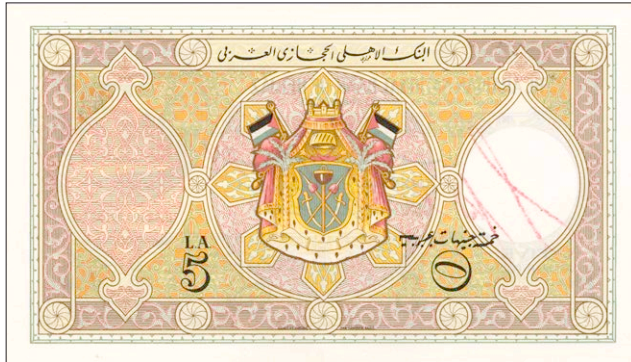
Valuations

The following listings have no values because none of these notes are known to have been offered for sale publicly in decades, and any attempt to value them would be pure conjecture.



B101 (P2): 1 Arabian pound VG VF UNC
 Blue, green, yellow, brown, and red. Front: Arabic and English text; Ka'aba (cube) in the courtyard of the Holy Mosque in Mecca, Hedjaz (present-day Saudi Arabia). Back: Arabic and English text; coat of arms with shield, sabre, lances, swords, daggers, crown, cape, castle, palm trees, and flags of the Hedjaz. No security thread. Watermark: Bearded man wearing a headdress. Printer: *GRAVÉ ET IMPRIME PAR DRAEGER, PARIS*. 156 x 86 mm.

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. | 23 Shawal 1343 (7 May 1925). Sig. 1. Unissued. Unconfirmed. | — | — | — |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | as1. Diagonal red <i>Specimen</i> handwritten front; no s/n. | — | — | — |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | as2. No ovpt; no perf; s/n A. 000000. | — | — | — |



B102 (P3): 5 Arabian pounds VG VF UNC

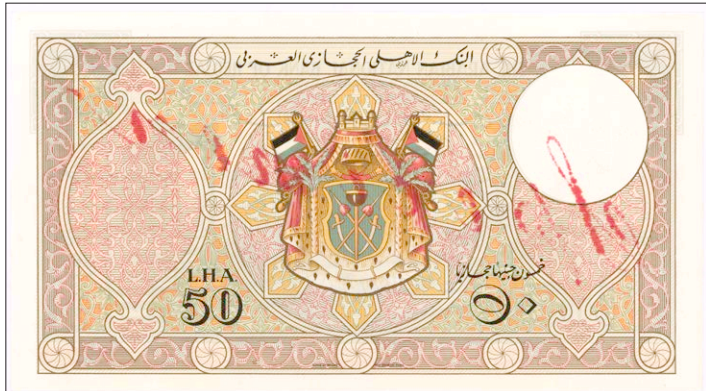
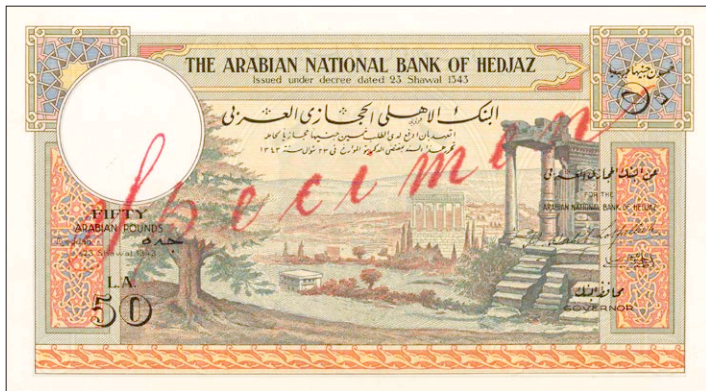
Brown, yellow, and red. Front: Arabic and English text; fountain and the treasury within the courtyard of the Great Mosque in Damascus, Syria. Back: Arabic and English text; coat of arms with shield, sabre, lances, swords, daggers, crown, cape, castle, palm trees, and flags of the Hedjaz. No security thread. Watermark: Bearded man wearing a headdress. Printer: *GRAVÉ ET IMPRIME PAR DRAEGER, PARIS*. 168 x 96 mm.

- a. 23 Shawal 1343 (7 May 1925). Sig. 1. Unissued. — — —
Unconfirmed.
- as1. Diagonal red *Specimen* handwritten front; no s/n. — — —
- as2. No ovpt; no perf; s/n 000000. — — —
- as3. Diagonal blue lines with *Specimen* handwritten front; no s/n. — — —

B103 (P4): 10 Arabian pounds VG VF UNC

Brown, pink, blue, green, and red. Front: Arabic and English text; King Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, Palestine (present-day Israel), flanked by the pillars of Jachin and Boaz. Back: Arabic and English text; coat of arms with shield, sabre, lances, swords, daggers, crown, cape, castle, palm trees, and flags of the Hedjaz. No security thread. Watermark: Bearded man wearing a headdress. Printer: *GRAVÉ ET IMPRIME PAR DRAEGER, PARIS*. 188 x 102 mm.

- a. 23 Shawal 1343 (7 May 1925). Sig. 1. Unissued. — — —
Unconfirmed.
- as1. Diagonal red *Specimen* handwritten front; no s/n. — — —
- as2. No ovpt; no perf; s/n A. 000000. — — —
- as3. Diagonal blue lines with *Specimen* handwritten front; no s/n. — — —



B104 (P5): 50 Arabian pounds VG VF UNC

Brown, orange, green, blue, and red. Front: Arabic and English text; cedar tree; Roman ruins at Baalbek (present-day Lebanon). Back: Arabic and English text; coat of arms with shield, sabre, lances, swords, daggers, crown, cape, castle, palm trees, and flags of the Hedjaz. No security thread. Watermark: Bearded man wearing a headdress. Printer: *GRAVÉ ET IMPRIME PAR DRAEGER, PARIS*. 202 x 112 mm.

- a. 23 Shawal 1343 (7 May 1925). Sig. 1. Unissued. Unconfirmed. — — —
- as1. Diagonal red *Specimen* handwritten front; no s/n. — — —
- as2. No ovpt; no perf; s/n 000000. — — —
- as3. Diagonal blue lines with *Specimen* handwritten front; no s/n. — — —



B105 (P6): 100 Arabian pounds VG VF UNC

Yellow, purple, brown, blue, green, and red. Front: Arabic and English text; winged sun discs and winged bulls with human heads (from Sargon's Palace at Khorsabad, Iraq) flanking river with palm trees. Back: Arabic and English text; coat of arms with shield, sabre, lances, swords, daggers, crown, cape, castle, palm trees, and flags of the Hedjaz. No security thread. Watermark: Bearded man wearing a headdress. Printer: *GRAVÉ ET IMPRIME PAR DRAEGER, PARIS*. 210 x 121 mm.

- a. 23 Shawal 1343 (7 May 1925). Sig. 1. Unissued. Unconfirmed. — — —
- as1. Diagonal red *Specimen* handwritten front; no s/n. — — —
- as2. No ovpt; no perf; s/n 000000. — — —

Looking Forward

For later issues, see Saudi Arabia.

Acknowledgements

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Sources

Schmidt, Tracy L. *Standard Catalog of World Paper Money, General Issues, 1368-1960*. 16th edition. 2016. ISBN 978-1-4402-4707-1. Krause Publications (www.krausebooks.com), 700 East State St., Iola, WI, 54990-0001.

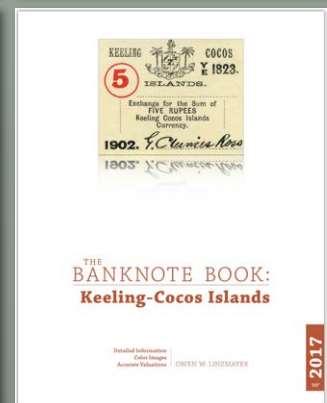
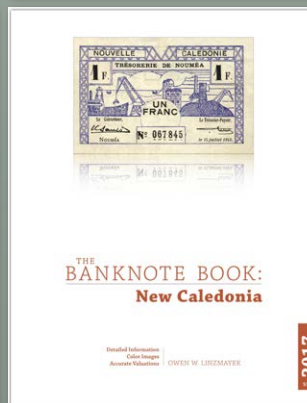
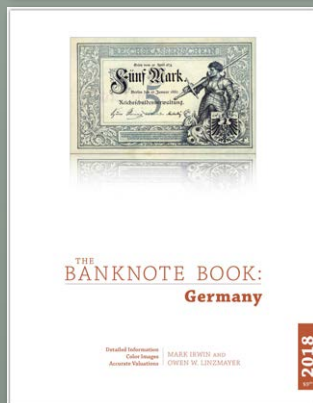
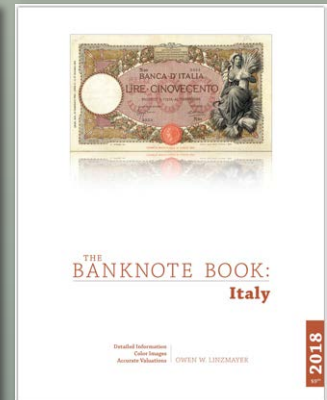
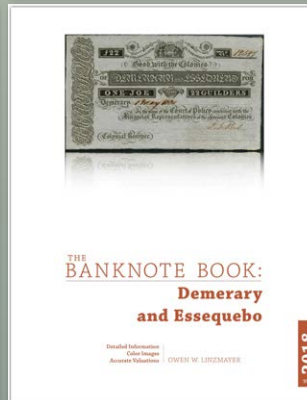
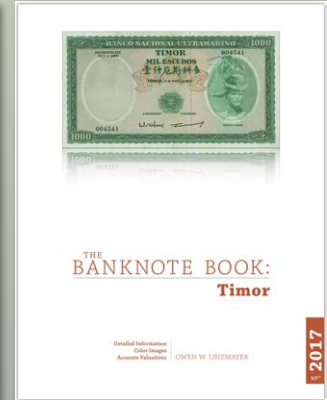
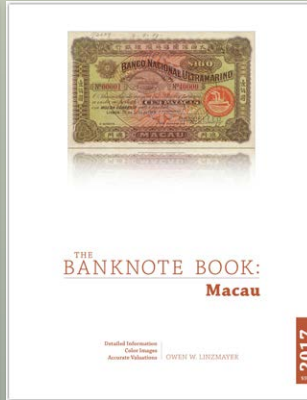
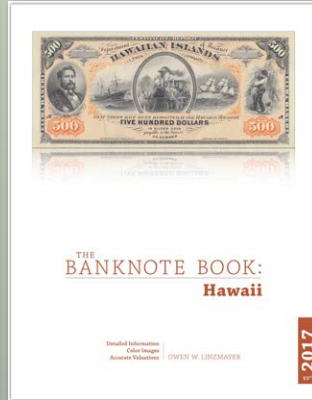
Symes, Peter J. "Habib Lotfallah and the Arabian National Bank of Hedjaz." *IBNS Journal*. Volume 44 Number 3, p.6.

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