

World Mintmarks

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If you look closely at a coin, you will often find a small letter that shows where the coin was made.

The mintmark is a little monogram, letter, or other symbol that shows which facility struck a coin. Mintmarks go back to ancient times. About 250 BC, the Ptolomies of Egypt, used mintmarks to show which of their large silver coins were struck at Tyre, Joppa, Sidon, and Gaza.

In modern times, France has used the A to stand for the capital city, Paris. Germany has used the A to stand for their capital, Berlin. Austrian coins with an A were made in Vienna. In Spanish colonial times, a crowned M meant Madrid while an M with an O over it meant Mexico. On today's American money, the P stands for Philadelphia, the D for Denver, and the S for San Francisco.

If you find an H on a foreign coin, it probably stands for the Heaton Company of England. This private firm has struck coins for Canada, Liberia, and other nations. Contracting for services allows small nations to have beautiful coins without the burden of expensive manufacturing facilities. Large nations also find contracting helpful. To fill in during a change in design, the United States mint struck coins for Canada. On the other hand, Israeli coins with an O mintmark were made in Ottawa.

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