Yemeni Old Civilizations, Between the eighth century BCE and the sixth century CE, Yemen was dominated by six main states which rivaled each other.

Kingdom of Saba’ (8th century BCE - 275 CE)

During Sabaean rule, trade and agriculture flourished generating much wealth and prosperity. The Sabaean kingdom was located in what is now the 'Asir region in southwestern Saudi Arabia, and its capital, Ma'rib, is located near what is now Yemen's modern capital, Sana'a. According to Arab tradition, the eldest son of Noah, Shem, founded the city of Ma'rib.

At the time of the earliest historical sources originating in South Arabia the territory was under the rule of the Kingdom of Saba', the centres of which were situated to the east of present-day Sana'a in
Ṣirwāḥ and Ma'rib. The political map of South Arabia at that time consisted of several larger kingdoms, or rather tribal territories: Awsān, Qatabān and the Ḥaḍramawt; and on the other hand an uncertain number of smaller states. Shortly after, Yitha'amār Watar I had united Qatabān and some areas in al-Djawf with Saba', the Kingdom reached the peak of its power under Karib'il Watar I, who probably reigned some time around the first half of the 7th century BCE, and ruled all the region from Najrān in the south of modern South Arabia right up to Bāb al-Mandab, on the Red Sea. The formation of the Minaean Kingdom in the river oasis of al-Jawf, north-west of Saba' in the 6th century BCE, actually posed a danger for Sabaean hegemony, but Yitha'amār Bayyin II, who had completed the great reservoir dam of Ma'rib, succeeded in reconquering the northern part of South Arabia. Between the 8th and 4th centuries the state of Da'amot emerged, under Sabaean influence in Ethiopia, which survived until the beginning of the Christian era at the latest. The exact chronology of Da'amot and to what extent it was politically independent of Saba' remains in any case uncertain.

The success of the Kingdom was based on the cultivation and trade of spices and aromatics including frankincense and myrrh.

The Sabaean kingdom, with its capital at Ma'rib where the remains of a large temple can still be seen, thrived for almost 14 centuries. Some have argued that this kingdom was the Sheba described in the Old Testament.

**Kingdom of Ḥaḍramawt (8th century BCE - 300 CE)**

The first known inscriptions of Ḥaḍramawt are known from the 8th century BCE. It was first referenced by an outside civilization in an Old Sabaic inscription of Karab'il Watar from the early 7th century BCE, in which the King of Ḥaḍramawt, Yadail, is mentioned as being one of his allies. When the Minaeans took control of the caravan routes in the 4th century BCE, however, Ḥaḍramawt became one of its confederates, probably because of commercial interests. It later was invaded by the growing kingdom of Ḥimyar toward the end of the 1st century BCE, but it was able to repel the attack. Ḥaḍramawt annexed Qatabān in the second half of the 2nd century CE, reaching its greatest size. During this period, Ḥaḍramawt was continuously at war with Himyar and Saba'.

**Kingdom of Awsan (800 BCE – 500 BCE)**

The ancient Kingdom of Awsān in South Arabia, with a capital at Ḥajar Yaḥīr in Wādī Markhah, to the
south of the Wādī Bayḥān, is now marked by a tell or artificial mound, which is locally named Ḥajar Asfal in Shabwah. Once it was one of the most important small kingdoms of South Arabia. The city seems to have been destroyed in the 7th century BCE by the king and mukarrib of Saba Karib'il Watar, according to a Sabaean text.

Kingdom of Qatabān (4th century BCE – 200 CE)

Qatabān was one of the ancient Yemeni kingdoms which thrived in the Bayḥān valley. Like the other Southern Arabian kingdoms it gained great wealth from the trade of frankincense and myrrh incense which were burned at altars. The capital of Qatabān was named Timna and was located on the trade route which passed through the other kingdoms of Ḥaḍramawt, Saba' and Ma'īn. The chief deity of the Qatabānians was 'Amm, or "Uncle" and the people called themselves the "children of 'Amm".

Kingdom of Ma'in (8th century BCE – 100 BCE)

During Minaean rule, the capital was at Qarnāwu (Ma'in). Their other important city was Yathill (Sabaean yṯl :now known as Barāqish). Other parts of modern Yemen include Qatabā and the coastal string of watering stations known as the Hadhramaut. Though Saba' dominated in the earlier period of South Arabian history, Minaic inscriptions are of the same time period as the first Sabaean inscriptions. Minaic inscriptions have been found far afield of the Kingdom of Ma'in, as far away as al-Ūlā in northwestern Saudi Arabia and even on the island of Delos and in Egypt. It was the first of the South Arabian kingdoms to end, and the Minaean language died around 100 CE.

Kingdom of Ḥimyar (2nd century BCE – 525 CE)

The Ḥimyarites eventually united Southwestern Arabia, controlling the Red Sea as well as the coasts of the Gulf of Aden. From their capital city, the Ḥimyarite kings launched successful military campaigns, and had stretched its domain at times as far east to the Persian Gulf and as far north as the Arabian Desert. During the 3rd century CE, the South Arabian kingdoms were in continuous conflict with one another. GDRT of Aksum began to interfere in South Arabian affairs, signing an alliance with Saba', and a Ḥimyarite text notes that Ḥaḍramawt and Qatabān were also all allied against the kingdom. As a result of this, the Kingdom of Aksum was able to capture the Ḥimyarite capital of Ẓifār in the first quarter of the 3rd century. However, the alliances did not last, and Sha'ir Awtar of Saba' unexpectedly turned on Ḥaḍramawt, allying again with Aksum and taking its capital in
225. Ḥimyar then allied with Saba' and invaded the newly taken Aksumite territories, retaking Ṣifār, which had been under the control of GDRT's son BYGT, and pushing Aksum back into the Tihāmah.