

## Special exhibit

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### What does money communicate?

#### ... legitimate rule

To secure their rule, monarchs had to depend on their authority being accepted at all levels of society. Elevation to the position of highest power took place in the coronation ritual. This ceremony used unambiguous imagery that was clearly understood by the ruler's subjects. The coin communicated the leader's new status. As a coronation coin – to be thrown to the crowd in the subsequent procession – it even reached a small part of the poorer sections of the population.



*Thaler for the coronation of Charles VI in Frankfurt, 1711*

This shows the coronation of Charles VI as Holy Roman Emperor in Frankfurt Cathedral (dedicated to St. Bartholomew). Like all emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, he was crowned by three archbishops. In the subsequent procession on the Römerberg in Frankfurt, the coins were thrown to public.



*Gold medal and commemorative coin for the coronation of Napoleon I*

As the first emperor after the feudal order had been overthrown by the French Revolution, Napoleon broke with tradition at his coronation in year XIII of the French Republican Calendar (=1804) by placing the imperial crown on his own head. He is depicted in antique style wearing the laurel crown of the Roman emperors. On the obverse, he is borne by two figures, allegories of the military and the senate. The commemorative coins were much smaller than the large gold medal.

### ... the guarantee of a stable means of exchange

Money is, essentially, not gold, silver, or iron, nor is it paper or plastic. It is not a share certificate or a bill of exchange, nor is it a credit transfer. It is not a Mark, a cent or a shilling, but it is an embossed numeral in gold and the printed word on paper. Money can be spent or saved, won or lost. When we go shopping with money, we exchange its monetary value for goods or services. Money is a communicated pledge that makes it possible to obtain goods and services at an agreed and accepted equivalent value. If this pledge cannot be honoured, say, because of high inflation, the question that arises is not about money itself but of new equivalent values.



"Emergency money" issued by the municipality of Flensburg, 1924

### ... cultural identity

Lawful payment media in the form of coins and banknotes are objects of everyday use and therefore a visual medium with the largest imaginable public appeal. As a country's "visiting card", they reflect its values. Portraits of famous personalities are used to highlight and affirm particular aspects of how a country sees itself.



Tristan da Cunha, 1 crown, Elizabeth II  
Jamaica, 50 dollars, Bob Marley

### ... regional affiliation

Money tokens invariably communicate their regional origin. In 1920 and 1921, plebiscites were imposed under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles in order to decide whether the territories of Schleswig, Silesia and East Prussia were to belong to Germany. "Emergency money" notes were used deliberately as a means of municipal and regional election campaigning. Even at the time, such notes were popular collector's items (their precursors were intended to replace small amounts of cash and coins that were scarce). Their inscriptions and imagery were deliberately designed to polarise views.



Westerland/Sytl, 2 Marks, October 1921