

Drachm, Dirham, Thaler, Pound

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Money and currencies in history
from earliest times to the euro

Coins and maps from the MoneyMuseum
with texts by Ursula Kampmann

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The Publisher's Foreword



"Coins tell stories. They are a means to an end, but in their beauty and significance also objects in their own right. The Greek coin gems from Sicily are the Picassos of antiquity."
(Leo Mildenberg)

Can you imagine making do without cash clinking in your pocket? Will our great-grandchildren never hold a coin in their hand any more? In the early 3rd millennium AD it looks as if money is becoming dematerialized.

Originally money consisted of basic materials such as shells, copper, silver and gold, then, for 2,000 years, of coins and eventually, after the introduction of banknotes in the 19th century, it was made of paper as well. Today it encompasses credit cards, checks, accounts, luminous signs on chip cards or flight mile credit. In recent times, currency systems that go back to barter schemes have increasingly also had a chance. Coins, on the other hand, are only still used for small amounts. Nowadays, anyone who pays in cash is really rather odd in many cases. The coin, long the tangible and visible epitome of money, is being used less and less. As a result, there are many indications to suggest that its 2,500-year history is coming to an end. But in order to understand today and tomorrow it is important to be familiar with yesterday.

In *Drachm, Dirham, Thaler, Pound* the MoneyMuseum combines coins and historical maps with texts to help you to traverse the history of mankind since the beginning of money. In doing so, you will come across some of the finest and most expressive pieces from the history of coins, gems of the past, the basis of our present time.

Coins can not only be used to acquire things, but also to bear eloquent witness to their time and touch us with their artistic beauty, as the opening quotation of the numismatist, coin dealer and collector of antiques Leo Mildenberg (1913–2001) has aptly formulated it. For me, collecting coins also means preserving the memory of civilization. For on a coin economics, politics and art come together on the smallest possible space.

Jürg Conzett
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