

Objects in Focus

Coins and medals

GLOBAL GOLD - Its use as currency from the 6th century BC to the present day

GLOBAL GOLD exhibition 2021



**Venetian ducat
(1289-1311)**



**German Ducat showing gold
panning (1743-1799)**

Rare, beautiful and easy to work, gold has been valued above all other metals in many societies over the last six thousand years. With its resistance to chemical reactions – it never corrodes or tarnishes – it is often called a 'noble' metal. The fascination with, and demand for, gold made it an attractive medium for political symbols of power and status, or to provide standards of value and means of exchange.

This display provides global perspectives on the use of gold for currency and coins, from late 6th century BC to the 20th century. The sources and trading networks of the raw material reflects colonialism and exploitation, technological change and the discovery of new sources.

Gold coinage and ancient states

Gold was one of the earliest metals used by humans, as it usually occurs in nature in a pure metallic form.



Natural gold nugget

Where it all began

The first gold coins appeared on what we now know as the western coast of modern Turkey.



Lydian kings, electrum 1/3 stater, Sardes, 6th century BC



**King's good gold
Egypt, Nectanebo II
(359-340 BC).**



Islamic coinage and the gold of Africa

From the 8th century to the 13th centuries, Islamic dinars coined using West African gold bullion dominated long distance trade. Almohads, Yusuf I (1163-1184), half dinar. Found at Wattisham, Suffolk.



Discovery, empire and exploitation

The exploitation of gold sources in South America led to the introduction of iconic coins on a large scale, produced for both domestic and international use. Brazil, Joao VI (1706-1750).



Gold rushes and international currencies

The discovery of gold in California in 1848 caused successive gold rushes and led to the introduction of a new gold denomination, the \$20 coin.



Behind the scenes at the Museum

Meet Dr Adrian Popescu, Keeper of Ancient Money

Adrian research interests include ancient coinages, coin production and circulation, and the analysis of coin finds. He is also co-director of the Noviodunum Archaeological Project.

