

Minting History

Financial History at Face Value

eabh archival workshop

eabh in cooperation with the Bank of Russia

Friday, 21 June 2019, St. Petersburg, Russia

This one-day workshop is aimed at minting and financial institutions' archivists, money museum curators and researchers.

The extensive archives of mints are a treasure-trove of information often covering extended periods of time. Yet some of these archival treasures are only accessible to a handful of specialists or remain largely unknown to researchers and the public. This workshop aims to present these materials to a wider audience and make them more accessible to interested researchers and scholars.

What can we learn from mints' archival material about the past? Does their study produce relevant lessons for today? How can records and artefacts be used to raise public interest for the history of money and finance? How can their study help contribute to a wider view on the history of money and payment systems?

Since antiquity, apart from serving as means of payment and store of value, coins also served politically and culturally important functions, representing sovereignty and fashioning identities. Private or public mints, acting in tune with economic development and financial innovation, created coinage that itself is a valuable source of social, political and cultural history.

Socially, the use of money is stratified as different groups use different forms of money or similar forms of money in different ways. Numismatic treasures may thus hold information about the social structure of the historical societies that used them. Archival data can be mobilised to illustrate how money use differed between, for example, the sexes or along racial lines. Finally, the composition of denominations in circulation can be used to chart trade relations or economic transformations such as the rise of modern wage labour.

Coinage (as well as bills) are also circulating claims of economic power and sovereignty. Political and economic changes influence the design of money and numismatic history can help us decipher the concerns, which sovereigns felt needed to be addressed. In modern times, monetisation of large societies accompanied processes of industrial and colonial exploitation. As social and cultural relations were reshaped, money and its varied forms and denominations, were mobilised to entrench or challenge these changes. Finally, quantitative minting data can hold information on seignorage, inflation or the workings of bi-metalism. Above all, coinage, relying on trust and open to abuse, is an economic institution, governed by a logic that adapts or fails with history's changing circumstances.

With new technologies of payments arising from information technology and FinTech, this is an important moment to reconsider the meaning and broader functions of physical money, the technologies that have affected its development and the way that different groups of people and businesses have used coins.

We are looking for presentations by archivists, curators or researchers working on these subjects or addressing one of the following topics:

- Precious metals and commodity money
- The relationship between mints and central banks
- State-building, coinage and political identity
- Competition between public and private mints, fraud and counterfeiting
- Big coins and small change: stratification of coinage and its effect on prices, markets and consumption patterns
- Slavery, empires, decolonialisation and specie currencies
- Gender at the mint. (The US Mint, e.g., was the first federal agency to employ women).
- How does money use differ among various social groups?

The archival workshop's steering committee is formed by: Chris Colvin (Queen's University Belfast), Carmen Hofmann (*eabh*), Joost Jonker (Amsterdam University), Nathan Marcus (Ben Gurion University of the Negev) and Catherine Schenk (University of Oxford).

Authors wishing to contribute to the workshop should submit their abstract and a short biographical note no later than **11 March 2019**.

Selected participants will be asked to:

- Deliver a full paper or presentation 3 weeks prior to the workshop (no later than 31 May 2019)
- Give a 10 – 15 minute presentation in St. Petersburg on 21 June 2019
- For submissions and questions please contact: c.hofmann@bankinghistory.org

Participants will have the opportunity for to submit their papers for publication in the *eabh* working paper series *eabh Papers*.