

AFTER THE COIN

Coinage, Credit, and the Making
of Monetary Institutions

c. 650 BCE-1700 CE



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Cover: Lydian gold stater, approximately 560-546 BCE. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 26.59.2. Public Domain. Cropped photograph; not actual size.

PUBLICATION NOTE

Abstract and central argument

CENTRAL ARGUMENT

Coinage made monetary verification more portable. The institutions that developed alongside and after it made claims more transferable. Neither development removed the need to establish what was owed, who could pay, and when an obligation was finally discharged.

Abstract

The companion white papers established that monetary accounting and credit preceded minted currency. This paper continues that trajectory from early coinage in western Anatolia to the emergence of public banks and transferable bank liabilities around 1700. Its subject is the interaction of material money with the institutions that authenticated, transferred, financed, and settled claims. The sequence is comparative rather than universal: coins, weighed metal, paper instruments, and account balances repeatedly coexisted. [1, 2]

Selected evidence from the Mediterranean, the Islamic world, China, and European commercial centers shows how different monetary arrangements redistributed uncertainty. A mint could certify a coin without fixing its purchasing power. A remittance document could reduce the movement of metal without ensuring payment at destination. A bank could settle transactions through its ledger while exposing customers to a common intermediary. Public sponsorship could strengthen a payment institution while also connecting its resources to fiscal demands.

The paper argues that the most consequential change after coinage was an expansion in the capacity to transfer and organize obligations. This expansion depended on rules of acceptance, documentary evidence, liquidity, and institutional accountability. Failures of metal standards, paper currencies, and banks are therefore examined within the same analytical frame as their achievements. By approximately 1700, important elements of later banking were visible, but modern central banking had not yet emerged as a complete institutional system.

Scope and approach

This is a historical synthesis of selected primary evidence and specialist scholarship, not a comprehensive world history or a new statistical study. The principal period is approximately 650 BCE-1700 CE. The conclusion identifies implications for understanding credit and payments without treating ancient or medieval arrangements as identical to modern financial products.

Keywords: monetary history; coinage; credit; paper money; bills of exchange; settlement; public banks.

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A connected, uneven history

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Selected chronological anchors

Date	Development
Late 7th c. BCE	Early electrum coinage in western Anatolia. [3]
375/4 BCE	Athenian law provides for public coin testing. [5]
698-699 CE	Dated example of the reformed Umayyad gold dinar. [9]
1023	Song government assumes control of Sichuan paper issuance. [10, 11]
Late 13th c.	Merchant correspondence supports bills of exchange. [16]
1609-1694	Amsterdam exchange bank; Swedish banknotes; Bank of England. [22-25]

Dates identify selected documented developments. They do not imply simultaneous adoption across regions or a single line of institutional descent.

01 / CONCEPTS AND METHOD

The starting point

Early Civilizations' - Currency examined the diversity of monetary arrangements before and around the appearance of coins. *Before the Coin* showed how lending converted a timing gap between present resources and future production into a recorded obligation. Together, they established that a society could measure value, extend credit, and enforce repayment without minted money. This sequel begins at their chronological threshold while retaining that institutional perspective. [1, 2]

The word *after* denotes a period of history, not the disappearance of the coin. The central question is what happened when stamped metal entered systems that already depended on accounts, promises, and enforcement. Coinage changed the available instruments. It did not erase the differences between an object accepted in payment, a unit used to state a price, and a claim requiring someone else to perform.

Concept	Meaning in this paper
Unit of account	The measure in which a price, balance, or debt is expressed.
Payment instrument	The object, document, or instruction used to make a payment.
Credit claim	An entitlement whose fulfillment depends on another party.
Settlement	The discharge of an obligation under the rules governing the transaction.

These distinctions prevent several misleading equivalences. A note recording a remittance is not necessarily a generally circulating banknote. The transfer of a bill is not necessarily its payment. A credit to an account can discharge a buyer's debt to a seller while leaving the seller with a claim on a bank. What counts as completed payment must therefore be established for each arrangement rather than assumed from the instrument's appearance.

Reading the evidence

Coins and inscriptions establish material characteristics and declared authority; they do not, by themselves, measure the frequency of transactions. A statute establishes a rule, not universal compliance. A legal speech presents a litigant's position, not an impartial verdict. Merchant letters reveal specific practices without proving that everyone used them. These differences in evidentiary status are maintained throughout the case studies. Modern diagrams and arithmetic below are explicitly illustrative; they are not reconstructed archival accounts.

02 / EARLY COINAGE

What the stamp changed

Early electrum coinage in western Anatolia, conventionally dated to the late seventh century BCE, combined precious metal with repeatable types and issuing authority. Electrum's variable gold content makes the issue of verification especially significant. John Kroll's study of Sardis places the innovation within a local and imperial history rather than treating it as the immediate creation of a universal monetary standard. [3]



FIGURE 1

Lydian gold stater, approximately 560-546 BCE. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 26.59.2. Public Domain. The photograph is cropped for presentation; the object is not shown at actual size. [4]

Under Croesus, separate gold and silver coinages replaced the earlier electrum system. Persian rule continued the lion-and-bull types before Darius introduced royal archer coinage around 515 BCE. These developments did not give every region of the Persian Empire the same pattern of coin use: gold darics traveled more widely than the silver coinage associated particularly with western Asia Minor. [3]

The analytical change was a redistribution of verification work. A recognizable coin could allow its recipient to rely partly on a prior act of weighing, refining, and authorization. Such reliance was conditional: the mark had to be credible, the specimen genuine, and the denomination meaningful to the recipient. A stamp offered a claim about the monetary object; local practice and public institutions determined how far that claim could travel.

CONTINUITY WITH THE EARLIER PAPERS

Where a sealed credit document authenticated an obligation, a coin type helped authenticate a monetary object. Both gained usefulness from an accepted system of recognition; neither was self-enforcing.

03 / ATHENS

Testing the coin, trusting the banker

Public standards required administration

The Athenian law on silver-coin approvers of 375/4 BCE provides unusually concrete evidence of this supporting machinery. It assigned public officials to test coins and distinguished acceptable silver from plated pieces with bronze or lead cores. Counterfeits were to be cut and dedicated, while sellers who refused approved coin faced sanctions. Interpretation of the law's treatment of foreign imitations remains disputed; the text should not be reduced to an uncomplicated rule that every foreign coin was accepted. [5]

The law also exposes the social foundations of monetary order. The public slave responsible for testing could be flogged for failing to perform the assigned duty. Dependable verification was thus backed by unequal status and coercive enforcement. Recognizing this feature matters: administrative sophistication is not evidence of equitable institutions. [5]

A deposit created a different evidentiary problem

Isocrates' *Trapeziticus*, a speech prepared for a dispute involving the banker Pasion, describes an alleged deposit whose repayment became contested after the depositor's political circumstances changed. The speaker emphasizes the difficulty of proving dealings conducted privately and presents accusations of denial and manipulation. The account illustrates how an intermediary's acknowledgment could matter as much as the physical money originally delivered. It does not establish that every allegation was true: the surviving text is a partisan courtroom speech, not a neutral judgment. [6]

Read together, the inscription and the speech disclose two distinct questions. Coin testing asks whether the object offered is acceptable. Deposit litigation asks whether an intermediary owes a claimant and what evidence will establish that liability. These questions can arise in the same monetary economy. It would therefore be misleading to interpret banking as an activity that became possible only after coins had ceased to matter.

The contrast also develops the earlier paper's account of layered controls. Authentication of an asset cannot substitute for proof of ownership or proof of repayment. A monetary system needs procedures for the object, the account, and the obligation, because a failure in any one can obstruct a transaction. The Athenian evidence makes that distinction visible without requiring modern banking terminology to be projected onto every ancient practice.

04 / IMPERIAL MONEY

Metal, fiscal power, and confidence

Roman silver coinage shows why a monetary history cannot equate the continued appearance of a denomination with a constant material standard. The Liverpool research project on silver coinage from Septimius Severus to Valerian and Gallienus reports a pattern of stable stretches interrupted by major reductions in fineness, rather than an uninterrupted third-century decline. Its metallurgical work also identifies increased use of recycled bullion. [7]

That project cautions against treating the surface of a coin as a straightforward guide to its interior composition. Manufacturing and surface enrichment complicate measurement. For historical interpretation, the consequence is substantial: a series based on incomparable tests may exaggerate precision. Nor is measured fineness itself a price index. Evidence about metal content must be distinguished from evidence about purchasing power, circulation, and the conditions under which coins were accepted. [7]

FIGURE 2 / A FIXED QUANTITY OF FINE SILVER**100 g / (2 g per coin) = 50 coins****100 g / (1 g per coin) = 100 coins**

Illustrative arithmetic only. The figures are hypothetical; no minting costs, alloy limits, coin weights, or price response are modeled.

The illustration isolates an accounting possibility: more nominal pieces can be made from the same quantity of fine silver if each contains less. Whether that change benefits an issuer, alters exchange rates, or raises prices depends on the surrounding monetary arrangements. The example is deliberately not a model of Roman inflation. It demonstrates why physical debasement and changes in purchasing power require separate evidence.

Continuity depended on repeated performance

A Byzantine solidus of Heraclius and his sons, dated 638-641, provides a later example of coinage joining payment and political representation. The Metropolitan Museum's account places Byzantine gold within the reciprocal demands of military pay and taxation, while the ruler's image expressed authority and succession. Maintaining standards was part of imperial governance. [8]

A durable coin standard can be understood as a continuing institutional performance. Recognition rests on accumulated expectations about what the next coin will contain and where it will be accepted. This interpretation helps explain why a familiar type can retain significance across changes of ruler, while also leaving room for interruption, imitation, and reform.

05 / THE ISLAMIC DINAR

A monetary object and a public claim

Early Islamic rulers initially worked with inherited Byzantine and Sasanian minting traditions. Under the Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik, gold coinage was reformulated in 696-697 around inscriptions rather than the earlier figural designs. The dinar illustrated here dates to 79 AH, or 698-699 CE, and belongs to the reformed system; it is not presented as the first issue of the reform. The surviving object makes a political and religious declaration through the medium of money. [9]



FIGURE 3

Umayyad gold dinar, 79 AH / 698-699 CE, Syria. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 99.35.2386, gift of William B. Osgood Field, 1899. Public Domain. Cropped photograph; not actual size. [9]

The comparison with the Lydian stater is instructive. Both combine a material object with a recognizable public identity, but their designs belong to different political and religious worlds. A shared monetary function does not establish a shared meaning. Historical analysis must therefore attend to inscriptions, imagery, issuing arrangements, and the settings in which objects were used, rather than reading every gold coin as the same institution in a different costume.

This case also sets a limit on what can be inferred from an artifact. A reformed dinar establishes the characteristics of that issue; it does not prove that all transactions across an empire were conducted in gold, that every community experienced monetary uniformity, or that merchants ceased to rely on credit. The documentary evidence examined later supplies a different view of commercial life: how people requested funds, handled mixed payments, and verified that claims had been discharged.

INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLE

Material standardization and institutional diversity can coexist. A common coin type does not imply a single, uniform system of payments.

06 / CHINA

From remittance documents to paper currency

The Chinese evidence interrupts any account in which European banking supplies the inevitable destination of monetary development. Niv Horesh distinguishes Tang-period *flying cash*, used to arrange remittances, from the later appearance of circulating paper currency. In the former arrangement, a document enabled value deposited in one place to be recovered elsewhere. Reducing the physical transport of money did not necessarily make the document a general means of payment. [10]

The emergence of paper currency in Sichuan involved a different practical setting. Heavy iron coinage made substantial payments cumbersome, while private issuers provided paper claims. Government control of issuance followed in 1023. This sequence connects paper money to local monetary conditions and institutional responses; it does not support a general claim that paper was invented simply because metal had become obsolete. [10]

FIGURE 4 / TWO FUNCTIONS OF PAPER

Instrument	Illustrative distinction
Remittance document	Directs a specified payment elsewhere.
Circulating note	Passes among holders under the issuer's rules.

Richard von Glahn's account of the Song experience emphasizes the management surrounding paper issues, including tax acceptance, renewal arrangements, and operations involving silver. These policies are more informative than a binary description of notes as either backed or unbacked. The nature of support, the holder's rights, and the issuer's actions varied across periods and regions. [11]

The distinction in Figure 4 is analytical. A document can authorize a particular payment without circulating widely; a circulating note can pass among holders while remaining subject to specific rules. Describing both as paper risks concealing what participants actually possessed. The relevant questions concern transferability, redemption or other means of absorption, and the authority responsible for honoring the instrument.

Paper also changed the location of practical knowledge. A recipient needed to recognize an authorized issue and understand its terms, rather than assess only the contents of a piece of metal. This was a change in the information required for acceptance, not the removal of that requirement. The next question is how institutions sustained those terms when fiscal conditions changed.

07 / YUAN AND MING CHINA

The changing terms of monetary commitment

Hanhui Guan, Nuno Palma, and Meng Wu distinguish several phases of Yuan paper money between 1260 and 1368: an initial silver-convertible arrangement, a period of nominal convertibility, and a later fiat regime. Their research summary associates the consequences of issuance with these institutional differences and with fiscal pressure, especially military expenditure. It also identifies a period of comparatively stable prices extending from the 1290s into the 1330s. The history is therefore more differentiated than a narrative of immediate collapse following the adoption of paper. [12]

The authors' periodization is useful because it directs attention to the changing commitment made to holders. A promise can remain printed on an instrument while practical access to fulfillment changes. Conversely, the absence of metallic redemption does not establish that an instrument has no institutional support. The test is how issuance, acceptance, and the management of outstanding liabilities operated together.

Paper and silver did not follow a one-way sequence

Von Glahn's interpretation of the later Ming experience gives particular weight to the state's inadequate absorption of paper through taxation, alongside issuance problems. The subsequent expansion of silver use demonstrates that monetary history could move toward metal after major experiments with paper. It was neither a simple reversal to a primitive stage nor proof of a timeless superiority of one material. [11]

Taken together, the Song, Yuan, and Ming cases suggest an institutional reading of monetary credibility. If an authority issues an instrument, it matters whether holders can use it to meet obligations to that authority or exchange it under effective rules. It also matters whether those rules persist when expenditures rise. A description of the instrument's material cannot answer either question.

COMPARATIVE FINDING

The historical unit of comparison is the monetary arrangement: issuance, acceptance, transfer, and discharge. A comparison limited to metal versus paper leaves out much of the mechanism.

This reading does not reduce every monetary failure to administrative error. Political conflict and fiscal demands can change what an issuer is willing or able to honor. Nor does it establish a universal prescription for the appropriate volume of money. The evidence supports a narrower conclusion: the consequences of issuance depend on the commitments and institutions within which it occurs.

08 / COMMERCIAL NETWORKS

Distance made documents consequential

Medieval letters preserved in the Cairo Geniza document the detailed work needed to move and reconcile funds. In a letter cataloged as T-S J2.66, Nahray b. Nissim is associated with an obligation of forty-four dinars through a *suftaja*. The instructions require recovery of both the current document and an earlier document relating to the same obligation. Shipment, receipts, and the handling of funds appear within a connected commercial correspondence. The point is more specific than the existence of credit: settlement required control of the surviving evidence of a claim. [13]

This requirement continues a theme from *Before the Coin*. Creating a legible obligation is only half the problem. If documents remain capable of supporting a second demand after payment, a completed economic transfer may not produce secure discharge. Returning or canceling evidence of indebtedness helps align the record with what has actually occurred. [2, 13]

A second Geniza letter, DK 333, describes a payment composed of good dinars and Sicilian fractional coins, including older and newer pieces. It discusses whether to send the money with a courier or arrange a payment order. Such correspondence shows the coexistence of physical coins and documentary alternatives, together with attention to the amount and available arrangements. The document is evidence of a particular decision, not proof that all merchants used the same settlement method. [14]

Comparison without invented ancestry

The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Museum describes *hundis* as instruments used for remittance, credit, and trade. They provide a useful functional comparison with other orders for payment. However, the museum's illustrated specimens include much later material; those objects cannot, by themselves, establish medieval origins or a direct line of transmission from one region to another. This paper uses the comparison to clarify functions, not to assign an unsupported invention date. [15]

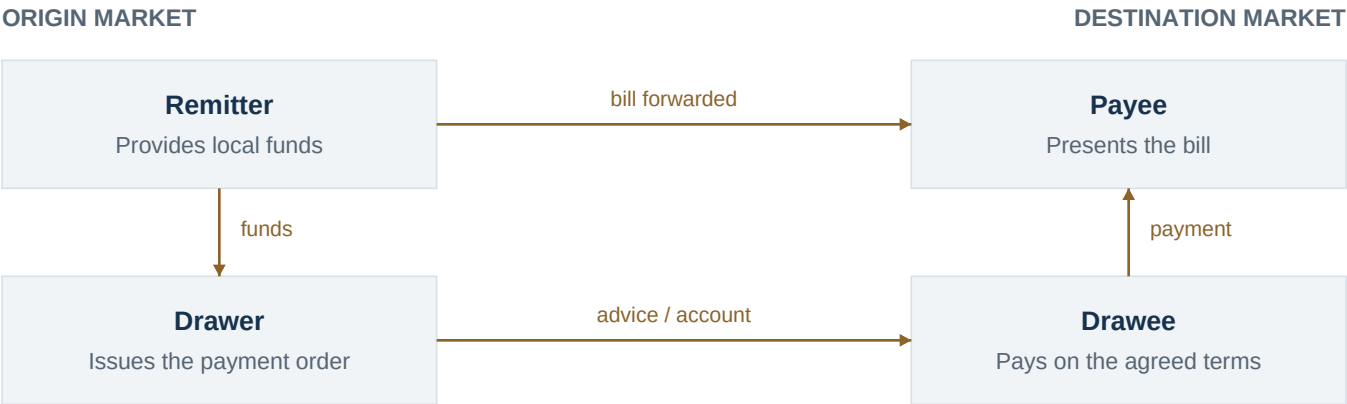
Across these examples, the useful analytical distinction is between transporting an asset and communicating a claim on an intermediary. The second method can reduce the need to carry coin while creating dependence on identification, correspondence, and performance elsewhere. Merchant networks mattered because they connected those tasks. Describing the arrangement only as trust would obscure the records and practical controls through which trust became usable.

09 / BILLS OF EXCHANGE

An instruction could cross a border

In Meir Kohn's reconstruction of European exchange markets, later medieval bills developed within the correspondence of merchant firms, following earlier exchange contracts. By the late thirteenth century, a written order could instruct a correspondent in another market to pay a named recipient. The arrangement connected place, currency, and time, often with payment after a customary interval. A bill was an instruction to pay, distinct from a simple promise made by the writer to the recipient. [16]

FIGURE 5 / A BILL OF EXCHANGE, SIMPLIFIED



Original schematic based on Kohn [16]. Correspondence is condensed; the bill is prepared by the drawer and forwarded to the payee through the remitter.

The four roles in the schematic need not always have been four independent firms. Nor should later practices of unrestricted endorsement and negotiability be assumed for every medieval bill. Kohn's account locates important changes in the legal and commercial treatment of these instruments over time. Presentation, acceptance, and final payment were separate events; the paper itself did not eliminate the possibility of refusal or failure. [16]

Legal form shaped financial form

John Munro shows how restrictions on usury interacted with the development of exchange contracts, rents, and public borrowing. Medieval prohibitions did not simply mean a modern ceiling on excessive interest: the legal characterization of a transaction mattered. The distinction between a loan, an exchange operation, and a purchase of income could affect how a return was justified and enforced. It is therefore inadequate to describe all such arrangements either as disguised loans or as commerce untouched by legal constraint. [17]

For the present argument, the bill's significance lies in the organization of performance. A local transfer obtained a claim payable elsewhere, but successful completion still depended on communication, an available payer, and an accepted means of discharge at destination. The innovation reduced a transport problem by constructing a network of obligations. Its effectiveness must be assessed at the point where those obligations were fulfilled.

10 / DEPOSIT BANKING

The ledger as a means of payment

James McAndrews and William Roberds describe medieval European deposit banks as payment intermediaries, drawing particularly on evidence from Bruges. Money changers received coins and recorded claims; customers could then pay through transfers between balances. Their economic model emphasizes the ability of a common intermediary to organize offsetting transactions. It is a model informed by historical practices, not a claim that every medieval bank operated with an identical balance sheet. [18]

A book transfer altered who held the bank's obligation without necessarily moving coins at that moment. Where the rules treated the transfer as payment, the buyer's obligation to the seller could be discharged while the seller acquired or increased a claim on the banker. The bank was therefore part of the means of payment, not merely a place in which money waited between purchases. [18]

FIGURE 6 / TRANSFERRING AN EXISTING BALANCE

Account	Before	Transfer	After
Buyer	100	-30	70
Seller	20	+30	50
Total claims on bank	120	0	120

Hypothetical units of account; one bank, no fee and no new lending. Thirty units change account holder. No physical cash movement is represented.

The example isolates a transfer of existing balances. It does not depict new lending, fractional reserves, or the creation of additional deposits. If the bank instead grants credit, both its assets and its obligations must be considered. Keeping those operations separate avoids the mistaken inference that every ledger payment either creates money or requires a fresh delivery of coin.

Efficiency and dependence grew together

A common ledger can spare customers repeated handling of metal and help coordinate payments. The same arrangement makes them depend on a shared institution's records and capacity to perform. For a customer who needs coin, a balance is useful only if withdrawal can occur on the relevant terms; for a customer who can pay another account holder, transferability may be sufficient. Those are different liquidity needs.

The decisive development was thus a change in the form of acceptable discharge within a defined network. Participants could accept a change in the bank's accounts as payment between themselves. That acceptance did not remove credit risk from the wider arrangement. It placed the intermediary's integrity and financial condition at the center of a larger number of transactions.

11 / GLOBAL SILVER

Metal remained inside the expanding system

The growth of paper instruments and banking did not end the importance of precious metal. Richard von Glahn's study of Latin American silver in China connects Chinese demand with changing supplies and trading relationships, including Japanese and American sources. It also cautions against collapsing several centuries into one monetary pattern. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, imported coins were frequently converted into silver ingots; the widespread monetary role of intact foreign silver dollars belongs more fully to a later period. [19]

This distinction matters because the arrival of foreign coin does not necessarily imply acceptance of its foreign denomination. A coin can cross a border as valued metal and enter a receiving system on that basis. Likewise, the continued use of bronze cash alongside silver warns against describing an entire economy through the medium most visible in large commercial transfers. [19]

The supply of liquidity had a social geography

Potosí supplies a necessary counterpart to accounts centered on merchants and bankers. UNESCO's description of the mining city connects its extraordinary silver production to mines, processing infrastructure, the mint, and forced Indigenous labor under the colonial *mita*. Water-powered mills and mercury amalgamation formed part of the production system. The metal used in distant payments was produced through coercive labor and intensive environmental change. [20]

A monetary history that begins only when bullion reaches a market hides these conditions. The portability of silver separated its users from the places and people that supplied it. That separation made it easier to discuss monetary abundance as a commercial benefit without accounting for the burdens imposed in producing the metal. The historical analysis must hold both sides of the connection in view.

No single mechanism explains the whole system

These developments do not establish that silver flows alone explain a dynasty's collapse, European commercial expansion, or price movements across continents. Supply changes passed through institutions with different account units, fiscal demands, and payment practices. This paper therefore treats global silver as a material connection among monetary systems, not as proof that those systems had already become one homogeneous market.

12 / PUBLIC BANKS

Institutions for dependable settlement

Public banks appeared in several European settings before the Bank of England. William Roberds and François Velde document diverse institutions with public authority, privileges, and differing approaches to payment and lending. Some sought to provide dependable account money in markets where circulating coin was heterogeneous. They should not all be classified as modern central banks: their jurisdictions, powers, assets, and relationships to government varied. [21]

Institution	Selected historical position
Barcelona, 1401	Municipal public banking predates the seventeenth-century examples. [21, 22]
Amsterdam, 1609	An exchange bank provides a municipal institution for account transfers. [22]
Sweden, 1668	A bank under the Estates follows the failure of Stockholms Banco. [24]
England, 1694	A chartered bank links private subscription to government finance. [25, 26]

Amsterdam: separating account money from circulating coin

The Amsterdam Wisselbank, established in 1609, provided a means of making payments through accounts within a municipally supported institution. Roberds and Velde trace subsequent changes in the relationship between its balances, circulating coins, and withdrawal arrangements. By the seventeenth century, bank money could be valued separately from current money. The receipt system introduced in 1683 further distinguished a transferable bank balance from the entitlement needed to recover deposited coin. [22]

It would consequently be inaccurate to assign one unchanging convertibility rule to the bank's entire history. The relevant institution was a set of account, transfer, and withdrawal arrangements that evolved. The example demonstrates how money used in settlement could acquire a distinctive institutional form even while metal continued to play an important role. [22]

The broader issue was governance. If merchants rely on one institution to complete payments, the management of that institution becomes a common concern. Public status may help establish rules and continuity, yet does not make assets inexhaustible or eliminate competing claims on resources. Their comparative history shows why a public bank's quality cannot be inferred from its title. [21]

13 / BANKNOTES AND PUBLIC CREDIT

New liabilities, unfinished institutions

Stockholm: circulating notes and redemption pressure

According to the Riksbank's historical account, Stockholms Banco issued Europe's first banknotes in 1661. These credit notes could be issued through lending rather than solely against a matching new deposit of metal. Their convenience encouraged use, but excessive issuance and demands for redemption exposed the bank's inability to meet its commitments. In 1664, the authorities required withdrawal of the notes and the calling-in of loans. The episode illustrates the tension between a readily transferable liability and the issuer's available means of payment. [23]

The establishment of the Riksbank in 1668 placed banking under a different political arrangement, associated with the Estates. Institutional reorganization followed the earlier failure, but the later name and role of the Riksbank should not be read backward as evidence that all contemporary central-bank functions existed at foundation. [24]

London: banking and the organization of public borrowing

The Bank of England was founded in 1694 as a private bank whose creation served government finance during war with France. It also conducted banking business, including accepting deposits. The institution's later public responsibilities developed over time; its founding was neither the invention of credit nor the arrival of a fully formed modern central bank. [25]

The Bank's surviving founding records document an initial capital subscription of 1.2 million pounds and a royal charter dated 27 July 1694. Subscription and corporate governance gave the undertaking a defined institutional form. These records provide evidence of how capital and authority were organized, rather than simply establishing that the state had discovered borrowing. [26]

Indeed, Munro traces important antecedents of later public finance to medieval rents and public debt. The significance of 1694 must be placed within that longer history of legally structured claims and revenue commitments. The development was a consequential combination of institutions, not an origin without predecessors. [17]

Stockholm and London therefore belong in a comparative account for different reasons. The first makes the vulnerability of circulating bank liabilities visible; the second shows banking becoming closely joined to organized public credit. Neither case justifies assuming that official sponsorship, private ownership, or paper issuance alone determines stability. The obligations created and the means available to honor them remain the central questions.

14 / COMPARATIVE FINDINGS

Where monetary uncertainty moved

The cases examined here do not describe a succession of complete replacements. They show different ways of organizing acceptance and discharge. The comparison below is an analytical synthesis of those cases; it identifies recurring problems without claiming that every institution within a category followed the same rules.

Arrangement	Problem it could reduce	Dependence that remained
Stamped coin	Repeated weighing and testing.	Authenticity; standards; local acceptance.
Remittance order	Moving metal between locations.	Identification; communication; distant payment.
Circulating paper	Handling and transporting bulky coin.	Issuance; acceptance; fulfillment of terms.
Bill of exchange	Payments across place, currency, and time.	Acceptance; maturity; counterparty performance.
Bank transfer	Delivering coin between account holders.	Records; solvency; withdrawal or transfer access.
Public bank	Unreliable settlement among merchants.	Governance; resources; fiscal demands.

Three implications

First, monetary reliability is task-specific. An authentic coin, a solvent debtor, and a valid payment instruction answer different questions. Success in one does not establish success in the others. Historical institutions often combined several controls because no single device established the entire transaction.

Second, transferability can enlarge the importance of an intermediary. A claim becomes more useful when others will accept it, but a greater number of transactions can then depend on the same issuer or account system. Convenience and concentrated dependence are compatible outcomes of the same arrangement.

Third, confidence has an institutional basis. In these case studies, it concerns expectations about recognizable standards, documentary validity, effective acceptance, or the performance of obligations. Treating confidence as a free-standing sentiment obscures the practices that make it reasonable and the failures that can undermine it.

Table 4. Author's comparative synthesis. Historical bases: coin testing [5]; remittance [10, 13-15]; Chinese paper [10-12]; bills [16, 17]; deposit banking [18]; public banks [21-26].

15 / CONCLUSION

After the coin, the obligation remained

The historical trajectory begun in the companion papers continues through the coin rather than ending with it. Measured obligations preceded minting. Coinage added a durable and recognizable monetary object. Later developments expanded the ways in which people could make payments, transfer claims, and coordinate performance across distance. The result was a growing repertoire of monetary arrangements, not a universal movement away from material money. [1, 2]

The cases differ in their political settings and technical forms, yet repeatedly return to a common problem: an accepted representation of value must connect to an effective means of discharge. A stamp depends on recognized standards. A document depends on its validity and the performance it directs. An account depends on the institution that maintains it. The medium can simplify one part of a transaction while making another relationship more consequential.

By around 1700, transferable paper liabilities, commercial bills, bank accounts, public banks, and organized public borrowing supplied important components of later monetary systems. The surviving evidence does not justify treating this combination as inevitable, uniform, or complete. Chinese paper regimes had already followed different paths; metal remained deeply involved in global commerce; and European institutions still varied in their legal and fiscal foundations.

Implications for the continuing series

The earlier paper interpreted credit risk management as an institutional response to time. This sequel adds distance and transferability. An obligation must survive movement between people, places, and records without losing clarity about the debtor, the amount, the due performance, or the evidence of discharge. The enduring issue is not simply whether a monetary instrument is tangible. It is whether the arrangement surrounding that instrument makes obligations legible and performance dependable.

This interpretation also prevents a celebratory account of innovation. Standardization could be coercively enforced; bullion could be produced through forced labor; convenient liabilities could expose holders to failure. The benefits of monetary change and the distribution of its costs require separate examination. Greater transactional reach is an important historical development, but it is not by itself a measure of social welfare.

Limits of the argument

The selection privileges documented cases that illuminate verification, transfer, and settlement. It does not establish a single origin of banking, settle all disputed chronologies, or encompass the monetary histories of every region. Institutional similarities are treated as comparisons unless evidence of transmission is supplied. Within those limits, the evidence supports the paper's central conclusion: after the coin, the management of obligations remained the foundation of monetary life.

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Images and original illustrations

Cover and Figure 1: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 26.59.2, gift of the American Society for the Excavation of Sardis, 1926 [4]. Figure 3: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 99.35.2386 [9]. Both photographs are Public Domain under The Met Open Access policy. Cropping changes framing only.

Figures 2 and 4-6, the chronology, and comparative tables are original illustrations prepared for this paper. Numerical examples are hypothetical and are labeled accordingly.

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