

Shelf 1: Faces on Coins

Currency expresses the ideals of the government that mints it and the society that uses it. Ancient coins typically carried the image of a divinity or of a ruler, sometimes on each side (obverse and reverse). Attributes and style of the image changed as society changed. Displayed here are coins from the Holmes collection that reveal more than a thousand years of western art and politics. The faces from the past come to you just as they appeared then, in purses and pouches, when exchanged for goods and services, or given with blessings at births, weddings, and funerals.