

Call for papers: Women, Power and Money

Organisers: Richard Allard-Meldrum, Clare Rowan, Victoria Vening Richards

11 June 2026, The University Of Warwick, The Oculus Building, OC1.04

Please submit abstracts of 150-200 words (including a paper title, your contact details, and an abstract) by 12th December to Victoria.Vening-Richards@warwick.ac.uk

Three bursaries of up to £100 are available to assist in travel costs for students, early career scholars, the unwaged or underemployed. If you wish to be considered for a bursary, please let us know when you submit your abstract.

Numismatic objects (coins, notes, tokens, medals, alternative currencies) have historically offered women an opportunity to represent themselves and their positions, as well as to make comment on contemporary concerns. Female rulers issued currencies and used these to represent themselves and their power in different ways, while the female form might be used to represent ideals, geographic regions or other societal virtues as a personification. Women from different walks of life have created par anumismatica (tokens, medals) for different purposes: to serve as small change in their business dealings, to commemorate benefactions or to consolidate friendships or other relationships. Women have also played a role in the design and production of currencies: it was a female photographer, Dorothy Wilding, for example, who photographed Queen Elizabeth for her numismatic portrait in 1953. Currency might also be employed in protest and rebellion, carrying slogans connected to women's movements and societal change, embodied in the 'Votes for Women' pennies of the nineteenth century. We should also consider the role of women and the gendered implications within the modern transformation from physical notes and coinage to electronic tokens and cashless payment methods.

This conference seeks to highlight frequently overlooked aspects of women's history, and to refine our understanding of how numismatic objects can be best utilised to uncover diverse female experiences. The conference seeks contributions from scholars of different fields (e.g. sociology, anthropology, history, classics, politics), as well as from the museum and heritage sector. A (non-exclusive) set of questions we wish to explore are:

- The role of money in the evolution of female representation
- The role of money in communicating female power
- The use of money within gender studies. How has the approach to money as a source in gender studies evolved or changed?
- The economic role of money in generating female wealth, agency, independence and networks
- Women and agency: why did cultures that are seen as overwhelmingly patriarchal still feel the need to represent women on coinage?
- How and why did women issue numismatic objects?
- Female patronage and participation in the production of different forms of money and par anumismatica

- The use of money to voice dissatisfaction or to gather support for different causes
- Gender representations and use across different forms of money, including cryptocurrencies and NFTs. Does the transformation of the physical media of money affect gender relations and female representation?
- Contexts or cultures in which women are barred or hindered in relation to money