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This book is written for the general reader, who may use it as a reference source to the important monetary experiences that have either
shaped the evolution of money and banking systems or that for other reasons are regarded as interesting monetary experiments. The reader who does not know where to start may want to read the book from beginning to end. In the spirit of the adage that all sides of an issue cannot be seen from just one angle, this book approaches the subject of money as seen from every
angle represented by important monetary systems and experiments in history. Innovations in monetary systems invariably entail a redistribution of income, and therefore the subject of money is not one we expect to see handled without prejudice. This book, however, strives to treat the subject without trying to prove or disprove current theories in monetary
economics. Some value judgments can hardly be avoided in descriptions of episodes of hyperinflation, which remind us of the monetary insanity that lurks beneath the surface of fiat money systems. Also, complex scenarios of monetary debacles often seem clearer when seen through the trained eyes of the leading economists in history and theories can lend organization
to an otherwise chaotic series of events. In this book theories are advanced only to bring to light the order that exists where there appears to be no order, and to enliven the discussion with thought-provoking ideas. The main organizing principle in this book consists in the common characteristics shared by various types of money and monetary systems, rather than unifying theoretical threads.
that can be traced from the first page to the last.

This book presents the subject of money in the form of more than 300 topics ranging from whale tooth money, fur money, and tobacco money to the mechanisms of the modern international monetary system. Individual topics are intended to stand on their own merits, each striving to penetrate as a roving spotlight
all the nooks and crannies of monetary systems, lingering over the idiosyncrasies, and looking for archaic relics in modern systems and modern traits in ancient systems.

The professionally trained economists will miss in this book much of the technical jargon and sophisticated mathematical and statistical analysis associated with the science of monetary economics. Perhaps
the absence of theory and jargon will be repaid in the revelation of the almost endless variety of monetary systems and experiments that deserve our attention, and can teach us something about the nature of money.

The composition of this book was enriched substantially by conversations with Dr. Ron Fritze, professor of history at Lamar University, whose far-flung
knowledge of history and ancient societies gave me many clues concerning the whereabouts of unique monetary experiences. In discussing the treatment of various subjects, I always benefited from the clarification that any issue received at his hands. The hearty cooperation of the librarians at the Mary and John Gray Library on the Lamar University campus
impressed me during the process of