Coinage of the Greco-Roman World

Coinage of the Greco-Roman World:

Gods in the Palm of your Hand

By

Roger L. Papke

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures x

Tables and Lists xii

Maps in Appendix xiii

Introduction 1

Timeline 3

Chapter 1 5
Achaemenid Persia
Achaemenid Kings of Persia, 550 to 330 BCE 7
Coins of the Era of Achaemenids 8

Chapter 2 15
Greece
The cultural identity of the Greeks 15
Greek vs. Hellenistic 18
Greek coins and denominations 20
Gods, spirits, animals, and men on Greek coins 22
City-states of the Greek world 23
Mainland Greece and the nearby islands 23
Leagues of Greek city-states 53
City-states of Ionia and the Asian coast 60
Magna Graecia and Sicily 93
Ancient colonies of Magna Graecia including Sicily 96
Coins of Magna Graecia 98
Sicily 106
Coins of Sicily outside of Syracuse 109
Syracuse 118
Rulers/Tyrants of Syracuse 119
Coins of Syracuse 120
Sicily after the Greeks 125
The enduring symbol of the triskeles 129

Chapter 3 142
Phoenicia
Coins of Phoenicia 146
Coins of Carthage 154
Coins of Phoenicia under Rome 156

Chapter 4 160
Macedonia
Kings of Macedonia 162
Coins of Macedonia prior to Alexander III 163
Coins of Alexander the Great 170
Coins of Macedonia after Alexander the Great 174

Chapter 5 182
The Hellenistic World
The Diadochi (The successors of Alexander the Great) 182
Olympias 188
Coins of the Diadochi 190
Dynasties of Macedonian and Hellenistic rulers 194
List of the Seleucid rulers 198
Coins of the Seleucid Empire 200
Cleopatra Thea 215
Rulers of The Ptolemaic Empire 228
Coins of the Ptolemaic Empire 229
Arsinoë II 231
Shards of Lysimachia 237
Divinities on Hellenistic coins 259

Chapter 6 261
The Indo-Greeks
Bactrian and Indo-Greek rulers 264
Coins of Indo-Scythian rulers 275
Coins of Indian and other Eastern rulers 277

Chapter 7 282
The Parthians and Sasanians
Parthia 282
Parthian coins 284
The Sasanians 287
Sasanian coins 288

Chapter 8 291
The Celts
Coins of the Celts 292
Copies of coins of Philip of Macedonia 292
Copies of coins of Alexander the Great 295
Copies of coins from Macedon under its last kings 299
Celtic copy of Dionysus coin from Thasos 301
Celtic copies of Roman Republican denarii 304
Celtic copy of a Roman Republican Quinarii 309
The ultimate defeat of the Celts 310

Chapter 9 311
Rome
Roman coinage 311
The cursus honorum 312
The Roman Republic moneyers 314
Provincial coins and client kingdoms 316
Weights and measurements 317
The Expansion of the Roman Republic 318
Coins of the Roman Republic 319
Roman Tetradrachms from the Republican Period 320
Silver Coins of the Roman Republic 329
Bronze Coins of the Roman Republic 372
The "Fall of Rome", from citizens to subjects 377
The end of the Roman Republic 379
Coins of the era of the Roman civil wars 388
The Roman Empire 395
The Julio-Claudian Emperors 395
Augustus 396
Tiberius 412
Caligula 417
Claudius 419
Nero 420
Silver coins of the Julio-Claudians 423
Bronze and silver alloy coins of the Julio-Claudians 426
The Year of the Four Emperors 443
Coins of the Year of the Four Emperors 446
The Flavian Dynasty 448
Vespasian 448
Titus 449
Domitian 450

Coins of the Flavian Dynasty 452
Other coins of the Flavian era 455
The "Five" Good Emperors 457
Nerva 458
Trajan 459
Hadrian 460
Antoninus Pius 462
Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus 464
Silver coins from the years of the Five Good Emperors 467
Bronze and Silver alloy coins of the Five Good Emperors 477
Commodus and the Year of the Five Emperors 482
Commodus 483
The Five Emperors 485
Coins from the Year of the Five Emperors 488
The Severan Dynasty 493
Coins from the years of the Severan Dynasty 496
The Year of the Six Emperors 508
Coins from the Year of the Six Emperors 511
Emperors during the Crisis of the Third Century 517
Phase 1, 249-260 CE 517
Coins from the Crisis of the Third Century Phase 1 522
Phase 2, 253 -275 CE 527
Coins from the Crisis of the Third Century Phase 2 533
Phase 3, 275 -285 CE 542
Coins from the Crisis of the Third Century Phase 3 545
Diocletian and the Tetrarchy 548
Damnatio Memoriae 554
Coins from Diocletian to Constantine 557
Divinities on Roman coinage 569
Constantine 573
The Dynasty of Constantine 573
Constantine and the fall of the Olympians 574
The last years of the Pagan Empire 580
Coins from Constantine to Julian 581
Byzantine coins 588

Chapter 10 590
Epilog, Gods in the Modern Era
Liberty and Revolution 591
Coins of Britannia 591
The evolution of Liberty from Britannia 593

Liberty on coins of the Roman Empire 596
Coins of the French Revolution 598
The Girl and the Goddess 600
French coins and Marianne 603
Marianne through French history 604
Liberty in French Territories 609
French colonial coins 611
French Indo-China 615
American Liberty 616
Liberty on Early American coins 617
Washington token with Liberty 619
Roman Version of Seated Liberty 620
American versions of Seated Liberty 620
American Liberty coins 624
Mercury or Liberty? 634
Mercury and winged Roma 637
Liberty and Native Americans 637
Numismatic eagles 640
Ancient eagles 640
American eagles 641
Liberty throughout the world 641
Liberty of former Spanish colonies 643
Coins of former Spanish colonies 646
Coins of Portugal and its former colonies 653
Liberia 657
Coins of Liberia 658
Spain 660
Coins of Spain 662
Switzerland 665
The apotheosis of George Washington 668
Concluding thoughts 671

Appendix 672
Maps

Bibliography 679
Internet resources 682

Index 683

List of Figures

1.1-1.7	Coins of the Era of Achaemenids
2.0-2.32	Coins of ancient Greek City-States
2.33-2.38	Coins of Leagues of City-States
2.39-2.70	Coins of City-States of Ionia and the Asian Coast
2.71-2.81	Coins of Magna Graecia
2.82-2.95	Coins of Sicily outside of Syracuse
2.96-2.104	Coins of Syracuse
2.105-2.120	The triskeles
3.1-3.9	Coins of Phoenicia
3.10.3.13	Coins of Carthage
3.14-3.18	Coins of Phoenicia under Rome
4.1-4.9	Coins of Macedonia prior to Alexander III
4.10.4.11	Coins of Alexander the Great
4.12-4.13	Coins with Zeus
4.14-4.25	Coins of Macedonia after Alexander III
5.1-5.8	Coins of the Diadochi
5.9-5.44	Coins of the Seleucid Empire
5.45-5.55	Coins of the Ptolemaic Empire
5.56-5.84	Coins of other Hellenistic kingdoms
6.1-6.18	Coins of Indo-Greek kingdoms
6.19-6.21	Coins of Indo-Scythian rulers
6-22-6-29	Coins of Indian and other Eastern rulers
7.1-7.5	Coins of Parthia
7.6-7.8	Coins of the Sasanians
8.1-8.16	Coins of the Celts
9.1-9.77	Silver coins of the Roman Republic
9.78-9.85	Bronze Coins of the Roman Republic
9.86-9.97	Coins of the era of the Roman civil wars
9.98, 9.100-129	Coins of the Julio-Claudian Empire
9.99	Simplified Julio-Claudian family tree
9.130-9.134	Coins of the Year of the Four Emperors
9.135-9.140	Coins of the Flavian Dynasty
9.141-9.142	Other coins of the Flavian Era
9.143-9.170	Coins of the "Five" Good Emperors
9.171-9.180	Coins from the Year of the Five Emperors
9.181-9.202	Coins of the Severan Dynasty

9.203-9.210	Coins of The Year of the Six Emperors
9.211-9.249	Coins of the Crisis of the Third Century
9.250-9.273	Coins from Diocletian to Constantine
9.274-9.287	Coins from Constantine to Julian
9.288-9.289	Byzantine coins
10.1-10.3	Coins of Britannia
10.4-10.6	Coins showing evolution of Liberty
10.7-10.10	Coins of the French Revolution
10.11-10.18	French coins and Marianne
10.19-10.27	Coins in French Territories
10.28-10.50	Liberty on American coins
10.51-10.53	Mercury on coins
10.54-10.55	Liberty and Native Americans
10.56-10.57	Eagles on coins
10.58-10.72	Coins of former Spanish colonies
10.73-10.79	Coins of former Portugese colonies
10.80-10.82	Coins of Liberia
10.83-10.86	Coins of Spain
10.87-10.90	Coins of Switzerland
10.91	Washington quarter
10.92	The Apotheosis of George Washington

TABLES AND LISTS

Timeline	3
Achaemenid Kings of Persia	7
Leagues of Greek City States	54
Ancient colonies of Magna Graecia	96
Rulers/Tyrants of Syracuse	119
Kings of Macedonia	162
List of the Seleucid rulers	198
Rulers of The Ptolemaic Empire	228
Bactrian and Indo-Greek rulers	264
Weights and measures	317

Maps in Appendix

Region	Page
1. Asia	673
2. Europe	673
3. Greece	674
4. Shards of Lysmachia	674
5. Phoenicia	675
6. Magna Graecia & Sicily	675
7. Leagues	676
8. Alexander's Empire	676
9. Armenia	677
10. Macedonia & Paeonia	677
11. Roman Empire	678

INTRODUCTION

This book describes history that you can hold in your hand and connect youself to another time or place, in effect, handfuls of history. These ancient coins, artifacts of the Greco-Roman world, are well over a thousand years old. Coins are associated with commerce, both domestic and international, but they are also ethnography, reporting the icons and images of the peoples using them. Most of the coins illustrated show wear from circulation, as they have passed from hand to hand and carry their own individual histories with them.

The root of commerce is the exchange of goods. The Phoenicians and other ancient sea-going peoples were experts at transporting goods that were abundant in one location to another where they were in demand. On land, caravans would achieve the same purpose. Some trade goods are, of course, perishable, while others are not. Among the less perishable of ancient trade goods were metals including copper, tin, and iron. Tin and copper were the raw materials needed to make bronze, which could in turn be shaped into weapons or utilitarian objects. By the year 1,000 BCE, the ancient peoples appreciated the superior qualities of iron, and pieces of iron began to be objects for exchange, arguably the predecessors of coinage. In ancient Greece, iron spits were known as obols, and that word was later applied to a basic unit of small silver coins. In Africa large iron throwing knives ceased to be used so much as weapons as pieces of currency, even through the 20th century. In Asia Minor, specifically in the kingdom of Lydia, as far back as the 6th century BCE, small pieces of the precious metals gold, silver, and electrum, an alloy of gold and silver, began to be used as coinage.

The scarcity of these precious metals made it reasonable to assign and accept some value to these small nuggets, since these metals had certainly been trade items for centuries. As trade items, the values of such metals scaled with weight. Their usefulness as coinage came with the standardization of specific weights with units of currency and their association with civic authorities in the form of images stamped on the pieces of precious metal. These images define the origin, history, and value of each coin. Therefore, the stories of this book are very much concerned with the images on these ancient coins. Some of the images are emblematic of symbols of the power of the ancient kings who minted

them: warriors, lions, or other beasts. Other images are of totems representing the city-states of their origin, like the turtles on coins from Aegina, one of the first Greek states to mint coins. Many of the images, especially on early Greek coins, represent the deities they worshiped or other aspects of their religion. Of course, many of the images are of the Olympians, but there are also images of allegorical gods or goddesses, or lesser deities such as an eponymous nymph associated with a river that gave a city its name.

By about the time of Alexander the Great (Alexander III, circa 323 BCE) there began to be changes in some of the imagery on Greek coins. The most iconic coins of Alexander represent Heracles on the obverse and Zeus on the reverse; however, it is quite likely that the image of Heracles is based on Alexander himself. Certainly, after his death Alexander was portrayed on the coins of his successors as a god. From that point on, until the absorption of the Greek kingdoms into the domains of the Roman Republic, Greek coins most often featured an image of a secular ruler as a god.

The Romans date the founding of their city to 753 BCE and the founding of the Roman Republic to 509 BCE; however, Roman coins mostly date after 211 BCE, when they first began producing silver denarii. Throughout the time of the Roman Republic, the most common image on their coins was the eponymous goddess Roma, often paired with Nike (Victory) or other mythological or allegorical gods or goddesses. Roman coins did also often feature figures or events from Roman history but usually with some religious context.

The final transition from the Roman Republic to the Roman Empire was coincidental with the Roman defeat of the last Greek Kingdom, which was founded by a successor to Alexander the Great, the Egyptian Kingdom ruled at the end by Cleopatra VII. From that time forward, most Roman coins would bear images of the current emperor, and after the death of Augustus, as with the Hellenistic kingdoms before them, the emperors were to be worshiped as gods. Due to the Hellenistic traditions, in the eastern provinces of the Empire, the emperors were often worshiped as gods while they were still alive. However, in the Western Empire, they were usually only worshipped after their death, and then only if their deification was officially sanctioned by the senate or the succeeding emperor.

This book's primary focus is on Greco-Roman coins from their earliest days up to the last Roman Emperor of the East to worship pagan deities, Julian the Apostate. Look at these ancient coins and see the images of gods that you can place in the palm of your hand. In the Epilog, I discuss the survival of at least one of these ancient deities on coins that you may find in your own pocket.

TIMELINE

550 BCE	Rise of the Persian Empire
494-429 BCE	Pericles of Athens
490 BCE	First Persian invasion of Greece
480 BCE	Second Persian invasion of Greece
458 BCE	Oresteia of Aeschylus performed
431-404 BCE	Peloponnesian War
411 BCE	Lysistrata of Aristophanes performed
399 BCE	Trial and death of Socrates
359-336 BCE	Macedonian conquest of Greece
331 BCE	Alexander's conquest of Persia
323 BCE	Death of Alexander the Great
301 BCE	Battle of Ipsus
281 BCE	Death of Lysimachus
287-212 BCE	Archimedes
264-241 BCE	First Punic War
250 BCE	Greco-Bactrian Kingdom founded
218-201 BCE	Second Punic War
214-205 BCE	First Macedonian War with Rome
200-196 BCE	Second Macedonian War with Rome
196-164 BCE	The several marriages of Laodice IV
188 BCE	Antiochus III the Great, War with Rome
180 BCE	Demetrius invades India
172-168 BCE	Third Macedonian War with Rome
170 BCE	Eucratides conquers Bactria
167-168 BCE	Antiochus IV Persecution of Jews
150-148 BCE	Fourth Macedonian War with Rome
150-126 BCE	The several marriages of Cleopatra Thea
149-146 BCE	Third Punic War
146 BCE	Roman destruction of Corinth
145 BCE	The Yuezhi conquer Bactria
146-141 BCE	Parthian conquests of Western Seleucia
133 BCE	Pergamon bequeathed to Rome
107 BCE	Marian reforms of Roman Army
91-88 BCE	Roman Social War
88 BCE	Sack of Athens by Sulla
88-84 BCE	First Mithridatic War with Rome

83-81 BCE	Second Mithridatic War with Rome
82-81 BCE	Dictatorship of Sulla
75-63 BCE	Third Mithridatic War with Rome
48 BCE	Death of Pompey the Great
46-41 BCE	Dictatorship of Julius Caesar
40 BCE	Battle of Philippi (Death of Brutus)
31 BCE	Battle of Actium (Death of Mark Antony)
27 BCE	Octavian declared Augustus
14 CE	Death of Caesar Augustus
50 CE	Failure of the last Indo-Greek Kingdom
69 CE	Death of Nero, Year of the Four Emperors
69-96 CE	The Flavian Dynasty
96-180 CE	The Five Good Emperors
180 -192 CE	Commodus
192-193 CE	The Year of the Five Emperors
193-235 CE	The Severan Dynasty
238 CE	The Year of the Six Emperors
239-284 CE	Crisis of the Third Century
284-305 CE	Diocletian and the Tetrarchy
305-363 CE	Constantine and his successors

CHAPTER 1

ACHAEMENID PERSIA

Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Achaemenid Dynasty, ruled a relatively small kingdom on the Iranian plateau that was unsuccessfully attacked by the Medes in 553 BCE. The Mede King Astyages, the grandfather of the Persian King Cyrus according to legend, was captured, and Cyrus absorbed the kingdom of his grandfather into his own, establishing the First Persian Empire. For Cyrus, this was the first in a tremendous series of conquests. The growing power of the Persians attracted the attention of the Lydian King Croesus, who famously asked the Delphic oracle the question of whether he should attack the Persians, and even more famously misinterpreted the reply, that if he did, "a great empire would fall," which the Lydian Empire did in 546 BCE. Cyrus went on to conquer Babylon and Phoenicia. It was Cyrus who released the Jews from captivity in Babylon and allowed them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple in 538 BCE.

Cyrus' son Cambyses conquered Egypt in 525 BCE. However, while Cambyses was in Egypt, the Persian priesthood staged a coup and installed one of their own, Gaumata, as Emperor. Gaumata ruled for only seven months before being overthrown in 522 BCE by Darius I, the Great. Darius further expanded the Persian Empire toward the borders of India, into North Africa, along the coasts of the Black Sea, and into Thrace and Macedonia.

The success of the Persian Empire relied on good internal organization and the acquiescence of the subject peoples, who, in general, were well treated as long as the regional governors, known as satraps, were able to collect their taxes. Among the subject peoples of Persia were a number of Greek city-states in Western Anatolia including Ephesus, Rhodes, and other Ionian islands off the coast of Caria. These city-states were encouraged by mainland Greeks, notably Athens and Eretria, to revolt against the tyrants that the Persians installed as their local rulers. The revolts were brutally put down, and Darius turned his territorial ambitions toward Greece in revenge. In 490 BCE the Persians landed a substantial

force on the Greek mainland north of Athens but were defeated at the Battle of Marathon.

Darius died in 485 BCE and was succeeded by his son Xerxes, who resumed his father's plans for a second invasion of mainland Greece. Xerxes prepared a huge land force supported by a large navy. The army crossed the Hellespont on pontoon bridges and entered northern Greece, where they had allies in the Macedonians. Although the army of Xerxes was delayed by the Spartan-led force at Thermopylae, they made their way to Athens, which they captured and burned. The bulk of the Athenian forces, following Themistocles' interpretation of the Delphic oracle statement that they should "trust their wooden walls," had taken to sea and devastated the Persian Navy in the Straits of Salamis. Afterward, Xerxes began a retreat with much of his army, leaving his general Mardonius to finish off the Greeks. However, Mardonius' forces were soundly defeated by a combined army from Sparta, Athens, Corinth, and Megara at Plataea.

Although the period of Persian expansion and overt hostility to Greece ended after the Second Greco-Persian War, the Persians continued to be viewed by the Greeks as their ancient enemies. Ironically, great Athenian statesmen, including Themistocles, who fell afoul of fickle polis politics, would sometimes go to Persia for refuge.

The administrative organization and infrastructure of the Persian state built by Xerxes, his ancestors, and descendants served the Empire for 130 years after the death of Xerxes in 465 BCE, and to a large degree, with changes in the top-level administrators, would continue to serve their Macedonian conquerors and the later Parthian and Sasanian dynasties. Using a system originally developed by the Medes, the Empire was divided into provinces known as satraps. The term satrap also applied to the provincial ruler. In provinces with strong ethnic identities, the satraps were often appointed from the former ruling families and were considered kings within their domains, so the emperor was quite literally the King of Kings. Provinces that paid their taxes and showed proper submissive respect for the Empire were largely permitted to function autonomously. Satraps who failed at this, or who were suspected of rebellion, were replaced.

Interestingly, although the Persian Empire encompassed all of the major trading routes of the ancient Silk Road, the Persians were not famous minters of money. Most taxes were collected as grain or other goods. Probably more of the gold and silver in the Persian treasuries were turned to currency by their Macedonian successors than was coined by the Persians themselves. The most common coin of the Achaemenid Era was the small silver siglos. These were marked with the image of the king

running with a bow on the obverse and with a simple impression from the anvil on the reverse, called an incuse (e.g. Fig. 1.2). The same style of coin was used for more than two centuries, and so it is generally not possible to date a coin to the reign of a particular king. However, late in the era of the Achaemenid rulers, one of the Western satraps, Pharnabazos of Tarsos, began to mint his own coins (Fig. 1.4) that had a distinct resemblance to Greek coins, perhaps even inspiring later coins of Alexander the Great.

Achaemenid Kings of Persia, 550 to 330 BCE

Cyrus II the Great	550-529 BCE
Cambyses II	529-522 BCE
Darius I	522-486 BCE
Xerxes I	486-465 BCE
Artaxerxes I	465-425 BCE
Xerxes II	425-424 BCE
Darius II	423-404 BCE
Artaxerxes II	404-359 BCE
Artaxerxes III	359-338 BCE
Arses	338-336 BCE
Darius III	336-330 BCE

The era of Achaemenids ended with the conquest of Persia by the army of Alexander III in a series of three major battles: Granicus (334 BCE), Issus (333 BCE), and Gaugamela (331 BCE). The entire empire of the Persians became the bulk of that of Alexander III, who died in Babylon in 323 BCE. The fate of the Persian lands then fell to the hands of the Diadochi (successors) and set the background for the story of the Hellenistic world. Ultimately, many of the Persian satraps were incorporated into the empire of the Macedonian general Seleucus and formed the basis for the Seleucid Empire. The heirs of Seleucus kept their hold on the bulk of Persia for roughly a hundred years, but, even by then, their domains were being eroded, as the eastern satraps established an independent Greco-Bactrian (later Greco-Indian) kingdom. In the heartland of Persia, the Seleucids were challenged by the Parthians.

Coins of the era of Achaemenids

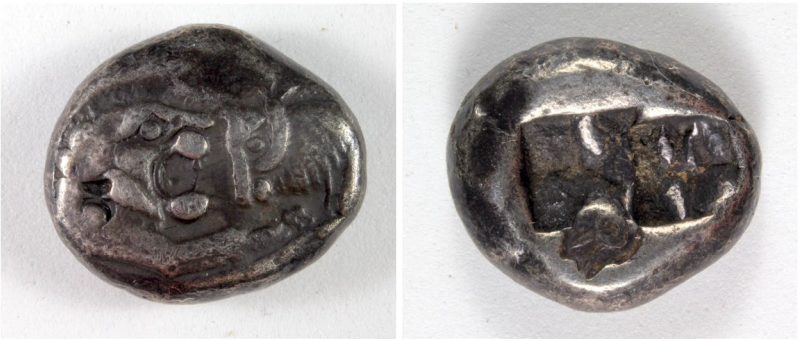

Fig. 1.1
564-539 BCE, Kings of Lydia, Croesus, silver Siglos or half Stater.
16 mm, 5.4 g. Obverse: Confronted foreparts of lion and bull. Reverse: Two incuse square punches. Bankers' mark.

"As rich as Croesus" is an ancient simile believed to have historic validity. Croesus was the last ruler of the ancient kingdom of Lydia, which expanded across the western half of the Anatolian peninsula, beginning from a time shortly after the Trojan War (~1200 BCE). At its greatest extent, Lydia incorporated all the Ionian Greek cities of mainland Anatolia. To the east, Lydia faced the expanding dominion of the Achaemenid Persian Empire.

Although the Lydians were not Greek, they were in close enough contact with the Greeks that the stories of several Lydian kings are incorporated into Greek mythology. Tantalus, who suffers eternal thirst in Hades, was believed to be the primordial ruler of mythic Lydia, and Niobe was his proud daughter. Midas of the "golden touch" was a king of Phrygia, which was later absorbed into the Lydian Empire. Midas was cleansed of his curse by bathing in the river Pactolus, which later proved to be a rich source for electrum, an alloy of silver and gold and the source of the wealth of the Lydian kings.

The kings of Lydia are credited with inventing coinage for commerce. The very first coins were of electrum and produced during the reign of Alyattes I (circa 591-560 BCE), who was the father of Croesus. During the time of Croesus, processes were developed to produce pure gold and silver from the electrum ore. This led to the world's first currency system based on gold and silver, around 560 BCE. These were relatively simple coins, pellets more than disks, and struck with a lion facing an ox on the obverse

and a simple incuse on the reverse (Fig 1.1). As with later Greek coins, the larger Lydian coins, initially known as Croeseids and later associated with staters, were of too high a value for ordinary commerce, so much smaller fractional units were also produced.

As mentioned above, around 548 BCE, Croesus sent an embassy to Delphi to ask how he should deal with the growing Persian threat. The famous reply was that if he should attack Persia, then a great empire would be destroyed. Although the Lydians had some early victories against the Persians, by 546 BCE, the Persians under Cyrus captured the Lydian capital of Sardis, and Lydia was, henceforth, a province of Persia. The early coins of the Achaemenid Empire were modeled after those of Lydia, with an image of the Persian king as a warrior on the obverse.

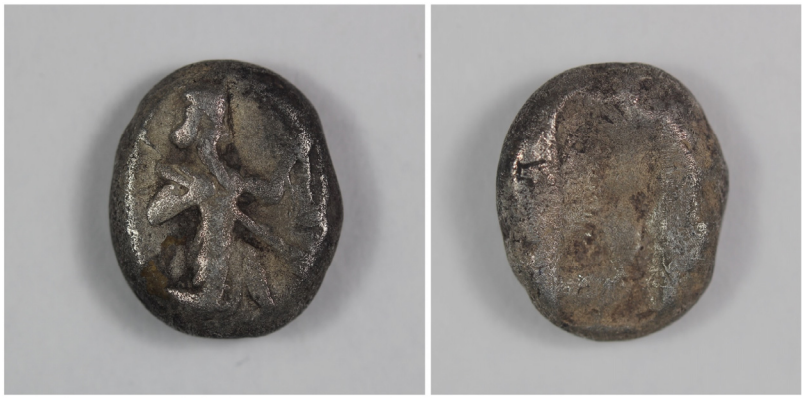

Fig. 1.2
485-420 BCE, Achaemenid Kingdom (Persia), silver Siglos.
15 x 12 mm, 5.40 g. Obverse: Persian king in a running-kneeling stance, holding a scepter and bow. Reverse: incuse punch.

For the most part, coinage in the Achaemenid Empire was modeled after the older coins of Lydia. One of the most common units was the silver siglos, issued from 520 to 330 BCE, with a standard weight of 5.40-5.60 grams. One siglos was roughly equal to 7.5 Attic obols. The Persians had several mints, but arguably two of most important were at the capital of Persepolis and the city of Susa on the route to Mesopotamia. Like other very old coins, they were struck with an image on just one side and had a divot, known as an incuse, on the reverse. In addition to being struck with an image on one side only, the sigloi minted by the Achaemenid emperors, were rather unembellished, usually with an image of the king running and

holding a spear or a bow. It is not possible to identify these coins with particular kings. Later coins issued by provincial satraps were more like typical Greco-Roman coins.

Map 1. Asia; Susa, Persepolis

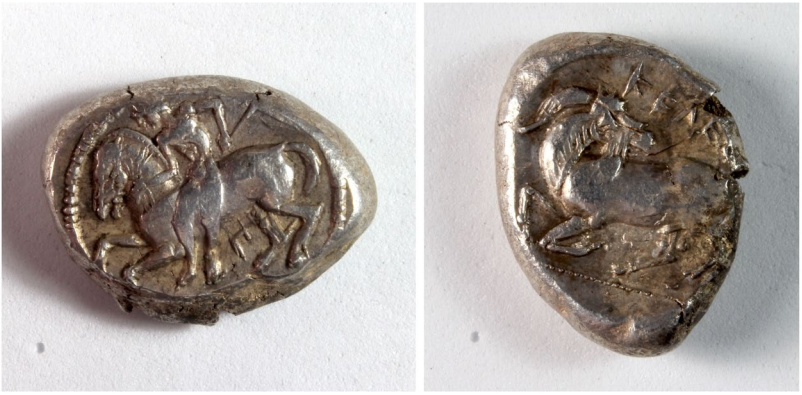

Fig. 1.3
425-350 BCE, Celenderis, Cilicia, silver Stater.
14 x 22 x 3 mm, 10.76 g. Obverse: Youthful nude rider holding the reins with his right hand and a goad in his left, seated sideways on horse prancing to left, preparing to jump off and run alongside the horse. Reverse: ΚΕΛΕ Goat kneeling to the left, its head turned back to the right.

Celenderis was one of the most ancient cities in the region of Anatolia known as Cilicia. Archeological evidence suggests that it was first settled by Phoenicians and then later enlarged with Greek colonists from Samos in the 8th century BCE. Along with the rest of Anatolia, it was incorporated into the Persian Empire during the 6th century BCE. Following the Greek victory over Persia in 480 BCE, Celenderis became a member of the Athens-led Delian League and independent of Persia for a brief period of time, when it prospered as a trading port. In 454 BCE, Celenderis left the Delian League and became part of the Achaemenid-allied Kingdom of Cilicia. However, like the Phoenician cities of the Levant, even as part of Cilicia, Celenderis could retain a certain amount of autonomy as long as the taxes to Persia were paid. The mint at Celenderis produced some the nicest coins of that time, and, like the Achaemenid coins, the coins of Kition, and other contemporary Asian coins, the coin is struck on something more like a nugget of silver than a flat disk.

Map 1. Asia, Celenderis

Fig. 1.4
379-320 BCE, Pharnabazos II (Pharnabazus), Satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, silver Stater.
23 mm, 9.41 g. Obverse: Baaltars seated left, holding lotus-tipped scepter. Reverse: Bearded male head (Pharnabazos) right, wearing crested helmet. The coin was minted in Cilicia, Tarsus.

There is a noteworthy resemblance between the image of Baal (Baaltars) on the obverse of this coin and the image of Zeus on the coins of Alexander the Great. Although it may be the case that the primary inspiration for the image of Zeus on Alexander's coins was the statue of Zeus by Phidias, housed at the temple in Olympia, it has been suggested that the image of Zeus on Alexander's coins (Fig. 4.11) would have been accepted as Baal by the new Persian subjects of Alexander. An even more remarkable resemblance between the Zeus of Alexander's coins and the Baal of the coins minted in Cilicia can be seen on the coin of Mazaeus (Fig. 1.6), where Baal holds an eagle as he does on the Hellenistic coins.

Although the territorial expansion of Persia largely ended after the defeat of Xerxes in 480 BCE, Persia remained a major power in Asia Minor. During this time, the Persian satraps ruled like kings in their own provinces. The line of rulers known as the Pharnacid Dynasty ruled in Asia Minor, in Hellespontine Phrygia, and Tarsos in Cilicia. This coin is attributed to Pharnabazos II. The last of this line was Pharnabazos III, who was defeated by the forces of Alexander the Great. For ten years, as a young man, Pharnabazos III was exiled with his family to Macedonia, where he would have met the young Alexander. Perhaps an important bond was formed during that time, because after his escape from the forces of Alexander during the initial conquest of Persia, Pharnabazos III

later reconciled with the Macedonians and served as a cavalry commander for Eumenes during the Wars of the Diadochi.

Map 4. Shards of Lysmachia, Phrygia

Fig. 1.5
380-362 BCE, Lycian King Perikles, Lion & Triskeles, silver coin.
17 mm, 2.45 g. Obverse: Lion's scalp facing. Reverse: Triskeles in incuse circle, PAR EK LA in three segments.

Perikles was the last documented Dynast of Lycia. The term dynast has come into use among historians, but that is not a native term. The Lycian inscriptions indicate the monarch was titled *xñtawati*, more phonetically, khñtawati. They were what we would consider client kings of Persia.

The stylized *triskeles* (three legs) was common on coins of this period. It is simpler in design than the triskeles of the coins from Aspendos or later coins from Sicily, not clearly representing human legs, so it may not have a common origin or the same significance.

Lycia, located on the southwestern coast of what is now Turkey, was absorbed into the Achaemenid Persian Empire around 600 BCE. Previously it had been linguistically and ethnically independent, but during the Persian occupation the native people largely vanished and were replaced by people of Persian decent. Lycia was intermittently independent following the Greco-Persian wars but later came to be dominated again by the Persians until the time of Alexander the Great. This coin comes from the second period of Persian domination, when the Persians granted the dynastic rulers of Lycia a certain amount of autonomy. Lycia was one of the territories contested for by the successors of Alexander. Once part of Lysimachia, it ultimately was ruled by the Ptolomies until roughly 200 BCE.

Map 4. Shards of Lysmachia

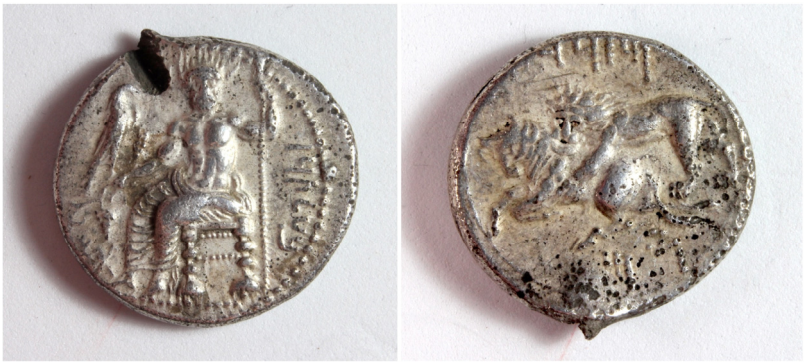

Fig. 1.6
361-334 BCE, Mazaeus, Satrap of Cilicia, Baal/lion attacking bull, silver Stater.
22 mm, 10.78 g. Obverse: Baaltars seated holding lotus-tipped scepter and eagle, grapes, ear of corn left, BLTRZ right. Reverse: lion attacking bull, MZDI above.

Mazaeus was the second-to-last Persian Satrap of Cilicia. His successor in Cilicia was Arsames, who was ultimately expelled by Alexander the Great. Mazaeus later served Alexander as Satrap of Babylon.

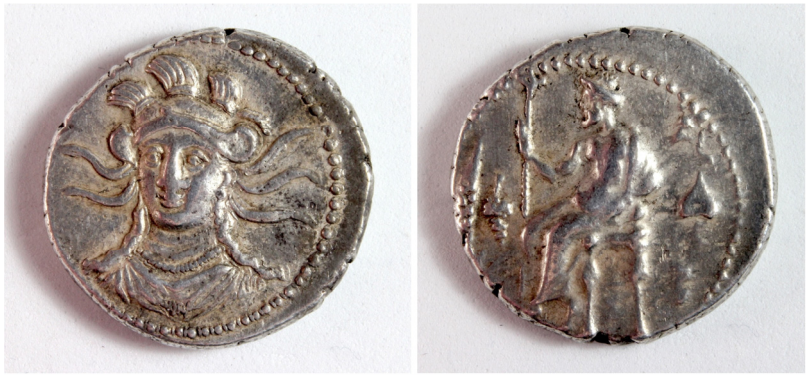

Fig. 1.7
333-323 BCE, Balakros, Satrap of Cilicia, silver Soloi.
24 mm, 10.7 g. Obverse: Draped bust of Athena facing slightly left, wearing triple-crested helmet. Reverse: Baaltars seated left on throne, holding lotus-tipped scepter; grain ear and grape bunch to left; below throne, uncertain letter below strut; A to right.

Map 4. Shards of Lysmachia, Cilicia

CHAPTER 2

GREECE

The cultural identity of the Greeks

The soul of the Greek people, who emerged from their Dark Age around 800 BCE, can be traced to the Bronze Age Greek kings and heroes of six hundred years earlier, who founded cities, quested for the golden fleece, and fought the Trojan War. The Greeks who went to Troy were led by Agamemnon, whose city of Mycenae gave its name to the warrior people that sailed the seas and walked with gods in the epic poems attributed to Homer. These Mycenaean Greeks had previously been in the shadow of the Minoan people, who were best known for their palaces on Crete and other islands. As Theseus defeated the Minotaur, the Mycenaeans, having learned much from the Minoans, including their first form of writing, the pictographic language known as Linear B, became dominant in the eastern Mediterranean around 1400 BCE.

It is not entirely clear what happened to these early Greeks at the end of the second millennia BCE that led them into a Dark Age. It is possible that there were plagues or famines. We know that there were attacks from the mysterious Sea Peoples and an invasion/migration of other Greek tribes, known as the Dorians, who had developed the use of superior iron weapons. Probably all these things were causal factors that led to the Greek Dark Age. However, by the 8th century BCE, the Greeks were making their first steps toward their Golden Age. They had adopted a Phoenician-type alphabet that would soon permit the epic poems of Homer and Hesiod to be written down as well as recited. Old cities prospered again, populations grew, and the Greeks, who had always been seafaring people, sent out ships to found new colonies all along the northern coast of the Mediterranean, around the Black Sea, and even on the African coast. These Greeks, of what is now called the Archaic Age, like those of the Mycenaean Era, had a common sense of identity in being Greek or Hellene, to use their term, but while they may have been one people, they were certainly not one nation. Greece only became a nation in 1832 CE.

The Mycenaean Greeks fought the Trojan War as a temporary alliance of often-rival kingdoms. The Greeks of the Archaic, and later Classic, Age owed their first allegiance to their home city-states. Even though the city-states were sometimes ruled by tyrants, aside from Sparta, the city-states were usually not kingdoms, and Greeks saw themselves as citizens, not subjects. The cities relied on citizen soldiers for their military, and so the success and survival of the cities depended on individual investments for common good and survival of the state. Well-off citizens, who might own a small farm outside the city walls, would own armor and weapons and be called upon to serve as *hoplites*, a sort of heavy infantry. More prosperous citizens belonged to a class of *hippeis* (knights), who would also have horses and so be able to serve in cavalry units. In times of need, poorer citizens would also serve as light infantry with whatever armor and weapons were available, even if only slings and stones.

The relationship between a citizen and his polis was what sustained the ancient Greek civilization and eventually nurtured the first democracies. The political organization varied from city to city and was often labile, even within a single polis. Sometimes a council of the rich elites would take control, forming an oligarchy, and in a time of crisis, a single man might be appointed, or simply take charge, as a tyrant. In most cities, though, there was usually an assembly of common citizens who had some say in the running of the state.

Wars were common among the Greek city-states, though usually without devastating effects on the losers. Often, at the end of such conflicts, the winner would impose a change of government on the loser, installing a tyrant or an oligarchy that would favor the policies of the winning city. While small disputes might lead to war between the Greeks, other things would unify them. The Greeks celebrated numerous Panhellenic events that would call for the cessation of any hostilities and safe passage for people traveling to or from these events. The most famous of such events were the Olympic Games, held every four years in the Peloponnese. In other years, similar events were held at Apollo's sanctuary of Delphi, the Isthmus of Corinth, and Nemea. Additionally, every year, initiates into the Mysteries of Demeter in Eleusis, outside of Athens, were guaranteed safe passage to participate in the ceremonies.

Groups of Greek states would also sometimes form leagues or alliances for defense or to achieve common military goals. Probably the greatest unification of the Greek states was in response to the Persian invasions of 490 and 480 BCE. While the invasion led by Darius in 490 BCE was stopped by a force of just 10,000 Athenians and 1,000 citizens of Plataea at the Battle of Marathon, resistance to the 100,000-strong