

## COINS ARE A SIGN OF THE PAST

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**Abstract.** *The article discusses the history of coins, their origin, types, significance in the economic life of peoples on the basis of the monetary units of ancient Greece and ancient Rome.*

**Key words:** *Numismatics, coins, coins of ancient Greece, coins of ancient Rome.*

## МОНЕТЫ — ЗНАК ПРОШЛОГО

**Аннотация.** *В статье рассматривается история монет, их происхождение, виды, значение в хозяйственной жизни народов на основе денежных единиц Древней Греции и Древнего Рима.*

**Ключевые слова:** *Нумизматика, монеты, монеты Древней Греции, монеты Древнего Рима.*

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Numismatics (from lat. numisma, Greek νόμισμα - coin), an auxiliary historical discipline that studies the history of minting monetary circulation using coins, bullion and other monuments (for example, coin stamps, documents).

The study of a coin as a means of monetary circulation, a state document, a work of craft and art, and an epigraphic source is carried out in close connection with studies of other historical sources - written and archaeological. Before the appearance of the metal coin, the functions of money were performed by various goods, livestock, jewelry, metal tools, metal ingots. The latter especially often acted as a monetary equivalent, sometimes even in relatively developed societies, for example, silver ingots (hryvnias) in Ancient Rus' in the 12th-13th centuries [1. 16].

Numismatics examines coins in all these aspects. It deals not only with individual coins, but also with coin complexes, primarily with treasures. They, as a rule, consist of coins withdrawn from circulation, so their study is important for clarifying the composition of monetary circulation in general. The most important means of numismatic research is mapping finds of treasures and individual coins (numismatic topography), which allows you to trace the change in the distribution area of individual coin series and establish the existing system of trade routes and connections, find out the place where individual coins were minted, etc.

The first coins appeared in Lydia (Asia Minor) and on about. Aegina (Greece) at the end of the 8th and beginning of the 7th centuries. BC e. Already from the VI century. BC e. both of

them are usually occupied by images, which in numismatics are denoted by the term “type” [1. 23].

Ancient coins were minted in Greece and Asia Minor from silver and electrum, and in China they were cast from copper. In the future, mainly silver, gold, copper, as well as various alloys - bronze, brass, bilon were used. In modern times, nickel, aluminum, etc. have joined them.

Less commonly, iron, lead, etc. are used. When using a noble metal, a certain amount of copper is usually added to it for strength. This impurity is called a ligature, and the percentage of precious metal in a coin is a breakdown. It is established by the government.

Coins are a kind of source in the study of the history of ideology, religion, political thought of society. Numismatic material is important in the analysis of the economic history of a society, since it can be used to trace the strengthening or weakening of the coin issue, the change in the weight system. introduction of other metals into circulation, etc.

Being products of artistic craft, coins are also a source for the study of the history of technology and the history of art. In some cases, these are masterpieces of fine art. Coin inscriptions are important for the study of paleography. In archeology, coin finds serve as an important dating material in the study of various sites.

The Greeks believed that money was invented by the famous hero Theseus, better known for his victory over the Minotaur. The Romans attributed the invention of money to the god Janus. 28]. In both cases, the very personality of their creator emphasizes the sacred, sacred nature of money. Money has always been sacred, but taboo sacred. With all the bizarre diversity of world religions, not a single people has reached the point of worshiping money, although in a figurative sense, the worship of money is very common.

Of course, it is pointless to seriously try to find out the name of the inventor of money.

They arose as a result of quite objective economic needs. Since ancient times, mankind has already known trade in the simplest forms of direct commodity exchange. But the direct exchange of goods for goods has always been associated with considerable difficulties. The buyer might not have what the seller needed. So there was a need for a universal equivalent.

The names of the vast majority of monetary units of antiquity come from measures of weight, which recalls the time when grain was measured by weight.

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purpose. Being a universal equivalent, they also retained the properties of the product. For this reason, we sometimes call such “proto-money” commodity -money [2.20].

Units of weight were borrowed in ancient Greece from Babylon and therefore combined the Babylonian hexadecimal and decimal counting systems.

The biggest weight unit was talent. In different cities, its weight could differ, and quite significantly. In Athens, since the reforms of Solon, a talent weighing 25, 196 kg has been adopted.

The talent was divided into 60 minutes. Sometimes a mine is called an antique pound, because it weighed 436.6 g. The mine was divided into 50 staters (the word for "balance of the scales"). The stater corresponded to 2 drachmas (“a handful”), the drachma to 6 obols [3.11].

Since the time of Solon, a larger monetary denomination of the tetradrachm has also been introduced into circulation. Athenian tetradrachms with the image of the head of Athena on the obverse and the owl on the reverse became the most popular coins in Greece and played the role of interstate currency. It is extremely rare, but coins of larger denominations were also minted in Athens. So, in honor of the victory over the Persians at Marathon in 490 BC. e. a dekadrachm -10 drachmas was minted [4. 14]. Such coins, issued in memory of a specific event or historical person, are called memorial or commemorative coins in numismatics.

Athens, for the first time among other Greek cities, began to mint a small change from copper.

In common parlance, they were called like that - hawks, that is, "coppers".

The smallest coin was called “mite” or “thin, small”. Hence the expression “to contribute”, in other words, a pretty penny, which has become entrenched in the Russian language. The advent of money radically changed life. It's not even that it has intensified trade. Money brought with it a new value system. It was no coincidence that the inhabitants of Athens, the city most involved in money circulation, were reproached for greed and venality. It is also no coincidence that Sparta, the rival of Athens, stubbornly opposed the introduction of money. In Sparta, the role of money was played by copper ingots in the form of arrowheads.

It was forbidden for the inhabitants of Sparta to have coins until the fear of punishment, because it was believed that money deprives a person of courage and makes him available for bribery. Their coins in Sparta began to be minted only in the III century. BC e., when in other cities of Greece they have been known for at least 300-400 years [4.15].

Greek coins were mostly minted from silver. This was explained by the fact that there were no gold deposits in Greece, and silver mines were found. The most famous are the mines of Lavrion in Attica, 26 km from Athens.

In the VI century. BC e. in the Persian state of the Achaemenids, the minting of coins from gold began. By the name of Darius I, under whom the issue of gold coins began, they were called "dariki". The weight of a gold daric was equal to the weight of an Athenian stater, but since the ratio of the price of silver to gold at that time was 13:1, the daric was 13 times more expensive than the stater. Silver coins of shekli were also minted in Persia [4.16].

Roman coins of the 1st – 2nd centuries n. e. are perfect examples of medal art. On the obverse, they usually have an image of the reigning emperor. These portraits are realistic and reflect well-defined individual features. Coin legends have become very long. Most often, there was not enough space to accommodate the entire inscription, and many words had to be abbreviated. Here, for example, is the brass sestertius of Caligula. On the obverse is a portrait of the emperor wearing a laurel wreath. The portrait is bordered by the inscription: Gaius Caesar Germanicus Pontifex Maximus Tribunus Imperator. On the reverse of the coin, the mother of Emperor Agrippina and his sisters, Julia and Drusilla are depicted as three goddesses from the myth of Paris [5.16].

A characteristic feature of the Roman monetary system of both the republican and imperial periods was the constant deterioration of money. Even during the Punic Wars, the Senate quite officially allowed the minting of suberat coins. We already know that such a coin was minted from base metals and then covered on top with a thin layer of silver or gold.

The appearance of such coins caused distrust of Roman coins in general. To restore the fallen prestige, the minting of coins with a deep notch along the edge was started. The notch was meant to demonstrate that the core of the coin was of the same metal as its surface. The reduction in the weight of the coin and the reduction in the content of precious metals were even more widely used. Half a century after Augustus, the emperor Nero lightened the coin stack when minting silver denarii from 84 to 96 per pound. This gave the state a 15% profit on every pound of silver. The coin stop for the minting of gold aureuses was lightened from 40 to 45, which gave an 11% profit [5.17]. Under Nero, the denarii contained 90% silver. Half a century later, by the time of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the silver content in the denarii had decreased to 75%, under his son Commodus it had decreased to 67%, and Septimius Severus, who had taken the throne after the overthrow of Commodus, put into circulation denarii with a 50% silver content [6.34]. In its heyday, Rome was a world power. The Roman Empire traded with many nations of the barbarian world. In exchange for amber from the shores of the Baltic, incense from Arabia, slaves from Germany and Africa, Rome gave away its silver and gold coins. The merchants didn't really need them, but they were taken because it was accepted, because Rome, by its seeming power, convinced of their value. Hoards of Roman coins have been found within a vast area from

Scandinavia to central Africa, from India to Eastern Europe [7.14].

Speaking about the reasons for the fall of the Roman Empire, historians mention many different factors. For us, in the context of the story about the monetary system of Ancient Rome, it makes sense to pay special attention to one of them. The wider, the larger was the trade of Rome with the barbarian periphery, the more serious were the financial problems that threatened to bring down the entire economic life of the state.

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