



**HAL**  
open science

# The Musical Identity of Ancient Greek City-States according to Coinage (Sixth – First c. BCE)

Sylvain Perrot

► **To cite this version:**

Sylvain Perrot. The Musical Identity of Ancient Greek City-States according to Coinage (Sixth – First c. BCE). Antonio Baldassarre; Arabella Tenniswood-Harvey. *Belonging, Detachment and the Representation of Musical Identities in Visual Culture*, Hollitzer, pp.317-346, 2023, <10.2307/jj.5211766.16>. <hal-04676788>

**HAL Id: hal-04676788**

**<https://hal.science/hal-04676788v1>**

Submitted on 23 Aug 2024

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire HAL, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



HAL Authorization

Chapter Title: THE MUSICAL IDENTITY OF ANCIENT GREEK CITY-STATES ACCORDING TO COINAGE (SIXTH—FIRST C. BCE)

Chapter Author(s): Sylvain Perrot

Book Title: *Belonging, Detachment and the Representation of Musical Identities in Visual Culture*

Book Editor(s): Antonio Baldassarre, Arabella Tenniswood-Harvey

Published by: Hollitzer Verlag. (2023)

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/jj.5211766.16>

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



This book is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0). To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.



JSTOR

*Hollitzer Verlag* is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Belonging, Detachment and the Representation of Musical Identities in Visual Culture*

# THE MUSICAL IDENTITY OF ANCIENT GREEK CITY-STATES ACCORDING TO COINAGE (SIXTH–FIRST C. BCE)

SYLVAIN PERROT

It is difficult to determine exactly when coinage started in the ancient world. The consensus of most contemporary scholars is that it was invented<sup>1</sup> in the late seventh century BCE in Sardis, the capital of Lydia (Asia Minor), as already suggested by the Greek author Herodotus.<sup>2</sup> At that time, these were only tiny ingots made of electrum (an alloy of gold and silver that was highly prized and abundant in that area) or silver. As shown by the excavations under the Temple of Artemis at Ephesos, the first coins, made of electrum, were issued during the first half of the sixth century, on the one hand by the king of Lydia Alyattes, Croesus' father, and on the other hand by Greek cities of Ionia (the Western coast of Anatolia), especially Phocaea and Miletus. In the middle of the sixth century, King Croesus replaced the electrum coins with coins of pure gold and pure silver, called Croeseids. By the end of the century, important Greek city-states started to issue coins made of silver, especially Chios and Samos, but the technique flourished a bit later on the other shore of the Aegean Sea, following the two Persian wars (490–479 BCE). From that time on, ancient Greek city-states struck coins widely spread all around the Mediterranean Sea. Gold and silver coins were meant to travel more than bronze coins, which were designed for local use.

From the beginning, it was essential to advertise which authority had issued the coins. Since they were used for trade or payment of mercenaries, they were also supposed to travel. Thus, those coins depicted symbols or features that represented the city and promoted the prestige of the state.<sup>3</sup> Such a symbol could be either a local mythological character (e.g. Pegasus in Corinth), an endemic animal or vegetal species (e.g. the marine tortoise in Aegina or the silphium in Cyrene), or a kind of riddle relying on a word play (e.g. the seal for Phocaea, since the Greek name of the seal is *phōkē*), etc. The most famous is probably the owl (Athena's favourite animal and symbol of wisdom) with a branch of olive tree, which Athens depicted on its drachms. Many Greek city-states decided to represent themselves with mu-

1 Abbreviations used in this paper: ANS: American Numismatic Society; BMC: *Catalogue of the British Museum Coins*; HN: *Historia Nummorum*; SNG: *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum*.

2 Herodotus, *Histories*, I, 94. See Koray Konuk, "Asia Minor to the Ionian Revolt," in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, ed. William E. Metcalf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 43–60.

3 Olivier Picard, "L'empreinte de la polis sur la monnaie," in *Hommage à Jacqueline de Romilly. L'empreinte de son oeuvre*, eds. Marc Fumaroli, Jacques Jouanna, Monique Trédé and Michel Zink (Paris: AIBL, 2014), 23–37.

sical instruments, which are mainly string instruments (lyre and *kithara*), usually related to the god Apollo. These instruments represented as much as 95 percent of the whole corpus of musical instruments. Nevertheless, since coins are intrinsically meant to circulate, we can never be absolutely sure that the idea to depict an instrument was original or if it was an imitation of the coinage of another city-state.

Among all the iconographical sources on ancient Greek music, coins have been quite underestimated until today. The fact that many cities depicted a *kithara* or a lyre (considering that the musical iconography usually coexists with other symbols) allows us to reflect on this phenomenon in terms of identity. Greeks did not constitute a united nation in Antiquity, but they thought they belonged to the same culture. Yet, at the same time, they were regularly in war with their neighbours, which is a kind of detachment from this idealistic Greek community. One of the best expressions of this paradox may be found in the last paragraph of the eighth book of Herodotus's *Histories*. In his long narrative of all the events of the second Persian War (480–479 BCE), he reports a public debate between the Athenians and an embassy of Spartans, who suspect Athenians of cooperating with the Persians. The Athenians answer they would never deal with Persians, because they belong to “the kinship of all Greeks, which is same blood, same language, the shrines of gods we have in common, the sacrifices, the habits and customs, the same way of life” (τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐὸν ὁμαιμόν τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον καὶ θεῶν ἰδρύματά τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι ἤθεά τε ὁμότροπα).<sup>4</sup>

The context of Herodotus's statement is enlightening. The Athenian answer highlights the existence of a Greek community, whereas some Greek cities decided to support Persians, hence the fear of Spartans. Obviously, it is a reconstruction of the past, since Herodotus writes some decades after the events, but he probably wants his Greek readers to maintain the fight against the common enemy, the Persians. Herodotus is a Greek author, but he was born in Halicarnassus, a Greek foundation in Caria, which had been under the Persian rule before joining the Athenian alliance (the Delian League) in 479. Afterwards, in the late fifth century, Halicarnassus left the Athenian alliance and joined the Persian satrapy of Caria. In 367 BCE, Halicarnassus became the capital of the satrap Mausolus. In between, Halicarnassus minted coins with, on the obverse, a helmeted head of Athena or a laureate head of Apollo, and on the reverse the legend of the city surrounding a four-stringed *kithara* (fig. 1).<sup>5</sup> An inscription testifies the presence of a sanctuary dedicated to Apollo, Athena and Parthenos.<sup>6</sup> This is a perfect example of a city expressing a Greek identity, although it was under Persian rule.

4 Herodotus, *Histories*, VIII, 144.

5 *BMC Caria – Halicarnassus* 7–8; *SNG Kayhan*, 761. See Koray Konuk, “Coinage and Identities under the Hekatomnids,” *Publications de l’Institut français d’Études Anatoliennes* 28 (2013) = *4<sup>th</sup> Century Karia. Defining a Karian identity under the Hekatomnids*: 101–121. For similar issues much later in Caria: Cnidos (*SNG Copenhagen* 326), Alabanda (*BMC Caria – Alabanda* 15; *SNG von Aulock* 2388; *SNG Copenhagen* 4).

6 *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 46.



Fig. 1: Halicarnassus, silver hemidrachm, ca. 400–367 BCE, 1.80 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. Fonds général 586) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Thus, I would like to examine how ancient Greek coins with music instruments show a feeling of belonging to or detachment from Greek culture based on same language, same gods, and same customs according to Herodotus's definition. How did music instruments on coins express this relation to Greek culture on the one hand and the political antagonisms between the city-states on the other? First, I shall explore what the depiction of a string instrument meant for Greek people, in terms of religion and culture, and then I will focus on the political significations. Finally, I will show some cases in which the musical instrument is obviously the symbol of a common Greek cultural heritage, especially from a non-Greek perspective. The purpose of this enquiry is not to discuss carefully the iconography, given that the instrument is often depicted on its own and not always realistically. For my topic, it is actually more relevant to provide a serial analysis, although I am aware that the shape of the instruments could be considered more in detail. Furthermore, I must confess that understanding these coins in a comparison with other represented subjects than music would be helpful in better comprehending their cultural significance, but this is a wide topic that deserves further studies to which this paper invites.

## Belonging: A Multi-Scale Identity

One of the most ancient issues featuring the backside of a *kithara* was minted in the sixth century BCE in Delos, an island in the Cyclades,<sup>7</sup> considered the birthplace of Apollo. From the beginning of its coinage up to the end of its independence (in 478 BCE), a string instrument was engraved on Delos's coins. Its design is not fixed, but rather evolved gradually.<sup>8</sup> The earliest coin of this series, dating back to ca. 530 BCE, is a silver didrachm (also known as a stater) showing the backside of a seven-stringed *kithara* with prominently curved arms and two dolphins atop the yoke (fig. 2).<sup>9</sup>

A silver hemidrachm (also known as a triobol), which was issued a bit later, features the backside of a five-stringed lyre on the obverse and a quadripartite incuse on the reverse.<sup>10</sup> In the decades between 510 and 480, there are several examples of silver didrachms with seven- or six-stringed *kitharai* seen from the back on the obverse, and either a quadripartite incuse or a pebbled mill-sail pattern on the reverse (fig. 3).<sup>11</sup> The shape of the instrument varies, especially the curve of the arms, the prominent part of the sound box, and the tuning system. A unique silver didrachm shows a seven-stringed *kithara* on the obverse and on the reverse a five-stringed lyre, the sound box of which looks like a shield rather than a tortoise shell.<sup>12</sup>

In the Hellenistic period, when Delos recovered its independence (314 BCE), there was an important change. The *kithara* was relocated to the reverse, and the head of laureate Apollo, looking left, was placed on the obverse. Furthermore, the front of the five-stringed instrument was newly depicted with the legend ΔΗ (for Delos).<sup>13</sup> The *kithara*, which was a professional instrument, more clearly refers to the Greek agonistic culture rather than the simple lyre. After the archaic period, the combination of Apollo's head on the obverse and the *kithara* on the reverse became the most common design on Greek coins with a string instrument.

There is no doubt that the string instrument is depicted as the attribute of Apollo, since Delos had one of the most important shrines dedicated to the god. However, the choice of the music instrument cannot be interpreted only as a simple attribute of the god because it also refers to musical performances that took

7 See Kenneth A. Sheedy, "Aegina, the Cyclades, and Crete," in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, ed. William E. Metcalf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 105–127.

8 Tony Hackens, "Le monnayage de l'atelier de Délos à l'époque archaïque," *BCH suppl.* 1 = *Études déliennes* (1973): 209–226.

9 Kenneth A. Sheedy, *The Archaic and Early Classical Coinages of the Cyclades = RNS SP 40* (London: Royal Numismatic Society, 2006), pl. 9 n° 1.

10 Ernest Babelon, *Traité des monnaies grecques et romaines II–I* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1907), n° 1930; Oliver David Hoover, *The Handbook of Coins of the Islands = The Handbook of Greek Coinage Series 6* (Lancaster: Classical Numismatic Group, 2010), n° 489.

11 Babelon, *Traité*, n° 1928 var.; Sheedy, *Coinages of the Cyclades*, pl. 9 n° 10–11.

12 Unedited: on sale in *Numismatica Ars Classica*, Auction 59, lot 601 (April 2011).

13 See e.g. *BMC Crete – Delos 4–10*; *SNG Copenhagen 670*.



Fig. 2: Delos, silver stater, ca. 530 BCE, 7.40 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. 1966.453.2434) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Fig. 3: Delos, silver hemidrachm, ca. 510–480 BCE, 8.54 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. Fonds général 185) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Fig. 4: Akanthos, silver hemiobol, 392–379 BCE, 0.54 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. Luynes 1546) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

place in Apollo's precincts.<sup>14</sup> We are especially told by the historian Thucydides that Delos welcomed the *Delia*, a festival opened to all Ionians,<sup>15</sup> i.e., Greeks speaking the Ionian dialect (Cyclades and Ionia) and forming an ethnical<sup>16</sup> community with a common mythic ancestor, Ion. The city of Akanthos, which was a foundation of Andros (a Cycladic island), also struck a silver mint with Apollo and a seven-stringed lyre<sup>17</sup> in ca. 392–379 BCE (fig. 4). This is one of the very few depictions of the front of a lyre on coins.<sup>18</sup> Until the Roman conquest, other cities of the Cyclades sometimes minted bronze coins with Apollo's head and a string instrument such as Kythnos (lyre and *kithara*)<sup>19</sup> or Thera (lyre),<sup>20</sup> or with a quince and a lyre (Melos).<sup>21</sup>

14 Sylvain Perrot, "Musical and Choral Performance Places in Hellenistic Delos," in *Musical and Choral Performance Spaces in the Ancient World* = *Telestes* 5, ed. Angela Bellia (Rome-Pisa: Fabrizio Serra, 2020), 59–74.

15 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 3.104.2.

16 I am using this term in its ancient Greek meaning: Greeks divided themselves into groups according to origin and dialect.

17 *BMC Macedonia – Acanthus* 40–41.

18 For another example in Smyrna, see *SNG Copenhagen* 1179–1180.

19 *BMC Crete – Kythnos* 1–3. See Kenneth A. Sheedy & Charikleia Papageorgiadou-Banis, "The Coinage of Kythnos," in *Kythnos: History and Archaeology = Meletemata* 27, ed. Lina Mendoni & Alexandros Mazarakis-Ainian (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1998), 649–655.

20 *BMC Crete – Thera* 3–4.

21 *BMC Crete – Melos* 30–31.

Therefore, it is probably not a coincidence that the Ionian city of Kolophon (Asia Minor) struck the head of Apollo on the obverse and the *kithara* on the reverse from 480 BCE, when Delos came under Athenian rule and was forced to stop its own coinage. Kolophon was likely one of the oldest of the twelve cities of the Ionian League (a confederation of Greek microasiatic city-states and islands formed in the seventh century BCE). The earliest coin dated with certainty is a silver drachm with a beautiful laureate head of Apollo (in the typical Archaic style) facing right, his hair bound with *taenia*, and the legend ΚΟΛΟΦΙΩΝ (“of the Kolophians”). A very realistic seven-stringed *kithara* in incuse square is found on the reverse (fig. 5).<sup>22</sup> From 480 to the conquest of the city by Lysimachus in 294 BCE, the city minted the same iconography on its silver drachms with some variations. In the fifth century, Apollo is looking right and the *kithara* is in an incuse square with the legend ΚΟΛΟΦΩΝΙΩΝ (fig. 6).<sup>23</sup> Later, in the fourth century, Apollo is looking to left and the *kithara* is in the field with two legends, one for the city and one for the magistrate (fig. 7).<sup>24</sup> One of the last bronze issues (ca. 330–294 BCE) is particularly remarkable.<sup>25</sup> The three-quarter facing laureate head of Apollo is found on the obverse. On the reverse, a palm tree is placed to the right of the *kithara*. The palm tree is an evocation of the tree that marks the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis in Delos, which recovered its independence in this period. In 478 BCE, Kolophon could be considered as the successor of Delos to federate all Greeks from Ionian origin. It competed with Athens, which claimed the same cultural heritage, based on a common mythical ancestor, Ion. Kolophon was the home to an important sanctuary dedicated to Apollo, Claros, which contained a temple and a very famous oracle of Apollo. The depiction of the palm tree further reinforces the connection with Delos. Therefore, the *kithara* can be interpreted as a reference to an important Ionian sanctuary of Apollo, within a network of cities belonging to the same linguistic and ethnical community.<sup>26</sup>

However, the depiction of a string instrument is not a specificity of Ionian sanctuaries, as shown by the city-state of Kalymnos, an island that belongs to the Dodecanese archipelago in the south-eastern Aegean Sea. Around 500 BCE it minted a silver stater featuring a meticulous seven-stringed lyre, with the details of the tortoise shell and the tuning system on the yoke. On the obverse, a bearded head faces left, wearing a crested Corinthian helmet in a typical archaic style.<sup>27</sup>

22 *BMC Ionia – Colophon* 1; Colin M. Kraay & Max Hirmer, *Greek Coins* (New York: N. H. Abrams, 1966), n° 602.

23 Joseph Grafton Milne, *Kolophon and its Coinage* (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1941), n° 13–49.

24 *BMC Ionia – Colophon* 5–8 and 11; Milne 1941, n° 51–85, 90, 95–100, 122–126, 142–144. On bronze coins, see *BMC Ionia – Colophon* 13 and 15–16.

25 Milne, *Kolophon*, n° 145–146.

26 On Leto holding a string instrument in late Hellenistic times, see Nuran Şahin, “Étude iconographique des monnaies autonomes frappées par Colophon-sur-Mer: nouveaux acquis,” *Anatolia Antiqua* 24 (2016): 147–162.

27 *BMC Caria – Calymna* 1–2.



Fig. 5: Kolophon, silver mint, ca. 480 BCE, 5.40 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. Fonds général 237) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Fig. 6: Kolophon, silver mint, 5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, 5.30 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. Fonds général 238) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Fig. 7: Kolophon, silver mint, 4<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, 2.90 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. M 4495) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Fig. 8: Kalymnos, silver mint, 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE, 8.21 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. Fonds général 1132) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

The city is in a part of the Greek world that speaks in the Dorian dialect. The lyre is an allusion to the guardian poliad god, Apollo, who had his sanctuary in the city.

The third century BCE (fig. 8) saw many important changes beyond the stylistic. The obverse displays a young man facing to the right, wearing an Attic helmet. The reverse features the frond side of a seven-stringed *kithara* with surrounding dots and the legend ΚΑΛΥΜΝΙΩΝ (“of the Kalymnians”).<sup>28</sup> The general idea remains the same, but the modifications should be interpreted in terms of political changes and influences. The Corinthian helmet was a reference to the Dorian world, since Corinth also belonged to this linguistic community. In the fifth century, the city of Kalymnos became part of the Delian League, resulting in increased Athenian influence, exemplified by the Attic helmet. The change from lyre to *kithara* might be a fad phenomenon, due the increasing number of *kithara* minted on coins.

As a result, the depiction of a string instrument on Greek coins may refer to the presence of an important sanctuary to Apollo, which is not a question of devotion in classical Antiquity. However, it has strong political implications: either it may refer to the name of the city, Apollonia, making Apollo the guardian god,<sup>29</sup> or this is a way to advertise that the city-state rules over a sanctuary to Apollo. The situation is simple, when the shrine is located within its borders.<sup>30</sup> However, some

28 *BMC Caria – Calymna* 3–9; *SNG von Aulock* 274.1. The iconography is similar on smaller silver and bronze issues (*BMC Caria – Calymna* 10–26).

29 For instance in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE: Apollonia of Aetolia (*BMC Thessaly – Apollonia* 80); Apollonia of Illyria (*BMC Tauric Chersonese – Apollonia* 81); Apollonia Salbace (*BCM Caria – Apollonia Salbace* 4–6; *SNG von Aulock* 2478).

30 For instance in Aigai (Aeolis): *BMC Aeolis – Aegae* 15 (2<sup>nd</sup>–1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE).



Fig. 9: Hamaxitos, bronze mint, 4<sup>th</sup> c. CBE, 5.89 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. Fonds général 674) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

of those sanctuaries were extra-urban and several cities laid claim. It was the coinage that identified the ruling city. One good example is the sanctuary of Apollo Smintheus in the south-west of the Troad (Anatolia). In the fourth century BCE, it was controlled by the city of Hamaxitos, which was first settled by Mytilenaeans (Lesbos), who particularly worshipped Apollo. Their minted bronze coins (fig. 9) were adorned with the laureate head of Apollo and a four-stringed *kithara* bearing the legend AMAEI (for Hamaxitos).<sup>31</sup>

Ruling over a sanctuary presented economic issues. The popularity of the cult of Apollo Smintheus grew in the Hellenistic period. The convenient proximity of its port to the god's shrine meant Hamaxitos benefited from an increasing number of pilgrims passing through the city-state's harbour. In the third century BCE, Hamaxitos continued to promote its relationships with Apollo Smintheus, introducing a second and more elaborate series of coins that advertised its link with the shrine. Nevertheless, in the early second century, Hamaxitos was synoecised to the city of Alexandria Troas, created by Antigonos Monophthalmus in 310 BCE. In 95–85 BCE, Alexandria Troas minted bronze coins with a *kithara* and a tripod with the legend ΑΛΕΞ (for Alexandria).<sup>32</sup> The tripod is usually the symbol of an oracle, and yet there was no oracle in the Smintheion. The image perhaps contains another

31 *BMC Troas – Hamaxitus* 1–2; SNG von Aulock 7601 (Apollo right)/7602 (Apollo left). See Alain Bresson, “Hamaxitos en Troade,” in *Espaces et pouvoirs dans l’Antiquité de l’Anatolie à la Gaule. Hommages à Bernard Rémy*, ed. Julie Dalaison (Grenoble : CRHIPA, 2007), 139–158.

32 *BMC Troas – Alexandria* 25–27. With Apollo on the obverse and a tripod or a *kithara* on the reverse, see *BMC Troas – Alexandria* 28.

function. It is most likely a reference to the Delphic tripod, suggesting a connection between the sanctuaries of Apollo Smintheus and Apollo Pythios in Delphi<sup>33</sup>.

That is exactly what we find on coins minted by cities which wanted to promote links with Delphi. A first example is Megara, midway between Athens and Corinth. The city had two *acropoleis*. On one summit, there was an important sanctuary to Apollo Archegetes as well as a temple to Athena, both guardian gods of the city. According to the mythology, Apollo helped the hero Alkathoos to construct the defensive walls of Megara, a tale recalling the construction of Theban city walls thanks to the lyre of Amphion.<sup>34</sup> On silver staters minted between 400 and 338, we find the laureate head of Apollo looking right on the obverse and the legend ΜΕΓΑ-ΡΕΩΝ (“of Megarians”) to left and right of a *kithara* on the reverse.<sup>35</sup> On silver coins struck around between 307 and 243 BCE (fig. 10), we find the typical association of laureate head of Apollo facing right along with the seven-stringed *kithara* and the legend ΜΕΓΑ-ΡΕΩΝ.<sup>36</sup> Bronze coins feature either a *kithara* or a tripod.<sup>37</sup> In the third century BCE, the colony Megara founded on the Black Sea, Chalcedon, minted a bronze coin with the heads of Apollo and Artemis on the obverse, with a *kithara*<sup>38</sup> on the reverse. A cult of Apollo Pythaios and an oracle is attested in Chalcedon.<sup>39</sup> Another example of the Delphic connection was produced by the city of Pellene (North Peloponnese) in the third century BCE. Its bronze coins featured a seven-stringed *kithara* and a tripod between Π and Ε (for Pellene).<sup>40</sup> Two examples demonstrate the occasional Delphic connection suggested by the presence of the *omphalos* instead of the tripod. The allegory of Sinope, located on the Southern shore of the Black Sea, is displayed on the obverse of a silver tetradrachm minted by the civic monetary workshops. On the reverse, Apollo is seated on the Delphic *omphalos*, holding a lyre (ca. 470–390 BCE).<sup>41</sup> Finally, a bronze coin from Naples reveals the laureate head of Apollo on the obverse and the *kithara* leant on the *omphalos* on the reverse (ca. 250–225)<sup>42</sup>.

33 A famous silver stater minted in 337/336 by the Amphictyonic Council in Delphi shows Apollo seated on the *omphalos* looking to left, with branch of laurel tree, *kithara* and tripod in the field left: *BMC Central Greece – Delphi* 22.

34 Euripides, *The Phoenician Women*, 824.

35 *BMC Megaris – Megara* 1 and 4.

36 *BMC Megaris – Megara* 5–6.

37 *BMC Megaris – Megara* 7–8. That is the same after 146 BCE: *BMC Megaris – Megara* 15–16; *SNG Copenhagen* 466.

38 ANS inv. 1944.100.42021. See İnci Türkoğlu, “The Civic Coinage of Chalcedon,” in *Proceedings of the First International Congress of the Anatolian Monetary History and Numismatics*, eds. Kayhan Dörtlük, Oğuz Tekin, Remziye Boyraz Seyhan (Istanbul: Suna & İnan Kıraç Research Institute on Mediterranean Civilizations, 2014), 589–606.

39 See Adrian Robu, “Réflexions sur le culte d’Apollon à Chalcédoine,” *Les Études Classiques* 75 (2007): 137–155.

40 *SNG Copenhagen* 223; *BMC Peloponnesus – Pellene* 5. Apollo Theoxenios was the god chiefly worshipped at Pellene.

41 ANS inv. 1952.128.3.

42 *SNG Morcom* 167; *HN Italy* 592.



Fig. 10: Megara, silver didrachm, 307–343 BCE, 20 mm, 7.95 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. 1966.453.1500) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

In sum, the definition of the Greek community given by Herodotus can be found in the distribution of some Greek coins with Apollo and the *kithara*. This is what I would call a multi-scale identity. It may express the local identity of a city, in that a sanctuary dedicated to Apollo belongs to the city. However, the examples also show that it could be a regional identity based on the same dialect, especially the Ionian. It may even reveal connections between Apollonian sanctuaries, beyond the regional borders. Therefore, the musical instrument reveals a network of cities and sanctuaries with political issues.

### Attachment and Detachment: Greek Alliances and Antagonisms

The most natural alliances between Greek cities were geographical, in order to defend a common territory against invaders. To a lesser degree, the alliances defined local, regional or ethnical identities. The coins that used the same iconographical model may refer to such alliances, although it is not always obvious.

In this perspective, the case of Sicilian city-states is one of the most complicated, because of many political changes.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, during the fourth and the third centuries BCE, many Sicilian cities struck coins with the laureate head of Apollo

43 To have an overview of the coinage of Sicily, see Oliver David Hoover, *The Handbook of Coins of Sicily = The Handbook of Greek Coinage Series 2* (Lancaster: Classical Numismatic Group, 2012) and Wolfgang Fischer-Bossert, “The Coinage of Sicily,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, ed. William E. Metcalf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 142–156.

on the obverse and a *kithara* on the reverse. The main problem is to determine whether they decided it individually or imitated one another. First, we have to highlight that the depiction of Apollo and the *kithara* may be related to the movement of the Greek diaspora in archaic times, when Greeks founded new cities all around the Middle Sea, including the west, southern Italy and Sicily. Apollo was worshipped as the protector of colons and as the guardian god of newly founded cities (it is the same in the East, e.g. in Olbia on the Black Sea).<sup>44</sup> That is probably the reason why in the late fifth century BCE Leontinoi, located on the south-eastern coast of Sicily, minted silver tetradrachms with Apollo on the obverse and a lion's head (alluding to the name of the city), three barleycorns, and a *kithara* or a tripod on the reverse.<sup>45</sup> This is the most ancient example from Sicily and the only one until 357–354, when the tyrant Dion ruled over Syracuse. His electrum coins featured the laureate head of Apollo on the obverse and a single *kithara* on the reverse.<sup>46</sup> The oldest part of the city, Ortygia, hosted two main sanctuaries, one dedicated to Apollo and one to Athena. Syracuse had a strong influence on the newly founded cities located in eastern Sicily and southern Italy.

The Syracusan influence may be the reason why bronze coins with the same iconographical code (Apollo/*kithara*) were minted in the city of Adranon, on the southwestern slope of the Mount Etna, between 354 and 344 BCE.<sup>47</sup> The city was founded a few decades earlier by Dionysius I of Syracuse. However, this was probably not a civic coinage, but a coinage of mercenaries. Indeed, in the mid-fourth century, the political situation became more and more unstable, since some Sicilian cities wanted to emancipate themselves from Syracuse. In 345 BCE, the Corinthian general Timoleon disembarked on the east coast of Sicily, in Tauromenion, to rescue these cities against Syracuse. He established his military basis in Adranon,<sup>48</sup> which eventually reproduced the iconography chosen by mercenaries on its civic coinage between 344 and 336 BCE (fig. 11).<sup>49</sup> It seems to be paradoxical that mercenaries and cities struck coins with the same iconography as developed by a city-state from which they sought emancipation. This coinage was instead an assertion of new-founded independence rather than the will to create a specific coinage.<sup>50</sup> Much more, these are bronze coins, designed for local use. In the period of Timoleon's campaigns in Sicily, other cities enjoyed the opportunity to eman-

44 ANS inv. 1944.100.15130 (175–150 BCE).

45 SNG ANS 243; SNG ANS 270.

46 Théodore Reinach, "Sur la valeur relative des métaux monétaires dans la Sicile grecque," *Revue Numismatique* 3.13 (1895): 509–510 (n° 3).

47 SNG ANS 1151–1154; Romolo Calciati, *Corpus Nummorum Siculorum. La monetazione di bronzo. The Bronze Coinage* (Milan: Edizioni GM, 1983–1987), Adranon 1.

48 Plutarch, *Timoleon*, 14.

49 SNG ANS 1155–1156; Calciati, *Corpus*, Adranon 2–3; SNG Morcom 872.

50 Richard John Alexander Talbert, *Timoleon and the Revival of Greek Sicily, 344–317 B.C.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 180–182.

cipate themselves, and minted similar coins like Centuripae<sup>51</sup> (fig. 12), Kersini,<sup>52</sup> and Herbessos.<sup>53</sup> Each of these cities has geographical and commercial connections with Adranon and with each other, which may explain the use of the same iconographical code. Thus, we may conclude the traditional influences of Syracuse through Adranon, as well as influences from Corinthian through Timoleon.<sup>54</sup> Corinth is known for a very important temple dedicated to Apollon.

After Timoleon's campaigns, Ameselon,<sup>55</sup> Tauromenion,<sup>56</sup> which particularly worshipped Apollo as their founder, minted this iconographical type. It could be also the case of Menaion<sup>57</sup> and Panormos,<sup>58</sup> although in those two particular cases, some dates remain indeterminate. These cities were independent until the situation changed in Syracuse, when the tyrannical Agathokles ruled from 317 until 289. Syracuse recovered its influence, and Agathokles minted electrum coins with the laureate head of Apollo (or Artemis) and the *kithara*, probably to promote his prestige (fig. 13).<sup>59</sup> Since the fourth century BCE, Apollo's cult, combined with Syracuse's influence, was significant on coins in southern Italy<sup>60</sup> including Rhegion,<sup>61</sup> Thourioi,<sup>62</sup> Canusium<sup>63</sup> and Tarentum,<sup>64</sup> and, in Roman times, Vibo Valentia/Heiponion.<sup>65</sup> This may also explain why those city-states had the same iconographical code.

In the subsequent decades, the general situation was complicated in Sicily because of the campaigns of Pyrrhus of Epirus (278–276) followed by the first Punic war (264–241).<sup>66</sup> After this period, Romans were increasingly present in Sicily, but

51 SNG Copenhagen 213; Hoover 2012, n° 635.

52 On the obverse, there is a bearded male head right: ANS inv. 2016.16.1 See Alberto Campana, "Aggiornamento al *Corpus Nummorum Antiquae Italiae* Sicilia: Kersini (ca. 357–339 a.C.)," *Moneta Antiche* 36 (2007): 5–9.

53 On the obverse, there is the head of Sikelia: SNG ANS 136.

54 This is confirmed by the silver coinage, which features Pegasus, Corinth's emblem.

55 On the obverse, laureate head of Apollo left and on the reverse, *kithara* with seven strings: Calciati, *Corpus*, Ameselon 5.

56 *BMC Sicily – Tauromenion* 27; SNG ANS 1112.

57 SNG ANS 293.

58 SNG ANS 604.

59 With Artemis: Boston MFA inv. 446; with Apollo: SNG ANS 617.

60 To have an overview of the coinage of southern Italy, see Alfred Watson Hands, *Coins of Magna Graecia. The Coinage of the Greek Colonies of Southern Italy* (London: Spink and Son Ltd., 1909) and Neville Keith Rutter, "The Coinage of Italy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, ed. William E. Metcalf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 128–141.

61 *BMC Italy – Rhegion* 43–44 (ca. 351–280 BCE).

62 *BMC Italy – Thurium* 145–148 (270–240 BCE).

63 *BMC Italy – Canusium* 3; *HN Italy* 657.

64 SNG Morcom 259 (ca. 275–200 BCE).

65 SNG Morcom 422 (ca. 192–89 BCE).

66 After 268 BCE, the city-state of Cales struck coins with on the obverse the head of Apollo left, Nike flying behind and holding wreath, and on the reverse a man-headed bull right, *kithara* above, star between legs, CALENO in exergue: *BMC Sicily – Cales* 21; *HN* 436; SNG Copenhagen 311. The same iconography is on coins from Teate, South Italy: *HN* 698.



Fig. 11: Adranon, bronze mint, 344–336 BCE, 14.80 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. Fonds général 17) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Fig. 12: Centuripae, bronze mint, 344–336 BCE, 7.45 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. 1966.453) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Fig. 13: Syracuse, Agathokles, electrum mint, 317–289 BE, 1.85 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France inv. Luynes 1269) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

the Greek cities remained free and minted their own coinage. After 241, four city-states, including Centuripae, Abakainon,<sup>67</sup> Kalakte,<sup>68</sup> and Lilybaeum,<sup>69</sup> minted coins with Apollo and the *kithara*. To this list, we add city-states including Alaesia<sup>70</sup> on the northern shore of Sicily, home to a temple dedicated to Apollo, and Melita (Malta),<sup>71</sup> which also struck bronze coins with a *kithara* in the early first century BCE.

The association between different city-states, well known in Greek history, may be institutionalised through the system of leagues. They are called *koinon*, i.e. literally the “common thing.” As government of a league, *koinon* comprises understandings among its member states in different fields, including defence, diplomacy, economics, religious practices, etc. The monetary policy of each league depended upon the treaties, but usually included two main possibilities. The capital of the league minted the one and only coinage for all the cities members, or each city-state kept its monetary workshops but struck the same iconographical model. Regarding musical instruments as symbols of a league, the most relevant examples are the silver tetradrachms of the Chalcidian League in the fourth century and the ones of the Arcadian League in the fourth and third centuries BCE.<sup>72</sup>

In the spring of 432 BCE, a year before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta, several cities of Chalcidice broke away from the Athenian-dominated Delian League. In an act of synoecism, the inhabitants of these cities fled for Olynthos forming a single state, and adopting the demonym “Chalcidians.” It seems that the League was at the pinnacle of its power in the second quarter of the fourth century. Chalcidians allied themselves in 357 BCE with Philip II of Macedon, and the League once again expanded to include 34 cities. In 348 BCE, Philip captured and destroyed Olynthos, putting an end to the League. The coinage, minted between 392 and 379, corresponded to the League’s moment of glory (fig. 14). The League struck coins featuring the *kithara*, the symbol of the Chalcidians, one of the most beautiful instruments found on coinage. The name of the League and of the *stratēgos*, the commandant of the League, are prominent.<sup>73</sup> The *kithara* probably refers to the city of Apollonia, which was originally the chief town of Chalcidice, some 15 km north of Olynthos. Apollonia was likely the location of the monetary workshops.

The Arcadian League was a federal league of city-states of Arcadia, in the central Peloponnese, that formed a single state. The league was founded in 370 BCE, taking advantage of the decreased power of Sparta, which had previously domi-

67 Giacomo Tropea, *Numismatica Siceliota del Museo Mandralisca in Cefalù* (Messine: Tip. D’Amico, 1901), 7.

68 Calciati, *Corpus*, Kalakte 4.

69 *BMC Sicily – Lilybaeum 2*; SNG Copenhagen 374 var.

70 Calciati, *Corpus*, Alaesia 6–8 (around 200 BCE).

71 Calciati, *Corpus*, Melita 13.

72 See Seleni Psoma, “Greece and the Balkans to 360 B.C.,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, ed. William E. Metcalf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 157–172.

73 *BMC Macedonia – Olynthus* 1–25; SNG ANS 499.



Fig. 14: Olynthus, Chalcidian League, silver tetradrachm, 392–379 BCE, 14.43 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. 1966.453.916) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

nated and controlled Arcadia. Mantinea, a city that had suffered under Spartan dominance, was particularly prominent in pushing for its founding. The league was responsible for the foundation of Megalopolis, which became the capital. After the Battle of Mantinea in 362, the League lost power, although it endured until the 230's BCE. Some of the coins show Zeus or Pan on the obverse and a syrinx with the monogram AP on the reverse (fig. 15).<sup>74</sup> Pan was the traditional god of Arcadia, a country associated with the pastoral world and his beloved instrument was the syrinx. Therefore, the choice of the music instrument is closely related to his cult, as representative of all Arcadian cities.

Let us consider the same iconographical model on coins minted by different city-states. This is exemplified by the silver drachms of the Lycian League, with Apollo's head and the *kithara*.<sup>75</sup> The instrument was so important that these coins were identified as the so-called *kitharēphoroi* ("wearing *kithara*") in the inscriptions.<sup>76</sup> Strabo wrote that the six largest cities were Xanthos,<sup>77</sup> Patara,<sup>78</sup> Pinara,<sup>79</sup>

74 SNG Copenhagen 197.

75 On coinage in the Hellenistic period, see Richard Ashton, "The Hellenistic World: The Cities of Mainland Greece and Asia Minor," in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, ed. William E. Metcalf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 191–210.

76 Louis Robert, *Études de numismatique grecque* (Paris: Collège de France, 1951), 150–152.

77 Hyla A. Troxell, *The Coinage of the Lycian League* (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1982), n° 5.

78 Troxell, *Coinage*, n°16–20.

79 *Ibid.*, n° 7.



Fig. 15: Megalopolis, Arcadian League, silver obol, 4<sup>th</sup> c. CBE, 0.70 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. 1966.453.2311)  
© Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Olympos,<sup>80</sup> Myra,<sup>81</sup> (fig. 16) and Tlos (fig. 17).<sup>82</sup> The names of the other cities have been identified by a study of the coins<sup>83</sup> and mentioned in other texts. The coinage of all city-states (167–88) is exactly the same, and the Lycian League is stamped ΛΥΚΙΩΝ (“of the Lycians”). There are a few elements of identity added in the field. For instance, the tripod highlights the link with Apollo and the Isis’s crown (*basileion*), a reference to the Rhodian and Ptolemaic influence. With few exceptions, each city kept its own identity, usually engraving the first two letters of the city. The four letters representing Phaselis (ΦΑΣΗ) is a notable exception<sup>84</sup> (fig. 18). In the late first century BCE, coins recognised two “independent” districts, termed, for want of a better term, “monetary districts.” Masicytus<sup>85</sup> and Cragus<sup>86</sup> were both named after mountain ranges, in the shadow of which, presumably, the communities lived and conducted business. Where coinage of the cities is stamped ΛΥΚΙΩΝ,

80 *Ibid.*, n° 41–45.

81 *Ibid.*, n° 28–35; SNG von Aulock 4364.

82 SNG Tuebingen 4285; Troxell, *Coinage*, n° 10–13.

83 Antiphellos: Troxell, *Coinage*, n° 23; Aperlai: Troxell, *Coinage*, n° 23; Gagai: Troxell, *Coinage*, n° 39; Kadyanda/Kandyba: Troxell, *Coinage*, n° 9; Kyaneai: Troxell, *Coinage*, n° 24–26; Limyra: Troxell, *Coinage*, n° 36–38; Phellos: Troxell, *Coinage*, n° 21–22; Rhodiapolis: ANS inv. 1973.101.7, Troxell, *Coinage*, n° 40; Sidyma: Troxell, *Coinage*, n° 6; Trebendai: Troxell, *Coinage*, n° 27; Termessos Minor: SNG Copenhagen 139.

84 With the crown of Isis or thunderbolt to left, torch to right, all within incuse square: *BMC Lycia – Phaselis* 16–17; Troxell, *Coinage*, n° 46–47.

85 *BMC Lycia – Masicytes* 5–23.

86 *BMC Lycia – Cragus* 1–14; SNG von Aulock 4303 and 4315.



Fig. 16: Myra, Lycian League, silver drachm, 167–88 BCE, 1.69 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. Fonds général 213) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Fig. 17: Tlos, Lycian League, silver drachm, 167–88 BCE, 2.85 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. L 3591) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Fig. 18: Phaselis, Lycian League, silver drachm, 167–88 BCE, 2.16 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. Fonds général 284) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

it was only identified with KP or MA. This iconographical code can be explained by the presence of a big sanctuary to Apollo, more precisely to the Apolline triad (the divine twins Apollo and Artemis, with their mother Leto): the Letoon of Xanthos.

Most coins confirm alliances between Greeks, but others recall wars. The first example features the *salpinx* (trumpet), on a silver tetradrachm minted under the king Demetrios Poliorcetes (306–283), probably to recall his naval victory in Salamis (Cyprus) over Ptolemy in 306 BCE.<sup>87</sup> On the obverse, a Nike, the winged goddess of victory, is standing left, holding a *salpinx*, on prow left (fig. 19). On the reverse, the god Poseidon, viewed from the side, is striding left, brandishing a trident in his right hand, a mantle wrapped around his left arm, and a star in twinkling in the right. The goddess Nike is a well-known archaeological feature, frequently placed on the prow of a ship. Her ubiquitous presence is recognisable, even without a trumpet, like the famous Nike of Samothrace in the Louvre. A similar monument was erected on the central square, the agora, of Cyrene (Libya).

Thus, the music instrument may belong to a general political propaganda for Hellenistic kings or queens.<sup>88</sup> Demetrios wanted to proclaim his military victory over the Ptolemaic kingdom in a context of strong rivalries after the death of Alexander the Great and the division of his empire. The *salpinx* is the instrument traditionally associated to ancient Greek warfare<sup>89</sup> and is a symbol of victory in both war and in musical competitions. The influence of Hellenistic kings and queens is also obvious in the support they can give to some contests. It is the interpretation given to bronze coins (fig. 20) minted by the city of Thespieae (Boeotia) around 210–208 BCE,<sup>90</sup> where big festivals were organised to worship the Muses, the *Mouseia*, in the so-called Valley of Muses.<sup>91</sup> On the obverse there is a female head looking to right, wearing *modius* with a veil, and on the reverse a lyre within a laurel wreath. There is ongoing debate regarding the identity of the veiled woman. Scholars believe she might be the goddess Hera or the queen Arsinoe III of Egypt. Indeed, we know that the Lagid dynasty funded this festival and it was part of their cultural policy in Greek mainland, particularly in Samothrace. If she really is Arsinoe, she would be represented as the tenth Muse.

87 Edward Theodore Newell, *The Coinages of Demetrios Poliorcetes* (Chicago: Obol Intl., 1978), n° 51.

88 See also the coinage of Antiochos II Theos (Oliver David Hoover, *The Handbook of Syrian Coins* = *The Handbook of Greek Coinage Series 9* (Lancaster: Classical Numismatic Group, 2010), n° 278) and of Antiochos VIII (Leo Kadman, *Corpus nummorum Palaestinensium. The Coins of Akko Ptolemais* (Tel Aviv: Schocken Publishing House, 1961), n° 48).

89 Peter Krentz, “The Salpinx in Greek Warfare,” in *Hoplites. The Classical Greek Battle Experience*, ed. Victor Davis Hanson (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 1993), 110–120.

90 SNG Copenhagen 406–407. See Catherine Grandjean, “La circulation monétaire à Thespies (Béotie),” *BCH Suppl.* 53 = *Nomisma* (2011): 257–271 ; Philippe Guittet, “Arsinoë, Thespies et Orchomène de Béotie. Un type monétaire régional ?,” *Bulletin de la Société française de Numismatique* 67 (2012): 82–87.

91 The organization of musical competitions in Pella (the *Basileia*) may be the reason why Pella stroke coins with Apollo and the *kithara* between 187 and 31 BCE: *BMC Macedonia – Pella* 11–12; SNG Copenhagen 262.



Fig. 19: Ephesos, Demetrios, silver tetradrachm, 306–283 BCE, 27 mm, 17.15 g, 1 h. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. 1973.1.73) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Fig. 20: Thespieae, bronze mint, ca. 210–208 BCE, 4.23 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. Fonds général 682) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

A music instrument may also appear in a context of secession from a Hellenistic king. This is exemplified by a coin combining the laureate head of Apollo Myrtaeus (since he wears a wreath of myrtle) and the *kithara*, struck in Cyrene between 282 and 261 BCE,<sup>92</sup> when Magas ruled over Cyrenaica. Magas was the first-born son of the noblewoman Berenice I, who became the wife of Ptolemy I Soter, the former general of Alexander and the founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt. Through his mother's marriage to Ptolemy, Magas was a stepson to Ptolemy. He became an

92 *BMC Cyrenaica – Cyrene* 319, SNG Copenhagen 1266–1268. See François Chamoux, “Le roi Magas”, *Revue Historique* 216 (1956): 18–34; Andrew Wilson, “Une cité grecque de Libye: fouilles d’Euhepéridès (Benghazi)”, *CRAI* 147 (2003): 1647–1675.



Fig. 21: Cyrene, bronze mint, 282–261 BCE, 4.19 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. D 638) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Egyptian prince living in his stepfather's court and was a member of the Ptolemaic dynasty. His mother bore Ptolemy three children: two daughters and one son, who became the future Pharaoh Ptolemy II Philadelphos. Ptolemy I sent him to Cyrene to recover the Lagid authority on this territory. Cyrene was a Greek colony founded around 640, ruled first as a monarchy, and then as a democracy until it was conquered by Ptolemy I. Ophellas, the general who occupied the city in his name, ruled the city almost independently until his death, when Magas received governorship of the territory. However, when Ptolemy I died in 276 BCE, Magas crowned himself king and declared *de facto* independence, marrying the daughter of the Seleucid king, Ptolemy's rival, and forming with him an alliance to invade the Ptolemaic kingdom. Magas opened hostilities against Ptolemy II in 274 BCE, attacking Egypt from the west. However, Magas had to cancel his operations due to an internal revolt of the Libyan nomads. Magas at least managed to maintain the independence of Cyrenaica until his death in 250 BC. Nevertheless, the coinage with Apollo and the *kithara* (fig. 21) was not struck by Magas himself, but by the city, which obviously gained from Magas the right to strike its own coinage, demonstrating independence from the Lagid kingdom. When the Ptolemies controlled Cyrenaica, they struck their own coinage.<sup>93</sup> The iconography is a direct allusion to the spring Kyre, which the Greeks consecrated to Apollo. One of its more significant features is the temple of Apollo, which was originally constructed as early as the seventh century BCE. The wonderful Apollo Kitharoidos, currently displayed in the British Museum, comes from the Roman Cyrene.

93 Olivier Picard & Thomas Faucher, "Le monnayage de bronze de la Cyrénaïque hellénistique et les Lagides," in *Le monete di Cirene e della Cirenaica nel Mediterraneo. Problemi e prospettive*, ed. Michele Asolati and Giovanni Gorini (Padova: Esedra editrice, 2016), 127–140.

In summation, the use of musical images may reflect a political community or a secession, in the context of Greek city-states as well as Hellenistic kingdoms. However, in the end, is there any specific musical identity suggested by those instruments?

### A Musical Identity? The Greek Culture Overseas

The *kithara* appears first as Apollo's instrument and the symbol of Greek communities, city-states or leagues, organised first around a common sanctuary and then around a common god. Nevertheless, all the examples studied above may also indirectly refer to the musical dimension of cults, especially festivals and contests, since the *kithara* was used in some rituals like processions or hymns, and was the only string instrument played in artistic competitions. As shown by the Arcadian syrinx, the instrument may have regional connotations, referring to local myths. That is also true for the morphology of the instrument, even if in most cases the general shape of the *kithara* is easily identifiable as typically Greek, so that they can recognise it as a cultural point of reference.

However, sometimes, some variations could suggest that the shape of the instrument could be different in certain regions. For instance, in South Italy, the *kithara* seems to have been more elongated, as suggested by the coins of Rhegion or Centuripae, or even of quadrangular shape.

It is plausible that, when Greeks saw the instrument, they could remember some Greek music they had already heard in any performance *in situ*. However, it seems very difficult to determine which genre this music could belong to. There are few exceptions, which prove that Greeks seem to have seen in the instruments more than a city-state or a political alliance.

One single instrument is usually not enough to identify a specific musical genre, since the *kithara* may be used in different kinds of ritual and artistic performances. However, some coins obviously refer to a poetic and musical heritage, which could be associated with a particular city-state. Indeed, some cities have depicted poets with musical instruments who were born in their territory, and became local celebrities. The island of Lesbos, and especially the city of Methymna, has always worshipped the gods Apollo and Athena, as shown by silver didrachms of the second half of the fifth century BCE. Featured is the left profile of the head of Athena wearing helmet on the obverse; a *kithara* on a slightly raised square is placed on the reverse (fig. 22).<sup>94</sup>

In Hellenistic times (330 and 280 BCE), the city minted a similar iconography with a kantharos, a bee, or a dolphin on the left of the *kithara* on silver triobols.<sup>95</sup> Later, the city decided to depict the poet Arion, a mythical figure, on his dolphin, a story reported by Herodotus.<sup>96</sup> Arion was kidnapped by pirates who forced him

94 *BMC Lesbos – Methymna* 10.

95 *BMC Lesbos – Methymna* 12–15; *SNG Copenhagen* 352.

96 Herodotus, *Histories*, I, 23–24.



Fig. 22: Methymna, silver hemidrachm, 5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, 2.77 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. Fonds général 115) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

to jump into the sea. He played his instrument and a dolphin came to his rescue. As a result, the instrument refers not only to musical practice, but to a common musical mythology. Arion on his dolphin appears first as a secondary motive on silver tetradrachms minted under the reign of Alexander III of Macedon (fig. 23), when Lesbos belonged to his kingdom. On the obverse is the head of the king and on the reverse Zeus is seated on his throne and holding the eagle; the poet Arion with a *kithara* rides a dolphin on the bottom left.<sup>97</sup>

On later bronze coins (fig. 24), the obverse features the laureate head of Apollo facing right. The poet Arion, with a *kithara* in his left hand, wears a long chiton and *chlamys*. He is seated on a dolphin, facing right, with his right hand extended.<sup>98</sup>

A similar iconography is found on coins produced in the late third and second centuries BCE in Brundisium (southern Italy).<sup>99</sup> It is from this region that Arion was hosted before his misadventure.

Historical poets were depicted, including the poet Anacreon (sixth – fifth century BCE) on silver didrachms in Teos (Asia Minor) in the early Hellenistic period. Anacreon is found plucking a *barbitos* on the reverse of a silver didrachm with a griffin on the obverse.<sup>100</sup> Anacreon supposedly designed this instrument, longer than a lyre, and composed specific songs called *anacreonta* (drinking songs). The

97 Martin J. Price, *The Coinage in the Name of Alexander the Great and Philip Arrhidaeus* (London: British Museum, 1991), n° 1691–1695.

98 *BMC Lesbos – Methymna* 16, 27 and 35.

99 SNG ANS 779–786.

100 Classical Numismatic Group Auction 57 (April 2001), unedited. On the depiction of Anacreon in the art, see Michèle Blanchard & Alain Blanchard, “La mosaïque d’Anacréon à Autun,” *Revue des Études Anciennes* 75 (1973): 270–271 and bibliography.



Fig. 23: Methymna, Alexander III, silver tetradrachm, 336–323 BCE, 7.00 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France inv. Fonds général 139A) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Fig. 24: Methymna, bronze mint, 330–280 BCE, 33 mm, 16.96 g, 12 h. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. 1973.1.55) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Fig. 25: Melos, silver tetradrachm, undated, 14.29 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. Fonds général 240) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

*barbitos* alone appears on silver and bronze coins.<sup>101</sup> In the early second century BCE, the city-state of Paros was represented on silver tetradrachms with the ivy-crowned head of Dionysos facing right (the guardian god of the island) and the poet Archilochus (sixth century BCE) on the obverse. The poet of Paros is seated on a *diphros*, holding a lyre.<sup>102</sup> A last, undated example is the coinage of the island Melos.<sup>103</sup> Silver coins illustrate the helmeted head of Athena, facing right, with the poet Diagoras of Melos (fifth century BCE) in a dot circle, seated on a throne with lyre (fig. 25). Diagoras is known for having composed a paean which was subsequently stolen. He lost his trial because he had no proof of authorship.<sup>104</sup>

The allusion to certain poets as local icons implies references to the musical genres in which they excelled. Drinking songs were associated with Anacreon, the iambic poetry with Archilochus, and the paean with Diagoras. Anacreon and Archilochus were credited with the creation of their genres, which later became a cultural heritage. Most of the Greeks living in Hellenistic times knew those poets and considered them to be symbolic of Greek poetry.

It does not suggest that Greek literature was considered as a monolithic ensemble without any foreign influence. From the beginning, Greeks underlined the links their music had with the Orient, even though intellectuals like Plato and Aristotle rejected any Oriental influence in their musical education.

The myth of the competition between Apollo and Marsyas is the most famous expression of this distrust. Although most artworks depict Apollo's triumph, a very famous bronze sculptural group made by Myron in the mid-fifth century BCE, and displayed on the Acropolis of Athens, showed the episode before the contest. Athena discarded the *aulos* she had just invented and Marsyas retrieved it. The group is reproduced on bronze coins minted by Athens under the reign of Hadrian, probably to display a famous piece of art than to create a specific reference to music.<sup>105</sup> The second representation of Marsyas playing *aulos* is more interesting, since it is clearly an ethnic symbol. The city of Apamea between 88 and 40 BCE minted bronze coins (fig. 26) with the turreted bust of the goddess Tyche facing right, symbolising the Fortune of the city, and, on the reverse, Marsyas advancing to the right and playing the Phrygian *aulos*.<sup>106</sup> It is an *aulos* with a curved bell on the end of one of the pipes.<sup>107</sup>

101 BMC *Ionia* – *Teos* 26 and 39; SNG Copenhagen 1444, 1460–1461, 1466; SNG Kayhan 610–612.

102 Arthur Löbbecke, "Griechische Münzen aus meiner Sammlung V," *ZfN* 21 (1898): 262 n° 2 pl. 8, 13; the same, but 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE: Diskin Clay, *Archilochos Heros. The Cult of Poets in the Greek Polis* (Washington DC/Cambridge MA: Center for Hellenic Studies/Harvard University Press, 2004), VI 31, pl. 31.

103 ANS inv. 1947.84.1.

104 *Suidas*, s.v. *Diagoras*.

105 Léon Lacroix, *Les reproductions de statues sur les monnaies grecques. La statuaire archaïque et classique* (Liège: Presses Universitaires de Liège, 1949), 252–253.

106 BMC *Phrygia* – *Apamea* 47, 49–51, 62, 74, 91–94 and 109.

107 Annie Bélis, "L'aulos phrygien," *Revue Archéologique* (1986): 21–40.



Fig. 26: Apamea, bronze mint, ca. 88–40 BCE, 6.81 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. 1966.453) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

This is not the only example with an instrument bearing a non-Greek traditional shape. The city-state of Sestos<sup>108</sup> (Thracian Chersonese) minted bronze coins in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> c. with the god Hermes wearing the *petasos*, who was very popular in this region, and a lyre which recalls the shape of the Thracian lyre represented on the vases (fig. 27).<sup>109</sup> The bronze coinage of Myrina<sup>110</sup> in Asia Minor (second century CE) shows also an unusual seven-stringed instrument, which does not appear to be Greek at first sight. It might not be the realism involved, but the presence on the reverse side of the god Telesphoros that allows the hypothesis of a cultural melting pot. The garment of the god (a hooded cloak) is not Greek, leading scholars to surmise that this god was assimilated to Asklepios' son but was originally a Celtic deity. It probably came with the Galatian invasions in the first quarter of the third century BCE.<sup>111</sup> We cannot exclude the fact that the instrument is also the image of a hybridisation of the Greek and the Celtic culture. Although Apamea, Sestos, and Myrina are Greek cities, they decided to foreground their musical connections with Phrygian, Thracian, and Celtic cultures.<sup>112</sup>

108 Hans von Fritze, "Sestos. Die Menas-Inschrift und das Münzwesen der Stadt," in *Nomisma. Untersuchungen auf dem Gebiete der antiken Münzkunde*, I, ed. Hans von Fritze & Hugo Gaebler (Berlin: Mayer und Müller, 1907), 6 n° 15–17.

109 Annie Bélis, "La cithare de Thamyras," in *La naissance de l'Opéra, Euridice 1600–2000*, ed. Françoise Decroissette, Françoise Graziani and Joël Heuillon (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003), 27–56.

110 *BMC Aeolis – Myrina* 39.

111 Waldemar Deonna, "Télesphore et le 'genius cucullatus' celtique," *Latomus* 14 (1955): 43–74.

112 See Sylvain Perrot, "Elephants and Bells in the Greco-Roman World: A Link between the West and the East?," *Music in Art* 38 (2013): 27–35, for the depiction of bells on coins struck by Indo-Greek kingdoms.



Fig. 27: Sestos, bronze mint, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE, 3.07 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. Fonds général 1907) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Finally, coins could suggest that non-Greeks depicted Greek musical instruments to show they shared the Greek culture. With this observation, caution must be exercised. For instance, the British Museum owns a silver tetradrachm<sup>113</sup> that features a Persian head facing right on the obverse and, on the reverse, a seven-stringed *kithara* with the legend B-A-Σ-I-Λ. This coin was described as a “satrapial coinage,” because scholars suggested that it could be the portrait of the famous satrap of Lydia Tissaphernes (ca. 445–395).<sup>114</sup> However, in this case, the coin should have the letters ΤΙΣΣΑ-, and not ΒΑΣΙΛ-. The latter can only refer to the Great King of Persia (called by the Greeks *Basileus*) Artaxerxes II. Although it is tempting to assume that the Persian king was interested in Greek music, this unique combination of a Persian figure and a typical Greek instrument does not necessarily mean that the King valued Greek music. The coin was probably minted by a Greek city under Persian rule. It is rather a way to affirm the Greek cultural identity, although the political independence was lost. At the very least, we may suggest that Artaxerxes had the visual competence to correctly identify a Greek instrument.

113 British Museum inv. EH, p521.1.Bas.

114 Herbert Adolph Cahn, “Le monnayage des satrapes : iconographie et signification,” *Revue des Études Anciennes* 91 (1989): 97–105; Leo Mildenberg, “On the so-called satrapal coinage,” *Publications de l’Institut français d’Études Anatoliennes* 12 (2000) = *Mécanismes et innovations monétaires dans l’Anatolie achéménide. Numismatique et Histoire*: 9–20; Jarosław Bodzek, “Achaemenid Asia Minor: Coins of the Satraps and of the Great King,” in *Proceedings of the First International Congress of the Anatolian Monetary History and Numismatics*, ed. Kayhan Dörtlük, Oğuz Tekin, Remziye Boyraz Seyhan (Istanbul: Suna & İnan Kıraç Research Institute on Mediterranean Civilizations, 2014), 59–78.



Fig. 28: Prusias II, bronze mint, 183–149 BCE, 5.82 g. Paris: Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. Fonds général 56) © Public domain, source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

A more convincing example is given by the bronze coinage of the Macedonian and Bythinian kings. Amyntas, who ruled over Macedonia from 393 to 369, minted bronze coins with Apollo and the *kithara* in order to show that Macedonia was highly influenced by the Greek culture.<sup>115</sup> The king of Bithynia Prusias I<sup>116</sup> reigned from 238 to 183 BCE. The obverse of his coins features the laureate head of Apollo and the reverse a *kithara*. The shape of the *kithara* is not canonical, but manifests a clear intention to imitate the Greeks with the god Apollo and the Greek alphabet. Prusias wanted to follow the cultural policy of his father Nicomedes, who wanted his kingdom to be Hellenised. His ancestors were Achaemenid, and Bithynia was part of the Achaemenid Empire. Nicomedes, however, wanted to establish a Greek culture, as shown by his name and the city he founded, Nicomedia. Prusias I wanted to show that Bithynia was actually Greek. Confirmation is given by later coins. A bronze coin probably minted when Prusias ruled with his son (183–149) features Hermes with petasos and a lyre, and a bronze coin minted by Prusias II,<sup>117</sup> featuring Dionysos' head facing right, wreathed with ivy, and the centaur Chiron walking right and playing *kithara*. (fig. 28)<sup>118</sup> Chiron has always been a symbol of culture, although he is a monster. According to the mythology, Chiron was the preceptor of Achilles, Asklepios, or Jason.

115 SNG Copenhagen 140–145; SNG ANS 926.

116 BMC Bithynia – Prusias I 8. See Otto Mørkholm, *Early Hellenistic Coinage from the Accession of Alexander to the Peace of Apamea (336–188 BC)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 130.

117 ANS inv. 1944.100.41956

118 BMC Bithynia – Prusias II 7–16.

To conclude, the string instrument is a way of symbolising the community of Greek people, because it combines the reference to a beloved god of the same religion and to a shared way of life. However, it does not imply that there was no local identity. Teos, for instance, depicted a *barbitos*, whereas Arcadians illustrated the Pan flute. Thus, coins are a testimony of the cultural heritage and the beloved instruments played in those places. Through coinage, we may even recognise political alliances such as leagues, and deduce rivalries between Greek political entities. Musical instruments may allude to diplomatic relationships and historical events, like the Victory holding a trumpet on the coinage issued by the Hellenistic king Demetrios Poliorcetes, or Magas's insurrection against Ptolemy II. Greeks could express through musical instruments on coins their cultural allegiance and announce some detachment due to the recurrent conflicts between city-states. I have shown that the string instrument is not only Apollo's attribute, but could actually refer in certain contexts to musical practices or repertoires, which constituted the Greek cultural heritage.