

# LYDIA & THE FIRST COINAGE



Above left, Lydian Kingdom Croesus, 560-546 B.C., silver stater  
**Obverse:** Forepart of a lion and a bull facing each other  
Above right, Lydian Kingdom, c. 600 B.C., electrum 1/3 stater  
**Obverse:** Lion's head right with star above

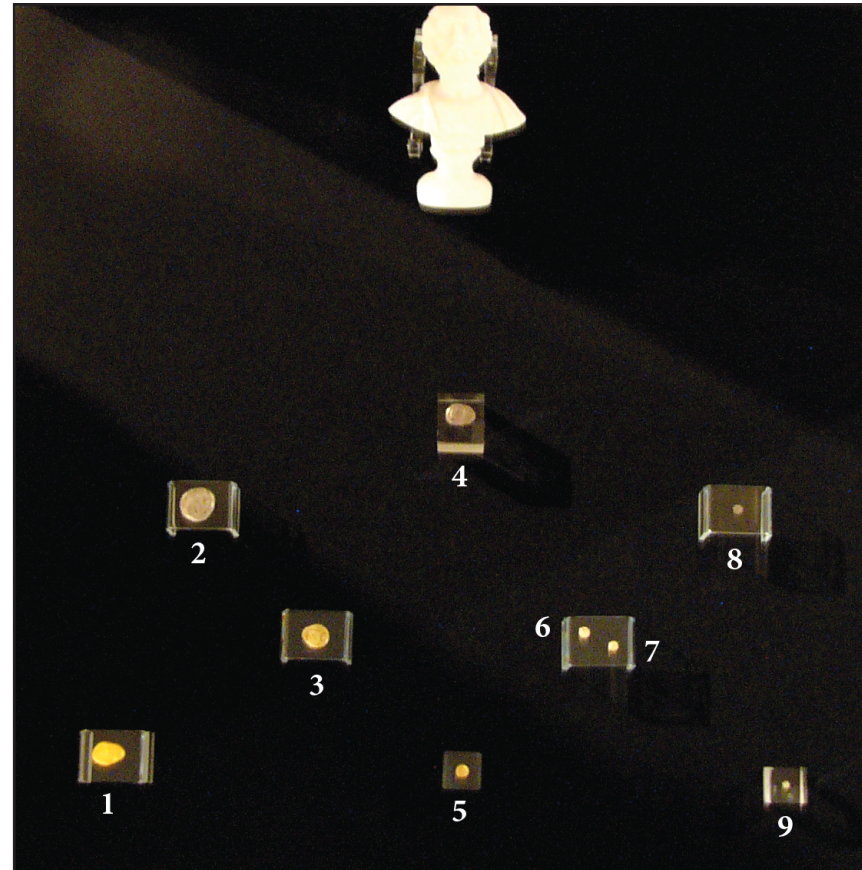
Lydian coins were issued in fixed denominations by weight from a stater of 10.89 grams to the tiny  $\frac{1}{6}$  of a stater weighing in at only 0.15 grams. The most common denomination was the  $\frac{1}{3}$  stater, or trite, which may have been worth 11 sheep, about a month's subsistence for an average person.

The Lydian king Croesus (560 – 546 B.C.), famous for his wealth, is credited with inventing the first bi-metallic coinage. He began issuing coins in gold and in silver instead of electrum, and silver coins quickly became the standard for the vast majority of Greek coinage.



Greek coins from the 5th to the 4th centuries B.C., from the left: decadrachm, tetradrachm, drachm, obol and hemitartemoron.

1. Lydian Kingdom, King Croesus, 560-546 B.C.  
Gold Stater  
**Obverse:** Forepart of a lion and a bull facing each other  
**Reverse:** Two irregular square punches  
*King Croesus is credited with creating the first coinages in gold and silver.*  
ANA Collection 1989.100.9
2. Caria, Mylasa, c. 520 B.C. Silver Stater  
**Obverse:** Forepart of a lion  
**Reverse:** Angular incuse punchmark  
ANA Collection 1989.100.10
3. Lydian Kingdom, c. 600 B.C. Electrum Trite  
**Obverse:** Lion head  
**Reverse:** Incuse punchmark  
*The designs for the earliest coins are derived from animals or gods associated with the city or kingdom that issued them.*  
ANA Collection 1990.19.1



4. Lydian Kingdom, King Croesus, 560-546 B.C. Silver  $\frac{1}{2}$  Stater  
**Obverse:** Forepart of a lion and a bull facing each other  
**Reverse:** Two irregular square punches  
ANA Collection 1990.18.1
5. Ionia, Uncertain Mint, 650-600 B.C. Electrum  $\frac{1}{2}$  Stater  
**Obverse:** Striations  
**Reverse:** Incuse punchmark  
*Coins with striation marks, such as this one, are considered to be the earliest type of western coinage.*  
ANA Collection 1989.100.1

6. Ionia, Uncertain Mint, 600-550 B.C. Electrum  $\frac{1}{8}$  Stater  
**Obverse:** Lion head  
**Reverse:** Scorpion in incuse  
ANA Collection 1989.100.2
7. Ionia, Uncertain Mint, 600-550 B.C. Electrum  $\frac{1}{48}$  Stater  
**Obverse:** Globules  
**Reverse:** Incuse punchmark  
ANA Collection 1989.100.4
8. Ionia, Uncertain Mint, 600-550 B.C. Electrum  $\frac{1}{6}$  Stater  
**Obverse:** Lion with star  
**Reverse:** Incuse punchmark  
ANA Collection 1989.100.3
9. Ionia, Miletos, 525-500 B.C. Silver Hemitertemion  
**Obverse:** Head of lion  
**Reverse:** Helmeted head of Athena  
ANA Collection 1991.28.4