

Democratic Propaganda

Coins in Archaic and Classical Athens



Fig 1. The Athenian Owl (Sear 1978, 236).

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Democratic Propaganda, Coins in Archaic and Classical Athens

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Bachelor Thesis

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Foreword

I would like to thank everyone who helped me in my process of writing this thesis. From the faculty of Archaeology of Leiden university I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Sojc for guiding me in the entire process from choosing a subject until the final version and Dr. Stöger and Dr. Stek for the guidance in the thesis tutorial lessons. Next to these I would also like to thank my fellow classical thesis writers who helped me by giving help and asking critical questions during the thesis tutorial lessons.

1. Introduction

During one of the lectures of the Bachelor 2 course “Visual Cultures” we were shown the Peplos Scene. This is a scene on the eastern part of the frieze on the Athenian Parthenon. It displays the Greek gods sitting down and looking at the Athenian people, who, in contrast to the gods, are standing up and are at work. This frieze was made in the Classical period of ancient Greece, at time when the city of Athens was in her golden age. It betokened that the Athenians looked upon themselves as hard workers in contrast to the gods they worshipped (Ashmole 1972, 117). The scene shows the attitude the Athenian people had in those days, because their city was blossoming. The mentioned part of the Parthenon frieze intrigued me and made me want to take a closer look the Athenians, where they came from, how they developed, and what gave them that attitude shown in pictures such as the Peplos scene.

1.1 Athens and Democracy

The earliest construction in Athens can be found on the Acropolis. These constructions date back to the late thirteenth century BC, when Athens was a part of the Bronze Age Mycenaean civilization. Sections of the Cyclopean walls were left intact on the Acropolis, even when Pericles started his large Acropolis building policy in 447 BC. On the top of the Acropolis are also signs of this Mycenaean presence. A bronze age palace of that period has been identified under the *Erechtheion*. (Hurwitt 2004, 61).

In the dark ages, which came after the Bronze Age and preceded the Archaic period. Athens suffered a decline, like other cities did. It is not sure if the Mycenaean palace was destroyed like other Mycenaean cities around 1200 BC. This is often attributed to

the Dorians, but the Athenians always maintained that they were 'pure' Ionians with no Dorian traits in them (Osborne 1996, 204).

Burials from Iron Age graves in parts of the city, such as Kerameikos, have been excavated and the prosperous and rich graves showed that in the beginning of Iron Age Greece, around 900 BC, Athens was a prosperous centre in the Greek world. To consider from the burial gifts, these graves were comparable with to as Lefkandi in Euboea and Knossos on Crete. The rich graves, with gifts from all over the Mediterranean, show us the importance of Athens in trading. Its location in central Greece, combined with good access to the sea, gave it an advantage over other cities on mainland Greece, such as Sparta or Thebes (Osborne 1996, 80)

Due to the process of synoecism, this advantage led to a growth of the city state, where small city states tended to join forces and form a larger city state. This meant that , in the eight and seventh century, Athens controlled an area of over 2,600 square kilometers, thus becoming significantly bigger than most Greek city states. This area growth inspired a growth in artistic and political development (Rhodes 2004, 1).

One of these political development was the upcoming of tyrants. Usually in city states in this period, an ambitious man within the ruling aristocracy who had extreme ideas used the restless longing for better circumstances to seize power. The rule of this tyrant became, after a couple of generations, a new dissatisfaction for the people, so tyrants were overthrown (Rhodes 2004, 2).

This also happened in Athens, where Cylon made himself a tyrant in the years of 630/620 BC. An important change took place in 594. Solon, a lawmaker, was chosen to write new laws. He wanted to make a compromise between the aristocracy and the more common people of Athens. One of his most compromising ideas was that the qualification for political function was no longer 'birth' but wealth. This greatly reduced the power of the aristocrats. Because neither the aristocrats nor the commoners got what they wanted, the tyrant period was not yet over. Between 546 and 510 Peisistratus and his sons became the tyrants over Athens. These created a

more centralized Athens, and the political centre of Attica went to Athens. However, under Peisistratus and his sons, aristocrats and commoners both became subjects to the tyrants. Therefore, the aristocrat Cleisthenes, having overthrown of the last tyrant, attempted to gain more popularity with the people of Athens by introducing a new political system in 508 BC, which included the entire citizen body. This system was called democracy (Rhodes 2004, 2).

The first tyrant- based political structure and the later democratic system in Athens were two of several forms of government which the various Greek city states had. The small city states with their small scale of public affairs contributed to an intense public life where differences were quickly noticed. Of all the different political structures there were four who formed the principal governmental forms. The first one is where the citizens of the polis had a very important voice in the political body of the city, the second is the rule of the wealthy, the third is where the people with higher social status rule, and the last is where only one man sat on the throne, just as we saw in Athens. The Greeks named these forms of government and these words we still use today: the first one is called democracy, the second one is oligarchy (where economic power or wealth is the basis of the claim to rule), aristocracy (based on a claim of special excellence in the rulers), and tyranny (the rule of one man, based on a force of action) (Hopper 1957, 1).

In my opinion it is the change from the tyrant- based political structure to the later democracy that had one of the primary effects in the upcoming Athenian classical period. But what did a government where the citizens of the polis formed the political body actually entail? To start with the meaning of democracy, the Greek word δημοκρατία (dēmokratía) means rule of the people, which is a conjugation from the words δῆμος (dēmos), meaning people, and κράτος (Kratos), meaning power (Hopper 1957, 2).

In practice, it meant that the following structure. First there was the ἐκκλησία, or Assembly, where all members of the Athenian citizen body could participate in. They

were not chosen, but because of their membership they have the right to vote and participate. Membership was open for all citizens but no one was allowed to serve the city in a political function for more than two years in a life time (Hopper 1957, 7). Citizens were exclusively males; were sons of a citizen father, or were born either from the wife of from the daughter of a citizen father (Rhodes 2004, 18).

Secondly, all the free men were registered according to which *demos* they lived in, in Athens, *demos* meant one of the administrative parts of Attica, not the later meaning 'people'. These parts were then organized in ten tribes, each of which consisted of a part of the city but also a part of the country side. From these tribes were executive magistrates chosen, the *archontes*. The citizen army was based on the tribes, resulting in people from different incomes being placed together in the same division, which strengthened their sense of unity. Thirdly, from these tribes there was also a council of 500 men was chosen. These took in turn one tenth of the year to give their whole time attention to daily business. (Hopper 1957, 6).

After the invasion of the Persians in 479 BC great leaders held the office of *strategos*, acting not only as military leaders but also as advisers to the *Demos*, and playing a part as policy makers. Before the Persian invasion the magistrates also functioned as leaders and initiators in public affairs. This was later taken over by the *strategos* (Hopper 1957, 8). The structure of this democratic system is given in a schematic in figure 2.

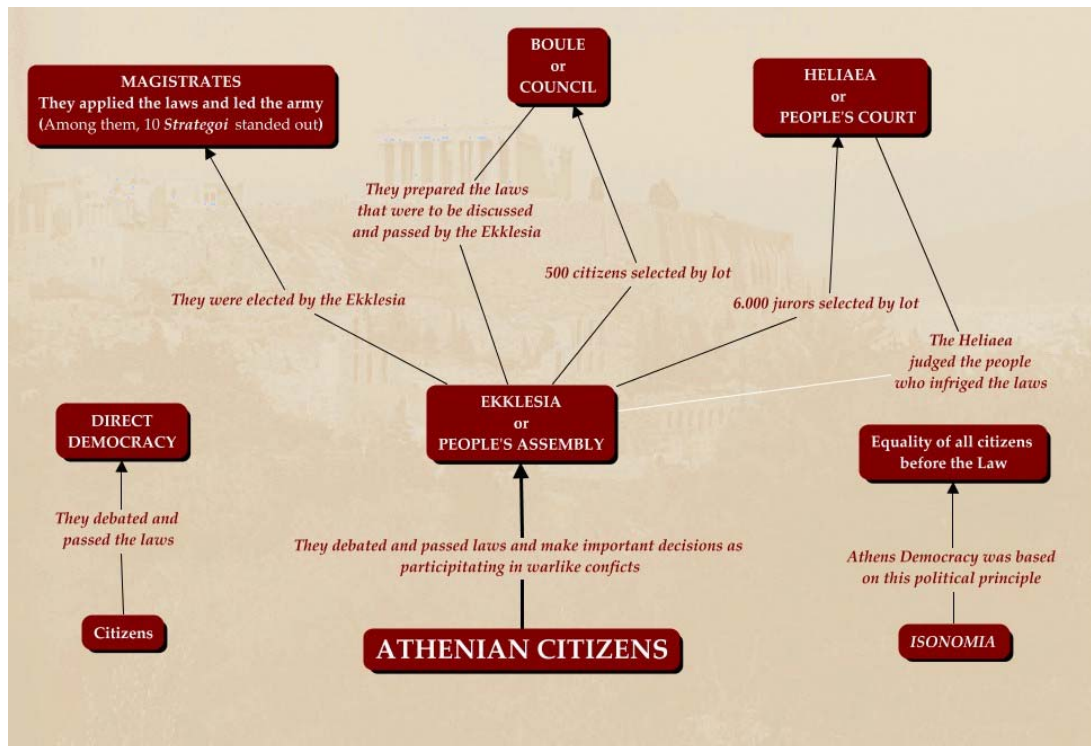


Figure 2. Schematics of the Athenian democratic system (ploigos1.wordpress.com).

1.2 Thesis research

As I already stated the change from the tyrant- based society to the democratic system must in my opinion have had a significant influence on the results of the upcoming Persian wars and the Classical period. But what I want to investigate is if the Athenians promoted their system to other city states or civilizations. This will be the main topic I will investigate in my thesis. I will focus my research on one form of media: The coins of Athens, making the research question of my thesis:

Did the Athenians use their coins for propagandistic uses of their democratic system?

1.3 Why use coins instead of other forms of media?

One of the main reasons for choosing coins over other forms of media is the range in time and in use. The introduction of money caused a change in the way we can trace back trading. Because money was city or state bound, the origin of the coins can be traced back to the city where they came from. The spread of coins in the Athenian Empire was over a great distance, which led to numerous finds of coins in Egypt and the Levant, which have been identified as Athenian coins (Papazarkadas and Parker 2009, 205).

If we look at this distance while keeping in mind that the origin of the coins can be traced back, they coins can form a perfect medium for purposes such as propaganda. The origin of the coins can be traced back through the symbols and scenes that are depicted on the pieces, which could have been used to identify the cities identity or aspects of it.

I will research the coins by looking at the symbols and the scenes on the Athenian coins, by comparing the coins made before the introduction of democracy and after. Next to this, I will also look how the introduction of coins developed in Greece, the way the city-state ruled its minting and the spread and magnitude of the coins.

Next to this I will also research how the coins fit in the propagandistic model. This propagandistic model explains how propaganda can be defined and what its elements are. Propaganda entails ideas and meanings that are deliberately spread to force the idea on other people. Here, we can see the two major components of propaganda, namely the idea and the way of spreading the idea. By applying these two components to my thesis study we can identify similarities or differences and eventually conclude if the coins were used as a tool for propaganda.

1.4 Hypothesis

Basing my hypothesis on the opinion that democracy played a part in the flourishing period of Athens, I suggest that coins played a part in broadcasting the identity of Athens. Since their identity can be seen through their political system, I believe that the coins were used for propagandistic purposes of the democratic system.

I hope to find evidence for the usage of images, symbols and scenes (on coins) that can verify my hypothesis. Next to this, if the Athenians forced their political system on other cities, we can see if the role of early trade (with the help of coins) played a part in this enforcement.

About the coins themselves, it would be logical to say that the monetization system was used for propagandistic uses. The two sides of a coin can presumably hold images or symbols that would link to either the influence of democracy on Athens or on democracy itself because coins have a vast circulation or spread. If we only look at the growth of the Athenian Tetradrachm (see table 2) between the years 490-480 BC there was a mass production of over 5 million of these silver coins (Papazarkadas and Parker 2009, 196). If these numbers are measured over 10 years time, we can expect bigger amounts over the larger period of the Athenian empire, spreading into the millions of as far as the Athenians traded, making it a perfect way to promote their governmental system.

2. Approach and Methodology

I will approach my subject through a literary, numismatic, semantic, semiotic and an iconographical analysis study of the subject. Information about the coinage in Athens is widely available, and it will be my research to look at this subject with an eye on democracy on the one hand, and the development of propaganda in classical Athens on the other hand. For the investigation on the coins themselves I will look at over 250 coins which include the first coins ever struck to the coins struck in classical Athens.

To draw conclusions on contradictory assumptions, I will look at the time interval the conclusion was written for, keeping in mind that newer scientific studies hold more relevant and up-to-date information. The acknowledgement of one's assumption by other scholars and scientific data will also be an important part in my analytical procedure, this will be referred to in my thesis as commonly accepted theories.

For the methodology of my thesis here is a review of the questions that I attempt to answer. My main research question is:

Did the Athenians use their coins for propagandistic uses of their democratic system?

For answering this question, there are four sub-questions to look at:

- *Did the installment of democracy have an effect on the minting regulation of the city's mines?*
- *What was depicted on Athenian coins from the moment coinage was introduced in Greece until the middle of the Classical period?*
- *Can differentiations in growth and spread of the Athenian coins be derived from the change in political system?*
- *Can the modern term of propaganda be applied to the city of Athens of the Archaic and Classical period?*

2.1 Investigation of coins

For the investigation of coins, I will be looking at the coin indexes of P.R. Franke and M. Hirmer, 1964, C.M. Kraaij, 1976, D.R. Sear, 1978 and S. Seltman 1933. At these coins I will focus on numismatic displays from pre-democratic and democratic Athenian coins. Besides, literary studies on the subject of Athenian coins will come under scrutiny, including their images, changes, spread and growth.

2.2 Setting the coins in a propagandistic framework

For the investigation of applying the modern term of propaganda on an ancient city, I will focus on literary studies on the subject of propaganda, its purpose and means, as already stated in the introduction, to broadcast.

Having established a propaganda model, we can see put the developments of coins in this model to see if there is an answer to be found for my main research question: *did the Athenian use their coins for propagandistic uses of their democratic system?*

3. Coinage in Athens

3.1 The introduction of coinage

3.1.1 Coinage in Asia Minor

The invention of coins did not start in Greece. The earliest datable coins were discovered in an excavation by the British Museum of the Artemision at Ephesus. These coins were made of electrum, an alloy of silver and gold that can be found naturally in the area of mount Tmolus and the valley of the Pactolus river or can be made artificially (van der Vin 1984, 7). These coins had on the one side an incuse square, but on the reverse images of either a lion, a goat or a beetle, see figure 3 (Kraay 1976, 93).



*Fig 3. Electrum coin from Ephesus with a depiction of a lion on the reverse (left)
(Kraay 1976, 381).*

According to numismatists, this was the first beginning of coinage. The incuse square is a test mark of the smith to test if the piece of electrum was pure or that there were other minerals inside the piece, and the reverse image shows an identification of the smith or a sign of decoration, which was a sign of ownership and value of a struck coin (Schaps 2004, 94). The coins were dated around 620 BC, but recent excavations have shown that the building under which they were found is one of the most recent buildings on the site of Artemision, possibly built by king Croesus of Lydia, who reigned from 561 until 546 BC. Therefore the youngest date, according to archaeological evidence, is set at 560 BC (Schaps 2004, 96).

Although it cannot be said with certainty that the first coins were struck by king Croesus, he did have a major influence on its development. Because electrum has a variable ratio of gold and silver and the Lydian's did not succeed in standardizing its value, he ended the minting of electrum to avoid this ratio issue and he subsequently started to mint bimetallic currency, coins struck both in gold and in silver. This new currency provided a greater range of denominations ¹ and shows the importance of money in the economy of the Lydian Kingdom, because of the need of refining their metal for a fixed value of solid silver or gold (Sear 1978, x). But the future of the coins was no longer under control of the Lydian's. In 546 BC the king of the Persian Empire, Cyrus, defeated Croesus as the last king of Lydia, and the kingdom went under Persian control (Schaps 2004, 101).

3.1.2 Coinage in Greece

The future of the coins began with the Greeks in Asia Minor. In Greek cities that traded and dealt with, or were controlled by the Lydian Kingdom, hoards were found that contained coins of electrum. Through these cities the contact originated with the Greek mainland, and it was Pheidon, the tyrant, of Argos who was the first being

¹ A specific unit of size or value in a series of units or values (van der Vin, 14).

linked to the upcoming of coins in Greece. It is uncertain if Pheidon was the first to indeed produce and mint coins or that he was the creator of a system of weights and measures. This is partly due to the uncertainty of when he existed, some sources pinpoint his lifetime in the early ninth century BC or in the middle of the eighth century, but these dates are too early for the introduction of money in Greece. Herodotus however gives him a date, early sixth century, which is more compatible with the theory of him being one of the founders of money or a monetary system (Schaps 2004, 102). Pheidon, according to the *Etymologicum Magnum*², started to exchange silver coins for iron spits, which he then dedicated to Hera of Argos. The names of these first coins derive from pre-monetary Greece such as the word *drachme*, meaning “a handful” or an *obelos* meaning a spit, a staff to herd cattle with. Words like *talanton*, *Mina* and *Stater* derive from other civilizations such as Babylon or the Persian Empire (van der Vin 1984, 10). Archaeological excavations at the Heraeum temple at Argos have discovered more than a hundred spits, and a coin at the Perachora at Corinth was found which bore the inscription “I am a drachma, white shouldered Hera”. The collection of spits and the coin which stated the identification of a new drachma shows us that at the time Pheidon lived, indeed a new monetary system was introduced in Greece, or at least Argos, where silver was the new currency and with it came a new weight and coin standard (Schaps 2004, 102). Not all numismatics believe this hypothesis. When silver would have been exchanged for spits, the tyrant of Argos would have been left with nothing, because all the silver would have gone to the people and all the iron spits would have been offered. Leaving the tyrant without money. This can be a plausible explanation, but history never showed such a behavior of Greek tyrants (Schaps 2004, 103). Nevertheless, one thing can be said with certainty, that in the beginning of the sixth century, electrum and silver coins started to appear in Greece just after the

² A compilation of a twelfth-century antiquarian (Schaps 2004, 101).

introduction of electrum coins in Lydia, together with new weight standards (Schaps 2004, 103).

The usage of coin in Greece can be seen as an innovation. However, silver was already used in that specific way in the Near East, as a standard value and one of the media forms of exchange. Therefore the introduction of coinage in Greeks is a form of borrowing the same medium to adapt it in a wider world of trade, because all over Asia silver was already used a form that approaches the form of how we define money (Schaps 2004, 104).

When going further in the archaic period, when the Greek poleis are rapidly growing, we can see that payments, trade and exchange took on an even more important role in society. So the need for Greek cities to have a more centralized monetary system became high, and the coin system from the Near East, which next to its convenience brought a good reputation, was adopted by the entire Greek society (Schaps 2004, 104).

The basic unity in the Greek system became the *stater*, which did not mean a specific weight, but a more standardized weight in the various systems that were created by the different Greek city states (van der Vin 11).

The basic system can be seen in table 1, keeping in mind that for every region or city the weight differed.

1 Mina	50 Staters or 100 drachmae
1 Stater	2/3 Drachma (differed per region).
1 Drachma	6 Obols

Table 1. Basic differentiation in coins (van der Vin 1984, 10).

Although the Greek coins were first struck in electrum, which could have been imported from the Greek cities in Asia minor, who delved the mix of gold and silver

from the Pactolus river, it quickly changed to silver, which was more available in the Greek mainland. Next to the availability, it was also a practical approach. When only striking coins in one metal, a standard and system was much more applicable, because the value of a denomination was now measured in one metal. (Schaps 2004, 104).

3.1.3 Coinage in Athens

Like in most cities, Athens started to mint their coins in silver, partly because of the nearby silver mines at Laurium, which I will discuss later.³ As earlier stated, Greek regions/city states had their own monetary system, so did the province of Attica, which was mostly under the control of Athens. This system would later turn out in the most important monetary system, when, in the fifth century, Athens began to dominate the international trade (van der Vin 1984, 14). In table 2 we can see the basic units from which the attic system consisted.

1 Tetradrachm	Consisted of 4 Drachmae	17,2 grams
1 Drachma	Consisted of 6 Obol	4,3 grams
1 Obol		0,72 grams

Table 2, basic units of the Attic monetary system (van der Vin 1984, 11).

The earliest Athenian coins were the didrachmae, who are dated around 560-550 BC. These coins show a variety of images, which can be related to the coat of arms of the different aristocratic Athenian families, that is why these coins are called the “*Wappenmünzen*”. The circulation of these coins was restricted to the region of Attica. Around 515-510 de production of the *Wappenmünzen* was ended and a new basic unit with a new image was struck. The Tetradrachm with the head of Athena on

³ In Chapter 3.2 “Minting”.

the front side and an owl on the reverse, this coin would become the standard for the next centuries where Athens started to dominate the international trade (Sear 1987, 181).

After the introduction of coins a number of things have to be taken into account, such as the minting of the coins, how and where were the coins struck and whether changes in the governmental entity had an effect on the regulation of the minting process. After the part on the minting regulations I will further discuss the *Wappenmünzen* and the Athenian owl.

3.2 Minting and minting regulations in Athens

The mines in Athenian control, that produced the early *Wappenmünzen* and the later Athenian owl can be directed towards central Greece. The reason for these assumptions are the circulation of the smaller denominations. Apart from the coins that drifted far from Greece, for example places as Egypt, The strongest concentrations of finds are within Attica or Euboea. In this general area there are more mining facilities and cities, but they can be excluded looking at the finds of distinctive coins from cities such as Corinth, Chalkis or Eretria. The smaller denominations are an important factor in this process of defining where the mining facilities lay, because these denominations are the pieces that circulate locally in their area of issue, pointing the facilities to Attica itself (C.Kraay 1976, 57).

Lead isotope analysis has also been done on the coins, and this scientific approaches gave a more accurate answer to the answer of where the silver, of which the Athenian coins were made, came from (Howgego 1995, 25). The principal source for Greek silver in the archaic period was silver-bearing lead ore. Once the ore has been established the isotopic composition does not change anymore, even by later refining or re-melting of the ore. The lead isotope functions like a fingerprint which then can be used to compare coins with samples of ores of different mines. The only way the isotopic composition can change is by melting and mixing it with another lead ore, so when using this technique you have to be certain, or at least make the assumption that, for the striking of the coin, the metal came from one source and has not been mixed with different sources. The technique was not applicable for classical and Hellenistic coins, which were more produced from re-used and mixed metal, but it was applied with success on the archaic coins, because the assumption was made that these were not produced from mixed or re- used metal (Howgego 1995, 27).

The results of the lead isotope analysis, together with literary sources such as Thucydides and later writers such as Strabo, state that the main mining facilities were at Laurium. Laurium is forty kilometers of Athens, it is an area near the east coast of Attica rich in silver-bearing ores which had been exploited since the bronze ages. Strabo, writing at the time of Augustus, states that the mines in his time were depleted, but that in classical times, Laurium was one of the chief sources of revenue for the Athenian state and that the metallic silver was mainly used for coinage (Strabo 7 BC, 450).

In archaic Athens, according to the lead isotope analysis, the use of the Laurium silver was only occasional until 500 BC. This is due to the fact that the Athenians only delved the upper veins of the silver mines, which were less rich than the ones deeper in the ground. It was only in the classical period, around 480 BC that the richer, deeper veins were accessed, which was vital for Athens to become one of the most important states in Greece. This late discovery was due to the fact that the Athenians extracted ore through vertical mineshafts, where at certain levels horizontal passages were made, and only when one layer was emptied of its silver, did they proceed on further down (Bagnal 2002). This discovery led to an immediate burst with a mass production of tetradrachm of over five million silver coins (Kroll 2009, 196).

When the deeper veins were found, increase in mine activity occurred. Lifting to total of mines up till 350 which produced 1000 talents every year. In these mines silver was delved by 10-20,000 slaves (Wilson 2012). Factories were set up to prevent slaves from stealing. Slaves who worked hard or that could be trusted were given houses of their own near the mines; the other slaves were hired out to the state but were owned by wealthy Athenians. These slaves were normally not criminals but prisoners of war (Bagnal 2002).

Since the Athenians started to extract ore in the archaic period at Laurium, were the mines property of the state Athens. However, private operators leased the mines and in the classical period the mines were officially leased to ten elected *poletoi* for the period of a year. These citizens and the later *poletoi* had to pay the state a fee, which differed depending on the value of the mine, for a lease of three to seven years and a tax or royalty. This fee had to be paid annually, and which was also based on the amount of metal recovered (Derry 1980, 18, Papazarkadas and Parker 2009, 196).

3.3 Athenian *Wappenmünzen*

When in the year of 590 BC the Alcmaenoid⁴ Megacles had the lead over the aristocratic parties, he issued a series of coins which bore a series of different devices and types. These coins are collectively called *Wappenmünzen* which in English means “heraldic coins”, because the types that are displayed on the coins have been interpreted as the coat of arms of the different families that leased the mining facilities or were in control of the city. The main types of these coins, which are icons set in images and therefore difficult to discern, have been interpreted as the following: an amphora, a beetle, the forepart of a horse, the hindquarters of a horse, an astralagos, a bull’s head, a gorgoneion, a knuckle-bone, an owl, a triskeles and a wheel, see figure 4 (Kraay 1976, 57 and Seltman 1933, 47). The wheel for example has been identified as the weapon of the Alcmaeonidae family (van der Vin 1984, 20).



Fig 4. Three Wappenmünzen with from left to right a depiction of an owl, a beetle and a bull's head (Franke and Hirmer 1964, 114).

Because these coins do not directly link to Athens by an inscription on the coin itself it has sometimes been disputed if these coins were struck by Athenian nobles because the types can't be directly linked to the city of Athens. Next to this was the

⁴ The Alcmaeonidae were one of the noblest families of Athens in the Archaic period. (Rhodes 2004, 14).

uncertainty about whether the silver of these coins came from mines that were under Athenian control. (Kraay 1976, 57).

However proof has been found to link these directly, and only to Athens, making them the first official set of coins produced by Athens. Firstly, we examine at the weight standards. There we can see that all the different types followed the same standards of Athens, from the standard didrachmae until the smaller denominations. The didrachmae had a standard weight of 8.6 gram, and as can be seen in table 2, this follows the weight type introduced by the Athenians. As a comparison, the Corinthian standard weight coin was the tridrachm, dividable into three drachmae not two, but had the same weight as the didrachm of the Athenians. At Chalchis the tridrachm was 17.2 gram, which in Athens was the weight of the tetradrachm. (Kraay 1976, 57 and van der Vin 1984, 14).

Secondly, images that are depicted on the various types of coins can be seen are also painted on the shields of hoplites on Athenian vases. These types were, however, not copied from the coins. But the painters, as the minters, were under the rule of the Athenian aristocracy, therefore the coat of arms of these aristocrats has been depicted on the vases (Seltman 1933, 48).

Thirdly, coins that bear different types have the same incuse square on the reverse, proving that minters were acted on instructions of different families of the same group.

The final evidence was that amongst these different types, there were a few that had a distinct Athenian character; for example the owl but also the Gorgoneion of Athena and the amphora which is a reference to one of the main export items of Athens, olive oil. These indicators has been the evidence that the *Wappenmünzen* are the first Athenian coins (Kraay 1976, 58).

The earliest *Wappenmünzen*, which have been dated around 600 BC, had a thick linear border around them, making them have the appearance of shields, see figure 5. This can be seen in comparison with the depictment of the different types on hoplite

shields in vases. Dated between 560-550 we see the last coin struck in this line, with a depiction of a Gorgoneion. However, the disappearance of the thick border was accompanied with a new innovation; In the incuse square on the reverse side, there was a depiction of a lion's head. The first sign of images on the reverse (Seltman 1933, 50).



*Fig 5. Two Wappenmunzen with a thick linear border, resembling shields
(Franke and Hirmer 1964, 114).*

Around the same time we can see the upcoming of the tetradrachms, the fabric of this coin is almost the same as the later 'owl' tetradrachms that will become the standard coin. It appears with either lion's head or a bull's head on the reverse. This new tetradrachm started early on to begin replacing the standard didrachm as the standard denomination. Next to this tetradrachms, a lot more denominations were produced, with, as we saw before, standard weights which bore the drachma and the obol names with the appropriate weight, these can be seen in table 2. With the assessment of lower, smaller denominations, we can see that the coins were still only meant for use on a local scale. This has been proven due to the fact that the *Wappenmünzen* only have been discovered in Attica (Kraay 1976, 58).

From the first appearances of the *Wappenmünzen*, dated between 600 and 560 BC and their final ones set at either 525 or 508 BC⁵, it can be deduced that most of these changes commenced under the Pisistratid tyrants. These included Pisistratus and his sons Hipparchus and Hippias, from 561 to 510 BC (Rhodes 2004, 40).

But why did the coinage started under Pisistratus? and with the initiation of coinage under the Pisistratid tyrants, why was chosen for changing types of the *Wappenmünzen* and not for a single type such as a national badge, or because it was initiated by tyrants, a dynastic badge? Which would have fitted better in the time and was not uncommon compared to coinages that started under a tyrant's rule. As regards Ionia, Corinth or as discussed earlier Lydia or Aegina, in this period these cultures/cities already had an established signature on coins. This gave a better identity to the coins and a clue which city it belonged to, a thing not always discernible with the *Wappenmünzen* (Kraay 1976, 59).

As the lead isotope analysis pointed out that archaic coins did not all derive from the Laurium mines, and in combination with the fact that at that moment the Athenians only delved in the veins at the surface, silver for the *Wappenmünzen* must also have been retrieved from another location. Pisistratus got most of the silver from the mines of Pangaion in Thrace, where after his temporary exile, he had connections due to his local property. (Seltman 1933, 50). This eventually helped him to his advantage due to circumstances in Attica where services and goods were a huge expense. Such as hiring mercenaries from Thessaly or Argos, importing marble from the Aegean island for which he then also had to pay the services of architects, engineers and sculptors. Partly was this payable with the incomes through taxes, fines and harbor dues. But for Pisistratus this led to an enormous advantage. Because of the increasing need for wealth and in this particular case, a good coinage which would help the circulation and improve a better economical system, Pisistratus had the power in his hands, due

⁵ 4.2.1 Transition from the *Wappenmünzen* to the Athenian Owl

to his supply of silver in Thrace. In other Greek cities the same phenomenon can be seen, as we saw earlier, when lower denominations than the obol were in circulation, it shows the primary intention of how the coins were used, namely the use for a local system, and not long distance trade for which high standards were measured, especially when scarcity was the reason for engaging in long distance trade (Kraay 1976, 59).

Therefore, in Athens, Pisistratus used the issue of low denominations for the wages of public workers such as stone-masons or common laborers. And through these wages, taxes and fines, they would circulate back into the main treasury and would then be used for public large works. This invention of Athenian coinage therefore gave Pisistratus a good position and made him very valuable for the Athenian economic life, by using his sources outside of Athens to strengthen his position inside the city (Kraay 1976, 59).

Now the question is, why was chosen for varieties in coins that were struck and why not was chosen for one type of coin? A couple of theories have been suggested; firstly, when comparing the *Wappenmünzen* to coins in the European Middle Ages, there had to be a premium paid if you wanted to re-stamp coins, this would lead to more money to the treasury, and would explain why so few issues of the same coin have been found. This still not solves the initial idea for changing types, but it was a good argument for keeping this system to ensure a more stabilized circulation of money.

The theory that circulates is that under this Pisistratid rule, Hippias, the second ruler, used the wealth of the other aristocrats to ensure the ongoing of the coinage in exchange for public offices. He led them stamp their identity on the coins to let people know from whom the coins came from. Therefore the citizens knew who helped uphold the economy. Next to this was it also proof for the inhabitants of Athens that the coins were struck by people who could ensure good quality and made the coins in the correct weight system, making the coins reliable. Hippias later started to work on issuing a static coin by taking in all the existing coins for discount. This

would probably be the first step towards the next fase in Athenian coinage, namely the start of the Athenian Owl (Kraay 1976, 60).

3.4 The Athenian Owl

As stated above, it was during the reign of Hippias, from 527 until 510 BC, when the first start was made for a static coin. This demonetization of the *Wappenmünzen* had a huge impact on the monetary system and was a major event in Athenian history. This was due to the identity that was put on the coin. Whereas this first resembled the aristocratic families of Athens, the new static coin was a direct link to the city itself. This was a result of the Athenian state taking over the entire minting control and administration, instead of the aristocratic families leasing the mines from the state, who then had no direct control over the mines any more (Kraay 1976, 60 and Seltman 1933, 52).

Even though control was now more with the government of the city, there was a specific idea behind this new static coin. During the reign of the Pisistratid tyrants, Athens secured a new international status and this meant more long distance trade and commerce. For that reason as well as for better representation, Hippias judged it necessary for Athenian coins to have a direct link to the city (Kraay 1976, 60 and van der Vin 1984, 21).

This new reputation and the growing long distance trade brought forth further innovations for the coinage in Athens. The denominations of the *Wappenmünzen* were made for local use, now with the owl as international currency, the standard didrachm was replaced with the tetradrachm, which became the new basic coin. In table 3 we can see the entire denomination of the Athenian owl at the beginning of the fifth century. This new basic coin, especially with its wide spread and range⁶, supports the theory that with the production of the new tetradrachms, international trade by Athens came to enormous heights (Schaps 2004, 105).

⁶ Spread and range will be discussed in chapter 4 “Defining propaganda.”

Dekadrachm	10 Drachmae	Circa 43 gram silver
Oktadrachm	8 Drachmae	Circa 35 gram silver
Tetradrachm	4 Drachmae	Circa 17,2 gram silver
Didrachm	2 Drachmae	Circa 8,6 gram silver
Drachma (6 obol)	1 Drachma	Circa 4,3 gram silver
Tetrobol	4 obol	Circa 2,8 gram silver
Triobol	3 obol	Circa 2,18 gram silver
Diobol	2 obol	Circa 1,40 gram silver
Trihemiobol	1 ½ obol	Circa 1,05 gram silver
Obol	1 obol	Circa 0,70 gram silver
Tritartemorion	¾ obol	Circa 0,50 gram silver
Hemiobol	½ obol	Circa 0,35 gram silver
Trihemitartemorion	3/8 obol	Circa 0,25 gram silver
Tetartemorion	¼ obol	Circa 0,17 gram silver
Hemitetartemorion	1/8 obol	Circa 0,08 gram silver

Table 3. Denominations of the Athenian Owl at the beginning at the fifth century B.C

(by van der Vin 1984, 14).

But what did the Athenian owl look like? On the front of the coin, the head of Athena wearing a helmet, and on the reverse in an incuse square a standing owl with an olive spray and next to it the AΘE, which is short for AΘENAION, the genitive form, meaning “of the Athenians”, see figure 6 (Sear 1978, 182).

This wasn't the original form however, the first versions had a Gorgoneion on the obverse and on the reverse, in an incuse square, a bull's head or a lion's head. This changed to Athena's head on the obverse, with varieties on the reverse, but this then changed that depicted the identity of the city with the head of Athena and the owl (Seltman 1933, 52).



Figure 6. An early Athenian Owl (Franke and Hirmer 1964, 117).

Some coins were very primitive, with variations in weight, different depictions of Athena and the owl, with different details. There was even a theory by Seltman that the first owls were produced under Pisistratus, but these coins were found in hoards that derived from, at the earliest, the last quarter of the sixth century, but it has been later proved that these were struck in the same fashion as the *Wappenmünzen* but not in the same time (Kraay 1976, 61).

The first of these 'final' archaic owls has been agreed upon that these were struck during the reign of Hippias, setting the earliest possible date at 525 B.C (Kraay 1976, 62).

However, there are still uncertainties why especially then the coins were struck. The first agreed theory concerned with the new international position but there is still debate if this was the only reason. It can also be compatible with the expulsion of Hippias as tyrant in 510 BC or even a couple of years later with the introduction of the democratic system in 507 BC. There are only two problems with this theory. To judge from the amounts of archaic owls in circulation at that time, it is very unlikely that these were struck in such a short period even when taking into account that the *Wappenmünzen* had to be demonetized. Next to this, such a major operation in

reforming the entire monetary system would have overlapped with an immense political instability, thus making it hard to issue such a reform (Kraay 1976, 61 and Seltman 1933, 58). Most likely, this new democratic society did not want to be associated with coin types identifiable with the aristocratic families. Also the owls at that time were already getting a reputation across the Mediterranean, and therefore in the early years of the democracy a couple of developments in the coins were made, such as the Athena without helmet on the reverse of the triobol were made (Seltman 1933, 58).

The beginning of the classical Athenian owl are two distinctive adjustments to the figures. These two adjustments have been interpreted as a link to the Persian wars and its outcome. Firstly, a diadem of olive leaves was added to the helmet of Athena. Secondly a small lunar crescent or waning moon was placed on the reverse, next to the owl, however, this was only placed on tetradrachms, see figure 7. These changes in design would stay on the coins until in the third century (Sear 1978, 82).



Figure 7. An Athenian Owl from 430 BC with the addition of a diadem and a crescent moon (Franke and Hirmer 1964, 119).

The addition of the moon has been interpreted as a sign of the waning moon under which the battle of Marathon in 490 BC or the battle of Salamis in 480 BC were fought. There are however arguments that the moon was added to the tetradrachms as a reference to the owl being a nocturnal creature (Seltman 1933, 91). The olive diadem has been interpreted as a hint towards the history and upcoming classical period of Athens, because the Persians sacked Athens in 479 BC. They destroyed the acropolis and burnt the sacred olive tree of Athena. This diadem is reference to the still live cult of Athena, although the Parthenon was burnt down, and the olive tree, which burning was a foreshadow of its regeneration (Kraay 1976, 62 and Herodotus. VIII, 55).

4. Propaganda in democratic Athens

4.1 Defining propaganda

How do we define propaganda? I would first like to start with a selection of definitions out of dictionaries. *The Oxford Dictionary of Current English*: Organized propagation of a doctrine by use of publicity, selected information, etc. *Cambridge Dictionaries online*: Information, ideas, opinions or images, often only giving one part of an argument, which are broadcast, published or in some other way spread with the intention of influencing people's opinions. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*: The systematic propagation of a doctrine or cause or of information reflecting the views and interests of those advocating such a doctrine or cause.

All the definitions derive around the same components; products, such as an idea, opinion or information, but also the process of broadcasting this product under people, a form of doctrine to stimulate the idea under a large amount of recipients (Enenkel and Pfeijffer 2005, 65).

What we can observe here is that the amount and effectiveness of propaganda cannot be objectively measured, but is a subjective evaluation, because the effect of propaganda can only be tested by the recipients. Therefore it is hard to say when a product such as information becomes propaganda. When an idea has been given, it can be brought as information that is necessary for people to make a correct decision, but the recipient can regard it as propaganda, making the recipient the sole decision-maker on the fact if something is purely information or propaganda (Enenkel and Pfeijffer 2005, 65).

Although the recipient can define if information can be seen as propaganda, there are other factors that need to be taken into consideration. Scale, organization, system,

repetition, range of used media, volumes and resources can be decisive in the success of propaganda. It can even be said that labeling the use of media as a form of propaganda, in the process of broadcasting a product, fits in a larger process of persuasion. This will put more emphasis on the attempts to bring the information to the public (Chomsky 1989, 8).

With all these factors manipulating the success of propaganda, it is therefore not unusual that propaganda is mostly identified as the primary tool of governments, which have both the product and the use of these different media for broadcasting their information in the version they wish to broadcast, varying from sending out good news to suppressing negative reports (Herman 2003, 2).

4.1.1 applying propaganda on ancient Athens

When respect to propaganda in archaic and classical Athens we have to keep in mind that the term 'propaganda' is a modern word which is going to be applied to on an ancient city. Especially keeping in mind that in ancient Greek there is no word comparable with the definitions or explanations as has been described above.

Given these facts we cannot say that the meaning of propaganda was unknown to the ancient Greek city-states. The Greeks were familiar with broadcasting ideas, beliefs and perceptions. Because in Greece, all the city states were proud of their own identity, they fed these identities through various media, for example architecture, panhellenic cults, competitions and civic displays. Especially in Athens where we saw earlier that with the rise of tyrants and the later democratic system, ideas on formed political systems should have been properly broadcasted to the inhabitants of the city (Schaps 2004, 126).

But it is with this identification of propaganda as the primary tool of governments that a problem with Athens arises. Athens, after the introduction of the democracy,

had a government that consisted of the people and not a government that operated outside the approval of the citizens, as was the situation before its introduction. With a situation that public posts could be filled by voting, with strict rules of limiting terms of office, with an absence of recognized political parties who could have seats in the government, this system consisted of political individuals who did not form a government as a distinctive entity for the people of Athens.

This means that in this form of democracy, holding on to the modern term of propaganda, it is hard to identify a top-down manipulation of the public by a central government. On the other hand, with the system of democracy opening functions for citizens who wanted to be active in politics, the need for persuading the citizens of maintaining the democratic system has been lower because of the active participation of Athenian citizens (Enenkel and Pfeijffer 2005, 70).

Therefore in Athens we can see propaganda in two other forms. The first form is where the citizens of the city present themselves as a collective body in which they try to impress other cities/civilizations and reassure themselves of their collective power. The other form is propaganda in which an individual political citizen try to influence the demos (Enenkel and Pfeijffer 2005, 70).

It is the first form of propaganda that will be discussed next, with the establishment of a system where the citizen body actively participated in political life, it is important to look at how Athens displayed their system towards other cities/civilizations. In that aspect the Athenian coins could have played a great part, and that part will be discussed next. For the images on the coins we will look at the meaning and display of the coins from both the archaic and classical period. But for the spread and growth of the coins, which could say more about the extent into which the coins were seen by other civilizations, I will limit it to the classical period, when Athens was a major player in the international trade (van der Vin 1984, 21).

4.2 Coins as a part of propaganda

When looking at the coins as a part of a propagandistic plan of the Athenians, there are three specific parts to look at. First part is the transition from the *Wappenmünzen* to the Athenian Owl, the second part is the symbolism of the Athenian Owl, and the last part is the growth and spread of the Athenian Owl to see to which extend the Athenian Owl has been circulated through other civilizations/cities.

4.2.1 Transition from the *Wappenmünzen* to the Athenian Owl

Starting with the transition of the *Wappenmünzen* to the owl in the last quarter of the sixth century BC. As I have stated earlier, the most agreed upon theory is that they were introduced during the reign of the tyrant Hippias (before 510 BC), for two distinct reasons. The first reason is that the Owls had to be introduced before the introduction of democracy because the placement of a new coin type fits better in a period of political stability. The second reason is that the large quantity of early owls must indicate over a longer period in the sixth century, than a shorter period at the end of the sixth century (Kraay 1976, 60).

Although this theory receives much support there are researchers who associate the changes in coins with the changes in political system. The strongest theory against this was a research on the Asyut hoard where no early owls were dated before 510 BC, this alignment of the changing coins with a changing political structure could also explain why the Athenian Owl remained mostly unchanged for far in the Hellenistic period (Price and Waggoner 1975, 65).

This theory, however, has been marked with objections. The first objection is that the changes in coins have been ascribed to both the expulsion of Hippias in 510 BC and the constitutional reforms of Cleisthenes in 507 BC. The second objection is that the assumption made that this new static coin with depictions that symbolized the city

was a clear sign for a democratic coin. However, more of these kind of coins, with the same symbolism and similar displays have been struck in oligarchic city-states. Third is that no argument has been given why the coins could not have been struck under the reign of Hippias, when the replacement of alternating coin types with a new static Athenian type can be placed in the policies of the Pisistatrid tyrants which involved putting more culture in their politics (Meadows and Shipton 2001, 27). The last argument against joining the changes in coins and changes with political systems is the evolvement of the meaning of the owl as a symbol. Research on the representation of Athena's owl on vases has been done, and it has been argued that the owl evolved in the second half of the sixth century BC. First it was an attribute of the Goddess Athena, but it changed into a symbol of the city of Athens. The conclusion was drawn that the development in iconography suggests that the use of the owl as a symbol for Athena and her city is highly unlikely to have taken place before the late sixth century (Shapiro 1993, 218). Also another point was made, that is based on the vases and not on coins, namely that the Owls may have been introduced by the last tyrant Hippias. He introduced the owl facing left and that after the formation of the democracy this changed with the owl facing to the right, but a real conclusion on iconographic and political changes has not been drawn, see figure 8 (Shapiro 1993, 218).



Figure 8. the owl facing left and right, possibly changed after the introduction of Democracy (Franke and Hirmer 1964, 117).

Establishing that the most common theory is that the earliest owls start at the last quarter of the sixth century, but with opposing theories that join it with the start of the democratic system in 507 BC, we had at this point better take a look at the larger picture of the introduction of the Owls. Because even if the Owls were introduced by Hippias, the new democratic government did not disapprove of this new type of coin, otherwise they would have changed it, and would not have kept it intact throughout the entire classical period. It appears then that the tyrants and the democratic government had the same vision about where the focus on the coins should be, namely the city (Meadows and Shipton 2001, 27).

This focus can perhaps be explained through all the political phases that Athens went through from aristocracy to tyranny and finally democracy. When looking at the coins in this political process the point that should not be made is when the changing types of the *wappenmünzen* were replaced, but instead, that they were replaced by a static civic coin type. The change in coins is just one part of this political process, and when we look for propaganda for the democratic system involved in this change, it is to be found in the ban of various images and meanings on the coins, and the new emphasis on Athens' patron and revered animal. And in the meaning, in the descent of the Athenians themselves ((Meadows and Shipton 2001, 28).

4.2.2 Symbolism of the Athenian Owl

With establishing it not being the time for the transition from *Wappenmünzen* to the Athenian Owl to become the key factor, a genuine transition transpired. The displays of the Athenian Owl have already been discussed in greater detail⁷. Now is the moment to look at the symbolism and features of the Athenian Owl.

⁷ In chapter 4.3 'The Athenian Owl.'

Having seen that from the early start of the owls the head of Athena was displayed on the coin, be it with various reverses, there are three different coins that have been struck suggesting having a link with the political changes/status of Athens.

The first coin is a hemidrachm that depicts a Negro on its reverse. Assumptions were forwarded that it has been identified as Delphos, the son of Melantho. It suggests that it refers to Delphi and its role it played in the downfall of Hippias in Athens. The second coin is a quarter-drachm which has a depiction of a Janiform⁸ female on its obverse. This has been interpreted as Athena looking backwards and forwards in time, looking at the history and future of the city Athens. The third coin is a standard drachm where an owl is depicted on its reverse. The owl has its right wing raised. This has been interpreted as a reference to the end of the tyranny in Athens, that the right wing is an auspicious omen, meaning that the new direction the city's political system has taken has taken is a prosperous one (Meadows and Shipton 2001, 28).

Next to these three variations on a coin struck in a standard way, there have been two significant changes already discussed. These are changes that could have taken place after the victory on Persia in the Persian wars. After 480 BC one notices the addition of a diadem of olive leaves to the helmet of Athena on the obverse and the insertion of a crescent moon next to the owl on the reverse. However, as has been stated, these changes were only applied on the tetradrachms (Kraay 1976, 62).

It has been argued that these were indeed adjustments placed to commemorate the victory on Persia or that they were, for example, the appearances of the moon, or decorations referring to the owl being a nocturnal creature (Seltman 1933, 91).

This discussion is purely based on speculations and on motivation to look for (political) history of Athens on the Athenian Owl (Meadows and Shipton 2001, 28).

Besides these two implementations the coins remained essentially the same in the entire classical period. Stylistic developments, however, have been made in the course of this period; such as the modernization of Athena's head, where her eye was

⁸ Janiform: resembling the god Janus, having two faces looking in opposite directions.

depicted in profile instead of an eye depicted from the front. With no alterations being made for the rest of the classical period, there were however two features on the coins which imply the democratic principles in Athens.

The first feature is that on the Athenian Owls there is no display of magistrates' symbols and signatures. In other cities and civilizations elsewhere in the classical period this was the case, especially in the fourth century (Kraay 1976, 254).

The second feature on the Athenian Owls is the absence of signatures of the engravers. On Sicily and southern Italy they were present, but other cities and civilizations neither displayed the signatures of the engravers

Combining these two features, we may conclude that the Athenians avoided any personal depictions on coins, and they did so to keep a focus on the civic symbols of the city. We can even see that the Owl and Athena and the legend of the city form a democratic emblem, the *dêmosios charaktêr*, as has been referred to in the fourth-century Coinage Law, since in that case the link with magistrates or artists were regarded as undemocratic (Meadows and Shipton 2001, 28).

Comparin the Athenian owls with the preceding coins, the *Wappenmünzen*, and the succeeding coins, the Hellenistic 'New Style' tetradrachms, we can clearly see a difference. With the varying types of the *Wappenmünzen*, which have been associated with the individuals who struck them, and the Athenian 'New Style' tetradrachms, which carried the names and monograms of different magistrates, the Athenian Owl from the classical period, with no reference to individuals but only to the city, displayed a certain uniformity, that can be linked to the democratic system, and in that case can be seen as a reflection of the way in which the city was ruled.

4.2.3 Growth and spread of the Athenian Owl

Having looked at the upcoming and symbolism of the Athenian Owl, it is now time to look at its growth and geographical spread. With one of the key factors for the

introduction of the Athenian Owl being a standard coin that not only explains the origins of the city and represents it, this symbolism could now be used for long distance trade and commerce (Kraay 1976, 60 and van der Vin 1984, 21). Now if this was indeed the case, we have examine the scale Athenian Owls were minted at and those the Athenians traded with.

What already has been discussed is that between 490- 480 BC the richer, deeper silver veins of the Laurium mines were accessed, which led to a increasing number of coins produced. This growth entailed staggering quantities that were minted from an approximate 250 obverse dies⁹. With one die it would be able to press, at a minimum, 20,000 coins. This made a total of, at least, five million tetradrachms and 3,600 talents of silver coins (Bagnal 2002, Papazarkadas and Parker 2009, 196).

This magnitude can be seen through one of its outcomes, such as the one hundred talent funding by the Athenians to the building of warships in 482. If this was tax money¹⁰, the one hundred of talents would represent a total recovery of 2,400 talents which in tons would be 62,208, that could have been produced into 3.6 million tetradrachms. These amounts however have been based on the production of the tetradrachms in the middle of the fifth century, when another large silver vein was extracted (Papazarkadas and Parker 2009, 196).

After the Persians having invaded Athens in 479, there is an immediate resumption of striking coins in 478 BC, which continued into the late 460-50's BC. And the dies that were being used for the striking the tetradrachms, were over a hundred. These numbers are based on groups of tetradrachms which were divided in typology and chronology which can be linked to certain dies and to how many can be derived from

⁹ A plate cut or shaped in a way to give a certain desired form to, or impress any desired device on, an object or surface, by pressure or by a blow.

¹⁰ Applying here the tax rate of the fourth century BC (Papazarkadas and Parker 2009, 196).

one single die. Not only were tetradrachms made for international trade, but also in smaller denominations. The decadrachm was set on a higher denomination, to make a coin more fit for transport and to manage larger quantities of silver coins. However the making of these coins was soon stopped because of technical difficulties and because the size of the coin limited the general use of the decadrachm as a flexible monetary coin. However, we note that this peak of 478 until 460-450 BC reached a climax in the second half of the fifth century, but this was due to the standardizing of the tetradrachms (Papazarkadas and Parker 2009, 197).

There are two important factors leading to this standardization, and by those means, the climax of the growth of the Athenian Owl. The first one was the replacement of the treasury of the Delian League from Delos to Athens in 453 (Starr 1970).

The second factor was the Athenian decree on Coinage and Standards, which was a decision by Athens not only to impose the Athenian tetradrachms on its allies in the Delian League, but also to forbid those allies to strike coins by themselves (Hadji and Kontes 2005, 263). With the treasury of the Delian League being in Athens, the Athenians had a good reason to strike the coins from outside of the city into their own Owl. With all the money being their own currency they could make the appropriate payments. In combination with the said decree, this meant that all the silver falling into Athenian hands was being re-struck into Athenian Owls. It also resulted in a large re-striking of the coins beginning around 453 and leading to the standardization and to the climax of the growth of the Athenian Owl in the classical period (Starr 1970).

When looking at the geographical spread of the coins it is important to know that the coins did not only have a primary political function, as can be suggested from the displays on the coins themselves, but they also had a more economic and commercial function. Athens in the classical period benefited a lot from the increase in overseas trade.

With the Athenian empire at its height point around 450 BC, it's Delian League involved a lot of coastal cities on the Athenian mainland, cities on the coast of Asia Minor, the Bosphorus and the Aegean Islands together with trade for grain with the Egyptians and the Levant. In this view, we can see that the standard structure of coins, namely the weight and the measures, which were then according to the standardized Athenian decree on Coinage and Standards, all standardized, had a huge commercial effect on the economy of the Mediterranean. Although this stimulated trade in the Mediterranean as a whole, it constantly reflected on Athens, being the instigator of trade standardization (van der Vin, 21, Papazarkadas and Parker 2009, 199).

The supremacy of Athens' affected a lot of sectors involved as well, such as the political, public and private economy spheres of influence. The importance of the Athenian coinage can be seen here, the common weights and denominations, together with one symbol on the coin, strengthened both Athens' economic and political power, making their status in both wealth and supremacy one of the most important players in the Mediterranean (Papazarkadas and Parker 2009, 199).

5. Conclusion

In the previous chapters I have discussed the upcoming of democracy in Athens, the introduction of coinage in Greece, its evolution in Athens, the connection between democracy and the coinage of Athens and if the coins were used for propaganda. In answering my main research question I will attempt to see if, with the research done, the three sub-questions can be answered as well.

The first sub-question was: *Did the installment of democracy have an effect on the minting regulation of the city's mines?*

We have established that before and after the introduction of the democratic system in 508 BC the mines of Laurium were under control of the Athenian State. However in pre-democratic Athens the mines could be leased by private operators and in democratic times the mines were officially leased to ten elected *poletoi*. We note that in the Archaic period the mines were usually leased by the aristocratic families, enabling them to strike the coins with their own family weapons. With the introduction of the democratic system, the new government had a stronger control over the operators and therefore over the minting regulations.

The second sub-question was: *What was depicted on Athenian coins from the moment coinage was introduced in Greece until the middle of the Classical period?*

As discussed, there were two major streams in coinage. The first stream is the *Wappenmünzen* starting around the beginning of the sixth century BC and the second the Athenian Owl starting around 525 BC.

The *Wappenmünzen*, in English 'Heraldic Coins', depict several images both on the obverse and reverse. These have been identified as the weapons of the different aristocratic Athenian families.

The Athenian Owl portrayed the head of Athena with a helmet on the obverse and on the reverse an owl and next to it the letters AΘE. Meaning AΘENAION, the genitive form, meaning “of the Athenians”. These Athenian Owls stayed the same during the classical period, with only two additions in 480 BC when diadem of olives was placed on the helmet of Athena, and a crescent moon was placed next to the head of the owl.

The third sub-question was: *Can differentiations in growth and spread of the Athenian coins be derived from the change in political system?*

The introduction of the democratic system did not have a significant impact on the growth of the Athenian Owl. This growth was due to two factors. The first factor was the delving of the deeper silver veins at the mines of Laurium around 480 BC. These contained a significant higher amount of silver than the veins closer to the surface. The second factor was the combination of the placement of the treasury of the Delian League from Delos to Athens and the decree on Coinage and Standards in 453/2. The combination of the new location of the treasury and the mentioned decree led to the standardization of the Athenian Owl in the Mediterranean.

The replacement of the treasury and the decree were the results of the Athenian classical period the introduction of democracy played a huge part in, so there is a link between the invention of democracy and the standardization in 453, but this may turn out to be an indirect link

The geographical spread of the Athenian coins follows the same principles as the growth in 453 BC and results from an increase in national/international trade. It has been shown that the international trade for Athens began in the last quarter of the sixth century, together with the introduction of the Athenian Owl, and since then the coins were spread over a greater distance than Attica alone. The international trade, however, did take greater forms in the classical period which can then be seen as an indirect result of the introduction of the democratic system.

The last sub-question was: *Can the modern term of propaganda be applied to the city of Athens of the Archaic and Classical period?*

By establishing the key components of what propaganda entails, its product and its means of broadcasting this products, we established that applicability to ancient Athens. The product in my thesis is democracy and now we want to see if the coins were the means of broadcasting this idea.

With the sub-questions answered we may now have an answer to the main research question: *Did the Athenians use their coins for propagandistic uses of their democratic system?*

The most important aspect to this question is the transition of the varying *Wappenmünzen* to the static displays on the Athenian Owl. Where the *Wappenmünzen* displayed various aristocratic weapons, the images on the Athenian Owl show a direct reference to the city, her guardian, and her history. With the addition of the diadem and the crescent moon in 480 BC we can see that the coins were indeed used as a form of showing her history and this is complemented with the images of the owl and Athena herself. Although there is no direct image of democracy portrayed on the coins, the history and Athenian character portrayal does refer to the institution of the democratic system, because it reflects on the ideals of the citizens of the city and forms an important part of the history. Although the owls were introduced earlier than democracy itself, the fact remains that after the introduction of the new political system the owls were not changed again and that the road to this new system began with the reforms of Solon. This makes the coins one part of an entire process indeed.

Another part of the process is the better control of the state on the mining facilities, making it harder for the aristocratic families, to, had they wanted to, start producing coins with their own emblem's on them again.

Next to this I also have to state that the coins were a medium with a wide range, if we look at the growth and spread of the coins.

Considering all the information, and putting the coins in the modern term of propaganda, I believe we can conclude that the Athenians used their coins for propagandistic uses for their democratic system.

6. Summary

In my thesis I have investigated the possibility that the Athenians used their coins for propagandistic uses of their democratic system. I have researched several aspects of the Athenian coinage through different forms of study. I started by looking at the minting regulations of Athens. Here I saw that with the introduction of the new political system the city enforced stricter laws on the leasing of the mines, which enabled the new government more direct control over her mines. After this I researched the history of the Athenian coinage. When the first coins were struck in Athens, the tyrants were still at large. These coins, collectively called the *Wappenmünzen*, reflected the aristocratic families which held the power in the city. In the process of becoming a democratic city we see that this also reflects on the coins, the emblem on the coin change from the varying coat of arms of the different aristocrats to a static coin where the head of Athena, patroness of the city and on the obverse the owl, animal of the patroness, was depicted. After establishing this change in coins, I tried to fit my study into the propagandistic framework. Propaganda exists of a product and a way of broadcasting the product. In my thesis democracy is the product and the coins are the way of broadcasting this. With the coming growth of the coins in the fifth century BC and the spread of the coins that was made possible by Athens dominant trading position, the coins became a good medium for spreading a message. And with the new message on the coins being the history of Athens, which included for a large part the process of becoming a democratic society, which enabled her growth in the classical period, the coins did in fact were used for propagandistic purposes.

7. Samenvatting

In mijn scriptie heb ik onderzoek gedaan naar de munten van Athene om te kijken of die gebruikt werden als propagandamiddel voor de democratie. Ik heb meerdere aspecten van de Atheense munten onderzocht op verschillende manieren. Ik begon met te kijken naar de reglementen omtrent de muntslag, en hier was te zien dat, zodra de democratie werd ingevoerd, Athene strakkere reglementen invoerde waardoor zij een meer directe controle kon uitoefenen op de individuen die de mijnen huurde van de staat. Hierna heb ik onderzoek gedaan naar geschiedenis van de Atheense munt. Hier is te zien dat de eerste munten werden geslagen aan het begin van de zesde eeuw voor Christus en dat deze munten de wapens van de adellijke families in Athene droegen. In het proces van een meer democratische stadstaat te worden werden ook deze wapens als afbeeldingen vervangen door op de voorzijde het hoofd van Athene, godin van de stad en op de achterzijde de uil, haar dier. Deze nieuwe munt werd de Atheense Uil genoemd. Hierna heb ik gekeken of de zaken die ik onderzoek wel passen in het propagandamodel. Propaganda bestaat uit een product, een boodschap als het ware, en een medium om die boodschap te verspreiden. In mijn studie is het product democratie geweest en het medium zijn de munten. In de vijfde eeuw voor Christus ontstond er een ontzettende groei van Atheense Uilen en omdat Athene in deze periode een zeer dominante positie had in de Mediterrane handel, was de circulatie van de munt ook hoog. Hierdoor werd de munt een zeer goed middel om een boodschap te verspreiden, en omdat de Atheense uil nu de idealen en geschiedenis van Athene afbeeldden, een geschiedenis waar het proces van een democratische staat een groot deel van uitmaakte, kan bevestigd worden dat de munten op bepaalde wijze gebruikt werden als propaganda middel voor de democratie.

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