

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Traders in the *agora* were controlled by different officials. In Athens, ten *metronomoi* were chosen annually to check weights and measures, to ensure that the customers were not cheated with short measures. Officials called *agoranomoi* checked the quality of the goods, while *sitophylakes* were specifically in charge of keeping an eye on the grain trade.



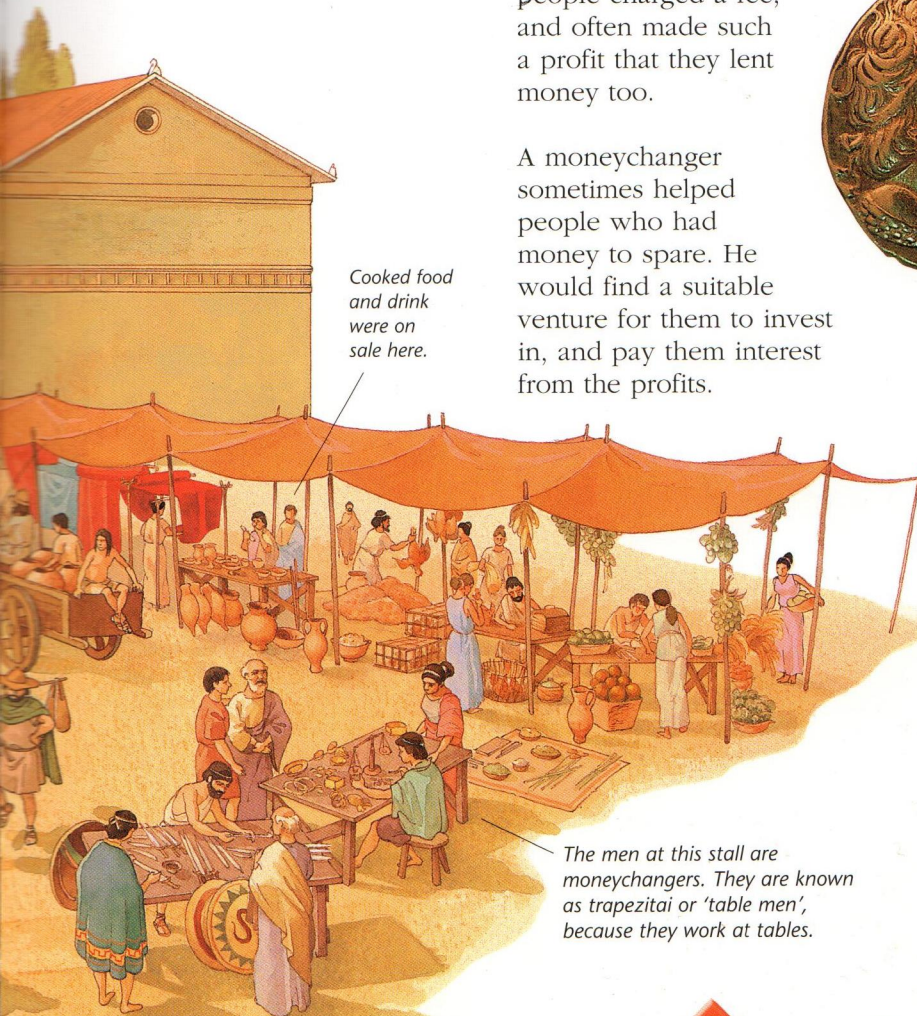
The coin on the left is an electrum coin from Cyzicus, a Greek colony in Ionia. It shows the god Poseidon with a fish.

THE FIRST BANKS

By the 6th century BC, each city was issuing its own coins, which became a sign of its independence. People who wanted to do business in another city had to change their money with a moneychanger. These people charged a fee, and often made such a profit that they lent money too.

A moneychanger sometimes helped people who had money to spare. He would find a suitable venture for them to invest in, and pay them interest from the profits.

Cooked food and drink were on sale here.



The men at this stall are moneychangers. They are known as *trapezitai* or 'table men', because they work at tables.



This silver coin is from Athens and is called a *didrachm*. It shows an owl, a symbol of the city.



These Hellenistic Period gold coins show Ptolemy I of Egypt (left) and Alexander the Great in a chariot drawn by elephants.



THE FIRST COINS

Coins were probably invented at the end of the 7th century BC in Lydia, a kingdom in Asia Minor. They were made of electrum (a mixture of gold and silver). The idea spread to the Greek colonies in Ionia and then to mainland Greece. Sparta was the only state that didn't adopt coins until later, in the 4th century BC.



INTERNET LINK

For links to websites where you can watch a movie about Greek coins and tour a Greek agora, go to www.usborne-quicklinks.com