
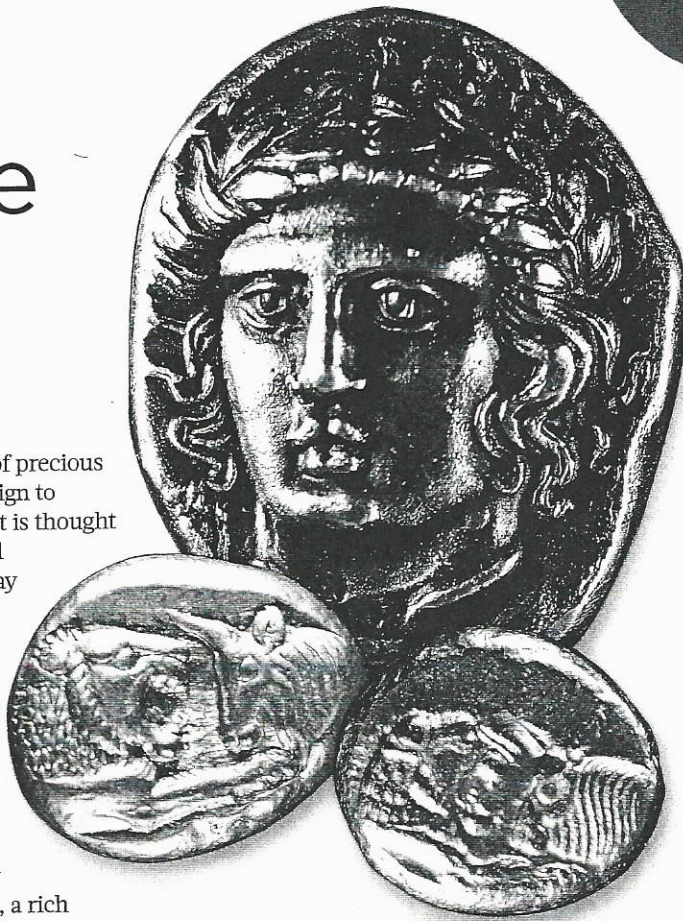


When were coins first made?


 The very earliest coins were pieces of precious metal that were stamped with a design to guarantee their purity and weight. It is thought that the first coins were produced in the mid 500s BC in Asia Minor. Local rulers had to pay Greek mercenaries a set weight of precious metal at the end of their contracts, and to ensure the correct amount was paid, coins were used. These pieces of metal were generally stamped with an animal head on one side, perhaps indicating the person who issued them, and an abstract design on the other signifying the weight.

The first coins to be issued with the intention that they would be used as money were those minted by King Croesus of Lydia, a rich and powerful Greek state on the west coast of what is now Turkey. These coins, from c550 BC, were small gold pieces stamped with a lion and a bull. King Pheidon of Argos minted silver coins stamped with a turtle, and some claim that he produced his coins before Croesus, but the dates when Pheidon lived are disputed. RM



SPARE CHANGE
The silver coin depicts the god Apollo while the gold coins show animals, including a lion

WHICH ROSE WON THE WAR?

 The Wars of the Roses ended at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, but technically, neither side won.

The wars had nothing to do with the counties of Yorkshire and Lancashire, but was a dispute between rival branches of the family of Edward III. On one side were supporters of Duke of Lancaster John of Gaunt, while on the other was Edmund, Duke of York. As Henry Tudor's victory over Richard III marked the end of the Plantagenets, neither the red nor white rose was the clear victor, despite Henry's distant connection to Lancaster. SL

Why are people of noble birth said to be 'blue-blooded'?

The earliest English record of the term 'blue-blooded' in reference to those of noble descent dates to the early 19th century, but the notion actually stretches back much further.

The concept likely originates in medieval Spain as 'sangre azul', and is attributed to the rich, powerful families of Castile. As part of their 'pure Gothic' descent, they would claim never to have intermarried with another race by drawing attention to their pale skin, which made the blueness of their veins visible. An English publication of 1811 stated that the

century, Spanish military noblemen reportedly proved their pedigree by displaying their visible veins to distinguish themselves from their darker-skinned Moorish enemy. Throughout Europe, the term came to express the difference between the upper and lower classes - the former prizing their fashionable, marble-like skin complete with visible veins, in contrast to the tanned skin of those toiling in the sun. Somewhat strangely to our eyes, a gentleman suitor might safely make a compliment to his lady's turquoise veins, which

