Position:
Postdoc project, 1.5 years (1.0fte), start date: 1 March 2018

Title:
Coinage in ancient Greece (Anchoring Work Package 4)

Salary:
€3,238 tot max. €4,757 gross per month (based on 38 hours a week, depending on previous experience)

Supervisor:
Prof. Dr. J.H. Blok (UU)

Organisational unit:
Utrecht University, Faculty of Humanities

Job description:
The use of minted coins was one of the major innovations in the ancient world of the first millennium BCE. Invented in Lydia in the seventh century, coinage spread rapidly throughout the Greek world, first in the Greek cities in Asia Minor, next to Aegina and Athens and soon to the other cities across the Aegean and Mediterranean area. Before the introduction of minted coins, exchange was largely based on weights of precious metals, in smaller amounts weighed on scales, a practice to which striking fixed weights of metal seems just a small and logical step. Yet the swift success of coinage, evidenced by rapidly increasing number of Greek poleis adopting the new medium, shows that the potential of coins to surpass weighed bullion in practical use for all kinds of transactions was recognised early on.

The scholarship on the monetization of ancient Greece is vast, covering both longer developments in the economic and social history of Greece as well as the numismatic facts on the ground. Major topics are the forms of money preceding coins, the possible contexts for the spread of coinage, and the effects of coinage on various aspects of society. Coins facilitated local retail trade and paying mercenary troops and the subjects engraved on coins served as pictorial messages about cultic priorities, political events and polis identity. That the (representational) value of stamped coins tended to be higher than the (intrinsic) value of the precious metals became soon clear as well, allowing for new forms of investment, lending and borrowing. In sum, considering these effects there are multiple reasons why in terms of utility coinage could only be expected to be a success.
Yet there is another side of the coin. Monetization also upset traditional ways of exchange, dealing and relationships. Reciprocity could be cast in figures, labour paid in coins was set on a new social footing, prices would show fluctuations that were unknown before. People had to get used to the new medium, including effects they had not anticipated and the causes of which were probably not immediately clear to them. For the traditionally-minded population of archaic Greece, coinage must have been bewildering, perhaps even disruptive, as much as it may have been an economic facility.

The aim of the post-doc project is to investigate the introduction of coinage and the monetization of Greece from the perspective of Anchoring innovation. Was the success of the new, in this case minted coins, built upon patterns of the old, and if so, which elements may have been supportive and which probably the reverse? Why did monetization happen so prominently in the Greek world and how does Greece compare to the Ancient Near East in this respect? The project is situated on the crossroads of social, economic, cultural and political history and archaeology (notably numismatics) of the archaic age, and may involve wider disciplinary interests, such as economic anthropology or Assyriology.

Candidates are invited to design a plan of their own with questions to be asked and methods to be applied to tackle the problem of how and why the invention of coinage may have evolved into a fundamental innovation. The results, laid down in at least two substantial articles, are to illuminate vital aspects of the monetization of Greece and the anchoring processes involved.

More information about the Anchoring Innovation research agenda of OIKOS can be found on the OIKOS website (http://www.ru.nl/oikos/anchoring-innovation/), including an article by Ineke Sluiter, entitled “Anchoring Innovation: a Classical Research Agenda” (http://www.ru.nl/oikos/anchoring-innovation/publications/).

Requirements:
- A PhD in a relevant field (held by time of appointment)
- Demonstrable research experience in the area of numismatics and the relevant historical subdisciplines
- An excellent research and publication record in relation to stage of career
- A strong cooperative attitude and willingness to engage in collaborative research
- Excellent command of English
- Some organisational experience

Job application:
In order to be considered, applications must include the following information (in the order stated), in one PDF file (not zipped):
- Cover letter
- CV, including list of publications and contact details of two referees
- Research proposal of 1500 words (excluding bibliography and – if appropriate – appendix containing list of sources: together max. two pages A4)
- Copy of relevant degree certificate(s)

Please submit your application to Dr. Roald Dijkstra, the coordinator of the Anchoring programme via anchoring@let.ru.nl before 1 November 2017.

Interviews will take place in the week beginning 4 December 2017. For candidates living abroad interviews may be held via Skype.

More information about this position may be obtained from Prof. Dr. J.H. Blok (j.h.blok@uu.nl)