<u>Greek Numbers, Currency, and Wages</u>

NUMBER SYSTEMS (source: OCD)

The ancient Greeks used two main number systems:

(i)'Alphabetic'/'Milesian' – where regular letters (along with ς = 6, Q = 90, and ϡ = 900) of the Ionian alphabet represent numbers: α-θ = 1-9, ι - Q = 10 – 90, and ρ – ϡ = 100 – 900, and so on. This system most likely originated in Ionia and is the older of the two systems.

(ii) 'Acrophonic' – this system was used in public inscriptions in Attica, with some exceptions, down to c. 100 BCE, with some sporadic later use. It was also the main system used (with local variations) in other Greek city-states. Numbers consisted of the initial letter of numerical words, (apart from the unit, I = 1, II = 2, up to 4):

Γ = πέντε (5)
Δ = δέκα (10)
Η = ἑκατόν (100)
Χ = χίλιοι (1000)
Μ = μύριοι (10,000)

- Quintuples of the latter four are represented in combination with Γ:

Ͷ,Γ = 50
Ͷ = 500
Ͷ = 5000
Ͷ = 50,000

- Other multiples are expressed by the repetition of the sign:

ΔΔΔ = 30

And so, for example:

ͶΗΗͶΔΙΙΙ = 763
(500 + 100 + 100 + 50 + 10 + 3)

CURRENCY

The Greeks used talents, drachmae (sg – drachma), and obols.

I = 1 obol
Ϲ = ½ obol
Ɔ = ¼ obol
Ⱶ = 1 drachma (= 6 obols)
M* = 1 mina (= 100 drachmae)
T**= 1 talent (= 6000 drachmae)

Example: ΓⱵⱵII = 8 drachmae, 2 obols (5 + 3 drachmae; 2 obols)

*Note: not usually represented in the acrophonic system
** Note: this could also be combined with numerals to express a number of talents,
 e.g. Γ͞ = 5 talents.

WAGES (source: http://www.tulane.edu/~august/H310/handouts/Finances.htm)

       In Athens, from around 475- 400 BCE, hoplites, rowers, and labourers were paid one drachma as their daily wage. Craftsmen and masons working on public projects received daily wages of 2-2.5 drachmae. On the other hand, between 460-400 BCE, the first propertied class had annual incomes at or above around 1500 drachmae, measured by medimnoi of wheat which equaled 3 drachmae at this time. The second propertied class was between 900 and 1500, and the third class was between 600-900 drachmae.