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Nicholas J. Molinari, General Editor
Shawn Caza, Associate Editor
Lloyd W.H. Taylor, Associate Editor

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Communications for the editors, manuscripts, and books for review should be addressed to the Editors. All enquiries to:

Nicholas J. Molinari, General Editor
1784 Providence Road
Northbridge, Massachusetts
njmolinari@gmail.com
https://koinonjournal.wordpress.com/

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Tel +44-(0)1865-311914 Fax +44(0)1865-512231
e-mail info@archaeopress.com
http://www.archaeopress.come-mail info@archaeopress.com
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Ἤθελον Χείρωνά κε Φιλλυρίδαν,
εἰ χρεὼν τοῦθ᾽ ἁμετέρας ἀπὸ γλώσσας
κοινὸν εὔξασθαι ἔπος
ζώειν τὸν ἀποιχόμενον...

Pindar, *Pythian Odes* 3.1-4

F

Celebrating our Fifth Year with Cheiron, the Son of Kronos and Philyra

Electrum hekte, Mysia, Kyzikos, c. 550 to 450 BC.
Image Courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group, Auction 105, lot 169.

'The only substitute for an experience we ourselves have never lived through is art and literature. They possess wonderful ability: beyond distinctions in language, custom, social structure, they can convey the life experience of one whole nation to another.'

-Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *Nobel Lecture,* 1970

Five years. That is how long *KOINON* has existed, and this is a special time for the journal because we've made it past our third barrier. The first was getting an editorial board and I'm still surprised and humbled that so many notable numismatists agreed to help out. The second was formulating the first journal which, I'm happy to report, can be found in hundreds of academic libraries all over the world, along with all subsequent issues. Now we've made it to five years and we have passed our third barrier in the sense that we've managed to reach a genuine milestone, and this seems like the perfect opportunity to pause and reflect on the significance of our new contribution to the world of numismatics.

When Pindar was writing his Ode to Hieron of Syracuse (the beginning of which appears on the previous page) he began with a brief prayer, though it was somewhat of a lamentation and quite different from his other odes—he begins by recognizing the centaur Cheiron is dead and wishes he were alive again. Cheiron is one of those really interesting figures in Greek religion and myth precisely because he was so wise, just, and benevolent in his interactions with mankind. It was Cheiron who gave us medicine and botany. It was Cheiron who is said to have taught the likes of Asclepius, Achilles, and Jason. Unlike other centaurs he was no drunk—he was instead a virtuous and honorable teacher. There weren't many deities like that in the Greek world, and sadly there aren't many now. As the ancient tale goes (accounts vary slightly), he was accidentally shot by Herakles with a poisoned arrow, and, since Cheiron was immortal at the time, the result would have been an eternity of excruciating pain. However, he was able to give his immortality to Prometheus,

the infamous trouble-maker who gave mankind fire and technology, and subsequently he died. Zeus felt some pity for his half-brother and placed him among the constellations, which today we still recognize as Centaurus.

But what would it mean for Cheiron to be alive again? In a certain sense numismatics, rather surprisingly, helps bring back these ancient gods and fulfill Pindar's wish. Coins don't just inform the historian of religion that there were ancient cults operative in such-and-such a place engaging in various activities. Nor do they simply provide a convenient form of dating for archaeologists or fill in the gaps in the timeline for historians. As Solzhenitsyn indicated, coins, as pieces of art, offer a genuine connection to Greek religion as much as they allow insight into ancient economies. Putting a god on a coin wasn't merely some token gesture to a deity or simple indication of a social group—it was a deeply meaningful incorporation of the gods into the powerful new phenomenon of coined money. Even today we still maintain here in the United States that 'In God We Trust,' and that, too, is no mere relic of a bygone age. In an important sense, then, *KOINON* is significant not simply for contributing to the body of knowledge about antiquity, but by providing a vehicle for it to be alive again—alive in all of our thoughts as it interacts with our imagination. By engaging with ancient coins we are able to experience, at least to some degree, the very same thing our ancestors did when they gazed upon a handful of beautiful coins, with all those fantastic images and intricate details. And it is precisely because of *KOINON*'s dedication to keeping antiquity alive that it embodies Pindar's wish through the common prayer (κοινὸν εὔξασθαι) of its pages.

In this volume we are blessed with so many wonderful contributions that resuscitate ancient history so we can enjoy it. In the section on Greek coinage we have five essays. The first is an essay I wrote with Curtis Clay and it exhibits one of the earliest known illustrations of an overstrike, from Nicola Ignarra's 1770 work on the Gymnasium at Neapolis. While Ignarra didn't quite seem to recognize what an overstrike was, he nonetheless depicted and preserved that bit of history for future generations, and for that I am grateful. The second and third essays are my own contributions. One concerns a new Acheloios type—a truly rare occasion these days—that features Acheloios Hermotos of Parion, who hasn't been recognized in over 2300 years, and yet here he is again as though awoken from a false death. The next is an essay about the winged figures crowning Acheloios Sebethos on Neapolitan coinage, and in this case I argue that the figure is a syncretism of Pathenope and Nike, crowning Acheloios as the 'victor over death,' which seems particularly apt given the theme of this editorial. Next up we have two essays by our own Lloyd Taylor. Once again Lloyd has set a really high standard for numismatic scholarship. The first essay identifies a new mint control for the coinage of Andragoras and Sophytes, and the second essay dispells the idea of an 'Indian' weight standard on the coinage of Sophytes. It is important to recognize that, depite my romantic ramblings, the detailed works of scholars like Lloyd are absolutely essential in keeping history alive, particularly because such studies offer fixed waypoints for navigating the more esoteric realms of the numismatic sea.

The next section on Roman coinage has three great contributions. The first is essentially a transitional essay by our own David MacDonald insofar as it discusses Roman types overstruck on Greek coins from Apollonia and Dyrrhachium—is there a more concrete example of living history than overstrikes? It is both thorough and important, and a brief glimpse into David's continuing work on the coinage of this region. The second essay isn't about coins at all, but about magical

lead amulets, and it is utterly fascinating. It was written by Gert Boersema, a first-time contributor but longtime numismatic friend, and provides a comprehensive overview of these magical amulets along with a large corpus of examples. Essays like Gert's are particularly important because they remind us to transcend the economic dimension of numismatics to get a broader view of the past. The third and final essay is by Dirk Faltin, who has written one previous essay for *KOINON*. In his newest work he examines a tremissis in the name of Honorius, and convincingly argues it belongs to the Suevic coin series of the Iberian Peninsula. Here again we are able to behold an object in a new light, and this new interpretation offers, in an important sense, a rebirth for the coin as it was.

In the Early Modern section we have two essays. The first is by long-time contributor Andrei Bontas and it discusses some interesting symbols on deniers tournois of Naupaktos. I'm always delighted to receive contributions from Andrei because I know they'll reveal something interesting that has been hidden for too long. The second essay in this section is another contribution from David MacDonald and it presents a new countermark for the Knights of Malta, and here again we are reminded that new discoveries are all around us just waiting for the keen observer.

Rounding out the essay section we have our first-ever book reviews, and I really hope this initiates a trend for future volumes. The first is Alberto Campana's review of *Coins of the Roman Revolution, 49 BC-AD 14. Evidence without Hindsight* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2020), edited by Anton Powell and Andrew Burnett. The second is by Virgil Houston, who reviews our Associate Editor Shawn Caza's new book *A Handbook of Late Roman Bronze Coin Types, 324 – 395* (London: Spink, 2021). Finally, the journal concludes with a fairly extensive catalog of new varieties (our largest yet!), all of them disoveries that haven't been formally recorded before now.

As a way of concluding, I want to thank all of our readers for the support over the past five years—I really hope you all enjoy this volume. I certainly enjoyed editing it, and it has been a true honor serving as the General Editor. My hope is that this journal will eventually outlast me, and in doing so help keep the ancients alive well into the future. In that respect, I also hope that you'll consider making your own contribution. Without the enthusiastic contributions of readers like you, not only would *KOINON* quickly die out, but so might the gods.

Vivat Achelous!

Dr. Nicholas J. Molinari, General Editor
Societas De Tauro Cum Facie Humana

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