Greek Coins – Collaboration in the Digital Age, Berlin 2015

April 15th 2015, 10:00a.m.-4p.m.

Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Jägerstr. 22/23, 10117 Berlin

Participants:

Carmen Arnold-Biucchi, Angela Berthold, Georgia Bousia, François de Callataÿ, Karsten Dahmen, Amelia Dowler, Frédérique Duyrat, Jürgen Freundel, A. J. Gatlin, Sascha Grabsch, Lily Grozdanova, Ethan Gruber, Jannis Hourmouziadis, Chris Howgego, Hristina Ivanova, Sergei Kovalenko, Stefan Krmnicek, Evangeline Markou, Andrew Meadows, Adrian Popescu, Mariangela Puglisi, Ute Wartenberg Kagan, Bernhard Weisser, David Wigg-Wolf

Welcome, Introduction and Developments since Paris

The meeting has been preceded by meetings in Berlin 2012 as well as in Paris and London 2014 and should serve as a platform for communication before the INC in Taormina in September 2015. After a short welcome and introduction by Ulrike Peter, Andrew Meadows and Frédérique Duyrat reported on the developments of the OGC-Project (Online Greek Coinage) since the meeting in Paris one year ago. A. Meadows emphasized that the aim of the meeting is not to make proper decisions but to share information on the work of the institutions and of people. This is a circle open to everybody who is interested in advancing the digitization of numismatics. Everybody is invited to contribute to this enormous effort up to now mainly done by the ANS, but since 2014 supported by more and more colleagues of other institutions. F. Duyrat reported on two initiatives in Paris since then: 1) the project of the printed auction catalogues and 2) the project on excavation finds. The auction catalogues in Paris written in French (3.821 catalogues of 16.321 at BnF) will be digitized in a proper way which is quite expensive (1, - Euro per page including OCR, the French catalogues have c. 195.087 pages). On a colloquium in November 2014 for the excavations finds there has been established collaboration with the Ecole Française d'Athènes. The finds from the excavations at Thasos, Argos and Delos will be registered in a specially developed spreadsheet, and placed online in a Linked Open Data format.

Further they briefly reported about the constitution of a steering group that has for the past year been focusing on the creation of stable URI's as the most important issue. This has partly been achieved by the money awarded by the INC for the development of nomisma.org and OGC. There is a team compiling lists of authorities, working on spreadsheets for the creation of standardized descriptions, and trying to structure the project and to do tests with data. The need for URI's for types and literature and the different ways to create these were discussed. To create or obtain stable URIs for literature, especially for articles, it may be best to use the Zenon-URIs of the German Archaeological Institute.

A. Meadows demonstrated some new features of nomisma.org. The coin hoards section has been detached from the nomisma.org website. A new website coinhoards.org has been created. On nomisma.org there has been established an ontology developed principally by Karsten Tolle and

individual databases could now be mapped to this ontology. An example is the ancient coin finds in Europe (http://afe.dainst.org/d2rq/). The map is now able not only to depict places but also regions.

E. Gruber pointed out that nomisma has nearly 40.000 queries every day, especially concerning the cultural heritage. This makes it one of the most heavily used Linked data services included in OCLC's recent survey (http://hangingtogether.org/?p=4137).

It was suggested that themes for discussion at the Round Table at the INC at Taormina could be: steering group, spreadsheets, nomisma ID's, website and a "cookbook". The need of a cookbook was underlined by participants. The nomisma steering group is already writing it.

Examples of Special Studies

This session was followed by a session of 10 minute statements. First four projects on special issues were presented.

Evangeline Markou spoke about the progress of her project SilCoinCy since the Paris meeting. By the end of the project in July 2015 the website (www.kyprioscharacter.eie.gr) will be online with all features. A special feature is a collection of 50 essays on Cyprus for which E. Markou asked international specialists and the feedback was overwhelming. At the moment there will be available only the silver coins, but she already collected more material.

Then Ulrike Peter presented the status quo of CNT (www.corpus-nummorum.eu). A lot of features are by now available, the most important is the possibility to register and insert Thracian coins by every registered user. She emphasized the importance of having specialists for every ancient region in order to create the online corpus of Greek coin types. Further she pointed out the relevance of standardized descriptions which also should get stable URIs by nomisma.

Mariangela Puglisi took a look at the functions of DIANA. Digital Iconographic Atlas of Numismatics in Antiquity (http://ww2.unime.it/diana/). The main categories for iconography defined by the project team are personage, flora, animal and monster and objects. At the moment they use material of auction catalogues and are planning to include the coins of the Archaeological Museum in Syracuse. The output format of the results can be viewed as list in form of catalogue entries or as a map of geographical distribution. The aim of the project is to share this methodology.

François de Callataÿ presented his project GOD (Greek Overstrikes Database), for which he has collected all overstrikes on Greek coins for 30 years and works together with David MacDonald. As a format of distribution and for discussion he uses the platform Pinterest. (https://www.pinterest.com/francoisdecalla/greek-overstrikes-database-macedonia-late-hellenis/). At the moment there are available the overstrikes of Thrace (Odessos and Mesambria, Maroneia and Thasos) and late Hellenistic silver of Macedonia.

Status quo of the digitization

For the ANS Ute Wartenberg Kagan announced the preparation of two linked data projects until the INC in Taormina: PELLA on the coinages of the Argead kings and SCO - Seleucid Coins Online. By adding correct and standardized data as well as photographs for these two projects, one fifth of the ANS's Greek collection will be completed. Also Ethan Gruber is working on Linked Data project on Islamic coins in collaboration with Jere Bacharach (coin collection of the Egyptian National Library). She also announces the new availability of publications of the ANS via Hathi Library and Google Books (http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/mb?a=listis;c=1850525919).

For Paris Frederique Duyrat presented the impressive total number of 121.325 Greek coins of the collections now in the database and also visible online. The possible ways of search are first by department and then via collection or geography.

In the British Museum as Amelia Dowler reported changes in November 2014 concerning the image database and resulting problems. A census of their coins showed that they keep about 800.000 coins; 650.000 are already online. The remaining coins (especially medieval and modern coins as well as for instance the Syrian RPC coins) will go online in the next five years. From next year on they are going to start an extra database for the casts (beginning with Attica) which are not supposed to be inserted in the main database of the collections.

Adrian Popescu reported on the Cambridge Museum database and SNG online. For SNG online they are developing new spreadsheets. For the Cambridge collection online new filters were installed and they now have 1/3rd of the collection online. He emphasizes that these all have permanent identifiers. They are digitizing the McClean collection because the scans were too bad. He asked for a 'cookbook' for use in his IT-department.

Sergei Kovalenko introduced the online collection of the Pushkin Museum www.coins-and-medals.ru to us with the highlights of the collection, which has a very impressive zoom function. For the entire collection they have a database for internal use.

Karsten Dahmen told us about the new things that happened recently in the IKMK database of the coin cabinet Berlin (www.smb.museum/ikmk) which has over 24.000 objects online now. There has been a lot of progress made in issues of standardization. Keywords in this approach are links to the catalogue of the DNB (Deutsche Nationalbibliothek), the VIAF (Virtual International Authority File), Wikipedia and Geonames. Besides, every file is available as a LIDO export and Berlin collaborates in the development of 'nomisma'.

Bernhard Weisser announced the acquisition of the photo archive of Lübke and Wiedemann, coin photographers. It consists of more than 1.7 mio. coin photos of auctions. This immense sum of photos connected with the data from the auction catalogues is now waiting to be inserted for example in CNT. He emphasizes the importance of the collection of data in scientific databases as a measurement of the protection of cultural heritage.

Jannis Hourmouziadis, a private collector with own database who has agreed to show his Thracian coins in CNT, introduced to us his Web-Site. His database is constructed with netscape composer. His main concerns were the systematization of monograms, the multilingualism and the simplicity of searches as well as a program for image recognition (on which the ANS is already working in a project).

Discussion

The main topic has been the creation and development of OGC. In order to enhance a quicker access we agreed at first to develop a project to build up a very simple search tool, which would allow to search in different collections by mint, metal, weight and authority. Contributors would be asked to provide links to nomisma.org search terms to allow standardization. This simple search would make the way to the OGC corpus easier.

Also the coins present in coinarchives.org could be involved in such a simple search. A. J. Gatlin promised to provide access to his archive with over 3 million coins. He agreed to program an endpoint with URLs with special copyright notice.

The need to work with 'clean data' was emphasized. Which data should belong to the 'core'-data of coin and type description should be topic of further discussion.

On the OGC website, for example, there would be a need for a news and information section to coordinate projects. Everybody should have easy access to new things happening in this surrounding in sense of avoiding double work and due to the fast progress of technology. The website of the INC could serve as an information portal (for instance inform about the Heidelberg project on auction catalogues).

CNT, the Cyprus project by E. Markou and perhaps another project on Caria by K. Konuk could serve as examples of specialized regional studies, which can contribute in a later stage of development of OGC to it, and then OGC could also serve as an overarching portal.

Problems with the OGC project are due to permanence, supervision, funding. But its necessity is clear also because of the discussion concerning cultural heritage (see the example of the German Archaeological Institute who put the Syrian photo archive online).

Funding possibilities: EU-Funding, Mellon Foundation.

The question came up who would be interested in contributing to such an experiment. Paris, Berlin and the ANS would among others have an interest in this.

To sum up, the next important steps would be to construct a simple overarching search and to look for funding of the OGC-project. The ANS, Berlin, Paris, Oxford, Cambridge and may be Harvard agreed to cooperate. We should involve more specialists for instance also to find solutions for monograms.

For Taormina it would be important to develop a manual for contributors to this OGC simple search and to look for funding options.

<div align="right">Angela Berthold</div>