

CHRONIQUE.

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PRESENTATION OF THE MEDAL OF THE ROYAL NUMISMATIC SOCIETY TO M. JEAN N. SVORONOS.

(Reprinted from the "Numismatic Chronicle." Fourth Series vol. XIV 1914).

The Report of the Council recommending that the Society's medal should be awarded to M. Jean N. Svoronos in recognition of his long and distinguished services to Greek numismatics having been unanimously adopted, the President (Sir Henry H. Howorth, K.C.I.E., F.R.S., F.S.A.,) handed the medal to Mr. Allan to be forwarded to M. Svoronos and addressed the meeting as follow:—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

My first duty to-day is to present our medal to the scholar who has been selected by your Council for that distinction. It is our habit in giving the medal to alternate between English and foreign numismatists. This year it is the turn of the latter, and we have selected M. Svoronos, the Keeper of the great collection of Greek coins at Athens, for the distinction. The fact that at so young an age he has been thought worthy of such an honour enhances the compliment we are paying him. Another reason which makes his position notable is the fact that he is the first Greek who has reached the position of authority in the science of Numismatics which entitles him to rank among the first exponents of the study. This is a great fact when we remember what a dominating position Greek coins hold in the eyes of us all. He began his career as a subordinate in the Athens Museum, where he worked under a patient and accurate master, Postolakka. On the latter's death he succeeded him as Keeper, a position he has filled with quite remarkable vigour and activity. He began by uniting the old collection belonging to the University with the smaller one belonging to the State, and persuaded the Greek Government to pass a stringent law by which all coins found in Greece were to be sent to the Museum. The result of this has been a gigantic growth in the collection, making it, so far as Greek Numismatics are concerned, one of the finest in the world, as it ought to be. One result we naturally feel to be an embarrassment. It is often said that it is no use collecting Greek coins in these days because so few of them come into market. It has been argued that this is due to few being found. It is rather due to the leakage from Greece having been largely stopped. This, again, tempts me to moralize a little; I often think that the great museums might help each other more than they do by the exchange of of duplicates. The passion of some collectors to possess every coin of the same type that exists and thus to prevent others from securing a specimen is a miser's instinct, and not a scholar's. Once a collection has secured an adequate representation of a type surely it is better to exchange with other collections, and thus to do homage to the cosmopolitan character of science as represented by coins. To return to M. Svoronos, we all of us congratulate him on the mighty collection he presides over, which contains so many rare prizes, and we congratulate the Greek nation on having such a fine scholar and fine courteous gentleman in charge of its numismatic treasures. His first work was a notable monograph on the Coins of Crete which received the distinction of being academically crowned. He has since written a great work in four volumes on the Coins of the Ptolemies which puts all other works on that series in the shade. He has translated the *Corpus Numorum* of our own Father Anclhises Head into Greek, and is now editing a volume on the Coins of Athens for the great *Corpus* of Greek coins published by the Berlin Academy*. In 1898 he founded and has since edited the *Journal International d'Archéologie Numismatique*, in which numerous papers from his pen have appeared. This is a great deal to have

* This is not correct. The new work of Svoronos, of which 120 plates have already been printed at Munich by Bruckmann, forms part of the "Trésor de la Numismatique ancienne" published by the reading numismatologists of all nations. — [J. I. A. N.]

done in so short a space. May he continued to have the same vigour and the same imaginative genius (which sometimes runs away with all of us but without which our studies are so often mere dust), and may he found at Athens a school of Greek disciples to help him to unravel the thousand puzzles and mysteries which are still hidden in the lovely and illuminating Coinage of Greece.

You will convey our kind thoughts to him, Mr. Allan, and you will tell him that we English people put at the head of a long list of our teachers the Greek scholars and school-masters, Theodore of Canterbury and Hadrian, Abbot of St. Augustine's, and we at present close the list in one great field of culture with the name of M. Svoronos³.

After tributes to M. Svoronos's work had also been paid by Mr. H. B. Earle Fox and Mr. Hill, Mr. Allan read the following letter of thanks from M. Svoronos:—

"DEAR MR. ALLAN,

"The great honour and token of appreciation conferred on me by the illustrious Royal Numismatic Society of Great Britain fills me with deepest gratitude no less than with joy and pride.

"By universal consent the Royal Numismatic Society and the distinguished Department of Coins and Medals in the British Museum, which is closely linked to it by the bonds of a common science, constitute the greatest, most distinguished, and most erudite centre of numismatic research. In consequence, it is the highest honour to which a numismatist can hope to attain in his lifetime, to be named out for distinction by those who form the head and centre of his science. The greatest proof of this are the thanks which your Society has received from the notable array of universally reputed scholars who have been thus honoured by you. The more I am conscious of my own insignificance as compared with the greatness of all those whom you have honoured from 1883 down to the present day, the greater is my gratitude and pride, most especially as I belong to Greece, the country which in olden times taught other nations the highest civilization, and has left as an heritage the glorious monuments to which our studies are above all directed. Greece, once the teacher, is now the pupil, full of ambition speedily to become the equal of her teachers and worthy of her ancient glory. It is in this endeavour that we, the Greeks of to-day, are filled with an insatiable ambition, not from motives of self-interest, but only because we know that these honours are, second only to our own blood, the most acceptable tribute that we can lay at the feet of the native land which we so passionately love:

'Holier, more sacred than father or mother or aught else.'

"In these days as I saw my beloved country, which two sacred and just wars have glorified and made twice as great, filled with men, whose mangled limbs are decked with the medals of bravery bestowed on them by their country for their deeds of valour and the blood that they have shed, I envied them and sorrowed that the same good fortune had not come to me, the unwarlike.

"Hereafter, when I look on the medal which you have conferred on me, I will console myself with the thought that the world offers other achievements besides those of war, and I will remember the words of your distinguished countryman and our colleague, Arthur Evans, spoken about the medal of your Society, 'a medal seems to be the fitting badge of one who has fought a good fight.'

"I would end with this last conceit, and I would request you, Sir, to act as my mouth-piece, and ask that through the medium of your eloquence, the warmest expressions of my deepest gratitude may be conveyed to your distinguished Society.

Believe me, Sir, sincerely yours,

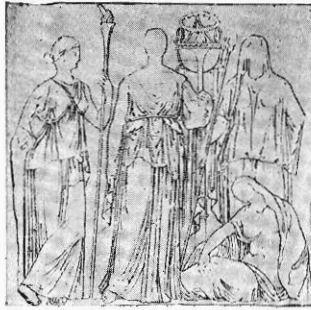
JEAN N. SVORONOS."



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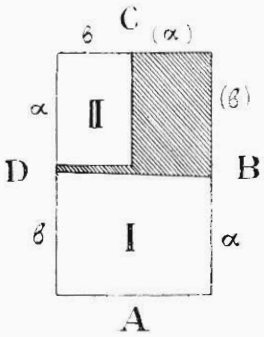
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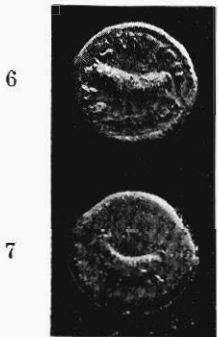
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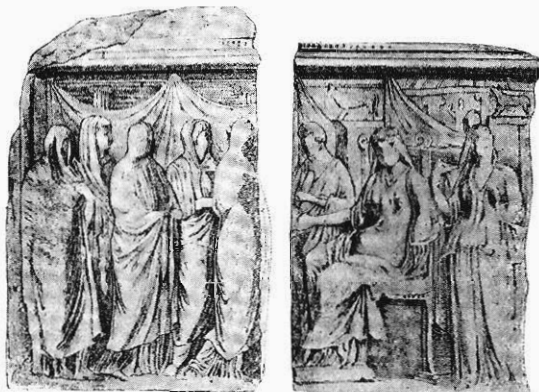


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BASE DE SORRENTE
DÉO LA DÉMÈTER AGELASTOS DE PRANITÈLE
A MEGARA

