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TOKENS, VALUE AND IDENTITY  
EXPLORING MONETIFORM OBJECTS  
IN ANTIQUITY  
AND THE MIDDLE AGES

*Edited by*  
ANTONINO CRISA

# Travaux du Cercle d'études numismatiques

22

## *Comité scientifique*

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Bicci di Lorenzo (1373-1452), polyptych of the Church of San Nicolò di Caseggio, in Florence, 1433  
(courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum, New York)

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# TOKENS FOR FESTIVALS IN HELLENISTIC ATHENS

MAIRI GIKAKI<sup>1</sup>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Today lead, bronze and clay tokens of Athens populate major museum collections, first and foremost those of the Numismatic Museum at Athens. These museum pieces originate from nineteenth-century private collections. In the Athenian Agora, tokens – named *symbola* in antiquity – have been and are still abundantly discovered in archaeological excavations. It was precisely the excavation finds from the Athenian Agora that helped construct the chronology of Athenian tokens, distinguish between the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and determine the early 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. as their beginning, and the Herulian destruction of the city in A.D. 267 as their closing date<sup>2</sup>.

The aim of this paper is to show that tokens were used in festivals in Hellenistic Athens and that the well-known practice of the Roman period had its forerunners already in the Hellenistic period. Neglected aspects of imagery and legends on tokens, as well as find contexts, help shed new light on the particular roles tokens played in the civic festivals of Athens. Perhaps the first instance when tokens were used in festivals was with the institution of theoric distributions in the fourth century B.C. Furthermore, I aim to explore the role of the Council of Five Hundred and of some magistrate boards which worked closely with the Council in the distribution of tokens. The adjunct catalogue provides an overview of the tokens discussed in the paper.

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<sup>2</sup> CROSBY 1964, p. 76-130.

The connections of Hellenistic tokens to festivals were first acknowledged by Achilleus Postolakas (1821-1897). He based his conclusions analysing the lead pieces, which were at the time already kept at the Numismatic Museum at Athens. Postolakas published two papers in 1866 and 1868 listing 284 and 822 tokens respectively. Selections of these were illustrated in volume VIII of the *Monumenti Inediti*. The 1868 publication concluded with a commentary. Here Postolakas tackled the problem of the 'ΠΙΕΝ' – tokens bearing the legend ΠΙΕΝ and combined with multiple devices. Postolakas argued that the legend meant *pentaeteris*, the four-year interval commemorating the celebration of many major festivals and here referring specifically to the Great Panathenaea. The token type with a ship's prow accompanied by the legend ΠΙΑΝΑ was an obvious candidate for the Panathenaea<sup>3</sup>.

In his monograph (1870), Albert Dumont had an entire chapter entitled *De tesseris agonisticis*, limiting himself to repeating Postolakas' main research results<sup>4</sup>. Subsequently, Otto Benndorf made a significant advance in the discipline in 1875, suggesting that tokens were in fact exchanged with *theōrika* and were used as entrance tickets to theatre performances at the Greater Dionysia, and also for distribution at all the Athenian festivals<sup>5</sup>.

Thanks to Margaret Crosby's work, it is now known that the pieces enumerated by Benndorf as tokens related to distributions of *theōrika* in fact belong to the Roman Imperial period. 'Benndorf's tokens' can be summarised as follows: those bearing legends – CEBACTOY, CAICAP – referring to Augustus, others with the legend ΠΙΑΝΑ, which obviously refers to Panathenaea; others with theatre masks; and the famous token type representing Dionysos' cart of the Dionysian parade, which at the time was interpreted by Benndorf as the ship carrying the Peplos of the Great Panathenaea<sup>6</sup>. To these we may add the token type with three masks on pedestals and bearing the legend 'Theophoroumene' ('the girl possessed by the god'), which was first published by Postolakas from the inventories of the Athens Numismatic Museum and was proven to date a little before A.D. 267, the year of the Herulian destruction<sup>7</sup>.

## 2. TOKENS AND FESTIVALS IN THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD: PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS

Nevertheless, a holistic approach to the connections of tokens to festivals of Hellenistic Athens still needs to be written. There have been a few instances where the role of tokens in Hellenistic festivals has been traced. An exploration of the importance of tokens to festivals is timely. Recent scholarship has greatly extended our understanding of the ideological formation of the *polis* and

<sup>3</sup> POSTOLACCA 1866, p. 347, no. 129, p. 348, no. 163, p. 350, no. 201, p. 352, no. 237, p. 353, nos. 258-259; POSTOLACCA 1868, p. 273, nos. 76-78, p. 281, no. 261, p. 286, no. 373, p. 297, no. 660, p. 301, no. 751 (with commentary on p. 304-305).

<sup>4</sup> DUMONT 1870, p. 79-84.

<sup>5</sup> BENNDORF 1875, p. 605-611.

<sup>6</sup> POSTOLACCA 1868, p. 605-612. For the identification of the type with the Dionysos' ship of the Anthesteria festival: CROSBY 1964, p. 95-96, no. L88; that the ship belonged to the procession of the Greater Dionysia and not to the Anthesteria: CSAPO 2012, p. 27-41.

<sup>7</sup> POSTOLACCA 1868, p. 300, 310, no. 732; BENNDORF 1875, p. 609; SVORONOS 1900, p. 342, no. 288, pl. IV, no. 42, nos. 277-287, pl. IV, nos. 36-40; CROSBY 1964, p. 122, no. L329. Scepticism expressed by NERVEGNA 2013, p. 191, fn. 215 concerning their identifications as theatre tickets.

placed festivals and their ceremonials in the broader frame of the evolution of behaviours and attitudes related to the development of civic ideology<sup>8</sup>.

The wider importance of tokens in terms of religious and social life has started to emerge. A series of pioneering and diverse studies has already confirmed that tokens in diverse circumstances and periods have contributed to the formation and maintenance of different types of community<sup>9</sup>. Especially in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, and for the purposes of festivals, issuers and recipients of tokens forged bonds through procedures of distribution, control and validation. It was in Roman Imperial Ephesus that tokens served to enhance the status of the elite, who issued the tokens and sponsored festivals<sup>10</sup>. In Palmyra tokens can be viewed as small ‘monuments’, enabling communication between the invitees and the sponsors of banquets<sup>11</sup>.

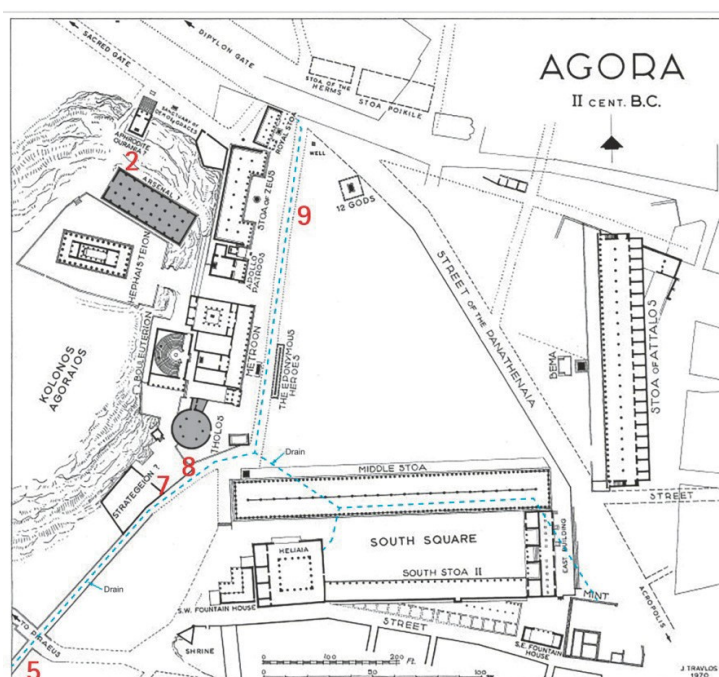


Figure 1 – Map showing the Athenian Agora in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. The Tholos and the Arsenal are shown in grey. The numbers in red denote the findspots of the tokens of the catalogue.

(THOMPSON & WYCHERLEY 1972, pl. 7; adapted by Matthias Demel)

It is tempting to think that tokens played an important role in festivals already in the Hellenistic period. Primary guides in this exploration are imagery, devices and legends, as well as the evidence of the find spots. The iconography of an Athenian lead token with ivy wreath and palm branch resting on amphora seems to relate to festivals, in particular agonistic prizes (cat. no. 1)<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> VERNANT 1980; LORAUX 1981; VIDAL-NAQUET 1981.

<sup>9</sup> CRISA, GKIKAKI & ROWAN 2019, p. 6-7.

<sup>10</sup> KUHN 2014, p. 137-140.

<sup>11</sup> RAJA 2015, p. 165-186.

<sup>12</sup> ENGEL 1884, p. 19, no. 182, pl. VI.



Nonetheless, questions regarding precise function, festival, and date can be only tentatively answered.

A significant number of Hellenistic tokens is indeed distinguished by divine iconography and images of gods or legends with the names of gods. The figures of Aphrodite Pandemos, Apollon Delios with three Graces, Artemis with torch, Asklepios, Dionysos, Eros, Heracles, Hermes, Nike, Pan, Silenus, Triptolemos can be cited<sup>13</sup>. The names of Demeter, Artemis Phosphoros with Athena Nikephoros and Nike can also be read on tokens<sup>14</sup>.

Excavation evidence connects tokens to the Panathenaic festival, the major festival of Athens. This was highlighted by the discovery of such a token (cat. no. 2), only seven or eight metres from the northwest corner of the Arsenal, the only building of the Athenian agora, in and around which fragments of Hellenistic Panathenaic amphorae were concentrated (fig. 1)<sup>15</sup>. It has been suggested that the Arsenal was used for the assembly and storage of the equipment for this great event<sup>16</sup>. The remaining Panathenaic amphora tokens were discovered in the south branch of the Great Drain, indicating that they had moved there from elsewhere, with the exception of one specimen discovered very near the entrance to the Tholos, the round building which served as the seat of the *prytaneis*, the executive committee of the Council (fig. 1)<sup>17</sup>.

### 3. TOKENS FOR FESTIVALS: *THEŌRIKA*

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The token discovered in the vicinity of the Arsenal clearly bears the legend OI-NO, placed symmetrically to the right and left of the Panathenaic amphora (cat. no. 2). The same legend is also on another token type – this time an owl. The most plausible restauration is thought to be the *deme* name Oinoe (cat. no. 3)<sup>18</sup>. *Deme* names on tokens of possible festival use can be correlated to Demosthenes' narration about Leostratos. Leostratos fails to prove that he is a real son of this father and as a result fails to receive the *theōrikon*. The demarch denies him the *theōrikon* and as a consequence it is impossible for him to participate in the Panathenaea and the festival sacrifices<sup>19</sup>. Did the demarch distribute money or tokens? The money would equate to the sum needed for admittance to the festival. The *deme* name on the token indicates that the tokens were distributed per *deme*. *Theōrika* as regular payments were evidently a phenomenon of the fourth century B.C.

<sup>13</sup> CROSBY 1964, p. 95, no. L82 (Aphrodite Pandemos), p. 95, no. L83 (Apollon Delios and Three Graces), p. 95, no. L85 (Asklepios), p. 95, nos. L86-L87 (Dionysos), p. 96, no. L89 (Eros), p. 96, no. L90 (Heracles), p. 96, nos. L91-L92 (Hermes), p. 96, no. L93 (Nike), p. 97-98, nos. L109-L110 (Pan), p. 98, no. L111 (Silenus).

<sup>14</sup> SVORONOS 1900, p. 339, nos. 252-256, pl. IV, no. 19 (Artemis Phosphoros and Athena Nikephoros), p. 339, no. 257, pl. IV, no. 20 (Demeter), p. 340, nos. 269-270 (Nike), pl. IV, nos. 28-29. For a general overview see: CROSBY 1964, p. 79.

<sup>15</sup> CROSBY 1964, p. 101, no. L157.

<sup>16</sup> THOMPSON & WYCHERLEY 1972, p. 80-81.

<sup>17</sup> CROSBY 1964, p. 101-102, nos. L159-L161 (found in Great Drain South), 101, no. L158 (found in Tholos trench N, northeast of the Tholos porch).

<sup>18</sup> Alternatively, it has been suggested that the legend OI-NO refers to the tribe Oinēis (Οἰνηϊς). The fact that we have OI-NO makes the connection with the *deme* more probable. See also: SVORONOS 1900, p. 332; CROSBY 1964, p. 101, no. L157. The owl token type inscribed OI-NO is discussed below.

<sup>19</sup> DEMOSTHENES, *In Leocharem*, 37; CROSBY 1964, p. 78; WHITEHEAD 1986, p. 134-137; PÉBARTHE 2006, p. 206-208.

They may have existed already in the fifth century B.C. but only as *ad hoc* payments<sup>20</sup>. The main source is Plutarch, who stresses Pericles' role as the initiator of the *theōrika*<sup>21</sup>. The *theōrikon* was just two obols, one for the entrance and one to provide the attendants with food for the day of the performances<sup>22</sup>. In the late fourth century the charge, and consequently the distributions, for the Great Dionysia rose to five *drachmai* (*pentedrachmia*), but whether per day or for the whole festival remains unclear<sup>23</sup>.

There are tokens pertaining to *pentedrachmia*: these are tokens with the legend ΠΙΕΝ and with a great variety of types<sup>24</sup>. In the introduction it was noted that Postolakas and Dumont thought that ΠΙΕΝ meant *pentaeteris*. Svoronos linked the same tokens to the Council of Five Hundred, which is often mentioned in the sources as '*he boule hoi pentakosioi*' (ἡ βουλή οἱ πεντακόσιοι)<sup>25</sup>.

Tokens with explicit monetary indication shaped as the first few letters of the corresponding denomination are well attested. Thus, on a token excavated in the Athenian agora in Roman context we find the Isis symbol between the pilei of the Dioskouroi and the legend ΤΡΙΩΒ, which no doubt corresponds to ΤΡΙΩΒΟΛΟΝ (triobol)<sup>26</sup>.

Svoronos listed 34 different types with the legend ΠΙΕΝ. Their variety is remarkable: besides Zeus, Hera and Heracles, there are also animals and various designs including the *triskeles*. They do not obviously relate to festivals, although some of the designs do, e.g. the theatre mask (cat. no. 4). The designs are puzzling, a feature typical of the Athenian tokens. These hermetic symbols made tokens the coding devices for accessing a good, in this case the festival<sup>27</sup>.

Ancient sources draw an analogy between the *theōrikon* on the one hand and the *ekklesiastikon* and the *dikastikon* on the other<sup>28</sup>. Tokens for state pay were commonplace in Athens: *ekklesiastikon* and *dikastikon*, the remuneration for the Assembly participants and the jurors, respectively, were distributed by means of pay tokens<sup>29</sup>. The lexicographer Harpokration attributes the *theōrika* to Agyrrius, the same individual who increased the *misthos* for the ekklesiasts from

<sup>20</sup> ROSELLI 2009, p. 29-30.

<sup>21</sup> PLUTARCH, *Pericles*, 9.2-3: it was because of Pericles' competition with Cimon for the favour of the *demos* that made the former turn 'to the distribution of state funds and that soon thereafter he bribed the multitude wholesale with *theōrika*, pay for service in jury courts, other payments and choregic performances'. The scholiast to AISCHINES (3.24) and ULPAN (*On Dem.* 1.1) likewise attribute *theōrika* to Pericles.

<sup>22</sup> See ULPAN in his *Introduction to the First Olynthiac*, 13; VALMIN 1965, p. 191.

<sup>23</sup> HYPERIDES, *Against Demosthenes*, 26,15; DEINARCHOS, *Against Demosthenes* 56; VALMIN 1965, p. 191-192; DE STE. CROIX 1964, p. 191; WILSON 2008, p. 95, nos. 34, 38.

<sup>24</sup> Identification credited to Eric Csapo. Suggestion communicated to the author by e-mail.

<sup>25</sup> There is a serious objection to this: the tokens with the legend ΒΟΑΗ or ΒΟΥΑΗ. If the Council is referred to the ΒΟΑΗ, then the legend ΠΙΕΝ can only refer to something other than the Council.

<sup>26</sup> SVORONOS 1900, p. 334-336, nos. 181-228.

<sup>27</sup> For the designs on Athenian tokens as time stamps see: BUBELIS 2011, p. 186-187.

<sup>28</sup> POLLUX, *Onomasticum* VIII, 113; VALMIN 1965, p. 191.

<sup>29</sup> On tokens to be exchanged with the Assembly pay see: GAUTHIER 1990, p. 417-443. Regarding tokens to be exchanged with the jurors' pay see: BOEGEHOLD 1960, p. 393-401.

two to three obols in the late fifth/early fourth century<sup>30</sup>. *Misthos* means payment, a generic term which applied not only to the state pay received by magistrates, but also to the payments given as prizes to winners at the Dionysia, i.e. the winning tribe, chorus, *khoregos*, or poet.

Modern researchers seem not to agree on whether *theōrika* were a *misthos*, and whether the *theōrika* can be catalogued among the other known *misthophoriai* or not<sup>31</sup>. The answer was provided already in antiquity: Ulpian in his introduction to Demosthenes' Third Olynthiac (44) declares that *misthos* constituted a payment on a daily basis and that *theōrika*, on the contrary, were paid in the *hieromēniai* (= the months when the great festivals were held)<sup>32</sup>. It should be noted that, although the institution, the beginnings and the particular nature of *theōrika* are hotly debated, scholars have given little attention to the connection between *theōrika* – the entrance fees – and *symbola* – the entrance tickets – and have neglected *symbola* as the material manifestation of *theōrika*<sup>33</sup>.

This paper suggests that in the fifth century *theōrika* were distributed in cash. In the fourth century, at the time when Eubulos was at the head of the financial administration of the city, and consequently the theoric fund was instituted and distributions began on a regular basis, tokens were first distributed as *theōrika*<sup>34</sup>. According to a point of view expressed already by Natan Valmin in 1965, the finances of the theatre justify the use of *theōrika* in the fourth century B.C.<sup>35</sup> Eubulos' period coincides with the stone construction of the Dionysus theatre: the *polis* did not need to lease the site because the need to rebuild it had gone. Entrance fees continued to be charged and now the theatre became a significant source of income for the city. It has been estimated that the city would have levied 3 talents and 20 *minai* (20,000 *drachmai*), calculated on two obols per day, for five days, for 12,000 spectators<sup>36</sup>. What is also more significant is that the stone theatre had doubled its capacity compared to its wooden predecessor, enabling the seating of *theōrika* holders as well as ticket holders. This income would have been vital for financing distribution of tokens.

The fact that entrance to theatre performances is described in the sources in monetary terms does not preclude the employment of tokens. Monetary value is inherent to tokens<sup>37</sup>. The value signs on a whole series of tokens in a deposit accumulated over the course of the third century B.C. in the

<sup>30</sup> LOOMIS 1998, p. 20-22, no. 19. For an analysis on the story with Agyrrhius see: RUSCHENBUSCH 1979, p. 308; ROSELLI 2009, p. 12-13.

<sup>31</sup> VALMIN 1965, p. 178-179; WILSON 2008, p. 95, no. 34 writes: '*theorikon* is never described as a *misthos*'; ROSELLI 2009, p. 21 thinks of the *theorikon* as a *misthos*.

<sup>32</sup> VALMIN 1965, p. 178-179.

<sup>33</sup> With the exception of Otto Benndorf and Margaret Crosby.

<sup>34</sup> For Eubulos as the initiator of the *theōrika* and the theoric fund: CAWKWELL 1963, p. 54, no. 49; RUSCHENBUSCH 1979, p. 303-308; CSAPO & WILSON 2014, p. 394-397. For whether there was a single official or a board of officials: BOECKH 1817, vol. 2, p. 193, 205-206; CAWKWELL 1963, p. 47, no. 4; RHODES 1972, p. 235-240.

<sup>35</sup> VALMIN 1965, p. 193.

<sup>36</sup> WILSON 2008, p. 93-95.

<sup>37</sup> CRISÀ, GIKAKI & ROWAN 2019, p. 4-6.

Well B1 in the Dipylon Gate are a valid indication that pay tokens were common in early Hellenistic Athens<sup>38</sup>.

Tokens in the theatre were indispensable not only for enabling entrance but also for assigning to seats. If in the case of the *boule* and the courts, tokens regulated the seating of the participants, the same applied by analogy to the theatre. Philochoros in the third book of his *Atthis* defines *theōrikon* as ‘δράχμα τῆς θεᾶς’ and goes on to say that the *theōrikon* acquired its name from this<sup>39</sup>. *Thea*, as inferred by Liddell-Scott-Jones, signifies not only the spectacle but also the place from where you watch the spectacle – and therefore the seat. In the text recording the lease for the Piraeus theatre, the *thea* is described as being ‘furnished with seats’ (ἡδ[ω]λιασμένην τὴν θεάν)<sup>40</sup>. *Symbola* had always to do with the regulation of seating arrangements. The members of the Council were first; they began to be allotted their seating by letters in 410/409 B.C.<sup>41</sup> The bronze lettered tokens marked with twenty-four letters, plus the *sampi*, helped determine the seating areas of the jurors<sup>42</sup>. The clay lettered tokens are plausibly connected to the Assembly and the seating arrangements of participating citizens<sup>43</sup>.

In the case of the theatre, there were specified places for particular groups of citizens. Our relevant evidence derives from Demosthenes: a citizen taking wrong seats (someone else’s ‘*thea*’) was punished by being ejected from the *prohedria*<sup>44</sup>. It is not known what theatre *symbola* looked like, whether they were lettered or not, or how the seating areas were named. *Symbola* bearing titles of known theatrical works have not been demonstrably associated to *theōrika*. The same is true for some designs which seem to reflect preserved or lost works of ancient drama<sup>45</sup>.

From the fourth century onwards, *symbola* would have secured free entrance for citizens. Payments in cash provided no guarantee that the sum could not have been used for other reasons, whereas distributions of *symbola* made sure of their use for the original purpose. There were also further organisational implications: the issuing of *symbola* in a given number would have helped to control the number of citizens entitled to the theatre dole and would have also served accounting purposes. Thus *symbola* were collected by the theatre entrepreneurs, who would have later settled accounts with the officials of the city<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> BRAUN 1970, p. 193, cat. nos. 96, 123, pl. 57; GRACE 1974, p. 193-203.

<sup>39</sup> PHILOCHOROS *FGrHist* F33; CSAPO 2007, p. 90, fn. 5; ROSELLI 2009, p. 13-14.

<sup>40</sup> IG II<sup>2</sup> 1176 frg. bII, line 12; WILSON 2008, p. 93, no. 14.

<sup>41</sup> *FGrHist* 328 Philochoros F140; BOEGEHOLD 1995, p. 71, 155-156, no. 73.

<sup>42</sup> BOEGEHOLD 1995, p. 67-72.

<sup>43</sup> MAKRYPODI 2019, p. 34.

<sup>44</sup> DEMOSTHENES, *In Meidiam*, 178.

<sup>45</sup> CROSBY 1964, p. 79-80.

<sup>46</sup> On the theatre entrepreneurs see: CSAPO 2007, p. 87-115.

## 4. HELLENISTIC FESTIVAL TOKENS AT THE ATHENIAN AGORA

A token with the legend BACI (with a lunar *sigma*) has been considered along with tokens bearing titles of magistrates, forming thus a special category (cat. no. 5)<sup>47</sup>. The legend refers in all probability to the *archon basileus* – one of the nine magistrates (*archontes*) – charged with religious and judicial duties<sup>48</sup>. Particular attention should be paid to the wreath/crown in the centre of which the name can be seen. Wreaths and crowns are rather uncommon on Athenian tokens and have a particular significance. A wreath encircling the legend is found on token types reading BOULE (BOAH, BOYAH, Council) (cat. no. 6)<sup>49</sup>. In both cases the wreath puts an emphasis on the main type. Furthermore, the crown relates to crowns commemorated in honorific decrees to be awarded to a magistrate or a magisterial body in recognition of the successful completion of duties<sup>50</sup>. BOULE tokens are obviously *symbola* issued by the Council of Five Hundred.

The few known wreaths on tokens usually frame not just legends but official, state devices. The functions of the ‘owl-in-wreath’ token type were also official in all likelihood (cat. no. 7)<sup>51</sup>. The owl is one of the official designs and devices of the Athenian state<sup>52</sup>. Others including the *kerykeion* (caduceus)<sup>53</sup>, the tripod<sup>54</sup>, and the amphora (Panathenaic ?), each time surrounded by a wreath. The ‘amphora-in-wreath’ type bears the legend Δ-H, referring to ΔΗΜΟΣΙΟΝ, meaning ‘public’, ‘official’, and is therefore of particular significance (cat. no. 8)<sup>55</sup>.

64 The legend BACI designates the *archon basileus* as the issuer of the token (cat. no. 5). Given the range of religious duties assigned to this official the *symbolon* could have played a role in a festival. The *archon basileus* was responsible for the Mysteries, the Lenaia, as well as the torch races at all festivals and the sacrifices offered, according to ancestral customs<sup>56</sup>. It is tempting to see the BACI token as ticket issued to allow participation in festive banquets following sacrifices.

In the immediate vicinity of the Arsenal, the structure associated with the storage of equipment for the Panathenaic festival (fig. 1), a token with the legend ΕΛ | ΑΟΥ was discovered (cat. no. 9)<sup>57</sup>. The legend seems to read ΕΛΑΙΟΥ (‘oil’) in the genitive; it could be associated with the olive oil

<sup>47</sup> CROSBY 1964, p. 89, no. L37, pl. 19.

<sup>48</sup> ARISTOTLE, *Athenaion Politeia*, 57; RHODES 1981, p. 636-650.

<sup>49</sup> SVORONOS 1900, p. 333, no. 178, pl. III, no. 19.

<sup>50</sup> MERITT & TRAILL 1974, p. 4-17; HENRY 1983, p. 22-42; LAMBERT 2004, p. 85-88.

<sup>51</sup> CROSBY 1964, p. 94, no. L73. The ‘owl-in-wreath’ type seems and has to be distinct from the owl framed by two olive sprays and having the legend ΑΘΕ or ΑΘΗ: POSTOLACCA 1866, p. 342-343, nos. 57-59 combined with lettered reverses (only no. 57 is depicted); ENGEL 1884, p. 8, no. 45 combined with a lettered reverse. This is known as the ‘triobol’ because of its similarity to the fourth century triobols. The ‘triobol-type’ has been considered as the token exchanged for jurors’ pay: SHEEDY 2015, p. 215-216, fig. 8.

<sup>52</sup> KILLEN 2017, p. 99-109.

<sup>53</sup> ENGEL 1884, p. 19, no. 192, pl. VI. For the significance of the *kerykeion*: CROSBY 1964, p. 82.

<sup>54</sup> ENGEL 1884, p. 19, no. 194, pl. VI. The tripod is a state device: it is found on Athenian bronze denominations from the mid-second century to the mid-first century B.C.: KROLL 1993, p. 68, 80, nos. 112, 114.

<sup>55</sup> CROSBY 1964, p. 102, nos. L161a-b, pl. 25.

<sup>56</sup> ARISTOTLE, *Athenaion Politeia*, 57, 1; RHODES 1981, p. 636-639.

<sup>57</sup> CROSBY 1964, p. 89, no. L38, pl. 19 (provenance: the Athenian Agora excavation sections I-J 6-7).

given as a prize to winners of the Panathenaic festival games. This token is very similar in manufacture and style of appearance to the preceding tokens. It also features a crown around the legend. Margaret Crosby, who first published the type, hesitates between ELAIOU and ELAIOUS, the name of the attic coastal *deme*<sup>58</sup>. The latter reading has an important parallel to recommend it. There is a token type in the collections of the Athens Numismatic Museum bearing KOIAHΣ, the name of the attic *deme* in the genitive, enclosed in a wreath<sup>59</sup>. The two types correlated to each other could suggest the existence of a series with *deme* names surrounded by a crown. The *deme* names pertain to the conduct of festivals and to festival distributions, already evident in the story of Leostratos, as recorded in Demosthenes' speech, mentioned above<sup>60</sup>.

Not only can *deme* names within a crown alternate, but the same *deme* name can also be found with different devices, e.g. Engel and Svoronos have catalogued another type bearing the known legend OI-NO, this time with an owl (cat. no. 3)<sup>61</sup>. The alternating devices – Panathenaic amphora (cat. no. 2) and the owl (cat. no. 3) – can very probably be connected to successive events or occasions: the different emblems were probably 'time stamps'.

## 5. THE COUNCIL OF FIVE HUNDRED AS ISSUER OF TOKENS FOR ATHENIAN FESTIVALS

The Council of Five Hundred was in charge of the financial administration of the city and a major regulator of festivals in Athens. The Council issued tokens for various purposes on festive occasions: the token with the legend Δ-H and an amphora surrounded by a wreath, briefly mentioned above, can in all probability be associated with the Council. This is evident from the legend: Δ-H. The legends Δ-E and Δ-H or the word ΔΕΜΟΣΙΟΝ or ΔΗΜΟΣΙΟΝ in full are found on various objects – dining equipment for the *prytaneis*, weights and measures kept in the Tholos – designating them as public property and putting them under the jurisdiction of the Council<sup>62</sup>. Tokens for festivals were distributed by the Council: a great number of tokens found in and around the Tholos, the seat of the executive committee of the Council testifies it<sup>63</sup>.

The Council had extensive religious duties that were especially related to the administration of festivals<sup>64</sup>. Some of these duties were carried out by boards, and in particular the board of *hieropoioi*, its members selected by lot from among the members of the Council. Combined studies of the *Athenaion Politeia* and the texts inscribed on stones indicate that there existed not one but several boards of *hieropoioi*, usually constituted by ten members each, selected by lot. They were assigned to the conduct of sacrifices, the distribution of meat to the participants, and then the

<sup>58</sup> TRAILL 1975, p. 52.

<sup>59</sup> SVORONOS 1900, p. 328, no. 111, pl. III, no. 2.

<sup>60</sup> DEMOSTHENES, *In Leocharem*, 37.

<sup>61</sup> ENGEL 1884, p. 6, nos. 20-21, pl. 1; SVORONOS 1900, p. 332, nos. 153-155, pl. II, no. 35.

<sup>62</sup> LANG 2004, p. 14, 15, fig. 6 (dining equipment), 31-32, fig. 35 (lead weight), 36 (official liquid measure), 37 (official dry measure).

<sup>63</sup> See, in particular, lead and clay tokens found in Hellenistic contexts related to the Tholos, as it can be deduced from the find spots recorded by CROSBY 1964, p. 86-109, 126-130.

<sup>64</sup> RHODES 1972, p. 127-134.



payment to the treasury of Athena the proceeds from the sacrifices. One way or another *hieropoioi* are mentioned for almost all Athenian festivals. In connection to the Eleusinian Mysteries we hear of annual *hieropoioi* and *hieropoioi* of the Council<sup>65</sup>, *hieropoioi* charged with the festivals occurring every fourth year, with the exception of the *Panathenaia*<sup>66</sup>, and *hieropoioi* charged with the administration of the *Panathenaia* occurring every year<sup>67</sup>. For the issuing of tokens explicitly by the *hieropoioi* there is no direct evidence; nevertheless, their functions and duties, and in particular the distribution of meat to the participants, make the issuing and distribution of tokens highly probable.

Religious duties similar to those of the *hieropoioi* were assigned to another board, known as the conveners of the people (συλλογεῖς τοῦ δήμου)<sup>68</sup>. The latter are better known for the provision they took in summoning the Assembly, including the distribution of tokens to citizens (*symbola ekklesiastika*)<sup>69</sup>.

The text of IG II<sup>2</sup> 1749, a dedicatory inscription and catalogue of the *prytaneis* of the tribe Aigeis, preserved on a statue base, reports a *hieropoios* proposing honours for the ‘conveners’ (*syllogeis*), a convener proposing honours for the *hieropoioi*, and another *hieropoios* proposing honours for the *hieropoios* who had proposed honours for the conveners. The proposer of the honours for the *hieropoioi* also did the same for the treasurer of the *prytaneis*. The text suggests a close cooperation between *hieropoioi* and ‘conveners’. That the text should be seen in the setting of a festival is evident from lines 83-84: the *hieropoioi* are designated as the *hieropoioi* of the Eleusinian

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Mysteries. The Eleusinian *hieropoioi* had been appointed by the Council of Five Hundred<sup>70</sup>.

The distribution of *symbola* mentioned in line 79 is usually related to the summoning of the Assembly<sup>71</sup>. Although this seems to be the case, the evident interaction between the *hieropoioi* and the ‘conveners’ in IG II<sup>2</sup> 1749 opens up possibilities of cooperation in a festive setting. At occasions where regulations and provisions had to be made for large numbers of citizens, as in the case of a festival, tokens were employed. The tokens would have authorised participation and entrance, and would have been exchanged for a portion of meat at the festive banquet.

Looking through the extant Athenian tokens for ‘Eleusinian *theōrika*’ we are immediately struck by the popularity of the *kernos*, used with great variation, and over a wide period of time, on bronze and lead tokens<sup>72</sup>. *Kernos*, also called *plēmochōē*, denotes a vase of biconical shape, often lidded. The last day of the Eleusinian Mysteries was referred to as *plēmochōai*, named after these particular

<sup>65</sup> IG II<sup>2</sup> 1672, lines 251, 280.

<sup>66</sup> ARISTOTLE, *Athenaion Politeia*, 54, 7.

<sup>67</sup> In the text of the law and decree on the Lesser *Panathenaia* of 335 B.C.: IG II<sup>3</sup> 1 447; RHODES 1972, p. 129; RHODES & OSBORNE 2003, p. 396-403, no. 81.

<sup>68</sup> RHODES 1972, p. 129-130.

<sup>69</sup> MERITT & TRAILL 1974, p. 7.

<sup>70</sup> RHODES 1972, p. 128, fn. 13; MERITT & TRAILL 1974, p. 48-49, no. 38.

<sup>71</sup> CROSBY 1964, p. 77.

<sup>72</sup> POSTOLACCA 1866, p. 349-351, nos. 177-212.

vases, which were used ceremonially<sup>73</sup>. The *kernos* has shown itself to be one of the official state devices, encountered not just on tokens or coins but also on other official media<sup>74</sup>. It is employed as a ‘subordinate’ symbol among the bronze lettered juror tokens from the early Hellenistic period (4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.)<sup>75</sup>, as well as on the lead lettered ones<sup>76</sup>. It is also found as countermark on the lead lettered tokens of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.<sup>77</sup>

The type of *kernos*, plain, or sometimes with wheat placed through the handles, or surrounded by a wheat wreath, occupies the entire round surface on lead tokens issued from the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. onwards (cat. no. 10)<sup>78</sup>. The ‘secondary’ stamp or ‘secondary’ symbol does not firmly indicate the functions of the *kernos* type used in the later Hellenistic period; in fact the latter are more probably candidates for *theōrika*<sup>79</sup>.

## 6. ‘DEME TOKENS’ AT CIVIC FESTIVALS

The token series featuring *deme* names that was mentioned earlier is linked to events where all *demes* took part: these tokens would have helped marshal the citizen body. The hundred and thirty-nine *demes* were population units with a territorial basis. The law and decree on Lesser Panathenaea (ca. 335 B.C.) stipulate that the meat from the cows must be distributed to Athenians located in the Ceramicus quarter<sup>80</sup>. But in what way? The portions depended on the number of participants that each *deme* was sending out for the procession. The text stipulates portions also for magistrates: five to the *prytaneis*, three to the nine *archons*, one to the treasurers of Athena, one to the *hieropoioi*, three to the generals, and three to the *taxiarchoi*. The portion seems to be a unit, the size of which is unknown to us today. The rather unequal distribution among the magistrates – five for the fifty *prytaneis* and three to the nine *archons* – suggests in that case that the distribution was related more to prestige and honour.

Speaking about the meat distribution to the members of the *demes* (the *demotai*), let us try and reconstruct the procedure. Every citizen received the *theorikon* from the demarch of his *deme*<sup>81</sup>. The demarchs were able to verify that each one had his *theorikon* because they functioned as marshals of the Panathenaic procession<sup>82</sup>. The participants reassembled in the Ceramicus and the

<sup>73</sup> DEUBNER 1932, p. 91.

<sup>74</sup> KILLEN 2017, p. 181-182.

<sup>75</sup> SVORONOS 1923-1926, pl. 102, nos. 16-19, 37-39; BOEGEHOLD 1995, p. 76, T36, T37.

<sup>76</sup> ENGEL 1884, p. 6, no. 17, pl. I, p. 7, no. 28, pl. I, p. 19, no. 183, pl. VI.

<sup>77</sup> CROSBY 1964, p. 87, no. L5, p. 88, no. L18.

<sup>78</sup> A secure *terminus post quem* is provided by Athenian coinage: a *kernos* appears for the first time on Athenian bronze *hemioboloi* and *chalkoi* of the period following the evacuation of the Macedonian garrisons from the forts of Attica in 229 B.C.: KROLL 1993, p. 58-60, nos. 64, 66, 68 (countermarks), 61-62, nos. 70, 72-75. On the tripod see: KROLL 1993, p. 68, 114, no. 80, p. 84-86, 96, nos. 120-121, p. 101-102, no. 138.

<sup>79</sup> CROSBY 1964, p. 81, footnote 26.

<sup>80</sup> IG II<sup>3</sup> 1 447; RHODES 1972, p. 129; RHODES & OSBORNE 2003, p. 396-403, no. 81.

<sup>81</sup> DEMOSTHENES, *In Leocharem*, 37.

<sup>82</sup> The demarchs could verify that each citizen had his token as they functioned as marshals of the Panathenaic procession.



tokens were collected by magistrates – the *hieropoioi* (?). Just how many gathered in the Ceramicus could be easily reckoned, the number was impossible to falsify<sup>83</sup>. Three different sources – Demosthenes, Schol. Aristophanes *Clouds* and the epigraphic evidence – fit the narrative and complement each other very well<sup>84</sup>. The sharing of the tokens among the citizens, the emphatically repeated *deme* names on the tokens, their distribution and re-collection, and the controlled participation to a fixed event, would have likely contributed to a sense of community among the citizens<sup>85</sup>.

## 7. EUERGETISM AND TOKENS

Admittance to festivals and gift distributions on the occasion of festivals were all initiated and directed by the state. Nevertheless, a token inscribed with the name Polykleitos next to the depiction of a cicada on one side, and the name Nikagoras featuring next to the depiction of a tripod on the other, sheds new light and provides evidence for token issues on the occasion of festivals (cat. no. 11)<sup>86</sup>. The type, first published by Arthur Engel, was interpreted by Margaret Crosby as ‘a free admission ticket or an exchange token’<sup>87</sup>. Crosby links the name Polykleitos with Polykleitos, a son of Alexandros of Phlya, archon of Athens in 110/9 and *epimelete* of Delos in 99/8

B.C. and the name Nikagoras with Nikagoras, son of Polykleitos, known from the Pythaist lists at Delphi<sup>88</sup>. Crosby’s identification of these two men of the Athenian elite seems justified, and accounts well also for the fact that the two names share the two sides of the same token. The joint mention could possibly be explained by the fact that Nikagoras was still a *pais*.

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The cicada and tripod devices are official types; they also belong to the repertoire of state devices and are well attested not only on tokens but on coins as well<sup>89</sup>. Polykleitos and Nikagoras were obviously acting in some official capacity, sponsoring a festival or a distribution from their own wealth.

In Hellenistic Athens euergetism was particularly encouraged. With the abolition of the liturgy system in the late fourth century B.C. conditions in Athens changed radically from the Classical period. Benefactions were very much sought after as both the *polis* and the elite profited. As recipients of benefactions, the *polis* needed the elite as they aspired to honours and could gain the conspicuous distinction they craved<sup>90</sup>.

<sup>83</sup> Schol. ARISTOPHANES, *Clouds* 37.

<sup>84</sup> RHODES & OSBORNE 2003, p. 401-402.

<sup>85</sup> ROWAN 2019, p. 102.

<sup>86</sup> ENGEL 1884, p. 18, no. 169, pl. V.

<sup>87</sup> CROSBY 1964, p. 79-80.

<sup>88</sup> TRAILL 2000-2010, vol. 14, nos. 778795, 778825 (On Polykleitos); vol. 13, no. 708255 (on Nikagoras).

<sup>89</sup> The cicada first appears around 190 B.C. and from then onwards becomes one of the most popular designs for Athenian bronzes: KROLL 1993, p. 54-55, 65, nos. 85, 79, 108, p. 80, no. 113, p. 99-100, no. 131.

<sup>90</sup> For the so-called ‘hortatory intention’ as can be traced in the wording of honorific decrees, see: MILLER 2016, p. 386-387.

Although the tokens which have survived from the Hellenistic period are few in number, and represent only a small proportion of those originally issued and circulated, the example of the ‘Polykleitos-Nikagoras’ type remains almost unparalleled in regards to citizen names<sup>91</sup>. Given the tenor of the honorific decrees of Hellenistic Athens, which focus on publicising the reciprocity, the benefactions will have elicited honours bestowed by the *demos* on the benefactors. Thus, it would not be exaggerating to think that the names inscribed prominently on the two sides of the token constituted a part of these honours<sup>92</sup>.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

Tokens in Hellenistic Athens were official and used mainly for the activities of the Athenian government, particularly in the Council, the Assembly, and the Lawcourts. Tokens were also employed as vouchers to be exchanged for wheat in the wheat distributions and as entrance tickets to the Great Dionysia and other festivals. These are Margaret Crosby’s main conclusions, published with a very informative catalogue of the approximately 1,000 tokens excavated in the Athenian agora, and are still valid today.

Among the functions and contexts enumerated by Crosby, the festivals are the least explored. Except for some tentative identifications of types made by Crosby in the catalogue, many questions remained open, especially concerning how tokens were used in a festival context and what were the types, and/or particular features, of the ‘festival tokens’. To these questions the present paper has sought to give some suggestions. Distributions would have been made at the *deme* level, applying especially for *theōrika*. Festival tokens used the same repertoire of official devices known also from other official uses of tokens: owl, Panathenaic amphora, *kernos*, tripod. Inevitably we tend to relate the Panathenaic amphora to the Panathenaea, and the *kernos* to the Mysteries. The majority of the devices remain enigmatic, probably because they signified ‘time stamps’. Nonetheless, the functions determined particular features, devices and types: the legends with personal names refer to private benefactors, who in their official capacity as magistrates, sponsored certain elements of the festivals.

## CATALOGUE OF TOKENS



<sup>91</sup> WILSON 2000, p. 144-147.

<sup>92</sup> CROSBY 1964, p. 79-80.

1. Lead token | Ø 17 mm.

Side A: ivy wreath.

Side B: palm branch traversing amphora.

References: Heldreich Collection (current location unknown); ENGEL 1884, p. 19, no. 182, pl. VI.



2:1

2. Uniface lead token | Ø 18 mm; 2.62 g.

Side A: lidded Panathenaic amphora with two letters either side; OI – at right, NO – at left.

References: Athenian Agora, IL 540; CROSBY 1964, p. 101, no. L 157.



2:1

3. Uniface lead token | Ø 18 mm.

Side A: OI-NO, owl.

References: Athens Numismatic Museum; ENGEL 1884, p. 6, no. 21, pl. I; SVORONOS 1900, p. 332, nos. 153-155, pl. II, no. 35.



2:1

4. Uniface lead token | Ø 14 mm; 1.99 g.

Side A: theatre mask facing right; inscribed Π | E-N.

References: The Alpha Bank Numismatic Collection, inv. no. 516; SVORONOS 1900, p. 336, nos. 209-212, pl. III, no. 51.



2:1

5. Uniface lead token | Ø 16 mm; 2.34 g.  
BACI (ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ?) enclosed in wreath.

References: Athenian Agora, IL 1022 ; CROSBY 1964, p. 89, no. L 37, pl. 19.



2:1

6. Uniface lead token | Ø 15 mm.

BOYAH enclosed in olive or laurel wreath.

References: Athens Numismatic Museum; SVORONOS 1900, p. 333, no. 178, pl. III, no. 19.



2:1

7. Lead token | Ø 16 mm; 3.07 g.

Side A: Owl right enclosed in (olive?) wreath, two incuse dots as countermarks.

Side B: Cicada, three incuse dots as countermarks.

References: Athenian Agora, IL 1134; CROSBY 1964, p. 94, no. L 73.



2:1

8. Uniface lead token | Ø 16 mm; 4.33 g.

Amphora enclosed in ivy wreath. In field lower left Δ, lower right H.

References: Athenian Agora, IL 647; CROSBY 1964, p. 102, no. L 161 pl. 25.



2:1

9. Uniface lead token | Ø15 mm; 2.58 g.

ΕΛ | ΑΟΥ enclosed in olive or laurel wreath; small hole pierced through token at lower right.

References: Athenian Agora, IL 1168; CROSBY 1964, p. 89, no. L38, pl. 19.



2.5:1

10. Uniface lead token | Ø 12 mm.

Side A: *kernos*; inscribed Δ in the left field.

References: Athens Numismatic Museum; ENGEL 1884, p. 19, no. 187, pl. VI.



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2:1

11. Uniface lead token | Ø 15 mm.

Side A: cicada; inscribed ΠΟΛΥ | Κ-ΛΕΙ | [ΤΟ]Σ.

Side B: tripod; inscribed ΝΙ-ΚΑ | Γ-Ο | ΠΑ-Σ.

References: Athens Numismatic Museum; ENGEL 1884, p. 18, no. 169, pl. V.

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He has also been awarded with the *Kraay Travel Fund* of the University of Oxford (1989), taught at the American Numismatic Society (1996), and collaborated with the Medieval European Coinage project at the University of Cambridge (since 1999).

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MASSIMILIANO MARAZZI &amp; SEBASTIANO TUSA

**From token devices to written tablets in the Central Mediterranean (17<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C., Italy, Sicily and surrounding islands)**

**Abstract:** Research performed over the last twenty years in the Bronze Age island settlements of the central Mediterranean area has investigated a series of ‘object-based writing’ devices, benefitting from particular tokens. Moreover, real numerical tablets and graphic systems, mostly related to pottery production, have also been documented.

Such ‘pre/proto-writing’ devices seem to be closely linked to a network of maritime connections, in which metallic raw materials and products of particular prestige circulated. In addition, this paper aims not only to present such currently known ‘object-based writing’ systems for calculation and accounting, but also to evaluate and contextualise them in transmarine routes, to which they appear to be part of.

**Key-words:** islands, Mediterranean, Mozia, Sicily, tokens, proto-writing, Vivara.

ANTONINO CRISÀ

**Goddesses on ‘monetiform’ objects: Hellenistic clay tokens from the small community of *Makella*-Marineo (Palermo, Italy)**

**Abstract:** A full set of clay tokens, partially neglected by scholars until now, has been recently ‘re-discovered’ in the Palermo and Eleuterio River Valley Museums in Sicily. Archaeologists found these artefacts within the excavations at *Makella*, the ancient centre corresponding to Marineo, a small town in the province of Palermo. The main scope of this article is to fully present these tokens for the first time, providing a catalogue. First, we introduce the historical and archaeological context of ancient *Makella*, in which the artefacts were distributed and used. Then we analyse their iconography, assessing the role of local cults to Demeter. Third, we offer a series of final remarks on the artefacts, providing some hypotheses on their function, use and final discharge on the site. This information sheds new light on these ‘monetiform’ objects, which were strongly related to local cults and traditions of small communities in Hellenistic and Roman Sicily.

**Key-words:** clay, Demeter, Hellenistic, *Makella*, Marineo, Sicily, tokens.

## Tokens for festivals in Hellenistic Athens

**Abstract:** Through the analogy of their Roman counterparts it is thought that tokens in Athens were issued on the occasion of festivals. Otto Benndorf in his publication on the ancient Greek theatre (1875) was the first to connect Athenian tokens to the *theōrika*, the free distributions offered by the state for attending theatre performances and festivals in general. Since then, the assumption has been repeated many times. The organisation of the Athenian festivals shows the need for exchange tokens. Legends and designs on many of the Athenian tokens can be plausibly explained as tokens for festival distributions. The paper relies heavily on the objects themselves and explores the intersection between the festival imagery on coins and tokens. A catalogue of festival tokens is provided as an appendix.

**Key-words:** Athens, festival, Greece, iconography, *theōrika*, tokens.

## Personal, public and mercantile themes on unpublished lead tokens

**Abstract:** The *Tokens: Culture, Connections, Communities* conference (University of Warwick, June 2017) demonstrated some of the myriad uses of tokens, from the dawn of civilisation to the present day. This paper will describe eleven unpublished lead tokens from four of the major token-producing areas of the Roman period – Spain, Rome, Ephesus, and Egypt. In Spain, where several distinct groups of lead coins or tokens were issued, a new specimen from the Imperial period will be assessed. In Rome, a new food-related type will suggest a possible function of *tesserae* in the *tabernae*, and others will illuminate the manufacturing process of lead tokens. The understudied Ephesian tokens will offer the most interesting and important pieces: unpublished mythological and agriculture types, as well as an exploration of the practice of mixed obverse and reverse dies. Lastly, a rediscovered Egyptian token will lend additional support for the interpretation of lead tokens from that region as currency. Taken together, these eleven tokens provide a hint towards the identity of the individuals who created and used the tokens and to the value these lead pieces would have held to them.

**Key-words:** Egypt, Ephesus, Spain, *tesserae*, tokens.

MARIA CRISTINA MOLINARI

### Three pewter *tesserae* from the temple of Hercules in *Alba Fucens*: new considerations on the use of official Imperial tokens

**Abstract:** The scope of this paper is to present the recent discovery of three Imperial *tesserae* in a sacred well inside the sanctuary of Hercules at *Alba Fucens*, along with other finds dedicated therein and related to the military sphere. This discovery represents extraordinary archaeological evidence revealing the function of *tesserae* with Imperial portraits, in connection with the presence of troops deployed by the emperor Claudius in the draining operations of the Fucino Lake.

**Key-words:** *Alba Fucens*, Fucino, Hercules, pewter, portrait, *tesserae*.

PHILIP KIERNAN

### Roman imitations as an unofficial token coinage: a comparative approach

**Abstract:** Roman unofficial imitation coins should be considered tokens in the sense that they functioned as an unofficial fiduciary currency and were (probably) made by non-government entities. The very existence of such token coinages is itself a sign of a highly monetised economy. An analogous shortage of small change and counterfeiting occurred in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century in Great Britain and North America, and provides a well-documented model to better understand how Roman imitations may have functioned. This model suggests that the acceptability of imitations, often intentionally made to look old and worn, may have depended on the size of individual transactions, that imitations were valued differently on a regional level, and that large hoards of imitations could, amongst other things, reflect a sort of wholesale trade in small change. Above all, for such imitations to function at all, coin users must intuitively accept the idea of a token or fiduciary monetary system.

**Key-words:** archaeology, coins, counterfeiting, economy, imitations, monetisation, numismatics, tokens.

PETER FRANZ MITTAG

### Roman medallions

**Abstract:** Roman medallions were produced in gold, silver and bronze during the entire Imperial period in the official mints. They did not primarily serve a monetary purpose and are therefore not tokens in the strict sense. In addition, during the first century A.D. medallions were usually made using regular coin dies. While bronze medallions were mainly produced in this phase, the

proportion of gold and silver medallions increased continuously until late antiquity. This may reflect changes in distribution occasions and recipients. The known sites suggest that the recipients were mainly members of the military and civilian administration. Some personal and/or unusual depictions also point to personal friends of the emperor. The increase in precious metal medallions seems to be accompanied by an increase in the number of military recipients, which could also explain the late antique finds in the Barbaricum. New Year, jubilees, victories, births and weddings seem to have been frequent occasions for their distribution. Many medallions found their way into private tombs, sometimes as pieces of grave furniture, in Rome quite often pressed into the plastering of catacombs.

**Key-words:** Barbaricum, bronze, coins, gift, medallions, Rome.

ARIANNA D'OTTONE RAMBACH

## Reconsidering the history of studies on Islamic tokens and jetons

**Abstract:** This contribution offers a review of the history of studies devoted to Islamic tokens and jetons and explores the terminology connected to them. Latin and Italian sources are reconsidered in order to reassess the contributions of the first scholars who dealt with glass discs and to throw new light on the different hypothesis made about these discs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through unpublished manuscript sources, especially letters.

**Key-words:** Adler, Assemani, coins, currency, glass, Islamic tokens.

ANDREA SACCOCCI

## The so-called 'Lombard *jettons*', a Medieval multi-tasking card?

**Abstract:** One of the most well-known series of Italian Medieval tokens is represented by one of the so-called 'Lombard *jettons*', dated between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Since the mid-nineteenth century, these artefacts have been recognised as bearing the monograms of the commercial Lombard ('Italian') companies and then interpreted as tokens, used by the merchants to make calculations on the abacus. It seems very probable that this was one of their functions, because entries like *jeton à compteur* or *Rechenpfennige* are attested since the late Middle Ages. However, some of the main features of these objects seem in contrast to such exclusive roles, as, for instance, their original name, *quarterolo* or *ferlino*, which means just 'one fourth'. This was a good name for a coin, not for a counter which needed only to be counted as 'one', or the extreme variability of their appearance, especially for the number of pellets or rosettes, which substitute the legend along the border. It is a very strange feature for objects which had only to be identical one to each other, in order to be recognised as belonging to a certain company. Thus, some authors have recently suggested, due to this variability, that these tokens had a much wider role than being



used for the abacus, especially as a token used in all the many occasions in which a commercial activity might ask for a recognition sign.

This paper will discuss and examine archaeological data and rare representations of a *taberna* painted by Gentile da Fabriano (1425) and Bicci di Lorenzo (1433), which seem to strongly confirm this last hypothesis.

**Key-words:** abacus, *ferlino*, *jettons*, Lombard, painting, Peruzzi, *quarterolo*.

FRANÇOIS DE CALLATAÏ

***Spintriae*: a rich and forgotten past historiography (16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries):  
why it matters for our present understanding**

**Abstract:** It comes as no surprise that the so-called *spintriae* have been thoroughly collected and discussed from the sixteenth century onwards. Recent literature is however mute about past scholarship. This paper aims first to gather what has been printed before 1800 and, second, to evaluate how it matters for our present understanding. Looking at the nearly thirty studies involving these *spintriae* – a rich panorama – it turns out that the benefits are twofold: a) factual evidence with the conjunction of four eighteenth-century authors mentioning the discovery of such tokens on the island of Capri, reports which have passed unnoticed; b) second, and more importantly, to confront our actual best guesses with past best guesses in a revealing mirror. In the eighteenth century scholars were deeply interested in the potential satiric nature of these tokens while studies from the last 150 years often favoured a sexual angle.

**Key-words:** games, historiography, numerals, positions, sex, *spintriae*, tokens.