

**Manuscript version: Published Version**

The version presented in WRAP is the published version (Version of Record).

**Persistent WRAP URL:**

<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/160612>

**How to cite:**

The repository item page linked to above, will contain details on accessing citation guidance from the publisher.

**Copyright and reuse:**

The Warwick Research Archive Portal (WRAP) makes this work of researchers of the University of Warwick available open access under the following conditions.

This article is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International and may be reused according to the conditions of the license. For more details see: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>



**Publisher's statement:**

Please refer to the repository item page, publisher's statement section, for further information.

For more information, please contact the WRAP Team at: [wrap@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:wrap@warwick.ac.uk)

## Chapter 3

# The Council of Five Hundred and *Symbola* in Classical Athens

M.E. Gkikaki

It is widely accepted that Classical Athens is to be credited with the introduction of tokens (gr. *symbola*) in public administration. Accumulative evidence shows that tokens were used in the Council, the Jury Courts and the Assembly. While the bronze lettered tokens have been convincingly assigned to the Jury Courts and the clay lettered tokens have been plausibly connected to the workings of the Assembly, there is a dearth of evidence when it comes to the Council.<sup>1</sup> The aim of the present paper is to gather all relevant literary and material sources to demonstrate that the Council was an issuer of tokens on a much broader scale than we may have originally thought, with the Council probably issuing – or at least supervising the issue of – all public tokens in Classical Athens. The premises lay within the functions and the jurisdiction of the Council. The earliest testimony of the Council as issuer of tokens, the Kleinias' Decree, dated probably to 425/4 BCE (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 34*), has passed almost unnoticed in this regard. Likewise, the lead tokens found in and around the Old Bouleuterion and the Tholos have up until now not been regarded as a coherent lot.

This paper arises from the Project 'Tokens and Their Cultural Biography in Athens from the Classical Age to the End of Antiquity', a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action, which has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 794080-2. The author wishes to thank Associate Professor Clare Rowan, PI of the ERC Project 'Token Communities in the Ancient Mediterranean' for her continuous support and Professor J.H. Kroll for comments on earlier drafts of this paper. A special debt of gratitude goes to Professor John McK. Camp II, director of the Excavation of the American School of Classical Studies at the Agora, Athens, as well as to Sylvie Dumont, Registrar of the American School Excavations at the Athenian Agora.

<sup>1</sup> Jury Courts: Boegehold 1960; Boegehold et al. 1995; Kroll in this volume; Assembly: Makrypodis 2019; Kroll in this volume; Makrypodis in this volume.

### Tokens in Athenian Foreign Policy of the Classical Period: Epigraphic Evidence

There exist two different decrees inscribed on stone which bear testimony of the connections between the Council and tokens. The first of the two is the famous and much discussed Kleinias Decree, of which a marble copy was set up on the Acropolis.<sup>2</sup> With this decree, special measures were announced to ensure that the tribute by the allies of the Delian League was paid and conveyed to Athens. *Symbola* are associated with two verbs. First, the infinitive ‘shall be made’ (π[οιέσα]σθαι, line 11), with the ‘Council’ as subject. Second, the verb ‘let the city seal [the writing tablet] with the token’ (σεμεναμένε, lines 15–16), meaning that the written records were sealed by the tokens.

[...] τὲ]μ β	5
ολὲν καὶ τὸς ἄρχ[οντας ἐν] τεῶ	
ι πόλεσι καὶ τὸς [ἐπισκό]πος ἐ	
πιμέλεσθαι ἡόπ[ος ἀν χσ]υλλέ	
γεται ἡο φόρος κ[ατὰ τὸ ἔ]τος ἡ	
ἐκαστον καὶ ἀπά[γεται] Ἀθένα	10
ζεχσύμβολα δὲ π[οιέσα]σθαι π	
ρὸς τὰς πόλες, ἡό[πος ἄ]μ μὲ ἔχσ	
εἰ ἀδικῆν τοῖς ἀ[πάγο]σι τὸμ φ	
όρον· γράφασσα δ[ὲ ἡε] πόλις ἐς	
γραμματεῖον τὸ[μ φό]ρον, ἡόντιν’ ἀν ἀποπέμπει, σεμε	15
ναμένε τοῖ συμβ[όλο]ι ἀποπεμπέτο Ἀθέναζε· τὸς δὲ ἀ	
πάγοντας ἀποδο[να]ι τὸ γραμματεῖον ἐν τεῖ βολεῖ ἀ	
ναγνῶνα ἡόταμ[πε]ρ τὸν φόρον ἀποδιδόσι· [...]	
 [[...] the	5
Council and the officials	
in the cities and the overseers	
shall manage that	
the tribute is collected each	
year and conveyed to Athens.	10
Tokens <b>shall be made</b> for the cities,	
so that it shall not be possible	
for those conveying the tribute to do	
wrong. Let the city write on	

<sup>2</sup> *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 34; Attic Inscriptions Online, [www.atticinscriptions.com/inscription/AIUK42/5](http://www.atticinscriptions.com/inscription/AIUK42/5) with references. Concerning the date of the Kleinias Decree: *SEG* 60, 78. Parts of the stone are kept at the Epigraphic Museum in Athens and parts of the stone are kept at the British Museum in London.

a writing tablet the tribute which it is sending, and seal it with the token and send it to Athens; and those conveying it shall hand over the writing tablet in the Council to be read when they hand over the tribute. [...]³

Σεμένανε derives from σημαίνω, -ομαι, which means seal, provide with a sign. The term σῆμα (*sema*) is of the same origin and signifies the sign, the token, the omen, the watchword.<sup>4</sup> The above makes *sema* almost a synonym to *symbolon*. Therefore, it is possible that sealing was a function intrinsic to *symbola* (tokens). It is stipulated that ‘*symbola* will be made for the allied cities’ and with these *symbola* the cities will have to seal the written record of the amount paid which will accompany the tribute to Athens. This written record will be opened on delivery, read publicly and compared with the tribute received. Although the text does not say so, it is only reasonable to think that the *symbola* on the written record (tablet) will have to be checked for their authenticity by means of comparison with *symbola* or other records kept in the possession of the Council. The reading of the tablet before the Council must have been accompanied by the verification of the seal.<sup>5</sup>

These *symbola* were made for authentication. The purpose was to keep the tablet from being tampered with by persons entrusted with bringing the tribute by ship to Athens and to identify the senders of the tribute. They served also as a guarantee that the tribute was paid in full and conveyed to Athens as assessed and as it had been agreed. They guaranteed that the pact/agreement between the two parties – Athens and the ally – was respected, just like in the case of commercial contracts between cities and foreigners, which were also known under the same term but should not be confused with the *symbola*.<sup>6</sup> Different sets of *symbola* should have been issued for each allied city.

For the Archaic and Classical periods it has already been assumed that tokens could be anything: any kind of object could serve as *symbola*.<sup>7</sup> In the case of the tokens which authenticated the allies’ tribute to Athens, the *symbola* functioned as seals, and could therefore – quite probably – have looked like seals. Because of this function, which probably extended to their materiality, the *symbola* of the Kleinias Decree enabled multiple uses.

<sup>3</sup> Translation by S. Lambert and P.J. Rhodes in Ancient Inscriptions online, [www.atticinscriptions.com/inscription/IGI3/34](http://www.atticinscriptions.com/inscription/IGI3/34).

<sup>4</sup> See <https://lsj.gr/wiki/σημαίνω> and <https://lsj.gr/wiki/σῆμα>. Cf. παράσημον (pl. παράσημα), the distinguishing mark, the emblem from <https://lsj.gr/wiki/παράσημον>.

<sup>5</sup> Hill and Meritt 1944, 11.

<sup>6</sup> Gauthier 1972; Finglass in this volume.

<sup>7</sup> Finglass in this volume. This is evidenced in particular because of the metaphorical use of the term *symbolon* as well as the literary testimonia which speak of dice and knucklebones.

The second part of the Kleinias Decree demonstrates that particular importance was laid on the exact assessment of the payment and revenue management in general. The text goes on to show that the procedure was considered serious and regulated in detail. Legal processes were envisaged for anyone who was suspected of abusing the procedure.<sup>8</sup> The Council was omnipotent in controlling the procedure and enforcing the measures for safeguarding it, so that it is only reasonable to believe that the ‘sealing tokens’ too were issued by the Council.

In the Neolithic period in the Near East, tokens also played an important role in protecting resources. Although they were not seals and they had plain forms of cones, spheres, discs, ovoids and cylinders – a total of twelve different shapes have been acknowledged – the clay tokens of the Neolithic Near East sealed clay envelopes, which in all likelihood represented debts, before being placed inside the envelopes. Denise Schmandt-Besserat suggests that the impressions on the sealed envelope allowed people to see quickly what was within. The Near Eastern tokens remained unchanged for several millennia between 9,000 and 3,500 BCE. They protected the content of the sealed envelopes and at the same time conveyed an array of information with different shapes and different sizes representing a variety of cereals and corresponding to different measures.<sup>9</sup>

The similarities of the Near Eastern tokens to the Athenian ones as described in the Kleinias Decree in terms of functions and materiality are striking and can potentially shed more light on the details of the procedure in Classical Athens. In both cases, tokens were used as seals in order to protect revenue or resources – cereals in the Near East, tribute in Athens. Furthermore, the analogy drawn with the Near Eastern tokens of the Neolithic period reveals that Athenian ‘sealing tokens’ were probably used for the purposes of accounting. The text of the Kleinias Decrees has been acknowledged as the earliest extant testimony for the financial responsibilities exercised by the Council.<sup>10</sup> Given the Council’s prominent role in collecting revenues and controlling public expenditure, and the extensive financial duties exercised in every aspect of the public affairs, it would not be too far-fetched to think of the ‘sealing tokens’ as a public instrument closely related to the workings of the Council. For how long the practice continued is not known. The picture is further complicated by the lack of findings in the archaeological record related to the ‘sealing tokens’.

<sup>8</sup> *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 34, ll. 19–76. Several lines are missing and the last approximately twenty lines are fragmentarily preserved.

<sup>9</sup> Wilding and Rowan 2017; Schmandt-Besserat 2019, 11–17.

<sup>10</sup> Rhodes 1972, 88–90 in connection to the tribute paid by the allies, and 88–134 for controlling revenue and expenditure in the army and the navy as well as religious life.

A generation later, in the honorific decree for Strato, the King of Sidon, *symbola* are employed again, this time for foreign affairs.<sup>11</sup> Lines 19–25 are of particular interest to the discussion of tokens.

And  
let the Council also have tokens made  
for the king of the Sidonians, so that 20  
the People of Athens may know if the  
king of the Sidonians sends anything when making  
a request of the city, and the king of  
the Sidonians may know whenever the people  
of Athens sends anybody to him 25

As in the Kleinias Decree, the same verb is employed here, and the subject is the Council (‘ποιησάσθω δὲ καὶ σύμβολα ἢ βολή’, lines 18–19). Split *symbola* are at issue here, with the Council keeping one half and the king of the Sidonians the other.<sup>12</sup> These served to immediately identify the courtier, and they ensured the validity of the messages exchanged. Tokens appear once more in connection with the Council. The tokens in question could in fact have served also as seals.

The only split tokens we possess from Classical Athens are a set of four tokens dated to the third quarter of the fifth century BCE. These tokens certainly formed part of a much larger set used in the allotment procedure of the offices in the Theseion. They were small tablets of fired clay, inscribed on both faces and cut along an irregular jigsaw line. They were inscribed on one side with the abbreviated name of each of the ten tribes, then they were cut in two along the middle of this inscribed name and they were turned with the blank side facing up. The upper half was inscribed with the demotic name and the bottom half with the magistracies, which were to be allotted. Tokens were marked proportionally with the names of the demes corresponding to the demes’ bouletic quota, which meant that the size (population size) of the deme defined the number of councillors (*bouleutai*).<sup>13</sup> The outcome of the allotment procedure was guaranteed by the irregular jigsaw cutting, which enabled unique matching. Unique should have been the matching also for the *symbola* exchanged between Athens and the King of Sidon: one set should have been kept by the Athenians and the other by the King of Sidon and the two sets could be compared for verification.

<sup>11</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 141. Attic Inscriptions online, [www.atticinscriptions.com/inscription/AIUK11/1](http://www.atticinscriptions.com/inscription/AIUK11/1), with references. The decree is dated to 394–386 BCE (AIO). The stone was found on the Acropolis and is now kept at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

<sup>12</sup> More on split *symbola*: Finglass in this volume.

<sup>13</sup> Kierstead in this volume.

It is almost certain that similar split clay tokens were employed for the allotment of all the magisterial boards and not only the *Poletai*, the board of ten magistrates, which are abbreviated on two of the preserved tokens as POL. Since the allotment to all magisterial boards was a procedure supervised by the Council, it is only reasonable to believe that allotment by split tokens was a procedure employed by the Council for all the other magisterial boards too.<sup>14</sup> Besides the *poletai*, there were the treasurers of Athena, the *astynomoi*, the *apodektai*, the *agoranomoi*, *metronomoi*, as well as the *hieropoioi epi ta ekthymata*, the *hieropoioi kat' eniauton* and the *athlothetai*, to mention only a few.<sup>15</sup> The *Athenaion Politeia* refers to magistracies of the later fifth century BCE, by which time the apportionment of some magistracies among the demes had been abandoned in favour of apportionment by tribes. As such, it is doubtful that allotment by demes and split *symbola* had lasted that late.<sup>16</sup>

Four halves of split tokens have been preserved, the three just mentioned and another example known from the nineteenth century excavations at the Dipylon, an exceptionally low record in total. This is significant because it testifies that particular care was taken to dispose of the allotment utensils in a secure way so that the procedure could not be manipulated. In the Agora, the three tokens were thrown in what has been characterised as a rubbish pit, while the fourth token was thrown into a well, a common place to dispose of small objects.<sup>17</sup> Another possibility is that more split clay tokens may be waiting to be found somewhere else in the city, such as the Theseion, a suggestion made by James Kierstead in this volume.

### Material Evidence: The Athenian Council House and Its Tokens

The Council met regularly at a building specially designated for that purpose, the Original or Old Bouleuterion (Council House), which stood in the south-west corner of the Agora and was erected around 460 BCE. The south-west corner of the Agora was of particular political and administrative importance in the Classical Age. The Original or Old Bouleuterion was in use until the late fifth century, when the Metroon (State Archive)

<sup>14</sup> Lang (1959, 87) comments that ‘The discovery of more tokens may prove or disprove it. Lower halves with abbreviated names of other boards comparable to the *poletai* would go far forward proving it’.

<sup>15</sup> *AthPol*, chapters 42, 47–51, 54, 56, 60; Rhodes 1972; Hansen 1980, 151–56.

<sup>16</sup> Kierstead in this volume.

<sup>17</sup> For the find-spot of the three *Poletai* tokens: Thompson 1951, 51–52. For the find-spot of the ΧΣΥΠΙΕΤΑΙΩΝ token: Koumanoudes 1879, 237 no. 6. A number of lead armour tokens were also found in well, as published by Kroll (1977b), as well as the *Xenokles Perithoides* clay tokens published by Kroll and Mitchel (1980).





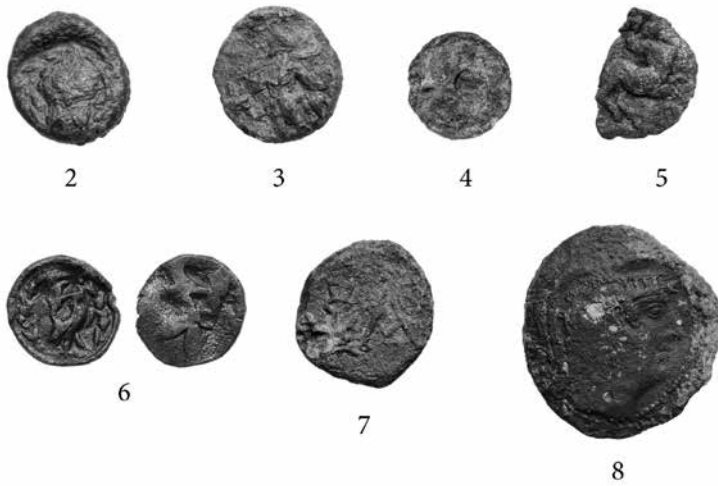


Figure 3.2 Uniface lead token, 15 mm. Agora, IL624. Tholos Trench D with material from the sixth and fifth centuries and occasionally as early as the third century. Layer III (Section Z #1251). Owl facing between two olive sprays. Crosby reports that the letters AΘE were barely visible on this specimen, but this was not confirmed by the author. Published: Crosby 1964, 100 (L144, pl. 24), <https://coins.warwick.ac.uk/token-types/id/agoral144>. Another specimen (Agora IL821) of this type was found in the area of the Odeion of Agrippa (section ΩΔ #88 with dumped material)

Figure 3.3 Uniface lead token, 12 mm. Agora, IL615. Tholos (H 11), Late Roman context. Herakles dragging with his left hand a beast left, club over right shoulder, Letter Epsilon (E) retrograde in field left, Letter Pi (Π) should be assumed to have existed in field right. Published: Crosby 1964, 96 (L90, pl. 22), <https://coins.warwick.ac.uk/token-types/id/agoral90>. Cf. Svoronos 1900, 335 (no. 192, pl. III,38) for a token of this type inscribed Π-E

Figure 3.4 Uniface lead token, 14 mm. Agora, IL1167. North-east of Tholos (H11), Panathenaic amphora, traces of letters to left (?) all in wreath (?). Published: Crosby 1964, 101 (L158, pl. 25)

Figure 3.5 Lead token, 13 mm. Agora, IL1163. North-east of Tholos (H11), Section Z #1753. Side A: a centaur galloping right with upraised right arm, side B: uncertain representation. Large chip, about one-third of whole missing. Published: Crosby 1964, 94 (L70, pl. 21), <https://coins.warwick.ac.uk/token-types/id/agoral70>

Figure 3.6 Lead token, 16 mm. Agora, IL1134. Section B #947, Great Drain to the south of the Tholos. Side A: owl right in wreath, side B: cicada, three incuse dots as countermarks. Published: Crosby 1964, 94 (L73, pl. 21); Gkikaki 2021, 71 (no. 5), <https://coins.warwick.ac.uk/token-types/id/agoral73>

Figure 3.7 Uniface lead token, 23 mm. Agora, IL54. Section Z #100, from context of third century CE in Great Drain (G13). Letter Alpha with ‘broken’ the horizontal bar and apices, winged *kerykeion* (caduceus) of the same size as the letter in the field left. Published: Crosby 1964, 87 (L7, pl. 19), <https://coins.warwick.ac.uk/token-types/id/agoral7>

Figure 3.8 Lead token, 33 mm. Agora, IL57. Found in front of the Metroon. Side A: helmeted Athena head right (of the *stephanephoric* coin type). Side B: gamma with circular countermark (diameter 12 mm) of a kernos. Published: Crosby 1964, 88 (L18, pl. 19), <https://coins.warwick.ac.uk/token-types/id/agoral18> (accessed 21 November 2021)

Figures 3.2–3.8: Ephorate of Antiquities of Athens City, Museum of the Ancient Agora, ASCSA: Agora Excavations. Photos: Giannis Tzitzas © Hellenic Ministry of Culture/Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development (H.O.C.RE.D.)

delineated by the architectural remains of the above-described public buildings.

More tokens were excavated in the sand at the bottom of the Agora’s Great Drain. The course of the drain delineated the east façades of the Apollon Patroos Temple and the Metroon (i.e. the Old Bouleterion). It also delineated the eastern and southern sides of the Tholos, before turning to the south-west, where it was crossed by a bridge. It then passed along the south-eastern side of a rectangular building, the ‘Poros Building’, which has been interpreted as the State Prison.

Among the architectural remains of these buildings and the wider area of the south-west corner of the Classical Agora, a particularly heavy concentration of lead tokens has been excavated, for many of which it is only reasonable to believe that they were in some way associated with the functions of the Council of Five Hundred.

The token types (Figures 3.1–3.8) from the Council have a peculiar iconography which can be identified as state iconography. They bear distinctive legends (Δ-H and Π-E) and in total they are very different from all other tokens found in the rest of the Agora Square. The only ‘tribol token’ of the Athenian Agora comes from the area of the Council House. These tokens have several typological features in common. They are lead,

coin-shaped and – with the exception of **Figure 3.8** – they can be dated to the fourth century BCE (at the earliest). Furthermore, they all bear designs which can be characterised as official state designs: the owl, the ‘tribol-type and the Panathenaic amphora. The two lead lettered tokens (**Figures 3.7 and 3.8**) likewise relate to state functions.

Let us set aside for a moment the hypothesis put forward by Margaret Crosby that the lead lettered tokens can be considered as the Hellenistic successors of the fourth century BCE bronze lettered tokens, and that they assigned the jurors of the Hellenistic period to their seats in the courtroom by analogy of their bronze forerunners.<sup>19</sup> Alan L. Boegehold had reached the conclusion for the use of the bronze lettered tokens in the courts based not only on the finds at the Athenian Agora, but also on the literary testimony of the atthidographer Philochoros, who preserved the information that the members of the Council began sitting by letter in 410/9 BCE.<sup>20</sup> This will not be the first instance that an equipment (objects) category can be attributed to the Jury Courts as well as to the Council. The other category is the bronze balls, some of them uninscribed and others inscribed with letters, which were used in the allotment machines (*kleroteria*).<sup>21</sup> Of the nine bronze balls excavated in the Athenian Agora by the time Boegehold’s book was published (1995), six were found in the immediate vicinity of the Tholos and just two in the Square Peristyle, acknowledged as a fourth-century court, which stood on the place of the later Stoa of Attalos.<sup>22</sup>

The passage of the fourth century BCE atthidographer Philochoros, referred to above, attests that ‘the Council was seated for the first time by letter in the year of the Eponymous Archon Glaukippos 410/9 BCE and that to the author’s day councillors continued to swear that they would sit in the letter to which they are allotted’.<sup>23</sup> The text reads that the councillors began ‘also’ to sit by letter, implying probably that the same procedure was applied elsewhere. Because the passage is just a fragment of a larger text it is not possible to say if the seating of the jurors (which is implied by the

<sup>19</sup> Crosby 1964, 86. Crosby comments at the beginning of catalogue Section I.

<sup>20</sup> Boegehold et al. 1995, 71 and 155–56 source no. 73.

<sup>21</sup> Boegehold et al. 1995, 65–66.

<sup>22</sup> Boegehold et al. 1995, 66 cat. nos. BB2–BB7 found in the Tholos. Note also the find-spot of terracotta ball: Boegehold et al. 1995 cat. no. CB1. Boegehold et al. 1995, 66 cat. no. BB8 in the Ballot Deposit (a hoard of objects, all related to the jurors’ courts) and Boegehold et al. 1995, 66 cat. no. BB9, very near the north-west corner of the Square Peristyle (building of the early fourth century BCE, which housed the jurors’ courts). Kroll (in this volume) repudiates the use of lettered tokens for the seating of the members of the Council.

<sup>23</sup> *FGrHist* 328 (Philochoros) F 140; Boegehold et al 1995, 65 and 155–56 source no. 73: <φησι γάρ Φιλόχορος ἐπὶ Γλαυκίππου «καὶ ἡ βουλή κατὰ γράμμα τότε πρῶτον ἐκαθέζετο· καὶ ἔτι νῦν ὁμῶσιν ἀπ’ ἐκείνου καθεδεῖσθαι ἐν τῷ γράμματι οἱ ἄν λάωσιν.»>

Figure 3.9 Lead token, Athens, Museum of the Ancient Agora, IL1463 31 mm. Side A: helmeted Athena head right (dull impression). Side B: letter A with curved diagonal bars, countermarked with winged *kerykeion* (caduceus) in the field left. Published: Crosby 1964, 88 (L17, pl. 19), <https://coins.warwick.ac.uk/token-specimens/id/agorail1463>. Ephorate of Antiquities of Athens City, Museum of the Ancient Agora, ASCSA: Agora Excavations. Photos: M.E. Gkikaki (side A) and Giannis Tzitzas (side B) © Hellenic Ministry of Culture/Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development (H.O.C.R.E.D)



‘also’) refers to arrangement older than the year of the Archon Glaukippus and that the jurors sat by letter already before the councillors, or if it refers to arrangements of the fourth century BCE Jury Courts.

It is generally understood that it was the oligarchic coup of 411 BCE and the restoration of democracy soon afterwards that prompted the Athenians to take measures to protect their democratic procedures. The allotment of the councillors to seating areas by letters would have discouraged the creation of factions and the seating together of like-minded members who could conspire and shout down the speaker and therefore manipulate the outcome of the debate.<sup>24</sup>

The architectural remains suggest that in the New Bouleuterion the councillors sat on wooden benches. Only in the late fourth or the early third century was a stone theatre-like structure installed with twelve rows which could accommodate more than five hundred, and which presumably also included a number of onlookers.<sup>25</sup> Wooden benches are also attested for the Assembly<sup>26</sup> and the recently discovered lot of clay lettered tokens showed that the participants in the Assembly sat by letter.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the wooden benches were probably the kind of equipment ‘compatible’ with seating by letters.

Of the two lettered tokens, the one with the caduceus (**Figure 3.7**) should probably date to the second century BCE, when many letter cutters executed serifs and broken-bar Alphas. In my opinion, this Hellenistic lead lettered token must be examined together with another lead lettered

<sup>24</sup> Rhodes 1972, 192; Ostwald 1986, 321–22, 418–19; Tordoff 2017, 166–67 (n. 39).

<sup>25</sup> Thompson and Wycherley 1972, 30–34; Travlos 1980, 191 s.v. Bouleuterion.

<sup>26</sup> Aristophanes, *Ekklesiazousai* ll. 21, 86–87; Hansen 1976, 131.

<sup>27</sup> Makrypodis 2019; Kroll in this volume; Makrypodis in this volume.

token, this time countermarked with a caduceus. The token bears a dull impression of Athena's head left on side A, which fills the entire metal round. It was excavated on the north slope of the Areopagus (**Figure 3.9**).<sup>28</sup> Hellenistic lead lettered tokens bear often added symbols in the field, or they are countermarked by the same symbols. The symbols are consistent: caduceus,<sup>29</sup> kernos,<sup>30</sup> bunch of grapes,<sup>31</sup> ear of wheat<sup>32</sup> and an owl seating on a panathenaic amphora's belly.<sup>33</sup> The custom of adding a symbol should have begun already with the bronze jurors' tokens.<sup>34</sup> The meaning and the function of these 'added symbols' cannot be defined with any certainty. They could denote 'time stamps' for different sessions. But given the fact that the Council met very often – almost every day – the 'time stamps' seem highly improbable. It would be interesting to think that the caduceus was the typical design for the lettered tokens of the Council, given the symbolism of the design and its connections to the *probouleutic* role the Council had in preparing the legislative Agenda to be discussed in the Assembly. Another possibility is that the designs refer to the magistrate or the councillor who distributed the tokens, i.e. it was his personal identity badge. This latter possibility has a lot to recommend it. Token types of the Roman Imperial period are inscribed ΓΡΑ ΒΟΥ (= ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΩΣ ΤΗΣ ΒΟΥΛΗΣ, meaning 'Of the secretary of the Council'), giving particular prominence to one of the members of the 'prytany' contingency.<sup>35</sup>

The other token stamped with a letter bears the head of Athena on the other side, of a style very similar to the *stephanephoric* coinage of the city (**Figure 3.8**). This is a secure anchor point in order to date the type to the second century BCE. There has been a continuous dialogue between coin types and token types in Athens beginning with the bronze jurors' tokens of the fourth century BCE. William Bubelis argues that particular care was taken to distinguish the types and that in no occasion was a coin die used

<sup>28</sup> Crosby 1964, 88 L17 (IL1463). The date results from the style of head on the other face of the token, which closely copies the style of the *stephanephoric* coinage. By coincidence, it bears also the letter Alpha.

<sup>29</sup> Svoronos 1900, 324 (no. 37, pl. I,22, pl. I,31) and 325 (no. 69, pl. I,49).

<sup>30</sup> Crosby 1964, 87 L5, pl. 19 and 88 L18, pl. 19 (= Figure 3.8 in this paper), with countermark in the form of kernos.

<sup>31</sup> Svoronos 1900, 325 (no. 70, pl. I,50).

<sup>32</sup> Svoronos 1900, 325 (no. 66, pl. I,45).

<sup>33</sup> Svoronos 1900, 323 (no. 19, pl. I,10).

<sup>34</sup> Svoronos 1898, 65/20 (nos. 109–10, pl. ΣΤ' 1–2 with Kernos); 55/19 (nos. 107–08, pl. ΣΤ' 3–4 with owl); 56–57/20–21 (nos. 112–18, pl. ΣΤ' 5–10 with Bacchos ring); Boegehold et al. 1995, 76 (T36, pl. 12, Agora B1160) and Boegehold et al. 1995, 76 (T37, pl. 12, Agora B1161 with kernos); Boegehold et al. 1995, 76 (T38, pl. 12 with owl).

<sup>35</sup> More on these tokens: Gkikaki (forthcoming).

for tokens.<sup>36</sup> This may apply for the fourth century BCE, but the *stephane-phoric* Athena Heads on the token of **Figure 3.8** expresses the need to lend authority to the procedure in which these tokens were used by means of their iconographic relevance to coinage.

Next to the above-mentioned lead lettered tokens, the type inscribed BOAH on one side and bearing a letter on the other can unequivocally be attributed to the seating arrangements of the Council and at the same time proves that the Council made use of lead lettered tokens at least for a period of time, although when exactly remains impossible to determine.<sup>37</sup> The writing BOAH – the employment of O instead of OY – suggests an early date, perhaps still in the late fifth or the early fourth century BCE.<sup>38</sup>

### Tokens for the Councillors' Pay

Two other tokens in the Tholos (**Figures 3.2 and 3.6**) bear the all-too-famous image of the Athenian owl. The type of the facing owl between two olive sprays 'borrows' the so-called triobol type of the fourth century BCE silver triobols.<sup>39</sup> Three obols was the jurors' pay, as introduced in 425 BCE, and this remained the same during the fourth century BCE.<sup>40</sup> The occurrence of tokens with the 'triobol type' – first spotted in collections – along with the testimony preserved in the *Athenaion Politeia* that the jurors received a token bearing the letter Gamma (Γ), a sign equivalent to the number 3, has led to the assumption that the triobol tokens were the tokens that were exchanged for jury service.<sup>41</sup>

The recovery of one such token in the Tholos trench and another one in the Great Drain to the south of the Tholos proves particularly puzzling. Were these voucher tokens intended for the councillors' pay? Attendance to the Council's meeting was compulsory and the contingent of the five hundred councillors remained unaltered for the entire councillor's year. Therefore, the use of pay tokens seems to have been redundant.

But if pay tokens were indeed used for safeguarding the attendance, would they have been the ones of the 'triobol type'? This is only possible if the design on the token was not necessarily linked to its function or if it was not so important as it was on a coin. When placed on tokens, the

<sup>36</sup> Note how much more distinct the Athena heads are on the bronze jurors' tokens (Boegehold et al. 1995) and the contemporary Athenian coinage (Flament 2007, 121–32).

<sup>37</sup> Engel 1884, 5 (no. 1, pl. I); Svoronos 1900, 333 (no. 172, pl. III,15); Kroll in this volume Figure 6.5.

<sup>38</sup> Kroll in this volume.

<sup>39</sup> Kroll 1993, 20–21 (no. 19); 25–26; 35–37 and 39 (nos. 35–37).

<sup>40</sup> *AthPol* 68.2; Loomis 1998, 15–16 and 26.

<sup>41</sup> Kroll in this volume.

‘triobol type’ probably ‘lost’ its original significance. The ‘triobol type’ would have designated money, but not the value of three obols or the exchange with three obols. Only future research can prove the validity of this assumption because the fact remains that the councillors’ daily pay amounted to five obols, and that those serving as *prytaneis* received only an additional one obol daily (ration money, εἰς σίτησιν ὀβολός).<sup>42</sup> Although these two arguments – the compulsory attendance and the daily stipend of five/six obols – seem to dissociate the triobol tokens from the Council, their find-spot still needs further assessment.

### Tokens and Civic Administration

Despite all the known difficulties in the interpretation of tokens and the questions left open regarding their functions and roles, it can nevertheless be established that tokens were used in the city’s administration and in the three main Athenian institutions: the Council, the Assembly and the Jury Courts.

The Council had complex administrative duties which covered broad areas of Athenian public life: finance, the army and navy, religion. The Council worked together with several boards, which were either manned by the councillors themselves or were chosen by the councillors. One way or another, the Council stood higher in the hierarchy and kept a permanent eye on them, and through them exercised control over Athenian public life. Tokens may have been issued and distributed either by the Council directly or by the boards. Tokens for the Assembly are in fact closely related to the Council. For the Assembly tokens there exists substantial literary testimonia and a lot of clay lettered tokens have recently been assigned to the Assembly with persuasive arguments.<sup>43</sup> The Assembly tokens were issued and distributed by one such a board: the Convenors of the People (*syllogeis tou demou*).<sup>44</sup> They were a committee of thirty, three from each tribe, who were selected among the year’s councillors and administered the distribution of Assembly tokens. Valuable testimony of that is provided by the decree of the Aigeis tribe praising the three tribal representatives who served as Convenors of the People in 341/0 BCE.<sup>45</sup>

Tokens for the Assembly assigned participants to seating areas. They ensured that the citizens who arrived at the entrances of the Assembly and were checked by tribes took random seats at the auditorium, so that the

<sup>42</sup> Thucydides, *Historiae* 8.69.4; *AthPol* 62.2; Rhodes 1981, 691–92; Loomis 1998, 26.

<sup>43</sup> Makrypodi 2019, 34; Makrypodi in this volume; Kroll in this volume.

<sup>44</sup> Hansen 1991, 141–42.

<sup>45</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1749 = *IG II<sup>3</sup>* 4, 76, ll. 78–80, tribal decree carved on a prytanic dedication; translation available on AIO, [www.atticinscriptions.com/inscription/IGII2/1749](http://www.atticinscriptions.com/inscription/IGII2/1749). Cf. Kroll in this volume; Russo in this volume.

building of factions was impossible.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, there are two more aspects which deserve particular mention regarding the role of tokens as state equipment in the workings of the Assembly. First, the tokens' role was to make sure that the necessary quorum was reached.<sup>47</sup> By distributing a prearranged number of six thousand lettered tokens it should have been possible to count, at a glance, the number of participants who had already entered and taken seats in the auditorium. The second point, which is related to the first, is that the distribution of tokens regulated the expenditure. This was of particular significance because the Assembly pay constituted one of the major items of the budget for the Athenian state: it amounted to fifty talents per year.<sup>48</sup> Only the first six thousand receivers of tokens would have received the daily stipend, to the disappointment of late comers.<sup>49</sup> In the opposite case, distribution of more than six thousand tokens would cause unnecessary increases in expenditure; keeping the number under control would have saved the state avoidable expense. Therefore, tokens played an important role in the logistics of the Assembly meetings and the related bookkeeping.<sup>50</sup> The importance of this is suggested by the critical turn that events took in 348 BCE, when financial difficulties and a shortage of money prevented the Jury Courts from meeting.<sup>51</sup>

With its executive committee – the fifty *prytaneis* – the Council would have the necessary authority for issuing tokens. The keys of the temple treasuries, where in essence the state money was kept, along with the state/public seal, were under the Council's jurisdiction.<sup>52</sup> These were kept in the Tholos and were the responsibility of the *epistates*, who was picked by lot from among the *prytaneis* and had, in effect, supremacy over the whole state for a whole day.<sup>53</sup> There is evidence that there was not just one public seal, but the various boards of magistrates made use of their own seal.<sup>54</sup> It is no surprise that tokens found in and around the building

<sup>46</sup> Cf. the very informative analysis by Kroll in this volume.

<sup>47</sup> Assembly pay was introduced in order to motivate attendance: *AthPol* 41.3; Gauthier 1993, 232–50; Hansen 1991, 150.

<sup>48</sup> Hansen 1976, 133. Cf. Burke (1985, 253–55) and Rhodes (2013, 222–23) for measures of comparison.

<sup>49</sup> Aristophanes, *Ekklesiazousai* ll. 289–98 and 381–94.

<sup>50</sup> Argued in detail by Gkikaki (forthcoming).

<sup>51</sup> Demosthenes, *Against Boeotus I* 17. For the financial crisis of the fourth century BCE, the inflation and the impact on wages, Gallo (1987, 19–63) paints a colourful picture.

<sup>52</sup> For the dating of the state/public seal: Lewis 1955, 32–34; Olson 1996, 253–54.

<sup>53</sup> *AthPol* 44.1; Rhodes 1981, 531–32.

<sup>54</sup> Particularly revealing is the case of the token stamped with the same seal of seated Dionysos as the sealing found on two pots – probably measures and two lead weights (Crosby 1964, 95 L86, pl. 22, with references).





Figure 3.10 Lead uniface token, 15 mm, Agora IL647, this object depicted here (pocket H 12: 19). Panathenaic amphora, inscribed: Δ–Η in field lower left and lower right respectively, all enclosed in ivy wreath. Cf. the Lead uniface token, 14 mm, from a different die than Agora IL697 (filling H 12: 1). Published: Crosby 1964, 102 (L161, pl. 25), <https://coins.warwick.ac.uk/token-specimens/id/agorail647>

Figure 3.11 Lead uniface token, 11 mm, Agora IL646 (pocket H 12: 19). Lidded kernos on ground line with wheat through each handle. Published Crosby 1964, 106 (L204, pl. 26), <https://coins.warwick.ac.uk/token-specimens/id/agorail646>

Figure 3.12 Lead uniface token, 13 mm Agora IL671 (H 12: 19). Palmette. Published: Crosby 1964, 106 (L210, pl. 27), <https://coins.warwick.ac.uk/token-specimens/id/agorail671>

Figure 3.13 Lead uniface token, 13 mm, Agora IL648 (H 12: 19). Rosette. Published: Crosby 1964, 107 (L219, pl. 27), <https://coins.warwick.ac.uk/token-specimens/id/agorail648>

Figure 3.14. Lead uniface token, 17 mm, Agora IL1123 (H 12: 1). Ship prow left. Published: Crosby 1964, 107–08 (L224, pl. 27)

Figure 3.15 Lead uniface token, 16 mm, Agora IL1122 (H 12: 1). Thorax. Published: Crosby 1964, 108 (L227c, pl. 27)

Figures 3.10–3.15: Ephorate of Antiquities of Athens City, Ancient Agora, ASCSA: Agora Excavations. Photos: Giannis Tzitzas © Hellenic Ministry of Culture/Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development (H.O.C.R.E.D.)

complex related to the Council bear official state designs, i.e. the owl framed by two olive sprays in the so-called ‘triobol type’ (Figures 3.2 and 3.6a), the cicada (Figure 3.6b), the Panathenaic amphora inscribed Δ-H (Figure 3.10), the *kernos* (Figure 3.11) – they bear the designs of the public seals. The administering of the state seal is closely related to the functioning not only of the Council but also of the Metroon, the State Archive, which was established in the late fifth century BCE in the building complex of the Old Bouleuterion.<sup>55</sup> The state seal, the utensil for the Council’s administrative duties, inevitably connects to the sealing tokens of the Kleinias Decree and may potentially reveal more on the role and the functions of these tokens. This should remain speculative for the time being because of lack of concrete evidence.

To the catalogue compiled above, we may add tokens coming from two lots of the Great Drain, in the immediate vicinity of the Tholos and for which we have good reason to believe that they constitute refuse from the nearby complex of civic buildings – the Tholos, the New Bouleuterion and the State Archive (Metroon). That the two lots in fact belong together is proved by the type Crosby L161 (Figure 3.11), which was found in both the pocket H 12: 19 in the floor of the Great Drain (third to second century BCE context) and the filling H 12: 1 (context dated to the last quarter of the second century BCE).

The token with the amphora framed by the letters Δ-H left and right (Figure 3.10) has a lot to recommend it as a public token. The Panathenaic amphora has long been acknowledged as an Athenian state design found on a variety of media from early times and used on coinage as well as weights and measures.<sup>56</sup> In my opinion, the inscription Δ-H is self-evident. It refers to *Demosion* (ΔΗΜΟΣΙΟΝ, i.e. public), a well-attested term, and known to be combined with state designs, such as the owl. It is found on a variety of media such as ballots, roof-tiles, the dining equipment for the *prytaneis*, as well as weights and measures kept in the Tholos.<sup>57</sup> According to the most recent analysis on the subject, the meaning of the inscription is that the object is destined for use by the people and it is meant to distinguish this stamp from others, which are not state stamps.<sup>58</sup> Although the token type in question is the only case of a type inscribed Δ-H which has been excavated in the Agora, more are known from other contexts. Svoronos records five different types which bear the abbreviation Δ-H.<sup>59</sup> Svoronos thinks that

<sup>55</sup> Boegehold 1972, 23–30.

<sup>56</sup> Lang 1964, 5–8; Kroll 1993, 62 no. 76; Killen 2017, 96–97.

<sup>57</sup> Lang 1964, 14, 15 Figure 6 (dining equipment), 31, 32 Figure 35 (lead weight), 36 (official liquid measure), 37 (official dry measure); Killen 2017, 139–40 for an overview.

<sup>58</sup> Killen 2017, 139–40.

<sup>59</sup> Svoronos 1900, 339–40 nos. 259–63.

these refer to Demeter, but the abbreviation of personal names and gods' names would be quite unusual. All five types bear designs which refer to grain and therefore their association to public grain distributions seems very probable.<sup>60</sup> In that case, they stand in juxtaposition to similar types, some of them uninscribed but others with inscriptions, which have not been adequately explained and may refer to grain distributions of private initiative.<sup>61</sup>

The *kernos* is likewise an official design of the Athenian state (Figure 3.11).<sup>62</sup> It is a vase of biconical shape, often lidded. Because of its connection to Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries, which were a source of pride for the Athenians, the *kernos* should have been a very prestigious symbol. It is found on coins, on the bronze jurors' tokens, and of course on lead tokens.<sup>63</sup> The variety of its representation in the last case is remarkable.<sup>64</sup> But a type almost identical to the *kernos* token of the Tholos and probably from the same die has been excavated on the Pnyx from a context of the fourth century, which proves that the Tholos specimen could date much earlier than the context it was excavated in.<sup>65</sup> In fact it comes from the construction fill of Pnyx III, where reconstruction began ca. 346–342 BCE, which proves that the *kernos* token type is contemporary, if not earlier, to the earliest occurrence on Athenian coinage.<sup>66</sup>

The token with the palmette (Figure 3.12) and the token with the rosette (Figure 3.13) bear simple, universal designs, which could stand for every possible use or could represent an institution, a commission, a civic body or even a magistracy. They are enigmatic, despite their simplicity. As a result of these features they are both identified as typical designs of the early and middle Hellenistic period. These designs have not been recorded accompanied

<sup>60</sup> Svoronos 1900, 339 no. 259–60 Demeter head: ear of Grain inscribed Δ-H no. 261 Demeter head: horn of plenty inscribed Δ-H and no. 262 (uniface) plough inscribed Δ-H and 340 no. 263 with ant walking on two feet and carrying an agricultural tool, in the field *kernos*.

<sup>61</sup> Crosby 1964 (90–92 L43–L56, pl. 20) publishes tokens for grain distribution inscribed EP and EPMI.

<sup>62</sup> Killen 2017, 181–82.

<sup>63</sup> Kroll 1993, 30 n. 34 with *kernos* as an added symbol on one of the fifteen emission of the ELEUSI – coinage (ca. 350s – early or mid-330s BCE and Kroll 1993, 47 no. 61 third century BCE, undated) for the earliest occurrence of the *kernos* as a coin type. *Kernos* on the bronze jurors' tokens: Svoronos 1898, 56/20 no. 111, with reference (*Kernos* is the main type on side A) and Boegehold et al. 1995, 76 (T37, pl. 12). *Kernos* countermark on lead lettered token: Crosby 1964, 87 (L5, pl. 19) and *kernos* on lead tokens: Crosby 1964, 105–06 (L203–L205, pl. 26), with references.

<sup>64</sup> Gkikaki 2020, 107.

<sup>65</sup> Davidson and Thompson 1943, 106 (no. 8 (M69) with Figure on p. 107).

<sup>66</sup> Refer to n. 62, above.

by an inscription, and therefore every interpretation remains speculative to a degree. For all the significance it may have, it should be mentioned that the only lead token which has been excavated in Olynthos is a lead token with a palmette on one side and a spray with ivy leaves in incuse on the other.<sup>67</sup> It is more than probable that this token should have travelled from Athens. It can only remain speculative if the token travelled in fulfilment of some official function or the circumstances are purely coincidental.<sup>68</sup>

Another token from the filling H 12: 1 bears a ship's prow (**Figure 3.14**). Likewise, tokens with a ship or ship's prow are not accompanied by inscriptions, a fact which renders their interpretation particularly challenging.<sup>69</sup> This is compounded by the fact that Classical Athens was notorious for its naval power and that the ship crews of that time were pro-democratic.<sup>70</sup> In the Hellenistic period the city's naval power had diminished, but there was inherent prestige in these representations which should have been particularly appealing to the entire population.<sup>71</sup> It would not be too far off similarly to consider a public function for this token type.

In this category of public token, the type with the corselet is also perfectly at home (**Figure 3.15**). All we know of about tokens depicting pieces of armour point to the direction of tokens distributed centrally and fulfilling some public purpose.<sup>72</sup>

If an alternative view of the tokens with the Panathenaic amphora and the *kernos* should be offered, then it is obvious that they both refer to festivals, and specifically those festivals in which the Council is well known to have played an important role. Both the Panathenaea and the Eleusinian Mysteries were state cults and were administered by the Council. The distribution of festival tokens would have meant the distribution of portions after the sacrifices, procedures which are attested epigraphically, and were managed by the boards of *hieropoioi*.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Robinson 1941, 505 no. 2574, mentioned by Crosby (1964, 107 under L212).

<sup>68</sup> I wish to thank the archaeologist Dimitra Aktsele of the Ephorate of Chalkidike and Aghio Oros (*per litteras* 19 January 2022) for asserting that no more tokens have been excavated in Olynthos. That tokens could have travelled: see Geelmuyden Bulgurlu and Hazinedar Coşkun in this volume.

<sup>69</sup> More Hellenistic lead tokens with representations of ships: Crosby 1964, 93 L69, 107–08 L224. Cf. Crosby 1964, 128 C15, pl. 32 for clay tokens with a person seated on the forecastle of a ship's prow.

<sup>70</sup> Potts 2008, 87–92 and 95–103.

<sup>71</sup> Loraux 1986, 87–88 on the prestige derived from the (lost) naval supremacy of Athens.

<sup>72</sup> Kroll 1977b; Schäfer 2019.

<sup>73</sup> Rhodes 1972, 128–34. More on tokens for festivals in Hellenistic Athens: Gkikaki 2021.

The connections of the multiple token types presented above to the Boule cannot be properly justified without explaining that the Council was the principal administrator of the city's finances. The Council managed the *Doiekeisis*, the general fund in the financial administration of the Athenian *polis*. It provided the daily stipends for attendance in the Council and the jurors' courts and, at the same time – assisted by the Board of *Apodektai* (the receivers) – it received revenues from tribute collection (in the fifth century, at least) and from tax contracts and mine leasing later.<sup>74</sup> In the middle of the fourth century BCE, an important change in the city's financial administration took place: the Theoric Fund was created or (at least) reformed. This fund received all surplus revenue, until Demosthenes redirected surpluses to the Military Fund in 339/8 BCE. It was managed by a board, '*hoi epi to theorikon*', one of the many boards who worked closely with the Assembly and administered considerable sums of money. The Theoric fund is better known for the distribution of *theorika*, which enabled citizens to attend festivals, but literary sources credit the Theōric fund with all sorts of public works.<sup>75</sup> Scholarship has always considered the *theorika* to be distributions in cash, but tokens inscribed ΠΕ or ΠΕΝ, just as [Figure 3.3] presented above, provide probably valuable evidence that the distribution involved tokens.<sup>76</sup> The abbreviation may stand for *pentadrachmia*, the term for the distributions at the Great Dionysia, yet another major and costly festival which was administered by the Council.<sup>77</sup>

To sum up, the Council employed tokens in order to carry out a certain amount of day to day business. The argumentation developed in this chapter on the sealing tokens attested in the Kleinias Decree, as well as the functions of the tokens for the Assembly meetings, show that tokens deserve a mention in Athenian fiscal policy of the Classical period. Although it is not possible to determine the function of each individual token, the cataloguing of the tokens excavated in and around the Council house has nevertheless demonstrated that the logistics as well as the accounts associated with Athenian public finance (public revenue and public expenditure) were administered by official tokens handled by the Boule.

<sup>74</sup> Rhodes 2013, 203–31 with references; Ober 2015, 492–522.

<sup>75</sup> Rhodes 1972, 104–07 and 235–40; Stroud 1998, 82.

<sup>76</sup> Gkikaki 2021, 60–62.

<sup>77</sup> Pentadrachmia: Hyperides, *Against Demosthenes*, 26; Dinarchus, *Against Demosthenes* 56; Valmin 1965, 191–92; Ste. Croix 1964, 191; Wilson 2008, 95 (nos. 34, 38). More tokens inscribed ΠΕ or ΠΕΝ: Svoronos 1900, 334–36 (nos. 181–228, pl. III, 30–52 and IV, 1–9).