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ANCIENT TOKENS FROM THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF SYRACUSE¹

ABSTRACT: Called symbola by the Greeks and tesserae by the Romans, ancient tokens have played an essential role in daily life as small ‘monetiform’ objects used to get access to festivals, temples, private buildings (e.g. baths) and banquets. Produced and distributed as a means to obtain special rights ‘in exchange,’ tokens have been massively discovered within archaeological excavations or traced anew in world-wide museum collections arousing interest amongst scholars.

Sicily represents a remarkable case study to understand how token production and distribution occurred in small ancient communities. Starting from the final results of the recent ERC project Token Communities in the Ancient Mediterranean project (University of Warwick, 2016-21), my contribution aims to present a novel set of clay tokens currently preserved at the Paolo Orsi Archaeological Museum in Syracuse. First, the article outlines the token production in Sicily benefitting from available data recently

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collected. Second, it assesses the Syracuse's tokens mostly focusing on their findspot area, iconography and recurring types (in particular, Hermes and the ox). The article also includes a detailed catalogue of finds reporting all measurements and data.

KEYWORDS: clay; collecting; giraffes; Hermes; ox; Sicily; Syracuse Museum; tokens

Introduction

It is astonishing to think that human beings have been using tokens since pre-historic times when small pieces of clay objects were produced to count or to exchange objects *before* the invention of coins (Wilding *et al.* 2017, 1-14; Schmandt-Besserat 2019, 11-18). Generally speaking, nowadays, a token may be defined as a small object (commonly circular or monetiform) that is made and used as a substitute for currency or alternatively to obtain an exchanging good or even a right. We do not have a single definition of the word 'token' because it really depends on its function and context in which the object is produced and used (Crisà *et al.* 2019, 2-3). Second, Bitcoin, the most advanced evolution of tokens, is a virtual currency that is purchased for investment purposes or to buy merchandise online (Maurer 2019, 215-230). Both examples prove how tokens are still an effective means to obtain something in exchange or replace currency.²

The use of tokens is well-testified in the Classical world. The Greeks produced many *symbola*, especially in the Hellenistic period. Athens was the most well-known area of production (Gkikaki 2019, 127-144; Gkikaki 2021, 57-76). Meanwhile, the Romans made bronze, clay, bone, and ivory *tesserae* to access thermal baths (Pedroni 1997, 203-210), festivals, or banquets. For instance, substantial specimens showing a variety of deities as well as ritual and religious symbols were produced in Palmyra and called banqueting *tesserae* by scholars (Ingholt *et al.* 1955; Comte Du Mesnil du Buisson 1962; Raja 2015, 165-186; Crisà 2018, 803-810; Raja 2020, 243-255). Sometimes tokens represented/sponsored a company devoted to commerce or replaced currency in the micro-economy of a small community. Archaeologists have discovered and classified substantial sets of *tesserae* in Rome and Ostia, which were significant production and distribution sites (especially during the Imperial period) (Stannard 2015, 147-154; Rowan 2023). The monumental work *Tesserarum urbis Romae et suburbium plumbearum sylloge* (Rostovtzeff 1903) includes a considerable set of Ro-

² For a current definition of 'token' see: The Collins Dictionary. S.v. Token. Retrieved from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/token> (status as of Febr. 6th, 2024).

man *tesserae*. Furthermore, ancient tokens from European museums have been published as well, like those in Cambridge, Glasgow and Milan. Most orichalcum tokens in Spain are in private hands or the public collections of museums. Nonetheless, the extraordinary/superior volume of the Spanish assemblage in comparison to the rest of Europe is clear (Bateson 1991, 385-397; Overbeck 2001; Martínez Chico 2019; Rowan 2020, 95-125; Martínez Chico 2021). Besides (and generally), the records pertaining to tokens are so extensive in the Classical world that we cannot provide a standard definition of tokens. It strongly depends on the context in which they were produced and used (Crisà *et al.* 2019, 1-9; Crisà 2021a, 7-13).

Token Communities in the Ancient Mediterranean, a recent ERC research project carried out at the University of Warwick (United Kingdom) between 2016 and 2021, aimed to assess the impact of token production in the ancient world. In particular, the project focused on selected geographical and chronological contexts such as Athens, Egypt, Ostia, Rome, and Sicily. Amongst its main research and publication outputs, which include several articles by team members involved in the project, *Token Communities* has yielded three essential conferences, *Tokens: Culture, Connections, Communities* (Coventry 2017), *Tokens, Value and Identity* (Rome 2018), and *Tokens: The Athenian Legacy to the Modern World* (Athens 2019). They have now been published in the relevant edited volumes. My role within the project was to investigate and assess the production of Hellenistic and Roman tokens in ancient Sicily, exploring the island's museums and tracing novel artefacts (Crisà *et al.* 2019; Crisà 2021b; Gkikaki 2023).

The present study presents a set of newly identified tokens that have been neglected by scholars. It includes twelve clay pieces that are currently preserved at the Paolo Orsi Archaeological Museum in Syracuse. Such material is worthy of analysis for the following main reasons. First, it complements the Sicilian finds previously studied within the *Token Communities* project. Second, it sheds new light on homogenous token production in the eastern area of Sicily, providing an interesting case study on iconographic types of Roman *tesserae* that were previously little known by scholars.

The introductory section discusses token production in ancient Sicily, summing up the results of the recent investigations carried out at Sicilian museums including all published and forthcoming works on the subject. The next section describes the new tokens traced at the Paolo Orsi Museum, focusing on their iconography and available data. I then make some final remarks on these speci-

mens, outlining why they may be considered remarkable and the limitations of my research (especially the lack of a precise archaeological context). Finally, Syracuse's tokens are properly listed, arranged, and described in a catalogue all measurements and physical data for each specimen.

A brief overview of ancient token production in Sicily

My investigations in the island's archives and museums, carried out between 2016 and 2019 within the *Token Communities* project, have been vital in outlining – even if only through the assessment of selected case studies – how ancient token production developed in Sicily during the Hellenistic and Roman periods (Table 1) (Pl. 1: 1). Our knowledge is still fragmentary because it is based on limited sets of specimens from past archaeological excavations or numismatic/monetiform object collections. The latter consist mostly of specimens provided with limited data about their archaeological context or their provenance (e.g., a museum acquisition, a purchase, or a donation made by a private collector). Nevertheless, despite these limitations and a lack of available data, a record of the case studies analysed and published can shed new light on this under-researched subject.

So far, we have identified 45 tokens, of which one was documented by S. Frey-Kupper at Monte Iato and 44 were traced by investigations in the island's museums. The majority of tokens are now stored at the Salinas Museum in Palermo (25 specimens), followed by the Paolo Orsi Museum in Syracuse (11), the Civic Museum of the Eleuterio River Valley of Marineo (Palermo) (6), the *Antiquarium* of Patti Marina (Messina) (1), the site of Monte Iato (Palermo) (1) and the *Antiquarium* of Tindari (Messina) (1). The most represented typology of tokens shows Demeter holding torches and searching for Kore (22 specimens) and the Hermes/ox series (10), which are presented here.

Table 1. Scheme summing up token production and distribution in Sicily

Typology/ iconography ³	Dating	Site/ museum	References	Quantity
Athena/owl	4 th cent. BC	Palermo	Crisà 2023, 254, no. 1	1
<i>Coitus a tergo</i> /X	1 st cent. AD	Patti	Crisà 2020, 635-648	1
ΔA-Achelous/blank	4 th -2 nd cent. BC	Monte Iato	Frey-Kupper 2013, I, 85	1
Demeter + torches/blank	4 th -early 3 rd cent. BC	Palermo	Crisà 2021a, nos. 1-17	17
		Marineo	Crisà 2021a, nos. 18-22	5
Dioscuri's caps/blank	Late 1 st cent. BC	Tindari	Crisà 2019, 63-77	1
		Palermo	Crisà 2023, 256, no. 7	1
Eagle-ΘC/ quadruped-ΘC	1 st cent. BC?	Palermo	Crisà 2023, 256, no. 6	1
Elephant left/A	2 nd -1 st cent. BC?	Palermo	Crisà 2023, 255, no. 3	1
Elephant right-A/ blank	2 nd -1 st cent. BC?	Palermo	Crisà 2023, 255, nos. 4-5	2
Herakles+club/blank	Late 1 st cent. BC?	Palermo ⁴	Crisà 2023, 256, no. 8	1
Hermes-ONE/ ox-DCI	Early 1 st cent. AD?	Syracuse	This contribution	10
Male head/giraffes	Late 1 st cent. BC?	Syracuse	This contribution	1
<i>Tyche-Fortuna</i> /blank	2 nd -1 st cent. BC	Marineo	Crisà 2021a, no. 23	1
Zeus/Achelous right	3 rd cent. BC?	Palermo	Crisà 2023, 255, no. 2	1
TOTAL				44

³ Material is clay for all tokens excepting for the *spintria* ('*coitus a tergo*/X' type) which is made of orichalcum.

⁴ This token was originally found in Termini Imerese on 9 October 1840; it is now stored at the Palermo's museum (Crisà 2023, 256, no. 8).

As a general overview, at the ancient Tyndaris, a Greco-Roman site in the province of Messina, a terracotta token showing two caps of the Dioscuri (strongly connected with the local religious traditions and cults) and dated to the late 1st century BC is attested by two specimens: the first is preserved at the local *Antiquarium*, while the second is kept at the A. Salinas Archaeological Museum of Palermo. The same institution also preserves a clay *tessera* with Hercules carrying a club and lion skin (Pl. 1: 2), and several other artefacts acquired at the island's antiquarian markets in the nineteenth century, for instance, two terracotta small disks with a small elephant advancing right (Pl. 1: 3), a terracotta imitation of a 'pi-style' tetradrachm (c. 353-294 BC), and a specimen of the same material showing an advancing bull. A similar artefact has also been found at Iatai, an archaeological site at Monte Iato (Palermo). More importantly, archaeologists have discovered a set of clay tokens produced at the site of Makella-Marineo (Palermo) showing Demeter carrying two torches as she searches for Ades (Pl. 2: 1). These remarkable items may have been associated with local festivals or sacred ceremonies in the inner areas of Sicily during the Hellenistic period.

This overview is certainly preliminary or rather incomplete. For various reasons, while working on the project, I was unable to visit certain institutions, such as the Agrigento's Superintendence and the Lipari's Museum because I was denied authorisation to the collections. Such obstacles may be overcome in future investigations, which might disclose novel sets of tokens spread across the western and northern areas of the island at two essential ancient Sicilian sites, namely, the Greek and Roman Agrigentum and Lipara.

New tokens from Syracuse

The first token discussed here is a small orange-clay, circular-shaped disk (cat. no. 1). It is well-preserved and does not have any noticeable fractures. On side A, the *tessera* shows the laureate head of Apollo left with a circular border around it. On side B, we can see a vivid Nilotic scene – as shown in the lower right area of the token – featuring two big and majestic giraffes advancing left with a rudimentary attempt at perspective. The first animal, placed in the background, is smaller than the second one, which is in the foreground and therefore of a larger size. Below, a right-facing animal lying on the ground might be a dead hare. The

archaeological context of this specimen is unknown, so it can only be dated (to the late 1st century) using a stylistic criterion.

It is difficult to trace strict and targeted comparisons of the scene. Nevertheless, we know that giraffes are represented in the famous Palestrina Mosaic, a huge late Hellenistic floor depicting the Nile and a variety of flora and fauna along its shores. Pliny the Elder reports that the first giraffe (Lat. *camelopardalis*) shown in Rome was introduced by Julius Caesar on the occasion of his triumph and grandiose *venationes*, organised in 46 BC (Cecconi 1756, 44-49; Lo Giudice 2008, 361-395; Zohar 2008, 123-146; Salari 2012, 351-356).⁵ Moreover, a type of dead hare is represented on Classical to Hellenistic coins from *Akragas* (Agrigento, Sicily) (Pl. 2: 2). However, the hare is being held by an eagle there.⁶

The museum's inventory list reports that the artefact was discovered in the so-called 'Sacramento' area in Syracuse (Pl. 2: 3) on 31 October 1892. The museum acquired it to increase its numismatic collection. Sacramento, which faces the small island of Ortygia, is a coastal and rural area outside Syracuse. Orsi likely managed the acquisition since he became the museum's director in 1891, but at this stage, we do not have any further archival information on the process.

The other tokens traced at the Orsi Museum in Syracuse form a remarkable group of eleven specimens of the same typology. These circular-shaped *tesserae* are made of grey clay; they have regular physical features (Table 2) that tend to suggest a standard production process. Furthermore, because of their dark grey/black colour, two specimens (cat. nos. 11-12) show traces of burning on both sides.

Table 2. Scheme showing physical parameters of clay Hermes/ox *tesserae* discovered at Plemmirio in 1897

Physical parameter	Range	Average
Token diameter	24.26-26.20mm	25.57mm
Mold diameter	19.55-21.61mm	20.88mm
Thickness	6.08-7.66mm	6.76mm
Weight	3.8-4.9g	4.4g

⁵ Plin. NH 8.69: '*Harum aliqua similitudo in duo transfertur animalia. Nabun Aethiopes vocant collo similem equo, pedibus et cruribus bovi, camelo capite, albis maculis rutilum colorem distinguuntibus, unde appellata camelopardalis, dictatoris Caesaris circensibus ludis primum visa Romae. Ex eo subinde cernitur, aspectu magis quam feritate conspicua, quare etiam ovis ferae nomen invenit.*'

⁶ *Akragas* (287-79 BC), Æ. Obv.:/Laureate head of Zeus Hellanios right. Rev.:/Two eagles standing left on a dead hare; KH above (Calciati 1983-1987, vol. 1, 211, no. 125).

Side A shows a male head wearing a stylised *petasus* (helmet) and facing left. It may be argued that this represents Hermes, who is closely associated with pastoralism and is sacred to shepherds and breeders. The helmet is often represented on Hellenistic and Republican coins (often without wings), such as those from Thrace (Pl. 3: 1)⁷ and Ionia (Pl. 3: 2).⁸ On side B, an ox is facing right and lying on a flat and rocky surface. The animal's horns and an ear (only one is represented in profile), its tail and four legs can be seen. Sometimes side A reports the legend 'ONE' (cat. nos. 2-5) and other times side B 'DCI' (cat. nos. 6-12). It is interesting to note that these legends are not found on both sides simultaneously: thus, a token can either have 'ONE' or 'DCI.'

We may speculate on the meaning of the legends by comparing them with other tokens. ONE might stand for 'Onesimus,' a Latin version of the Greek name *Onesimos* (Ονήσιμος). Scholz, Rostovtzeff and Overbeck have discovered the same legend on some lead Roman *tesserae* (Scholz 1893, 43, nos. 414-415: 'ONESIM'; Rostovtzeff 1905, 323, no. 2831: 'ONE'; Overbeck 2001, 34, no. 208: 'ONE/SIM'). It is worth pointing out that a famous Greek painter of the 5th century BC was called *Onesimos* (Beazley 1925, 88-89; Anderson 1995, 130-135). The DCI legend can be interpreted as the abbreviated form of the verb 'dicit' or possibly the noun 'dictio,' which means 'declaration.' Thus, if we combine the legends on both sides, we obtain the following short sentence: 'Onesimus dicit' or 'Onesimi dictio' ('Onesimus says' or 'declaration of Onesimus'). It may be inferred (again on the basis of a stylistic criterion) that the Plemmirio *tesserae* date to the 1st century AD.

Because the specimens in question have been well preserved, the token production process can be explained. First, the maker produced molds (probably made of terracotta) for sides A and B. Then, he/she shaped a small, circular piece of clay which was gently pressed on the mold to imprint the Hermes and ox types on both sides. After having analysed all specimens, we have identified four series of *tesserae* made from three different molds (Pl. 4) (Table 3). Series 1 and 2 were made using molds *alfa* and *beta*, while series 3 was produced combining molds *beta* (side A) and *alfa* (side B). Series 4 derives from another stamp (mold *gamma*). We noticed that series 2 is the most represented (5 specimens), followed by series 1 (4), 3 (1), and 4 (1).

⁷ Thrace, *Sestos* (late 2nd century BC), Æ. Obv.:/Helmeted head of Hermes left wearing a *petasos*; dotted borderline; Rev.:/ΣΗΣ, lyre; Δ in the left field (Hoover 2017, no. 1648).

⁸ Ionia, Phocaea, *Pythis* (3rd-2nd century BC), Æ. Obv.:/Helmeted head of Hermes right wearing a *petasos*; Rev.:/ΙΥΘΙΣ, griffon advancing right (Head 1892, 217, no. 105).

Table 3. Scheme listing all Hermes/ox tokens by series and specimens

Series	No. of specimens
1	4
2	5
3	1
4	1

Even if the exact findspot and archaeological context are still unknown, the inventory list reports information on the area and the year (1897) the tokens were discovered and bought by Orsi. Plemmirio (Plemmyrion) (Fig. 6), a coastal and rural region abutting the Ionian Sea on the southern peninsula, is 14km from Syracuse (Scalora 2017). The area has remarkable archaeological potential. In 1974, archaeologists discovered a relic of a ship from northern Africa that had sunk in the late 3rd century AD (Parker 1980, 57-64; Taylor *et al.* 1997, 9-21; Gibbins 2000, 311-334). In addition, Orsi investigated a Siculan necropolis at Plemmirio in 1891 and 1897, when he discovered a series of graves and goods that he subsequently brought to the museum. He published the results of these excavations in two articles in the journals *Bullettino di Paletnologia Italiana* and *Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità* (Orsi 1891, 115-139; Orsi 1899, 26-42). It is highly unlikely that our tokens would have been found during Orsi's explorations at the necropolis – the site is, of course, prehistorian – even if the second one was conducted exactly at the time when he acquired them.

Rather, as an assumption, it may be argued that Orsi traced and bought them (from a local collector possibly) while exploring and monitoring the area. The article published in the *Notizie degli Scavi* details a second major investigation of the huge circular structure at the so-called Mondjo, an archaeological site in the north-western sector of Plemmirio (Pl. 3: 3) (Orsi 1899, 36-41; Scalora 2017, 190-193). Local workers began to demolish this ancient monument in order to extract building materials, but Orsi stopped them. He claimed the building was a *poliandros*, a Greek funerary monument that housed the bodies of dead soldiers. Close by, Orsi excavated a more recent hole containing pottery fragments and considerably worn Roman *asses* coins (3rd-1st century BC). Other small Hellenistic or Roman finds may have been recovered there as well (including our tokens).

Conclusion

The present study has offered insights into Roman token production in Sicily. It has provided a general overview of recent research performed in the island's museums and presented a set of newly traced *tesserae* discovered at the Paolo Orsi Museum in Syracuse. It concludes by making some final remarks on our investigations, pinpointing their limitations, and suggesting several interpretations of token production and their use and discharge at ancient Syracuse.

It seems likely that token production in Sicily was scattered across different centres, though the majority of the artefacts discovered were made of clay. It is not still clear whether tokens circulated outside the sites where they were produced, though it may be possible to clarify this through further archaeological investigations. Furthermore, there was a conspicuous antiquarian interest in purchasing and collecting tokens in 19th-century Sicily. As a consequence, curators and directors of the main island's museums, such as the National Museums in Palermo and Syracuse, bought or simply acquired such artefacts to increase their numismatic and small find collections. Peculiar monetiform objects, such as the Hellenistic and Roman *tesserae*, were appealing to scholars, curators, and directors – Salinas and Orsi were both interested in numismatics – and their exhibition potential was clear.

One of the most glaring limitations of our research in Sicilian museums is the lack of archaeological context of Hellenistic and Roman *tesserae*. Specimens discovered in the island's museums were purchased or acquired in the late 19th century, but data on the exact findspots or stratigraphic information are not available or have been lost. Inventory lists and records offer little information on the purchase or acquisition of these artefacts or other vital data on the history of museum collecting. Therefore, it is very uncommon to trace tokens that were discovered within archaeological excavations, such as those found at Makella-Marineo (Palermo) showing Demeter searching for Persephone; unfortunately, they come from medieval or modern archaeological layers (Crisà 2021a, 33-56).

As has been noted, we have scant information on the provenance and archaeological context of the *tesserae* discussed herein. Both token series were acquired in the late 19th century, when Paolo Orsi was director of the museum. Orsi had a strong interest in numismatics, which included a variety of periods and interdisciplinary research themes (Greek, Roman, Late Roman, and Byzantine coins, hoards, iconography, monetary circulation, and so on) (Orsi 1906, 99-106; Orsi 1910, 353-359; Gorini 1985, 77-82; Santangelo 2018, 287-308). He understood the vital archaeological potential of the Plemmirio region. As soon

as the tokens came to his hands, he decided to acquire them to increase the museum's numismatic collection. They attracted him because they formed a unique set of clay *tesserae* showing recurring iconography, legends, and types, and were evidence of token production in the area. However, he postponed their analysis.

Why were these clay *tesserae* produced and distributed in Sicily? Because of the irremediable lack of data on their archaeological context and exact findspots, it is difficult to provide a definitive answer to this question. Nevertheless, we can speculate. While they are different in terms of clay colour, types, and legends, both token series show animals. The first 'male head/giraffes' series, which is undoubtedly connected to a Northern African or Middle Eastern setting/natural environment, might allude to an activity involving the displaying of exotic animals. This would explain the targeted production and distribution of the token. In addition, it is possible that the token was imported into Sicily in ancient times.

The second 'Hermes/ox' series has encouraged us to posit another (and certainly more intriguing) interpretation. First, the association between Hermes (a bucolic god protecting shepherds) and a horned ox suggests that the tokens were produced for a pastoral event at Plemmirio in the early Roman period. This may have been a ceremony to celebrate Hermes or a local livestock fair with access limited to those in possession of the *tessera*. It may have been collected by the organiser for a certain time and thrown away at the end of the event. Onesimos may therefore have been used to regulate and manage strictly local, rural events close to Syracuse.

Finally, our research on token production in Hellenistic and Roman Sicily has shed new light on a novel subject that scholars have hitherto neglected. The tokens preserved at Syracuse represent a case study that merits further investigation. It is hoped that the exploration of collections in Sicilian museums and potential discoveries of novel artefacts at archaeological excavations will enhance our knowledge of the *tesserae* produced, circulated, and discharged on the island.

Token catalogue

Tessera, orange clay, circular shape. | Provenance: Syracuse, ‘Sacramento’ area. | Dating: late 1st century BC (?).⁹

Side A: Laureate head of Apollo left; linear border.

Side B: Two giraffes advancing left close to a river; below, a dead hare facing right.

Records: the museum’s inventory list (*Giornale d’Entrata*) reports: ‘Siracusa (al Sacramento), 31 8bre 1892.’¹⁰

Reference (comparison): unknown so far.

1 | inv. no. 12205 | Ø 23.58mm; Ø mold: 21.06mm; thickness: 4.49mm; weight: 2.4g | Preservation: good (no fracture, lack or defect) (Pl. 5: 1).

Tessera, grey clay, circular shape | Provenance: Syracuse, ‘Plemmirio’ area | Dating: early 1st century AD (?).

Side A: Male head of Hermes wearing a stylised *petasus* left; linear border.

Side B: Horned ox right on a flat, rocky surface; linear border.

Records: the museum’s inventory list reports: 17114 | *Lotto di dieci*¹¹ *tessere fittili in forma di monete, diam. Mm. 27. Dr. Testa virile a destra coperta di una galea adorna di una penna dritta. In quattro esemplari dietro la testa le lettere ONE. R/ Figura di bove ad un terreno roccioso. In sei esemplari, e variamente in quelli che mancano delle sigle del dritto, in alto le lettere DEI | Plemmirio?*¹² All tokens have been acquired and included in the museum’s collections with a unique inventory number.

Reference (comparison): Scholz 1893, 43, nos. 414-15 (ONESIM); Rostovtzeff 1903, 128, no. 1040, 130, no. 1050 (side B); 315, nos. 2741, 2743 (side A); Rostovtzeff 1905, 323, no. 2831 (ONE); Turcan 1987, 137, no. 595 (side B), 122, no. 491 (side A, but without helmet); Overbeck 2001, 34, no. 208 (ONE/SIM); Arzone and Marinello 2020, 59, no. 128 (side A).

⁹ All catalogue pictures are reproduced by courtesy of the Paolo Orsi Archaeological Museum of Syracuse (“Su autorizzazione del S. 39 – Parco archeologico e paesaggistico di Siracusa, Eloro, Villa del Tellaro e Akrai”). Pictures cannot be duplicated without any further authorisation.

¹⁰ However, the inventory list reports a description which does not match the actual token.

¹¹ Tokens traced at the museum are actually eleven.

¹² Tokens are also reported as *acquisto Plemmirio 1897* (‘purchase at Plemmirio 1897’).

Series 1

2 | inv. no. 17114a | Ø 25.68mm; Ø mold: 19.55mm; thickness: 6.94mm; weight: 4.6g | Preservation: good (there is only a very small lack in the upper section) | Side A: ONE(*simus*) (Pl. 5: 2).

3 | inv. no. 17114c | Ø 26.13mm; Ø mold: 19.96mm; thickness: 6.79mm; weight: 4.6g | Preservation: good (no fracture, lack or defect) | Side A: ONE(*simus*) (Pl. 5: 3).

4 | inv. no. 17114d | Ø 25.75mm; Ø mold: 19.90mm; thickness: 7.27mm; weight: 4.9g | Preservation: good (no fracture, lack or defect) | Side A: ONE(*simus*) (Pl. 5: 4).

5 | inv. no. 17114l | Ø 25.70mm; Ø mold: 20.20mm; thickness: 7.15mm; weight: 4.6g | Preservation: good (no fracture, lack or defect) | Side A: ONE(*simus*) (traces) (Pl. 6: 1).

Series 2

6 | inv. no. 17114b | Ø 25.70mm; Ø mold: 21.61mm; thickness: 6.25mm; weight: 3.8g | Preservation: good (no fracture, lack or defect) | Side B: D(i)C[I](*t*) (Pl. 6: 2).

7 | inv. no. 17114e | Ø 24.26mm; Ø mold: 21.43mm; thickness: 6.08mm; weight: 3.8g | Preservation: good (no fracture, lack or defect) | Side B: D(i)CI(*t*) (Pl. 6: 3).

8 | inv. no. 17114f | Ø 26.20mm; Ø mold: 21.53mm; thickness: 7.66mm; weight: 4.7g | Preservation: good (no fracture, lack or defect) | Side B: D(i)CI(*t*) (Pl. 6: 4).

9 | inv. no. 17114g | Ø 25.80mm; Ø mold: 21.50mm; thickness: 6.53mm; weight: 4.4g | Preservation: good (no fracture, lack or defect) | Side B: D(i)CI(*t*) (Pl. 7: 1).

10 | inv. no. 17114h | Ø 25.93mm; Ø mold: 21.75mm; thickness: 6.09mm; weight: 4.3g | Preservation: good (no fracture, lack or defect) | Side B: D(i)CI(*t*) (Pl. 7: 2).

Series 3

11 | inv. no. 17114m | Ø 25.64mm; Ø mold: 21.59mm; thickness: 7.13mm; weight: 4.5g | Preservation: mediocre (the surface's colour is black showing evident traces of burning) | Side B: [D]CI (Pl. 7: 3).

Series 4

12 | inv. no. 17114i | Ø 24.47mm; Ø mold: 20.71mm; thickness: 6.53mm; weight: 4.4g | Preservation: fairly good (the surface's colour is dark grey showing traces of burning) | Side B: DCI (Pl. 7: 4).

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Pl. 1: 1 – Map of Sicily showing major sites mentioned in the article

Pl. 1: 2 – Clay token showing Hercules standing with a club and lion skin (Crisà 2023, fig. 10.18.08) (courtesy of the Museo Archeologico «A. Salinas», Palermo, inv. no. 69358)

Pl. 1: 3 – Clay token showing an elephant advancing right (Crisà 2023, fig. 10.17.04) (courtesy of the Museo Archeologico «A. Salinas», Palermo, inv. no. 65356)



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Pl. 2: 1 – Clay token showing Demeter holding two torches and searching for Persephone/Kore (discovered at Marineo) (Crisà 2021a) (courtesy of the Museo Archeologico «A. Salinas», Palermo, inv. no. 62777)

Pl. 2: 2 – Coins of Akragas with two eagles on a dead hare (3rd century BC) (*Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 514, 20 April 2022, lot no. 24*)

Pl. 2: 3 – Satellite view of Syracuse showing the Sacramento and Plemmirio areas



- Pl. 3: 1 – Coins of *sestos* (Thrace) showing Hermes wearing the *petasos* and a lyre (late 2nd century BC) (*Nomos AG, Obolos 22*, 6 March 2022, lot no. 129)
- Pl. 3: 2 – Coins of the magistrate Pythis (Ionia, Phokaia), showing Hermes wearing the *petasos* and a griffon (300-100 BC) (*Gorny & Mosch Giessener Münzhandlung, Online Auction 286*, 29 March 2022, lot no. 4251)
- Pl. 3: 3 – Plan of the Hellenistic circular structure discovered at the 'Mondjo' rural area at Plemmirio (Syracuse) (Orsi 1899, 37, fig. 12)



Pl. 4 – Plate outlining the Syracuse’s ‘Hermes/ox’ token series and mold. Photo by the author



Pl. 5 – Plate showing the Syracuse's 'Apollo/giraffes' and 'Hermes/ox' token series (courtesy of the Paolo Orsi Archaeological Museum) (cat. nos. 1-4)



Pl. 6 – Plate showing the Syracuse's 'Hermes/ox' token series (courtesy of the Paolo Orsi Archaeological Museum) (cat. nos. 5-8)



Pl. 7– Plate showing the Syracuse's 'Hermes/ox' token series (courtesy of the Paolo Orsi Archaeological Museum) (cat. nos. 9-12)