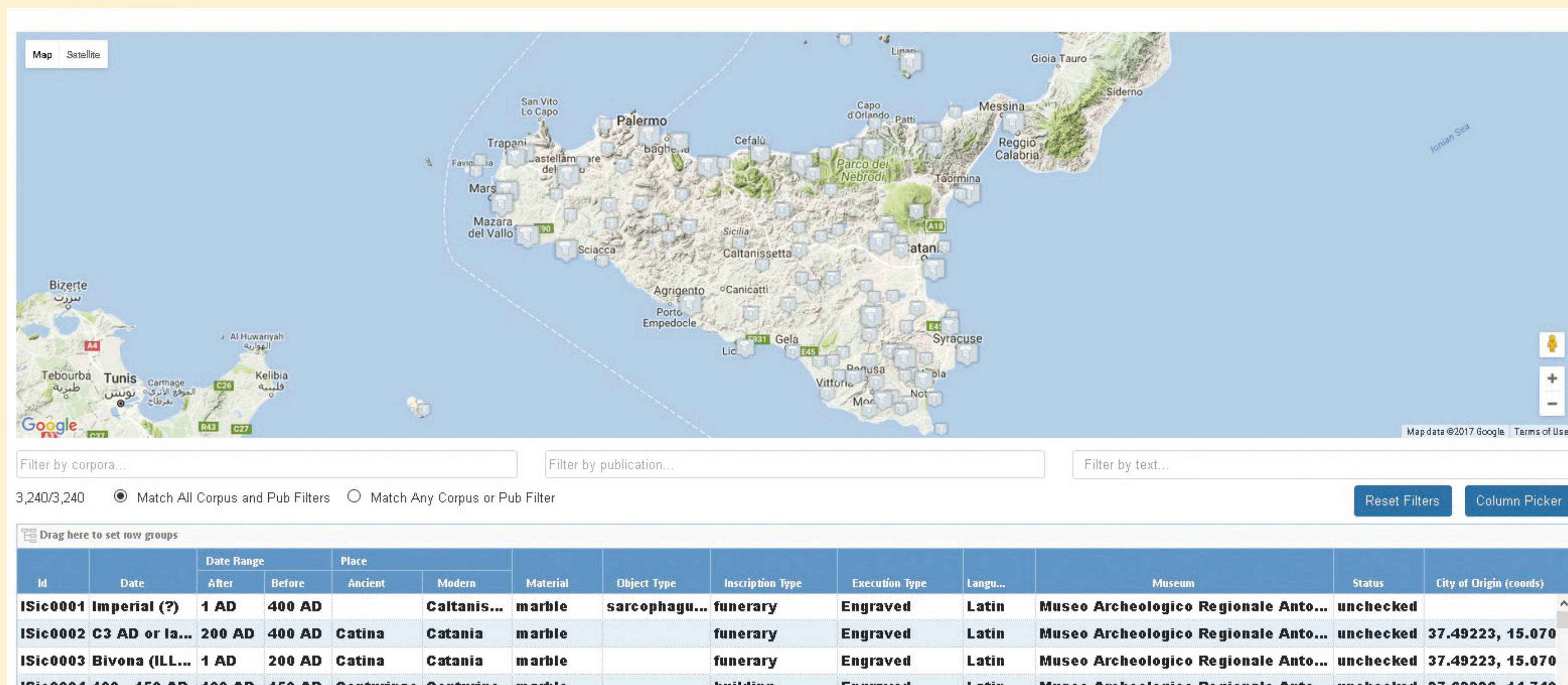


# I.Sicily – the first comprehensive (digital) corpus for Sicily

<http://sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk>

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Screenshot of the main search interface for I.Sicily  
Search via map, data filtering, or free text searching

## What is *I.Sicily*?

*I.Sicily* is the first attempt at a complete epigraphic corpus for Ancient Sicily since the work of *CIL* X.2 (1883) and *IG* XIV (1890). *I.Sicily* goes further, including all inscriptions from the Archaic to Byzantine periods, in all languages (Greek, Latin, Punic, Sikel, Oscan, Hebrew, etc.). In the first phase *I.Sicily* contains all inscriptions on stone (currently 3,240, projected total c.5,000). Work has already begun to incorporate inscriptions on metal, and texts on ceramic and other materials will be included in due course. The corpus is already freely available online (CC-BY 4.0) as a continuous work-in-progress.

## A digital corpus

*I.Sicily* exploits the possibilities created by TEI-XML in the EpiDoc schema. Each inscription is recorded in a separate TEI file, containing not only the epigraphic text and translation, but comprehensive documentation about the physical form of the inscribed object, its provenance and current location, together with epigraphic description, apparatus, commentary, bibliography, and imagery. Each inscription is allocated a unique identifier, and this resolves as a unique web address which presents a full online edition of the inscription, as for example at [sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk/inscription/ISic0298](http://sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk/inscription/ISic0298).



## Complex searching

The use of TEI-XML enables all of the information recorded to be encoded in a standardised format, which in turn means that the data can be indexed and searched as with any standard database. The main interface imitates a typical spreadsheet format for ease of use (screenshot *above*), but multiple search modes are available, including map-based, collection-based, and publication-based searching, as well as free-text.

## Bibliographic searches and concordances

Because the Sicilian corpora are so old, most modern epigraphic publication is widely scattered across diverse publications. *I.Sicily* presents a unique identifier (in collaboration with [www.trismegistos.org](http://www.trismegistos.org)) for each inscription to simplify future reference - but it also presents a full, searchable record of past publications linked to individual inscriptions. Publication records are held in a public online Zotero bibliography: [www.zotero.org/groups/382445/isicily](http://www.zotero.org/groups/382445/isicily). This enables not only searching by publication, but also the dynamic generation of concordances



between publications, or other data fields. For example, *I.Sicily* now offers an index of Sicilian inscriptions published in the *Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità*.

## Opening up Sicilian museums

*I.Sicily* places a strong emphasis upon the core principle of autopsy. Initial records are generated from existing publications, but we are collaborating with individual museums to compare these records to actual collections, and to create up-to-date catalogues of individual museum collections. Inscription records are linked to a separate database of Sicilian museums, which enables not only searching by collection, but the presentation online of individual collections:



[sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk/museums](http://sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk/museums) (137 collections included). Initial collaborators include the Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi, Siracusa, which has enabled the discovery of important unpublished material (see ISic3387, *right*), as well as making important published material more easily accessible. *I.Sicily* is currently working closely with the Museo Civico ‘Castello Ursino’ at Catania ([sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk/museum/18](http://sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk/museum/18)), and together with the Liceo Artistico Statale “M.M. Lazzaro”, we have brought a selection of material out of the stores to create a new permanent epigraphic display (“Voci di pietra”) of material from Roman Catania; at the same time, the entire collection is being catalogued and placed online. A recent grant from the International Catacomb Society will enable the full incorporation of the Siracusa catacomb inscriptions with Dr Ilenia Gradante and Dr Davide Tanasi.

## Open data

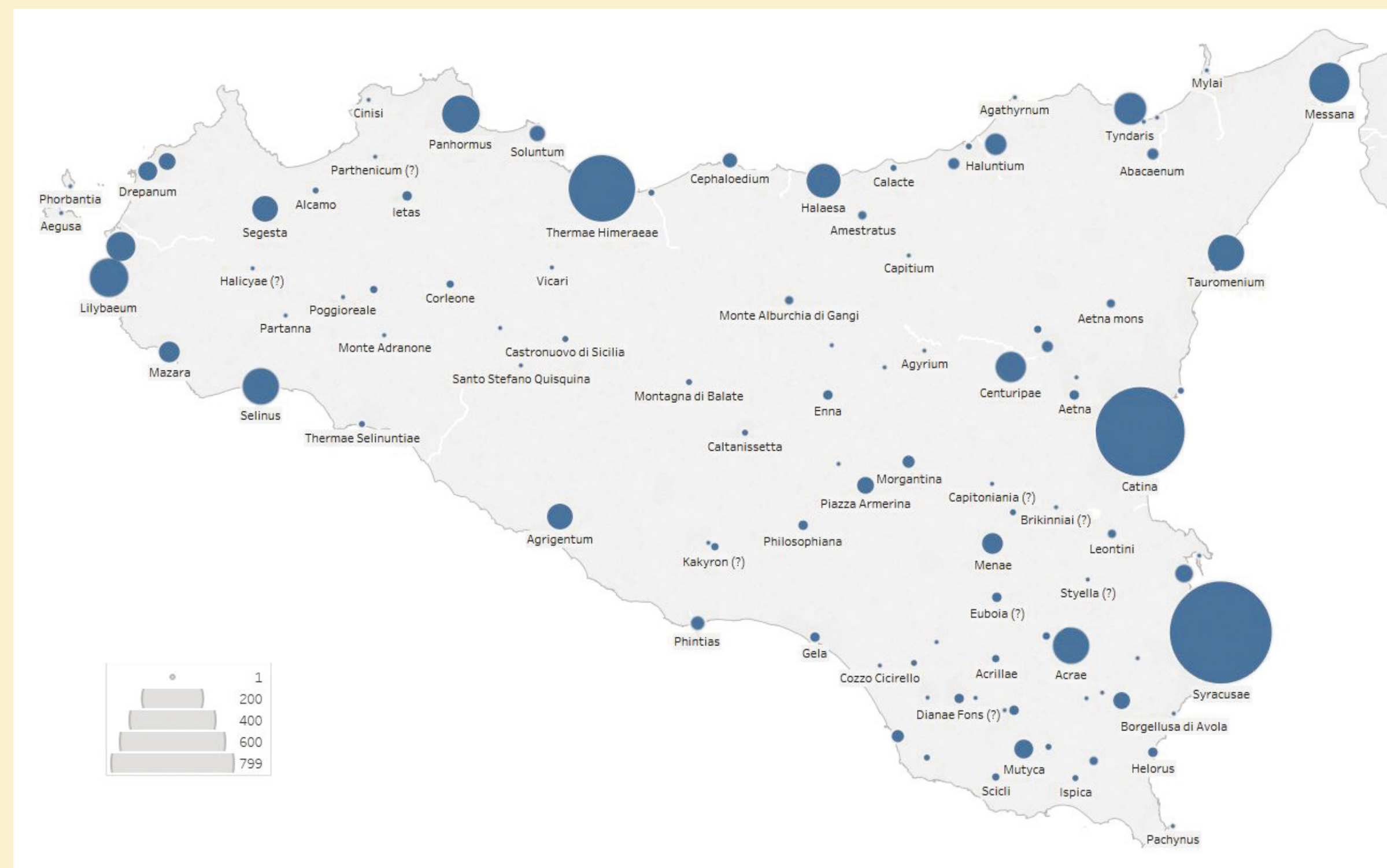
All the data in *I.Sicily* is made freely available under a CC-BY licence. XML files can be downloaded, and all searches can be saved and downloaded as CSV files (enabling re-use e.g. for data visualisation, see *upper right*). In order to create the potential for true Linked Open Data, wherever possible data elements are referenced using external resources:

- places in [pleiades.stoa.org](http://pleiades.stoa.org) and [geonames.org](http://geonames.org)
- epigraphic categories using the EAGLE vocabularies ([www.eagle-network.eu/resources/vocabularies](http://www.eagle-network.eu/resources/vocabularies))
- names using LGPN and Trismegistos.

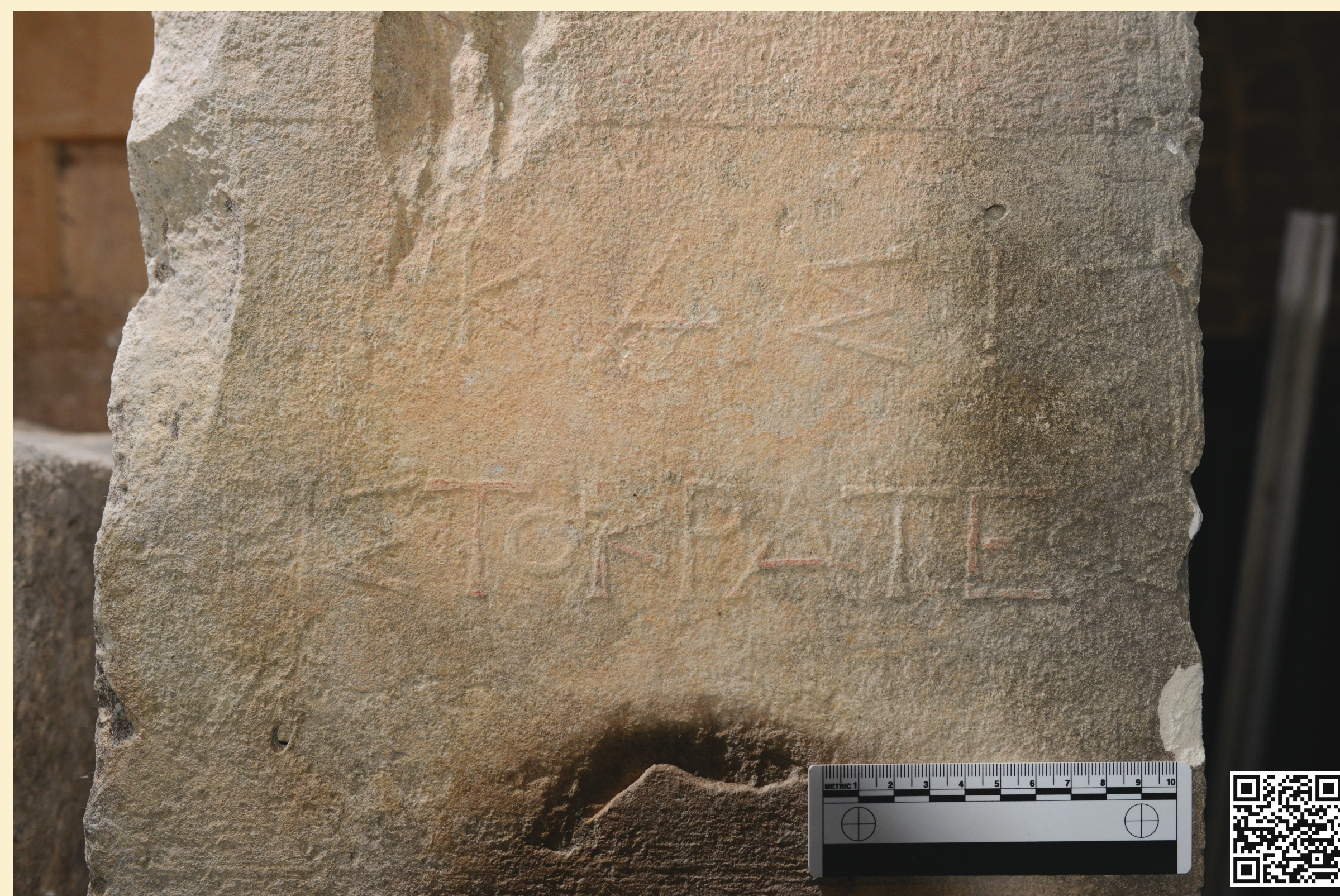
At the same time, we are making URIs for Sicilian inscriptions and museums publicly available as resources for others, together with the online Zotero bibliography. We are currently exploring the possibilities of creating an RDF ontology for epigraphic data.



Engraved by Peter Thonemann



Distribution of known inscriptions on stone in ancient Sicily (7th cent. BC – 7th cent. AD).  
Map produced using data from I.Sicily via Tableau Public.



Hellenistic funerary inscription from Syracusae, bichrome relief lettering.  
I.Sicily 3387, Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi, Siracusa, inv.104851. Forthcoming in *ZPE* 203.  
<http://sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk/inscription/ISic3387>

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