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Tesseram conferre. Etruscan, Greek, Latin, and Celtiberian *tesserae hospitales*

ABSTRACT: Hospitality can be considered a key institution in the social relationships in the ancient Mediterranean. To identify the people involved in a hospitality agreement, in certain contexts small objects were used in a similar way to a password, which the Greeks called *symbolon* and the Romans *tessera hospitalis*. We know how the latter were used thanks to Plautus' *Poenulus*. At least 64 pieces are currently known which may be identified as *tesserae hospitales*. All come from the Western Mediterranean. The majority contain brief inscriptions, written in Etruscan, Latin, Greek, or Celtiberian. They share a series of common features, which impart a clear family resemblance beyond geographic, cultural, or linguistic borders
Keywords: Hospitality – *symbolon* – *tessera hospitalis*

1. Introduction[1]

Tesserae hospitales were used as passwords or tokens in hospitality agreements signed between individuals or between individuals and cities. They are generally small pieces of bronze, and exceptionally of ivory or bone, in the form of animals or clasped hands, or in geometric shapes. They usually contain a brief inscription which mentions one or both parties involved in the agreement, although there are, as we shall see, some examples which are not inscribed.

There are currently 64 pieces which can be classified as *tesserae hospitales*. All come from the Western Mediterranean, largely from Italy and, above all, Spain. There are also various examples from Tunisia, Sicily, and the south of France. The oldest *tesserae hospitales* are dated to the sixth century BCE, while the most recent are from the Augustan era. The majority, however, may be dated to the second and first centuries BCE. Eight of them contain texts in Etruscan, two in Greek, eleven in Latin, and 33 in Celtiberian – written in both Palaeohispanic script and Latin alphabet – while ten pieces, all from Spain, are anepigraphic.

The purpose of this study is to analyse this particular type of document, taking into consideration all the known pieces regardless of their provenance, chronology, or the language in which their texts were composed. It starts with a brief contextualisation of

1 This work forms part of the project "*El final de las escrituras paleohispánicas*" (FF2015–63981-C3–3-P), financed by the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities of Spain.

public and private hospitality agreements in the ancient Mediterranean. It then reviews the limited information referring to the use of small objects as accreditation in hospitality agreements, and analyses the collection of pieces which may be identified as *tesserae hospitales,* paying special attention to the content of their texts and the characteristics of their form and iconography. The work is complemented by an appendix which records basic information about all these pieces.

2. Hospitality in Antiquity

Ancient societies developed various strategies around the experience of staying in a host's own home which were more or less standardised, and intended to enable relationships between individuals belonging to different human groups,[2] which are encapsulated by what G. Herman called 'ritualised friendship'.[3] *Ξενία* and *hospitium* may be included within this broad concept. It originated with institutions of a markedly aristocratic nature which regulated relationships between individuals who belonged to different political entities, guaranteeing hospitality and reciprocal protection. These alliances, which on occasion were represented symbolically through the exchange of objects, could last for generations.

Perhaps the most representative example of this practice is the famous episode of Glaucus and Diomedes recorded in the *Iliad*. When both warriors were about to clash by the walls of Troy, they recognised each other as beneficiaries of an ancient hospitality agreement which had been established by their fathers some time ago; thereupon, despite being enemies, they renounced combat, shook hands, and exchanged armour as a symbol of the renewal of the agreement.[4] The story of Glaucus and Diomedes has an interesting foil in the duel which, as Livy recounts, was fought during the Second Punic War before the walls of Capua between the Campanian Badius and the Roman T. Quinctius Crispinus, who were tied by a hospitality agreement.[5]

Hospitium can be seen as the Roman equivalent of the Greek *ξενία*, with which it shares notable similarities, although it also displays distinctive features.[6] On an interpersonal level, this institution is well documented above all in the Republican period, thanks to Plautus' comedies, in particular the *Poenulus,* to which we will return, and the writings of Cicero. Of particular interest are the *Verrines*, which describe in detail the bonds of hospitality that united the Roman senatorial aristocracy with the principal dignitaries from the Sicilian cities.[7]

These kinds of practices were not unique to the Greeks and Romans; on the contrary, various indications suggest they were widespread. S. Knippschild has recently demon-

2 Boudou 2017.
3 Herman 1987.
4 *Il*. 6.119–236. On *ξενία*, recently: Iriarte 2007; Basile 2016.
5 Liv. 25.18.
6 cf. Lemosse 1984; Bolchazy 1995; Nicols 2011 and 2015; Bourdin 2012: 569–572; Patterson 2016.
7 Deniaux 1987; Nicols 2001.

strated the existence of similar customs in the Near East,[8] Livy mentions a hospitality agreement between the Numidian king Syphax and the Carthaginian leader Hasdrubal,[9] while Caesar, Tacitus, and Diodorus Siculus describe various traditions designed to protect foreigners among the Gauls, Germans, and Celtiberians respectively,[10] although in none of these cases is it stated that objects were used as signs of recognition.

Ξενία and *hospitium* also developed in the public sphere. *Προξενία* sanctioned the existence of a hospitality nexus between a polis and a foreigner, associated with the concession of diverse privileges. The abundance of inscriptions related to this institution, which include not only the granting of decrees, but also numerous lists of *proxenoi*, is a clear indication of its importance as a mechanism for structuring relationships between Greek cities, mainly in the Hellenistic era.[11] We know much less about Roman *hospitium publicum*. According to M. Humbert's suggestion, it is likely that it played a key role in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE in the integration of Latin communities and neighbouring cities like Caere, through agreements that offered the mutual possibility of gaining citizenship, the *civitas per migrationem et censum*.[12] This nexus offering citizenship is the most obvious feature distinguishing *hospitium* from *ξενία*.[13]

By the end of the Republic, *hospitium publicum* was used on a municipal level to consolidate bonds between members of the Roman senatorial and equestrian aristocracy and cities overseas. The best surviving example of this practice is the hospitality agreement established between the municipium Gaditanum, in Hispania Ulterior, and the prominent senator L. Cornelius Balbus, who, despite being a native of Gades, had lost his local citizenship when he became a *cives Romanus*, as Cicero records.[14] Designation of senators as *hospites* is carefully regulated in the law from the colony Urso, also in Hispania Ulterior, drafted in Caesar's period but inscribed in the Julio-Claudian era.[15]

From the Augustan period, in both the east and in the west, *προξενία* and *hospitium publicum* progressively lost importance due to the advance of civic patronage, among other factors.[16] In fact, in the municipal laws of the Flavian period found in the south of Spain, *hospitium publicum* is not mentioned but *patronatus* is, unlike in the *lex Ursonensis* from a century previously, in which both institutions are regulated.[17] The lexicon of *hospitium* remained occasionally present, however, in the bronze *tabulae* that recorded civic patronage agreements until a very late date.[18]

8 Knippschild 2002.
9 Liv. 29.23.3.
10 Caes. *Civ*. 6.23; Tac. *Ger*. 21; D. S. 5.34; V. Max. 3.2.21.
11 Marek 1984; Gauthier 1985: 129–78; Mack 2015, with extensive bibliography. On *θεοροδοκία* and its relationship to *προξενία* vid. Perlman 2000.
12 Humbert 1978: 85–143, cf. Bourdin 2012. 572–4.
13 Beltrán 2012: 257.
14 Cic. *Balb*. 41; Beltrán 2015.
15 *CIL* II²/5, 1022, §§ 130–131; Stylow 1997: 42; Caballos 2006: 402–11.
16 Eilers 2002; Nicols 2014; Mack 2015, 233–81; Melchor 2018.
17 Pina and Beltrán 2013: 57–61; Melchor 2018: 49–55.
18 Díaz 2012: 216–8.

3. *Σύμβολον* and *tessera hospitalis*

Hospitality agreements did not only implicate the signatories, but also their descendants and family members. It was possible that the beneficiaries of an old hospitality agreement would not know each other in person. To resolve this problem, objects were used which, as well as enabling identification of the parties involved in the agreement, also had to be easily transportable and impossible to falsify. The Greeks called these objects *σύμβολα* and the Romans *tesserae hospitales*.

In Euripides' tragedy *Medea*, Jason gives Medea various *σύμβολα* when she is expelled from Corinth so she could be recognised by those with whom he had established hospitality relationships.[19] Ph. Gauthier points out that, according to a Byzantine scholion to the Euripidean work preserved in *Codex Parisinus* 2713, the *σύμβολον* consisted of a bone (*ἀστράγαλος*) split in half. Each host kept one of the halves so that, when they came together (*συμβάλλειν*), it was possible to identify the beneficiaries of the agreement.[20] In his comedy *Poenulus*, Plautus demonstrates in detail how this process worked:

AGO. *Antidamae gnatum me esse*
HAN. *si ita est, tesseram*
conferre si vis hospitalem, eccam attuli.
AGO. *Agedum huc ostende. Est par probe. Nam habeo domi.*
HAN. *O mi hospes, salve multum! Nam mi tuos pater*
patritus hercle hospes Antidamas fuit.
Haec mi hospitalis tessera cum illo fuit.
AGO. *Ergo hic apud me hospitium tibi praebebitur.*
Nam hau repudio hospitium neque Carthaginem,
ind' sum oriundus.

(Pl. *Poen*. 1047–1055, ed. W. de Melo, Loeb)

AGO. That I'm the son of Antidamas
HAN. If this is the case and if you want to compare your shard
of hospitality, look, I've brought mine along.
AGO. Go on, show it to me. It's the proper counterpart: I have mine at home.
HAN. O my guest-friend, many greetings! Your father
Antidamas was my father's guest-friend.
I had this shard of hospitality with him.
AGO. Then you'll receive hospitality here at my place:
I do not reject either the hospitality or Carthage.
That's where I'm from.

(trans. W. de Melo, Loeb)

19 E. *Med.* 611–613; cf. Page 1938: 117.
20 Gauthier 1972: 66–7; Herman 1987: 63; Knippschild 2002: 152–5. The scholiast mentions a passage from the playwright Eubulus referring to this practice (frg. 70; cf. Hunter 1983: 58 and 70).

The scene is between the youth Agorastocles, who had been captured in Carthage as a child, enslaved, and later adopted by a Greek named Antidamas, and the elderly Carthaginian Hanno, his uncle (we discover later). Agorastocles' adoptive father had hosted Hanno's father. Since the two people did not know each other, Hanno shows the *tessera hospitalis* that he had inherited from his father so that Agorastocles could compare it with his own (*tesseram hospitalem conferre*). Since the two pieces match, the two characters are identified as the beneficiaries of the hospitality agreement established by their parents. This is in essence the same process as that referred to in Euripides' *Medea*.

Poenulus is based on an unknown work of Athenian New Comedy, perhaps *Karchedonios* by the playwright Alexis, of which only brief fragments are preserved.[21] It is impossible to determine how far this passage reproduces the Greek model faithfully or how far it has been modified. It is interesting that Plautus does not use the term *σύμβολον*, but the expression *tessera hospitalis*. According to C. Virlouvet, the term *tessera*, probably in origin an abbreviation of the Greek adjective *τεσσαράγονος*, 'quadrangular', was used in Latin to refer to a wide variety of small objects.[22] For example, it could refer to small objects that were used in military contexts to transmit the watchword (*tessera militaris*).[23] It is used in the expression *tessera hospitalis* with the same meaning of 'password', which has no equivalent in Greek; this confirms that the scene was adapted by Plautus to make it more comprehensible to the public for whom it was intended. It is reasonable to suppose that it reflected a common practice among Romans of the early second century BCE.

The *tessera* therefore played a key role in hospitality relationships. In another work by Plautus, *Cistellaria*, based on an original by Menander, the expression *confringere tesseram* ('break the *tessera*') is used.[24] As Th. Mommsen indicated, it is likely that this expression referred to the custom of breaking the *tesserae* that identified the two parties involved in a hospitality agreement when this relationship terminated, thus preventing their use thereafter.[25]

In the Republican period, the expression *tessera hospitalis* was specifically used to refer to the small objects that identified the contracting parties of a hospitality pact. It appears, for example, on the majority of Latin *tesserae* from the Iberian Peninsula.[26] This same expression was also used, however, to refer to the bronze *tabulae* upon which agreements of hospitality and patronage began to be recorded from the first century CE.[27] In this type of inscription, therefore, the expressions *tabula hospitalis*[28] and *tabula patrona-*

21 cf. De Melo 2012: 3.
22 Virlouvet 1995: 340–6.
23 Virlouvet 1995: 367–8.
24 Pl. *Cist*. 503.
25 Mommsen 1864: 343; cf. Herman 1987: 71.
26 *CIL* I² 3465 and 3466; II 5763; *AE* 1999, 922; *HEp* 3, 1993, 373.
27 Beltrán 2010.
28 *CIL* XIV 2924; *AE* 1937, 119, 121.

tus[29] are both attested, but also *tessera hospitalis*[30] and, rarely, *tessera patronatus*.[31] That is, both the small pieces from the Republican period as well as the bronze *tabulae* from the Imperial period that recorded agreements of hospitality and patronage could be called *tesserae.* The different characteristics of each nonetheless allow us to reserve the term *tessera* for the former, and to refer to the latter as *tabulae,* if only as a convention.[32]

This paper uses the expression *tessera hospitalis* to refer to the small tokens of bronze, bone, or ivory, which were usually figurative and used to identify the two parties involved in a hospitality agreement. One of the faces is usually flat to allow the two tokens belonging to the same agreement to be matched with each other (*tesseram conferre*). In the majority of cases, the flat face was also used to inscribe a short text which mostly included the name of one or both parties (fig. 1), a feature to which none of the literary sources ever refers and which is only attested by the inscriptions themselves.

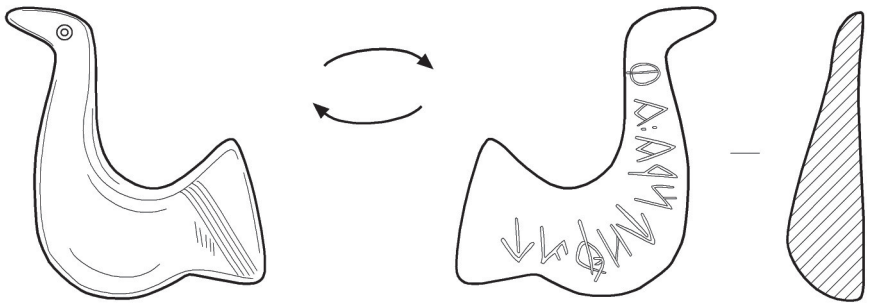

Fig. 1: Celtiberian *tessera hospitalis* from Pallantia (*MLH* IV K.25.1).

The identification of tokens used in hospitality agreements sometimes poses significant problems, especially when their inscriptions are not sufficiently explicit or when examples are anepigraphic. The Greek *σύμβολον* from Lilybaeum, discovered in the eighteenth century, was the first of these pieces to be interpreted correctly.[33] In 1895 the Italian F. Barnabei identified the first Italian Latin *tesserae*.[34] Some years previously, the Spaniards A. Fernández-Guerra and F. Fita had already proposed respectively in their pioneering works that various Celtiberian pieces recently discovered could be *tesserae hospitales.*[35] Identification of Etruscan pieces had to wait another century before the publication of an influential work by G. Messineo in 1983,[36] which would be further developed by A. Maggiani, after the discovery of new examples in the excavations of Murlo (Tuscany).[37]

29 *CIL* II²/7, 276; VI 29682; X 476–478; *AE* 1913, 25; 1975, 367; 1992, 301; 2004, 443.
30 *CIL* I² 755; VI 1684 and 1688; *AE* 1985, 581.
31 *CIL* II² 7, 332.
32 On the *tabulae hospitalis* and *patronatus*: Nicols 1980; Díaz and Cimarosti 2016, with extensive bibliography.
33 cf. Benivenga 1769: 70–1.
34 Barnabei 1895.
35 Fernández-Guerra 1877; Fita 1888.
36 Messineo 1983.
37 Maggiani 2006.

4. Geographic and chronological distribution.

All the hospitality *tesserae*, including Greek *σύμβολα*, come from the Western Mediterranean (fig. 2). It is significant that we do not currently know of any example from the Eastern Mediterranean. In the 1950s excavations of the Athenian Agora, three small terracotta plaques with brief, painted inscriptions were discovered, very similar to another that had been found in the excavations in 1878 in the Dypilon, now lost. These pieces had been cut in such a way that the content of their texts was only legible once each piece was united with its corresponding piece. These are unquestionably tokens used to guarantee the identity of their owners, but it is clear that nothing suggests they pertained to agreements of *ξενία*,[38] and in fact the most likely scenario is that they were used in an official context.[39]

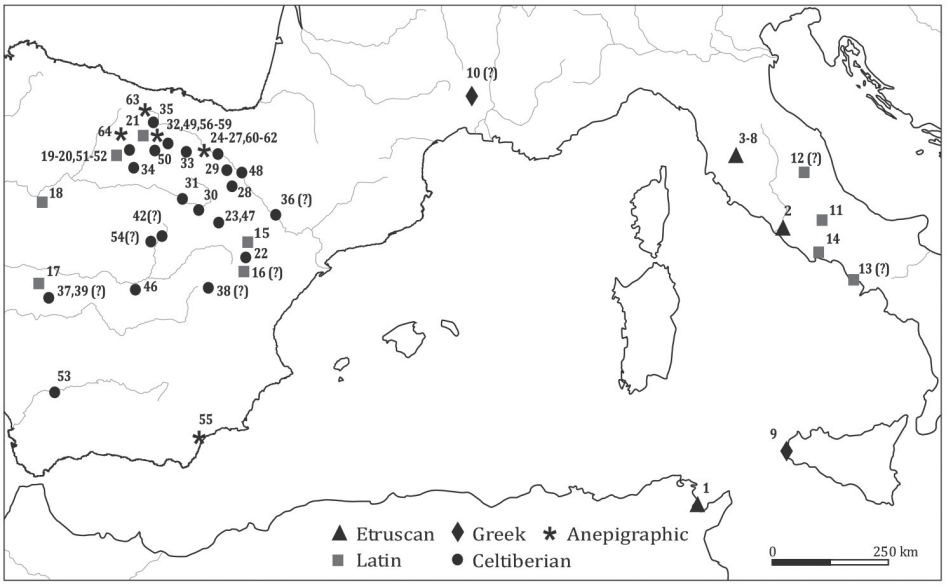

Fig. 2: Map showing the distribution of Etruscan, Latin, Celtiberian, and anepigraphic *tesserae hospitales*, and Greek *σύμβολα*.

Beyond the Mediterranean, among the objects discovered in the princely tumulus of Kul-Oba, near Panticapaeum on the far east of the Black Sea, a small gold plaque was recovered that reproduces the crowning moment in the Scythian oath of friendship ceremony, in which the two participating individuals drank wine mixed with their own blood from the same drinking horn to seal their bond.[40] G. Herman suspected that this

38 Herman 1987: 62–3.
39 Thomson 1951: 51–2.
40 Hdt. 4.70.

piece could have been the Scythian equivalent of the Greek *σύμβολα*, although, unfortunately, the absence of an inscription makes this impossible to confirm.[41]

In the north of Italy, the Raetian people developed from the fifth century BCE a literacy that was heavily influenced by Etruscan models, among whose most characteristic type of inscriptions is incised on small zoomorphic bronze figurines made using lost wax casting, which look like some of the Latin and Celtiberian *tesserae hospitales*.[42] It seems that the majority of these inscriptions include onomastic formulae. These have traditionally been considered votive objects; however our limited knowledge of Raetic culture means we cannot dismiss other possible interpretations.[43]

Occasionally, it has been suggested that certain objects which are problematic to classify should be considered *tesserae hospitales*, generally without conclusive arguments – which has not stopped some of these suggestions making an impact in the scholarly literature. This is the case with the so-called disc from Gouraya (Algeria), a medium-sized round piece of bronze, with two butting rams' heads on the obverse and a brief Etruscan inscription on the reverse,[44] and with a pair of dice with strange signs found in Numantia and Calagurris in Celtiberia,[45] to cite just two examples.

Along with the pieces whose interpretation is questionable or clearly false, another problem which makes it significantly more difficult to establish a catalogue of *tesserae hospitales* is the abundance of counterfeits. This problem particularly affects objects from the Iberian Peninsula, and especially Celtiberian ones. The earliest counterfeit Celtiberian *tesserae hospitales*, easily identifiable, date to the early twentieth century,[46] but it is since the 1980s, as part of the illegal trade in antiquities, that very well-made counterfeit pieces have started to proliferate, which means the majority of pieces from private collections published in recent years should be treated with great caution.[47]

Bearing in mind these caveats, the number of pieces that we can consider to be *tesserae hospitales* with relative certainty currently reaches 64 (see appendix). Their chronological distribution is not homogenous (see table 1). The oldest *tesserae* are Etruscan, which usually date to the sixth century BCE. We do not know of any *tessera* that can be dated to the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. The Latin examples from Italy date approximately to the third or early second centuries BCE, except for one which is probably mid-second century BCE. The bulk of the pieces from Spain, including all the Celtiberian and anepigraphic ones and the majority of Latin ones, can be dated between the middle of the second century and the middle of the first BCE. The only two Greek *σύμβολα* that we have also belong to this time frame. The latest *tesserae* are three examples from the interior of Spain dated to the early first century CE. From this point, *tesserae hos-*

41 Herman 1987: 55; Knippschild 2002: 143–4.
42 As an introduction to Raetic epigraphy and language: Salomon 2017, with bibliography.
43 The majority of the pieces of this type, 16 in total, come from Sanzeno, in the province of Trentino, although a few more found elsewhere are also known. For Raetic inscriptions: Marchesini 2015.
44 *ET*² Af 2.1; Briquel 2006.
45 Ballester 1999.
46 Cabré 1920.
47 Beltrán, Jordán and Simón 2009.

pitales disappear from the epigraphic record and are permanently replaced by *tabulae hospitales* and *patronatus*.[48]

Table 1: Chronological distribution of *tesserae hospitales* and *σύμβολα*.

	600–500	500–250	250–150	150–50	50–20 CE	**total**
Etruscan	8					**8**
Latin (Ita.)			4			**4**
Greek				2		**2**
Latin (Spa.)				3	4	**7**
Celtiberian				33		**33**
anepigraphic				10		**10**
total	***8***	***0***	***4***	***48***	***4***	***64***

4.1 The Etruscan *tesserae*

In 1985, G. Messineo suggested that a piece discovered at the end of the 1970s in the area of Sant'Omobono, in Rome, and another discovered in 1898 in the Bordj-Djedid necropolis in Carthage, both made of ivory in the sixth century BCE, should be interpreted as *tesserae hospitales*.[49] This suggestion has been very well received in recent years,[50] although in reality we have no conclusive data that the archaic Etruscans possessed an institution similar to Greek *ξενία* or Roman *hospitium*, nor is it yet clear what the relationship was between the Etruscan *tesserae* from Rome and Carthage and the rest of the known examples, the oldest of which are almost three centuries later. They do, nevertheless, share clear similarities with the more modern *tesserae*. In both cases the pieces have two faces, on one of which the figure of an animal is portrayed in relief – a lion and a boar respectively – while the inscription is incised on the flat face (fig. 3). It is likely that they were designed in this way to enable the parties to the agreement to be identified when they fitted their respective *tesserae* together. The one from Carthage even has a circular hole, perhaps intended to allow it to be connected to a hypothetical rod on its corresponding piece, as occurs with some of the *tesserae* from Spain.

There is no agreement about how to interpret the texts that accompany these pieces, but in both cases, they are consistent with their classification as *tesserae hospitales.* The piece from Rome could read: *araz silqetenas spurianas*.[51] The first word, *araz*, seems to be a *praenomen* while the final one, *spurianas*, is clearly a *nomen gentilicium*. The meaning of

48 cf. Beltrán 2010.
49 Messineo 1985.
50 cf. Maggiani 2006; Colonna 2010: 287–9.
51 *ET*² La. 2.3; Maggiani 2006: 321; Benelli 2015: 257–8; Della Giovampaola 2016.

silqetenas poses several questions. Some consider it another *nomen,*[52] although it is also possible that it referred to the city of Sulcis in Sardinia.[53] It is difficult to decide between the two options, but the latter is particularly tempting since it suggests that the text may refer to the two parties implied in the agreement, one Araz, resident of the city of Sulcis, and a family, perhaps the Spurina, who are well attested in Tarquinia.[54]

The text of the *tessera* from Carthage has not been preserved completely. With some reservations, it may read: *mi puinel karθazies vesϕ+[---]na*.[55] It falls within the group of the so-called 'speaking inscriptions' typical of the archaic period.[56] *puinel* has been interpreted as an ethnic designation, 'Punic',[57] but it is perhaps more appropriate to consider it a *praenomen* or personal name.[58] The next word, *karθazies*, probably refers to Carthage, perhaps Puinel's place of residence.[59] The final sequence of the text is remarkably difficult to read, but, as was the case with the *tessera* from Rome, it could correspond to the *nomen gentilicium* of the family with whom Puinel had established a hospitality agreement.

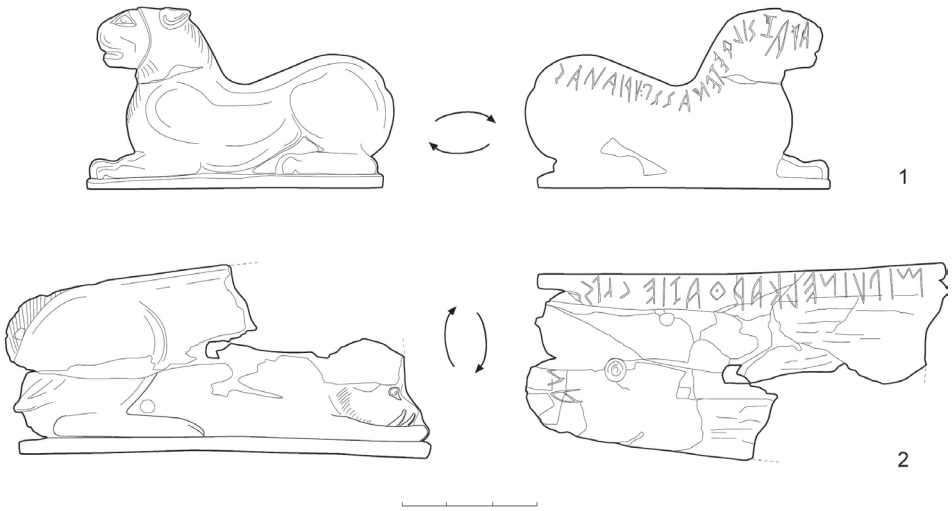

Fig. 3. Etruscan *tesserae hospitales.* 1: Sant'Omobono (*ET*² La 2.3). 2: Carthage (*ET*² Af 2.3).

The excavations undertaken in Poggio Civitate (Murlo) have provided fragments of another six possible *tesserae hospitales*, all from the sixth century BCE. These are ivory pieces which could be mistaken for decorative appliqués if it were not for the fact that all

52 De Simone 1981: 96–8.
53 Colonna 1987: 59, note 33; cf. Cristofani 1991: 72–3.
54 cf. Torelli 1975; Benelli 2015: 62–4.
55 *ET*² Af. 3.1; Maggiani 2006: 319–21.
56 Agostiniani 1982: 138.
57 cf. recently: Poccetti 2007: 29–30; Colonna 2010: 288.
58 Wallace 2008a: 190–1; cf. e. g. *ET*² Vt. 1.137, 4.1 (Volaterrae): *puina*, *puine*, *puinei*.
59 Prag 2006: 8.

have inscriptions on their reverse. The inscriptions are only very partially preserved, but it is possible to recognise in them some sequences that could belong to anthroponyms. Three of these pieces depict lions very similar to that on the *tessera* from Rome, the others correspond to a sphinx (perhaps), a bull or a horse, and a pair of women facing each other.[60] They were recovered in the same room. A. Maggiani has drawn attention to the fact that their texts were written by different hands.[61] It is possible that these pieces were preserved together because they comprised the hospitality agreements of which the family that resided there was beneficiary.[62]

4.2 The Greek σύμβολα

We only know two inscribed Greek *σύμβολα*. Both can be dated between the second and first centuries BCE. One was recovered in 1749 in the Lilybaeum necropolis, in the far west of Sicily. It is made of ivory, like the Etruscan *tesserae.* Two clasped hands are portrayed on the obverse, an iconography which is repeated in contemporary Latin and Celtiberian *tesserae hospitales* (fig. 4). Its text records a hospitality agreement between a Carthaginian, Imulch Inibalos Chloros, son of Himilchon, and a Greek, Lyson, son of Diognetes.[63] The latter could perhaps be the same Lyson mentioned by Cicero in the *Verrines*.[64] The formula *ξενίαν ἐποήσατο* is included in the text, which almost literally reproduces the expression *hospitium fecit* which appears in some Latin *tesserae* and *tabulae hospitalis*.[65] The agreement explicitly included descendants (*καὶ τῶν ἐγγόνων*), something which, as we have seen, was characteristic of this type of agreement.

The other *σύμβολον* was discovered in an unspecified place in the south of France in 1717. It is made of bronze and reproduces in detail a life-size right hand. On the palm may be read: *σύμβολον / πρὸς / Οὐελαννίους*.[66] On this occasion, it does not seem to be a case of *ξενία* between two individuals, but rather a public hospitality agreement which involved the people of the Velauni, perhaps the same Velauni that according to Pliny the Elder were mentioned in the Tropaeum Augusti from La Turbie.[67] The text does not mention with whom the Velauni established the agreement; it could be a Greek city, perhaps Massalia itself, although there is no indication that allows this possibility to be confirmed.

60 Maggiani 2006 published five of these pieces. Restoration work on the material recovered in Poggio Civitate later allowed a sixth to be identified: Tuck and Wallace 2012. Cf. Wallace 2008b; Della Giovampaola 2016: 131; *ET*² 2.14–2.19.

61 Maggiani 2006: 326

62 cf. Maggiani 2006: 334–7.

63 *CIG* III 5496 = *IG* XIV 279: *Ἰμύλχ Ἰμίλχωνος / Ἰνίβαλος Χλωρὸς ξενίαν / ἐποήσατο πρὸς Λύσων (sic) / Διογνήτου καὶ τῶν ἐγγόνων* (sic). Cf. Brugnone 1984; Knippschild 2002: 40 and 154–5.

64 Cic. *Ver*. 4. 37 and 59; Brugnone 1984: 124.

65 Such as on the *tesserae* from Cáceres el Viejo (*CIL* I² 2825) and Herrera de Pisuerga, Pisoraca (*AE* 1967, 239); cf. Díaz 2012: 216–8.

66 *IG* XIV 2432; Décourt 2004: 3–5.

67 Plin. *Nat*. 3.137.

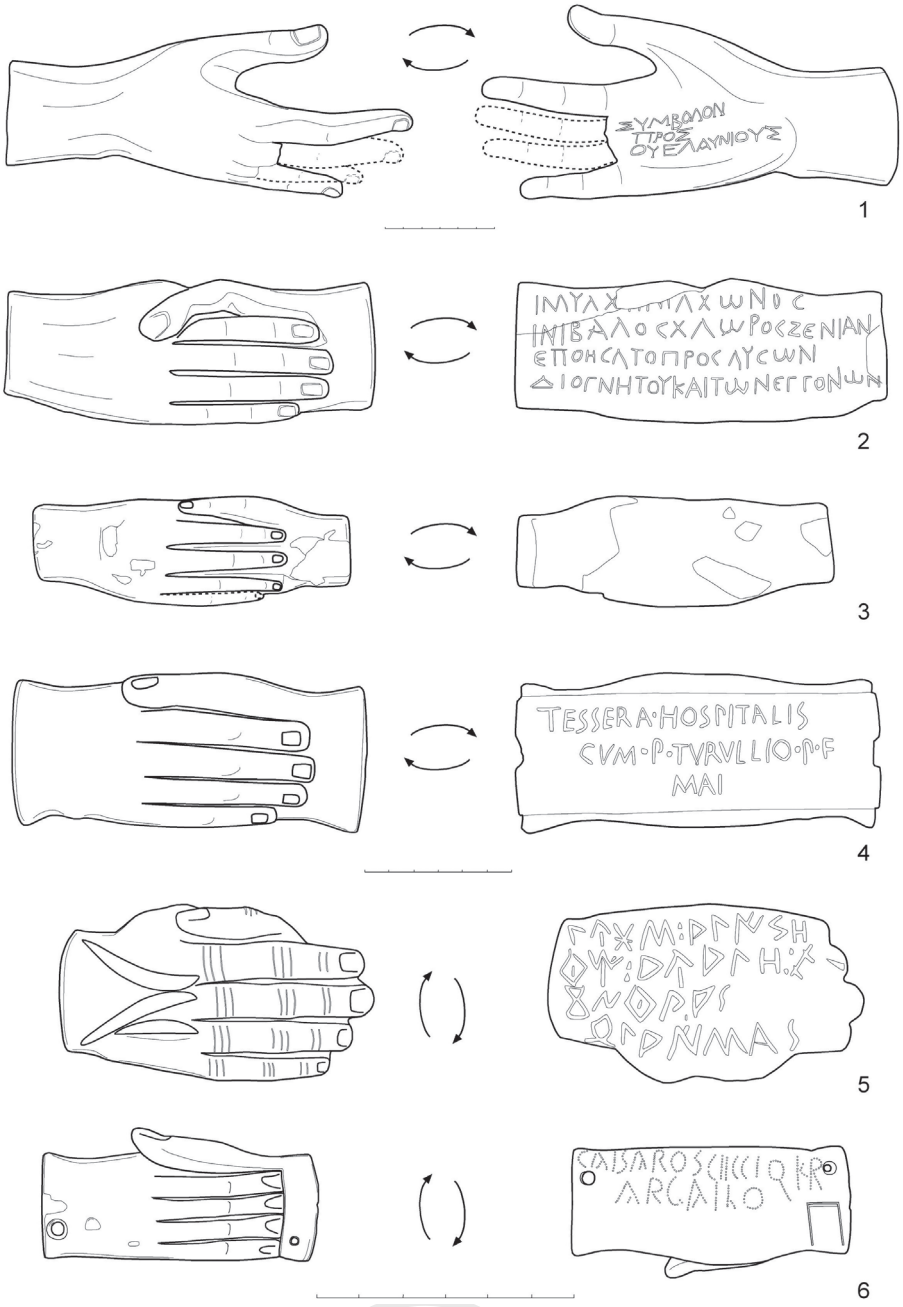

Fig 4. *Σύμβολα* and *tesserae hospitales* in the shape of a right hand and clasped hands. 1: south of France (Greek; *IG* XIV 2432). 2: Lilybaeum (Greek; *IG* XIV 279). 3: Baria (no inscription). 4: Castillo (Latin; *CIL* I² 3465). 5: Contrebia Belaisca (Celtiberian; *MLH* IV K.0.2). 6: Intercatia (Celtiberian; *MLH* IV K.25.1).

4.3 A Punic connection?

The Etruscan *tesserae* from Rome and Carthage, as well as the *σύμβολον* from Lilybaeum, have clear connections with the Punic sphere. The piece from Lilybaeum strongly recalls the hospitality agreement signed by Agorastocles' adoptive father and the father of Hanno in Plautus' *Poenulus*, as in both cases the contracting parties are Greek and Carthaginian respectively. Plautus' work also includes two passages in Punic (*Poen*. 930–939 and 940–949) which contains the terms *thuulech* (*Poen*. 934) and *chir saelicot* (*Poen*. 937) / *ersahelicot* (*Poen*. 947). M. Sznycer used sound arguments to suggest that *thuulech* could correspond to the *hospes* recorded in the Latin version which accompanies the passage in Punic (*Poen*. 954), while *chir saelicot / ersahelicot* could be the Punic equivalent of the expression *tessera hospitalis*, which is also reproduced in the Latin version (*Poen*. 958).[68]

All this could indicate that the use of objects as a sort of password in hospitality agreements was common among Punic populations of the Western Mediterranean. Are there any surviving Punic *tesserae hospitalis*? Surprisingly, the answer to this question is: probably yes. In the excavations of the mid-twentieth century in the old Phoenician colony of Baria, on the coast of Almería, on the south of Spain, in an archaeological context datable to the first century BCE, a bone *tessera* was found in the shape of clasped hands, very like that from Lilybaeum (fig. 4.3).[69] There are no discernible traces of an inscription on its reverse side. It is possible that an inscription disappeared due to the alterations that the object underwent following exposure to fire, or it may simply be an anepigraphic piece. In any case, given its characteristics, its interpretation as a *tessera hospitalis* seems a reasonable hypothesis. The absence of an inscription means it cannot be classified as 'Punic' with complete certainty, but at the end of the Republic, Baria was a city in which Punic culture retained a considerable presence.[70]

4.4 Latin *tesserae* from Italy

Only four Latin *tesserae hospitales* are currently known from Italy. These are small pieces of zoomorphic bronze, two in the shape of a ram's head (fig. 5) and the other two in the form of a dolphin. All can be dated between the third and mid-second centuries BCE.

Three of them record private hospitality agreements which probably connected Roman families from the *nobilitas* with other local nobles – or at least, this can be inferred from the *tessera* from Trasacco, the only one of the three in which the two parties are mentioned: *T. Manlius T.f. / hospes / T. Staiodius N.//f.*[71] The Staiedii are a well-attested

68 Sznycer 1967: 78–80, 95–7 and 127–8; vid. also: De Melo 2012: 194–6 and 206–7.
69 Tovar 1955: 583–4; cf. Simón 2013: 302.
70 cf. López 1995 and 2007.
71 *CIL* I² 1764; cf. Luschi 2008.

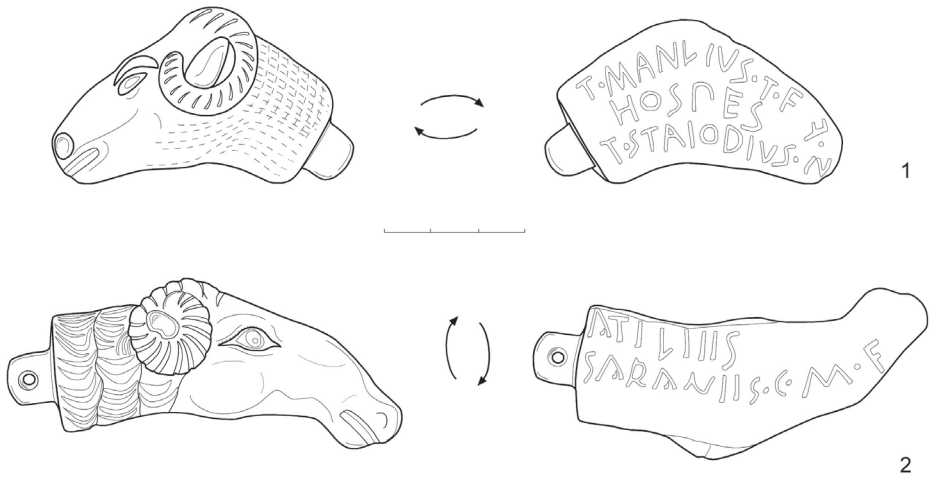

Fig. 5. Latin *tesserae hospitales* from Italy. 1: Trasacco (*CIL* I² 1764). 2: Provenance unknown (*CIL* I² 23; measurements unknown).

family from the area around Lake Fucino, where the *tessera* was recovered.[72] T. Manlius, in turn, could belong to the senatorial family of the Manlii.[73] The other two *tesserae* only record the names of one of the parties involved. One, of unknown provenance, mentions the senatorial family of the Atilii Serrani: *Atilies / Sarranes C. M. f.*[74] The other, perhaps from the Bay of Naples, mentions one *A. Hostilius A. f. / Mancin(us)*,[75] maybe a member of the Hostilii Mancini family, which supplied several consuls in the second century BCE.[76]

The fourth Italian *tessera* records an agreement of *hospitium publicum* (fig. 6.1). It is incompletely preserved, so it is difficult to establish who the contracting parties were.[77] It is likely, however, that one of the parties was the *praefectura* of Fundi, where it was recovered. The name of the individual beneficiary of the agreement could be one Ti(berius) C[laudius?]. It was deliberately cut, so this may be an instance of a '*tessera confracta*', a consequence of the agreement being broken, although unfortunately there are no further indications that would allow that to be confirmed.

72 *CIL* I² 389; IX 3901; cf. Letta and D'Amato 1975: 222–4.

73 Letta and D'Amato 1975: 217; Torelli 1982: 168.

74 *CIL* I² 23. It is known by a photograph, and was last seen in Vienna. In the opinion of P. Poccetti (1979: nº 203), it could be an Oscan inscription. Its ascription as a Latin one remains preferable, however, cf. Dupraz 2004: 246; Beltrán and Velaza forthcoming, which studies Latin nominative plurals in *-es*.

75 It is known only from the description by H. Dressel, *CIL* I² 828.

76 *MRR* II, 573.

77 *CIL* I² 611 = *AE* 1987, 236: *[Co(n)sc]riptes co(n)se(nsu) T. Fa[--- praifecti / et p]raifectura tot[a Fundi hospitium / f]ecere quom Ti. C[--- / i]n eius fidem om[nes nos tradimus et] / ⁵ covenumis(!) co+[---] / M. Claudio M. f. [--- cos.]*.

4.5 The Latin *tesserae* from Spain

The Iberian Peninsula has provided seven *tesserae hospitales* with Latin texts. They are later than the Italian ones. Four can be dated between the late second century BCE and

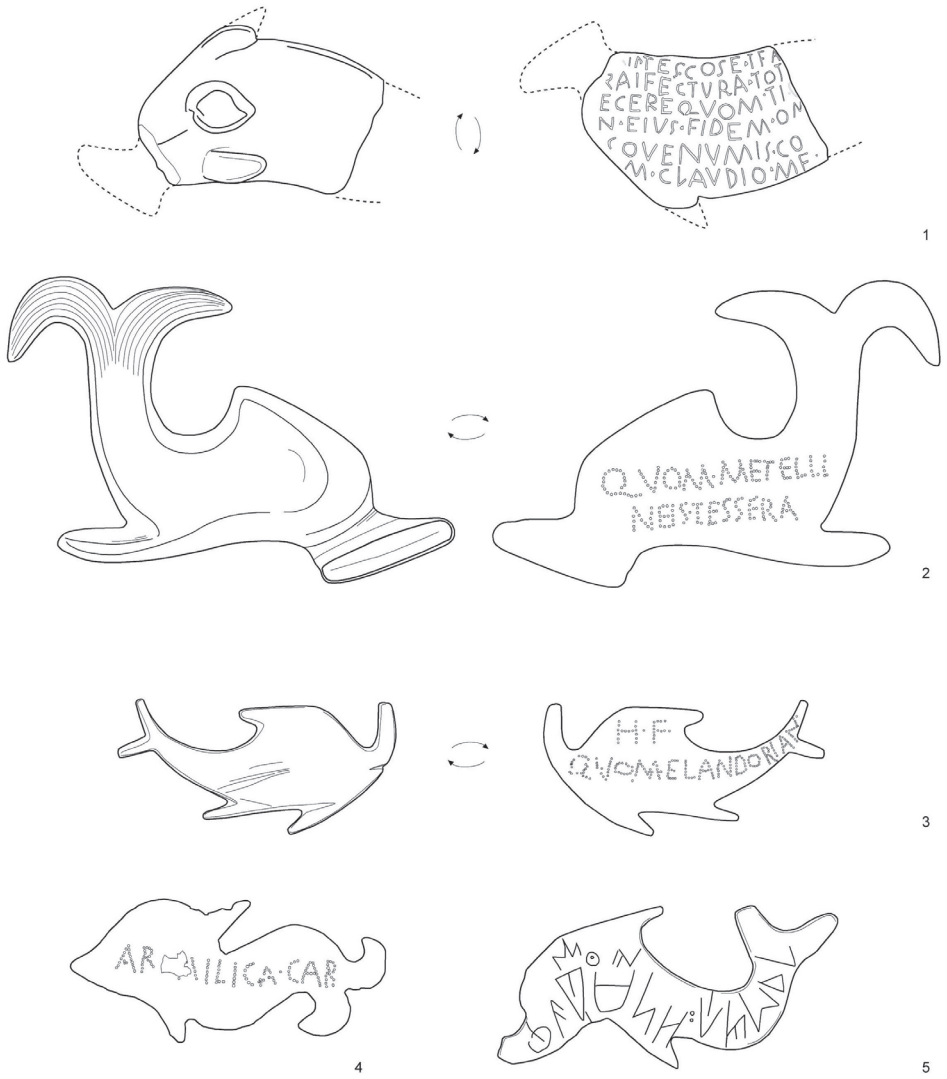

Fig. 6. Latin and Celtiberian *tesserae hospitales* in the shape of dolphins. 1: Fundi (Latin; *CIL* I² 611; fragment). 2: Fuentes Claras (Latin; *HEp* 3, 1993, 373). 3: Cáceres el Viejo (Latin; *CIL* I² 2825). 4: Intercatia (Celtiberian; *HEp* 9, 1999, 477). 5: Unknown provenance (Celtiberian; *MLH* IV K.0.9, measurements unknown).

the end of the Republic period, while the other three date to the early first century CE.[78] All are bronze. One portrays two clasped hands (fig. 4.4), two are in the form of a dolphin, a common motif among both Italian and Celtiberian *tesserae* (fig. 6), and another is in the shape of a boar, an iconography that is intermittently repeated on Celtiberian *tesserae* (fig. 7). The three remaining pieces are on small, more-or-less-rectangular sheets of bronze with uneven edges (fig. 8).

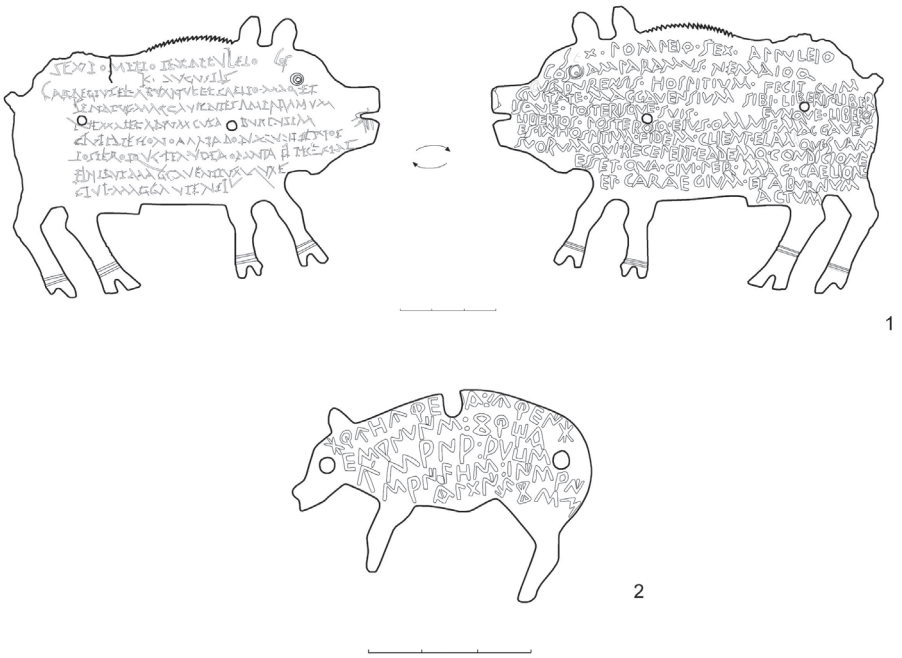

Fig. 7. *Tesserae hospitales* in the shape of boars. 1: Herrera de Pisuerga (Latin; *AE* 1967, 239). 2: Uxama Argaela (Celtiberian; *MLH* IV K.32.2).

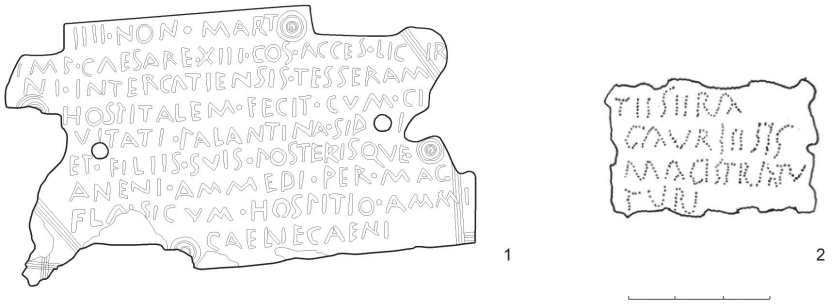

Fig. 8. Latin *Tesserae hospitales* formed by sheets with irregular borders. 1: Intercatia (*CIL* II 5763). 2: Las Merchanas (*CIL* I² 3466. Lost, drawing M. Gómez-Moreno).

78 cf. Balbín 2006.

Among the Spanish Latin *tesserae*, there are examples whose texts adapt well to the Italian model of *hospitium privatum*, while others have clear local features which undoubtedly show the existence of Celtiberian hospitality traditions.[79]

The *tessera* recovered in Castillo, in the province of Teruel, undoubtedly corresponds to an interpersonal hospitality agreement, homologous to those documented in Italy, in which one of the signatories, P. Turullius, the only one mentioned in the *tessera*,[80] was a Roman citizen and member of an important family involved in mining activity in the area around Carthago Nova.[81] The face bearing the text also features a cartouche that protrudes from the surface of the piece to enable it to be fitted to its corresponding piece, which probably recorded the name of the other party in the agreement; to judge by the site of recovery, in the middle of Celtiberia, that party could be indigenous.

More uncertainties are raised by the interpretation of the *tesserae* from Fuentes Claras and Cáceres el Viejo. It seems that both pieces correspond to agreements in which indigenous people were involved, as is undoubtedly also the case in that from Castillo.[82] The *tesserae* from Las Merchanas, Pallantia, and Herrera de Pisuerga, in turn, record agreements that should be interpreted from the perspective of local tradition. As we will see, the text on the *tessera* from Las Marchanas, *te(s)sera / Caurie(n)sis / magistratu Turi*, seems to reproduce, in a Latin version, the formula used in Celtiberian *tesserae*.[83] The four *tesserae* correspond to public hospitality agreements undertaken by cities of Celtic lineage which undoubtedly carried the concession of local citizenship to the beneficiaries – a privilege that coincides with that associated with Roman *hospitium publicum* – as is explicitly expressed on the *tessera* from Herrera de Pisuerga (face a, l. 6: *civitate honoraria donatus*).[84]

The *tesserae* from Pallantia, like the one found in Herrera de Pisuerga, can be dated to the early first century CE, two by consular dating. They have relatively long texts,[85] with formulae similar to those documented in some of the *tabulae* from the Imperial period from the interior of Spain which, like these, record public hospitality agreements that can also be ascribed to local tradition (which does not exclude the incorporation of elements from the Roman tradition).[86]

The *tessera* from Herrera de Pisuerga is perhaps the most interesting of the three.[87] It was issued by the senate and local magistrates of the Civitas Maggaviensium, to benefit Amparamus from the family of the Nemaioci, a native of Cusabura. It is an opisthographic piece. The texts on both sides are very alike, although each was written from the perspective of each of the two contracting parties. Its palaeographic characteristics

79 cf. Beltrán 2001.
80 *CIL* I² 3465: *Tessera hospitalis / cum P. Turullio P.f. / Mai(cia)*; cf. Díaz 2008: 185–6.
81 Nonnis 2012: 440.
82 *HEp* 3, 1993, 373: *quom Metelli/neis tessera*; *CIL* I² 2825: *h(ospitium) f(ecit) / quom Elandorian(?)*; cf. Díaz 2008: 184–5 and 201–2.
83 *CIL* I² 3466; cf. Díaz 2008: 207–8.
84 Beltrán 2012.
85 *CIL* II 5763; *AE* 1999, 922; *AE* 1967, 239; cf. Balbín 2006: 208–15.
86 Beltrán 2003.
87 Beltrán 2012.

indicate that they were written by two different hands, perhaps representing the two parties involved, a feature also attested on the Celtiberian *tessera hospitalis* issued by Contrebia Belaisca, which will be discussed later. The appearance of the piece recalls, for example, the Celtiberian *tessera* from Uxama Argaela, which was also produced on a sheet of bronze cut into the shape of a boar and, like the one from Herrera de Pisuerga, it even has two circular holes intended to allow it to be fitted to its corresponding piece (fig. 7).[88]

4.6 The Celtiberian *tesserae*

Tesserae hospitales are the most numerous type of document in Celtiberian epigraphy after inscriptions on pottery.[89] Establishing a catalogue, however, is complicated because of the number of pieces of questionable authenticity. At least 33 examples are known which can relatively confidently be considered authentic, which does not preclude the possibility that there may be others among the dubious ones. Of the 33 *tesserae*, 25 were written using Palaeohispanic script, adopted by the Celtiberians from the Iberians may be at the end of the third century BCE, though attested only from the second.[90] The remaining eight use Latin alphabet.[91] Very few examples were recovered in the course of archaeological excavations, so their dating should be considered approximate.[92] Broadly, the *tesserae* that use Palaeohispanic script are dated between the late second and early first centuries. Those that use Latin alphabet are probably a little later, and can be dated to the first century BCE.

All known Celtiberian *tesserae* were made of bronze, with some variations in the alloys used.[93] Some portray iconographic motifs adopted from Roman models, like clasped hands (fig. 4) or dolphins (fig. 6), although the majority of them use motifs derived from local iconographic traditions, especially boars, bulls, horses, and occasionally birds and fishes (figs. 1, 7, and 9). As is the case with the *tesserae* from Herrera de Pisuerga and Uxama Argaela, it is common for the Celtiberian *tesserae* to feature small rods and/or circular holes, undoubtedly intended to enable the two corresponding tokens

88 *MLH* IV K.23.2; cf. Simón 2013: 439–40.

89 As an introduction to Celtiberian language and epigraphy: Beltrán and Jordán 2019. For a more detailed approach: Jordán 2019. The *corpus* of reference continues to be Volume IV of the *Monumenta Linguarum Hispanicarum* (*MLH*) by J. Untermann, published in 1997. The online database Hesperia is also useful, and regularly updated (http://hesperia.ucm.es/). The most complete catalogue of Celtiberian *tesserae hospitales* is Simón 2013: 295–540, which includes extensive treatment of the dubious pieces.

90 Jordán 2017.

91 Simón 2014.

92 Of the 33 Celtiberian *tesserae*, only three come from archaeological excavations; they were recovered in the Celtiberian city of Caminreal (Vicente and Ezquerra 2003), the Roman foundation of Grachurris (Martínez and Jordán 2016), and the Cantabrian *oppidum* of Monte Bernorio (Torres and Ballester 2014), respectively.

93 Simón 2013: 316.

from the same agreement to be fitted together, thus making it possible to identify the two signatory parties.

The Celtiberian collection includes a series of exceptional pieces which portray complex geometric shapes designed to fit together (fig. 10). Two of these pieces were found together in the *oppidum* of La Custodia (Viana, Navarre). This is the only case where we are confident we have the two corresponding *tesserae* from the same agreement (fig. 10.1). One of them features an inscription in Palaeohispanic script, **sakarokas**, the interpretation of which is debated, but which perhaps could be an anthroponym. The other, however, is anepigraphic.[94]

There are another eight surviving anepigraphic zoomorphic and geometric pieces which are similar to the Celtiberian *tesserae* and can therefore be considered *tesserae hospitales,* despite lacking any inscription.[95]

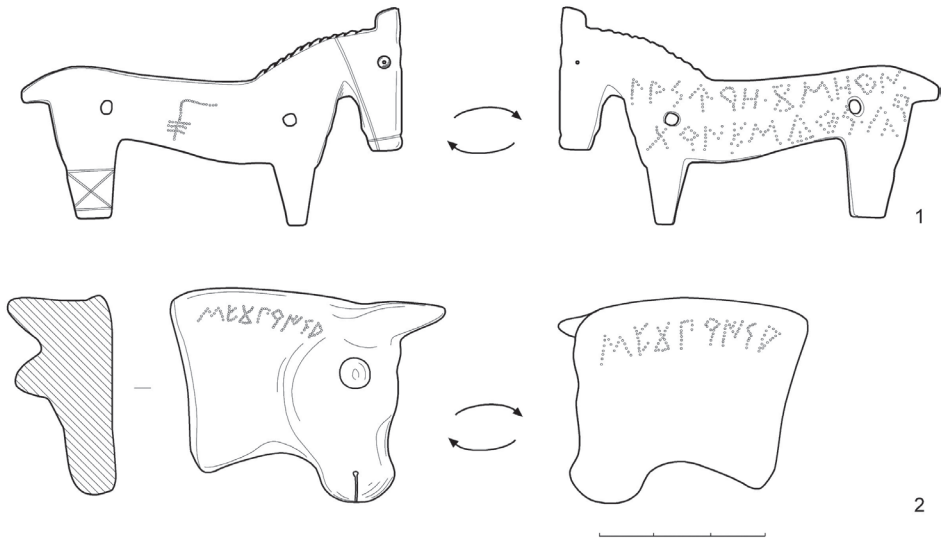

Fig. 9. Zoomorphic Celtiberian *tesserae hospitales*. 1: Caminreal (*HEp* 3, 2003–04, 689). 2: provenance unknown (*MLH* VI K.0.3).

94 *MLH* IV K.18.4; cf. Simón 2013: 447–8 and 453; Jordán 2019: 595–8.
95 Simón 2013; 452–5.

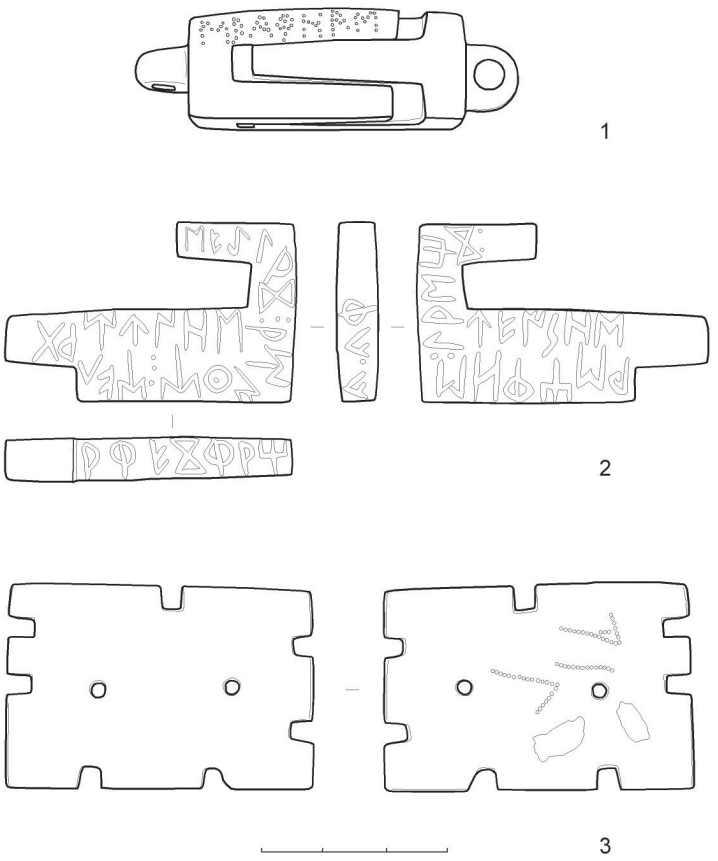

Fig. 10. Geometric Celtiberian *tesserae hospitales*. 1: Viana (two *tesserae* joined together, one with a Celtiberian text: *MLH* IV K.18.4, the other anepigraphic: Simón 2012: TA1). 2: Provenance unknown (*MLH* IV K.0.11). 3: Segisama (anepigraphic; Simón 2012: TA4).

There are also three fragmentarily preserved Celtiberian *tesserae* which could perhaps have been deliberately broken. As in the case with the Latin *tessera* from Fundi, they could perhaps be examples of *tesserae confractae* as a result of the agreement being broken.[96]

It seems clear that the Celtiberian *tesserae*, or at least, those with more comprehensible texts, belong to agreements which involved individuals and cities, like those that appear in the Latin *tesserae* rooted in indigenous tradition which come from Spain.[97] Normally they mention both parties in the agreement. Perhaps the piece that best illustrates this is called the 'Fröhner *tessera*', found in the nineteenth century in the area

96 The fragmentary Celtiberian *tesserae* come respectively from Viana and Cintruénigo in Navarre (*MLH* IV K.18.2; *HEp* 15, 2006, 201) and Monte Bernorio in Palencia (Torres and Ballester 2014). The latter was deliberately cut using shears.

97 Beltrán 2001.

around Zaragoza and currently conserved in the Cabinet de Médailles in Paris. It is in the shape of clasped hands (fig. 4.5). Its text was written using Palaeohispanic script: **lubos alizo / kum aualo ke(ntis) / kontebiaz belaiskaz**.[98] The first two lines record the onomastic formula of the beneficiary, composed by a personal name in nominative (**lubos**), a family name in genitive plural (**alizokum**), and filiation composed by the word **ke(ntis)**, 'son',[99] in nominative, undoubtedly abbreviated under Roman influence, and the name of the father in genitive (**aualo**). In the last two lines, the name of the city involved appears in ablative: Contrebia Belaisca, mentioned in the famous Tabula Contrebiensis.[100] Subtle variations in the tracing of the letters suggest that the text was written by two hands, like on the Latin *tessera* from Herrera de Pisuerga. One of the writers wrote the name of the beneficiary and the other the name of the city.[101]

The *tessera* in the shape of a horse, found in the Celtiberian-Roman city of La Caridad (Caminreal, Teruel) uses a very similar formula (fig. 9.1).[102] Its text, written in Palaeohispanic script, records firstly the personal name of the beneficiary in genitive (**lazuro**), followed by the name of the family to which he belonged in genitive plural (**kosokum**). In the second line, the sequence **tarmestutez** appears in ablative, probably a reference to the city of Termes/Tarmes, in the Douro Valley.[103] The final letter in the text is the word **kar**, which is frequently reproduced in the Celtiberian *tesserae hospitales*.[104] It is likely to be a technical term, perhaps equivalent to 'agreement', '*tessera*', or even '*hospitium*'.[105] The same formula recurs on a *tessera* in the shape of clasped hands from Intercatia, written in Latin alphabet: CAISAROS CECCIQ(VM) K(A)R ARGAILO (fig. 4.6). The text begins with an onomastic formula composed by a personal name in nominative followed by the family name in genitive plural, after which the term *k(a)r* appears abbreviated, and, finally, the name of the city with which Caisaros established an agreement, which can be identified with the abovementioned Uxama Argaela, on the upper course of the river Douro.[106]

Exceptionally, some *tesserae* feature more extensive texts that incorporate other elements. For example, one geometric *tessera* of unknown provenance reads: **sekilako amikum melmunos / ata / arekorati/ka kar / bistiros lastiko / ueizos** (fig. 10.2).[107] Once again, the text starts with the name of the beneficiary in genitive (**sekilako**), followed by the name of his or her family in genitive plural (**amikum**) and the name of the father in genitive (**melmunos**). **ata** could be a verbal form, perhaps equivalent to the Latin participle *acta*. It is followed by the name of the city with which the agreement was made, using an derived adjective form with the suffix **-ka** which is common in

98 *MLH* IV K.0.2; Simón 2013: 436–8; Jordán 2019: 544–9.
99 Jordán 2019: 257–8.
100 *CIL* I² 2951a.
101 Beltrán 2004.
102 *HEp* 3, 2003–04, 689; Simón 2013: 449–50; Jordán 2019: 549–52.
103 Jordán 2008: 119–24.
104 *MLH* V.1 s. v. **kar**.
105 Jordán 2014; 2019: 259–68.
106 *MLH* IV K.15.1; Simón 2013: 429–30; Jordán 2019: 858–63.
107 *MLH* IV K.0.11; Simón 2013: 443–5; Jordán 2019: 558–62.

Celtiberian, agreeing with **kar**, forming a sequence that recalls the expression *tes(s)era Caurie(n)sis* which appears on the *tessera* from Las Merchanas. The city could be the same one that minted coins with the legend **arekorata**, the location of which is unclear, but may be Muro de Ágreda (Soria).[108] Another onomastic formula appears in the final lines, composed by a personal name in nominative (**bistiros**) accompanied by a family name (**lastiko**), followed by the sequence **ueizos**, perhaps related to the Indo-European root *weyd- 'see',[109] which opens various highly conjectural possibilities of identifying Bistiros as a witness or even, more probably, with the city magistrate who supervised the signing of the agreement, in much the same way as on the abovementioned Latin *tessera* from Las Merchanas and the more complex ones from Pallantia and Herrera de Pisuerga.

Typically, the text on Celtiberian *tesserae* is much briefer and mentions only one of the two parties involved in the agreement. In the majority of cases this is limited to the city, which can appear only in adjective form, such as, for example, on a piece in the shape of an animal viewed from above (a bear?), of unknown provenance, on which appears the adjective **libiaka** (fig. 11.1),[110] probably related to Libia, a city located among the Berones.[111] Another such example appears on a *tessera* of unknown provenance in the shape of a bovid head (fig. 9.2), on which appears the adjectival form **sekobiriza**,[112] maybe associated with the Celtiberian city that minted coins with the legend **sekobirikez**.[113] Occasionally, the adjective derived from the name of a city can appear accompanied by other elements, especially the term **kar**, as occurs on a *tessera* in the shape of a bird recovered in Pallantia on which may be read: **uirouiaka kar** (fig. 1),[114] which probably refers to the city of **uirouia**, known from the coins it minted.[115]

5. The supports and iconography of the *tesserae hospitales*

As we have seen, with the exception of the Etruscan pieces, the *σύμβολον* from Lilybaeum, and the anepigraphic example from Baria, all the surviving *tesserae hospitales* are made of bronze. These can be divided into two subgroups, depending on the production technique. First, there are the *tesserae* made using lost wax casting, normally with one face in relief and the other flat. Second, there are the *tesserae* which were made by cutting a thin sheet of bronze. This latter technique, much simpler than the first, is exclusive to the Iberian Peninsula. The majority of the texts were engraved with incision, although the Latin and Celtiberian *tesserae* from Spain frequently used technique of puncture.

108 *MLH* I A.52.
109 *MLH* V.1 s. v. **ueidos**; Jordán 2019: 274–5.
110 *MLH* IV K.0.4; Simón 2013: 434–5; Jordán 2019: 519–21.
111 Plin. *Nat*. 3.3.24.
112 *MLH* K.0.3; Jordán and Díaz 2006; Jordán 2019: 521–5.
113 *MLH* I A.89.
114 *MLH* IV K.25.1; Simón 2013: 438–9; Jordán 2019: 527–9.
115 *MLH* I A.71.

The iconography of the *tesserae* allows a distinction between figurative and non-figurative pieces (table 2). The first group encompasses zoomorphic pieces and those that feature clasped hands. The second group consists of the geometrically-shaped examples, made both from lost wax casting and on cut sheets. Among the non-figurative pieces should be included four Latin examples and one Celtiberian from Spain, which were produced on rectangular sheets with more or less irregular borders.

Every indication suggests that the criteria used in the selection of iconographic motifs featured on the *tesserae* resulted from a complex convergence of external and local influences, but their meaning is not always clear.

Table 2: Iconography of the *tesserae hospitales* and *σύμβολα*.

	Etruscan	Latin (Ita.)	Greek	Latin (Spa.)	Celtiberian	anepig.	**total**
hands			***2***	***1***	***2***	***1***	***6***
animals	***6***	***4***		***3***	***25***	***5***	***43***
lions	4						4
boars	1			1	6		8
rams		2					2
dolphins		2		2	3		7
fish					3	1	4
bovids	1				5	1	7
horses					5	1	6
bears					1	1	2
birds					1		1
wolves					1	1	2
geometric					***5***	***4***	***9***
3 dimensions					5	2	7
2 dimensions						2	2
uneven				***3***	***1***		***4***
others	***2***						***2***
total	***8***	***4***	***2***	***7***	***33***	***10***	***64***

Clasped hands

Clasped hands – *δεξίωσις* in Greek and *dextrarum iunctio* in Latin – are the motif most directly associated with *hospitium* (fig. 4). Their origin goes back to the Near East, although they were distributed widely throughout the Mediterranean.[116] From the Clas-

116 cf. Knippschild 2002 and 2004.

sical period, the motif was adopted in Greece, where it is associated with international agreements. It was usual for stelae that published international treaties to be accompanied by the representation of the two signatory cities' protecting deities shaking hands.[117] Something similar occurred on the stelae that recorded decrees nominating *πρόξενοι*, which featured the beneficiary shaking hands with the city's patron deity.[118] Later, from the Augustan period, this motif appeared frequently on the coins commemorating agreements of *ὁμονοία* between two cities, minted in Thrace and Asia Minor.[119]

In Italy, offering the right hand symbolised *deditio in fidem*,[120] as for example it is used in the murals of the tomb of the Fabii in the Esquiline necropolis.[121] Livy uses the expression '*dextrae dextras iungentes fidem obstrinximus*' to refer to the agreement between the Capuan Pacuvius Calvatius and Hannibal during the Second Punic War.[122] The Italian rebels used the representation of *dextrarum iunctio* in a series of coins minted during the Social War, perhaps to symbolise the alliance between Italy and Mithridates of Pontus.[123] The *denarii* minted in 70 BC to celebrate the end of the war bore personifications of Italy and Rome shaking hands.[124] The abbreviated version of this motif, that is, limited to clasped hands, appears for the first time in coin iconography on a *quinarius* minted in 44 BC by the moneyer L. Aemilius Buca,[125] and was used again in a series of *aurii* and *denarii* minted respectively by C. Veibius Vaarus and L. Mussidius Longus during the Second Triumvirate.[126] Later, this motif featured occasionally on coins from the Imperial period associated with concepts of *fides* and *concordia*.[127] From the first century BCE, the *dextrarum iunctio* also became a symbol of conjugal alliance, so that it is common for family mausolea to bear representations of their incumbents shaking hands.[128]

It is therefore a motif with a long tradition and deep roots throughout the Mediterranean, which explains its use in very disparate cultural contexts. The 'abbreviated' iconography of clasped hands, however, appears to be a relatively newer innovation, perhaps of Italian origin. Its introduction to the Iberian Peninsula is without doubt a consequence of Roman influence, since its use is not attested among autochthonous populations before the conquest. It is likely that its use in Greek *σύμβολα*, at least in the one from Lilybaeum, was also a consequence of Roman influence.

117 e. g. *IG* II² 1.
118 e. g. *IG* I³ 91.
119 Franke and Nolle 1997.
120 Hölkeskamp 2000.
121 cf. Holliday 2000: 83–91.
122 Liv. 23.9.3. The connection between the right hand, *fides*, and *hospitium* recurs frequently in Latin authors, cf. e. g.: Cic. *Deiot.* 8; Liv. 25.18.7; Tac. *Hist.* 1.54, 2.8; Sil. 16.155–157.
123 Campana 1987: 123–9.
124 *RRC* 403/1.
125 *RRC* 480/24.
126 *RRC* 494/10–12; 494/41.
127 Hölscher 1980: 301–2; Salamone 2004: 36–40 and 141–5.
128 Davies 1985; Kockel 1993: 49–50.

Animals

Animals are the motif most frequently portrayed on Etruscan, Latin, and Celtiberian *tesserae*. It is not always possible to determine the significance of these representations. In some cases, it seems that they could be connected with sacrificial victims as an offering to the divinities protecting the agreement. This could perhaps be the meaning of the representations of rams and boars.[129] Not all the animals represented align easily with this interpretation, however. For example, the lions and sphinx portrayed on the Etruscan *tesserae* were perhaps influenced by common motifs in the iconographic tradition of the Orientalising Period.[130]

Representations of dolphins constitute a particularly interesting case. We know seven *tesserae* in the shape of a dolphin: two Latin ones from Italy, one of which is unfortunately lost;[131] three Celtiberian ones;[132] and another two Latin ones from Spain which probably record agreements from a local tradition (fig. 6).[133] Dolphins are a very common animal in Classical iconography, and are usually related to Apollo and associated with maritime contexts. The Celtic peoples from the interior of the Iberian Peninsula quickly adopted this motif, which often appears on coins struck by Celtiberian mints,[134] as well as on pavements of *opus signinum* discovered in the most Romanised settlements.[135] It is therefore difficult to determine what meaning those populations gave to representations of dolphins. Fish are a common motif on painted pottery from Numantia[136] and there are even some Celtiberian *tesserae* in the shape of a fish.[137] It is likely that fish played a key role in Celtiberian religious beliefs, as animals charged with providing the deceased with passage to the hereafter.[138] It is, however, impossible to determine if the representations of dolphins were interpreted by Celtiberians through their autochthonous lens or, by contrast, if it was a motif whose success was exclusively due to the prestige of Graeco-Roman iconographic models.

Whatever the case, the Celtiberians did not confine themselves to copying the repertoire of images supplied by Rome. The heterogeneous collection of animals that are portrayed on Spanish *tesserae* includes several that had an indisputable symbolic dimension among peoples of Celtic origin, such as birds, boars, horses, bears, and bovids.[139] *Fibulae* from a local tradition have zoomorphic representations which were very popular in the interior of the Iberian Peninsula from before the Roman conquest, and the so-

129 Italia: *CIL* I² 23 and 1764 (rams' heads). Carthago: *ET*² Af 3.1 (boar). Spain: *AE* 1967, 239, *MLH* IV K.18.1 and 2, K.23.2; *HEp* 15, 2006, 293; *HEp* 20, 2011, 623–624; Torres and Ballester 2014 (boars).
130 Roma: *ET*² La 2.3; Murlo: *ET*² AS 2.14, 16, 17 and 19.
131 *CIL* I² 611 and 828.
132 *MLH* IV K.0.9, K.7.3; *HEp* 9, 1999, 477.
133 *CIL* I² 2825; *HEp* 3, 1993, 373.
134 Abascal 2002: 19–21.
135 cf. Vassal 2006: 108–19.
136 Romero 2017.
137 *MLH* IV K.14.2 and K.24.1; Ballester and Turiel 2009; Simón 2012: TA5 (anepigraphic).
138 cf. Marco 2017: 331–6.
139 Aldhouse-Green 1989: 131–51; ead. 2004, 113–48.

called '*signa equitum*', occasionally recovered in Celtiberian necropoleis of the second century BCE, usually incorporate figures of horses and horsemen. These objects were made using the same techniques as the Celtiberian *tesserae,* with which they share clear iconographic similarities.[140] Bovids and suidae are likewise the most common motif of the so-called '*verracos*', large sculptures characteristic of the interior of the Meseta towards the end of the Iron Age.[141]

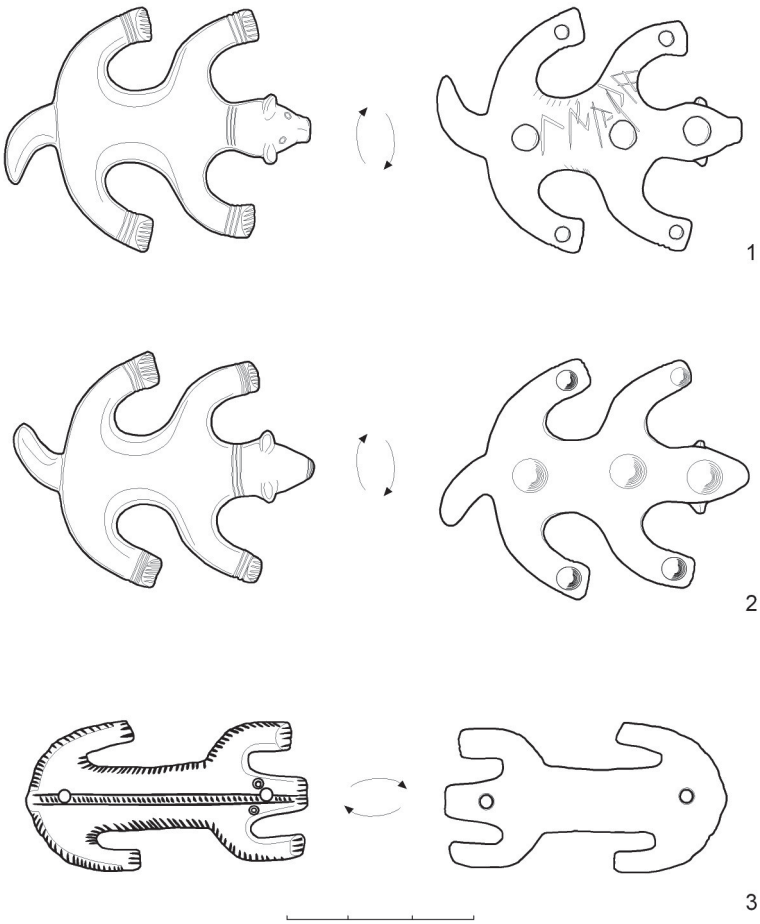

Fig. 11. Celtiberian *tesserae hospitales* with animals viewed from above. 1: Provenance unknown (*MLH* IV K.0.4). 2: Las Rabas (anepigraphic; Fernández and Bolado 2011). 3: La Morterona (anepigraphic; Romero and Sanz 2012).

140 Argente 1994; Almagro and Torres 1999; Lorrio 2010; cf. Simón 2013: 335–7.
141 Álvarez-Sanchís 2003: 215–94.

A good example of the deep connections between the iconography of the *tesserae hospitales* and local traditions are the representations of animals – bears and perhaps also wolves – viewed from above. We know of three *tesserae* in this shape, one inscribed and two anepigraphic (fig. 11).[142] The inscribed piece and one of the anepigraphic ones undoubtedly come from the same workshop. It is even possible that these are the two matching *tesserae hospitales* from the same agreement, since both have the same shape, with the distinctive feature that one of them has holes on its surface and the other small circular rivets that seem intended to fit into the holes of the first. Representations of animals viewed from above are documented with relative frequency between the third century BCE and the first CE on various objects from the region occupied by the Arevaci and Vaccaei. All the indications suggest that this was an iconographic motif with a complex religious meaning for the Celtic populations of the interior of the Spain, the significance of which we are unfortunately unable to unlock.[143]

5.3 Non-figurative geometric *tesserae* and rectangular sheets with uneven edges

The geometric *tesserae* can be considered a creation of the Spanish Celts (fig. 10).[144] It is likely that they were originally from the area occupied by the Berones, on the upper course of the Ebro. The majority of these *tesserae* were recovered in the *oppidum* of La Custodia (Viana, Navarre).[145] Their identification as *tesserae hospitales* is secure, since their texts resemble those documented in the figurative examples. They were designed to allow the two corresponding pieces of the same agreement to fit together. It does not appear that these objects were the result of abstraction from figurative motifs. It is possible that they drew on models made in other materials: the system for fitting them together is similar to the assembly systems used in carpentry, so they may have reproduced pieces that were originally made of wood.[146] Two anepigraphic pieces have recently been published with the same appearance as the inscribed geometric examples, but, unlike them, they were not made using lost wax casting, but on cut sheets of bronze (fig. 10.2). Their characteristics nevertheless indicate that these could also be *tesserae hospitales*.[147]

The Iberian Peninsula has supplied another four *tesserae* – three Latin and one Celtiberian – made on sheets of bronze which are broadly rectangular, with the borders cut in a wavy pattern, perhaps to enable the two *tesserae* of the same agreement to be matched together (fig. 8).[148] They are, therefore, distinct from the geometric examples, but, like them, it does not appear that they draw from figurative motifs. It has been suggested that

142 *MLH* IV K.0.4; Fernández and Bolado 2011; Romero and Sanz 2012: 197–9.
143 Romero 2010.
144 Simón 2002.
145 cf. Labeaga 2000.
146 Simón 2013: 339.
147 Torija and Baquedano 2007; cf. Simón 2012: TA6–TA7.
148 Latin: *CIL* II 5763; *AE* 1999, 922; 1967, 239. Celtiberian: *HEp* 7, 1997, 1110.

they may reproduce documents made of skin, but for the moment there are no indications that would allow this theory to be confirmed.[149]

6. Final thoughts

One of the most noteworthy aspects of the *tesserae hospitales* is that they were used by highly disparate communities – which include at least the Etruscans, Greeks, Romans, Carthaginians, and Celtiberians – over a long period of time which spans more than five centuries. All these pieces display a clear family resemblance, regardless of provenance or chronology. Despite such a wide geographical distribution and extended chronology, however, their number is unusually limited, above all taking into account that some ancient authors like Plautus refer to them with a familiarity that suggests these objects were relatively common.

It is likely that as well as being made from bone, ivory, and bronze, *tesserae hospitales* could be produced on other, less durable supports that have not been preserved. The geometric *tesserae* from Celtiberia which, if our hypothesis is correct, could perhaps reproduce models usually made of wood point in this direction, for example. On the other hand, the existence of anepigraphic *tesserae* indicates that these objects did not need an inscription to fulfil their function. In his *Poenulus*, Plautus refers to the correspondence between the shapes of the *tesserae* ('*Agendum huc ostende. Est par probe. nam habeo domi*', Pl. *Poen*. 1050), but not their texts. It is therefore probable that these objects could sometimes lacked an inscription. It has been possible to identify the anepigraphic Celtiberian *tesserae hospitales* and the Punic one from Baria by their unmistakable similarities to inscribed examples. We cannot discard the possibility, however, that other types of objects could have been used as tokens in hospitality agreements, which have gone unnoticed because they lack inscriptions or other features that would allow them to be identified as such. It is apposite to recall here the *astragaloi* that, according to the Euripides scholiast, Jason handed to Medea so she could benefit from those with whom he had established *ξενία* agreements.

It is not currently possible to solve the nature of the relationship between the first Etruscan *tesserae* and the later Latin, Greek, and Celtiberian ones, which are separated by a hiatus of almost three centuries. From the third century BCE it appears that the distribution of this type of document in the Western Mediterranean could be related to Roman expansion, which is also implied by the use of bronze as a support, a metal characteristic of Roman inscriptions issued by the authorities.[150] This fact seems clear in Spain, as the proliferation of *tesserae* in the shape of dolphins and clasped hands indicates, although in this region Roman influence combined with local traditions in a rather complex manner, giving rise to developments of notable originality – among which the geometric *tesserae* stand out above all. The case of the only two Greek *σύμβολα* that

149 Beltrán 2001, 45.
150 cf. Beltrán 1999.

we know poses many questions, although the greater antiquity of the Italian *tesserae* and the use of the iconography of clasped hands arguably point to probable inspiration from Roman models.

At the end of the first century BCE, *tesserae hospitales* fell rapidly into disuse. Their decline coincided, as we have seen, with the start of the circulation of *tabulae hospitales* and *patronatus*. The reason for replacing *tesserae* with *tabulae* remains an open question. *Tesserae* are associated, at least originally, with private agreements, while the majority of *tabulae* record nominations of hosts and public patrons. It is likely that the disappearance of the *tesserae* could be related to private hospitality progressively falling into disuse, or with its transformation from the end of the Republic. There is, however, another possible explanation. P. Gauthier has previously suggested that the disappearance of the anepigraphic tokens used in Greece for private agreements could have been caused by the surge in literacy, which privileged other, more elaborate mechanisms of personal identification, such as letters.[151]

The advance of literacy seems to have had a double effect upon the tokens used in hospitality agreements. In the initial phase, it would have prompted the incorporation of texts, which in reality added nothing to the recognition mechanism that the *tessera* itself possessed, but which conferred a certain added value in a context in which writing was still a restricted practice and therefore a prestigious one. In the second phase, from the end of the Republic, the small, archaic *tesserae hospitales* could have become progressively obsolete as more articulate written documents replaced them. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the Latin *tessera* from Herrera de Pisuerga, the latest that we know, dated by consular dating to 14 CE, possesses an exceptionally long text which over twenty lines occupies the entirety of both faces of the piece. It could perhaps be taken as a sign of the times, in which even in as remote a region as the interior of the Iberian Peninsula the written word began to play a more important role than imagery in this kind of documents.

In fact all the *tesserae* – both the Etruscan (sixth century BCE) and also the Latin ones from Italy (third to second centuries BCE), the Greek one from the south of France (second to first century BCE) and the Celtiberian ones (second to first century BCE) – share a common feature, since their use is framed within the context of the initial spread of literacy, and their disappearance coincides with phases in which the written culture asserted itself in each of these environments.

151 Gauthier 1972: 86–9; cf. Prag 2013: 337–8; Sarri 2018.

Appendix. List of *tesserae hospitales* and *σύμβολα*

The following list collates all recorded *tesserae hospitales* and *σύμβολα*. It does not include the pieces of controversial interpretation or dubious authenticity (a complete catalogue of dubious and counterfeit Celtiberian *tesserae* may be found in: Simón 2013, 456–487). The list is organised by the documents' cultural and linguistic affiliations, leaving the anepigraphic until the end, all of which come from Spain. The information in each entry is structured in the following way: shape, which describes the appearance of the piece. Measurements, in cm. Site of discovery, indicating the ancient toponym in italics, or, in its absence, the modern toponym in roman. Date: if not indicated to the contrary, all dates are BCE. Bibliography, which is limited to the most commonly used volumes (*ET*[2] for Etruscan inscriptions, *IG* for Greek, *CIL*, *AE* and *HEp* for Latin, *MLH* for Celtiberian, and Simón 2013 for anepigraphic) or whichever references offer easy identification of the piece. All the pieces are bronze, except for the Etruscan (1–8), the Greek *σύμβολον* from Lilybaeum (9), and the anepigraphic *tessera* from Baria (55), which are of ivory or bone.

Etruscan tesserae

	shape	**measurements**	**provenance**	**date**	**bibliography**
1	boar	4.3 x 9.5	*Carthage*	VI	*ET*[2] Af 3.1
2	lion	4.1 x 6.8	*Rome*	VI	*ET*[2] La 2.3
3	lion	(2.7) x (3.7)	Murlo (Tuscany)	VI	*ET*[2] AS 2.14
4	two people	(4.5) x (3.3)	Murlo (Tuscany)	VI	*ET*[2] AS 2.15
5	sphinx (?)	(0.7) x (2.4)	Murlo (Tuscany)	VI	*ET*[2] AS 2.16
6	lion (?)	(1.1) x (1.6)	Murlo (Tuscany)	VI	*ET*[2] AS 2.17
7	bull (?)	(1.1) x (1.6)	Murlo (Tuscany)	VI	*ET*[2] AS 2.18
8	lion (?)	(1) x (0.8)	Murlo (Tuscany)	VI	*ET*[2] AS 2.19

Greek σύμβολα

9	clasped hands	6 x 15	*Lilybaeum*	II-I	*IG* XIV 279
10	right hand	11.5 x 23.4	South of France	II-I	*IG* XIV 2432

Latin tesserae *from Italy*

11	ram's head	3.2 x 6.5	Trasacco (Abruzzo)	III-II	*CIL* I[2] 1764
12	ram's head		Italy	III-II	*CIL* I[2] 23
13	dolphin		*Neapolis* (?)	III-II	*CIL* I[2] 828
14	dolphin	4 x (5.7)	*Fundi*	III-II	*CIL* I[2] 611

Latin tesserae *from Spain*

15	dolphin	7 x 11	Fuentes Claras (Teruel)	I	*HEp* 3, 1993, 373
16	clasped hands	6 x 13.5	Castillo (Teruel)	I	*CIL* I² 3465
17	dolphin	3 x 6.7	Cáceres el Viejo (Cáceres)	I	*CIL* I² 2825
18	uneven sheet	2.8 x 4.4	Las Merchanas (Salamanca)	I	*CIL* I² 3466
19	uneven sheet	6 x 10	*Intercatia*	2 CE	*CIL* II 5763
20	uneven sheet	5.7 x 9.5	*Intercatia*	I CE	*AE* 1999, 922
21	boar	9 x 12.7	Herrera de Pisuerga, *Pisoraca*	14 CE	*AE* 1967, 239

Celtiberian tesserae *in Palaeohispanic script (22–46) and Latin alphabet (47–54)*

22	horse	3.9 x 6.9	Caminreal (Teruel)	II-I	*HEp* 3, 2003–04, 689
23	ox (?)	3 x 5.1	*Arcobriga*	II-I	*MLH* IV K.7.2
24	boar	2.8 x 6.5	Viana (Navarre)	II-I	*MLH* IV K.18.1
25	boar (?)	2.4 x (2)	Viana (Navarre)	II-I	*MLH* IV K.18.2
26	geometric	1.7 x 4.2	Viana (Navarre)	II-I	*MLH* IV K.18.3
27	geometric	1.7 x 6	Viana (Navarre)	II-I	*MLH* IV K.18.4 (fits together with nº 60)
28	protome of a horse	3.5 x 5	Cintruénigo (Navarre)	II-I	*HEp* 15, 2006, 201
29	boar	4.8 x (4.5)	Fitero (Navarre)	II-I	*HEp* 15, 2006, 293
30	geometric	1.9 x 5.2	Ciadueña (Soria)	II-I	*HEp* 20, 2011, 448
31	boar	4.5 x 5.5	*Uxama*	II-I	*MLH* IV K.23.2
32	bull (?)	3 x 5.1	*Segisama*	II-I	*MLH* IV K.14.1
33	fish	2.3 x 6.9	Belorado (Burgos)	II-I	*MLH* IV K.24.1
34	bird	2.5 x 3	*Pallantia*	II-I	*MLH* IV K.25.1
35	boar	3.8 x (2.7)	Monte Bernorio (Palencia)	II-I	Torres and Ballester 2014
36	clasped hands	4.2 x 7.2	Zaragoza (?)	II-I	*MLH* IV K.0.2
37	bull's head	4 x 4.4	Villas Viejas (Cuenca) (?)	II-I	*MLH* IV K.0.3
38	bear viewed from above	3.8 x 4.8	Cuenca (?)	II-I	*MLH* IV K.0.4
39	bull	3.6 x 5.4	Villas Viejas (Cuenca) (?)	II-I	*MLH* IV K.0.5
40	dolphin		Spain	II-I	*MLH* IV K.0.9

41	geometric	2 x 1.8	Spain	II-I	*MLH* IV K.0.10
42	geometric	4.7 x 2.9	Patones de la Sierra (Madrid) (?)	II-I	*MLH* IV K.0.11
43	boar	2.8 x 6.4	Spain	II-I	*HEp* 20, 2001, 623
44	boar	3 x 5.4	Spain	II-I	*HEp* 20, 2001, 624
45	horse (?)	4.5 x 11	Spain	II-I	*HEp* 13, 2003–04, 763
46	fish	5 x 1.8	Nambroca (Toledo) (?)	II-I	Ballester and Turiel 2009
47	dolphin	2.7 x 5.7	*Arcobriga*	I	*MLH* IV K.7.3
48	horse	3 x 5.2	*Grachurris*	I	Martínez and Jordán 2016
49	fish	2.8 x 5.3	*Segisama*	I	*MLH* IV K.14.2
50	bull's head	2.8 x 4.5	Ubierna (Burgos)	I	*HEp* 9, 1999, 923
51	clasped hands	3.1 x 6.3	*Intercatia*	I	*MLH* IV K.15.1
52	dolphin	3.8 x 7.7	*Intercatia*	I	*HEp* 9, 1999, 477
53	wolf's head	2 x 4	Lora del Río (Sevilla)	I	*HEp* 9, 1999, 513
54	uneven sheet	2 x 5.6	Madrid/Segovia (?)	I	*HEp* 7, 1997, 1110

Anepigraphic tesserae

55	clasped hands	5.5 x 12.9	*Baria*	I	Tovar 1955: 583–4.
56	protome of a horse	3.3. x 5.6	*Segisama*	II-I	Simón 2013: TA4
57	fish	3.1 x (4.3)	*Segisama*	II-I	Simón 2013: TA5
58	geometric sheet	3.3 x 4.8	*Segisama*	II-I	Simón 2013: TA6
59	geometric sheet	3.3 x 4.8	*Segisama*	II-I	Simón 2013: TA7
60	geometric	1.8 x 2.5	Viana (Navarre)	II-I	Simón 2013: TA1 (fits together with nº 27)
61	geometric	1.8 x 4.1	Viana (Navarre)	II-I	Simón 2013:, TA2
62	bull	3. x 4.4	Viana (Navarre)	II-I	Simón 2013: TA3
63	bear viewed from above	3.8 x 4.6	Las Rabas (Cantabria)	II-I	Fernández and Bolado 2011
64	wolf (?) viewed from above	2.5 x 4.5	La Morterona (Palencia)	II-I	Romero and Sanz 2012: 197–9

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