A A G A D I B U S  R O M A M

MYTH AND REALITY OF AN ANCIENT ROUTE

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This article has emerged from my research for a critical edition of the *miliaria provinciarum Hispanarum*, the inscriptions on Roman milestones from Spain, to be published in the near future as the first part of Volume XVII of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. The aim of our endeavours is not only to provide a critical edition of about 1,500 inscriptions, but also to constitute a coherent roadmap of the three provinces Hispania Citerior, Baetica, and Lusitania.

Therefore, the archaeological vestigia of the ancient communication system of the *viae publicae* (bridges, arches, and remnants of ancient roads) had to be traced first. In doing so, we could luckily rely on the thorough studies of local archaeologists contributing to the *Tabula Imperii Romani* (= TIR) – who have, so to speak, paved the way for a comprehensive road map of *Hispania* in their articles on the different archaeological sites – piece by piece.

But one can very seldom find a whole ensemble of the main features of a Roman road and its stations at a single spot – as is the case of Martorell in Catalunya/Spain, where we have an ancient bridge, an Augustan arch spanning the cobblestones of a Roman road that leads across the River Llobregat (ancient name: Rubricatum), three milestones, and probably also the archaeological remains of a mansio (Ermita de Sta. Margarita). Even the name of this station *Ad fines* is documented in the itineraries, the most important sources for the *viae publicae Romanae* in general.

A handful of ancient itineraries, or at least itineraries modelled on ancient sources, are handed down by a manuscript tradition, *e.g.*, the *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti*, the Ravenna Cosmography, the *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, the *Geographica Guidonis*. However, the so-called *Tabula Peutingeriana* takes first place among the non-epigraphical *itineraria*, since it is the only known surviving ancient map (except perhaps

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1 Field research since 2008 has been made possible with funding by the Berlin Cluster of Excellence: ‘Topoi. The Formation and Transformation of Space in Ancient Civilisations’ (www.topoi.org).


3 Besides the critical editions, all *itineraria* referring to the Spanish provinces have been collected by J. M. Roldán Hervás, *Itineraria Hispana. Fuentes antiguas para el estudio de las vías romanas en la península ibérica* (Granada 1975); see also R. Chevallier, *Les voies romaines* (Paris 1997) 53.
that of the so-called Artemidorus papyrus of the Roman empire, the last revision dating back to the fourth and beginning of the fifth century AD. Unfortunately, the only copy of it, a parchment scroll from medieval times, is incomplete on the left side, so that the western part of the Empire (Spain, Ireland, Britain, and the Fortunate islands) has been lost. But due to Konrad Miller’s reconstruction of the missing section(s) we have an approximate idea of how Hispania might have been depicted within the *cursus publicus* of the Roman Empire.

It is owing to the epigraphic tradition that several itineraries can by chance fill some potholes in the Roman road system on the Iberian Peninsula: a small fragment of a *tegula* from Valencia, the clay tablets from Astorga, and the four goblets from Vicarello, that give the complete route of a Roman road, with about a hundred names of towns and stations along the way, leading from the ancient city of Gades (Cádiz) to Rome.

First, I shall give a description and a brief history of the finding of the goblets. Then, I will present an overview of scholarship since then and sum up the history of research up to now with a statement of the *opinio communis*. Third, I would like to discuss different approaches to the date of the objects. Finally and with a glance at a literary testimony, I will give my own view of the goblets’ date and their purpose.

*I. Description and history of the find*

If you are looking for information on the ancient overland route from Gades to Rome, on your internet research you will certainly come across a virtual board game, ‘De Roma a Gades’, that the Junta de Andalucía has posted on its home page. It is quite clear that this game is inspired by antiquity itself – since the name of the game and its course allude to the Vicarello goblets: *A Gades Romam* – such a heading or the like is engraved below the rim of these four silver goblets. Below this heading you see four columns of names and numbers that refer to towns or stations along the way, giving the distances in Roman miles between the individual stop-overs. They thus constitute a route that leads from the

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6 Miller, *Itineraria Romana* (n. 5 above) col. 3 (Britannia); col. 27 (Pyrenees); col. 147-49 (Hispania). For detailed information on Miller’s edition and his reconstruction of the western part, see R. J. A. Talbert, ‘Konrad Miller, Roman cartography, and the lost western end of the Peutinger Map’, in U. Fellmeth, P. Guyot, and H. Sonnabend (eds.), *Historische Geographie der Alten Welt. Grundlagen, Erträge, Perspektiven (= Festschrift Eckart Olshausen)* (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York 2007) 353-66, at 353.

7 *CIL* II 6239 = II², 14, p. 38; Roldán Hervás, *Itineraria Hispana* (n. 3 above) 161, no. VII.

8 A. Blázquez, *Cuatro tésares militares, RAH* 77 (1920) 99; Roldán Hervás, *Itineraria Hispana* (n. 3 above) 163, no.VIII.

9 *CIL* XI 3281-3284; Roldán Hervás, *Itineraria Hispana* (n. 3 above) 149, no. VI.

10 http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/averroes/html/adjuntos/2008/01/29/0002/index.html. The aim of the game is to speed forward in a racer’s chariot on a road leading along the Mediterranean Sea via Italia, Gallia Narbonensis, and Hispania until one reaches Gades. Thus, the racer takes almost the same route as the ancient *itineraria show*, only in the opposite direction and taking the short route along the Mediterranean coastline.

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western edge of the oikoumene to the centre of the Roman Empire: from the old Phoenician foundation of Gaddir/Gades to Rome, crossing the province of Baetica, passing through the interior and along the east coast of the Iberian Peninsula in the direction of the Pyrenees, crossing Provence, then climbing over the Cottian Alps, descending towards the plains of the River Po, afterwards turning south along the east coast of Italy on the Via Flaminia until it reaches Fanum Fortunae, and once again crossing a mountain range, the Appennine, until the road ends in Rome. [Figure 1]

The four silver goblets, which are now in the Museo Nazionale Romano (Sezione Numismatici di Palazzo Massimo), are of roughly similar dimensions, although one is significantly different from the other three:11 Goblet I is 15.5 cm tall and measures about 8 cm in diameter, Goblets II and III are slightly smaller (14 cm by 7.3 cm), whereas Goblet IV is less than 10 cm tall and less than 7 cm in diameter. Thus, unlike the others, it does not correspond to an approximate ratio of two to one.

It is amazing how precisely the script has been engraved on these silver goblets, which were surely not everyday articles to be sold by souvenir traders, as some scholars have suggested: the tiny letters pose no textual problem at all, even though less than half a centimetre high, and there are no significant cruces to be discussed from the point of view of the lettering.12 The design of the inscriptions in four columns, separated by finely

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12 For details see the apparatus criticus in Bormann’s edition, CIL XI 3281-3284.
engraved pillars with Corinthian capitals, shows a highly developed craftsmanship – especially when you consider the miniature scale of the objects. However, there are considerable differences in the technique of engraving: Bormann’s reproduction of the inscriptions in the Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum suggests that a single style of script was used on all the four goblets, but this can be seen at a glance not to be the case. Whereas Goblet I shows the common sulcus of Roman letters engraved in metal, Goblet II, for instance, has the letters contoured by fine lines – a technique that seems to point to a later date. Goblet IV is the simplest of all, showing a rather deeply chased script, free from any ornamental element, and even tending to do without the horizontal bar of the letter A.

Like the heading, the final line is normally written in larger characters – the distances between the stations are summed up here, in total about 1,840 Roman miles. A look at Itin. Vicar. IV is quite rewarding, showing that there is no heading and no concluding final line at all. In this respect, Itin. Vicar. IV is simpler than the others, giving at the end of the last column simply Summa MCCCXXXV. And within the layout of this inscription, the introductory line A Gadibus Roma is part of a structure that is missing in the other itineraries: larger sections of it – at least for the route outside Italy – are summarized by interlinear headings. It is quite obvious from this comparison, that the more elaborate lettering and the sophisticated design of Itin. Vicar. I to III are the result of a later adaptation of the same route, which in Itin. Vicar. IV also differs in its length (Itin. Vicar. I–III about 1,840 miles, Itin. Vicar. IV only 1,835 miles). [Figure 2]

So much for the description of the goblets, which reveals differences in lettering, the general design, and the structure of the itineraries. Itin. Vicar. IV in particular shows significant differences, judging by appearance and by the structural principle of the itinerary. From this it might be deduced that the four goblets represent copies made from the same archetype at different times, with modifications, since the goblets also show minor differences in some sections of the itinerary – for instance in the section on the Cottian Alps.

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14 Bormann, CIL XI 3284 n.: ‘In paginis II–IV fere omnes litterae A praeter primam in II, 27 sunt sine lineola transversa’.

15 This obligatory abbreviation has been fixed by F. Vollmer (ed.), ThLL. Index librorum scriptorum inscriptionum ex quibus exempla adferuntur (Leipzig 1904) 61.

16 Ab Hispani Cordybae (Itin. Vicar. IV col. 1, v. 7); Ab Corduba Tarraco (Itin. Vicar. IV col. 1, v. 12); A Tarraco Narbone (Itin. Vicar. IV col. 2, v. 9); A Narbone Taurinos (Itin. Vicar. IV col. 2, v. 24), that is the first Italian town after passing the Alps.

17 By the way, none of the sums are correctly calculated: there are differences of between 4 miles on Itin. Vicar. I and 14 miles on Itin. Vicar. III. See already R. Garrucci, Dissertazioni archeologiche di vario argomento I (Roma 1864) 176.

18 See Bormann, CIL XI, 496.
Immediately in the year of their finding in 1852, the first three goblets were published by Padre Giuseppe Marchi under the title *La stipe tributata alle divinità delle Acque apollinari*;¹⁹ two years later, the treasure trove was brought to the notice of a wider scientific community by Wilhelm Henzen in *Rheinisches Museum*;²⁰ and Bormann’s edition in the eleventh volume of the Corpus (*CIL* XI 3281-3284) remains the standard publication of these itinera.²¹

But how did the goblets come to light? Together with *aes grave*, currency bars, and thousands of coins and votive offerings of silver and gold, they turned up in a basin of a fountain in the ancient spa resort of Vicarello – a little Italian village near Lake Bracciano, where thermal water issues from hot springs that were already known in antiquity.²² This immense numismatic find, which is now scattered over several museums in Rome and elsewhere, was unfortunately poorly documented after its discovery: Padre Marchi counted 5,215 Roman and non-Roman coins as well as more than 1,200 pounds of *aes rude*, but gave¹⁹ Padre G. Marchi, *La stipe tributata alle divinità delle Acque apollinari scoperta al cominciare del 1852* (Roma 1852).


no detailed archaeological description of the find.\footnote{22 M. H. Crawford, ‘Thesauri, hoards and votive deposits’, in O. de Cazanove and J. Scheid (eds.), \textit{Sanctuaires et sources} (Naples 2003) 69-84, at 81, adding Ritrovamenti e contesti. I reperti archeologici della provincia di Roma nelle raccolte del Museo Nazionale Romano (Rome 2001) 88-137.} As a result, we do not know in what context or in which stratum the goblets were found. And even the coins have not all been published, except for those of the Republican period, because many thousands of struck pieces – ‘a molte e molte migliaja’ (Marchi) – ranged in date from Augustus to the end of the 4th century. These facts are quite important, because some scholars have been unaware of the fact that the coin finds are not restricted to late Republican or early Imperial times and have accordingly dated the itineraries to the Augustan period.

Again Goblet IV plays a prominent role – it differs not only in size and design, but also in the history of its discovery, which begins ten years later: in 1863, it turned out that a fourth goblet was still in the possession of the archaeologist then in charge of the excavations – in addition to other \textit{instrumenta} made of silver and of gold. But there is no doubt that Goblet IV is also an authentic piece from antiquity (all four specimens were first published by Garrucci in 1864 [n. 17]). And though regrettably the history of the whole find is somewhat obscure, this does not, in my opinion, matter to the understanding of the itineraries and the interpretation of the goblets: we face similar problems, whenever we try to trace back the history of objects from antiquity that are small but of precious material, such as rings, gems, and other \textit{instrumenta}, which could easily have changed hands already in ancient times.

Unlike other finds from this context, for instance votive offerings to Apollo or the nymphs, who were worshipped in the baths of Vicarello (\textit{CIL XI} 3285–3290),\footnote{23 Künzl and Künzl, ‘Aquae Apollinares/Vicarello (Italien)’ (n. 13 above) 279.} the inscriptions on the goblets show no connection to the place where they were found. There is no dedicatory line, \textit{Apollini et nymphis sacrum}, not even a \textit{statio} on the road from Gades to Rome that refers to this site is mentioned in the itineraries, though the route could have easily passed by the baths, which are traditionally identified with the \textit{Aquae Apollinares} near Lake Bracciano.\footnote{24 Bormann, \textit{CIL XI}, 496; Künzl and Künzl, ‘Aquae Apollinares/Vicarello (Italien)’ (n. 13 above) 273.} And indeed, when you look at the map, the route of the goblets takes the long way around (\textit{i.e.} the \textit{Viae Aemilia and Flaminia}), while the roads along the western coast of Italy (\textit{Via Iulia Augusta} and \textit{Via Aurelia}) would have been much shorter.

From this I would argue that the context of the find has no significance for the interpretation of the goblets and their itineraries, since they might have found their way into the basin of Vicarello either as votive offerings that originally were nothing else but \textit{itineraria}, as the heading below the rim says, or they were part of a Roman hoard of unknown provenance and protected by their location against looting in late antiquity. It is noteworthy in this context, that only \textit{instrumenta} of precious metal, but no ceramics or clay votives were found, which are frequently attested in the context of a mineral spring.\footnote{25 Künzl and Künzl, ‘Aquae Apollinares/Vicarello (Italien)’ (n. 13 above) 275: ‘Das Fehlen von Keramik jeder Art unterscheidet den \textit{pozzo} in Vicarello auch von den zahlreichen \textit{stipi votivi} Mittelitaliens; es gibt deshalb auch keine der sonst so häufigen anatomischen Votive, die man an einer Heilquelle ansonsten gut erwarten dürfte’. See also A. Comella, ‘Tipologia e diffusione dei complessi votivi in Italia in epoca medio- e tardorepubblicana. Contributo alla storia dell’artigianato antico’, \textit{MEFRA} 93 (1981) 717-803; Crawford, ‘Thesauri, hoards and votive deposits’ (n. 22 above).} However, from the point of view of the textual tradition we have to keep in mind that the...
four itineraries represent copies of one archetype, made at different times. The fact that the precious artefacts were found together seems to indicate that they were also kept together in a safe place, before they were submerged in the baths of Vicarello.

II. The communis opinio

Of course, we know of other epigraphic documents displaying the courses of Roman roads that could perhaps contribute to a better understanding of the goblets from Vicarello: for instance the short inscription on a vessel from Rudge, Wiltshire (CIL VII 1291 = RIB II 2, 2415.53), and another from Amiens (AE 1950, 56).26 Our itineraries could be most closely compared to the four clay tablets from Astorga, that record important connecting routes in the western part of the Iberian peninsula, for instance the road running from León (Legio VII Gemina) to the harbour of portus Blendius.27 But the goblets from Vicarello remain unique, to be compared only with each other or with the literary evidence, especially with the Itinerarium Antonini and the Itinerarium Burdigalense – with respect to the routes through the different provinces.28 They have thus inspired interpreters from the very beginning of their exegesis, or to be more precise, a communis opinio has developed since the early days of Padre Marchi (1852), which can be summarized as follows: the four silver goblets are miniature replicas of a milestone, that had been erected in Gades as the counterpart of the milliarium aureum in Rome. The goblets are thus souvenirs brought to Vicarello by a Spaniard or Spaniards, who dedicated the silver vessels as a votive offering to the healing god or out of gratitude for their safe journey from Gades:

Three silver vessels, cylinder-shaped, apparently emulating the grand milestones. These were erected, not only in Rome (the milliarium aureum), but also at major locations in the provinces, to indicate the distance to Rome and from one station to another. It would require the compendiousness of an English travel ‘necessaire’ to engrave a vessel with an itinerary of railway stations. Hence, we would recommend that all travelling Mylords and Gentlemen should not do without the convenience available to old Roman provincials. Undoubtedly, the vessels belonged to a Spanish man, who – after staying in Rome and falling ill there – found his cure in Vicarello.29

26 See Chevallier, Les voies romaines (n. 3 above) 77.
27 Roldán Hervás, Itineraria Hispana (n. 3 above) 163, placa I.
This interpretation remains unchanged in Künzl and Koeppel’s book on ‘Souvenirs and devotional objects’:

The goblets were manufactured in Gades/Spain. Voyagers had their wine served and could review the journey following the itinerary engraved on these silver drinking cups. In the end, the goblets became a true souvenir representing the arduous journey. Later, they turned into votive offerings to Apollo and the nymphs in Vicarello. The shift in purpose of such small products cannot be traced anywhere better than in this rare case.30

The authors’ interpretation evokes a scene of everyday life, in which the ancient travellers after the long journey from Spain filled the goblets with wine, while the engraved itineraries called episodes to their mind.31 I cannot join this unanimous chorus of scholarship that seeks to harmonize the data of the find, the shape of the vessels, the starting point and the destination of a very long journey, and the course of the itineraries in general.

III. Purpose and date of the goblets

Several questions arise, such as why the former owner needs to have been a Spaniard, and why he would have collected at least four quite similar silver goblets with the same route engraved on them, objects of different periods, and why he should finally have submerged them in the baths of Vicarello as votive offerings, even though there is no dedicatory inscription referring to Apollo.

First, the supposed Spanish origin and the shape of the cups, which are generally traced back to a milestone once set up in Gades. The goblets of course show a cylindrical form as cups usually do. In comparison with the regular form of a milestone, which consists in a rather long shaft and a cubic base, I do not see too many common features – not even with the milliarium aureum, in so far as we have an idea of its form and design.32

If you are looking for an architectural model, you have to take into account the fact that

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1990) 36; Chevallier, *Les voies romaines* (n. 3 above) 76; Lesley and Roy A. Adkins, *Handbook to life in ancient Rome*. (Oxford 1998) 171: ‘The goblets ... may have been presented by someone from Cádiz to Apollo, the healing god, on a visit to Rome. The goblets may be copies of an elaborate milestone set up in Cádiz’.


the columns of the inscriptions are divided by pillars with Corinthian capitals (I shall come back to that point later).

But above all, we have no evidence of such a miliarium Gaditanum, and the only reason for thinking of a Spanish archetype for our four itineraria is the starting point of a supposed long distance journey – more than 1,840 miles around the western half of the ancient world, which in the end leads to Rome – but not by the shortest route. Already in the time of Cicero it was much easier to cover this distance by ship. And Pliny the Elder states that sailing from Ostia to Gades would take not longer than a week (Pliny, *Nat.* 19.1). On the other hand, it took even Caesar, famous for his rapidity, 27 days from Rome on the overland route, to arrive in Obulco east of Corduba, i.e. a distance of about 1,500 Roman miles.

Reckoning the whole journey with an average speed of about 20 to 25 miles a day on foot or 50 to 60 miles by means of transport, such a distance could be covered within 90, or alternatively 40, days. But who would take up the challenge, if not a true sporting ace?

Interestingly enough, Wilhelm Kubitschek has drawn our attention to a poem from late antiquity, comparing it to the *Itinerarium Antonini*, where the same route in the same direction is the subject of an arithmetical riddle. In the Palatine anthology (*Anth. Pal.* XIV 121), Metrodorus presents the distance of this route as the sum of mathematical fractions: from Gades to the headwater region of the River Baetis (i.e. the Guadalquivir), you have passed a sixth of the journey, from there to the ‘land of the bulls’ (τόιον γη η), probably an etymological hint at the name of the capital Tarraco, it will take you another fifth, to the Pyrenees an eighth of the entire distance, and so on, until the author gives a clue to solve the problem.


38 W. Kubitschek, ‘Ein arithmetisches Gedicht und das Itinerarium Antonini’, *Ant. Class.* 2 (1933) 167-74; translation by W. R. Paton: ‘From Cádiz to the city of the seven hills the sixth of the road is to the banks of Baetis, loud with the lowing of herds, and hence a fifth to the Phocian soil of Pylades – the land is Vaccanæ, its name derived from the abundance of cows. Thence to the precipitous Pyrenees is one-eighth and the twelfth part of one-tenth. Between the Pyrenees and the lofty Alps lies one forth of the road. Now begins Italy and straight after one-twelfth appears the amber of the Po. O blessed am I who have accomplished two thousand and five hundred stades journeying from thence! For the Palace on the Tarpeian rock is my journey’s object’.


40 375 miles from Castulo to Tarraco, and another 234 miles to the Pyrenees = 609 miles. Interestingly enough, *Plin. Nat.* 3.29 gives the figure of 607 miles for the distance between Castulo and the Pyrenees, which is also the

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Τοῦ αὐτοῦ [i.e. Metrodorus]

Έπτάλοφον ποτὲ ἄστο Γαδειρόθεν, ἔκτον οἶδοίο
Βαίτιος εὐμύκους ἄχρις ἐς ἡμέρας
κεῖθεν δ’ αὐ πέμπην Πολύδαν μετά Φώκιον οὐδάς
Τάγηρ χόθν βοής οὖνοι’ ἀπ’ εὐετίης.

Πυρήνην δε τοι ἐνθεν ἐπ’ ὑράκρατον ἱότε
ὀγδοὸν ἡδὲ μής δωδέκατον δεκάτης.

Πυρήνης δε μεσηγὸ καὶ Ἀλπιον ὑψικαρήνον
τέταρτον’ Ἀδυσονής αἴνια δωδεκάτον ἠργομήνης ἠλεκτρα φαίνεται Ἡριδανών

Ὦ μάκαρ, δε δυσσᾶς ἣνυσα χιλιάδας,

πρὸς δ’ ἔτι πέντε’ ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐκατονταύδας ἐνθεν ἐλαύνοντι

ἡ γὰρ Ταρπείη μέμβλετ’ ἀνακτορίῃ.

(Anth. Pal. XIV 121)

There are 2,500 stadia (a stadium is about an eighth of a Roman mile) left to cover the stretch between the River Eridanos (i.e. the Po) and Rome – this means a sixth of the route corresponds to 2,500 stadia. The result is very interesting, in so far as the total of 15,000 stadia or 1,875 miles is quite close to the 1,840 miles on the goblets from Vicarello, a variation of only 35 miles or about 2 percent, resulting from the inevitable rounding in Metrodorus’ calculation.41 You could say it is exactly the same route that Metrodorus describes in his riddle.

As we have seen before, this is not a matter of course: the route leads from Gades to the source of the River Baetis, afterwards crossing the Iberian Peninsula in the direction of Tarraco, climbing up the mountain range of the Pyrenees, then heading across the river Rhone for the Alps, later reaching the Po by a roundabout route and supposedly taking the Via Flaminia to Rome.

This poem is interesting also in some other respects, in the first place, the time of its composition, which is clearly later than the time of Diophantos, an Alexandrian mathematician, who flourished in the second half of the 3rd century AD and is identified as the model for Metrodorus.42

In dating the goblets, scholars have not agreed as unanimously as they have in interpreting them. And, still worse, we have a plurality of different proposals that exist side by side, without the authors ever taking notice of one another’s arguments. Most popular is Jacques Heurgon’s plea for a date in Augustan times, based on toponomastic grounds.

41 Calculating the distance from Gades to Rome: 1/6 x + 1/5 x + 1/8 x + 1/120 x + 1/4 x + 1/12 x + 2,500 stadia = x, reduced to a common denominator ‘120’: 100/120 x + 2,500 stadia = x; 100/120 + 20/120 (= 2,500 stadia) = the entire course; 20/120 = 2,500 stadia = 1/6 of the course; 2,500 x 6 = 15,000 stadia = 1,875 Roman miles.

42 By the way, Diophantos’ epigram has now served as a model in the Nintendo Game ‘Professor Layton and Pandora’s Box’ for riddle no. 142, as is noted in the Wikipedia article on Diophantos: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diophantus.

43 J. Heurgon, ‘La date des gobelets de Vicarello’, Rev. Ét. Anc. 54 (1952) 39-50, esp. 44f. (‘la toponymie ... apparaît entièrement renouvelée ... dans un sens déterminé, qui est impérial et romain’); repeated for instance by Roldán Hervás,
which seems wrong from the outset, because there is no agreement between the itineraries’ route and the Augustan road in Spain between Cordoba and Saetabis [Figure 3]. Heurgon argued that indigenous names in the section on the Cottian Alps, like Gaesao and Segusio, which are present in *Itin. Vicar. I–III*, had been replaced in *Itin. Vicar. IV* by names that reflect Augustan propaganda (following the Roman agreement with Cottius); the latter names thus gave a ‘terminus post quem’ for this itinerary, while the former names seemed to imply a pre-Augustan date for the other three goblets. But the indigenous names incriminated by

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*Itineraria Hispana* (n. 3 above) 152; Silières, *Les voies de communication* (n. 29 above) 36; Künzl and Künzl, ‘Aqua Apollinarae/Vicarelo (Italien)’ (n. 13 above) 282; Chevallier, *Les voies romaines* (n. 3 above) 76; and others.


45 Especially *Augusta Taurinorum* in *Itin. Vicar. IV*, col. 3, 23, in contrast to *Taurinins* in *Itin. Vicar. I–III*: see Heurgon, ‘La date des gobelets de Vicarello’ (n. 43 above) 44: ‘La vieille cité des Taurini y paraît revêtue de son titre de colonie romaine, Colonia Julia Augusta Taurinorum, déduite à une date inconnue sous Auguste’. But *Augusta Taurinorum* (e.g. *CIL* V 4192; XIII 6870; XVI, no. 81; *EE* VIII, no. 311) and *Taurini* (e.g. *CIL* V 6955, 6970; 7617; VI 211) are used without discrimination through the centuries.
Heurgon are still present in inscriptions and itineraries from late antiquity.\textsuperscript{46} Others prefer a Flavian date\textsuperscript{47} or a date around the year 150 and consider this as the prevailing opinion,\textsuperscript{48} they interpret the numismatic evidence as reaching not later than Trajan, which is evidently wrong and the result of the incomplete publication of the finds by Padre Marchi. One of the first editors, Ettore de Ruggiero, thought about a date for Goblets I–III ‘anteriori di molto al tempo di Diocleziano’, while he considered goblet IV to be quite close in date to the Itinerarium Antonini.\textsuperscript{49} On the other hand, Manfred Fuhrmann rightly observed that Roman itineraries in general date to not earlier than the 3rd century AD.\textsuperscript{50} However, some of the arguments for dating Goblets I–III in the early fourth century AD were already made decades ago. For instance, goblet IV (Itin. Vicar. IV, col. 3, v. 5) mentions the ferry crossing the Rhône, \textit{traiectus Rhodani}:\textsuperscript{51} this would clearly indicate a date before the construction of the bridge at Arelate (Arles) in the time of Constantine, \textit{i.e.} earlier than AD 333 to 337; but goblets I–III simply use the name Arelate, not the ferry, which must date them later in the century.

But the most important argument is the use of the word \textit{itinerarium}/\textit{itinerare} itself: Goblet IV, which in my opinion is the oldest of the four copies, has no heading at all, its itinerary beginning simply with \textit{A Gadibus Roma}; and here you have the classical declined ablative \textit{Gadibus}, whereas the other specimens use an indeclinable form \textit{Gades}.\textsuperscript{52} In Goblets I–III different headings are given, but all refer to the list of place-names and indication of distances as an \textit{itinerarium} or \textit{itinerare}; the latter word is only attested on our silver cups: \textit{Itinerarium a Gades Romam} on Itin. Vicar. I, \textit{Ab Gades usque Roma itinerare} on Itin. Vicar. II, and \textit{Itinerare a Gades usq(ue) Roma} on Itin. Vicar. III (Itin. Vicar. IV, col. 1, v. 1: \textit{A Gadibus Roma}). The adjective \textit{itinerarius}, from which the term is derived, is attested only in late antiquity – for instance in the \textit{Historia Augusta}, Ammianus, or in the \textit{Liber pontificalis}, while \textit{itinerarium} occurs in \textit{Vegetius}, in the \textit{Itala},

\textsuperscript{46} See Bormann’s and Mommsen’s tables, comparing the \textit{variae lectiones} of Itin. Vicar. I–IV with the evidence of other itineraries, \textit{CIL} XI, 496, and especially \textit{CIL} V, 811; cf. the inscriptions \textit{CIL} V 7246-7252, 7261, 7263-7264.

\textsuperscript{47} G. Cordiano, ‘Domiziano, Columella e la stipe di Vicarello’, \textit{Ann. Fac. Lett. Siena} 24 (2003) 91-115, taking into account another votive offering found in the Vicarello basin, where \textit{Nymphae Domitianae} (\textit{CIL} XI 3286 = \textit{ILS} 3876) are mentioned, which for the dating of our goblets is of no significance at all.


\textsuperscript{49} E. de Ruggiero, \textit{Catalogo del Museo Kircheriano I} (Rome 1878) 108, nos. 402-05.


\textsuperscript{51} With the numeral \textit{\textae}, indicating the subtotal of 1000 miles for the distance between Gades and the \textit{traiectus Rhodani}.

\textsuperscript{52} Heurgon, ‘La fixation des noms de lieux en latin’ (n. 48 above) 169: ‘Tous les noms de lieux \textit{(scil. in the itineraries)} sont pourvus de désinences casuelles, à première vue, incohérentes…. Les milliaires, au IIe siècle de notre ère en tout cas, témoignent de la même discordance dans l’emploi des cas’.
and in itineraries from late Antiquity – in the *Itinerarium maritimum* (p. 497, 9), in the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* (p. 549, 1), and in the commentary by Ambrose on Psalm 118. 53

Secondly, looking back at the riddle of Metrodorus, the poem sheds light on interest in the theme in 4th century Rome: it shows clearly that distances within the Roman Empire were well known to a broader Roman public and that the route from Cádiz to Rome in particular, though not the other way round, and its enormous length, were to the educated reader in late antiquity such a common metaphor for a long distance journey that Metrodorus could associate this with an arithmetical riddle. Consequently, I do not see a direct connection between the four goblets and the poem, whereas Wilhelm Kubitschek does:

Since we’ve already been puzzling about this – admittedly, I am reluctant to place him (*scil.* Metrodorus) in front of a grand monument in Gades, I’d rather think of him in contact with a Spanish merchant in Rome, who presented a copy of the itinerary as a topic for conversation. 54

The codicological problem – the quest for a common archetype of the Latin itineraries and the Greek poem – is reduced to the half-hearted and somehow absurd assumption that a Spanish trader had brought a copy of the itinerary from the *miliarium in Gades* to Rome and discussed the matter with the author Metrodorus. But why do we not simply stay in Rome with our reflections on both the epigraphic and literary evidence? Why should we turn to Gades to solve the problem? Of course, there were ‘road maps’ of the Empire available in Rome, as can be deduced from the itineraries and maps recorded by the literary tradition. 55 And a special itinerary could easily have been excerpted from such an official *itinerarium*; this seems to have been quite customary for military purposes. 56 And that is exactly what happened here: the route was copied from an official itinerary for some special purpose and was then circulated in various copies; but that does not have to pre-suppose any long distance journey actually travelled.

In my opinion, the direction from Gades to Rome hints at the real character of this route, which was in some way special enough to be documented in literary and epigraphic form. The route presumably had a particular significance: it was perhaps linked to the memory of a historical or mythical journey; or was tracing some kind of geographical line, as does the Rudge Cup from Wiltshire, where the stations mentioned lead along the famous Hadrian’s wall. 57

The goblets from Vicarello were certainly not tourist itineraries: tourism – which is a phenomenon of repeated travel for recreational purposes – does not seem to offer any solution. We have a route there and back of about 6,000 km, that does not reach its destination directly, but on the contrary leads through the dangerous *saltus Castelonensis*,

53 *ThLL* VII 2, col. 567 s.v. *itinerarium.*


55 See in general Dilke, *Greek and Roman maps* (n. 29 above), esp. 112; a critical assessment of alleged Roman maps, accurate and to scale, and an account of the counter-concept of landmarks and routes is offered by K. Brodersen, *Terra cognita. Studien zur römischen Raumverfassung* (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York 1995), esp. 33, 139.


57 See for instance Chevallier, *Les voies romaines* (n. 3 above) 77.
full of robbers in ancient times (Cic. *Fam.* 10.30), then by-passes the interior of Hispania and leads along the eastern coast; after this comes the hardest part: the crossing of the Pyrenees, of the Cottian Alps, and (after the plain of the River Po) of at least one other mountain range – the Appennines, *nubifer Appenninus*, as Ovid has it in his catalogue of mountains (*Ov. Met.* 2.226). This seems a frightful journey and a real feat of strength, which leads me to another point: Gades, the city that was situated by the columns of Heracles, gave to its hero one of the most attractive sights of antiquity, the Temple of Hercules Gaditanus.\(^58\) This is where the route begins, not in Rome, as one would expect on a Roman itinerary.

The itinerary is determined by its starting point and its destination, and by distinctive features along the way. For the route through Spain, one can see that this is not a heavily used route, because it deviates from the road Augustus had built in 7 BC, the main connection between the provincial capitals of Tarraco and Corduba (see Figure 4). The itinerary indicated by the Vicarello goblets seems to represent here a forgotten stretch that was once used in Republican times (Strabo 3.4.9 [160]), on the east-west route between *Sucro* and *Ad aras* (Castulo), which in modern times was called after Hannibal ‘el camino de Aníbal’\(^59\). The *Itinerarium Antonini* gives no corresponding line, nor does the *Ravennatis Cosmographia*,\(^60\) and milestones outside of the area of Castulo are scarce and may belong to other roads.\(^61\) While the ‘via Augusta’ or rather ‘via Augusti’ on the territory of the *provincia Hispania citerior* continues southbound in direction to *Carthago nova* and only afterwards turns west to the border of the Baetica via *Acci*,\(^62\) and it has been argued by scholars, without any evidence, that precisely this route was the legendary *via Herculis*.\(^63\)


\(^{59}\) Some attempts at an explanation of this traditional name are offered by Sillières, *Les voies de communication* (n. 29 above) 220, 550; actually, the origin of the name remains unknown. Perhaps the fact that Hannibal’s wife came from Castulo (Liv. 24.41.7), gave a name to this road.

\(^{60}\) *Ravenn.* IV 44, p. 81, vv. 1–9 (ed. Schnetz) is a northbound road in the direction of Complutum.


\(^{62}\) On the Via Augusta, which on inscriptions of the *provincia Tarracense* is only attested on milestones north to Saguntum, see in general Sillières, ‘Le “Camino de Aníbal”’ (n. 61 above) 39; Nünnerich-Asmus, ‘Straßen, Brücken und Bögen’ (n. 32 above) 131; Augustan milestones from the route Carthago Nova-Castulo, all dating to the year 7 BC: Totana (*CIL* II 4936 = Sillières, *Les voies de communication* [n. 29 above] 70, no. 3 = Lostal Pros, *Los miliarios de la provincia Tarracense* [n. 2 above] no. 23); Lorca (*CIL* II 4937 = Sillières, *Les voies de communication* 71 no. 5 = Lostal Pros, *Los miliarios de la provincia Tarracense* no. 24); Mazarrón (Lostal Pros, *Los miliarios de la provincia Tarracense* no. 25); Chirivel (*CIL* II 4938 = Sillières, *Les voies de communication* 74, no. 6 = Lostal Pros, *Los miliarios de la provincia Tarracense* no. 26); Cullar de Baza (Sillières, *Les voies de communication* 77, no. 13 = Lostal Pros, *Los miliarios de la provincia Tarracense* no. 27); La Guardia (*CIL* II 4931 = Sillières, *Les voies de communication* 84, no. 19).

Figure 4 ‘Via Herculis’

From a handful of ancient authors, we do indeed know of a Ὀδὸς Ἡρακλεῖα or via Herculis, but not in Spain. The only evidence for such a mythical route concerns the stretch through the Alps, where the Greek hero had paved the way for himself and his cattle. But sure enough he had come all the way from southern Spain, from the island Erytheia near Gades, as the legend says, where in accomplishing his tenth labour he had stolen the cattle of the fearsome giant Geryon and from where he drove his herd across the Iberian peninsula, crossing the mountain range of the Alps via Mont Genèvre, just as the itineraries do, then through the plain of the River Po – which in Roman times was obviously a considerable detour. His route leads him straight to the place where in historical times Rome was founded, and right in the heart of the later city he eventually meets Cacus, who tries to steal some of the cattle from him (cf., i.a., Verg. Aen. 8.185-275). The mythological tradition localizes the place on the left side of the river Tiber between Capitol, Palatine, and Aventine – which in later times was to be the Forum Boarium, where Hercules’ Ara Maxima was built and where the Temple of Hercules Victor was erected. This temple is a monopteros,
encircled by a colonnade of Corinthian columns, which could possibly – and perhaps with a better claim – have served as a model for our goblets from Vicarello. However, in antiquity the cult of Hercules was constantly popular at all levels of society, and his labours were present to everybody in oral tradition, literary narrative, and works of art. It seems that in memory of Hercules’ tenth labour, which is in a specific sense connected with prehistoric Rome as well as with Gades, the Ὁδὸς Ἡρακλεία is exactly represented by the route of the itineraries, with the detour involved in crossing the Alps, the plain of the river Po and crossing again a mountain range, the Apennines. At any rate, the myth of the long and arduous path of the via Herculis seems to have been traced out in concrete terms in late antiquity – for whatever reason. It was a Roman attempt to grasp the immense mythical distance by means of exact measurement – on the goblets as well as in the riddle of Metrodorus. [Figure 4]

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65 Interestingly enough, Chevallier, Les voies romaines (n. 3 above) 76 n. 81, thinks about the Columns of Heracles as a model: ‘On peut songer aussi à une allusion aux colonnes d’Hercule’ (!).
68 Perhaps pilgrimage on the via Herculis as some kind of aemulatio herois is the key; cf. the makarismoi in Metrodorus’ poem, Anth. Lat. XIV 121.10.
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