

# IESP *SIGNARY*

*List\* of basic recurrent  
characters  
with descriptive names  
in Latin*

\*This list is by no means exhaustive;  
the signary remains quite open for new discoveries  
and decisions about terminology.

There are three main categories of Etruscan *sigla* (non-verbal markings) from archaeological contexts; alphabetiform *sigla*, numeriform *sigla* and individual characters that may be called abstract *sigla*.

Alphabetiform and numeriform *sigla* are in the shapes, respectively, of letters and numbers and they can be easily described using the alphabet or numbers.

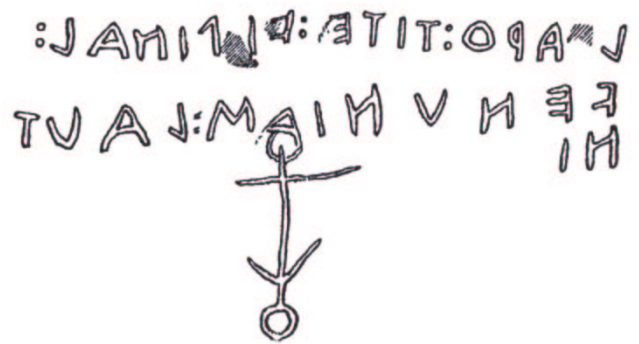
All the Etruscan *sigla* can have multiple meanings, according to the results of the study of different scholars. For example, the sign V can be considered by some scholars in some contexts as an alphabetiform *siglum* (letter U) or by others in other contexts as a numeriform *siglum* (number 5); a cross inscribed in a circle can be considered by some scholars as an alphabetiform *siglum* (letter *theta*) or by others as an individual abstract *siglum* (see below) allusive to other semantic spheres such as that of the Etruscan sacred space.

Individual abstract *sigla* are elusive, receiving different names in different languages, so that they are usually designated generically in the epigraphic terminology as *nota*, *notae* or *signum*, *signa*. The signary of the IESP given here presents such *sigla*, assigning them Latin names with neutral significance that may be used internationally. For example, the five-pointed star is named the *pentaculum*, and the dry tree branch is called the *ramus siccus*. Abstract *sigla* so far identified are listed below according to their alphabetical order and are illustrated each by one or two examples (A and B or only A) drawn from documented Etruscan *sigla*.

## **Ancora.**

A. Fragment of impasto lid. Roselle (after CIE 12019). 2nd century BCE.

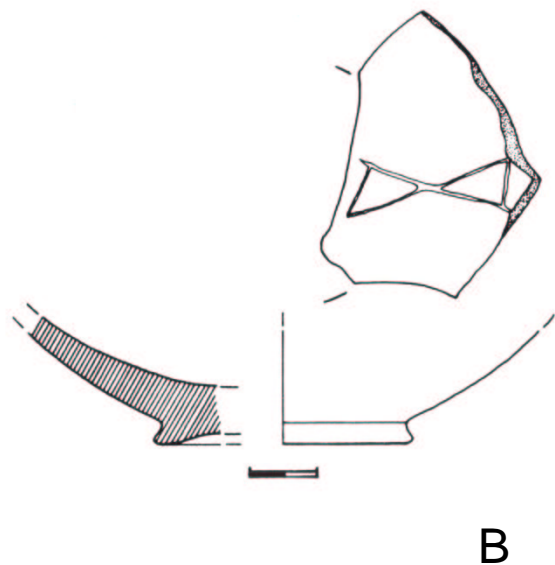
B. Terracotta funerary tile. Chiusi (after CIE 2864). Date unknown.



## **Bipennis.**

A. Foot of an impasto cup. Roselle (after CIE 11671). Archaic.

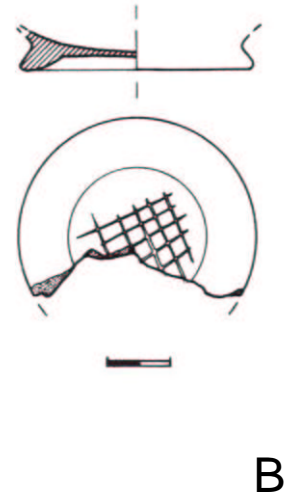
B. Foot of a grey bucchero bowl. Marzabotto (after Sassatelli, fig. 118). Late 6th-5th cent. BCE.



## ***Craticula.***

A. Cup of black Campanian bucchero. Nuceria, Tomb 159 (after SE 53, 1985, p. 210). Date unknown.

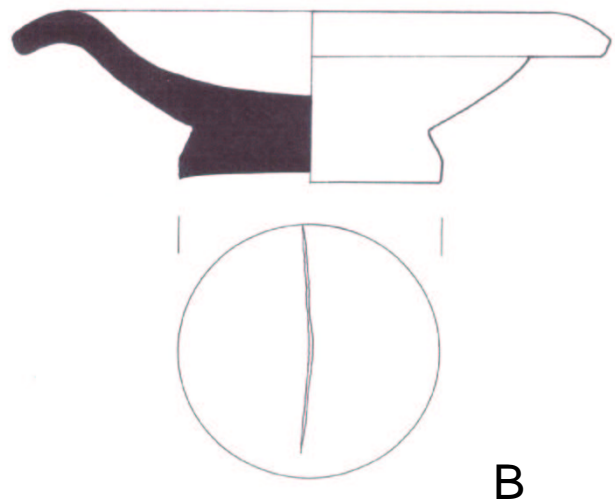
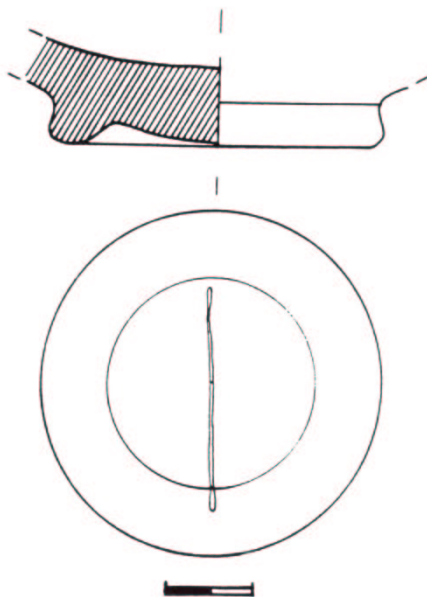
B. Foot of a grey bucchero bowl. Marzabotto (after Sassatelli, fig. 95). Late 6th-5th cent. BCE.



## ***Forma dimidians.***

A. Cup of black Campanian bucchero. Nuceria, Tomb 159 (after SE 53, 1985, p. 210). Date unknown.

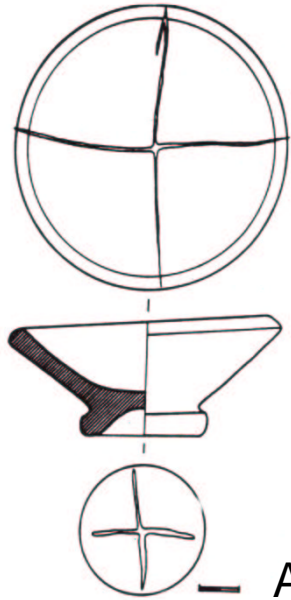
B. Bucchero bowl. Cetamura del Chianti (Cetamura archive). Ca. 550-450 BCE.



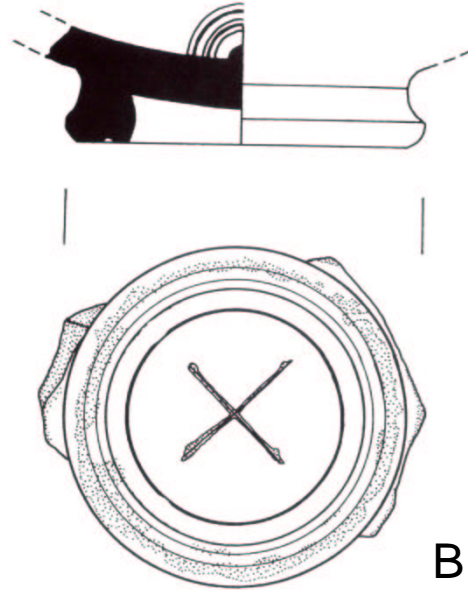
## ***Forma quadrans.***

A. Impasto lid/bowl. Marzabotto (after Sassatelli, fig. 68). 6th-5th cent. BCE.

B. Foot of a black-gloss vessel. Cetamura del Chianti (after de Grummond 2000, fig. 79). 3rd-2nd cent. BCE.



A

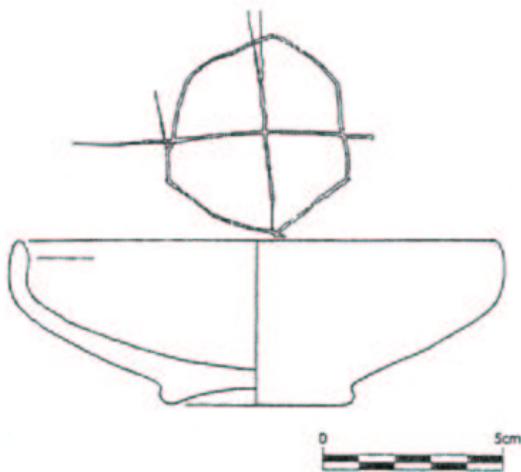


B

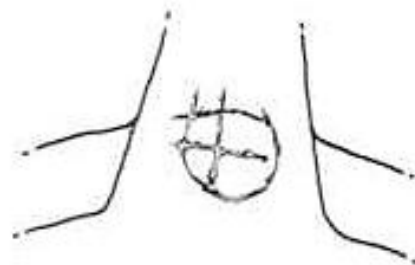
## ***Forma quadrans in circulo.***

A. Bowl of black Campanian bucchero. Abella, Tomb 102 n.59 (after SE 71, 2007, p. 203). Ca. 550-475 BCE.

B. Handle of local dipper. Chiavari (after Bagnasco, fig. 59). Second half of 7<sup>th</sup> BCE.



A

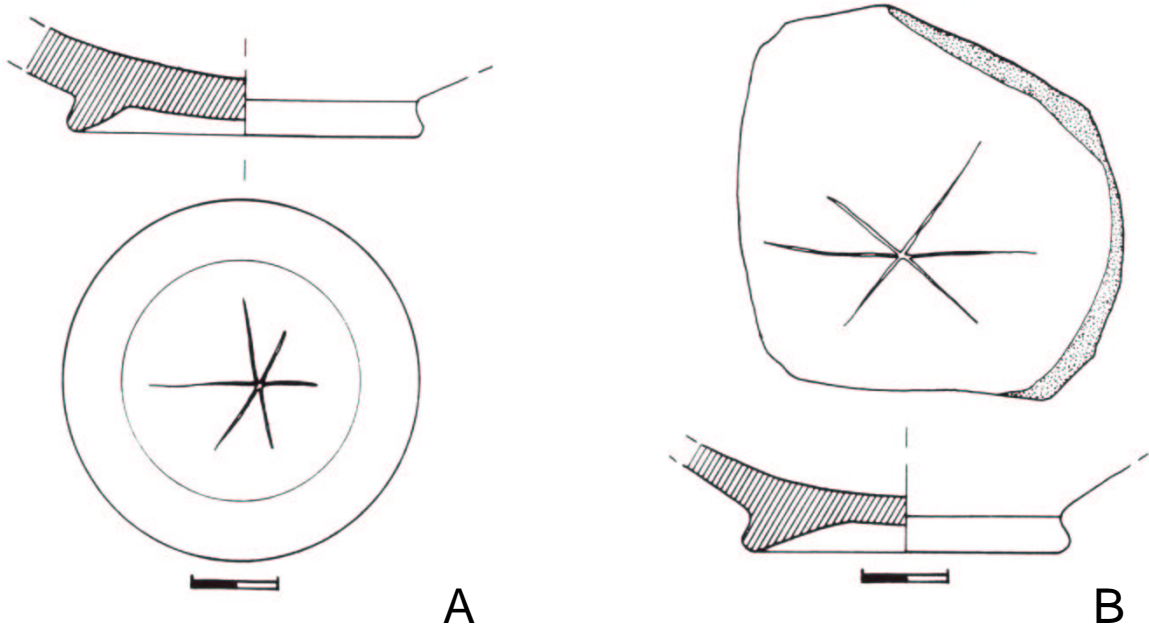


B

## ***Forma sextans.***

A. Foot of an impasto bowl. Marzabotto (after Sassatelli, fig. 35). Late 6th-5th cent. BCE.

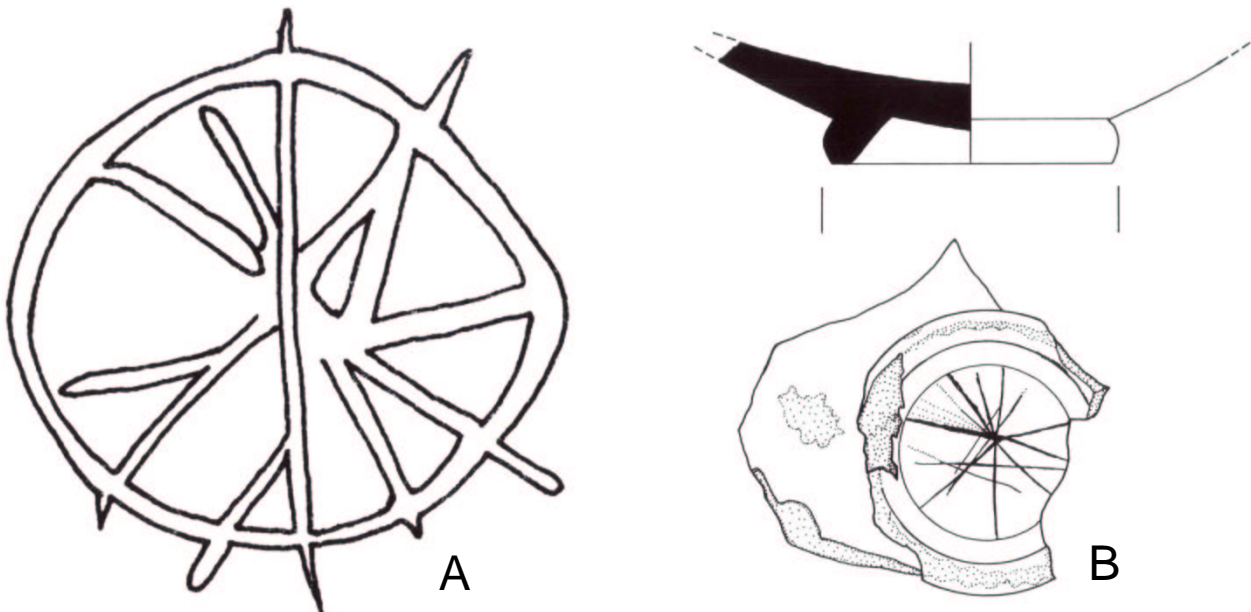
B. Foot of a bowl, unpainted. Marzabotto (after Sassatelli, fig. 38). 5th cent. BCE.



## ***Lineae radiantes.***

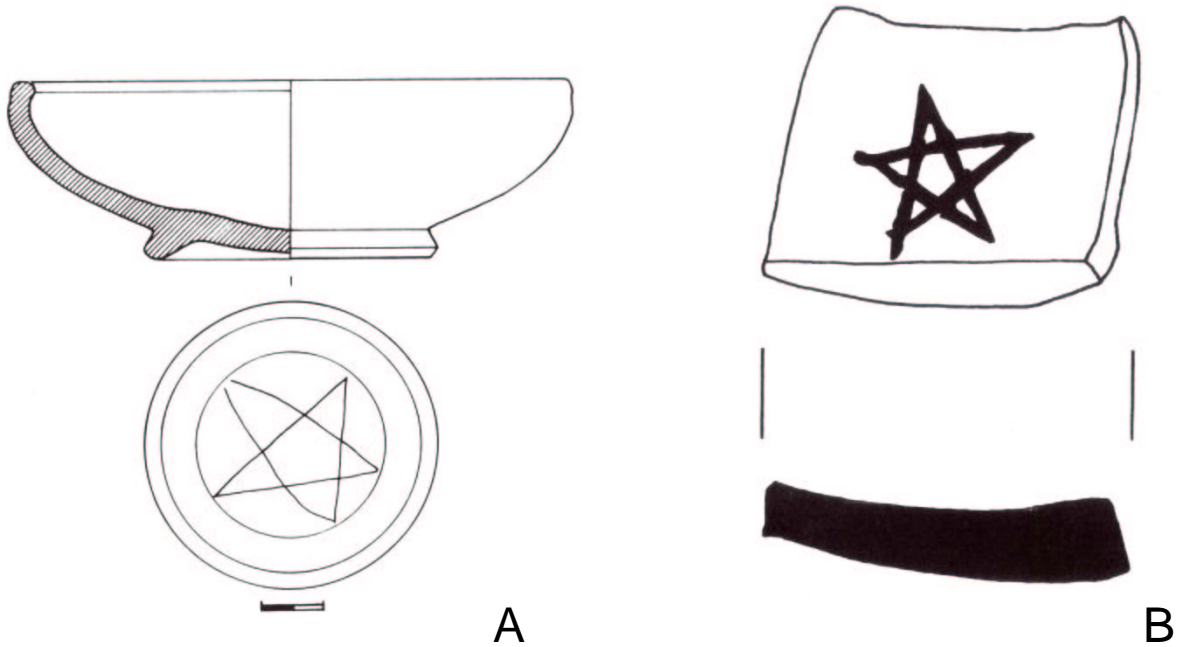
A. Black-gloss saucer. Tarquinia, Monterozzi (after CIE 10129). 3rd-2nd cent. BCE.

B. Foot of a black-gloss vessel. *Cetamura del Chianti* (after de Grummond 2000, fig. 88). 3rd-2nd cent. BCE.



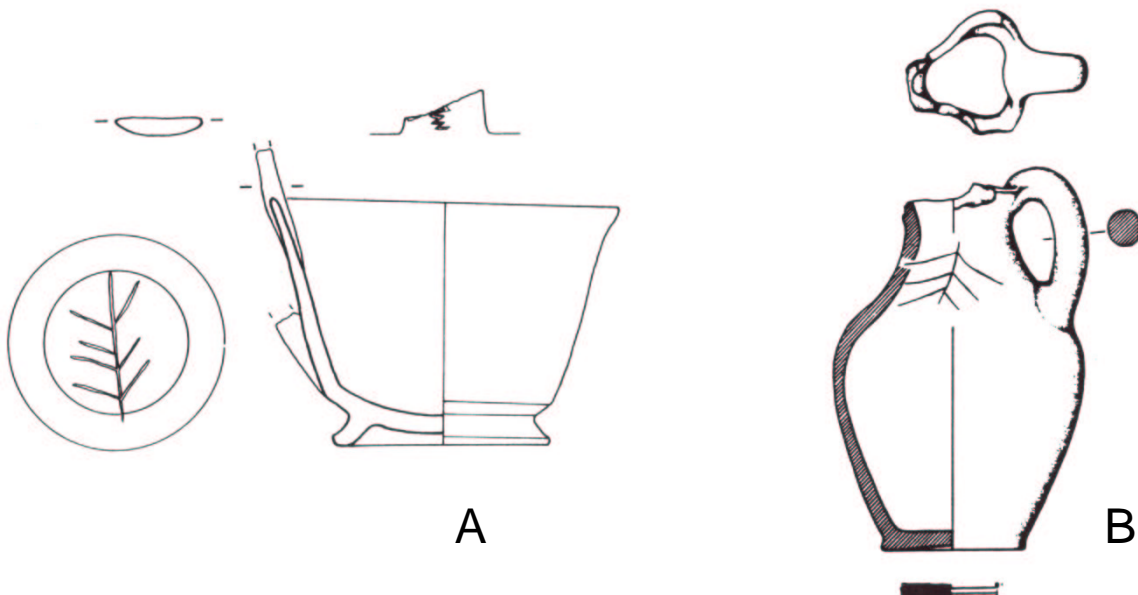
## ***Pentaculum.***

- A. Bowl of orange fine ware. Marzabotto (after Sassatelli, fig. 41). Date unknown.  
B. Interior wall of black-gloss vessel. Cetamura del Chianti (after de Grummond, 2000, fig. 101). 3rd-2nd cent. BCE.



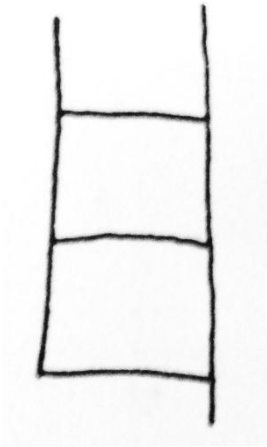
## ***Ramus siccus.***

- A. Bucchero kyathos. Blera (after SE 58, 1992, p. 292). Ca. 550-500 BCE.  
B. Pitcher of grey fine ware. Marzabotto (after Sassatelli, fig. 92). 5th cent. BCE.



## **Scala.**

A. Foot of a Ionic cup, type B2/ B3. Gravisca (after CIE 10386). Mid 6<sup>th</sup> BCE.



A

## **Swastika.**

A. Foot of a fine impasto vessel. Roselle (after CIE 11670). 7th-6th cent. BCE.

B. Bronze axe. Bologna, Benacci Caprara, Tomb 53 (after Sassatelli, figs. 19-20, no. 174). Villanovan.



A

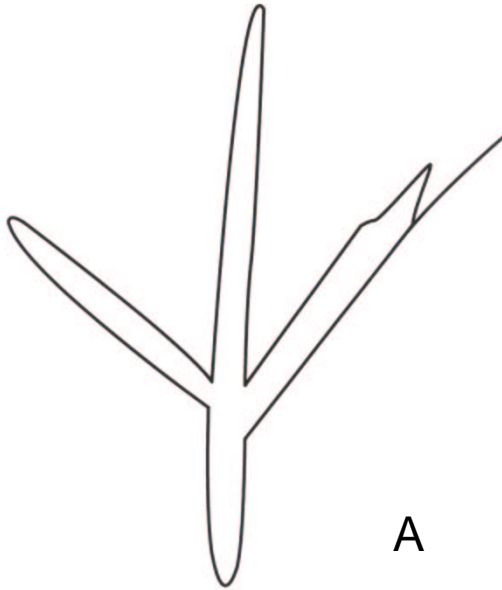


B



***Tridens acutus.***

A. Bronze axe. Bologna, San Francesco (after Sassatelli, figs. 11-12, no. 103). Early orientalizing.



A

***Tridens quadratus.***

A. Foot of a black-gloss vessel. Populonia (after SE 6, 1932, 473, fig. 8). Date unknown.



A

## ***Abbreviations***

Bagnasco = G. Bagnasco Gianni, *Accoglienza della scrittura e valore del segno scritto*, in *Insubri e Cenomani tra Sesia e Adige, Atti del Seminario di Studio*, in *Rassegna di studi del civico Museo archeologico e del civico Gabinetto numismatico di Milano* LXIII-LXIV, 1999, pp. 47-59.

*CIE = Corpus Inscriptionum Etruscarum*

de Grummond = N.T. de Grummond (ed.), *Cetamura Antica, Traditions of Chianti*. Florida State University, Tallahassee 2000.

Sassatelli = G. Sassatelli, *Graffiti alfabetici e contrassegni nel Villanoviano bolognese. Nuovi dati sulla diffusione dell'alfabeto in Etruria Padana*, in *Emilia Preromana* 9-10, 1984, pp. 147-255.

*SE = Studi Etruschi*