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Etruscan Horseshoe Earrings: a native jewelry type

Abstract: This study is concerned with the so-called horseshoe, or *a grappolo*, earring type that circulated in Etruria during the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic period. Presented here is the most extensive catalog of the type – a total of 53 earrings – published to date. In addition to the real examples of horseshoe earrings, we also consider the numerous images of women wearing the horseshoe earring type in the Etruscan art. Both the primary and the secondary evidence for the horseshoe earring demonstrate that it was a popular form and one that allows us to explore aspects of native costume in Late Classical and Early Hellenistic Etruria.

Keywords: Etruria, earring, jewelry, women, costume

Introduction

Etruscan fondness for lavish gold jewelry is well documented both by the artifacts themselves and by the images that show elite men and women arrayed in necklaces, earrings, rings and bracelets. Two extravagantly dressed females are shown here in roles warranting such luxurious accoutrements. First, a familiar fourth-century B.C.E. painting from the Tomb of the Shields shows Velia Seithiti, the wife of Arnth Velcha (fig. 1)¹. She accompanies her husband and wears a full set of gold ornaments – a diadem, the globular *a grappolo*, or “horseshoe” earrings, a bead choker, a pair of bracelets and a finger ring – that illustrates a typical Etruscan expression of elite wealth in a feasting setting. She and her husband are depicted at a banquet, an occasion that seems to have been a defining context for Tarquinian aristocratic families and one at which women were featured prominently². The second figure, a terracotta votive head from Cerveteri, now in Berkeley, illustrates the extraordinary interest in jewelry that appears in fifth- and fourth-century Etruscan sculpture (fig. 2)³. The veiled female is adorned with a high, beaded crown and large horseshoe earrings embellished with an upper disk of concentric bands of beads and tubes⁴. Two small dolphin figures cavort directly below the protruding boss; a cluster of five bulging hemispheres finishes off the earring⁵. What is striking about the stock of jew-

¹ Maggiani 2005 with earlier bibliography.

² Bonfante 1981.

³ Nagy 1988, 50 IA3.

⁴ Coen 1999, 144, notes that some of the main crown types found in the subset of votive heads – beaded diadems, such as the one seen here, and a woven high crown that may have been made from wheat or some other organic material – cannot be paralleled with real examples.

⁵ Comella 2001, 40, reports that the dolphin motif appears also on two individual horseshoe earrings (from the same matrix) found in the sanctuary at Punta della Vipera. See below for discussion of this evidence.



Fig. 1 Tomb of the Shields. Tarquinia

ely seen in both images is how closely certain pieces match contemporary accessories worn by Etruscan women. In particular, the horseshoe earring was a favorite Late Classical jewelry type in Etruria, as suggested by the large number of earrings recovered. This physical evidence is paralleled by the frequent presence of the type in contemporary art, particularly in votive terracotta sculpture in southern Etruria and Latium. It is the horseshoe earring type with which this analysis is concerned.

Horseshoe earrings appear in burials, as gifts supplied for the dead and as part of elite tomb decoration, as seen in fig. 1. The ornaments also play a prominent role in sanctuaries. A few horseshoe earrings – both gold and clay versions – were dedicated as offerings and, as illustrated in fig. 2, the earrings belonged to a distinctive costume found on female votive sculptures⁶. The presence of horseshoe earrings in these two public contexts marks women's presence in essential communal rituals in which elites reinforced their social status. In addition, the horseshoe earring clearly branded wearers as Etruscans, since no other Italic or Mediterranean culture wore this type of earring. This study collects primary and secondary evidence for the horseshoe earring in order to consider the ways in which dress in general, and jewelry in particular, responds to social and historical circumstances to create iden-

⁶ While Etruscan males do wear both personal jewelry – bracelets, armllets, occasionally amulets or bulla necklace pendants – and clothing ornaments – pins and fibulae – there are no images of Etruscan men wearing earrings. Thus, I label earrings as a component of Etruscan female costume.

tity – in this instance, Etruscan female identity – in the late Classical period.

Depicting Jewelry in Etruscan Art

A close correlation between real ornaments and images of jewelry, such as that seen above, contrasts sharply with the situation that prevailed in the heyday of Etruscan jewelry, the seventh and sixth centuries. Orientalizing and Archaic goldsmiths had mastered the challenging decorative technique of granulation – the application of small grains of gold to a thin surface – and flaunted their skill on luxury goods worn by both men and women⁷. Such sophisticated technical expertise attests to a discerning clientele who placed a premium on craftsmanship. Archaic Etruscan art shows women twirling in colorful, patterned clothing that blends Etruscan dress types with imports from Greece and Ionia⁸. But when it comes to depicting their jewelry, artists generally resort to stereotypical forms common in eastern Mediterranean art – large blue or red

disk earrings and blue and red bead chokers – rather than using local accessories such as the gold *a baule* earrings or the fibulae for which Etruscan goldsmiths are celebrated⁹. Replicating real jewelry in any medium was evidently not a priority for the artist or customer at this time.

By the fifth century, we see a noticeable shift both in the Etruscan jewelry types produced and in their depiction¹⁰. Actual finds consist of large, sheet gold ornaments characterized by less careful craftsmanship and flashier styles than the jew-



Fig. 2 Terracotta votive head from the “Vignaccia”, Cerveteri (Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology)

⁷ Cristofani – Martelli 1983, 35–61.

⁸ Bonfante 2003, 32 f. 36–38. 60–63.

⁹ The Etruscans did wear disk earrings in the Archaic period, but the paintings show colored materials – red and blue – rather than yellow for gold. The color choice allies the Etruscan imagery with the art produced in Asia Minor, following this region’s dress imagery rather than a native tradition.

¹⁰ Bonfante 2003, 85, marks a similar shift in clothing that occurred by the mid-sixth century, when an “Etruscan look” can be identified.

elry favored during the Archaic period¹¹. The fashion trend also can be traced in images of women in various media in late 5th–4th centuries, as we see in the tomb-painting and terracotta head discussed above. A new desire to capture details of contemporary jewelry characterizes art beginning at the end of the fifth century; such accurate copies supply an exceptional body of secondary evidence for jewelry in the costume of the Etruscan elite.

This study of the horseshoe earring aims to re-assess the type for the first time in several decades¹². It has three goals: first, to collect in one place the most extensive catalog of surviving horseshoe earrings published to date in order to set out the stylistic and technical features of the earring type as presently understood; second, this study offers, for the first time, a typological framework grounded on archaeological evidence by incorporating the evidence of material excavated since the mid-20th century; third, to review the artistic representations of women wearing the horseshoe earring and to evaluate the role of this earring in fifth- and fourth-century female costume. Fifty-three earrings are cataloged below¹³. Earlier studies, faced with the challenge of categorizing orphaned earrings with little or no context, dated the type generally to the fourth century. The material presented here proves instead that the horseshoe earring accessorized women from at least the mid-fifth century through the early third century. Objective chronological evidence is particularly welcome for this jewelry type since it has been used to date terracotta votive heads and sculpture; the new dates for the horseshoe earrings presented here may prompt revisions to certain votive sculpture.

Another topic with which this study is concerned comes through a re-evaluation of the figural art that depicts women wearing these earrings. While reviews of the horseshoe earring have always included this important material when considering the type, scholars have become increasingly sensitive to the role of adornment in delineating various identities – social, ethnic, economic status, gender or age – through analysis of both artifacts and images¹⁴. Dress made and worn for key public occasions, such as religious rituals, wedding ceremonies, civic festivals and funeral rites, coincided with events during which families promoted their social standing in the community. As these were often the same moments that presented women in model familial or religious activities, the images discussed here also illuminate gender and cultural ideals. Studies of dress that explore these issues, combined with

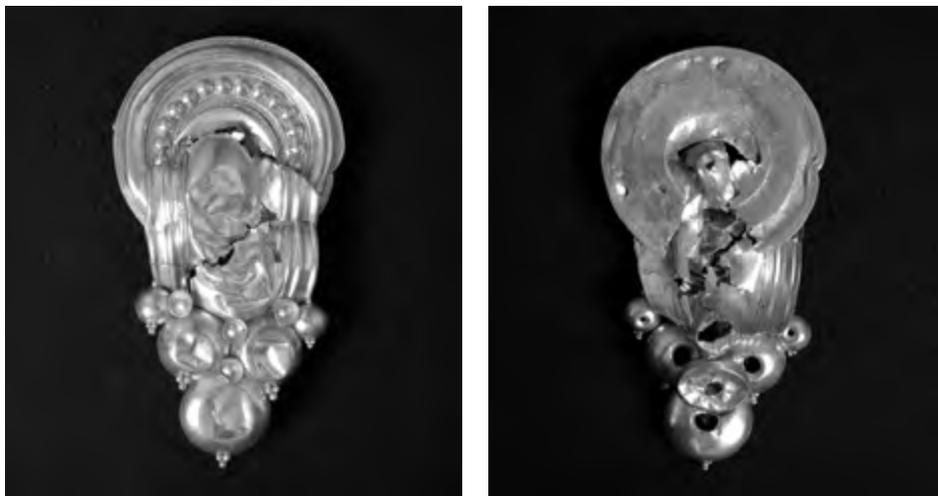
¹¹ Higgins 1980, 149 f.

¹² The two main surveys of the horseshoe type are Hadaczek 1903, 61–63 and Andr n 1955/1956. The conclusions of these authors are presented in more detail below.

¹³ The material in the catalog has been gathered from previous studies, excavation reports, museum and exhibition catalogs and visits to museum collections in London, New York, Rome and Chiusi, among others. I am grateful to curators in Stuttgart and Vienna for providing me with photographs and details concerning unpublished material in their collections.

¹⁴ Fisher – Loren 2003; Joyce 2005; German 2005, 10–17; Rautman 2000; Colburn – Heyn 2008, 1 f.; Hamilakis et al. 2002; Montserrat 1998; Roach-Higgins et al. 1995; Green 2007; Bonfante 1981; Sebesta – Bonfante 1994; Edmondson – Keith 2008 for Roman dress.

Fig. 3. 4 Circular horse-
shoe earring, cat. 33.
Early 3rd cent. Dicomano
Museo Archeologico.
3 obverse; 4 reverse



work focused specifically on Etruscan costume, provide the artistic and anthropological parallels for this survey. A close look at the horseshoe earring allows us to examine in detail the cultural and artistic contexts in which the ornament was displayed and to consider the messages that it communicated to viewers.

The Horseshoe Earring: Definition and Typology

The horseshoe earring is composed of three elements: a flat disk, a bulging central boss and a cluster of large, hollow hemispheres set together along the lower edge of the earring. The middle component, the boss, serves an important function, as it is, in fact, the visible portion of a complete tubular earring that fastened the earring to the earlobe (fig. 3). We should think of the earring as essentially a hoop with decorative features added to the top and bottom. Usually the overall ornament takes one of three shapes: a teardrop, a figure-eight or an elongated oval.

An arched, semicircular or circular disk normally comprises the upper part of the earring. Variants such as crescents or apsidal disks were occasionally set in this position¹⁵. Concentric bands of granules, textured filigree, repoussé beads, smooth convex tubes and appliqués supplied the main visual interest on the disk, casting shadow and light in alternating rows. Highly decorative forms of the disk embedded figural attachments such as a human head appliqué in the upper part of the earring¹⁶.

As noted above, the central boss is, in reality, only a small part of a complete tubular hoop earring (fig. 4). The reverse of the earring reveals a variety of ways for women to attach the seemingly bulky ornament to their ears. One end of the tubular earring may have been pinched together and inserted into the earlobe, just as

¹⁵ Such features may point to a local preference or workshop connection, although unfortunately, none of the earrings in these two categories have documented archaeological contexts that could shed light on this hypothesis.

¹⁶ See cat. 6. 15. 29. 44–48.

the tubular hoops that also flourished at this time were worn¹⁷. Alternatively, an intermediary hoop, hook or pin could be passed through the lobe and fastened to the tubular earring to secure the ornament. Three horseshoe earrings retain pins for this purpose, one of which was additionally equipped with a five-cm chain that was inserted into the opposite end of the tubular hoop¹⁸. Two of these earrings are assigned securely to the late fifth or early fourth century. Etruscan goldsmiths had employed the pin-and-chain fastener on disk earrings in the Archaic period and so may have transferred the technology to the new earring form¹⁹.

The distinctive component of the horseshoe earring is the cluster of large, convex hemispheres along the lower edge. Often, it is this portion alone that peeks below the curls of women shown wearing the earring. The globules were made in two halves, were hollow and usually included an opening on the reverse; in one example, it has been argued that perfume was inserted into the hemispheres²⁰. If so, the Etruscans saw jewelry as a way to tantalize the senses of smell and sight, ensuring that a woman wearing these perfumed baubles would be even more alluring to those who encountered her. Most of the hemispheres are somewhat flattened rather than perfectly round, a technique that allowed the hemispheres to form a solid mass. Goldsmiths masked any gaps between the hemispheres with a combination of large beads, several small grains and appliqués in the shape of depressed buttons or hollow cups. These beads and appliqués were normally placed where the upper hemispheres touched the central boss and again where the lower three hemispheres joined. Each hemisphere was embellished with a tiny cluster of three granules fastened to the bottom center of the hemisphere, and this teardrop shape repeated – in miniature – the form of the ornament as a whole.

Horseshoe earrings required few advanced manufacturing techniques²¹. Sheet gold was tapped into molds and many of the disk designs, such as rows of beads or convex tubes, could have been carved into the mold. Other embellishments were made separately and added to the disk. Craftsmen attached beaded and twisted filigree wire between the decorative bands on the disk. Scattered granules covered gaps between the three earring sections. Granulation – a potentially time-consuming process – rarely shows up on the horseshoe earring. Thus, while the horseshoe earring appears at first glance to be impressive, closer inspection reveals that it could have been manufactured relatively quickly and cheaply in comparison to the smaller, but more densely decorated, ornaments of earlier centuries. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that faster production processes and the efficient use of gold made these luxury goods more readily affordable to a wider group of wearers than during the seventh and sixth centuries. This fact may account, to some degree, for

¹⁷ Cristofani – Martelli 1983, 308 no. 224; Higgins 1980, 151; Hadaczek 1903, 64–66.

¹⁸ See cat. 2. 7. 15. Cat. 15, from Aléria, has a chain attached to the hoop.

¹⁹ Cristofani – Martelli 1983, 54 fig. 9. It is possible that other earrings in this catalog are equipped with a similar mechanism, but I have been unable to examine them or to acquire photos of the reverse.

²⁰ Scarpignato 1981, 14.

²¹ See Formigli 1995 for the construction of the horseshoe earring.

Fig. 5 Funerary horseshoe earring, cat. 53. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum



the high number of real horseshoe earrings that survive in comparison to other earring types since these could be disposed of with less expense for survivors. Finally, a kind of foil quotation of the horseshoe earring exists for use in the grave (fig. 5). Eleven earrings in the catalog are made of thin sheet gold impressed over a mold that replicates the entire earring²². These simulacra were presumably intended solely for funerary use since they were otherwise too flimsy to withstand much wear, but unfortunately, none come from a documented context. No marks or holes on the surviving funerary earrings indicate how the pieces would have been worn; it seems likely that they were simply set on either side of the head or tacked to a backing such as a veil or shroud that covered the body. Foil earrings incorporate all the defining features of the functional horseshoe earrings: concentric bands of decoration on the disk, the central bulge and even hemispheres with miniature clusters on the bottom. Funerary earrings can be as richly decorated as real-use earrings, even including repoussé heads and rosettes²³.

Historiographical Discussion

The first analysis of the horseshoe earring was published in Karl Hadaczek's 1903 survey of Greek and Etruscan earrings²⁴. Hadaczek listed ten horseshoe earrings in museums in Italy and in Vienna. He proposed that the horseshoe earring developed originally from an eastern Mediterranean hoop-with-pendants type that was wide-

²² Cat. 43–53. The Etruscans used sepulchral jewelry made of sheet gold much earlier as well. See, for example, the plentiful ornaments in the Regolini-Galassi tomb, discussed by von Hase 1995, 533–559.

²³ See cat. 44. 45.

²⁴ Hadaczek 1903, 61 f. Hadaczek noted that he had seen examples of the horseshoe earring in local museums, but since he did not list inventory numbers it is not always possible to trace the current location of these artifacts. Hadaczek lists two pairs of earrings in the Vatican that I believe correspond to cat. 27. 28, a pair in the local museum at Tarquinia (not currently on display), a pair at Cortona (not currently on display) and one pair from Cortona in the Florence museum; this last pair has female masks at the end of the disk.

ly used in early first millennium B.C.E. Cyprus and Greece. Archaic hoops-with-pendants have been discovered in South Italy and Sicily²⁵. Etruscan jewelers adapted the type by expanding the hoop, creating the broad surface that we can recognize as the central boss of the horseshoe earring. Few Etruscan wide hoop earrings are dated securely, and those with archaeologically verifiable dates belong to the fourth century when, as we now know, the horseshoe earring was already in wide use. It is thus impossible to verify a strict typological development²⁶. A variant of the Etruscan hoop called the *a sanguisuga*, or leech-shape earring, combines the broad hoop with small round disks, but the earring is still more readily identifiable as a hoop than as an early horseshoe type (fig. 5)²⁷. Hadaczek recognized that no fifth-century examples of the leech earring had been discovered, which is still the case, and therefore that the type could not certainly be labeled as a predecessor. No archaeological evidence has yet been discovered that can



confirm or reject his proposed evolution, but it has been widely accepted and I follow it here²⁸. Hadaczek concluded that the horseshoe earring was a purely Etruscan creation with no close Greek predecessor and that it had been disseminated widely throughout Etruria in real examples and in representations²⁹. This study confirms his hypothesis and goes beyond to consider the widespread use of a native jewelry type in art and in real life.

Fifty years after Hadaczek, Arvid Andrén acquired a terracotta matrix impressed with a horseshoe earring on the art market and used this artifact as a case study for the type³⁰. He divided the earrings into three stylistic groups: a circular disk with three hemispheres; five or seven hemispheres; and finally, an oval earring with three

²⁵ Higgins 1980, 102.

²⁶ Cristofani – Martelli 1983, 311 no. 241.

²⁷ Hadaczek 1903, 61; Higgins 1980, 141 f.

²⁸ Hadaczek 1903, 61.

²⁹ Hadaczek 1903, 62 f.

³⁰ Andrén 1955/1956.

Fig. 6 Jewelry from Vulci. Vatican, Museo Etrusco Gregoriano, cat. 32. c. 350. Vatican, Museo Etrusco Gregoriano

or five hemispheres³¹. Andrén regarded the last as the standard horseshoe type, although he did not elaborate on his reasons for this assertion. While these categories supply general stylistic guidelines for considering the earring type, they could not be matched up with regional or chronological data, since none of the earrings had detailed contextual evidence associated with them. Andrén's typology could not then, as it stood, be used to study the evolution of the form over time or in specific areas of Etruria.

Neither Andrén nor Hadaczek could connect the earrings they knew with secure archaeological evidence, and both recognized that this limitation severely hindered their study of the type. They were able to confirm the popularity of the form in fourth-century Etruria, however, and both labeled the form as Etruscan in origin. The bulk of horseshoe earrings known today fit into the groups that Andrén identified, with some additional categories, and it is now possible to apply some chronological parameters to these forms.

Archaeological Contexts for the Horseshoe Earring

Prior to the mid-20th century, only six horseshoe earrings could be associated with known findspots, and these artifacts were published in brief notices with little adjunct evidence³². I will now review these examples: the earliest in date is a pair of horseshoe earrings with a circular disk and three hemispheres found at Todi together with an engraved mirror³³. The earrings and mirror were dated to the early fourth century, but no other details concerning the burial appear in the notice. A second pair of large horseshoe earrings, now in the Vatican, was discovered at Vulci (fig. 6)³⁴. A review of the archival notes concerning the jewelry allowed Scarpignato to recreate a tomb group that included a gold olive-leaf crown and a set of five large bulla pendants with the earrings. The objects from this tomb supply rare evidence for a "set" of Classical jewelry, one that resembles closely the ornaments featured in the images such as the Tomb of the Shields, seen above³⁵. At Capena, a single arched horseshoe earring with five hemispheres was discovered in Tomb E. The tomb dates to the second half of the fourth century and also contained a silver and a gold ring, a bronze strigil, fragments of iron weapons, and some fragments of locally-produced

³¹ Andrén 1955/1956, 213. Andrén added material from collections in Paris, London and New York to Hadaczek's original corpus; he listed approximately 20 earrings in his study.

³² Some museum pieces have alleged provenances which may or may not be accurate. A striking pair of earrings in the British Museum is said to come from Populonia, and the earrings in Berlin have an alleged provenance of Capena. Both areas produced other Late Classical Etruscan jewelry, and the provenance may well be legitimate, although once again, the lack of a date and associated goods adds little to our understanding of the circulation of the earring type at this time.

³³ Cat. 31.

³⁴ Cat. 32.

³⁵ Scarpignato 1981.

pottery³⁶. Finally, three examples now in Florence came from the San Cerbone cemetery at Populonia and were dated to the second half of the fourth century³⁷. One of these was supposedly discovered together with a vase by the late-fifth-century Meidias Painter, but Andrén questioned the coherence of this tomb group since the museum acquired the two artifacts six years apart³⁸. As we will see below, new evidence confirms the possibility of a fifth-century date for the horseshoe earring type, but Andrén's question about the legitimacy of the association between the vase and the earrings stands. Even if we take the comments concerning provenance of the artifacts at face value, these earrings can only document the presence of the type in central and northern Etruria by the fourth century.

Now we turn to the five earrings discovered since the mid-20th century. The most significant contexts for the history of the earring type come from an Etruscan Classical and Hellenistic cemetery at Aléria on Corsica. Excavations there since the 1970s have uncovered three mid- and late-fifth-century burials with horseshoe earrings. Given the paucity of Etruscan jewelry dated securely to the fifth century, the contexts supply much-needed chronological markers. The earliest pair was placed in Chamber Tomb 155 (c. 440–325), which contained the remains of two males and a female³⁹. The female was placed in the tomb first, so the jewelry found *in situ* likely dates to around 440, while the males were buried on separate occasions over the next several decades. Other metal goods and jewelry associated with the female burial include five bronze vessels, a bronze mirror, bronze fibula, ring and short chain, four amber pendants, a silver button, seventeen glass beads and eight bone pendants⁴⁰. The horseshoe earring has a semicircular upper disk with a band of repoussé beads; below, seven hemispheres were arranged along the bottom. This earring shows that the type had reached its fully developed shape around the mid-fifth century and raises the date for the introduction of the horseshoe earring by at least a half-century from the chronology proposed by Hadaczek and Andrén.

A second earring from Aléria offers a more elaborate version of the horseshoe earring that includes human head attachments as additional decoration to the rest of the disk. The singleton was found buried in the dromos of a late-fifth century tomb – and thus was not placed on a body – and the earring consists of a densely decorated disk with a beaded outer border and a row of rosettes and head attachments⁴¹. A third pair of earrings dates to c. 410 B.C.E. and deviates from the normal clustered arrangement of hemispheres below the boss⁴². The arched disk and boss on the upper part of the earring are familiar from many other examples, but the

³⁶ Cat. 17.

³⁷ Cat. 18–20.

³⁸ Andrén 1955/1956, 211; cat. 18.

³⁹ Cat 1. Jehasse – Jehasse 2001, 211 f.: Four Attic red-figure vases, two Attic black-glaze vessels, ten Etruscan cups, seven bowls and two plates supply chronological markers for the date.

⁴⁰ Jehasse – Jehasse 2001, 213 f.

⁴¹ Cat. 15.

⁴² Cat. 16.

lower part is divided into three separate clusters of pendant hemispheres. Were it not from a late-fifth-century context, we might suppose that this was an early experiment with the horseshoe type, but the other two horseshoe earrings from the same site conform to styles that lasted through the next century⁴³. The typical shape of the horseshoe earring apparently was familiar in this settlement and this pair may be a local variant, albeit one that reveals recognition of the traditional shape and style of the horseshoe earring.

The evidence from Aléria supplies critical data that requires us to adjust the introduction of the type to the third quarter of the fifth century. The variety of earring forms dated within a forty-year span indicates that different shapes circulated simultaneously and that the earring form may not necessarily reflect either a regional style or a specific period of development. No technical or stylistic similarities relate these pieces to a common workshop; they may have been made-to-order commissions or acquired from different workshops or markets.

Horseshoe earrings found at Civitavecchia discovered in 1948 cannot be dated with the same precision as those from Aléria, although their findspot is secure. The pair from Civitavecchia was discovered in an unplundered Early Classical tomb⁴⁴. Remains of three corpses were found in the tomb; the body on the left couch was identified as female because of the grave goods, which included two clay biconical beads, a bronze mirror, bronze and bone pins, a bronze fibula, a gold ring, a pair of gold horseshoe earrings, and a bronze strigil set close to the body.

An exceptional context, a votive deposit at the site of Poggio Colla (Commune di Vicchio) dated to the early third century, yielded the last example of newly discovered horseshoe earrings (fig. 3. 4)⁴⁵. These earrings were found in a deposit with five small gold tubular earrings, two necklace pendants – jasper and an animal tooth – capped with gold, six polished oval stones of agate and jasper, a lead disk, an amber bead, and a piece of bone. The jewelry found in the deposit represents typical Late Classical and Early Hellenistic jewelry forms. Since it is unheard of for pairs of earrings to remain together outside of a grave context, the deposit of jewelry thus probably represents a single ritual burial act. The acropolis on which the cache was discovered served as a ritual space, with multiple votive contexts as well as architecture associated with temples⁴⁶. Other high-value objects – gold wire, inscribed statue bases, bronze vessels – suggest that this area attracted prestige goods as votive offerings, although the identity of the deity to whom the space was dedicated remains unknown. I have argued elsewhere that the jewelry in this particular votive group links the deposition ritual specifically with women⁴⁷. The Poggio Colla earrings are, so far, the northernmost examples of the type and from the latest datable context.

⁴³ It is possible that this pair of earrings was used before it was placed in the tomb. A complete description in the final publication of the cemetery may indicate if any signs of wear can be identified.

⁴⁴ Mengarelli 1941; Cat. 2.

⁴⁵ Cat. 33.

⁴⁶ Warden – Thomas 2002/2003, 97–108; Warden et al. 2005, 253 f.; Warden 2009.

⁴⁷ Castor 2009.

There are few signs of wear on the earrings, suggesting that they were likely made soon before they were buried in the early third century.

These archaeological discoveries show that the horseshoe earring appeared by at least the second quarter or middle of the fifth century and was used for about a century and a half. Secure findspots demonstrate that the type was widespread from Aléria, Civitavecchia and Vulci to northern settlements in Populonia and Poggio Colla. As valuable as the datable contexts have proven to be, our ability to establish an evolution of the type remains constrained because three of the five scientifically excavated earrings are from a single site. Additional discoveries elsewhere in Etruria would undoubtedly fill in some important gaps that could help us refine the remaining chronological issues.

Catalog

The catalog below is arranged according to disk shape beginning with the semicircular disk, since this type includes the earliest known horseshoe earrings from Aléria. Arched and circular disk horseshoe earrings follow. At the beginning of each section, earrings from excavated contexts are listed in chronological order according to their context date; those lacking context are listed alphabetically by their current museum location. Two types of disks, the solid apsidal plate and crescent disk have no excavated examples and are listed according to their present location. The final section groups all of the foil funerary earrings, regardless of disk shape, according to their current museum location. A glossary of descriptive terms used in the catalog descriptions is supplied below.

Glossary of Catalog Terms:

Band: The horseshoe disk is embellished with multiple decorative bands comprised of plain sheet gold, filigree wire, appliqués or embossed patterns.

Boss: The visible portion of the tubular earring. Most appear to be trapezoidal (wider at the bottom than at the top) or rectangular (long and narrow). A few earrings have small circular bosses.

Circlet: A row of circles made of filigree wire and arranged in one of the bands on the disk. Usually equipped with a central bead.

Depressed disks: Open cup-shaped attachments made of sheet gold, usually with a central bead placed inside. Depressed disks are spaced on clusters and fill gaps between the hemispheres or in a band on the disk.

Double-beaded border: Typically, this forms the outermost band on the disk. Carefully executed examples consist of a row of beads that is topped with small granules to create the border. Other examples include a row of two beads of equal size, rows of repoussé beads or beaded wires. When the technique used to create the border is known, it is described in the catalog entry.

Fluted strips: Strips of sheet gold with a central carination and raised edges. Fluted strips are placed on either side of the boss to help to mask the connection between the boss and the disk or cluster.

Lunate attachment: A carinated crescent-shaped attachment that is often placed upside-down above the boss as the innermost decorative band on the disk. A few earrings also include a lunate attachment at the bottom of the boss.

Miniature clusters: These groups of three granules are fastened to the bottom center of the hemispheres that make up the lower cluster. They were apparently a necessary embellishment and are included even in schematic funerary horseshoe earrings.

Hemispheres: Large, flattened beads used to create the cluster of beads on the lower part of the earring. Sometimes an additional hemisphere is added to the reverse of the cluster to provide additional stability for the earring; this is noted in the catalog entry.

Tube: A convex strip of sheet gold used as one of the bands on the disks. The tubes may be plain or ribbed.

Group I: Semicircular Disk (Middle 5th to second half of 4th century)

Semicircular disk horseshoe earrings are characterized by densely decorated disks with multiple bands of decorative filigree borders, rows of circlets or repoussé beads and lunate attachments above the boss. Two pairs of semicircular disks establish that the form began early in the history of the type, with the earliest pair (cat. 1) known to date from an Alérian tomb context of c. 440 B.C.

A notable example of this form (cat. 6) is an oversized (12 cm) pair of horseshoe earrings now housed in Dallas. These elaborate earrings include a Medusa head attachment below the central boss; mythical creatures are nestled in some other horseshoe earrings⁴⁸. The extravagant size of these earrings finds a parallel in cat. 23, a 14-cm singleton. The semicircular disk shape is reproduced most often in the artistic representations of horseshoe earrings, further supporting the idea that the semicircular and arched forms are the most common disk types.

Dated Examples

1. Aléria Inv. 72/263

H. 4.5 cm, W. 2.8 cm. Tomb 155 (Chamber tomb). Dat.: 440 B.C.

A semicircular upper disk with three decorative bands consisting of two rows of repoussé beads with small lunate attachment above the central boss. The rectangular boss is framed with filigree; the lower cluster is made of seven hemispheres.

Bibliography: Jehasse – Jehasse 2001, 215 no. 3377 pl. 91.

⁴⁸ See cat. 44. 45. 53, all of which are funerary earrings.

2. Civitavecchia

H. 5 cm. Tomb E. Dat.: late 5th to mid – 4th cent.

Obverse: Four decorative bands with filigree borders separating each band. The outer band is a double-beaded border, then a row of beads, then a row of ten circlets with central beads, and finally a lunate attachment with strips of filigree on the upper and lower edges of the crescent. The trapezoidal boss is framed with beaded filigree wire. Seven hemispheres below, several of which are dented or damaged.

Reverse: Not illustrated, but described as including a small silver pin that connected the upper, hollow tube with the lower part. According to the author, this pin would prevent the earring from slipping out of the earlobe and would have been reinforced with a removable disk placed between the earlobe and the pin.

Bibliography: Mengarelli 1941, 363 fig. 9.

Undated Examples in Museum Collections

3. Berlin 30483

H. 5.5 cm. Said to be from Capena.

Four bands with rows of twisted and beaded filigree borders between the bands. Double-beaded border, narrow convex tube set above a band of nine depressed disks, each with a central bead, and small beads placed in the spaces above the disks. The final band is a lunate attachment above the boss; beads mask the join. Small, half-shell attachments are placed on either side of a trapezoidal boss, which is framed with beaded filigree. Seven-hemisphere cluster; three depressed disks with central bead are set between the upper hemispheres and a single large bead is placed where the bottom three hemispheres meet.

Bibliography: Greifenhagen 1960, 73 no. 1; Formigli 1995, tav. 1–3.

4. Berlin 30484

H. 4 cm.

Three bands, with a double-beaded outer border, nine repoussé beads encircled with plain filigree wire and small beads set between the hemispheres. Lunate attachment above the boss; a strip of filigree wire covers join with the rectangular boss. Seven hemispheres with five depressed disks spaced along the lower part of the boss and a sixth placed between the lowest three hemispheres.

Bibliography: Greifenhagen 1960, 73 no. 2.

5. Berlin 30485 (Singleton)

H. 2.5 cm, W. 2.2 cm.

An unusually wide disk with three decorative bands bordered with filigree wire. A double row of beads on the outside edge, eleven small repoussé beads and a narrow convex lunate attachment set above the trapezoidal boss. Beaded wire frames the boss and nine small hemispheres cluster below. Small granules fill the spaces between the hemispheres, replacing the typical miniature clusters. No other horse-shoe earring in this catalog has nine hemispheres.

Bibliography: Greifenhagen 1960, 73 no. 3 left.

Fig. 7. Semicircular
horseshoe earring, cat. 6.
Dallas, Dallas Museum
of Art



6. Dallas, Museum of Art 1966.25.a–b (fig. 7)

H. 12 cm, W. 6.5 cm, Wt. 30.4 gr.

Four bands with rows of twisted filigree wire between the bands. The outer double-beaded row has a filigree border on the upper and lower side; convex tube; a dense row of rosette appliques (ten on one disk, eleven on the other), each fitted with a central bead. In the center of this rosette band is a small human head; larger head appliques are set on either side of the boss. All of the heads are shown frontally with their hair arranged in a smooth cap on the top of the head and falling straight on either side. It cannot be determined if they are male or female heads. Below the rosettes, the third band consists of another dense row of nine flat disks with a depressed circular center; below is a lunate attachment. The rectangular boss is bordered with wide bands of filigree and a double-beaded row of granules.

Directly below the boss is a Medusa mask applique surrounded on either side and below by rosette appliques. (See cat. 52 for a possible parallel to the Medusa figure in a gold foil version.) The hair of the Medusa flies out wildly, in contrast to the carefully styled coifs of the figural attachments above. Five hemispheres, each with a two-tiered miniature cluster (three large beads, an inverted triangle of three smaller beads) are placed below the boss. Strips of filigree fill the spaces between the hemispheres rather than the customary cups or beads.

Bibliography: Hoffmann 1970, no. 214; Deppert-Lippitz 1996, 127 no. 23.



Fig. 8 Semicircular horseshoe earring, cat. 7. Dallas, Dallas Museum of Art

7. Dallas, Museum of Art 1991.75.34.a–b (fig. 8)

H. 8.4 cm, Wt. 11.2 and 10.2 gr.

Obverse: Five decorative bands beginning with a double-bead border on the outside, a narrow convex tube, a row of circlets, and a convex ridged strip, below which is a row of repoussé lotus and palmette attachments and another ridged strip. Finally, a small lunate attachment sits above a circular boss framed with fluted strips. An upright lunate attachment placed below the boss is embellished with a small figure of a lion. Lunate attachments set below the boss are also found on cat. 8. 10. 26. 45 and 47, but none of these have embossed decoration such as we find here. Seven hemispheres form the cluster with six depressed disks (five of them on the right earring) set in the gaps between the boss and the hemispheres; most of these include a single central bead, but the center cup substitutes a tiny rosette.

Reverse: Deppert-Lippitz describes a chain and wire attachment on the reverse, perhaps similar to cat. 2. 16.

Bibliography: Deppert-Lippitz 1996, no. 22.

8. London British Museum 2252

H. 6 cm, Wt. 7.5 gr. Said to be from Populonia.

Four bands with filigree borders. An outer double-beaded border, a row of repoussé beads, a row of appliqué palmettes and a lunate attachment. Fluted strips and beaded wire on either side of the rectangular boss. An upright lunate attachment is fastened below with a cluster of seven hemispheres. Miniature clusters are set in a fan-shape rather than hanging directly below the hemisphere. Four depressed disks placed

between the hemispheres and a large rosette appliqué set between the lower three beads. A single large bead is set below the rosette.

Reverse: Gold sheet covers the back of the disk; the upper tube is pushed through this sheet.

Bibliography: Marshall 1911, no. 2252; Cristofani – Martelli 1983, 311 no. 239.

9. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 18.103.1–2

H. c. 6 cm.

Five bands with an outer double-beaded border, rows of twisted filigree; a thin convex tube; nine depressed disks with a central bead, small granules set at top of this band in the spaces between the cups. A lunate attachment above trapezoidal boss and a row of beads covering the join. A beaded filigree wire frames the boss. Seven hemispheres below with beads set in the spaces between the hemispheres.

Bibliography: Richter 1918, 289.

10. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 15.152–153

H. c. 3 cm.

Four bands, beginning with beaded filigree wire on the outer band; twelve depressed disks; a row of plain wire and a lunate attachment above a rectangular boss framed with filigree. An upright lunate attachment below the boss, and seven hemispheres on the cluster.

Unpublished, on display.

11. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 18.103.3–4

H. c. 5 cm.

Two decorative bands with a band of filigree between them. The usual double-beaded border, seven depressed disks with central bead. Small granules set at the top in the spaces between the disks. Trapezoidal boss with beaded wire on each side; seven hemispheres clustered below.

Unpublished, on display.

12. Paris, Louvre Bj 311 (see also cat. 36)

19th-century diadem with a pastiche of horseshoe earrings and modern elements. No dimensions available. Single horseshoe earring placed upside down in the center of the diadem.

Three bands with filigree borders between. Two rows of repoussé beads and a lunate attachment set above the rectangular boss. The boss is embellished with a design, but the details are unclear. Seven hemispheres, two on either side of the boss and the five lower hemispheres equipped with miniature clusters. Four large beads placed between the hemispheres.

Bibliography: Clément 1862, 8 no. 6; Gaultier – Metzger 2005, 144 no. 2, 128.

13. Providence, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design 25.106a–b (fig. 9. 10)

H. 4.7 cm, W. 2.8 cm.

Obverse: Four bands with herringbone-pattern filigree border (made of four twisted filigree wires) on outer edge; two additional rows of filigree encircle a row of small



hemispheres; another filigree border surrounds ten depressed disks. A lunate attachment placed above the trapezoidal boss, framed with twisted filigree wire. Five hemispheres below, with small granules and four depressed disks filling any gaps. Reverse: A sheath of sheet gold covers the reverse of the earring; openings for the tubular earring and the reverse of the hemispheres.

Bibliography: Hackens 1976, 37–39; Hackens – Winkes 1983, 112 f. no. 30.

Fig. 9. 10 Semicircular horseshoe earring, cat. 13. Providence, Rhode Island School of Design. 9 obverse; 10 reverse

14. Rome, Villa Giulia 53824–53825 (fig. 11)

H. 3.5 cm, W. 2.3 cm. Said to be from Tarquinia.

Four bands with twisted filigree wire in a herringbone pattern on outer edge; a row of seventeen circlets with central beads; a wide convex tube with filigree border on the upper and lower edges; a lunate attachment with a filigree border above the rectangular boss. Fluted strips frame the boss; seven hemispheres, the lower five with miniature clusters. Five depressed disks (one missing on one of the earrings) are spaced out among the beads.

Bibliography: Sgubini 2000, 184 no. 142.

Group II: Arched-disk Earrings (Late 5th to mid-/late 4th century)

Arched and semicircular disk earrings are similar in form and likely circulated at the same time and in the same regions of Etruria. The two earliest examples, found at Aléria, date to the late fifth century; one of these includes human head attachments as part of the disk ornament. The style of the heads is Archaizing, with similarities to Daedalic-style figures from the sixth century. A similar style was also used for heads fastened to a single arched horseshoe earring (cat. 29) in St. Petersburg, suggesting a late-fifth-century date for that archaizing example as well.

An oversized earring (cat. 23), a 14-cm singleton in London, supplies a second example that compares in size to the large pair in Dallas (cat. 6) discussed above. Study of the reverse of the London earring showed that small hooks were set on



Fig. 11 Semicircular horseshoe earring, cat. 14. Rome, Villa Giulia Museo Nazionale Etrusco

either side of the pointed tubular earring end. These additional attachments illustrate how the piece could have been worn, and suggest that the piece was indeed functional.

Dated Examples

15. Aléria 1684a (Singleton)

H. 4.5 cm, W. 2.8 cm. Tomb 87, dromos. Dat.: c. late 5th cent.

Obverse: Three densely set decorative bands. A double-beaded border at the outer edge has a frame of plain and twisted filigree wire below; three multi-level rosettes with central beads flank each side of a central appliqué in the form

of a human head. Head appliqués are placed at each end of the disk; short, straight locks frame the faces. A trapezoidal boss is decorated with beaded filigree wire on either side and small granules in a v-shape on the top and bottom of the boss. Below the boss two rosettes similar to those found on the disk were fastened; a third rosette is formed from granules and set in the center. Three large hemispheres form the bottom cluster, each with a miniature cluster on the bottom; two smaller hemispheres can be seen on either side of the boss.

Reverse: A 5-cm chain ending in a straight pin allowed the wearer to fasten the ornament to her ear.

Bibliography: Jehasse – Jehasse 1973, 428 no. 1684 a pl. 1, 1684.

16. Aléria 3753

H. 2.1 cm, W. 1.4 cm. Dat.: c. 410 B.C.

Two decorative bands separated by a border of filigree. The outer border consists of a highly articulated beaded row and a convex tube below. A rectangular boss is bordered with filigree wire. These horseshoe earrings differ from the usual form in that the lower cluster of hemispheres does not border the central boss continuously, but rather forms three separate clusters.

Bibliography: Jehasse – Jehasse 2001, no. 3753 pl. 91.

17. Capena (Singleton)

H. 4.0 cm. Tomb E, a single earring found on the floor of the tomb. Note that this earring is published only in a sketch. Its current whereabouts are unknown. Dat.: second half of 4th cent.

Three decorative bands consisting of an outer border (details of which are unclear from the drawing), a row of small beads and a row of circlets with central beads above a rectangular boss. Five hemispheres below; the space between the hemispheres filled with beads.

Bibliography: Stefani 1958, 201 f. fig. 56.

18. Florence, Archaeological Museum 88269 (Singleton)

H. 2.9 cm. Earring found out of context at San Cerbone necropolis in Populonia with no link to a specific tomb. Dat.: second half of 4th cent.

Obverse: Two bands separated by filigree borders. A double-bead border above a row of ten repoussé hemispheres and a filigree border completely surrounds the row of hemispheres. A rectangular boss with a filigree border on each side. Seven hemispheres; the space between covered with depressed disks.

Reverse: The earring is functional.

Bibliography: Minto 1943, 183 pl. 48, 5; Cristofani – Martelli 1983, 62. 68 no. 5; Reusser 1986, 40 no. 95; Formigli 1985, 44 f. pls. 53. 54; Gioielli 1988, 145 no. 72; Magie des Goldes 1996, 63 f. no. 65; Treasures from Tuscany 2004, no. 202.

19. Florence, Archaeological Museum 80884–80885

H. 7.0 cm. San Cerbone necropolis, Populonia. Dat.: second half of 4th cent.

Two decorative bands separated by a filigree border. A double-beaded outer border above a row of ten (eleven on one of the earrings) circlets with central beads. A rectangular boss, framed with filigree wire. Seven hemispheres with depressed disks spaced between the hemispheres.

Bibliography: Treasures from Tuscany 2004, no. 201.

20. Florence, Archaeological Museum 84462

H. 3.0 cm, W. 2.0 cm. San Cerbone necropolis, Populonia. Dat.: 4th cent.

A variant of the usual arched disk with four rows of granules, decreasing in diameter from outer inner row. The outer edge of the disk is studded with small granules. Rows of twisted filigree create a crescent-shaped area of the disk that is covered with granules. Rectangular boss framed on three sides with nine attachments in the form of seashells. Below the boss, a lunate area is filled with granules. Seven hemispheres, each with miniature cluster set at the bottom.

Bibliography: From the Temple and the Tomb 2009, no. 247.

Undated Examples in Museum Collections

21. Berlin 30485 (Singleton)

H. 2.7 cm, W. 1.9 cm.

Two decorative bands separated by a row of beaded filigree wire. A double-beaded border above a row of seven open circlets with central beads. The boss is rectangular and narrow; below are seven hemispheres, and two depressed disks mask the join between cluster and boss.

Bibliography: Greifenhagen 1960, 96 pl. 73, 3 right; Platz-Horster 2001, 42 no. 24.

22. London, Victoria and Albert Museum 8749–1863 (Singleton) (fig. 12)

H. 4 cm, W. 2.4 cm.

Four bands: a double-beaded border with a row of filigree below; a single row of beads. Two rows of filigree surround the upper and lower border of twelve circlets, each with a central bead and tiny granules that are scattered above and below the cir-



Fig. 12 Arched horseshoe earring, cat. 22. Victoria & Albert Museum

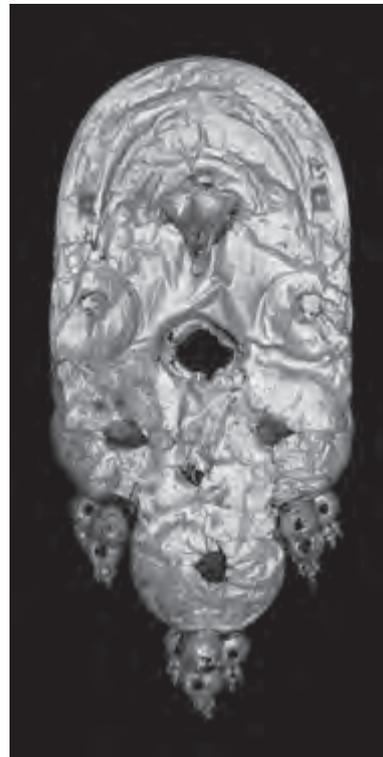


Fig. 13. 14 Arched horseshoe earring, cat. 23. London, British Museum. 13 obverse; 14 reverse

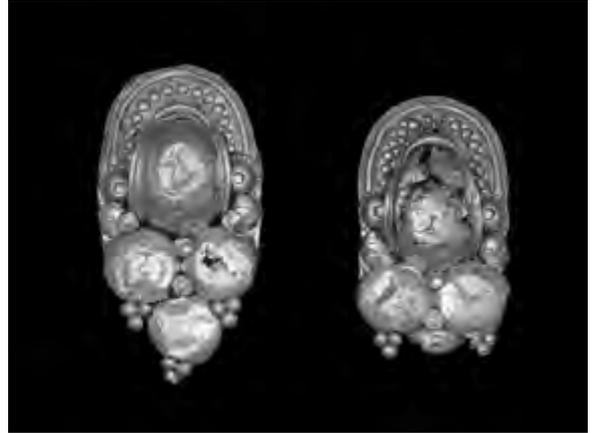
cllets. An arc of beaded filigree wire and granules placed irregularly above the central boss. A hole is cut at the top of the earring in the center of the horseshoe (unclear if it is ancient or modern). A rectangular boss with fluted strips and beaded filigree borders; an upright lunate attachment below the boss. Seven hemispheres, an eighth on reverse, with miniature clusters. Five depressed disks at the joins.

Bibliography: Bury 1982, 49 no. 3.

23. London, British Museum 2256 (Singleton) (fig. 13. 14)

H. 14 cm, W. 6.1 cm, Wt. 34 gr.

Obverse: Four bands: a wide band of filigree wires forms the outer border above a row of beads; a narrow, sharply carinated lunate attachment with a thinner version of the filigree band above and below; a row of ten bead-covered appliqué, with a filigree band below; a small lunate attachment above boss. Two hemispheres set at bottom of disk; rosette design made of filigree spirals and a bead-covered appliqué in the center. The hemisphere is surrounded with beaded wire and a small rosette attachment set below it. A bulging circular boss covered with granules carefully set in place; this is a unique example of granulation on the boss. The boss is bordered with a row of small beads and twisted filigree wire in a herringbone pattern. Three hemispheres, slightly crushed, with smaller clusters on the bottom of each hemisphere. These smaller clusters consist of three large, hollow beads, a pendant cluster of three beads on which there is a subsidiary cluster of even smaller beads. Large beads are set on the top and in the center of this cluster. Four rosettes are placed between the hemispheres and the



boss. Three of these rosettes have a central beaded appliqué and the fourth, the largest (set in the center of the hemispheres), includes a tiered corolla with a central solid bead.

Reverse: Entire reverse is covered with sheet metal. The remnants of a tubular earring are visible, indicating that the earring was intended to be functional. Two square hooks are set on either side of the tubular earring. If a chain was threaded through them and hung over the ear, it would have stabilized this large earring when it was worn.

Bibliography: Marshall 1911, no. 2256.

Fig. 15 Arched horse-shoe earrings, cat. 24. London, British Museum

Fig. 16 Arched horse-shoe earring, cat. 25. Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

24. London, British Museum 2257–2258 (fig. 15)

H. 6.7 cm, W. 3.0 cm, Wt. 4.7 gr. and 5.3 gr.

Obverse: Four bands: the edge of backing metal is folded up to create a border along with three rows of plain and twisted filigree wire; a thin tube of ribbed repoussé; fourteen hemispheres with filigree border repeated above and below; a lunate attachment above boss, the join concealed with a thickly twisted filigree wire. An inverted rosette, with ribbed petals and a depressed center at end of disk, also two small human heads with round faces and short hair with a central part. A trapezoidal boss with fluted strips on either side, three hemispheres with miniature clusters below. Four depressed disks with central beads set at the join of boss and hemispheres and between the lower two hemispheres.

Bibliography: Marshall 1911, no. 2258.

25. Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art 50.22.12 a–b (fig. 16)

H. 3.5 cm.

Three bands: double-bead border, an unusually wide filigree band with four strips of beaded and plain filigree wire that creates a continuous border surrounding a row of depressed disks with central beads. Tiny granules set neatly at the top and bottom of each disk along with a few extra granules scattered in this band. A row of graduated granules, with the largest in the center, set above a trapezoidal boss that is framed with beaded filigree wire. Seven hemispheres, two of which are bordered on the outer edge by granules to distinguish them from the lower five



Fig. 17 Arched horseshoe earring, cat. 29. St. Petersburg, Hermitage Museum

hemispheres which are clustered tightly together. Miniature clusters set on the bottom of the lower five hemispheres and five larger beads spaced along the lower edge of boss.

Bibliography: Del Chiaro 1967, no. 124.

26. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology MS 310 (Singleton)

H. 4.6 cm, W. 2.6 cm, pres. depth (now crushed) c. 1.0 cm. Said to be from Orvieto.

Three bands with filigree borders set between them. A beaded border above a row of eight repoussé hemispheres; small lunate attachment above a rectangular boss. Fluted strips on either side of the boss, with a small, depressed disk at the end of each strip. An upright lunate attachment below boss; seven hemispheres, with miniature clusters on the lower five hemispheres.

Bibliography: White et al. 2002, 17 no. 23; Turfa 2005, 176 f. no. 167.

27. Rome, Vatican, Museo Etrusco Gregoriano

H. c. 4 cm.

An arched disk with two bands: a double-beaded border with several rows of filigree that frame the lower part of the disk; a row of nine circlets with small central beads. A trapezoidal boss with beaded filigree wire on either side, seven hemispheres with miniature clusters below.

Unpublished, on display.

28. Rome, Vatican, Museo Etrusco Gregoriano

H. c. 4 cm.

Very similar to cat. 27 above, perhaps from the same workshop.

Unpublished, on display.

29. St. Petersburg, Hermitage D 61 (Singleton) (fig. 17)

H. 5.0 cm.

A double-beaded border; rows of filigree wire above and below a dense row of small cups or circlets with central beads. A wide lunate attachment, now flattened, above the boss and a row of filigree set between attachment and boss. A trapezoidal boss (now crushed) with a filigree border. Five hemispheres below and two human head attachments on the sides of the boss. The heads have Daedalic-style hair and features. The hairstyle is short on top, long on the sides, and the figures have long, narrow faces; miniature clusters are set below the heads. Five hemispheres have miniature clusters as well. Three large beads and one depressed disk set below the boss.

Bibliography: Boriskovskaia 1972, 41 no. 113.

30. Stuttgart, Landesmuseum Württemberg 8.65

No measurements available.

Arched disks with a double-beaded border, row of round beads on the upper disk. Rectangular boss with strips on either side, seven hemispheres in cluster below,

small beads mask the joins of the hemispheres. Miniature cluster on the bottom of the hemispheres. The earring is functional.

Bibliography: Hadaczek 1903, 61.

Group III: Circular disks (Early 4th through early 3rd century)

The circular-disk horseshoe earrings resemble a figure eight shape, with the round disk mirrored by a tight cluster of hemispheres grouped on the lower part of the earring. Examples from Vulci and Poggio Colla give the type a chronological and geographical frame, demonstrating that the form was present in both southern and northern Etruria. In general, the circular-disk earrings are plain, with little additional granulation or filigree; most of the decoration on the disk comes from embossed or ribbed bands.

Dated Examples

31. Florence, Archaeological Museum 74757-1/2

H. 2.6 cm. Tomb 16 bis, Peschiera necropolis, Todi. Dat.: early 4th cent.

No distinctive bands of decoration, instead the circular disk is covered with concentric rows of twisted filigree wire. The disk fits closely above the boss on one earring, but there is a large gap on the other example. A rectangular boss with a wide, twisted filigree wire border on each side; three hemispheres with miniature clusters below. Two depressed disks with central beads.

Bibliography: Treasures from Tuscany 2004, no. 203.

32. Rome, Vatican, Museo Etrusco Gregoriano 13502–13503 (fig. 6)

H. 7.6 cm. From Vulci. Dat.: c. 350 B.C.

Four bands: the outer edge is framed by twisted filigree wire set in a herringbone pattern, this motif separates all of the other bands. A row of large repoussé beads arcs around the disk, and a convex tube lies immediately below the beaded row, separated by the herringbone filigree border. A ribbed tube curves over a lunate attachment set above the central boss. Large beads are set at each end of the crescent and a row of loosely twisted filigree covers the join with the boss. A round central boss with wide fluted strips that terminate in a depressed disk. Three hemispheres, each with a double miniature cluster (e.g., three hollow hemispheres, each with a set of three granules). Open cups and hollow hemispheres fill all of the gaps in the cluster.

Bibliography: Andrén 1948, 102 fig. 5; Andrén 1955/1956, 210 fig. 4; Becatti 1955, no. 362 pl. 92; Helbig 1963, 569 no. 763; Scarpignato 1981, 14 fig. 9; Cristofani – Martelli 1983, 307 no. 219; Cristofani 1985, 356 no. 15.1/9; Buranelli 1987, 205 no. 77.

33. Dicomano, Archaeological Museum 03-071. 03-082 (fig. 3. 4)

H. 5.8 cm, W. 3.0 cm, Wt. 3.53 gr. Poggio Colla, acropolis. Dat.: early 3rd cent. votive context.

Obverse: A row of twisted filigree wire on the outer edge; four rows of plain wire below; a wide convex tube; a row of thirteen repoussé hemispheres with rows of plain filigree wire above and below. A lunate attachment directly above the boss with a strip of twisted filigree wire to cover the join. A rectangular boss with wide fluted strips on either side; five hemispheres below (a sixth on the reverse). Four depressed disks with central beads spaced between the hemispheres.

Reverse: The disk is covered with sheet gold through which the upper tube is pushed.

Bibliography: Warden et al. 2005, 261; Castor 2009.

Undated Examples in Museum Collections

34. Copenhagen, National Museum 4979

No measurements available.

Five bands: at least four rows of filigree on the outer border, two bands of small repoussé beads are separated by a thin convex tube, a second band of filigree; a small lunate attachment above the boss. A rectangular boss with fluted strips; five hemispheres set below the boss. Three depressed disks set between the hemispheres. The three beads forming the miniature clusters each have their own dependent cluster of even smaller granules.

Bibliography: Moltesen – Nielsen 1996, fig 9.

35. Rome, Vatican, unpublished

c. 6–7 cm.

A circular disk with beaded wire. A trapezoidal boss with beaded filigree wire border and three small hemispheres below with miniature clusters.

Unpublished, on display.

Group IV: Crescent-shaped Disk (None from excavated contexts)

The crescent-shaped disk earrings have small proportions in comparison to other horseshoe earrings; the bulging trapezoidal boss distinguishes the form. All of the published examples of this type originated in the Campana Collection, and they likely derived from the same workshop. The lack of any archaeological data for this earring type prevents us from assigning a date or region it.

Undated Examples in Museum Collections

36. Paris, Louvre Bj 320–321

H. 7.5 cm, W. 3.8 cm. Campana Collection.

A thick twisted wire border (the reverse metal of the plate is crimped over to create an edge); a row of beads; a lunate attachment with a water bird between confronting lionesses set above the boss. Hemispheres are placed at each end of the crescent. An unusually wide trapezoidal boss, decorated with an inverted palmette

in the center of the boss and a running wave pattern on either side; narrow fluted strips as border. Three hemispheres with miniature clusters, and two large beads set between the hemispheres.

Bibliography: Clément 1862, 25 no. 63; Coche de la Ferté 1956, 85 pl. 40, 3; Gaultier – Metzger 2005, 132 no. 2, 62.

37. Paris, Louvre Bj 327–328

H. 3.2 cm, W. 1.3 cm. Campana Collection.

One band on the crescent disk: a lunate attachment outlined with two rows of twisted filigree wire set in a herringbone pattern along the upper and lower edge. A rectangular boss with filigree wire on either side; three hemispheres below with miniature clusters.

Bibliography: Clément 1862, 23 f. no. 52; Gaultier – Metzger 2005, 132 no. 2, 63.

38. Paris, Louvre Bj 111

No measurements available.

Two bands: a row of small beads with filigree border; a convex lunate attachment. Two large beads on either side of the disk. A trapezoidal boss with a filigree border, five hemispheres below the boss, each with a miniature cluster.

Bibliography: Clément 1862, 8 no. 6; Gaultier – Metzger 2005, 144 no. 2, 128.

39. Paris, Louvre 322–323

H. 5.8 cm, W. 2.7 cm.

Four bands: two rows of filigree wire in a herringbone pattern on the outer border; a thin convex tube; a row of sixteen beads; a convex lunate attachment over boss. A prominent trapezoidal boss with a border of beads set between two rows of filigree. Three hemispheres with miniature clusters; depressed disks with central beads.

Bibliography: Clément 1862, 24 no. 57; Gaultier – Metzger 2005, 132 no. 2, 61 fig. 5, 22.

Group V: Solid Apsidal Plate (None from excavated contexts)

An arched, largely undecorated plate replaces the disk and boss elements of the traditional horseshoe earring type. Only minimal decoration was added to the upper part of the earrings; a central vertical row of filigree divides the plate into two zones. Filigree is also placed around the edge of the plate. The lower cluster of hemispheres was fastened directly to the bottom of the plate. The three examples listed here have no recorded provenance.

Undated Examples in Museum Collections

40. Baltimore, Walters Art Museum 57.1611 (Singleton)

H. 3.5 cm.

Solid apsidal plate decorated only with twisted filigree wire on the outside and in a central line. Three hemispheres attached directly to the disk/apsidal plate (a fourth



Fig. 18. 19 Apsidal horseshoe earring, cat. 41. Providence, Rhode Island School of Design. 18 obverse; 19 reverse

behind). Two depressed disks at the join of the upper hemispheres and plate; granules set between hemispheres; miniature clusters consisting of three small granules each with even smaller granule clusters on the bottom.

Bibliography: *Jewelry* 1979, 59 no. 165.

41. Providence, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design 25.107 a–b (fig. 18. 19) H. 3.25–3.4 cm, W. 1.3–1.35 cm.

Obverse: An apsidal disk with twisted filigree wire frames the edges and a vertical row in the center of the plate. Three beads (a fourth on the reverse) are set below the plate, each equipped with a triangle of small beads on the bottom; even tinier inverted triangles of granules are placed in the interstices of the larger triangles. Four depressed disks with central beads at the center and sides.

Reverse: The plate tapers into a sharp curved hook.

Bibliography: Hackens – Winkes 1983, 111 no. 29.

42. Rome, Villa Giulia 53845 (Singleton)

H. 3.5 cm. From Civitella San Paolo, Castellani Collection. Dat.: late 4th cent.

An apsidal plate with a vertical row of spectacle-spirals made of plain filigree wire and a border of twisted and plain filigree wire that outlines the edge. A row of granules is set along the bottom of the plate where it joins with the three hemispheres that form the lower part of the earring. Two depressed disks with central beads are set in the center of the hemispheres, and three granules at the bottom of the hemispheres.

Bibliography: Bordenache Battiglia 1980, no. 64; Cristofani – Martelli 1983, 311 no. 240.



Fig. 20 Funerary horse-shoe earring, cat. 44. Florence, Museo Archaeologico

Fig. 21 Pair of funerary horseshoe earrings, cat. 45. Florence, Museo Archaeologico

Group VI: Funerary Horseshoe Earrings (None from excavated contexts)

Funerary horseshoe earrings typically incorporate a semicircular or arched disk on the upper part of the imitation ornament. Figural decoration appears on five of the ten examples listed here and includes male sea-creatures, frontal faces and hippocamps. These decorative imitations are often larger than the real earrings included in the catalog and reproduce all of the typical features found on real earrings. Notable examples include the pair now split between the Florence Archaeological Museum and the Louvre, which shows a male, nude from the waist up, holding two hippocamps. This pair of funerary earrings has small holes piercing the outer edge of the foil earrings; perhaps these served to attach the earring to a cloth or leather backing to increase its stability. Other funerary earrings may simply have been set on either side of the head.

Undated Examples in Museum Collections

43. Chiusi (no inventory number) (Singleton)

H. c. 6–7 cm.

An arched disk with two bands, imitation filigree and a row of beads. A long, rectangular boss and an imitation of seven hemispheres with miniature clusters.

Unpublished, on display.

44. Florence, Archaeological Museum 15802 (Singleton) (fig. 20)

H. 9.05 cm, W. 4.75 cm.

Arched disks with five relief bands, imitation filigree, a convex band, a beaded row, filigree and a figural scene, somewhat flattened and difficult to make out. It appears to show the upper body of a male figure with sea creatures on either side. A raised palmette is set at the bottom of the disk on either side of the central boss. The usual smooth boss is replaced with the figures of a male and female embracing. The scene



Fig. 22 Reverse of funerary horseshoe earring, cat. 46. London, British Museum

is evidently impressed from a finger ring, and the usual ring borders are included. Five hemispheres in relief, each with miniature clusters below. A frontal face of a female (labeled a Medusa in the catalog) is placed below the boss.

Bibliography: Gioielli 1988, 145 no. 71.

45. Florence, Archaeological Museum 153803–153804 (fig. 21)

H. 8.65 cm, W. 6 cm.

A semicircular disk with five bands: the outer band shows a double-beaded border in relief, inside is a beaded row with a very thin convex tube below this. A row of thirteen circular depressions with a central bead; a figural scene with a nude male figure who holds a sea creature with a fishy tale in each hand; a small convex lunate attachment above the boss. On each side of the disk is a female head; repoussé rosettes fill the space between the heads and the central square boss. Imitation beaded wire on either side of

the boss; five imitation hemispheres with miniature clusters. The gaps between the boss and the hemispheres are filled with circular depressions, beads and a rosette. An upright lunate attachment is set on the bottom of the boss, mirroring the attachment above the boss.

Bibliography: Cristofani 1985, 172 no. 6, 45 a; Gioielli 1988, 145 nos. 70 a–b.

46. London, British Museum 2259 (fig. 22)

Wt. 1.7 gr.

An arched disk with an imitation convex border, a beaded row, a lunate form above rectangular boss, and five imitation hemispheres. Each has the usual miniature cluster, although some of these smaller “beads” were cut off when the earring was cut out.

Bibliography: Marshall 1911, no. 2259.

47. Paris, Louvre Bj 319 and Rome, Villa Giulia 53740

H. 8.4 cm, W. 5.9 cm. Campana Collection.

A semicircular disk with five imitation bands: an imitation double-beaded border; a row of imitation beads; a thin convex tube; a row of thirteen imitation circlets or cups with central bead; a male figure between two hippocamps, with a narrow lunate attachment below. Two frontal heads with short hair on top and sides of head (female?) on either side of the rectangular boss. Imitation filigree found on either side of the boss, and below an upright lunate attachment. A central embossed rosette beneath the boss and five imitation hemispheres with miniature clusters beneath. Pairs with cat. 43.

Bibliography: Clément 1862, 24 no. 53; Cristofani – Martelli 1983, 68 no. 6; Gaultier – Metzger 2005, 153 no. 4, 7.

48. Paris, Louvre Bj 317–318 (Funerary)

H. 8.8 cm, W. 5.3 cm. Campana Collection.

A semicircular disk with four bands: a beaded zone between smooth imitation filigree borders; an imitation tube; a second row of “beads”; a human frontal mask placed in the position of lunate attachment. A small, rectangular boss; imitation fluted strips

# of Hemispheres	Arched Disk	Semicircular Disk	Circular Disk	Crescent	Apdisal
Seven	18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 43	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 48	None	None	None
Five	17, 29, 44, 46, 49, 50, 52	6, 7, 13, 45, 47, 51, 53	33, 34	38	None
Three	15, 16, 23, 24	None	31, 32, 35	36, 37, 39	40, 41, 42
Total	22	19	5	4	3

on either side. Seven repoussé hemispheres with miniature cluster below. The decoration below the boss is unclear. A circular hole punched into center of each upper disk; earrings are otherwise intact and in good condition.

Table 1 Disk Shape and Number of Hemispheres

Bibliography: Clément 1862, 23 no. 51; Gaultier – Metzger 2005, 132 no. 2, 64

49. Rome, Vatican

H. c. 8 cm.

An arched disk with three bands: an imitation filigree strips, an imitation row of beads, an imitation convex lunate attachment. A rectangular boss with five imitation hemispheres and miniature clusters on each. Likely from the same mold as cat. 48. Unpublished, on display.

50. Rome, Vatican (Singleton)

H. c. 8 cm. See cat. 49 above.

Unpublished, on display.

51. Rome, Vatican (Singleton)

H. c. 4 cm.

A semicircular disk, with two imitation bands of beads and imitation convex lunate shape. A circular boss with five imitation hemispheres below.

Unpublished, on display.

52. Rome, Villa Giulia 53840

H. c. 7 cm.

An arched disk with two imitation bands of filigree and a row of bead, over a rectangular boss and imitation of five hemispheres with miniature clusters.

Unpublished, on display.

53. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (fig. 5)

H. 9.5 cm, W. 5.5 cm.

A semicircular disk with an imitation of alternating filigree bands, convex and beaded rows; an imitation lunate attachment above rectangular boss. Seven imitation hemispheres, a frontal face below boss, perhaps a Medusa figure as in cat. 7.

Hadaczek 1903, 61.

Table 2 Size of Earring
(*Not all earrings in the
catalog have published
dimensions)

1–4 cm = 21 total	5–7 cm = 17 total	8+ cm = 12 total
4, 5, 10, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 37, 40, 41, 42, 46, 51	1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 19, 24, 26, 29, 33, 35, 39, 43, 52	6, 7, 23, 32, 36, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 53

Typological Considerations

The large number of surviving artifacts allows us to classify the earring into stylistic groups according to the shape of the disk and the number of hemispheres in the lower cluster. In addition to the three categories Andrén established, I add here three more: apsidal, crescent and foil/funerary⁴⁹. The arched disk and semicircular disk both appeared by the mid-fifth century and continued well into the fourth century; the circular disk was in use by at least the fourth and into the early third century. Based on current evidence, this form may have developed somewhat later than the arched and semicircular shapes. Arched disks are the only shape that varied between seven, five and three hemispheres in the lower cluster (Table 1). Semicircular disks were best suited for the larger cluster of seven hemispheres – 12 of 18 semicircular earrings have seven hemispheres – and this pairing of a wide disk and numerous globules creates an elegant teardrop-shape for the entire ornament. Arched and semicircular earrings with seven or five hemispheres are the most commonly found types both in the artifacts themselves and the visual evidence and thus should be considered the standard shapes of this earring type. Circular and apsidal disks joined readily with three hemispheres⁵⁰.

The few known provenances do not allow us to determine regional preferences, but it is not unreasonable to imagine that certain distinct forms – the crescent-shaped disks originally collected by Campana and now in the Louvre or the apsidal disk earrings found in Baltimore, Rome and Providence – were made in the same region. Additional discoveries of horseshoe earrings may link with some of the evidence presented here and contribute to future discussions of the distribution of the horseshoe earring type.

As seen in Table 2 above, almost half of the earrings are 1–4 cm; another large group is 5–7 cm. Funerary earrings represent the majority of earrings over 8 cm long. The foil funerary earrings drastically reduced expense since they were made from a single sheet of gold: even the largest foil earrings would require less gold than the smallest real-use horseshoe earrings. Two horseshoe earrings, the singleton in the British Museum (cat. 23) and the large pair in Dallas (cat. 6), are exceptions to the general picture outlined above. Both of these oversized examples were functional

⁴⁹ While the foil earrings usually copy the arched or semicircular type of horseshoe, I have assigned them to a separate category because of their specific function and manufacturing technique.

⁵⁰ See cat. 33, however, with five hemispheres.

and I suggested above that the small hooks on the reverse of cat. 23 could have been used to support a chain that was slipped over the wearer's ear. This arrangement would have made the large piece more comfortable and secure for the wearer and also would have placed the ornament so that it covered much of the ear, quite similar to the position of earrings on terracotta votive heads discussed below.

Stylistic Connections

A significant result of this study reveals a small group of earrings that share an unusual stylistic feature. Three examples (cat. 21. 25. 27) in Berlin, Los Angeles and Rome used distinctive wide filigree borders to separate the decorative bands on the disk. The group, termed here the "Filigree Style," relies on several rows of beaded filigree wire rather than the two or four strips normally employed on the disk. The techniques used for each of these earrings differ, and therefore it is unlikely that the earrings were made in the same workshop, but the common decorative elements do inform us of stylistic exchanges, perhaps among goldsmiths working within the same area. Should other horseshoe earrings with a similar style be found in a secure context, that evidence would help to locate these artifacts within a specific region.

Horseshoe Earrings in Etruscan Art

Representations of horseshoe earrings fall mainly into two categories: in terracotta sculpture used as votive offerings and in an assortment of objects produced in various media – carved bone, painting, bronze – for use as toilet articles and tomb equipment. The horseshoe earrings in images reproduce the standard types described above: semicircular or arched disks embellished with decorative rows of beads and convex bands, a boss, and a cluster of five or seven hemispheres below⁵¹. It is even possible to identify figural decoration on these clay earrings as seen in fig 2. The images show that artists recognized the essential details that defined the earring type. Women wearing the earring usually are represented in their role as wife or in a religious context. What follows is an analysis of how horseshoe earrings appear in terracotta sculpture, tomb paintings and small objects.

Votive Sculptures: A Ritual Costume?

Votive figures constitute the largest group of secondary representations that show the horseshoe earring. The horseshoe earrings shown conform in detail to the real earrings that women wore, perhaps lending additional support to the idea that the

⁵¹ Three-hemisphere clusters are also found in the imagery.

sculptures depict worshippers rather than goddesses, although this issue remains open. Clay sculpture accurately captures the minutiae of the earrings and other jewelry; one significant feature, however, distinguishes terracotta jewelry from that found in other media: the scale of the jewelry shown. Very large horseshoe earrings were made in separate matrixes and then added separately to the sculpture or head. The relative size of horseshoe earrings in terracotta sculpture far exceeds the average size of the surviving earrings, as they typically equal about one-third or even one-half the size of the figure's head. These proportions are about the same as the massive earrings in London (cat. 23) and Dallas (cat. 6) discussed above, raising the possibility that artists drew inspiration for the exaggerated scale from real ornaments. Could such extravagant earrings have been more common than we might imagine? Other jewelry, especially the multiple necklaces and large pectorals found on these terracotta figures, is of equally substantial scale. Andrén argued that matrices for the sizeable relief pectorals were taken from real gold ornaments, although none of these have been found. If true, this evidence strengthens the hypothesis that sculptures reflect actual costume elements⁵². Conventions of Etruscan art, however, make it more likely that artists deliberately increased the size of the jewelry as a way to convey the essential meaning of the votives through the particular dress being represented. This sort of value perspective, in which key components of a figure are depicted in exaggerated scale, was used regularly in Etruscan art. For example, a figure's head or hands could be significantly larger in proportion to the rest of the body to illustrate that these features were of superior importance relative to the image as a whole⁵³. The emphasis on oversized ornaments appears only in the material found in religious contexts and it suggests that certain types of jewelry, such as horseshoe earrings, are crucially important to the meaning of the terracotta heads.

The bulk of this terracotta evidence comes from Etruscan and Latial sanctuaries⁵⁴. Female votive figures discovered at Lavinium provide us with richly adorned images that serve as a case study for this analysis⁵⁵. A full-figure sculpture of a woman shows her with a veil draped over a tall beaded, woven or embellished crown. Crowns were often accessories for adult women in late Classical and early Hellenistic Etruscan art⁵⁶. Immense horseshoe earrings copy the now-familiar earring forms illustrated above – semicircular disks with rows of beading and seven hemispheres set below the boss. Additional jewelry includes three necklaces: a choker, a bulla-pendant necklace and a massive relief pectoral that covers the bust. The pectoral depicts five figures, a central triad of Hermes, Zeus, and Herakles and two unidentified flank-

⁵² Andrén 1940, 93.

⁵³ Brendel 1995, 231 f. 323–325, for Archaic and Classical sculptural styles.

⁵⁴ See Hafner 1965; Briguët 1974; Steingraber 1980; Comella 1981.

⁵⁵ Enea nel Lazio 1981, 245 f. D 227. The earrings found on the other two preserved heads in this group (D 226 and D 228) are set at a more realistic angle to head and are seen either in full profile or three-quarters view.

⁵⁶ Coen 1999.

ing figures; additional J-shaped and amphora-shaped pendants hang from the bottom of this pectoral⁵⁷.

Votive heads and busts offer abbreviations of the full-length figures and here, the horseshoe earrings apparently served as emblems of more elaborate dress found on the larger sculptures⁵⁸. At a minimum, the head and bust figures wear a crown and horseshoe earrings; busts also tend to incorporate one or more necklaces strung with large pendants across the chest. Similar examples can be associated with sanctuaries at Ariccia, at Tarquinia and Cerveteri⁵⁹.

Examples from the Hearst Museum in Berkeley have been well studied by Nagy, who categorized the large collection of votive heads chronologically according to style (fig. 2. 23). Nagy suggested that the dramatic size of the jewelry found in terracotta sculpture might have chronological implications, with larger ornaments dating to the late fifth to early fourth century and smaller accessories used later on⁶⁰. We see here, then, an early and dramatic shift in representations of female costume in the late fifth century. Several examples of these votives include horseshoe earrings, most of which are sizeable and exceptionally detailed⁶¹. The upper disk is rendered as rows of small beads arching above a large, rectangular boss. Other votives in this group reveal the bust, adding even more jewelry to enrich the image. One or more necklaces, usually consisting of a short, beaded choker and another necklace with elaborate pendants, hang across the chest. Just as in the full-length sculptures discussed above, here again, the proportions of the jewelry can dwarf the female face or

⁵⁷ Only the upper portions of these figures are preserved. The head of another figure (D 226, Enea nel Lazio 1981, 242) has the same diadem as D 227/D 228, is veiled and wears horseshoe earrings that look to be from the same matrix as D 227, while another figure (D 229, Enea nel Lazio 1981, 247 f.) lacks a head, but otherwise sports similar jewelry. The two also fit in this sequence of figures.

⁵⁸ Enea nel Lazio 1981, 258 D 246–248. Dated by the earrings to the late fourth – early third century.

⁵⁹ Ariccia: Roghi 1979, 227 no. 4, Female head inv. 112402, H. 23 cm. Pair of horseshoe earrings, diadem with a row of circles on front, veil; Roghi 1979, 227 no. 3. Female head, inv. 112398. Pair of large horseshoe earrings, veil – Tarquinia inv. 2823; Stefani 1984, 9 f. no. 9. Head, H. 31 cm. Veiled female, no diadem, hair arranged in ringlets. Large horseshoe earrings (slightly less than one-half the height of the head), with arched disk and five hemispheres; choker necklace – Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe 1917.683; Bust of female, veiled with high ‘woven’ crown. Large horseshoe earrings set at side of head, beaded choker with large necklace of lenticular pendants and a central amphora-shaped pendant with two nude male figures and an eagle at their feet. Pagenstecher 1917, 94 no. 17 fig. 17. 17 a; Hornbostel 1981, 114 no. 141. Dated to third–second cent. B.C.; Hamburg Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe 1917.684; Dedication from Cerveteri. Veiled female wears high beaded crown with central ‘part’. Large horseshoe earring (arched, three hemispheres) set below hair, hanging down on neck. Necklace with lenticular and amphora-shaped pendants (large), and a lunate plaque with a female head in relief between male figures. Pagenstecher 1917, 94 f. no. 16 fig. 16. 16 a; Hornbostel 1981, 114 no. 140. Dated here to third–second century.

⁶⁰ Nagy 1988, 15 f.

⁶¹ Nagy 1988, IA 3, 23–26; IA 11, 45–47.



Fig. 23 Terracotta votive head from the "Vignaccia", Cerveteri.

figure, a fact that reinforces the importance of these accessories in conveying the identity of the female.

Other Late Classical Etruscan and Latial votive types show a similar interest in jewelry, although no other figures are draped with such lavish jewelry. Some votive figures from Lavinium, like those described above, retain certain necklace types described above, but not the horseshoe earrings⁶². A veiled woman is shown wearing an ornamented diadem and four necklaces: a choker, a short, thick twisted chain necklace, a necklace with several bulla pendants and a longer necklace with five large pendants that lay across the breast. Additional accoutrements include buttons along the sleeve and a plain, convex armband worn around the upper arm. The woman does not wear earrings. It could be argued that her hairstyle – chin-length hair parted in the middle, hanging straight on either side of her face – does not reveal her ears, although as we have seen, coroplasts had few reservations about fastening ornaments in unrealistic positions when necessary. Torelli has suggested that these figures wear a bridal

costume, and this is certainly a possibility given the focus of Etruscan art on married women and mothers⁶³. Most of the females shown wearing substantial jewelry, however, appear to be fully adult and mature women, suggesting that they may already be married and ready to take on important religious roles. A survey of this evidence shows that the diadem-horseshoe earring-relief pectoral jewelry combination was by far the most elaborate of all of the costumes, and, I suggest, documents dress worn by certain individuals for a specific role; the votive offering could commemorate the occasions for which this outfit was worn.

Antefixes from a large temple at Cerveteri were decorated with bejeweled females conventionally called maenads. Examples from this structure are found in Berlin, Rome, New York and Philadelphia⁶⁴. Framed by a shell-shaped backing, a female head is shown wearing a diadem embellished with a row of circles; the diadem secures a veil. Substantial horseshoe earrings are set on either side of the woman's head, set perpendicular so that they are fully visible to the viewer. A plain chain or choker is visible at the base of the neck⁶⁵. It is significant, I believe, that these bejeweled maenad antefixes decorated an Etruscan temple, reinforcing an association between the horseshoe earring and the sacred sphere.

⁶² Enea nel Lazio 1981, 253 D 241.

⁶³ Torelli 1984, 31–50.

⁶⁴ Andrén 1940, 57f. Type IV from Cerveteri.

⁶⁵ In Philadelphia, one of the female antefixes has black skin, a feature also of the satyr antefixes that served as the male counterparts to the maenads.

Finally, the last group of terracottas discussed here presents new material not previously recognized as a distinct votive type. A small group of terracotta horseshoe earrings not attached to sculpture was also retrieved from sanctuaries. These clay earrings show no traces that indicate they were ever fastened to a head or figure but instead seem to have been stand-alone offerings⁶⁶. The size of these terracotta earrings conforms to that of real examples, ranging from 7 to 9 cm. Terracotta horseshoe earrings from the sanctuary at Punta della Vipera and from Tarquinia make up the corpus, although a closer look at known terracotta earrings from other contexts may supplement this evidence⁶⁷. Although the habit of offering clay jewelry was not widespread in Etruscan sanctuaries – I have found no comparable examples – a pair of gold horseshoe earrings, along with other gold and semi-precious stone jewelry, belonged to the votive deposit at Poggio Colla (cat. 33). Perhaps the terracotta earrings from southern sanctuaries were substitute dedications for gold horseshoe earrings that were offered in the Poggio Colla sanctuary. Incursions by Greeks in this region in the early fourth century seem to have had a noticeable effect on votive offerings, with less extravagant offerings now becoming popular⁶⁸. The interpretation of this material must remain speculative, but as we have seen, the earring type belonged to a specific array of jewelry familiar in Late Classical votive art. The dedication of a clay earring may have taken place during an occasion when the costume was worn or it represented the wearer in her votive role as manifested through her dress and jewelry.

To sum up: votives supply us with the most extensive and detailed visual evidence for the horseshoe earring. The jewelry is deliberately exaggerated to indicate its importance in identifying the figure. Few details of female cult roles in Etruscan religion are known, although inscriptions referring to a *hatrencu*, a term usually defined as meaning a priestess, in Early Hellenistic burials have attracted much scholarly attention⁶⁹. Nielsen sought traces of ritual dress in late fourth-century funerary sculpture, looking specifically at rich jewelry as a possible means to identify women as priestesses⁷⁰. A late fourth-century sarcophagus cover shows a female Bacchant. Her key attributes of a thyrsus, a kantharos and a small fawn are further enhanced

⁶⁶ Tarquinia Archaeological Museum inv. 2599: Horseshoe earring with semicircular disk and five large hemispheres, 9.8 cm high. Stefani 1984, 25 no. 61 pl. 15 a; inv. 2599bis: Upper part of horseshoe earring with semicircular disk, preserved height 7.2 cm. Stefani 1984, 25 no. 62 pl. 15 b; inv. 2600: Horseshoe earring with arched disk. Preserved height 8.3 cm. Stefani 1984, 25 no. 63 pl. 15 c – Punta della Vipera: Civitavecchia Archaeological Museum inv. V66/7: Horseshoe earring with semicircular disk. Two dolphins can be seen below the boss; five hemispheres form the lower cluster. Preserved height 8.5 cm. Comella 2001, 40 A2fr13 pl. 9 c.

⁶⁷ It is possible that the practice of dedicating individual earrings was adopted only in a small area of Etruria near Tarquinia.

⁶⁸ Turfa 2006, 62 f.

⁶⁹ Nielsen 1990; Lundeen 2006, 34–38, discusses the evidence for the *hatrencu* and argues that it is a civic, rather than a religious, title.

⁷⁰ Nielsen 1990, 58–60.

by her ornaments: a crown, a pair of inverted pyramid earrings, two necklaces and an armband. Although the evidence linking rich jewelry and dress with religious ritual is circumstantial, it accords with the dominant presence of Etruscan elite in public ritual roles⁷¹.

Tomb-paintings, Mirrors, Vases and Boxes

The “uniform” of ornaments displayed in the terracotta sculptures does not appear in other media and artistic contexts. These images represent women in a range of activities, usually accompanied by their husbands. These idealized versions of elite life use jewelry primarily as a visual indicator of wealth and luxury.

Two fourth-century Tarquinian tomb paintings depicted women from the same extended family wearing horseshoe earrings: the first shows Velia Seithiti in the Tomb of the Shields, discussed above, and the second presents the so-called “lovely” Velia Velcha from the Tomb of Orcus I⁷². This Velia, wife of Arnth Velcha, wears a leaf crown, horseshoe earrings and two gold bead chokers. The jewelry shown in these tomb paintings appears to be noticeably more restrained in size and quantity compared to the terracotta figures festooned with jewelry, but still evokes a sense of their elite status. Both women are shown in banquet scenes, representing either a funerary meal or a generic elite communal meal at which wives participated. Steingraber refers to an “aristocratic aura” in the tomb paintings of the fourth century and an interest in promoting a clan identity through detailed references to genealogy in the inscriptions included in the tombs⁷³. The women found in these paintings reinforce this sense of elite self-representation and illustrate the correct role and dress that wives were expected to adopt in these settings. Elite wives may also have played the role of a priestess on religious occasions and the earrings, although not given the same prominence as in the votive imagery, could refer to that position.

Late Classical mirrors include a few examples of women, including divine or semi-divine figures such as Malavisch and Elene, wearing horseshoe earrings. Two mirrors show Malavisch and her companions wearing horseshoe earrings⁷⁴. In these scenes, Malavisch is being outfitted for a special occasion, widely agreed to be a wedding; she is usually seated, fully dressed, with attendants adding the final touches to her ensemble⁷⁵. All of the women in the Malavisch scenes wear the same accessories, so there is no visual distinction suggestive of rank or status here. Similarly,

⁷¹ Bonfante 2009; Castor 2010.

⁷² Steingraber 1986, 329 f.

⁷³ Steingraber 2006, 191.

⁷⁴ Gerhard II, 215; V, 22.

⁷⁵ Lambrechts 1992 collects eleven mirrors, six of which are inscribed with the name Malavisch, that depict a seated woman being adorned. For discussions of Malavisch, see also Bonfante 1977, especially 155–167; van der Meer 1985; van der Meer 1995, 201–203; Wiman 1992; Izzet 2007, 60–62; de Grummond 2006, 159 f.

two depictions of Elene show her sporting the horseshoe earring. In one she is being decked out with jewelry, much as Malavisch is shown, and in the other she sits, fully adorned, between the men who compete for her love, Paris and Menelaus⁷⁶. Finally, anonymous females with this earring are depicted on two mirrors: both face the viewer and their horseshoe earrings are shown frontally as well, placed at right angles to the woman's head in a manner reminiscent of the terracotta votives and antefixes⁷⁷. Neither woman is labeled with an inscription or identified by attributes and they may simply represent a generic figure suitable for any toiletry item. The iconography of the horseshoe earring on mirrors associates jewelry in general, and the horseshoe earring in particular, with beautiful or desirable women who attract men.

Several details of horseshoe earrings can be seen in the mirrors that are missing from the other artifacts. In general, engravers chose semicircular or arched disk horseshoe earrings with a group of five or seven globules. The only exception provides an exceptionally clear rendering of a circular earring with a long rectangular boss and cluster of five beads quite similar to cat. 33⁷⁸.

Finally, two containers – a vase and a bone box – also show women wearing the horseshoe earring. Once again, the imagery associates these well-adorned women with men; the women seem to represent wives. A red-figure skyphos in Boston shows a woman wearing a tall crown, horseshoe earrings and a necklace with bulla pendants (fig. 24). It has been suggested that the figures are Alcestis and Admetus⁷⁹. The skyphos image adds to the repertory of scenes involving wives adorned lavishly in the presence of her husband, much as women are depicted in tomb paintings and on mirrors. Finally, a bone box with scenes carved in relief, shows one of two women wearing horseshoe earrings⁸⁰. The scene shows a group of soldiers departing for war; the dress of the male figures has received far more attention than that of the women, but we see a familiar set of jewelry: the woman wears a crown, beaded necklace and horseshoe earrings. The woman is likely an elite wife seeing her husband off to war. She holds a thyrsus as well, which may impart a ritual overtone to the departure scene. Such an occasion would merit



Fig. 24 Red-figure Faliscan skyphos. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.

⁷⁶ Picón et al. 2006, no. 370 and Gerhard II, 197.

⁷⁷ Gerhard V, 155 no. 4 and 156 no. 2.

⁷⁸ Gerhard V, 156 no. 2.

⁷⁹ Padgett et al. 1993, 136.

⁸⁰ Lenormant 1881/1882, 23.

the presence of wives and female relatives; this singular illustration suggests that women donned ceremonial or ritual garb for departures.

In the secular, or at least non-votive, body of material, more diversity in the types of costume and jewelry is represented, as we would expect. This evidence suggests that women wore horseshoe earrings, crowns and some sort of necklace during public occasions such as banquets, marriage ceremonies, and perhaps as shown on the bone box, for the departure of men to war. Additional accessories – bracelets and armbands – were occasionally added in the scenes of bridal preparation. The horseshoe earrings then, may be interpreted as a jewelry type favored by elite women during the second half of the fifth and fourth centuries as a costume element that conveyed both her status and specific roles. Once again, we can note the shift to showing the realia of women's dress dominated the visual arts at this time.

Conclusions

The unusually rich primary and secondary evidence for this earring type has permitted us to conduct a thorough re-examination of the horseshoe earring in fifth- and fourth-century Etruria. This exploration has shown that the earring was a native creation used throughout Etruscan territory. Functional earrings take several consistent styles, normally incorporating horseshoe-shaped disks in arched or semicircular shapes, but also using crescents and apsidal disks for the upper part of the earring. Large, undecorated bosses and hemispherical globules finished off the earring, creating alternating light and dark shadows below the disk. New archaeological evidence shows that the style was known by the mid-fifth century and was in use until at least the early third century. One stylistic connection has been proposed here and others may emerge with new discoveries of the type in secure contexts. In addition to earrings worn in life, we have also collected a significant number of sheet gold funerary examples of the type. These foil versions suggest that the earring type played a significant role in the costume of the dead, although since none were discovered in situ, it is difficult to reconstruct any specific evidence about funerary costume. Horseshoe earrings are documented in southern and northern Etruria and were clearly a favorite type in the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic period.

The images of horseshoe earrings can be seen in light of an interest in representing native costume, a practice that begins to appear in the mid-fifth century. I have suggested here that votive sculpture records some sort of ritual costume, where certain elite women wore specific jewelry types as part of their dress in order to announce their status or role to viewers. Votive heads, busts and sculptures captured this costume. The few other surviving representations show that wives with their husbands at banquet and departure for war and women preparing for their wedding wore this earring type, sometimes in conjunction with other jewelry types. It is difficult to extrapolate specific meanings for these scenes other than that the earrings contribute to a costume worn by women who appear in their proper roles as wives and brides. The wider parameters of such roles could easily have included ritual acts as part of the ceremony.

The distinctive character of the horseshoe earring in both real examples and artistic imagery is understood best through comparison with the differing use and depictions of jewelry in the Archaic era. Archaic Etruscan jewelry used local forms with very few adaptations of Greek styles but, in contrast, Archaic art rarely represented those ornaments into depictions of costume. Instead, the most generic Mediterranean earring and necklace types show up in Etruscan art; the wearers would fit into any contemporary setting in Greece or Asia Minor. Classical Etruscan jewelry diverges significantly from both Archaic Etruscan forms and foreign models. Classical Etruscan art foregrounds this native jewelry and exaggerates it so that it becomes a testament to a particular role or statement. This type study of the horseshoe earring type has demonstrated that the earring flourished in an era during which Etruscans distinguished themselves through their costume, both in reality and in art.

Excursus:

Horseshoe Earrings and 19th-century Italian Archaeological Style jewelry

To collect a catalog of Etruscan jewelry requires sorting out the authentic from replicas, pastiches or forgeries that circulated during the era of Italian Archaeological Style jewelry. The activities of 19th-century collectors and antiquarians yielded the bulk of the evidence discussed here, which is, unfortunately, divorced from its original find spot or any associated grave goods. A group of horseshoe earrings now in the Louvre (cat. 36–39) was acquired during the sale of the Campana collection of artifacts in 1860–1861; these share significant stylistic features and likely came from a common context, although no information about these ornaments has survived. Campana was known for his interest in ancient jewelry and had amassed a significant collection of Etruscan, Greek and some Roman ornaments. Campana himself was actively exploring the areas of Vulci, Cerveteri and Veii and he liked to promote the idea that he himself had discovered many of his most spectacular finds. Closer study of his and other antiquarian activities shows that it is impossible to connect the majority of Etruscan jewelry to these sites with any certainty⁸¹. Any collector of antiquities active in Rome would have known that Campana was interested in jewelry and would have tried to interest him in their discoveries. These were on display in Rome and were of great interest to Alessandro Castellani, whose study of the objects and ancient manufacturing techniques inspired him to create imitations and adaptations of ancient styles⁸². At least one pair of horseshoe earrings, now in

⁸¹ Sarti 2001, 74 f.

⁸² The Castellani workshop and Campana collection at the Louvre have been the subject of recent exhibitions focused on Archeological Style jewelry. See Soros – Walker 2004; Gaultier – Metzger 2005. One drawing of a horseshoe earring, the funerary earring described above in cat. 45, survives in an album of Alfred Castellani. See Gaultier – Metzger 2005, 106 fig. 8. 5.

the Villa Giulia, was worked in the Castellani workshop⁸³. These earrings show far greater delineation and more precision on the decorative bands on the disk than is found in most ancient examples and the clustering of hemispheres along the bottom of the piece are packed tightly together in a way that ancient goldsmiths rarely used. Another 19th-century creation was made up of a pastiche of seemingly genuine ancient horseshoe earrings and new elements⁸⁴. This remarkable crown is composed of at least one pair and one single horseshoe earring (described below in cat. 12 and 36), all of which are flipped upside down so that they form a row of flame-shaped elements on the diadem. A third pair of horseshoe earrings on this diadem is made of embossed gold foil and clearly copy a cluster of grapes. Three imitation hemispheres are set at the edge of the gold sheet, which is also decorated with a row of imitation beads and filigree. A very similar pair of foil earrings with an embossed grape cluster is also found in the British Museum; it is possible that both pairs are ancient or that both were created to suit the fancy for Archaeological Style jewelry⁸⁵. One known forgery of horseshoe earrings was identified in Florence, and other pastiches or adaptations may have slipped into collections that were acquired around the time that Archaeological Style jewelry was popular⁸⁶. Seven pairs of horseshoe earrings in the Cini-Alliata collection in the Vatican have been labeled as being of questionable authenticity⁸⁷. Formigli's analysis of the manufacturing techniques of the horseshoe earrings and, it is hoped, the more detailed descriptions in this catalog should prove helpful for museums to validate or exclude questionable pieces⁸⁸.

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⁸³ Villa Giulia, Castellani collection 85098, H. 5 cm and W. 3.2 cm, last quarter of the 19th century. Gaultier – Metzger 2005, 154 no. 4, 9.

⁸⁴ Louvre, Campana collection, Bj 111; Gaultier – Metzger 2005, 144 no. 2, 128.

⁸⁵ Marshall 1911.

⁸⁶ Florence Archaeological Museum 85036, said to be from Populonia and acquired in 1911. Cristofani – Martelli 1983, 311 no. 238.

⁸⁷ Buranelli – Sannibale 2004, 38–42 nos. 10. 12–17.

⁸⁸ Formigli 1995.

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