**[title]A Group of Items from the Campana Collection as an Example of Nineteenth-Century Restoration**

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[A-head]Abstract

[abstract]

Together with other items from the famous collection of Marquis Giovanni Pietro Campana, three so-called shields appeared in the Antiquities Department of the State Hermitage Museum in 1861. Two “shields” were hammered from a bronze sheet. Their wide, flat rims are decorated with a double-spiral ornament. The third “shield” with a crudely made handle inside was suspected to be entirely fake. In the center of the shields, Samnite *kardiophylakes* (chest bandoliers) were attached.

Except for the removal of the *kardiophylakes*, no other attempts were made to restore these items. Preliminary examinations of the items were made in 2011 in the conservation laboratory of the Hermitage. It was discovered that some parts of the surface of two similar “shields” were covered with a false green patina. In the center of one “shield,” accurate round holes had been made, and on the inside newly fashioned bronze loops with rings had been attached. In the center of the second “shield” was mounted a small metal detail, perhaps for fastening a *kardiophylax*, which at that time may have been believed to be a kind of shield decoration. The bosses covering the surface of the third “shield” were in fact ancient.

[main text]

The major part of Marquis Giovanni Pietro Campana’s famous collection came into the Department of Classical Antiquities at the Hermitage Museum in 1861. Among the items were three “shields.” There were no detailed descriptions of them, but they were included in a short list of the objects in a special catalogue.[[1]](#endnote-1)

Two of the three were similar: round basins with wide flat rims. The first one was described in Campana’s catalogue as “Scudo rotondo con figura di Arpia in mezzo di bello stile”;[[2]](#endnote-2) the second one was described as “Scudo rotondo con chimera a basso rilievo nel mezzo.”[[3]](#endnote-3) The third “shield” was listed in catalogues as “Scudo grande con cerchi concentrici di borchie rotonde con in mezzo una figura di chimera in rilievo.”[[4]](#endnote-4)

In 1925, some items from the Campana collection were disassembled and the parts that were deemed to be ancient were detached. Today we can only guess what the items looked like when they entered the Hermitage. We know that an appliqué relief of a winged deity was removed from the first item (inv. B. 563). This relief was once presumably attached to the wooden surface of a chariot. What the Campana catalogue described as a “harpy” most likely represented the deity Usil, the Etruscan sun god.

The plaque with Usil was attached to a simple flat *kardiophylax*, which in turn was attached to the body of the “shield.” Before the *kardiophylax* was restored in 2011, it showed traces of the plaque fixture. The *kardiophylax* with a figure of a fantastic creature was removed from the second “shield” (inv. B. 559), and the same was done with the third “shield” (inv. B. 535).

The plaque with the sun god and the three *kardiophylakes* were thoroughly studied and published.[[5]](#endnote-5) At that time, the other parts, which were thought to be fake, were left inside the cases, and no attempts were made to restore them. Ultimately, though, it was decided to examine them as well. The first modern examinations began in 2011 in the laboratory of ancient metal conservation at the Hermitage.

During this investigation, it was discovered that the surfaces of the two similar “shields” were covered with an artificial green patina. Both objects are shaped like round basins, 48 centimeters (18 7/8 in.) in diameter. The items were made up of numerous, diverse fragments soldered on tin and blocked on all surfaces by a thick layer of mastic, which began to burst, flake off, and lose its adhesive properties.

During the conservation of the “shield” with Usil (B. 563), the layers of mastic and a fragment of a bronze leaf, which was fixed on a fabric layer and also covered by mastic, were removed. Places where the rim was soldered to the basin were cleaned and the lead-tin solder that nineteenth-century restorers had used to fill losses in the metal was removed. Loops of a copper alloy, holding two rings of different diameters (2 and 5 cm) inside the shield, were also soldered on with a lead-tin alloy. On the exterior of the object, traces of soldering the *kardiophylax* remain. There is a spiral ornament, two round holes in the center, and five small holes on the rim.

In the center of the next “shield” (B. 559), a small metal detail was mounted with a screw and nut. The rim was fastened to the basin with a tin spot-solder. The considerable difference in the diameters of the basin and the rim was concealed by means of rags and ropes, which were filled in with a thick layer of mastic and sealing wax. To investigate the object properly, layers of mastics were completely removed from the metal surface. The lead-tin solder from the nineteenth century was removed, and small details and fragments were detached. After this conservation treatment, the “shield” practically broke up into two parts: a basin and a rim.

The nineteenth-century restorers faced a very difficult problem. A lot of fragmentary items found together during excavations were waiting for somebody to understand how to reconstruct them into whole objects. It was as challenging as reassembling mosaics. It was a fascinating but difficult task, considering that sometimes the restorers had only a very vague idea of what kind of objects they were and what exactly they were supposed to look like. Ultimately it was decided to restore our items as shields.

The relief decorations of recently found Etruscan tombs in Cerveteri may have guided the restorers in their decision. Or perhaps, knowing such items as the Certosa situla or the warrior frescoes, the restorers or their clients thought that they were dealing with parts of shields.[[6]](#endnote-6) In any case, they created two round shields with brims, made like broad bands with bent edges and decorated with a number of double-spiral ornaments. They attached *kardiophylakes* of the eighth to seventh centuries BC, which at that time were perhaps believed to be originally shield decorations. In the internal part of one shield, newly made bronze loops with rings were affixed, possibly for hanging the shield on a wall or just to imitate rings for fastening belts to the inner part of the shield.

However, on the outer side of a vessel under the rim, Hermitage conservators detected traces of tin soldering. It looks as though this object was first intended to be a dish or a basin, and that the nineteenth-century restorers soldered handles to it. This idea was not far off the mark, because such basins existed in ancient Italy; only they had no handles.

For instance, a basin with a flat rim (now in the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Mainz) has a similar shape and its rim is decorated with the same double-spiral ornament.[[7]](#endnote-7) In the Metropolitan Museum of Art, there are twenty-one large shallow bowls coming from an Etruscan tomb.[[8]](#endnote-8) All of them have the same decorations of the rim: three bands of plait pattern. As we can see, the band of our item was attached correctly, with an ornament inside, as if it were a bowl. For the object to be properly restored as a shield, the ornament should have been on the outside, facing the opponent.

The third object can rightfully be called a shield (inv. 535). It consists of a round copper base with a diameter of 89 centimeters, divided into four parts by concentric circles. Each part is decorated with ranks of hemispheres covering the surface. In total there were eighty-five hemispheres, some of which are missing. In the middle of the shield can be seen solder traces where the *kardiophylax* had been removed. On the reverse side of the shield are located two rings and a handle. The shield was previously considered to be entirely fake.

It is now clear that 61 of the 85 bosses are ancient. The remaining 24 hemispheres, the handle, and two rings, as well as the base were made in brass in the nineteenth century. The ancient hemispheres in the center had tetrahedral spikes, which were sawn off in the nineteenth century, in order to be attached to the base of the shield. Pairs of brass wires with bent ends were soldered with tin to the places where the hemispheres were fastened. Bosses were put on the wires and then fixed by wax gloss oil mastic.

We may suppose that when the nineteenth-century restorers decided to make this shield they had in mind large Villanovan embossed shields of a central-handgrip type.[[9]](#endnote-9) In order to carry out this plan, they hammered a bronze sheet and attached various bosses to the body of the shield. Inside they put a crudely-made handle and two rings, which had the same functions as in the “shield” with Usil described above.

The walls of Etruscan tombs were sometimes decorated with shields. The walls of the Tomb of Shields and Chairs in the Banditaccha necropolis near Cerveteri, for example, were decorated with cut-out stone shields in relief about a meter in diameter. Under the shields, also carved from stone, stand chairs or thrones.

A throne of the same form was found at the Lippi necropolis near Verucchio.[[10]](#endnote-10) It is decorated with figurative scenes separated by lines of bronze studs. These studs look very much like the ancient bosses on the Hermitage shield.

As a result of our research, it became clear that the items are not entirely fake as was assumed before. Two similar objects in the form of shields most likely are parts of Etruscan paterae or large bowls. It is highly probable that the hemispheres detached from a shield may have been decorations on a wooden item, such as an Etruscan chair.

[A-head]Bibliography

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1. Guédéonow 1861, 41. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cataloghi del Museo Campana 1858, 2, VIII: 5. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Cataloghi del Museo Campana 1858, 2, IX: 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cataloghi del Museo Campana 1858, 2, VII: 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Boriskovskaya 1973, 5‒15; Haynes 1985, 173, 275‒76 n. 81. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Connolly 1981, 81, fig. 5; 96. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Nazo 2003, 89‒91, no. 138, plate 47. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/247024>, <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/247025> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Connolly 1981, 94. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Eles 2000, 80‒81, figs. 81, 82. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)