



# Etruscan News



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Acheloo head pendant, ca. 480 BC. Louvre.



Inscribed granulated fibula, Castellani.



Acheloo head pendant, Castellani.

## New Etruscan and Italic Rooms at the Musée du Louvre

by Laurent Haumesser

Since 2018, the Etruscan collections have no longer been visible to the public at the Musée du Louvre: the rooms built between the late 1970s and early 1980s, on the museum's first floor, needed to be completely refurbished. This has now been achieved, after several years' work on both the objects *continued on page 20*



## Etruscan Treasures The Castellani Collection between History and Fashion

Fondazione Luigi Rovati Milano  
by Giuseppe Sassatelli, Giulio Paolucci  
and Valentino Nizzo  
October 25, 2023 - March 3, 2024

Fondazione Luigi Rovati is hosting the exhibition "Etruscan Treasures. The Castellani Collection between History and Fashion", curated by Giuseppe Sassatelli, Giulio Paolucci and Valentino Nizzo. More than eighty masterpieces including Etruscan jewelry and faithful 19th-century reproductions, Attic and Mediterranean ceramics – carefully chosen from the Castellani Collection of Villa Giulia's Museo Nazionale Etrusco – will join the permanent collection of the Fondazione's Art Museum. The proximity creates a unique case of contamination between antique and contemporary typical of Fondazione's exhibition strategy.

The exhibition takes place in collaboration with Villa Giulia's Museo Nazionale Etrusco in Rome and it offers an in-depth analysis of the history of the Castellanis, a family of goldsmiths, collectors and antiquarians. It recounts the history of their extraordinary collection and their goldsmith's shop that launches a new jewelry genre "in the style of the ancients", aimed to reproduce the forms and the crafting techniques of antique jewels. The new genre soon became a trend among many international clients, intrigued by its evocative value and sophistication.

The activity of Fortunato Pio Castellani and his sons Alessandro and Augusto, renowned goldsmiths, collectors and antiquarians, is tied to the season of the great archaeological finds in the areas formerly inhabited by the Etruscan and Italic populations. Their collection was partly donated to Villa Giulia Museum in 1919 and partly scattered across cultural institutions around the world. Over the years the family starts and develops the intense work of collecting artifacts and promotes their exchange across the Peninsula, spurred on by a mix of historical interest, research demands, national identity and international trade. *continued on page 21*

## Images and Translations: The Etruscans Abroad

A New Book by Larissa Bonfante  
Review by Jean Turfa

Bonfante, Larissa. *Images and Translations. The Etruscans Abroad*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2023. ISBN: 978-0-472-13197-6 (hardback) \$65. 494 pages. 238 B&W illustrations, 8 maps, 20 color plates. *continued on page 35*

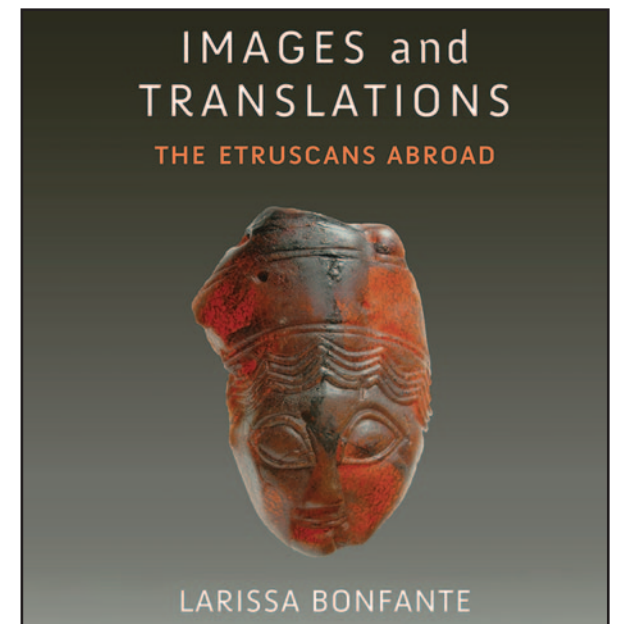






Fig. 8. Attic red-figure pelike from Tomb R6 with an image of a young man chasing a deer, 2nd half of the 5th century B.C.

tially articulated skeleton. Within the tomb itself only a cranium fragment and another bone fragment were recovered, so we hypothesize that the body was removed through the hole in the lid by ancient tomb robbers who were interested in confiscating metal artifacts.

In 2023, two tombs were discovered to the East of Tomb R5, designated as Tombs R7 and R8 (Figs. 9-10). Both of these tombs are fossa tombs, with similar dimensions (about 2.5 x 1 m), running approximately North-South. They were both heavily damaged by flooding, modern agricultural activity and likely robbed in antiquity. Stone piles designated the North side of the tomb, and thinly cut travertine fragments were discovered on the south end of each. Tomb R8 also contained an irregularly cut sandstone block with smoothed sides (perhaps originally rectangular) lying directly above a square cut travertine stone with a small depression in the center. Possibly these served as a marker for the tomb. A large quantity of pottery was recovered from each tomb. It seems from preliminary skeletal analysis that at least three individuals were buried within Tomb R7, including a child and two adults. .. Three miniature *thymiateria* were covered, similar to one recovered from Tomb R2 in 2019. Also, an iron

Fig. 7. Tomb R6 after excavation.



Fig. 9. Cut of Tomb R7.

knife blade and multiple iron fibulae along with a bronze handle were recovered. The pottery consisted mainly of a large amount of bucchero and impasto, with more than one fragment of an Attic kylix. Tomb R8 contained an even more impressive quantity of pottery, but little bone; the bone which was recovered was in very poor condition, perhaps eroded by the acidic soil conditions. Three bronze lumps (perhaps *aes rude*) and an iron knife blade fragment were recovered. The ceramic evidence for both tombs dates no later than the sixth century B.C., including some fragments of Faliscan-Capenate bucceroid impasto with incised meander motifs in Tomb R8 dating to the last quarter of the seventh century B.C.; this supports the hypothesis that these fossa tombs were among the earliest tombs of the necropolis.

Fig. 10 Tomb R8 prior to removal of stones.

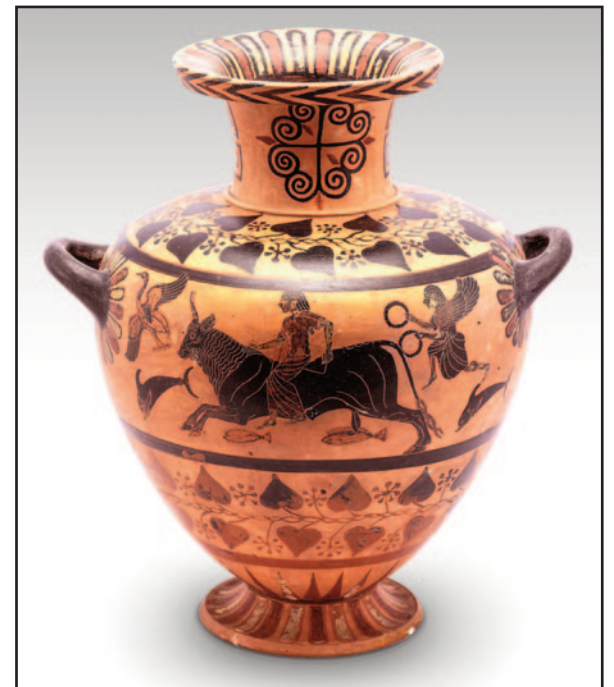


## EXHIBITS

### Castellani, continued from page 1

Giuseppe Sassatelli, President of the national Institute of Etruscan and Italic studies, states that it is true that exhibitions are made for the public. Often times though, especially in the case of archaeological exhibitions, they are made with experts in mind. This instead is an exhibition truly conceived, organized and intended for the public, with an effective selection of materials which draw the attention to some of the main themes of the Etruscan civilization. I think the Castellani would have loved it, since they enjoyed welcoming experts of the ancient world but most of all a large audience of curious people and enthusiasts.

Giovanna Forlanelli, President of Fondazione Luigi Rovati, points out: The fact that the Art Museum can host today the Castellani Collection of Villa Giulia's Museo Nazionale Etrusco is a meaningful and real sign of the collaboration between public and private, between a national public museum and a private foundation's museum. Many artifacts of the Castellani Collection can be found in the most famous museums of the world, but



Caeretan hydria from the Castellani collection.

the main part of the collection, donated by Augusto Castellani, is at the core of Villa Giulia's Museo Nazionale Etrusco. A philanthropic gesture which is part of the European tradition of the 19th century enlightened bourgeoisie. Today, Fondazione Luigi Rovati carries on that tradition.

As remarked by Valentino Nizzo, Director of Villa Giulia's Museo Nazionale Etrusco, the masterpieces of the Castellani Collection have never left Villa Giulia Museum before. The Fondazione's Art Museum certainly represents one of the most interesting novelties in recent years. A private initiative led to the opening of an Etruscan Museum in a modern city such as Milan, which likely has Etruscan origins. What strikes the most about the Etruscans is their huge modernity and the Art

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Fig.4. Bronze goddess Diana di Nemi, c. 350 B.C.

cities (sarcophagi and urns from Chiusi, Tuscania and Volterra); on the left are sanctuaries, bronzes and jewelry; on the right are Etruscan ceramics (red figures and overpainted decoration).

The tour closes with a display case on inscriptions, where visitors can see the gradual replacement of Etruscan by Latin, witnessing the integration of Etruria into the nascent Roman Empire.

Fig. 5. Caeretan hydriae in La salle des Séances.



### Castellani, continued from page 21

Museum interprets this identity merging contemporary works of art with a collection of antique objects. The same building which hosts these artifacts features an ancient facade, respectful of the place where it stands, but the interior design and architecture are innovative. We are pleased about this and its international significance: I think the Castellani would be too.

The exhibition trail is divided into six thematic sections: Masterpieces, Mediterranean Manufacturing, The Life of Women, Goldsmithing, Gods and Heroes, The Castellani Family. Numerous Etruscan jewels are on display next to 19th century reproductions, like the gold Achelous head pendant; Attic ceramics, like the kylix attributed to the Phrynos Painter; and Mediterranean ceramics, like the Caeretan hydria attributed to the Eagle Painter.

Two sketchbooks containing drawings by Michelangelo Caetani are also on display from Fondazione Caetani's archives: he is considered the inspiration behind Castellani's production of 19th century jewelry.

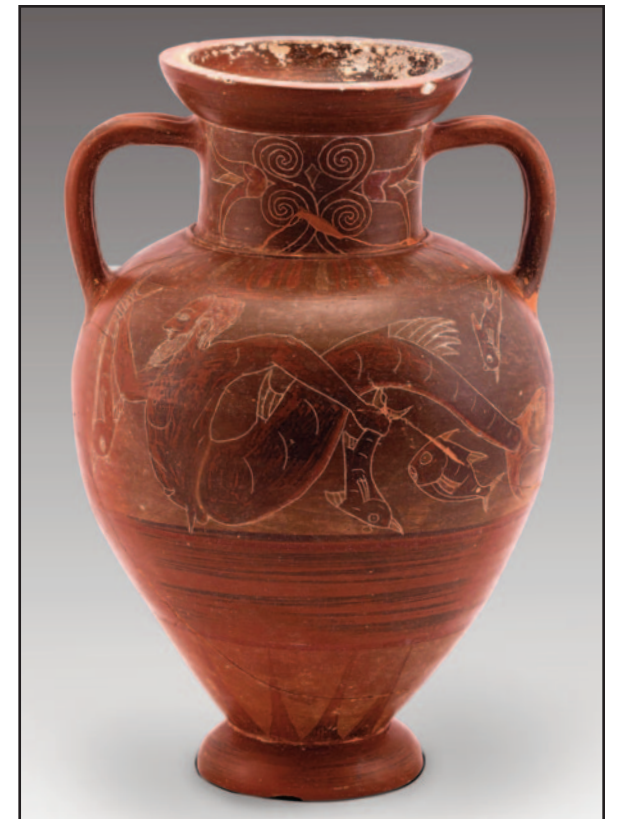
The Piano Nobile's light blue room features examples of Etruscan jewelry next to 19th century productions from the Castellani's workshop, which connect to Chiara Camoni's contemporary jewelry. The artist presents a series of jewelry-sculptures, created by melting other jewels through a reverse process that "turns shape back to shapeless, unexpectedly generating more beauty". To create her own jewelry, Chiara Camoni searches and experiments with different techniques: she collects various materials, some of natural origin like feathers and shells, others artificial like plastic, while also melting precious objects. The fusion and combination of fine and cheap materials gives way to new harmonies which turn into contemporary treasures.

On October 18, 2023, one week before the opening date of the main exhibition, the Art Pavilion hosts a photographic collection which tells the history of the Castellani family and its members between the 18th century and the 20th century. The timeline starts in 1794, the year of Fortunato Pio Castellani's birth, and passes through the production of the first jewelry creations in archaeological style; it marks the acquisition of the first artifacts from Cerveteri and Palestrina up to the donation made to the Capitoline Museums and the Villa Giulia Museum, and it ends with the closure of their workshop.

The exhibition is accompanied by the catalogue *Tesori etruschi. La collezione Castellani tra storia e moda* edited by Fondazione Luigi Rovati and Johan & Levi Editore with texts by Maria Paola Guidobaldi, Antonella Magagnini, Daniel Neumann, Valentino Nizzo, Giulio Paolucci, Giuseppe Sassatelli, Annalisa Zanni.

Website is [www.fondazione.luigirovati.org](http://www.fondazione.luigirovati.org)

Etruscan bronzes from Castellani collection in Milan.



Amphora with a Triton, Castellani collection, Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia. Below: a detail of granulation of the fibula on page 1.



Red-figure amphora with an athlete, Castellani collection, Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia.

