

# EARLY IRON AGE GOLD IN CELTIC EUROPE

Society, Technology and Archaeometry

Proceedings of the International Congress  
held in Toulouse, France, 11–14 March 2015

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herausgegeben von  
Ernst Pernicka und Martin Bartelheim

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# **EARLY IRON AGE GOLD IN CELTIC EUROPE**

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Edited by

Roland Schwab, Pierre-Yves Milcent,  
Barbara Armbruster and Ernst Pernicka



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# AN IRON AGE GOLD WORKSHOP IN SOUTHWEST IBERIA: REFLECTIONS ON VAIAMONTE AND OTHER EARRINGS

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*This paper examines the goldwork finds from Vaiamonte (Monforte, Portugal) where there is evidence of the existence of a workshop working on a specific type of earring. Related finds are analysed, and the overall scene of earrings production in southwestern Iberia between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC is discussed.*

**KEYWORDS:** JEWELLERY, SOUTHWEST IBERIA, IRON AGE

## INTRODUCTION: THE SITE

The Cabeço de Vaiamonte is a very large archaeological site on the northern limits of the plains of southern Portugal, identified as an Iron Age *oppidum* early in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century and subject to archaeological excavations in the 1950s. The excavations were of some importance, but their actual extent and precise location are unknown. Judging from the amounts of material deposited in the National Museum of Archaeology they must have been substantial, but of course, considering the overall dimension of the site, they could have involved only a fraction of it.

Questions remain on whether the excavations were carried out in a single area or as a number of different, separate fronts. This could be determinant in establishing if the jewellery found on the site was identified in a single context or if it is the product of a remarkably fortunate series of isolated finds in as much different contexts. These pieces, however, are just briefly mentioned in a secondary source (Machado 1964, 170; the pieces are not referred specifically to any of the four mentioned campaigns in years 1951, 153; 1952, 156; 1953, 159 and 1954(?), 167).

The finds from Vaiamonte have been studied on many occasions and with many different scopes and focuses of interest (Gamito & Arnaud 1977, 165–202; Fabião 1996, 35–84). The overall assessment is that of an exceptionally rich site; but maybe this assessment should be nuanced. Contemporary sites in the southwest of Iberia have eloquently demonstrated the preservation of rich deposits that were closed in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AC for various circumstances. Those are the cases of Garvão (a ritual secondary deposit in what was probably a sanctuary) and Capote (the sealed remains of a ritualized community meal). Something of that kind (or something entirely different, of course) could have happened at Vaiamonte and justify the abundance of material located by the excavators.

From a chronological point of view, it is the Sertorian military conjuncture that probably better explains these cases (Gamito 1987, 149–160; Almagro 2008, 92). It is also the date of closing of the Santana da Carnota hoard that, as shall be demonstrated further on, has a direct bearing on the issues that are raised by the Vaiamonte jewellery.

This has indeed been the neglected part of the finds and, to date, no complete summary of the finds has been presented. The present writer proposed, in 1994, that Vaiamonte was the location of a jewellery workshop (Correia 1995, 133), based on the opinion, not fully documented, that the piece here published as earring A5 was a botched piece, discarded by the jeweller. This point is here elaborated and documented (something that did not happen elsewhere as intended; *cf.* Correia *et al.* 2013, 105–109 or Correia 2013, 57–61).

## THE GOLDWORK FROM VAIAMONTE

Late Iron Age jewellery poses specific problems in its study, which derive from the nature of the pieces and the processes of their production. These pieces are no longer single objects produced as unique artefacts, as the Bronze Age items, for various reasons that coalesce in the workshops and the commercial circuits after the orientalising period (Baião being the first instance on which the serial production of identical pieces is demonstrated, at least in this broad geographical area (Correia *et al.* 2013, 72–76; Correia 2013, 49–53); items based on the addition of identical pieces, like articulated necklaces or large sets of decorative buttons are here excepted for obvious reasons).

The existence of commercial mechanisms proper provides an element of analysis (the distribution of pieces of recognisably the same ‘hand’), hindered only by the random character of finds, hence of the available evidence. This should be particularly important in the addition to the elements of study of the thorough physic-chemical analyses of metallic alloys and production processes (something that will not be done in the present paper). But the diffusion of pieces of, presumably, different sources, and the time span on which we work (largely indefinite as shall be seen), do not allow for much precision of the analysis.

The method here used is based on an attempt to isolate groups of pieces with obvious relations between them. These relations are not of the same nature in all cases, so the groups are not exactly of the same configuration: Some are defined by provenance (site or area) others are defined by style or typology. This fluidity corresponds – it is the core of the present proposal – to the perception that the producers of jewellery and the users of it could have of what was available. The artisans certainly knew what they were producing, and how and why, but they certainly also had ideas of what else was being (or had been) produced elsewhere or by other artisans and this idea of ‘availability’ was certainly present too among potential acquirers of the pieces, and to some extent could indeed condition what was being acquired, or not. The fluidity of the groups here presented is, from this point of view, not the product of insufficient information that could, theoretically, indicate the division of groups closed by the boundaries of factors identical in all of them, but an approach to the elasticity that, over time, would have presided to the demands of the acquirers and to the response the producing artisans could give to them.

## THE GROUPS

### *Group A: The finds from Vaiamonte*

A1 – Double suspension earring of closed circular body with a sub-triangular pendant, decorated with soldered twisted wire and small spheres; hollow, presently crushed (Inv. no. MNA Au494; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 101; Correia *et al.* 2013, 106, 169; Silva 2014, no 22; Fig. 1.1).

A2 – Fragment of an earring of shield-like closed body, decorated with four flattened spirals (made with two groups of an opposite spiralling coil) with a central grain; the edge is decorated with twisted wire; remains of a hinged suspension system (Inv. no. MNA Au561; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 101; Correia *et al.* 2013, 106, 169; Silva 2014, no. 22, Fig. 1.2).

A3 – Pair of circular double suspension earrings, decorated with a grape-pendant of six granules with a small extra grain at the apex; the inner area of the loop is occupied by a double spiral and three grains in triangular disposition; the loop itself has a filigree decoration of a meander (Inv. no. MNA Au576–577; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 101; Correia *et al.* 2013, 106, 169; Silva 2014, no. 22, Fig. 1.3).

A4 – Pair of circular double suspension earrings (one seriously damaged), decorated with a grape-pendant of six granules with a small four-grain pyramid at the apex; the inner area of the loop is occupied by a double spiral and three grains in triangular disposition (Inv. nos. MNA

Au573–Au575; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 101; Silva 2014, no. 22; mistakenly absent from Correia *et al.* 2013, 106, 169. Inv. no. MNA Au 575 has never been published and is incorrectly identified in Silva 2014, no. 22; Fig. 1.4, 5).

A5 – Circular double suspension earring, decorated with a grape-pendant of six granules with a small four-grain pyramid at the apex; the inner area of the loop is occupied by a double spiral and a herring bone-shaped wire (Inv. no. MNA Au574; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 101; Silva 2014, no. 22; mistakenly absent from Correia *et al.* 2013, 106, 169; Fig. 1.6).

A6 – Double coil pendant; a long wire draws an alternating meander, ending in a spiral at each end (Inv. no. MNA Au425; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 101; Silva 2014, no. 22; Fig. 1.7).

A7 – Lotus flower pendant (Inv. no. MNA Au660; Fig. 1.8).

A8 – Leaf shaped pendant (Inv. no. MNA Au426; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 101; Fig. 1.9).

A9 – Miscellaneous; three small beads (Inv. nos. MNA Au649, Au847–848) and sheet gold fragments (Inv. nos. MNA Au576, Au879, no illustration).

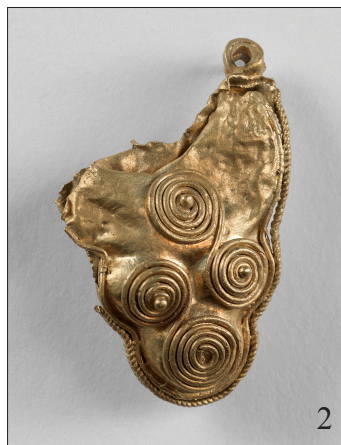


Fig. 1 Goldwork from Vaiamonte, Portalegre district, Portugal. 1: A1 (diam. 26 mm, h. 40 mm); 2: A2 (h. 25 mm); 3: A3 (h. 43 mm); 4–5: A4 (complete h. 42 mm (4); 5 not to scale); 6: A5 (h. 38 mm); 7: A6 (h. 41 mm); 8: A7 (15 x 19 mm); 9: A8 (h. 25 mm) (photos: DGPC/Museu Nacional de Arqueologia).





Fig. 2 Earrings from Estremoz, Évora district, Portugal, and elsewhere: 1: B1 (h. 15 mm); 2: B2 (h. 19 mm); 3: B3 (h. 26 mm); 4: B4 (h. 21 mm); 5: B5 (h. 30 mm); 6: B6 (diam. c. 26 mm) (photos: DGPC/Museu Nacional de Arqueologia).

### Commentary

The most important observation to be made is that the piece A5 (Fig. 1.6) is clearly a botched piece – somewhere in the process of producing it (probably in the final welding) the decoration of the loop became dislodged of the desired position; it is almost certain that the same thing happened with the fragments of one of the A4 pieces (Fig. 1.4, 5; Inv. MNA Au575) and probably both its pair and the A3 pieces (Fig. 1.3) had the same misfortune, but in these last pieces it is difficult to decide if the distortion that is visible is the result of a production accident or of post-depositional processes mechanically affecting the objects. The first two pieces, though, make it clear that at least some of the pieces from Vaiamonte were meant to be recycled, quite probably indicating the location of a workshop; this point will be elaborated further on.

### Group B: The finds from the Estremoz area

B1 – Loop earring, pointed at the ends, with a grape pendant of six granules (acquired 1923, attributed to the region ‘Évora-Estremoz’; inv. no. MNA Au171; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 103; Silva 2014, no. 26; Fig. 2.1).

B2 – Identical, but the last granule in the pendant was lost (same provenance; inv. no. MNA Au170; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 103; Silva 2014, no. 26; Fig. 2.2).

B3 – Double suspension earring, pointed at the ends, with a grape pendant of three granules; another three, smaller, decorate the inner part of the loop (same provenance; inv. no. MNA Au171;

Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 103; Silva 2014, no. 26; mistakenly mentioned between the Vaiamonte pieces in Correia *et al.* 2013, 106, 169; Fig. 2.3).

B4 – Like B1, small portion of loop missing (acquired 1934 from a jeweller in Estremoz, “unknown provenance” attributed; inv. no. MNA Au430; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 106; Silva 2014, no. 36; Fig. 2.4).

B5 – Loop earring, pointed at the ends, with a grape pendant of three granules (same provenance; inv. no. MNA Au431; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 106; Silva 2014, no. 37; Fig. 2.5).

B6 – Fragment of the loop of a double suspension earring apparently similar to A4 (same provenance, inv. no. MNA Au441; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 106; Fig. 2.6).

### *Commentary*

Although we have no concrete information on the findings of these pieces, the successive gathering of earrings of the same typology in various locations (Vasconcelos 1929, 182) and then, years later by an otherwise unknown jeweller of what was then a rather remote rural area near Vaiamonte (forgeries being unlikely precisely for that reason) would suggest that all the pieces come broadly from the same context, that we can presume to have been a necropolis whose location had been forgotten or never precisely communicated by the grave-robbers. This could indeed have been one of the reasons leading M. Heleno to excavate at Vaiamonte: The idea of a large site, of which the richness of potential finds was promising (another earring, eventually lost, had already been found at the site; *cf.* Vasconcellos 1929, 184); if that was the case, expectations were met, but the scarcity of information on these and further finds is disparaging.

### *Group C: The hoard at Santana da Carnota (Fig. 3)*

C1 – Two pairs of circular double suspension earrings, decorated with a grape-pendant of three granules with two small extra grains at the joining with the loop and a small four-grain pyramid at the apex; the inner area of the loop is occupied by a double spiral and one granule; there is a fifth piece of the same type, badly damaged (Inv. nos. MNA Au832–Au833, Au834–Au838, Au840; Viegas & Parreira 1984, 91, nos. 141–142, 147–148 and 149; Correia *et al.* 2013, 107, 169; Silva 2014, no. 21).

C2 – Two pairs of circular double suspension earrings, decorated with a grape-pendant of three granules with two small extra grains at the joining with the loop and a small four-grain pyramid at the apex; the inner area of the loop is occupied by a double spiral and three grains in triangular disposition (Inv. nos. MNA Au835–Au836, Au837–Au839; Viegas & Parreira 1984, 91, nos. 143–146; Correia *et al.* 2013, 107, 169; Silva 2014, no. 21).

C3 – Loop earring, pointed at the ends, with a grape pendant of four granules, in long triangular disposition (2+1+1) (Inv. no. MNA Au841; Viegas & Parreira 1984, 91, no. 150; Correia *et al.* 2013, 107, 169; Silva 2014, no. 21).

### *Commentary*

The hoard at Santana da Carnota, Lisbon district, Portugal, is an enlightening find on this whole issue. The first commentary it begs is that the earrings found there have come from the same workshop as those from Vaiamonte. Considering that botched pieces were found at the site, no doubt should rest that the workshop was located there, and that the Santana da Carnota hoard is,



Fig. 3 Gold pieces in the hoard from A, Lisbon district, Portugal (largest pieces h. 45 and 50 mm) (photos: DGPC/Museu Nacional de Arqueologia).

at least partially, the product of looting of that site, in the context of the Sertorian wars (this corresponds with what is known of its occupation; Fabião 1996, 35–84). The second commentary, strongly suggested by the earring C3 is that, if any doubt had not been cleared by the presence of the fragmented suspension B6 in group B, it should now be clear that the more complex double-volute earrings (A3–A4, C1–C2) and the simpler grape pendant ones (B1–B5, C3) do coexist. Groups A to C hence represent various post-depositionally differentiated aspects of the range of production of a goldsmith (or workshop of various ones) working at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC (Table 1). This point and its consequences will be elaborated upon in this paper.

#### *Group D: Other grape pendant earrings*

Sub-groups are:

Da – Possibly related to the group at Estremoz; Db – Similar finds from the Iberian area.

Da1 – Loop earring, pointed at the ends, with a grape pendant of three granules and a small grain at the apex (Conimbriga, Coimbra district, Portugal; Alarcão *et al.* 1979, 141–142, no. 212; Fig. 4.1).

Da2 – Pair of loop earrings, of the same type as C3 (unknown provenance; kept in the National Museum ‘Soares dos Reis’, Oporto; Pérez 1985, 95–98; Macedo 1993, 30 no. 44; Fig. 4.2).

Da3 – Similar to B5 (unknown provenance; in a unidentified private collection; Macedo 1993, 30 no. 45; Fig. 4.3).

Db1 – Loop earring, pointed at the ends, with a grape pendant of three granules (unknown provenance; in a private collection in Andalusia; Bandera 1989, 127–129, no. 8; Fig. 4.4).

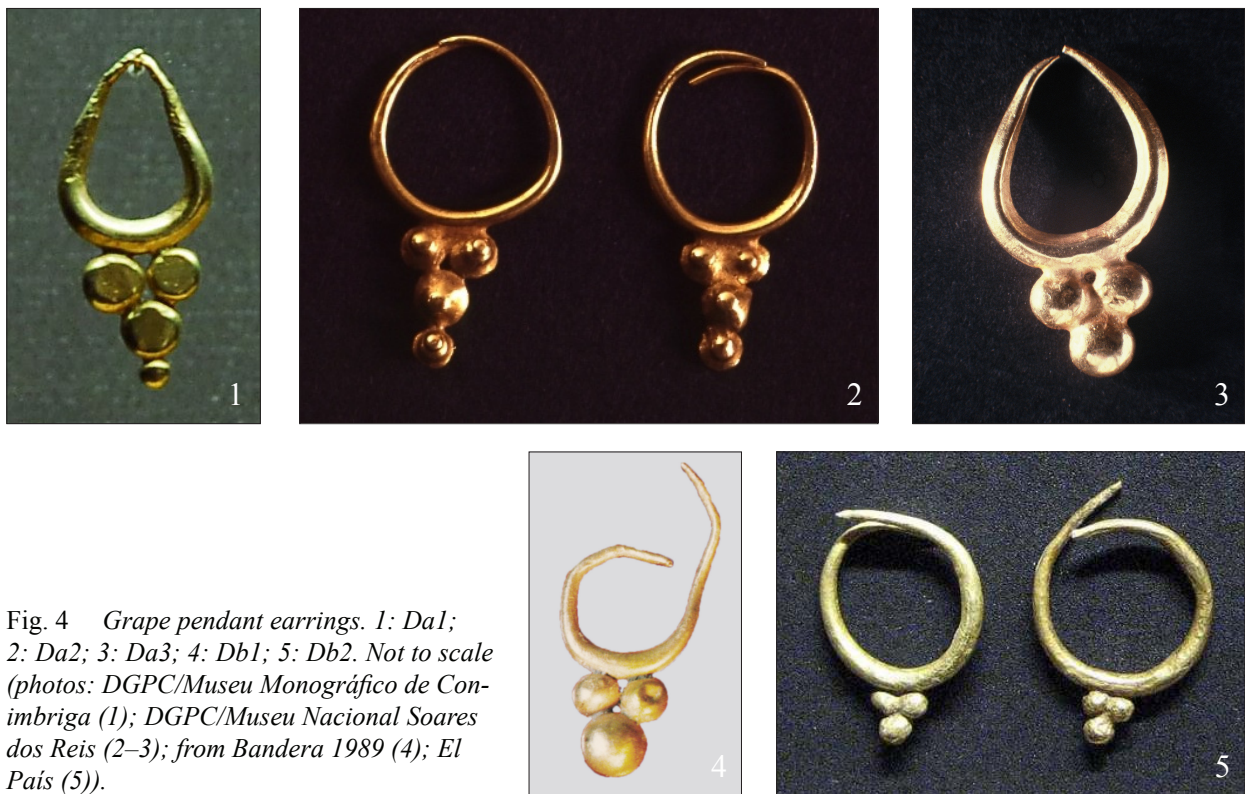


Fig. 4 Grape pendant earrings. 1: Da1; 2: Da2; 3: Da3; 4: Db1; 5: Db2. Not to scale (photos: DGPC/Museu Monográfico de Coimbra (1); DGPC/Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis (2–3); from Bandera 1989 (4); *El País* (5)).

Db2 – Pair of earrings, of the same type as C3/Da2 (Coimbra del Barranco Ancho, Coimbra district, Portugal; Anonymous 2008; Fig. 4.5).

Db3 – Loop earring with a single granule as decoration (Coimbra del Barranco Ancho, Murcia province, Spain; Garcia & Page 2002, 221; not illustrated).

Db 4 – Loop earring with three decorations of three granules each (Tugia, Jaen province, Spain; Gehrig & Niemeyer 1990, 223, no. 210; not illustrated).

### Commentary

The references in this group do not presume to be a complete inventory of related pieces, but aim just at demonstrating the existence of different chronological and geographical spheres that produce the same typology of earring. One of these spheres is the Early Iron Age Orient, probably starting in the Mycenaean period, to which influence finds in the West are attributed. M. Ponsich (1967, 21) and G. Pisano (1987, 80) concur in attributing the pieces mentioned to the obvious group that can be isolated in the British Museum pieces (Marshall 1969, *infra*), as indeed J. L. Vasconcellos (1929, 183) had already proposed for the pieces from Estremoz.

Earrings of this type include various examples of loop earrings with three grains pendants, from Enkomi, Mycenaean tombs 39 and 57 (Marshall 1969, 27–28, nos. 470–487) and from various locations in the Levant and other sites in Cyprus, Smyrna, Naukratis, and provenance unknown (Marshall 1969, 300, nos. 2596–2599; 166, no. 1593\*; 292, no. 2501; Marshall 1969, nos. 2506–2507); proposed chronologies are equally varied. From Sardinia there are five identical earrings, four in silver, one in gold, from Tharros and another three in gold in the Museum of Cagliari are referenced (Pisano 1987, 80). From North Africa three identical earrings, from as many tombs around Tangiers (Ponsich 1967, s.v. T. 4 at Aïn Dalhia Kebira and T. 25 and 99

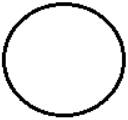
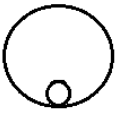



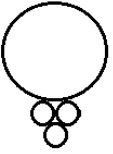
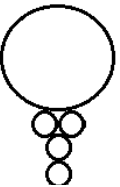
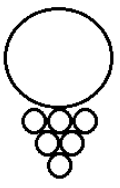
Loop										
Pendant										
	Da1	B5 Da3			C1		B3		C2	
		C3 Da2								
		B1 B2 B4			A5?				A3 A4 B6?	
Granulation/Filigree	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no

Table 1 *Typological scheme for groups A to D.*

at Djebila) are referenced. But the identification of pieces in group B and D with these more ancient examples must be incorrect, considering that it is rather paradoxical that in this area of the hinterland of Southwest Iberia (Estremoz) should one find the largest concentration of oriental earrings, second only to that of Tharros in Sardinia, and that a network of diffusion here would be more significant than anywhere else; hence it must be a case for local production at a different date, something to be determined by material analyses one hopes will eventually be carried out in all these pieces.

In between lay the ‘Iberian’ group (Db), from areas where oriental imports in the apparent quantities would be common (*cf.* Gehrig & Niemeyer 1990, 223), but for which the chronology is not at all certain. A third area of production would be a possibility but, considering some pieces in group F, imports from the West cannot be discounted.

*Group E: Spiral-based pendant earrings and similar*

Sub-groups are:

Ea – Large open disc earrings with triangular pendant; Eb – Loop earrings; Ec – Lunular plaque earrings.

Ea1 – Pair of open disc earrings with a meander in filigree and rows of decorative spikes on the edges and a pendant of six spirals in triangular disposition (Cortijo de Ébora, Cádiz province, Spain; Blanco 1959, 50–57; no illustration).

Ea2 – Open disc earring, decorated with granulation in opposed triangles and a row of decorative spikes on the edges, pendant of six spirals in triangular disposition superimposed by frame destined to hold two cabouchons or other inlay (Cogolludo, Guadalajara province, Spain; Celestino & Blanco 2006, 131–132; no illustration).

Eb1 – Loop earring, decorated with twisted wire at the edges; the pendant is decorated by seven spirals, disposed in an hexagon with one at the centre and has an overall triangular shape which is given by a small frame for an inlay (unknown provenance; Inv. no. MNA Au146; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 106; Correia *et al.* 2013, 108, 169; Fig. 5.1).

Eb2 – Loop earring, decorated with twisted wire at the edges; four spirals in the pendant (from the outskirts of Lagos, de Faro district, Portugal; Inv. no. MNA Au116; Parreira & Pinto



Fig. 5 Spiral-based earrings. 1: Eb1 (h. 30 mm); 2: Eb2 (h. 21 mm); 3: Eb3 (h. 25 mm); 4: Eb4 (h. 24 mm); 5: Eb5; 6: Eb6; 7: Ec1; 8: Ec2. 5–8. Not to scale (photos: DGPC/Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (1–4); from Fernández 1956 (5); from Celestino & Pérez 2006 (6–7); from Piñel 1976 (8)).

1980, no. 105; Celestino & Blanco 2006, 81; Correia *et al.* 2013, 108, 169; Silva 2014, no. 34; Fig. 5.2).

Eb3 – Loop earring, decorated with twisted wire at the edges; three spirals in the pendant (unknown provenance, formerly in the ‘Barros e Sá’ collection; Inv. no. MNA Au986; Correia *et al.* 2013, 108, 169; Silva 2014, no. 38; Fig. 5.3).

Eb4 – Double suspension earring, decorated with twisted wire at the edges; the pendant is decorated by three spirals, with frames for inlays on the front and sides (Monte Molião near Lagos, de Faro district, Portugal; Inv. no. MNA Au16; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 104; Correia *et al.* 2013, 108, 169; Fig. 5.4)

Eb5 – Double suspension earring, covered in wire; the pendant is decorated by six spirals, with frames for inlays on the front and sides: from Utrera (Fernandez 1956, 63; Bandera 1989, 155–157; Fig. 5.5).

Eb6 – Loop earring, decorated with twisted wire at the edges; the pendant is decorated by three spirals, with frames for inlays on the front (La Coraja, Cáceres province, Spain; Esteban 1993, Celestino & Blanco 2006, 133–134; Fig. 5.6).

Ec1 – Crescent-shaped earring, decorated by a twisted wire at the centre, triangular pendant with a single meander in filigree and frames for inlays; there is another disc, which is not clear if is a whole piece or a fragment, decorated by two twisted wires at both edges (La Coraja, Cáceres province, Spain; Esteban 1993, Celestino & Blanco 2006, 133–134; the first piece appears complete in the first reference, fragmented in the second; Fig. 5.7).

Ec2 – Crescent-shaped earring, decorated by three twisted wires, one at the centre and two at the edges, triangular pendant with three spirals and frames for inlays at the front and the sides (El Berruoco, Madrid province, Spain; Piñel 1976, 352–354; Fig. 5.8).

Ec3 – Crescent-shaped earring, decorated by a twisted wire at the centre, pendant with frames for inlays in a zoomorphic disposition; allegedly two pieces, of which only one is documented (Coimbra del Barranco Ancho, Murcia province, Spain (García & Page 2002, 223, II.1.5.2; not illustrated).

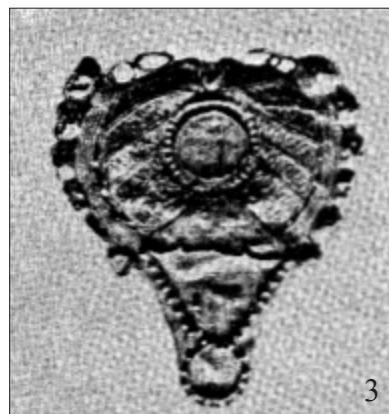


Fig. 6 Disc earrings. 1: F1, obverse (left), reverse (right); 2: F2; 3: F3. Not to scale (photos: from Celestino & Pérez 2006 (1); from Cardozo 1956 (2–3)).

### Commentary

The first observation to be made on this group of pieces is that there is an internal evolution which must have a chronological significance. Sub-group Ea is clearly much more similar to the orientalisising jewellery of the South of Iberia, and maybe the piece from Marchena, Sevilla province, Spain (below, F4) represents the same phenomenon.

For the whole group, though, there is a stylistic element that should be attributed to a workshop or the workmanship tradition of a production centre: That is the double spiral, rolled in opposite directions, with the centres marked by granules. This, a remarkable trait in pieces like A2 from Vaiamonte, or the point of joining the crescent and the pendant in the piece from Cogolludo (Ea2), is the very basis for the aspect of the pieces in group Eb and, substantially, in pieces in group Ec. Furthermore, all the earrings A3 to A5 and C1 to C3 and the pendant A6, show how one decorative device can be transformed in a properly structural one, keeping intact the finer details of the production process (something that could be called 'la manière').

Hence it is to be argued that a workshop, or more than one in the same production centre (or area), distinct by their way of working gold wire into double flat spirals that were used with large granules, did evolve from an orientalisising style of large disc earrings (Ea) into a more light style of loop earrings, where the spirals are no longer decoration of the structural pieces of the jewel, but true elements of the construction of the earrings (A3–A5/C1–C3); the evolution passes through a number of stages represented by many variants of spiral based decorations of the earrings pendants, sometimes applied to loops (Eb) sometimes applied to crescent-shaped discs (Ec).

This last variant is popular in the Iberian area, although examples are not specifically referenced here; a number of authors previously working on this subject mention pieces from Verdolay, Murcia province, Spain (Hartmann & Kalb 1969, 93 apud Celestino & Blanco 2006, 133), El Cigarralejo, Murcia province, Spain (T. 185 and 309, Cuadrado 1987, 341 and 524, apud García & Page 2002, 222), Tesorico, province, country (Broncano *et al.* 1985, 159, apud García & Page 2002, 222), Albufereta, Alicante prince, Spain (Rubio 1986, 106, apud García & Page 2002, 222) and Coimbra del Barranco Ancho itself (García & Page 2002, 222); for the sake of the use of spirals, the earrings from Tivissa, Tarragona province, Spain (Radatz 1969, 259–264) should also be mentioned. The phenomenon that can be identified with the pieces in group Db can also be seen in this case.

Another important point in this group is the use of inlays as decoration, as is demonstrated by the application of frames for its support. These commonly adopt the 'cup over tear drop' disposition – a segment of sphere over a circular element with a point (Celestino & Blanco 2006, 79–80) – sometimes with other, smaller circular frames.

It is puzzling that no inlaid piece has ever survived, not even in pieces coming from necropolises, where one would expect the earrings to have been deposited in their original condition and not very much subject to post-depositional processes that would have damaged them. Would these pieces have been inlaid with some kind of perishable material? Or is it just a technical problem? (the Aliseda diadem lost all its turquoise inlays, with the exception of one little piece; *cf.* Almagro 1977, 205).

These inlays raise another question, which is the zoomorphic appearance of these pieces (Celestino & Blanco 2006, 79–81; García & Page 2002, 223), sometimes called 'ox-head shaped earrings' (a designation the present author would prefer to reject). In fact the zoomorphic appearance is a secondary effect of the inlay being lost, and parts of the spiral being visible through the space where it once was. With any kind of opaque inlay, the zoomorphic aspect would not be detectable; but hypercriticism is excused here, looking at later pieces, in the Arrabalde hoards, Zamora province, Spain (Delibes 1989, 116–117), where the 'ox-head' was intentionally represented, maybe the zoomorphic intention somehow existed.

A numerous group of pieces, some of them coming from excavated sites, should, one can say, provide some good contexts, reference points for the chronological issue, able to provide a frame-



Fig. 7 Miscellaneous earrings. 1: G1 (20 x 22 mm); 2: G2 (h. 21 mm); 3: G3; 4: G4 (h. 58 mm); 5: G5 (h. 55 mm) (photos: DGPC/Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (1–2, 4); from Cardoso 2004 (3); DGPC/Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis (5)).

work of the stylistic evolution; that is, however, not the case. Only the pieces from La Coraja come from properly excavated contexts, but those are, as yet, insufficiently published to point more than a general date of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Esteban 1993, 78–82).

#### *Group F: Disc earrings (Madrigalejo Type)*

F1 – Large earring decorated in repoussé with granulation in the obverse and twisted wire in the reverse (Madrigalejo, Cáceres province, Spain; Almagro 1977, 230–231; Celestino & Blanco 2006, 135–136; Fig. 6.1).

F2 – Double suspension earring, now lost; with a central body, decorated with twisted wire and granules, with an outer rim of small vase-like appendices and a triangular pendant (Monsanto, Castelo Branco district, Portugal; Cardozo 1956, 455–458; Silva 2014, no. 16; Fig. 6.2).

F3 – Double suspension earring, now lost; with a central round body with a simple twisted wire decoration, outer rim of small vase-like appendices and large triangular pendant (Golegã, Santarém district, Portugal; Cardozo 1956, 455–458; Silva 2014, no. 17; Fig. 6.3).

F4 – Earring from Marchena, Sevilla province, Spain; the only photo available is of poor quality, and the piece, which belongs to a private collection, has not been thoroughly studied (Bandera 1989, 119–121; not illustrated).

*Commentary*

These four earrings and the piece A1 from Vaiamonte form a distinct group, to which one can attribute a prototype in the orientalisising earrings from Odemira, Beja district, Portugal (Correia 2005, 1216–1218). The group, however, clearly has a northern and western distribution. The fact that two of the four pieces have been lost drastically reduces any hypothesis of definite proof for the theory here presented, but the similarity between the reverse of the Madrigalejo earring and the piece from Vaiamonte is striking. Material analyses should be able to corroborate the fact. Geographical distribution can be summarily (and coherently) described as being centred on the Tagus basin.

*Group G: Miscellaneous*

G1 – Small ‘navette’ earring, decorated with a meander of filigree near the suspension attachment (*cf.* parallel in A3), of which the system strongly resembles the one in A2; twisted wire and small granules decorate the edge (Santana de Cambas, Beja district, Portugal, Inv. no. MNA Au180; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 98; Correia *et al.* 2013, 109, 169; Silva 2014, no. 31; Fig. 7.1).

G2 – Small hemispherical earring; extensions of the body form the suspension; a spiralled wire and a granule form a pendant (unknown provenance, from the ‘Barros de Sá’ collection; Inv. no. MNA Au985; Correia *et al.* 2013, 104, 169; Silva 2014, no. 35; Fig. 7.2).

G3 – Lost earring of a form that renders its interpretation difficult in the absence of the original. Apparently, there was an oblong frame, with a T-shaped structural device, that held three loose pendants in the shape of acorns or flower buds, and a decoration of three grains forming a small pyramid (decorating the suspension area?) (Bombarral, Leiria district, Portugal; Ferreira 1977, 211–213; Cardoso 2004, 267; Silva 2014, no. 18; Fig. 7.3).

G4 – Large double suspension, granule pendant earring; the loop if made of twisted wire and is occupied by a floral (?) composition made of decorated sheet gold (unknown provenance; bought by the Museum in Coimbra in 1951; sometimes mentioned as being from “northern Portugal”; Inv. no. MNA Au284; Parreira & Pinto 1980, no. 102; Silva 2007, 367 no. 549; Correia *et al.* 2013, 81, 168; Silva 2014, no. 12; Fig. 7.4).

G5 – Large lunular double suspension earring, decorated with twisted wire, that also decorates a T-shaped structural reinforcement (as in G3); the pendant is formed by eight hemispheres of wire crowned by a granule (similar to the one in G2), four facing the obverse and the other four the reverse of the earring; these hemispheres are decorated by smaller granules (São Martinho de Anta, Vila Real district, Portugal; Macedo 1993, 29 no. 43; Silva 2007, 367 no. 548; Silva 2014, no. 7; Fig. 7.5).

G6 – Lunular earring formed by the joining of alternating left-twisted, right-twisted and plain wires, seven in total; the inner one is rounded into two spirals decorated by a large granule in the centre.; a traverse piece assures solidity to the construction; pendant of six large hemispheres with smaller ones at the joining with the lunula and the vertice (Tongobriga, Porto district, Portugal; Lima 2016, 13, otherwise unpublished; not illustrated).

## PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

Any conclusions that can be presented here must be seen as preliminary, considering that thorough examination of the pieces and the alloys would be necessary to confirm some hypotheses suggested by the stylistic analysis, that is all the present writer, at this point, has been able to carry out. Style and context allow for the following ideas to be stated:

- Groups A and C demonstrate that there was a jewellery workshop at Vaiamonte, producing a characteristic type of earring (A3–A5/C1–C3). A large group of these earrings found its way into a hoard with abundant roman coins in the times of the Sertorian campaigns further West in the Tagus basin. It is likely that the earrings had been the product of the sacking of Vaiamonte by a Roman army unit, for the site itself is, apparently, abandoned at that time.
- Group B and an element of group C most likely represent another production of the workshop at Vaiamonte, for it is indeed unlikely that the concentration of earrings of a specific category in the area of Évora-Estremoz is anything else than the production of that centre.
- Group D, on the one hand, shows that there was probably a larger sphere of diffusion of the products of that workshop and, on the other, illuminate how the goldsmiths from Vaiamonte were working on imported models, some of an early date and of foreign, oriental origin (as indeed demonstrated by the striking similarities between the filigree decorating the earrings A3 and pieces from Cádiz; *cf.* Perea 1986, 298–299). This is important for further ideas to be stated.
- Group E is formed by a large number of pieces of very distinct style, of which one is present at Vaiamonte. It is not possible to ascertain if the piece of Vaiamonte was there as a remnant of the workshop production or if it was imported and eventually thrown to the scrap heap, because there appears to be a significant chronological gap between the assumed date for the production of groups A and B and the suggested date for this one (4<sup>th</sup> century BC), but style suggests that all this could be the product of the same workshop, working over some two or three centuries, a time gap that should not be considered too large to accept as likely.
- The same reasoning applies to group F, with a twofold difference in emphasis: Chronology apparently would be more extended, for these pieces appear to be of older date (namely because the earring from Madrigalejo is usually put closer to orientalisising jewellery, although with no concrete reason); but geography of distribution would be more consistent with a centre of production located in Vaiamonte. All things considered it still seems to be a reasonable proposal to attribute these pieces to the workshop at Vaiamonte.
- Finally, the pieces of group G, that for varied reasons could eventually be attributed to the same centre of production, strongly suggest that, even from a strict typological point of view, the evidence that remains to be analysed is of a very residual nature, and that there were many more types of earrings being used between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC in the Southwest than we can currently identify from the finds extant.

On the whole, these pieces constitute the ulterior evolution of the productions of the same workshop that is represented in the orientalisising pieces of Serradilla, Cáceres province, Spain (Almagro 1977, 221–230; Celestino & Pérez 2006, 146–149) with all that such a link means, both chronologically and in terms of the geographical distribution of the pieces.

Unavoidably, the study of these pieces, from the stylistic point of view, is dominated by the (false) dichotomy orientalisising/post-orientalisising which uselessly narrows the timeframe for the former and ignores the internal evolutions of the latter (on this subject, but on other classes of evidence, see Correia 2007, 191–192).

That said, the in-depth analysis of these pieces is useful, both *per se* and as the basis for further, enhanced studies (supplemented by augmented examination and physical-chemical analyses) that will, eventually, allow us to have an understanding of this important area of southwestern Iberian archaeology.

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