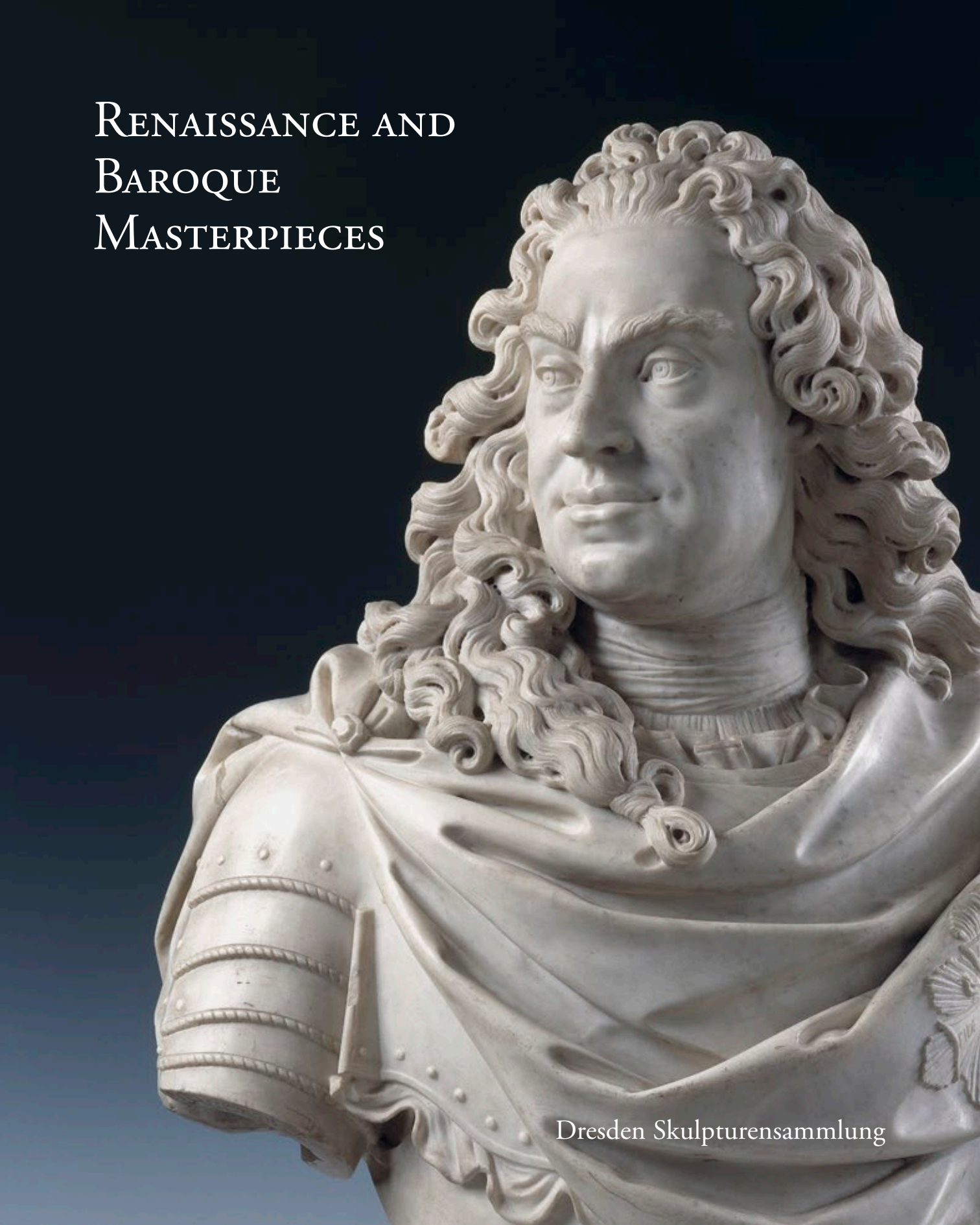
Renaissance and Baroque Masterpieces



Dresden Skulpturensammlung

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Staatliche
Kunstsammlungen
Dresden

Contents

On the History of the Bronzes and the Baroque Sculptures in the Dresden Skulpturensammlung

Astrid Nielsen

The corpus of bronzes and Baroque works is, along with the antiquities, the most important section of the Skulpturensammlung (Sculpture Collection), but it has not been possible to display it adequately and in its full scope since 2006. With the new conception of the Albertinum and its reopening in 2010 as a museum for art from 1800 to the present day, the ancient and modern sculptures that had previously been displayed in the *Antikenhalle* (Hall of Antiquities) and the *Klingersaal* (Klinger Hall) found new homes in various *Schaudepots* (display storerooms) (fig. 1).[1] Although the works of art were visible and accessible to the public, this kind of presentation could not do justice to their quality and importance.[2] It was necessary, therefore, to give "the works in the Skulpturensammlung a chance to make themselves heard within the framework of a new permanent exhibition – in a manner appropriate to their variety, beauty and often breathtaking quality – in the future."[3] It is a stroke of good luck for the Skulpturensammlung that since 2016, a selection of works could be shown in the newly installed Skulpturengang (Sculpture Corridor) in the Semperbau (Semper Building), as well as in various rooms in the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister (Old Masters Picture Gallery), while the antiquities will have been moved into the east hall of the Semperbau by the end of 2019. The fact that the older sections of the Skulpturensammlung will be presented separately from the newer one, consisting of art from 1800 to the present day – including the unparalleled holdings of works by Ernst Rietschel, Auguste Rodin, Constantin Meunier, Max Klinger and Wilhelm Lehmbruck – does not imply a dissolution of the collection, but rather a contextual repositioning of the works that has been accompanied by a structural change.

Some of the works that are now exhibited in the Skulpturengang of the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister were already included in the electoral Kunstkammer (literally, 'art chamber'), and were later used to decorate various palaces and residences. Between 1719 and 1730, the collections were reorganised under Elector Frederick Augustus I (reigned 1694–1733), who was also King Augustus II of Poland after 1697 and became famous as Augustus the Strong. The foundation for the Antikensammlung (Antiquities Collection) was laid with the purchase of a number of ancient statues in Rome, which were soon joined by Renaissance works and contemporary sculptures. From then on, these 'modern' works were shown alongside the sculptures from classical antiquity. The following brief overview of the collection highlights those Renaissance and Baroque works which came into the possession of the court from a great variety of sources, and are now among the holdings of the Dresden Skulpturensammlung.

Sculptures and gifts in the Dresden Kunstkammer

The Kunstkammer, with its collection of minerals, natural history specimens, craft objects, scientific instruments, clocks and paintings, was established at the Dresden Court around 1560, during the reign of Elector Augustus (reigned 1553–86, fig. 3), and was installed in the Residenzschloss (Royal Palace). Use of the Kunstkammer was restricted to the elector himself until 1586,[4] when Christian I (reigned 1586–91) acceded to the throne. The earliest listing of all the works held in the Kunstkammer, organised by room, was drawn up in 1587; this was the first Kunstkammer inventory in all of Europe.[5] The official responsible for the Kunstkammer was the carpenter and screw maker David Uslaub (1545–1616), who assumed his duties in 1572 and whose appointment was renewed by Christian I in June 1587.[6]

In addition to the existing holdings of the Kunstkammer, this inventory also included those works which had reached the court as gifts in the first year of Christian I's reign, and were exhibited on a shelf on the wood panelling of the *Reissgemach* (the elector's drafting chamber).[7] These objects included Giambologna's *Nessus Abducting Deianira* (cat. no. 9), *Mercury* and the *Sleeping Venus with Satyr* as gifts from Grand Duke Francesco I de' Medici (1541–1587), Giambologna's *Mars*

(cat. no. 8)[8] as a gift from the artist himself, as well as the *Marcus Aurelius* by Filarete (cat. no. 1), a gift from the Duke of Mantua, Guglielmo Gonzaga (1538–1587). These are outstanding works of the highest artistic quality – "incunabula of bronze sculpture"[9] – three of which are now among the holdings of the Skulpturensammlung, while two others can be admired in the *Bronzenzimmer* (Bronze Room) of the Grünes Gewölbe (Green Vault). The *Mars* by Giambologna (cat. no. 8) was ceded to the Family Association of the House of Wettin in 1924 as part of the *Fürstenabfindung*, a settlement that was reached when the personal property of the dethroned princes was confiscated by the German state.[10] The work subsequently found its way onto the art market and was reacquired for the Dresden Skulpturensammlung in 2018. In addition to these bronzes, the Kunstkammer in 1587 held four precious alabaster statuettes – replicas of Michelangelo's *Times of Day* in the Medici Chapel in Florence (cat. no. 7); these are probably early works by Giambologna that were sent to Dresden as gifts from Cosimo I de' Medici (1519–1574).[11]

Reorganisation

The sculptural works continued to be displayed in the Kunstkammer, albeit in different rooms, until the Dresden collections were reorganised under Augustus the Strong in the period after 1719.[12] The holdings of the Kunstkammer continued to grow under both Christian I and Christian II (reigned 1591–1611). The 1619 inventory lists not only the previously mentioned sculptures, but also "counterfactually painted and cast effigies, paintings and other things of this kind, exhibited in the chamber facing the castle courtyard, that make it necessary for the inventory from 1610 to be renewed."[13] These include the portrait bust of *Maurice of Saxony* (cat. no. 39) and that of *Christian I* by Carlo di Cesare del Palagio (cat. no. 11); the latter piece was created shortly after the elector's death by order of his widow, and in the inventory Giovanni Maria Nosseni is erroneously named as its author. The portrait bust of *Christian II* by Adriaen de Vries (cat. no. 14), which was presented to the elector by Emperor Rudolf II when he visited Prague, is also mentioned, along with other small bronzes.[14]

Fig. 1 Display storeroom of works from the Baroque to the present day in the Albertinum, 2010

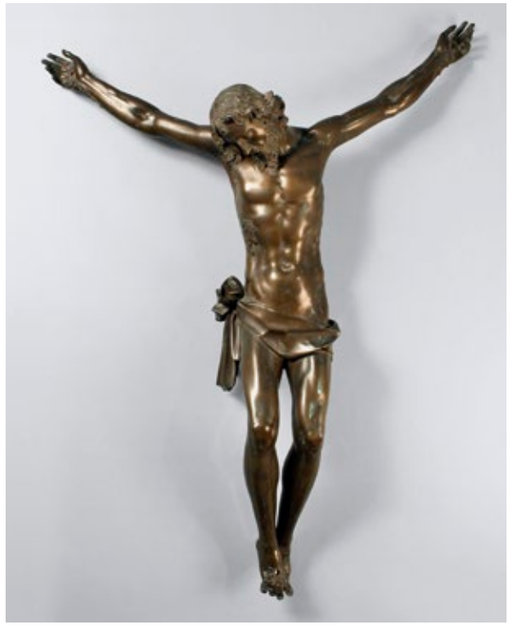
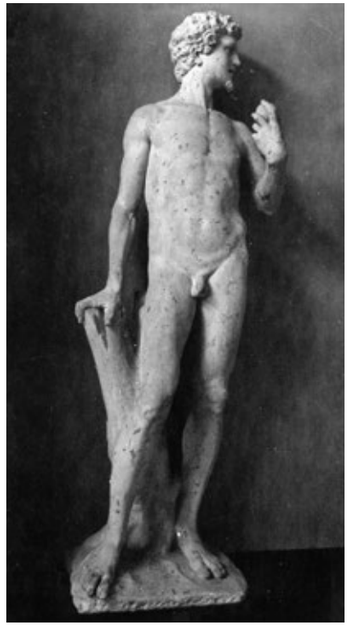


Fig. 2 Carlo di Cesare del Palagio, *Christ on the Cross*, 1590–93, bronze, H: 108 cm, SKD, Skulpturensammlung, inv. no. ZV 3130

In 1621, the estate of the sculptor and court architect Giovanni Maria Nosseni (1544–1620) added important works to the elector's art collection; some of these were transferred to the Kunstkammer and included in the 1640 inventory.[15] This inventory, created under Elector Johann Georg I (reigned 1611–56), who succeeded his brother Christian II, consists of an extremely detailed listing of all the holdings and can be read as a kind of guidebook to the Kunstkammer, which had almost doubled in size since 1587.[16] In addition to the existing works, the Nosseni estate provided, among others, the portrait medallion of *Augustus I* attributed to Giovanni Battista Pauperto (fig. 3), which was presented on the long wall of the "eighth room, next to the door leading to the antechamber".[17] A *Christ on the Cross* by Carlo di Cesare del Palagio (fig. 2)[18] and the *Dancing Faun* by Adriaen de Vries (cat. no. 13) are also registered. Also displayed in this room were the two life-sized sandstone sculptures of *Adam* and *Eve* that were created in 1630 by the Saxon sculptor Zacharias Hegewald (1596–1639) (figs. 4 and 5). These are particularly noteworthy, as they are considered to be "the first entirely nude figures in a monumental format in Dresden sculpture."[19]

Among the most important additions in the period between the Thirty Years' War and the accession of Augustus the Strong are the three reliefs by Johann Heinrich Böhme the Elder that entered the Kunstkammer in 1674 and were probably created expressly for it (cf. cat. no. 23).[20] When Augustus the Strong acceded to the throne in 1694, the existing bronzes – with very few exceptions – were exhibited in the Kunstkammer.[21] Although his predecessors had greatly increased the electoral collection, Augustus' subsequent acquisitions would eclipse all previous endeavours.

Fig. 3 Giovanni Battista Pauperto (?) after a design by Giovanni Maria Nosseni (?), *Elector Augustus of Saxony*, between 1588 and 1620, marble, H: 93 cm, SKD, Skulpturensammlung, inv. no. H4 5/38



Figs. 4 and 5 Zacharias Hegewald, *Adam* and *Eve*, 1630, sandstone, H: 176 cm (Adam); 163 cm (Eve), formerly Skulpturensammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, inv. nos. AB 23 and AB 24

The acquisitions made by Augustus the Strong and the foundation of the Skulpturensammlung as Churfürstliche Antiken-Galerie (Electoral Antiquities Gallery) in Dresden[22]

Baron Raymond Leplat (1663–1742) was a French Huguenot who had served at the Dresden court since 1697. As "Ordonneur du Cabinet" of the electoral-royal collections, the architect acted as advisor to the king in artistic matters and was an extremely successful art agent with exceptional negotiating skills; on the order of Augustus the Strong, he purchased numerous artworks in Paris, Rome and Venice.[23] The king sent Leplat first of all to Paris in 1699, where he acquired 37 bronzes that were intended for the decoration of the palace in Warsaw. Due to the unstable political situation in Poland, however, they were brought back to Dresden only three years later. The bronzes were unpacked in what was known as the *Geheime Verwahrung* (Secret Repository) – a suite of rooms on the ground floor of the palace that had been used as the Saxon state treasury for 150 years – then inventoried and subsequently installed in the Kunstkammer.[24] This repository was to become the Grünes Gewölbe under Augustus the Strong.

Leplat's next trip to the French capital lasted from 1714 to 1715. As companion to the Electoral Prince Frederick Augustus II (cat. no. 36) on the young man's Grand Tour, Leplat spent a lengthy period in Paris – it seems likely that his portrait bust (cat. no. 35), which did not find its way into the Skulpturensammlung until 1932, was created at this time. With the acquisitions made in 1699, 1714, and above all in 1715, the collection of bronzes increased to more than 200 pieces.[25] Although these works were temporarily installed in the rooms of the Kunstkammer, "they no longer belong[ed] to its traditional holdings"[26]. Instead, they were intended to be used to decorate various rooms in the palace. Most of the works that had been acquired were masterpieces of French bronze art, including reductions of ancient sculptures such as the *Laocoön* group (cat. no. 21) and freely interpreted copies of the large-scale statues at Versailles by contemporary sculptors such as

Antoine Coysevox, François Girardon and Étienne Le Hongre (cat. no. 25). The bronzes of *Cato* and *Porcia* (cat. no. 27), which had been conceived as companion pieces, were also among the purchases made in 1715. In 1723 Leplat was able to procure some other important works, including a small copy of Bernini's marble group of *Apollo and Daphne* in the Galleria Borghese in Rome (cat. no. 19).

Already in January 1712, Leplat had "twenty-eight bronze statues removed" from the Kunstkammer "on His Royal Majesty's orders […] and had the same works placed in His Royal Majesty's Picture Cabinets."[27] In a second relocation in 1714, a total of 107 bronzes were moved to the newly established *Bildergalerie* (Picture Gallery) and the above-mentioned, neighbouring *Bilder-Cabinets* (Picture Cabinets) on the second floor of the south wing of the Residenzschloss.[28] For Augustus the Strong, the idea of creating a painting gallery, and also of combining paintings and sculpture, was important from the very beginning, although at that time, the general trend was to separate the two genres, and this was in fact implemented in Dresden only 15 years later. Nevertheless, the south wing of the palace underwent initial alterations and the *Bildergalerie* and *Bilder-Cabinets* were transferred to the renovated *Riesensaal* (Hall of the Giants) and the adjacent picture chambers in the *Georgenbau*.[29]

In 1730, the learned travel writer Johann Georg Keyssler (1693–1743) visited Dresden and described the set-up as follows: "In addition, one can see in the palace the Bilder-Galerie or collection of valuable paintings, which is under the supervision of Baron le Plat. The most elegant of the halls devoted to this collection has still not been painted, but is already decorated with many precious pieces. There are several large serpentine vases on both sides and many more of porphyry, along with a good number of large marble and metal portrait busts, including an easily recognisable one of King Gustav Adolf. The Laocoon from the Vatican and many other brass models of the kind also help decorate this hall, which is 80 standard paces long and 20 wide."[30] Keyssler's description provides information on the layout of the *Bildergalerie*, where the paintings were flanked by magnificent vases. The bronzes and portraits were also decoratively arranged, whereby Keyssler singles out the *Portrait of Gustav II Adolf of Sweden* (fig. 6) by Georg Petel (1601/02–1634).[31]

In 1726, the first inventory of the "statues, busts, groups and other vessels, both ancient and modern, made of all kinds of marble stone, porphyry and alabaster" was drawn up. It listed all of the sculptures that were in Dresden at the time, along with short descriptions, details of the size, the names of some artists and the location of the works (cf. fig. at the beginning of this essay).[32] This was the first comprehensive inventory of the Skulpturensammlung. The locations listed are the "Bilder Gallerie", the garden of the Holländisches Palais (Dutch Palace), the Grünes Gewölbe, the "Paraten Schlaff Gemach" (state bedroom), as well as "both salons in the so-called Zwinger garden". As the separation of the Grünes Gewölbe and the *Antiken-Cabinet* did not take place until 1729, the 310 sculptural works listed here also include those bronzes which were later exhibited in the *Bronzenzimmer*. Furthermore, contemporary sculptures were displayed at various other places in Dresden, as Augustus the Strong had called sculptors such as Balthasar Permoser, Paul Heermann and

Fig. 7 (double page overleaf) Johann August Corvinus, Holländisches Palais in the New Quarter of Dresden (Neustadt) before remodelling, 1719, engraving, 72 × 44 cm, SKD, Kupferstich-Kabinett, inv. no. A 13155

Fig. 6 Georg Petel, *Gustav II Adolf of Sweden*, model 1632, cast first half 17th century, bronze, H: 82.5 cm, SKD, Skulpturensammlung, inv. no. H4 154/22

I

Antonio Averlino, called Filarete

Florence c. 1400 – c. 1469 Rome?

Equestrian Statuette of Marcus Aurelius

Rome, c. 1440/45

Bronze, traces of enamel
H: 38.2 cm; base area: L: 38.4 cm, W: 17.4 cm
Inscription on the plinth: ANTONIVS AVERLINUS ARCHITECTVS HANC VT VULGO FERTVR COMMODI ANTONINI AVGVSTI AENEAM STATVAM SIMVLQUE EQVM IPSVM EFFINXIT EX EADEM EIVS STATVA QVAE NVNC SERVATVR APVD S IOHANNEM LATERANVM QVO TENPORE IVSSU EUGENII QVARTI FABRICATUS EST ROMAE AENEAS TEMPLI S PETRI.
QVAE QVIDEM IPSA DONO DAT PETRO MEDICI VIRO INNOCENTISSIMO OPTIMOQVE CIVI. ANNO A NATALI CHRISTIANO MCCCCLXV[1]
Inv. no. H4 155/37

Provenance: Listed in the 1587 inventory of the Dresden Kunstkammer as a gift from the Duke of Mantua, Guglielmo Gonzaga, to Christian I, Elector of Saxony.
Literature: Gramaccini 1985, 69–80; Martin Raumschüssel in Berlin 1995, 132 ff, cat. no. 2; Arnold Nesselrath in Rome 2005, 312, cat. no. III.2.2; Ilaria Ciseri in Florence 2013, 174, cat. no. V.7.

Filarete's equestrian statuette is not only the oldest small Renaissance bronze to have survived, but also the oldest known reproduction of a large-scale ancient sculpture. From the 16th century onwards, small bronzes and replicas of ancient sculptures both evolved into flourishing artistic genres – a development that began with this seminal work from the mid 15th century. Filarete's statuette is a greatly reduced reproduction of an over four-metre-high ancient bronze equestrian statue of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius (fig. 28). This had survived intact through the centuries, as it was (erroneously) considered to be a monument to Emperor Constantine.[2] It stood in front of the Church of San Giovanni in Laterano from at least the 10th century as a symbol of the indestructible greatness of Rome and the worldly might of the papacy, before being removed in 1538 to the Capitol Square, which had been redesigned by Michelangelo.

Filarete – whose name means 'a lover of virtue' – was an architect, sculptor and medallist, and also the author of an important treatise on architecture. He probably trained in the workshop of Lorenzo Ghiberti in Florence at the time when the latter was creating the Gates of Paradise for the Florence Baptistery. The expertise Filarete acquired there apparently led to a commission from Pope Eugene IV to create monumental bronze doors for St Peter's in Rome. While working on this commission, which occupied Filarete from 1443 to 1445, he also modelled – as the unusually detailed inscription states – the bronze statuette we are dealing with here. On the basis of a stylistic comparison with reliefs on the door that could only have been created after 1443, the statuette can be dated to around 1440/1445.[3]

We do not know why, or for whom, Filarete made this bronze figure. Since the doors of St Peter's are worked in an almost exaggerated classicising style, it is obvious that Filarete was very interested in the art of antiquity. His innovative statuette may have been inspired by the small ancient bronzes that people were beginning to collect around this time. It is also possible, however, that Filarete intended to show the Pope how the ancient equestrian statue, which was in a poor condition, might be restored. It is no wonder that the original was in such a precarious state, given that the entire weight of the horse and rider rests only on three slender legs, while the fourth hoof is raised. Just how fragile these parts of the body are can be seen in Filarete's statuette, where the right front foot and left hind leg are tellingly broken off. As a solution to these structural problems, Filarete ingeniously proposed to insert a helmet as a support beneath the horse. He also added the chest harness of the saddle pad, which was missing from the original, and decorated this and the bridle with enamel inlays that are, unfortunately, only partly preserved. This could be regarded as an indication that Filarete wanted to restore the ancient masterpiece to its former glory.

The second part of the inscription, which was engraved at a later date, tells us that Filarete wanted to give the statuette to Piero de' Medici (1416–1469) in 1465; presumably he hoped to find in him a new patron, having left the court of Milan – where he had been working since 1451 – on bad terms. Although a letter from 1466 seems to suggest that Filarete was in Florence,[4] it is not possible to determine whether this was actually the case. A "bronze figure on a horse" listed in the 1492 inventory of the estate of Piero's son, Lorenzo de' Medici, has been associated with Filarete's statuette. It seems odd, however, that despite the comprehensive inscription on the small bronze, the compiler of that inventory failed to identify either the subject or the artist, while the following entry is correctly listed as "a centaur in bronze by Bertoldo di Giovanni". It should also be noted that, according to the inventory, the

location of these two figures was "Piero's room"; this could not have been a reference to Piero de' Medici – he had already been dead for 23 years by this time – but rather to Lorenzo's elder son, who was also called Piero. It is therefore uncertain whether Filarete's gift actually reached the person it was intended for. The fact that Filarete's statuette arrived in Dresden as a gift from Guglielmo Gonzaga also raises the question of how it came to be in Mantua in the first place. There are two main theories for this: either Filarete stopped over in Mantua on his trip from Milan to Florence and left the statuette there,[5] or it was given to Piero, fell victim to the plundering of the Palazzo Medici in 1494, was subsequently purchased on the art market – possibly by Isabella d'Este – and reached Mantua in this way.[6] No matter how it came to be in Mantua, the statuette certainly had a great impact on the court sculptor of the Gonzaga family, Pier Jacopo Alari Bonacolsi, called Antico (c. 1455–1528), who helped this new genre of bronze statuettes inspired by ancient sculptures to flourish. Although Filarete probably had quite different intentions, he thus became the founding father of a new type of sculpture that would soon become very popular and successful.

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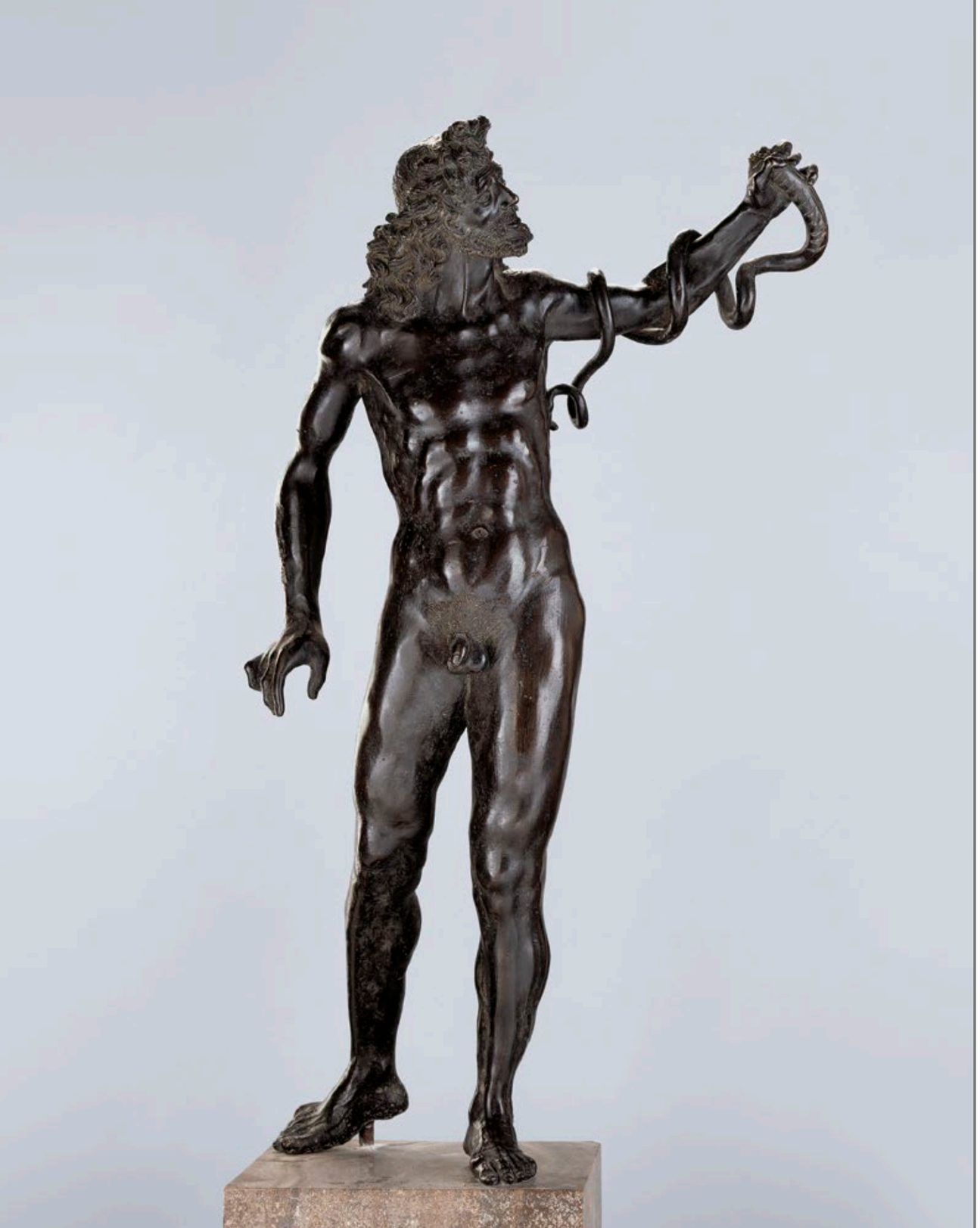
Fig. 28 *Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius*, Capitoline Hill, Rome

1 "The architect Antonius Averlinus copied this bronze statue of Emperor Commodus Antoninus, as is generally claimed, together with his horse after the statue of the same person that is now kept at San Giovanni in Laterano, at the same time as – on the order of Pope Eugene IV – the bronze door of St Peter's in Rome was made. He himself gives it as a gift to Piero de' Medici, a man without fault and an eminent citizen. In the year 1465 after the birth of Christ."
2 As can be seen from the inscription on the statuette, Filarete took the rider to be Emperor Commodus.
3 Keutner 1964, 147.
4 Beltramini 2002, 47. The letter was written on 1 February 1466 by the humanist Francesco Filelfo to a friend in Florence, whom he asks to pass on an enclosed letter to Filarete. This shows that Filelfo did not know if and where he could contact Filarete in Florence.
5 Gramaccini 1985, 79.
6 Jestaz 2002, 315.



2

Francesco di Giorgio Martini

Siena 1439–1501 near Siena

Male Nude with a Snake

Siena, c. 1495 (?)

Bronze; H: 113.5 cm
Inv. no. H2 21/78

Provenance: Purchased from the estate of Count Heinrich von Brühl in 1765.
Literature: Toledano 1987, 150 f; Martin Raumschüssel in Berlin 1995, 157 f, cat. no. 13; Arnold Nesselrath in Rome 2006, 124 f, cat. no. 10; Luke Syson in London 2007, 197 f, cat. no. 47.

The Dresden 'snake tamer' is one of the most unusual sculptural creations from the Italian Renaissance. It depicts a nude, athletic, middle-aged man, who grips in his raised left hand a serpent that is wound around his arm. Originally he was looking intently at the serpent's head, which is now lost; he was also holding something in his right hand, which likewise did not survive. Who the figure represents is just as puzzling as its purpose and its creator. The most convincing attribution is to the Sienese artist Francesco di Giorgio Martini,[1] who was active as an architect, sculptor, painter, engineer, illuminator and medallist. He worked in Siena, Urbino, Milan and Naples, wrote two treatises on architecture, among other subjects, and was in contact with Leonardo and Bramante.[2] The Dresden statue is generally compared with the two large bronze angels that Martini created for Siena Cathedral around 1490, which are, however, much more finely executed. The 'snake tamer' is coarser and less detailed, which is mainly the result of the cold work and was probably intentional, as it invests the figure with a vibrating vitality.

Martini was aided in his commission for Siena Cathedral by his long-time assistant, the sculptor and bronze-caster Giacomo Cozzarelli (1453–1515), which is why it is conceivable that the latter also collaborated on the Dresden figure. The impressive head of the male nude can certainly be more easily compared to confirmed works by Cozzarelli (fig. 29) than to those of Martini. The style of both artists is indebted to the local school of Vecchietta, who probably even trained Martini. However, influences of Donatello, Verrocchio and Polluaiuolo can also be discerned; Polluaiuolo in particular was interested in the theme of the male nude in action and – similar to the creator of the 'snake tamer' – found expressiveness more important than the study of antiquity. Nevertheless, it has occasionally been claimed that the striding motif of the Dresden statue is derived from the *Apollo Belvedere*; while this is possible, it is difficult to verify. All in all, the modelling of the musculature, as well as the proportions of the figure, are completely unclassical, as is the abundant pubic hair. The expressive head likewise does not derive from ancient models.

So far, no interpretation of the Dresden figure has managed to convince. It only appears certain that the subject is not Christian, but is likely to be a figure from ancient mythology. It has been suggested, for instance, that the figure represents Hercules fighting with Achelous, a river deity with the ability to change his shape, who transformed himself into a snake during their battle.[3] It is also conceivable that the always victorious hero is fighting here with a serpent as a symbol of evil in a purely allegorical sense.[4] This theory is contradicted by the fact that the figure's head with its long hair does not correspond to the customary image of Hercules. It is possible to see how Francesco di Giorgio pictured the Greek hero in his miniatures in the codex *De Animalibus* (Siena, Museo Aurelio Castelli), where Hercules' physiognomy is completely different.[5] Attempts have also been made to interpret the figure as Asclepius; in this case, however, it is strange that Asclepius seems to be fighting with the snake, which is actually supposed to serve him. Another proposal was that the statue depicts the Trojan priest Laocoön.[6] His appearance is based above all on the ancient sculptural group that was excavated in Rome in 1506 (Rome, Vatican Museums), which shows the priest and his two sons being attacked by two large and very long serpents (cf. cat. no. 21), as described by Virgil (*Aeneid*, 2, 200–25). It is an interesting thought, however, that an artist might have imagined Laocoön differently before the ancient group was recovered. Indeed, one could imagine that the missing object in the Dresden figure's right hand was a second serpent, while examples of small reptiles can be found in 15th-century book illuminations. The strap that binds the man's long hair together could also be interpreted as a priest's headband.

To this multitude of interpretations, a further possible reading – one that has not yet been suggested – shall be added here. Di Giorgio's interest in astrology is demonstrated in a rather unusual manner in two of his works: firstly, in a drawing of *Atlas* (Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum), where the Titan is bearing the firmament in the shape of a disc,

on which the planets and zodiac signs are inscribed in 15 rather than the usual 12 segments; secondly, in the large panel of the *Coronation of the Virgin* (Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale), where God the Father is surrounded by planetary gods and zodiac signs. This curious depiction of the cosmos was interpreted as an allegory of Ptolemy's astrological system,[7] according to which there are 48 constellations. In this system, the first 12 are the same as the familiar signs of the zodiac, while the 13th is called Serpentarius (the snake bearer). Hyginus (*Astronomica*, 2.14) tells us that Jupiter placed Asclepius, among others, in this constellation, who for that reason is often equated with the snake bearer. It is conceivable, therefore, that the Dresden figure is a depiction of Serpentarius. That such enigmatic subjects were in no way unusual at this time is demonstrated by the bronze figure of *Amor Atys* (Florence, Bargello) created by Donatello around 1440, which, with a height of 104 cm, is of a similar size to the statue in Dresden. It is assumed that Donatello's sculpture, like the 'snake bearer', once served as a fountain figure. As the bronze in Dresden is a full cast, however, it could only have been placed in a fountain basin, if at all, without spraying water. It is also possible to imagine the bronze being installed on a column in the inner courtyard or garden of a humanist. In any case, the patron would have had to be wealthy to decorate his home with such a remarkable work of art.

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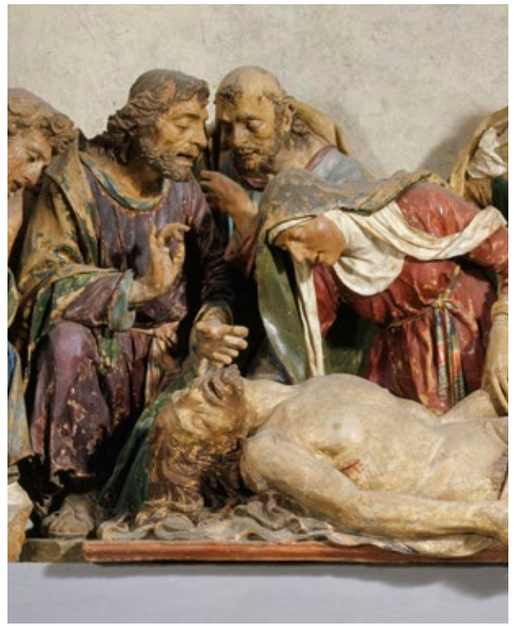


Fig. 29 Giacomo Cozzarelli, *Lamentation Group*, Basilica dell'Osservanza, Siena (detail)

1 Attribution by Schubring 1907, 194 ff, which has only been contradicted by Bellosi 1993, 84.
2 On the eventful biography of the artist, see Frommel 2015.
3 Toledano 1987, 150.
4 Raumschüssel 1995, 157.
5 For an illustration of this work, see Siena 1993, 145.
6 Arnold Nesselrath in Rome 2006, 124 f.
7 Toledano 1987, 84.

16

Giovanni Francesco Susini

Florence 1585–c. 1653 Florence

The Abduction of Helen by Paris

1626

Bronze; H: 52.1 cm, W: 27.7 cm, D: 25.6 cm
Signed on the back: IO.FR.SVSINI.FLOR.FAC.MDCXXVI
Inv. no. ZV 3609

Provenance: First mentioned in the 1726 inventory.
Literature: Ranalli 1974/75, vol. 4, 118–21; Martin Raumschüssel in Essen 1986, 210 f., cat. no. 235; Martin Raumschüssel in Duisburg 1994, 156 f, cat. no. 62; Martin Raumschüssel in Berlin 1995, 402, cat. no. 130; Peggy Fogelman in Fogelman/Fusco 2002, 190–9, cat. no. 24.

Giovanni Francesco was the nephew of Antonio Susini (1558–1624), the most important assistant in Giambologna's workshop from 1580 to 1600. The young sculptor became his uncle's apprentice and took over his workshop after his death; like Antonio, Giovanni became court sculptor to the Medici. As his biographer Filippo Baldinucci reports, he and his uncle produced casts of the most popular compositions by Giambologna, who died in 1608.[1] Virtuoso reductions made by Giovanni Francesco after famous ancient works have also survived. Besides these copies and replicas, however, he also created works of his own, such as the exquisite group of *The Abduction of Helen by Paris*.

Fig. 38 Detail of cat. no. 16

The sculpture depicts a dramatic moment in the abduction of Helen – the most beautiful woman in the world, and the wife of King Menelaus of Sparta – by Paris, the son of Priamos, King of Troy. Paris holds the struggling Helen with both hands and is lifting her up in order to carry her off. At his feet is another woman who is attempting to stop him. Paris, however, feels that he has the right to abduct Helen, as the goddess Aphrodite had promised her to him. This came about through the Judgement of Paris, when Hermes asked the young Trojan to determine which of three goddesses – Hera, Athena or Aphrodite – was the most beautiful. Paris chose Aphrodite, because she had promised him the world's most beautiful woman as his reward. By abducting Helen, Paris unintentionally triggered the Trojan War that sealed the downfall of his homeland. This is alluded to in a small relief inserted into the base of this sculpture (fig. 38), which shows a young Aeneas saving his elderly father, Anchises, from the burning city of Troy, while his child, Ascanius, holds a lantern to light their way.

The three main figures are not as closely entwined as those in Giambologna's famous *Abduction of the Sabine Woman* (cf. cat. no. 15). Here, the dynamism of the upwards-spiralling movement has been eased to allow more open contours and expansive gestures. The relief, which is required in order to understand the main theme of the work, also determines our view of the statuette. As a representative of the early Baroque style, Giovanni Francesco Susini thus overcame the Mannerist demand for a sculpture to be viewed from all sides. Although the combination of a bronze statuette with a relief showing a thematically expansive scene was to remain unique in his oeuvre, Susini's detailed staging of the abduction scene and the innovative landscape decoration of the base exerted a major influence on Florentine sculptors who came after him, who began to place greater emphasis on the narrative aspects of their representations.[2]

Birgit Langhanke

1 Baldinucci/Ranalli 1974/75, 118–21.
2 See Fogelman/Fusco 2002, 198.

17

Giovanni Battista Foggini

Florence 1652–1725 Florence

Hippomenes and Atalanta

c. 1690

Bronze; H: 41.2 cm, W: 48.6 cm (without plinth)
Inv. no. H4 153/4

Provenance: Purchased from the estate of Count Heinrich von Brühl in 1765.
Literature: Lankheit 1962, 83; Raumschüssel in Berlin 1995, 604, cat. no. 239; Dimitrios Zikos in Vienna 2005, 435–7, cat. no. 289; Dewes 2011, 110–14, 339 f, cat. no. 177.

Already at the very beginning of his career, Foggini enjoyed the protection of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo III de' Medici (1642–1723), who sent him to train in Rome for three years. Foggini returned to Florence in 1676 and soon had a flourishing practice as an architect and sculptor. Following Ferdinando Tacca's death in 1687, Foggini not only became the premier court sculptor, but also took over the workshop that Giambologna had used before him, and devoted himself to the production of skilfully modelled small bronzes. With his High Baroque bronze groups, which usually consisted of two figures, Foggini successfully continued the tradition that had been established by the great Flemish artist in the 16th century.

Fig. 39 Antonio Tempesta, *Metamorphoseon sive transformationum*, Antwerp 1606, pl. 97, SKD, Kupferstich-Kabinett, inv. no. A 97261

The small bronze being discussed here is a characteristic work by Foggini, who frequently depicted running figures and stressed their dynamic movement with flapping draperies. The subject derives from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the story of the beautiful huntress Atalanta is told. As she is unwilling to get married, Atalanta declares that she will only accept a suitor who can beat her in a running race. On Aphrodite's advice, Hippomenes drops three golden apples during their sprint; Atalanta is so charmed by these that she stops to pick them up, and Hippomenes beats her to the finishing line. Foggini depicts the moment when Hippomenes has thrown the first apple behind him and turns to see if his ploy has worked. As the original plinth, which doubtless resembled a natural terrain, is missing, the apple Atalanta has bent down to pick up is also lost. It can be assumed that the original impression was even more dynamic than it is now, as the figures seem rather too firmly attached to the smooth surface of the replacement base.[1]

This box-shaped plinth heightens the stage-like effect of the group, which also stems from the fact that Foggini based his figure of Atalanta on a print by the very popular artist Antonio Tempesta (fig. 39) – who had published a series of 150 scenes from the *Metamorphoses* in 1606 – and his Hippomenes on a composition by the Roman painter Ciro Ferri.[2] It is not surprising, therefore, that the structure of Foggini's bronze group almost evokes the impression of a painting with its clear frontal view, as the sculptor was mainly using two-dimensional models.

It has been suggested that the small bronze may have been in the possession of the sculptor Balthasar Permoser (1651–1732), who worked in Foggini's workshop in Florence for a long time before being called to Dresden in 1698.[3] However, the bronze group – of which no other copies are known – was documented in Florence in 1717 and 1729,[4] and must therefore have come to Dresden in some other way.

Claudia Kryza-Gersch

1 The smooth plinth dates from the time when the bronze was in the collection of Count Brühl.
2 Dewes 2011, 339.
3 Martin Raumschüssel in Essen 1986, 212, no. 240.
4 Dimitrios Zikos in Vienna 2005, 436.

18

Attributed to Nicolas Cordier the Elder

Saint-Mihiel 1567–1612 Rome

African Man

Rome, c. 1610

Marble; H: 79 cm
Inv. no. Hm 187a

Provenance: Purchased by Baron Raymond Leplat in Rome in 1728, as part of the collection of Prince Flavio Chigi.
Literature: Ingeborg Raumschüssel in Dresden 1992, 48, cat. no. 30; Martin 2005.

Fig. 40 Cat. no. 18 with bust

The polychrome bust shows a young African man wearing a light-coloured toga. His head is carved in black marble – *nero antico* or *bigio morato* – that contrasts sharply with the whites of his eyes and produces a gaze of piercing intensity. This, combined with the furrowed brow and the slightly opened mouth, lends the subject a remarkably animated expression. His naturally curly hair is tied together at the back; the surface of the stone has been left rough here, in contrast to the smoothly polished marble of the face, so that the slightly matted hair appears strikingly realistic. The black head and neck, along with a narrow portion of the chest, is set into a honey-coloured alabaster bust.

The bust came to Dresden in 1728 as part of an important collection of Roman antiquities that had been assembled by Cardinal Flavio Chigi. This collection was purchased for the court at Dresden by Baron Raymond Leplat, Augustus the Strong's art agent. However, the bust is not an original ancient sculpture, but a work that can be attributed to Nicolas Cordier, although this was not recognised until the late 20th century.

The attribution to Cordier, a sculptor from Lorraine who was known as 'il Franciosino' (the little Frenchman) in Rome, where he settled in 1592, is above all based on the striking similarity between this head and that of the so-called *Borghese Moor*. This life-sized figure, created by Cordier around 1610, was one of the highlights of Scipione Borghese's famous antiquities collection, and is now in the Louvre in Paris. It consists of the fragment of an ancient draped statue made of reddish alabaster, which comprised thighs and hips. Cordier skilfully added the rest of the figure – the upper body, head, arms and lower legs – to produce a sculpture of a Moor. Although the statue was actually a restored ancient torso, it can be regarded as something closer to a new creation. In general, works like these – which are also termed 'pseudo-antiquities' – were not produced with the intention to deceive, but instead reflected a desire to breathe new life into the ancient fragments. The competitive aspect also played an important role in this practice, as the Baroque sculptors aimed to show that even in direct comparison, their creations were equal to – or ideally even better than – the ancient originals. Cordier's speciality in this field was the masterful use of brightly coloured stones, an approach that proved very successful for him.

Claudia Kryza-Gersch

28

Pierre Le Gros the Younger

Paris 1666–1719 Rome

Apollo

c. 1715

Bronze; H: 68 cm, W: 38.3 cm, D: 31 cm
Inv. no. H4 154/14

Provenance: First mentioned in the 1728 inventory.
Literature: Holzhausen 1939, 174; Peter Volk in Munich 1995, 194–6, cat. no. 28.

The figure of *Apollo* was conceived as one of a pair, together with that of *Marsyas* (cat. no. 29). The two figures represent a myth described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the satyr Marsyas challenges the god Apollo to a musical competition. Apollo wins the contest and punishes Marsyas for his presumptuousness by skinning him alive.

This bronze was obviously inspired by the ancient statue of the *Apollo Belvedere* that had been found near Rome towards the end of the 15th century and was installed in the courtyard of the Villa Belvedere in the Vatican in 1511. Having lived in Rome from 1690 onwards, Le Gros would therefore have known the statue well.[1] However, he adapted the composition to suit his own purposes: he not only reversed the position of the legs, but also reinterpreted the outstretched arm – which in the ancient sculpture must have been holding a bow – so that his *Apollo* points towards *Marsyas*. The god looks proudly into the distance; in his left hand he holds the lyre he played in the contest with Marsyas. With the exception of a laurel wreath on his head, *Apollo* is nude; a carefully gathered cloth falls down over his left arm onto a tree stump, and his genitals are concealed by two leaves.

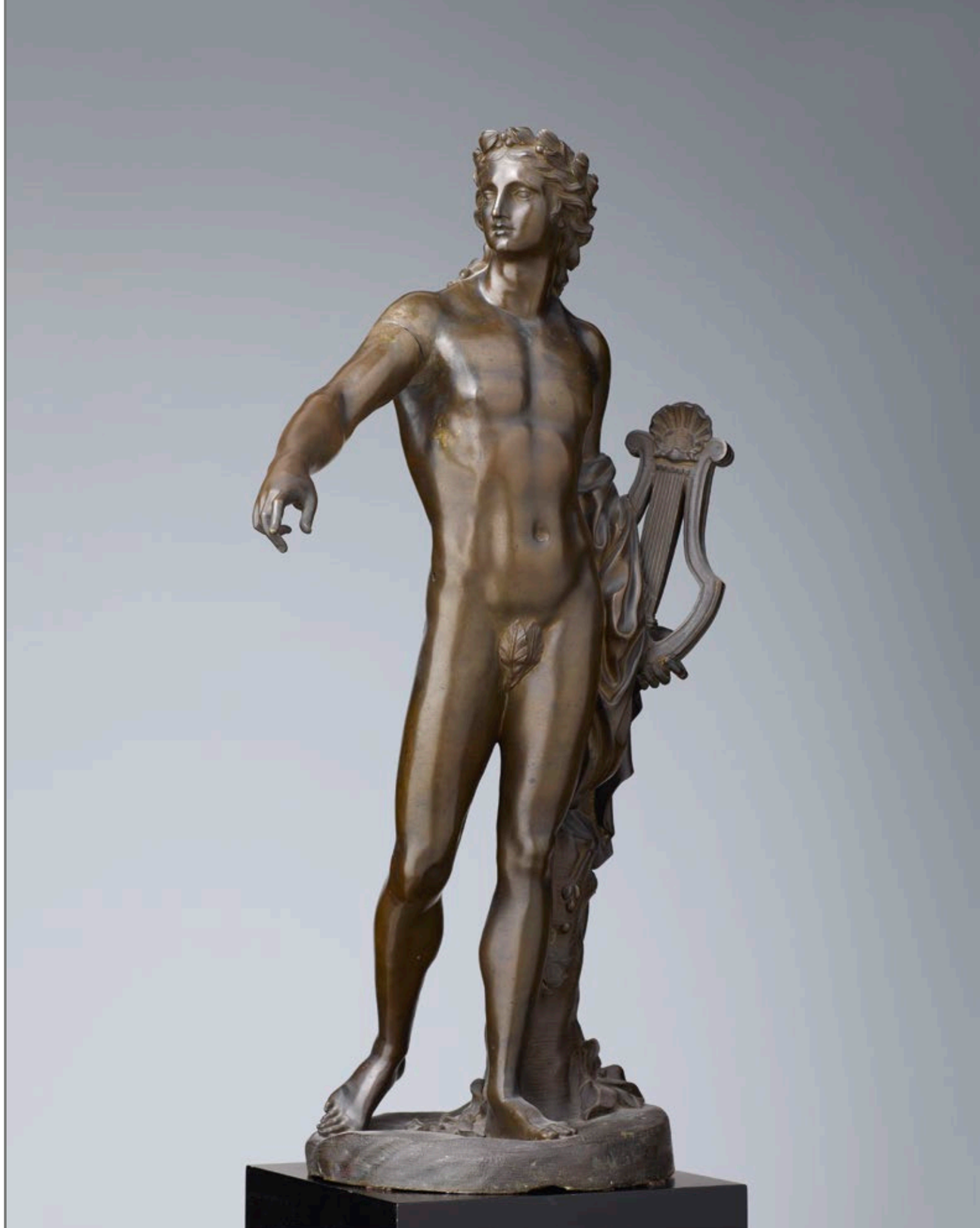
Pierre Le Gros was born in Paris and studied there under his father, who was also active as a sculptor. Having moved to Rome, Le Gros the Younger quickly became successful and worked for both the Jesuits and the Dominicans. His most important works include two monumental Apostle statues created for the Lateran Basilica at the beginning of the 17th century, demonstrating that he was involved in one of the most prestigious commissions granted in those years. From then on, Le Gros was one of the most sought-after sculptors active in Rome. Apart from a short period spent in France due to ill health in 1715, he lived in the Eternal City for the rest of his life.

There are very few records of Le Gros making small-scale sculptures; he preferred to produce monumental marble works. Le Gros was not interested in formal issues such as providing multiple viewpoints, as propagated by Mannerism, but preferred to compose his sculptures into an ideal plane by using broad draperies or expansive gestures. In this respect, he is completely in line with the Roman Baroque style of Gian Lorenzo Bernini, whose figures are conceived with a specific viewpoint in mind. Gestures and dramatically looped garments thus become part of the narrative arrangement. Le Gros' interest in narrative figural configurations is also revealed in *Apollo* and *Marsyas*, which were conceived as a pair but also create an impact when displayed individually.

The attribution of the unsigned bronzes that was first published by Holzhausen is founded on the 1765 inventory, where both the *Apollo* and the *Marsyas* are described as "by Legros".[2] The two statuettes had been listed as being "by Vinache" in an inventory from 1728, but Holzhausen assumed that this referred to the conveyor rather than the artist. The attribution to Le Gros is further supported by a reference made in 1761 with regard to a delivery by Andrea Violani for the Royal Place in Caserta; it includes a description of two figures of *Apollo* and *Marsyas* that match the works in Dresden, and states that these are based on a composition by Le Gros.[3]

Birgit Langhanke

1 Peter Volk in Munich 1995, 194.
2 Holzhausen 1939, 174.
3 On this and other surviving copies, see Baker 1985.



29

Pierre Le Gros the Younger

Paris 1666–1719 Rome

Marsyas

c. 1715

Bronze; H: 68.3 cm, W: 25.8 cm, D: 27.5 cm
Inv. no. H4 154/17

Provenance: First mentioned in the 1728 inventory.
Literature: Holzhausen 1939, 174; Souchal 1981, II, 298 f, no. 42; Baker 1985; Peter Volk in Munich 1995, 194–6, cat. no. 29.

The figure of the goat-legged satyr *Marsyas* is the counterpart to Le Gros' *Apollo* (cat. no. 28). After Marsyas lost the musical contest with Apollo, the god ordered that the satyr be flayed as a punishment for his hubris. Marsyas, writhing in pain, is here tied to a tree trunk with his right leg bent behind him. His head is turned to the side and tilted backwards; following its movement, his right arm is raised and bent. His left arm reaches behind his body and is placed against the tree trunk. To the left of the satyr, a panther skin hangs over a forked branch and identifies Marsyas as a follower of Bacchus. Above the figure, a branch that follows the line of his raised arm extends out from the tall trunk and lends the composition a greater sense of balance.

This type of depiction, featuring the flayed satyr with a bent leg and outstretched arm, corresponds with that used by artists to portray both the story of Marsyas and the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian. Examples of this type include a Renaissance bronze of *Marsyas* in the Allen Memorial Art Museum in Oberlin, Ohio, which is attributed to a follower of Desiderio da Firenze and is the only copy to have survived,[1] and a bronze of *Sebastian* from the 17th century in the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.[2]

With his figures of *Apollo* and *Marsyas,* Le Gros – who was above all known for his large-scale sculptures – succeeded in creating a convincing composition in a smaller format. *Marsyas* is definitely the most successful of his small sculptures, and has survived in several, slightly differing, versions made of marble, bronze and terracotta. It is difficult to place the small figures in the context of Le Gros' oeuvre, but Baker was able to establish that they were probably created during a short stay in Paris in 1715.[3] On the one hand, both the terracotta version – which could have served as a model but has since been lost – and a marble version are verifiable in French collections in the 18th century; on the other, Vinache's purchase for Dresden would also suggest that the work originated in Paris. In addition, there are records that during the short period he spent in Paris, Le Gros produced works for Pierre Crozat. He, in turn, owned other models by Le Gros that passed upon his death to his nephew, Crozat de Thiers, who in 1773 was in possession of the terracotta *Marsyas*.

Birgit Langhanke

1 Peter Volk in Munich 1995, 194; Follower of Desiderio da Firenze, *Marsyas*, 1526–50, bronze, H: 28.6 cm, inv. no. R. T. Miller Jr. Fund, 1957.58, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio.
2 Baker 1985, 705; French, *Saint Sebastian*, 17th century, bronze, H: 39.5 cm, inv. no. A.111–1910, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.
3 Baker 1985.

30

Guillaume Coustou the Elder

Lyon 1677–1746 Paris

Augustus the Strong

Paris, c. 1700/05

Marble; H: 64 cm (without socle), W: 41 cm, D: 27.5 cm
Signed on the left side of the support: "G. COVSTOV. F."
Inv. no. H4 1/5

Provenance: First mentioned in the 1726 inventory.
Literature: Martin Raumschüssel in Dresden 1992, 54, cat. no. 38; Bärbel Stephan in Dresden 2001a, 74, cat. no. 10; Astrid Nielsen in Versailles 2006, 157, cat. no. 15.

Coustou was a pupil of his older brother Nicolas and his uncle, Antoine Coysevox. After a period in Rome, where he worked with Pierre Le Gros, he developed into a prominent sculptor who was often employed by the French Kings Louis XIV and XV. Coustou was above all known for two sculpted groups of horses being restrained by grooms, which he made for the park at Marly.

Fig. 44 Jacques Lauenhufe, *Augustus the Strong*, 1705, SKD, Rüstkammer

This marble bust is a remarkably lively portrait of Frederick Augustus I, Elector of Saxony (1670–1733). It shows the physically impressive ruler – who for good reason was known as Augustus the Strong – aged between 30 and 35, by which time he was also King of Poland. The chest and shoulders are unusually fragmented and imbue the bust with an almost intimate character. Only a small section of the cuirass can be seen, while a strong neck with a skilfully modelled silk cloth wrapped around it forms the base, as it were, for the king's impressive head. The bust section is framed by a sash placed over the left shoulder in a series of ingeniously modelled waves, and by a restrained drapery on the other side.

Augustus the Strong is shown with relatively short hair, curled into irregular ringlets that appear to be natural. It is not possible to state with any certainty whether this is his own hair or a wig *à la moutonne*. The energetic turn of the head, which makes the face appear to be almost in profile when viewed from the front, also contributes to the unconventional character of the portrait. The ruler's striking physiognomy can only be fully appreciated when the bust is looked at *en face* from the left.

Coustou's masterful portrayal of the king is particularly astonishing as it is highly unlikely that the artist was able to work from the living model, but instead had to base his work on painted or printed source images. It is not known whether the bust was a commissioned piece or whether the artist sent it to Dresden as an application for work. Attempts to date the bust are also based on hypotheses, but as other portraits showing the ruler with short, curly hair (fig. 44) can be dated to between 1697 and 1705,[1] it seems likely that this bust was also created during that period.

Claudia Kryza-Gersch

1 See, for instance, a medal by Martin Heinrich Omeis from 1697 (SKD, Münzkabinett, inv. no. BGA3723); and a copperplate engraving from 1697 (SKD, Kupferstich-Kabinett, inv. no. A 138564).

38

Balthasar Permoser

Kammer 1651–1732 Dresden

Christ at the Column

Salzburg, 1728

Plassen limestone from the Untersberg massif near Salzburg; H: 79.5 cm
Inscription on the rear of the column: BALTHASAR / PERMOSER / HATS GEMACHT / IN SALZBURG. IN SEINEN / 77. IHAR. 1728
Inv. no. ZV 4090

Provenance: From the chapel of Taschenberg Palace in Dresden.
Literature: Asche 1978, 115–17; Bärbel Stephan in Dresden 2001b, 32 f, cat. no. 10.

In this depiction of the flagellation of Christ, the saviour's body describes an S-shaped curve, with the right hip turned strongly outwards and the chest bulging forwards. His head is raised heavenwards, while his hands rest, untied, on his back, partly hidden by the loincloth. The birch used for the flagellation lies on the ground between his feet. The flagellation column has metamorphosed into a tree trunk and conveys a message through a relief depiction of Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives at the beginning of the Passion. Christ is on his knees, collapsed over a cup of sorrow and being supported by an angel who stands behind him. Above this touching scene we can see the small heads of mourning cherubim.

Permoser addressed the theme of *Christ at the Column* three times: this extremely poignant sculpture from 1728 was preceded by one made in 1721 (Dresden, Hofkirche)[1] and another created in 1725 (formerly chapel of castle Moritzburg).[2] The three works are similar in terms of their material and composition. Permoser used a special kind of marble – Plassen limestone – from the Untersberg massif near Salzburg. In the first, almost life-sized sculpture, the stone is grey-green with reddish veins. Permoser formed the deep red sections of the stone into vivid drops of blood that stem from a wound on Christ's right shoulder and fall onto his chest. This first work on the theme already makes it clear that Permoser sought to create a "shockingly illusionistic realisation"[3] of Christ's Passion. The second version is much more animated, although the posture of the body is practically identical. In this case, the stone is almost skin-coloured and is also streaked with red veins.

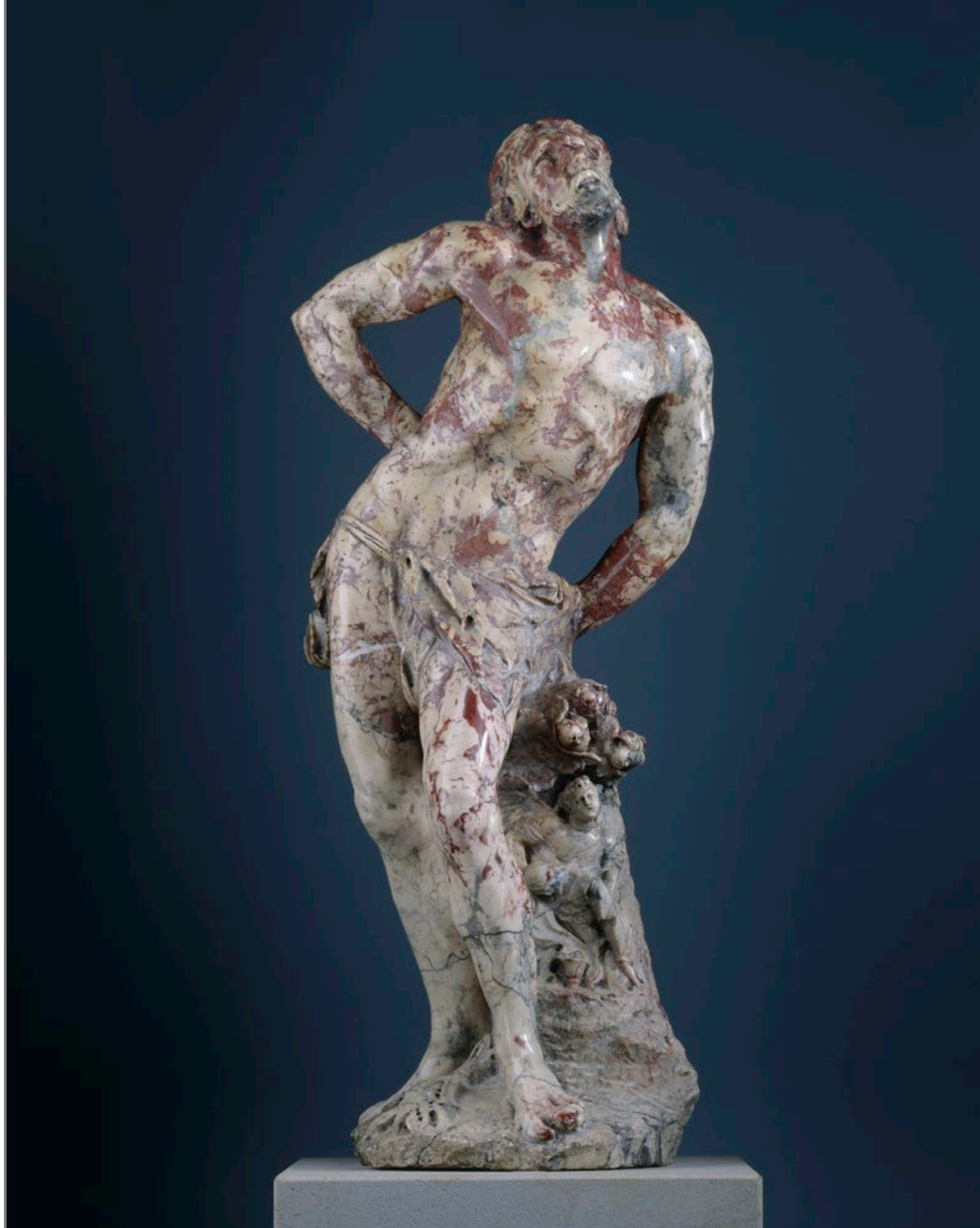
The stone used for the third and smallest version of the subject, produced in 1728, is also the colour of skin, but is more strongly spotted with dark red; this creates the painful impression of martyred flesh. In contrast to the earlier variations, the body of Christ no longer shows any modelled wounds, and his agonising martyrdom is expressed only through the coloured marble. Permoser was able to portray all of the drama of Christ's suffering through the material, using its natural colour to suggest blood and wounds. It would seem that personal piety also motivated Permoser, a Catholic, to create this sculpture as a devotional work; he depicted Christ not as the triumphant victor and king, but as a sufferer, and in this way he attempted to establish an inner connection and evoke feelings of empathy.

Permoser immortalised himself with a remarkable self-portrait on the back of this *Christ at the Column* (fig. 52). According to the inscription, he was 77 years old when he created the third work on this theme, which means it was made only four years before his death. However, the energetic individual in the self-portrait is not an old man, but an impressive artistic personality who definitely seems capable of creating such a moving sculpture in the eighth decade of his life.

Astrid Nielsen

Fig. 52 Detail of cat. no. 38

1 Bärbel Stephan in Dresden 2001b, 28, cat. no. 8.
2 Ibid., 30, cat. no. 9
3 Asche 1978, 115.



39

Laurent Delvaux

Ghent 1696–1778 Nivelles

Maurice of Saxony

1746/48

Marble; H: 74.5 (with socle)
Signed on the rear of the socle, above the plinth: FAIT PAR / LAVRENT. / DELVAUX / SCULPTEUR. / DE LA COUR / AU PAYS BAS
Inv. no. H4 5/36

Provenance: Purchased from the estate of Count Heinrich von Brühl in 1765.
Literature: Heiner Protzmann in Dresden 1992, 658, cat. no. 42; Bärbel Stephan in Dresden 2001a, 80, cat. no. 13; Protzmann 1995; Jacobs 1999, 340–3.

Fig. 53 Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Maurice of Saxony*, c. 1746–49, SKD, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister (detail)

The bust shows Maurice (1696–1750), the illegitimate son of Augustus the Strong and his mistress, Countess Maria Aurora von Königsmarck. Maurice was subsequently legitimised in 1711. While still a young man, he made a positive impression in the army under Prince Eugene in Flanders during the War of the Spanish Succession. He entered French military service in 1720 and went on to build a very successful career. Louis XV appointed him Marshal of France in 1744 and General Field Marshal in 1747. Maurice was very popular and highly respected due to his victorious military campaigns. The confidence and energetic determination he radiated as a result of these accomplishments are reflected in this portrait bust by Laurent Delvaux. Maurice's head sits upon an armless bust, mounted on a narrow, trapezoid socle with rococo ornaments. The front of the socle is decorated with the electoral coat of arms, supplemented by two crossed marshal's batons with Bourbon lilies and surrounded by a chain bearing the insignia of the Polish Order of the White Eagle. Emblems of weapons have been added to the sides, and the initials of the victorious military commander are inscribed inside a laurel wreath on the back. Maurice's proudly raised head is turned to the right and he is looking intently into the distance. In keeping with the fashion of the time, his hair is curled at the sides and tied to a loose braid at the back. He is wearing a doublet and sash under a fur-trimmed cloak with the cross-shaped star of the Order of the White Eagle and the associated motto "PRO FIDE REGE ET LEGE" (For Faith, King and Law) embroidered on it. Around his neck he wears a wide bow tie.

The signature identifies the bust as the work of Ghent-born sculptor Laurent Delvaux. A portrait medallion of Maurice of Saxony made by Delvaux in 1746 and a letter dated 17 May 1749, in which the Marshal expresses his satisfaction with Delvaux's work, make it possible to define the date of origin as between 1746 and 1748.[1] After sojourns in England, Italy and Portugal, Delvaux had returned to the Netherlands in 1732, where he became court sculptor under Archduchess Maria Elisabeth of Austria the following year. In his native Ghent, Delvaux worked on the pulpit of Saint Bavo Cathedral between 1741 and 1745, and he also met Maurice of Saxony, who commanded the French troops during the War of Austrian Succession and conquered the city in 1745. Delvaux subsequently created the portrait medallion which, in turn, prompted Maurice of Saxony to entrust the highly respected and successful sculptor with the creation of this portrait bust. It later found its way into the Dresden Skulpturensammlung from the estate of Count Heinrich von Brühl.[2]

Birgit Langhanke

1 Jacobs 1999, 340–2.
2 On other versions of the bust in terracotta and plaster, see Jacobs 1999, 342 f.

Designed by Gottfried Semper, the gallery building at the Dresden Zwinger houses not only the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister (Old Masters Picture Gallery), but also the Skulpturensammlung bis 1800 (Sculpture Collection from Antiquity to 1800), which is renowned for the high quality and impeccable provenance of its holdings. In addition to outstanding ancient works, around 100 Renaissance and Baroque sculptures are now on permanent display at the Semperbau. The concept for the gallery was revised following a thorough investigation of the collection, which also brought to light some hidden treasures. This catalogue presents the first results of the scholarly research; featuring selected masterpieces by Filarete, Giambologna, Adriaen de Vries, Giovanni Francesco Susini, Corneille Van Clève, Guillaume Coustou, Paul Heermann and Balthasar Permoser, among others, it illustrates the impressive breadth and variety of the Dresden Skulpturensammlung.

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