SKULPTUREN
SAMMLUNG
UNTIL 1800

SKULPTUREN SAMMLUNG UNTIL 1800

Edited by
Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden,
Stephan Koja

Staatliche Kunstsammlungen
Dresden

Stephan Koja
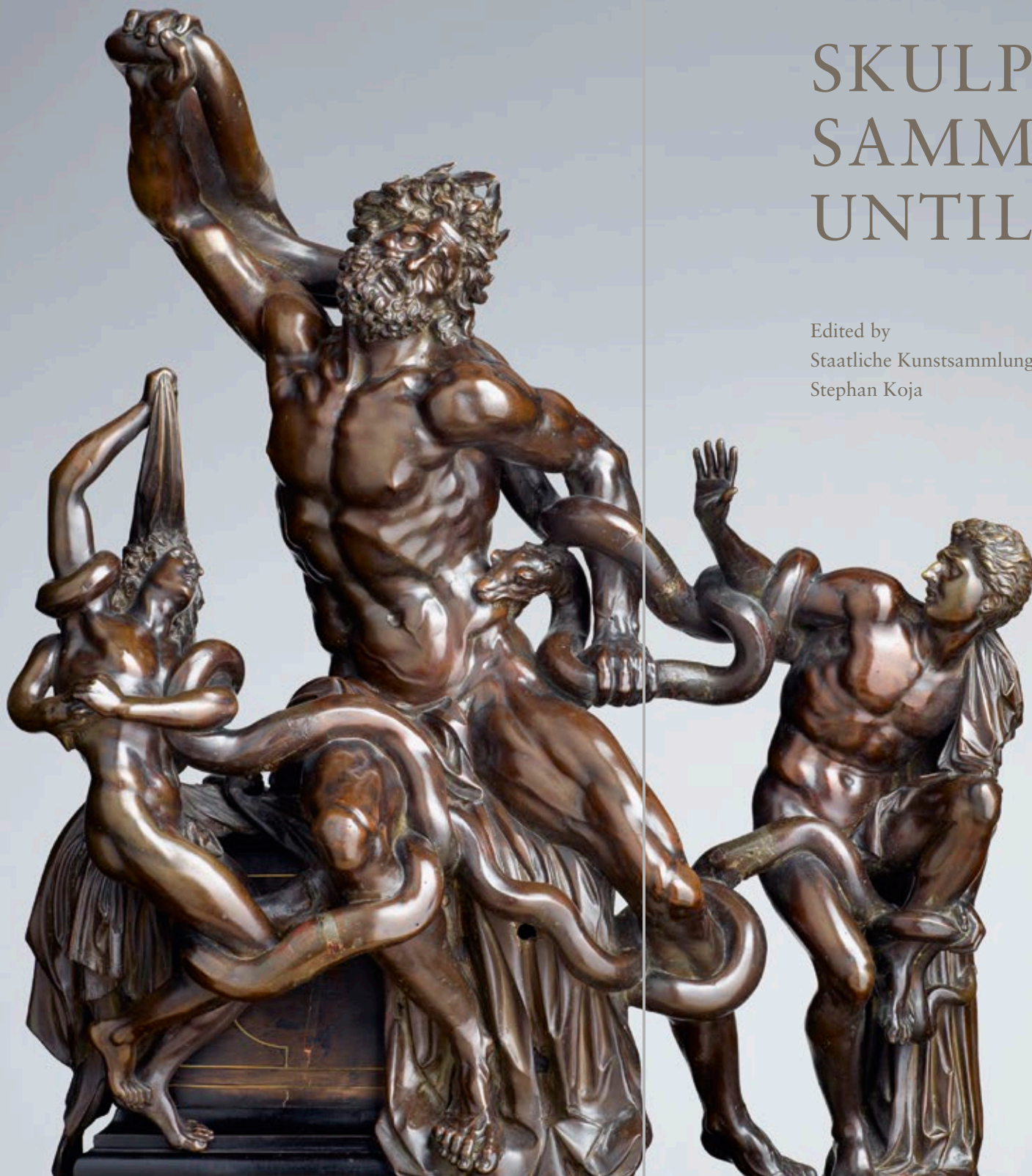
'The greatest treasure trove of ancient statues is to be found in Dresden'

On the History of Dresden's Skulpturensammlung

'The greatest treasure trove of ancient statues is to be found in Dresden [...] Concerning the best of them, I cannot however extol their beauty, because they stand in a shed of wooden boards, packed together like herrings [...].'[1]

Johann Joachim Winckelmann's famous lament from the year 1763 emphasizes two central aspects: first, the outstanding quality of Dresden's collection of classical antiquities, which contains singular marble sculptures, and is hence regarded by experts as unsurpassed worldwide; and secondly the urgent necessity for an installation that does justice to the significance of this splendid ensemble. Now, the new presentation of the Skulpturensammlung (Sculpture Collection) covering the period from Antiquity to Neoclassicism, in the splendidly renovated Gottfried Semper Gallery Building in the Zwinger, strives to do justice to these prerequisites.

Today, the Skulpturensammlung up to 1800 consists of four essential components: the collection of antiquities, the collection of medieval sculpture, the collection of Renaissance and Baroque sculpture, and the plaster cast collection. While carved Gothic figures from Dresden's Skulpturensammlung have been on loan to the Schlossbergmuseum in Chemnitz since 2009, the other parts of the collection have been on display in various visible-storage study rooms since the redesign of the Albertinum in 2010. The new permanent exhibition – shown in juxtaposition with old master paintings – features ancient sculptures in the East Hall, Renaissance and Baroque sculptures in the Sculpture Gallery, and allows the splendour of the sculptural works before 1800 to again be seen in their best light.

The foundations of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden were formed by the Kunstkammer (cabinet of arts and curiosities), initiated by the Elector August (r. 1553–1586) and housed in the Residenzschloss since 1560. Exhibited there alongside paintings were handcrafted objects, naturalia, mineral specimens, scientific instruments, and clocks. Thanks to an inventory compiled in 1587, we know, for example, that the elector already owned a number of important statuettes by Giambologna. Among these are a *Nessus and Deianira* (p. 140), a *Mercury*, and a *Sleeping Venus with Satyr* – works that had been sent by the Tuscan Grand Duke Francesco I de' Medici to the Elector Christian I. When acceding to the throne, the Saxon regent also received gifts from Duke Gonzaga in Mantua (among them Filarete's *Marcus Aurelius*, p. 124), as well as from

Anton von Maron
Johann Joachim Winckelmann, 1768
Oil on canvas, 136 × 99 cm
Klassik Stiftung Weimar

Giambologna himself: the Flemish sculptor made a personal gift of a celebrated small bronze statue of *Mars* (p. 135). In 2018, it was reacquired for the Skulpturensammlung, having been surrendered in the context of the *Fürstenabfindung* (expropriation of princes in the Weimar Republic) to the Familienverein Haus Wettin in 1924, after which it was auctioned.

Alongside these five masterpieces, the inventory of 1587 mentions four remarkable alabaster statuettes (p. 132), now regarded as early works by Giambologna. These are heavily reduced copies of the monumental *Allegories of the Times of Day* which Michelangelo Buonarroti carved between 1524 and 1534 for the New Sacristy in the Church of San Lorenzo in Florence. These depictions of *Evening, Night, Morning*, and *Day*, probably produced between 1555 and 1558, had already been sent to Dresden by Cosimo I de' Medici, and testify to the intense cultural exchange between Florence and the residence of the electors on the Elbe. But not all of these precious gifts arrived from Italy. During a trip to Prague in 1607, the elector received a bronze bust of *Christian II* (r. 1591–1611, p. 139), the work of the Dutch sculptor Adrian de Vries, from the Emperor Rudolf II.

In spite of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), the Elector Johann Georg I (r. 1611–1656) too was able to expand the collection. In 1621, the estate of Giovanni Maria Nosseni, an important sculptor and court architect, brought further important sculptures into the collection alongside his own works. Among these was Carlo Cesare del Palagio's *Christ on the Cross*, along with the *Dancing Faun* (p. 137) by Adriaen de Vries.

Sculpture as one of the collecting passions of Augustus the Strong

The most decisive augmentations to the electoral art collections occurred however during the reign of Friedrich August I of Saxony, known as 'Augustus the Strong' (r. 1694–1733). Between 1723 and 1726, the Saxon elector – who was also the king of Poland and the Grand Duke of Lithuania – received a generous gift from Friedrich Wilhelm I, King of Prussia, which comprised 52 primarily Roman portraits. The elector's enthusiasm for the arts brought purchases to Dresden on a scale that far surpassed those of his predecessors. With regard to sculpture, the key event was the acquisition in 1728 of two outstanding Roman collections formerly belonging to Cardinal Alessandro Albani and Prince Flavio Chigi. Thanks to this purchase, 200 ancient sculptures came to Dresden, not only securing a splendid ensemble of marble sculptures for the elector, but also doing much to bring together a collection that was commensurate with the prestige and ambition of the House of Wettin.

Purchasing negotiations in Rome were entrusted to Baron Raymond Leplat, an experienced counsellor and the architect to the king. On October 2, 1728, Leplat concluded the purchase agreement with Flavio Chigi, allowing 164 ancient statues to come to Dresden in exchange for 34,000 scudi romani. Among them are the four statues of a *Satyr* (p. 56) from the Villa of Domitian at Castel Gandolfo, the statue of a *Seated Muse* (p. 68) from the collection of Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, and the four *Heroes* (p. 49), which had been excavated in Acqua Santa near Rome in 1672. A few weeks later, in November of 1728, Leplat was able to acquire 32 ancient statues for Dresden through negotiations with Cardinal Albani at a cost of altogether 20,000 scudi. The ensemble included masterworks that still number among the showpieces of the Dresden's Skulpturensammlung: the *Dresden Boy* (p. 50), the *Dresden Zeus* (p. 43), and the statues of the so-called Lemnian Athena (p. 42).

In 1699, as well as in 1714 and 1715, prior to his journeys to Rome, Leplat had sojourned in Paris, where he acquired major bronze sculptures for Augustus the Strong. There, he was able to acquire small-format sculptures, such as the *Laocoön Group* (p. 143) and copies of monumental statues from Versailles by the French sculptors Antoine Coysevox, François Girardon, and Étienne Le Hongre for the electoral collection.

Just a few years later, in 1723, Leplat was also able to purchase a reduced copy of Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne* in Rome. From the first inventory of sculptures, assembled in 1726, we learn that the collection meanwhile comprised 310 objects – among them 'statues, portrait busts, groups, and other vessels, both ancient and modern, fashioned from all types of marble stone, metals, porphyry, and alabaster'.[2] These were distributed between the 'picture gallery', the garden of the Holländisches Palais (today the Japanisches Palais), the Grünes Gewölbe, and the 'Paraten Schlaff Gemach' (today the Königliche Paraderäume, or Royal State Apartments).

Palais in the Grosser Garten, view from the south east, 1937
Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, Abt. Deutsche Fotothek

An initial brilliant appearance in the Grosser Garten

Of course, all of these exquisite ancient works and contemporary sculptures demanded an adequate place of display. In 1727 there were plans – ultimately unrealized – to build an independent museum in proximity to the Zwinger; it would have been the first specially dedicated museum building in Europe. Augustus the Strong commissioned Zacharias Longuelune to design a central-plan building at whose core the ancient sculptures acquired in Rome would have been installed.

In 1729, when these plans proved to be too expensive, the elector resolved to present the by now very substantial collection in the rooms of the Palais in the Grosser Garten. The first celebrated guest to be guided through the new arrangement was the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm I, who had been invited to attend Dresden's carnival celebrations in February of 1730.

In circa 1736/37, the English traveller Jeremiah Milles wrote a description of the 155 marble sculptures he saw lined up in the festival hall of the Palais. From it, we learn that the splendid collection was arranged according to the model of Baroque galleries in accordance with aesthetic, and in particular, symmetrical principles. This spatially lavish presentation in the Palais in the Grosser Garten was however modified just a few years later. In 1747, on the occasion of the double

wedding of two children of August III, Prince-Elector Friedrich Christian and Princess Maria Anna, the objects were stored in the four pavilions surrounding the Palais. As a consequence of this measure, only a substantially smaller exhibition area was now available for a collection of objects numbering in the hundreds. And it was this placement that confronted Winckelmann during his visit to the Grosser Garten in 1755, while working as the librarian for Count Heinrich von Bünau near Dresden from 1748 to 1754. In view of the circumstances, Winckelmann's above-cited lament is quite understandable.

The new presentation in the Japanisches Palais

A new and adequate arrangement of the collection of antiquities came about only in 1786, when Camillo Count Marcolini, lord chamberlain, director of the Meissen Porcelain Manufactory, and director of both the Saxon Academy and the Royal Collections, relocated the 'Gallery of Ancient and Modern Statues' from the Grosser Garten to the bank of the Elbe. Sculptures, both large and small, were presented in ten galleries on the ground floor of the Japanisches Palais, while the electoral library and the numismatic cabinet occupied the building's first floor. For the installation of the collection of antiquities and the 'modern' sculptures, Friedrich Wacker, appointed inspector of the collection in 1748, took the Capitoline

The Collection of Antiquities in the Japanisches Palais
with a view of the Columbarium (Saal 10), 1888
Photo by Hermann Krone

Museums as his model. Consistent with this choice, he arranged individual sculptures at the centres of the galleries, while the greater portion of works, however, were positioned along the walls. Modern works, such as the busts of Cardinal *Richelieu* (p. 146) and the English King *Charles I* (p. 145), and the figural group *Nessus and Deianira* (p. 140) could be seen here together with antique sculptures. In any event, it emerges from contemporary accounts – for example, Johann Gottfried Lipsius's *Beschreibung der Churfürstlichen Antiken-Galerie in Dresden* (Description of the Electoral Gallery of Antiquities in Dresden), written in 1798 – that the arrangement followed neither chronological nor thematic principles.

The new museum presentation was conceived for a broad public, as made explicit by the inscription on the facade: 'MUSEUM USUI PUBLICO PATENS' (Museum, open for public enjoyment). From 1835 to 1836, Gottfried Semper had the galleries of antiquities painted in Pompeian style, a measure that was accompanied by a rearrangement of the sculptures.

Japanisches Palais, view from the north, 1929
Photo by Walter Möbius

The Collection of Antiquities

Dresden's Collection of Antiquities, a substantial part of the Skulpturensammlung's overall holdings, comprises over 10,000 works and boasts a kaleidoscopic wealth of objects: from small precious cameos and intaglios to larger-than-life-sized sculptures in marble, from statuettes made of durable clay to vessels of fragile glass, from simple everyday utensils to great masterpieces of ancient art. In all, these objects span a period from around 3000 BCE to 500 CE and were mainly made in Italy and Greece, but also in other regions around the Mediterranean.

With such rich holdings, only a fraction can ever go on display in the new permanent exhibition at any one time. This volume thus presents a representative selection, giving readers a compact overview of this important collection, which was originally one of the earliest and largest of its kind north of the Alps. Then as now, the timeless beauty of such statues as the *Dresden Boy*, the so-called Lemnian Athena, the *Dresden Zeus*, and the three famous *Herculaneum Women* casts a captivating spell on those who behold them. On the one hand, these Roman sculptures provide information on the visual representation of gods and humans in antiquity, while, on the other, they are testaments to a unique process of acculturation in which the imperial Romans turned to the Greeks as exemplary models of art and culture. Indeed, we primarily have Roman sculptures to thank for fleshing out our understanding of the masterful accomplishments of the Greek sculptors before them.

But even less famous objects reveal valuable insights into the world of antiquity. Greek funerary reliefs, vessels of clay and even marble, Etruscan urns, Egyptian mummies, Roman sepulchral monuments, and Palmyrene tombstones bear visual testimony to individual human lives, belief in gods, the afterlife, and the cult of the dead. They illustrate how burial forms varied from culture to culture and how memories of the deceased were kept alive.

Besides self-representation, the numerous Roman portraits above all embody the idea of *memoria*, of remembering and commemorating the deceased. Meanwhile, portraits of rulers such as the imposing cuirassed statue of Emperor Antoninus Pius are aggrandizing displays of a power that still impresses us today. | sw
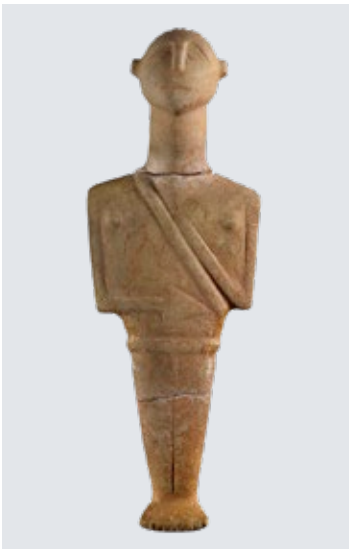
Male 'idol' with dagger

Cycladic, c. 2300/2200 BCE
Marble, probably Naxian; height 23 cm
Purchased from Alexander Margaritis, Athens, in 1914
Inv. no. ZV 2595

A Dutch nobleman by the name of Pasch van Krienen was one of the first to discover the statuettes that a famous 19th-century archaeologist still referred to as 'marble monsters', although they are known today as 'Cycladic idols'. While travelling around the Aegean in 1771, Van Krienen uncovered tombs on the island of Ios. According to the report he published shortly afterwards, among the objects he discovered was a 'piccolo Idolo di pietra di paragone' – a small touchstone (lydite) figure. If the identification of the object as a Cycladic idol is correct, it is surely one of the very few of the genre to have been sculpted in this dark rock, (marble being the customary material).

A drawing of a Cycladic idol – so-called, despite on this occasion being discovered in Attica – was published in 1817. It prompted a slew of discoveries on the Cyclades by farmers who chanced upon the idols while working the land. The accession of four idols at the Skulpturensammlung was registered relatively early in 1859, where they are described in that year's annual report as 'marble figures of genuine Greek origins, highly unusual from an art-historical perspective'. They had been acquired in Naxos by the Königliche Berg-Comissar, the 'royal commissioner of excavations', Karl Gustav Fiedler, in 1837.

The figure shown here was the last of a total eight Cycladic idols to join the Dresden collection. It is one of the few idols whose subject – possibly a warrior – is shown bearing arms. | SK

Mixing-vessel (krater)

Attic, mid–10th cent. BCE
Clay; height 19.8 cm
Purchased from Botho Graef, Berlin, in 1895
Inv. no. ZV 1465

The balanced proportions, simple contours, and austere decoration of this mixing vessel create an impression of contained monumentality. The supple and vegetal decorative elements of the Minoan and Mycenaean period have evolved here into independent, purely geometric circular patterns drawn with a compass. This early and simple vessel, one of the first-known examples of Greek art created after the fall of the Mycenaean culture, already embodies qualities which will remain characteristic for Greek art as a whole: clarity of form, organic composition, and harmonious, balanced proportions.

Above a low, conical base, the plain clay body of the vessel rises straight up, ending in a dark-edged lip which curves slightly outward. The bow-shaped round handles lie close to the wall of the vessel, but follow the slight outward curve of the lip at the top. They are decorated with cursory cross-stripes and outlined on the outer edges with dark lines which extend downwards beyond the ends of the handles. Three sets of concentric circles, drawn with a compass, appear on each wall of the vessel, framed by horizontal bands, one above and three below. | KK

Pyxis

Attic, c. 760 BCE, Workshop of Tübingen 1087
Clay; height 14.6 cm
Acquired from Wolfgang Job, Laurion, in 1900
Inv. no. ZV 1818

Pyxides with horses set above the knob on the lid were found in Athens and Attica primarily in women's tombs. They were used in domestic and cult contexts to store valuable objects. The horse was a status symbol, but also carried special religious significance as an animal sacred to Poseidon.

A wide frieze of triglyphs and metopes framed by ornamental bands runs around the flanks of the shallow vessel. The metopes are decorated with alternating hatched swastikas and leaf-shaped crosses. The flat lid and the body of the horse are also adorned with rings and dotted lines. The horse's eyes are modelled.

The strict order and balance of the geometric decoration, which covers the entire vessel, is typical of early Greek ceramics, and gives the Geometric period its name. This style flourished in the 9th and 8th centuries BCE. The horse on the lid is an early example of sculptural depiction, which was still rare in this period. | KK

Neck-handle amphora

Attic, last quarter of the 8th cent. BCE, Workshop of the Hooked Swastika
Clay; height 57 cm, Ø 31.5 cm
Acquired from Wolfgang Job, Laurion, in 1900
Inv. no. ZV 1820

In analogy to the human figure, the parts of a Greek vase are named after body parts. Described accordingly, this late Geometric amphora stands on a sturdy circular foot, has a slender (and slightly contorted) belly, and a slim, upright neck that leads into a bulging lip. The handles are located above the shoulders on either side of the neck – from which this type of vessel takes its name (amphora means 'carried on both sides'). The vessel's well-proportioned body is decorated with circumferential lines and patterns in a style typical of the early phase of Greek vase-painting (11th to 8th century BCE). Known as Geometric art, this style derives its name from the shapes (lines, circles, triangles, and rectangles) painted onto the vases either freehand or with the aid of implements. Scholars are able to attribute works to certain master potters and their workshops by analysing the style and frequency of certain ornaments. This amphora bears the hallmarks of the Workshop of the Hooked Swastikas: crosses formed of arms and legs bent at right angles, which are interspersed with crosshatched chains of rhombuses to form the frieze around the vessel's full circumference. The two decorative fields on the vessel's neck feature figural representations: two horses tied to a tripod, beneath them two birds facing one another. The Greeks mainly used amphoras in everyday life as containers for storing and transporting cereals, olive oil, and wine. By contrast, the majority of early vessels found in funerary contexts appear to have served primarily as grave goods for the afterlife. | SW

Bronze vessel

Early 5th cent. BCE
Bronze; height 36 cm, Ø 39 cm
Found at Santa Maria di Capua Vetere; purchased from Simmaco Doria in 1871
Inv. no. H4 49/109

Suetonius, the famous author of the *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, refers in his biography of Julius Caesar to colonists in the city of Capua plundering a number of prehistoric graves in order to pilfer vessels crafted in the ancient style. This disreputable practice not only continued in the centuries that followed but well into the modern age – as is clear from the 'excavations' of Simmaco Doria in the 1870s, which were undertaken without any discernible scholarly purpose. It was during these digs that the bronze vessel came to light, before it was then purchased in 1871 for the collection in Dresden.

Four sphynxes crouch on the lid of the squat bronze vessel. Where a handle would normally be, stands a nude man carrying a ram (a figure known as a *kriophoros*). Wrought from a thin sheet of bronze, the vessel was used to hold cremated remains. It would have been placed with other funerary offerings inside a hollowed-out tuff box for protection. This style of burial was reserved for members of the elite in Etruscan-ruled Campania in the 6th century BCE. | sw

Sarapis

2nd cent. CE
Bronze; height 40 cm (without base)
Acquired from the Martinetti Collection, Rome, in 1877
Inv. no. ZV 30.15

The statuette is believed to have been discovered in Alexandria. It depicts a god who first emerged during the reign of Ptolemy I of Egypt in the period 320 to 300 BCE. Writing in his *Exhortation to the Heathen* in around 200 CE, Clement of Alexandria gives a rather fairy-tale account of the first cult statue of this deity, which was erected in his home city: 'Athenodor says that Bryaxis used a mix of all kinds of materials for the artwork. For he had filings of gold, silver, copper, iron, and lead, as well as tin; and of Egyptian stones not one was wanting, and there were fragments of sapphire, and hematite, and emerald, and topaz. Having ground down and mixed together all these ingredients, he gave to the composition a blue colour, whence the darkish hue of the image; and having mixed the whole with the colouring matter that was left over from the funeral of Osiris and Apis, moulded the Serapis.'

An array of surviving large-scale heads very probably give a good idea of how Bryaxis's colossal statue must have looked. In contrast to Bryaxis's statue, however, the Dresden Serapis is shown standing. He wears on his head the *modius*, a measure for cereals, as a symbol of the god's responsibility for the fertility of the land. Cerberus, the three-headed dog and guard of the underworld, would have once sat to the figure's right. | sk

Pelike.
Wedding scene

Apulian, 340/330 BCE, Egnazia Group
Clay; height 44.1 cm, Ø 28 cm
Purchased from the antiquarian Salomon, Dresden, in 1891
Inv. no. Dr. 526

Known as a *pelike*, this squat vessel is adorned on both flanks with wedding scenes. However, they do not illustrate any specific proceedings from the ceremony, which lasted several days. Instead, they show individual images and attributes that relate to what would have been the single most important day in a woman's life. We see attractive young people, richly adorned in jewellery and bearing all manner of courtship accoutrements: mirrors, garlands, armbands, staffs, doves, a strigil, and an *iynx*-wheel. The last item is the small white object held in the right hand of the standing woman: a small, whirring wheel used in ancient Greece for casting love spells. Uttering such incantations as 'magic wheel, draw the man I love to this house', a woman would seek to summon her beloved. Further underlining the all-encompassing theme of love is Eros, god of love, whose image adorns both sides of the vessel.

Sadly, it is impossible to say whether the red-figure vessel from Apulia served a wedding-related purpose or was instead intended for a funerary context. In the latter case, it might have been for a young woman who died before being able to marry and was thus cheated of what in ancient Greece would have been her life's greatest goal. | sw
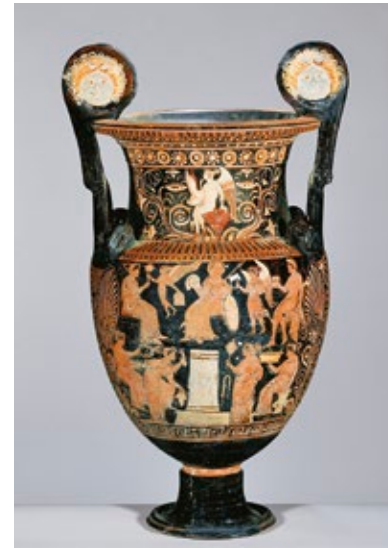
Volute krater.
Assembly of the gods

Apulian, c. 330/320 BCE
Clay; height 77 cm
Donated by Maria Isabel de Borbón in 1836
Inv. no. Dr. 519

Corresponding in form to vessels used for mixing wine and water, this krater was very probably one of the grave goods in a tomb. With the exception of the foot and portions of the handles, almost the entire surface of the krater is adorned with representations of plants, patterns, and various figures. Prominent among these is the seated figure of the goddess Athena, who holds her helmet in one hand and a lance in the other. Visible in the lower register are a number of women tending to a stela-topped grave. A striking group is shown on the krater's neck. In the midst of vines and plants, a caress takes place between Eros (depicted with white skin and large wings) and a swan. Standing on the god's lap, the bird directs its beak towards Eros's mouth. Eros is depicted wearing bracelets, a necklace, and an earring. He wears reddish-brown sandals, and – his hair partially hidden beneath a hood and tied in a knot at the back of his head – sports a hairstyle typically reserved for women. | sk
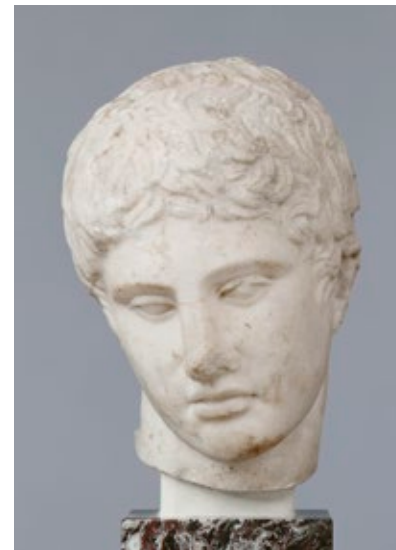
Two replicas of a greek statue of Victory

2nd resp. 1st cent. CE; copy of a lost bronze statue
by Polykleitos, soon after 460 BCE
Parian marble; height chin to crown 86.5 cm and 21 cm
Purchased from the collection of Flavio Chigi, Rome, in 1728
such as acquired from a private collection, Vienna, in 1897
Inv. nos. Hm 84 and Hm 85

Not one of the many hundreds of bronze victor statues erected in ancient times in Olympia has survived. However, a few victory statues were moulded and subsequently copied for export in the Roman imperial period – principally in Athens, where they were rendered in marble (and sometimes bronze). Adolf Furtwängler (1853–1907) was the first to see the connection between a statue at the British Museum, which is of the same statue type as the two pieces in Dresden, and a base discovered in Olympia in 1877. The top of the base features an inscription: 'The pugilist Kyniskos of glorious Mantinea – who bears the name of his father – had this erected on the occasion of his victory'. The position and size of the attachment holes on the upper side of the base indicate that the lost bronze statue was identical both in terms of stance and height as the 145-centimetre-tall sculpture at the British Museum. Thanks to Pausanias, who, in around 175 CE, visited Olympia and compiled an inventory of the victor statues displayed there, we also know the likely reason why the statue of Kyniskos was so frequently copied: the statue was the work of the famous bronze caster Polyclitus (p. 50), who crafted countless statues between 460 and 420 BCE. Specializing primarily in athletes, Polyclitus also created statues of deities (p. 51) and heroes. | SK

Young athlete
(so-called Dresden Boy)

c. 10 BCE–CE; copy of a lost bronze statue by Polyclitus,
c. 420 BCE
Pentelic marble; height 152 cm (without plinth)
Purchased from the collection of Alessandro Albani, Rome, in 1728
Inv. no. Hm 88

In 1893 the archaeologist Adolf Furtwängler successfully proved that the sculpture known as the 'Dresden Boy' is a copy of a famous lost bronze statue created around 420 BCE. This statuary type, represented by numerous copies in marble, is called the 'Dresden Boy' after the best-preserved example.

While the original position of the arms can be approximated in reconstructions, which attribute, or attributes, once identified the young man can no longer be determined, as none of the copies have survived intact. The figure's size and hairstyle suggest that it represents an athlete who has won a victory in the youth tournament of an important *agon* or competition, perhaps in the Olympic games, and was thus honoured with a statue in life size, dedicated by his city.

The statue's great popularity in the Roman imperial period most likely derived from the original artist's fame. Furtwängler was thus the first to believe that the Dresden Boy is based on a statue by the hand of Polyclitus, probably the most notable bronze caster of the High Classical period. Polyclitus's signature style is particularly recognizable in the treatment of the hair. | SK
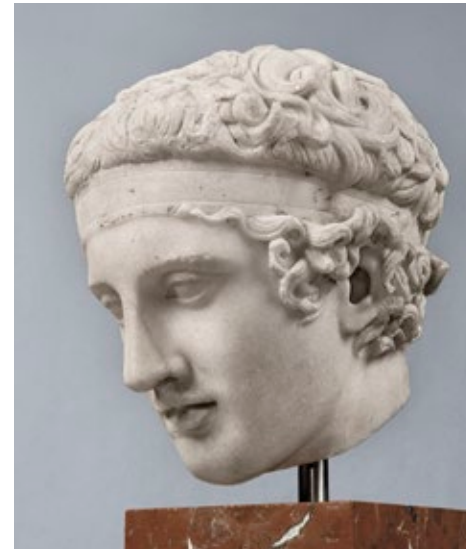
Head of a statue of Apollo
('Diadumenos')

c. 160/180 CE; copy of a lost bronze statue by Polyclitus,
c. 430/420 BCE
Parian marble; height chin to crown 26 cm
Purchased from the collection of Flavio Chigi, Rome, in 1728
Inv. no. Hm 71

Polyclitus's bronze statue of Apollo measured approximately 185 centimetres in height and was probably melted down sometime after the fall of the Roman Empire. Numerous copies from the period 100 BCE to 200 CE, however, have survived. Working with piece-moulds of plaster, the sculptors created marble copies of such accuracy that it is even possible to reconstruct the disposition of each curl of hair in the original. The copies also show that, rather than holding a bow and arrow in his hands, as is customary in many other statues of this god, this Apollo is in fact about to bind his thick head of hair with a victor's fillet or ribbon. An identification of the figure as Apollo was only made possible because the sculptor who made the earliest of the 30 surviving copies, (which dates to around 100 BCE and stood on Delos, one of the Cyclades islands) added a crucial identifying attribute: a quiver of arrows resting on the statue support next to the figure's supporting leg. In the Roman period the statue was simply called Diadumenos (Pliny, *Naturalis historia*) or 'the fair one, binding a ribbon' (Lucian, *Philopseudes* or *The Lover of Lies*). | SK

Statues of two lying Lions

1st cent. CE
Granodiorite or granite; 69×48.5×134 cm and 68.5×45×132 cm
Found in the Vigna Cornovaglia, Rome, c. 1644/1655 (Inv. no. Hm 16)
Purchased from the collection of Flavio Chigi, Rome, in 1728 (Inv. no. Hm 16),
resp. donated by Alessandro Albani, Rome, in 1728 (Inv. no. Hm 18)
Inv. nos. Hm 16 and Hm 18

These two lion statues belong to a group of three figures that are identical in form, material, and size. The three statues (inv. nos. Hm 16, Hm 17, Hm 18) were un-earthed in Rome in the 16th and 17th century. Even at this early point in the de-velopment of modern Egyptology, they were recognized as works of ancient Egyp-tian art. This cultural classification is not only supported by the lions' posture, the level symmetry of the body, the shape of the mane, and position of the tail; the material itself is also known to Egypt and appears to have been quarried in Aswan. The pieces likely date to the 1st century CE and were made after ancient Egyptian models, but their place of origin can no longer to be determined.

 As was customary in their land of origin, the lion figures probably also guarded a temple in ancient Rome, perhaps one of the local sanctuaries to Egyp-tian gods. These lion statues were often copied in the modern period. Examples of such Egyptianizing sculpture can still be seen today in Dresden's Grosser Gar-ten. | ML

Tomb slab of Nohrâ

226/227 CE
Limestone; 52.5 × 42.5 × 25 cm
Donated by Crown Prince Friedrich August of Saxony in 1890
Inv. no. Hm 25

Located in present-day Syria, the ancient oasis city of Palmyra achieved great wealth in the Roman Empire as a trading city and commercial hub. In the period from the 1st to 3rd century CE, the city developed its own unique culture and visual language influenced in equal measure by local and trans-regional pictorial traditions. This is particularly evident in Palmyra's portrait-adorned funerary reliefs, which were originally erected in tomb complexes surrounding the former city. These funerary monuments took a variety of forms: high funerary towers, exclusive 'house tombs', and temple tombs, as well as subterranean complexes (*hypogaea*). From the 1st century CE, the *loculi* (that is, the actual burial portions of the structures) were usually sealed with slabs. The representations and Aramaic inscriptions on the *loculi* reliefs served to memorialize the deceased. The woman shown on the Dresden relief looks towards the viewer. The inscription to the right of her head records her name (Nohrâ), date of death (226 or 227 CE), and which family she belonged to. She wears a cloak and veil over her short-sleeved undergarment. She is also richly bejewelled, wearing earrings, necklaces, a bracelet, and a ring. This abundant jewellery, which would have looked even more eye-catching in its original painted form, illustrates the strong display of status typical of Palmyra funerary portraits. | SW

Mummy of a woman and a man with mummy portrait and shroud

Late 3rd to mid – 4th cent. CE
Linen, stucco, painted and gilt, mummified body; 175 × 29.5 × 40 cm
and 164 × 37.5 × 29 cm
Found in Saqqara by Pietro della Valle in 1615
Purchased from the estate of Filippo Antonio Gualtieri, Rome, in 1728
Inv. nos. Aeg 777 and Aeg 778

These two late Roman mummies were brought to Europe in 1615, centuries before the rise of modern Egyptology. Their cartonnages are elaborately decorated and embellished with gold leaf. They show the portrait of a man and a woman wearing elaborate jewellery, both in the costumes they would have worn while alive. A painted net of beads contains decorative panels filled with motifs and mythological subjects, drawn from both ancient Egyptian and Greco-Roman traditions. The deceased each carry offering jars for wine and oil respectively and the 'crown of justification', marking their joyful entry into the afterlife. The Greek inscription underneath the man's right arm reads 'ΕΥΨΥΧΙ' (*eupsychi*), meaning 'farewell!'

CT scans revealed that the skulls and lower extremities of both are well preserved, while bones in the torsos and arms have clearly shifted after death. A number of circular objects were discovered in the woman's torso, perhaps beads of a necklace. The man was between 25 and 30 years old, the woman between 30 and 40. The man was approximately 163 centimetres tall, the woman around 150 centimetres. The man suffered from caries; one molar even had a root abscess. The woman showed signs of arthritis in her left knee. | SZ, SP, AZ, WR

Renaissance and Baroque

The post-antique section of Dresden's Skulpturensammlung is distinguished above all by its outstanding small bronzes. This genre, which had been popular already in antiquity, was rediscovered in Italy in the 15th century and became an experimental ground for new artistic ideas. In addition to Filarete's *Marcus Aurelius*, considered the foundational work of the genre, visitors in Dresden will encounter brilliant small bronzes by some of the most-celebrated masters of the art form, including Giambologna, Adriaen de Vries, Gianfranceso Susini, and Giovanni Battista Foggini.

While the earliest objects arrived in Dresden primarily as diplomatic gifts, during the reign of Augustus the Strong they were actively sought out and acquired for the lavish decoration of his palaces. In 1699 and again in 1714/15, Baron Raymond Leplat, inspector general of the Electoral-Royal Art Collections, travelled to Paris, where he acquired a large number of exquisite French small bronzes, which are among the best-documented of their kind. In Italy art agents in the employ of the Dresden court purchased not only works from antiquity, but also contemporary sculpture. Furthermore, to decorate the Zwinger complex, the Dresden court commissioned celebrated sculptors like Balthasar Permoser and Paul Heermann, who left their marks also in the collection.

The strong emphasis on distinguished portrait busts is typical for a princely collection, and Dresden boasts a large number of masterpieces which are remarkable not only because of their creators but also because of their sitters.

On numerous occasions entire collections were acquired en bloc, including that of court architect Giovanni Maria Nosseni in 1621, or that of Prime Minister Count Heinrich von Brühl in 1765. As diverse as the origins of the individual objects may be, together they form a picture of princely collecting at its finest. | CKG

Marcus Aurelius, after the antique

Antonio Averlino, called Filarete

Florence c. 1400–c. 1469 Rome (?)

1440/1445
Bronze with traces of enamel; 38.2 × 38.4 × 17.4 cm
First mentioned in the 1587 inventory of the Kunstkammer
Inv. no. H4 155/37

This figure is a greatly reduced copy of the over four-metre-high bronze equestrian statue of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, the only classical monument of its kind to be preserved in this state of completeness. It stood in front of the papal Lateran Palace from the 8th century until 1538, when it was moved to the Capitol Square. Filarete's reduction is the earliest small bronze of the Renaissance, and is regarded as the foundational work of this important new genre which brought the spirit of antiquity into the *studiolo* of erudite humanist collectors.

Filarete – whose name means 'lover of virtue' – was an architect and sculptor, and the author of an important treatise. He probably trained under Lorenzo Ghiberti in Florence at the time when the latter was making the *Gates of Paradise* for the Baptistery. Evidently, the expertise Filarete had acquired on this project led to a commission from Pope Eugene IV to create bronze doors for St Peter's in Rome (1433–1445). It was during this time that he made the bronze statuette, which like the doors is executed in a strictly classical style. Probably inspired by small bronzes from antiquity, it is not only the statuette itself that is remarkable but also the detailed inscription on its base. Although this states that the figure was intended for Piero de' Medici, it came into the possession of the Margraves of Mantua. From there it was sent to Dresden in 1586 as a gift from Guglielmo Gonzaga to Elector Christian I of Saxony. | CKG
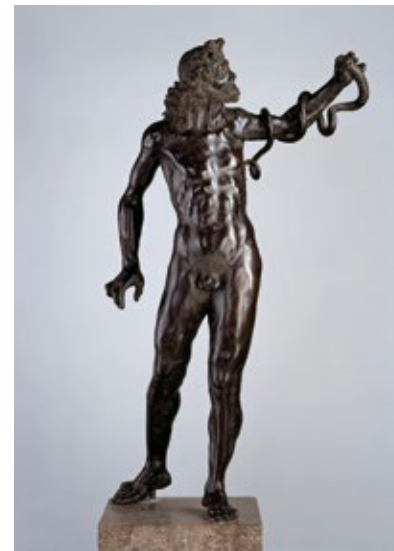
Nude Man with Serpent

Francesco di Giorgio Martini

Siena 1439–1501 Siena

c. 1495
Bronze; height 113.5 cm
Purchased from the estate of Count Heinrich von Brühl in 1765
Inv. no. H2 21/78

The Dresden 'snake-tamer' is one of the most unusual sculptural creations of the early Italian Renaissance and is attributed to the Sienese artist Francesco di Giorgio Martini, who was active as an architect, engineer, painter and sculptor. It shows a nude, athletic man of middling age gripping in his raised left hand a snake that is wound in coils around his arm. He stares intently at the head of the snake, which is now missing. In his right hand he once held an object that has meanwhile been lost.

Who the figure is intended to represent is a mystery. Suggestions range from Hercules in combat with Achelous, Asclepius, Laocoön or Serpentarius (the serpent-bearer), the thirteenth sign of the zodiac. Its original purpose is also unclear. The statue may have served as a figure on a fountain; however, if so, since it is solid-cast, it can only have stood in a basin without emitting water itself. It may also possibly have graced a column in an inner courtyard or garden belonging to a humanist. It is in any case remarkable that the figure is entirely naked and thus numbers among the very earliest Renaissance nudes. In terms of style, although the statue is expressively realistic, its nudity clearly shows the influence of the art of antiquity. It has been suggested that the pose recalls that of the *Apollo Belvedere*. | CKG

Elector Friedrich III of Saxony, called "the Wise"

Adriano Fiorentino

Florence 1450/60–1499 Florence

1498
Bronze; 62.8 × 49.5 × 27 cm
From Hartenfels Castle in Torgau
Inv. no. H4 1/1

Friedrich the Wise (1463–1525) was Elector of Saxony since 1486. As arch-marshal to three German-Roman emperors, he was one of the most influential sovereign princes of his time. Friedrich founded the university at Wittenberg and became the protector of Martin Luther, to whose ideas he was open, although he did not implement the Reformation in his lands. In 1505 he appointed Lucas Cranach the Elder as court painter.

The signature identifies the bust as the work of the Florentine artist Adriano Fiorentino, who worked as a sculptor, medallist and canon founder in Florence, Naples, Urbino and Mantua. Adriano's travels took him as far as Innsbruck, to the court of Emperor Maximilian I, and perhaps even to southern Germany. As Friedrich III paid repeated visits to the imperial court at the time when the bust – dated 1498 – was made, it can be assumed that it was created there and can thus be regarded as the earliest example of an Italian portrait bust from the early Renaissance to be executed north of the Alps. A typical feature is the way the bust terminates in a straight line, an element deriving from medieval reliquary busts. Under the influence of classical models this was superseded in the 16th century by a rounded termination above a pedestal. It is generally assumed that Adriano created the model for the bust while the cast and chasing was the work of a German master. | CKG
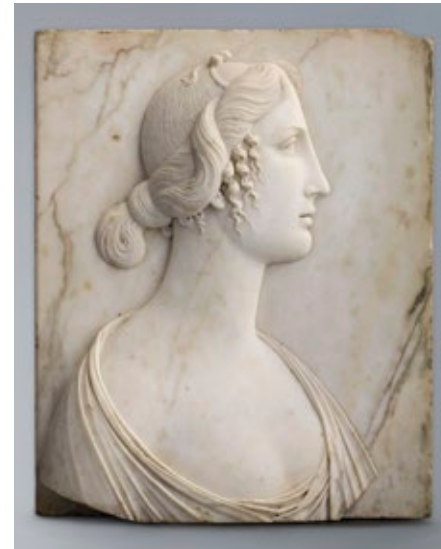
Ideal portrait of a Young Woman

Tullio Lombardo (attributed to)

Carona? c. 1455–1532 Venice

1525/1530
Marble; 49.2 × 40 × 8.5 cm
Given as a gift by Friedrich Wilhelm I, King in Prussia c. 1723/1726
Inv. no. H4 118/255

Deriving from the ownership of the Prussian king Friedrich I, this work was described as a classical portrait of Livia in the lavish catalogue of the Brandenburg art collection published in 1701. Between 1723 and 1726 King Friedrich Wilhelm I gifted his collection of antiquities to Augustus the Strong, and in this way the supposed relief of Livia came to Dresden, where it was held to be an original work of classical art until well into the 19th century. However, it is in fact a typical creation of the Venetian High Renaissance, and can be attributed to Tullio Lombardo himself or to one of his best assistants. Tullio was one of the foremost sculptors and architects in Venice at the beginning of the 16th century, running a large workshop producing altars, ornate sepulchral monuments and scuptural decoration for chapels. In addition, he made small reliefs intended for private collectors. Depicting one or sometimes two busts of beautiful women and men against a smooth background, these are ideal rather than realistic portraits. Curiously, the arms of most of the figures are cut off below the shoulder, as in the Dresden relief. This plays on a sophisticated level with the perception of viewers, who cannot be sure whether they are looking at a classical bust or a portrait of an individual. With these reliefs Tullio invented a new genre that satisfied the longing of his times for pseudo-classical fantasy. | CKG

Elector Christian I of Saxony

### Carlo di Cesare del Palagio

Florence 1540–1598 Mantua

1592/93
Bronze; height 69.3 cm (without pedestal)
First mentioned in the 1610 inventory of the Kunstkammer
Inv. no. H4 1/3

Christian I of Saxony (1560–1591) was the only son of nine to survive his father, Elector August, when he died in 1586. Christian had a passion for the arts, which he recognized as an important instrument for denoting status and rank. Upon becoming elector, he received several small bronzes by Giambologna (pp. 134 and 135) presented as gifts from Francesco I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, as well as from the artist himself. The gifts obviously inspired the Saxon elector to promptly send his court architect Giovanni Maria Nosseni to Florence, with the task of enlisting Italian artists for his ambitious projects. Nosseni succeeded in engaging Carlo di Cesare del Palagio, a student of Giambologna, who arrived in Saxony in 1590, where he remained for three years, executing primarily a great number of sculptures to decorate the funeral chapel for the House of Wettin in Freiberg Cathedral. Among them are 22 bronze figures, including five life-sized statues of Christian's parents and grandparents, and the elector himself. Due to Christian's early death, the mausoleum in Freiberg was realized only in reduced form, and in 1593 Carlo relocated to Munich on invitation of the court there. But before departing, he executed this portrait bust for Christian's widow, which bears a strong resemblance to the portrait statue of the elector in Freiberg. Because he is depicted there in 'perpetual adoration', Christian appears dignified and austere, so that the eye is captivated above all by the intricate rendering of his armour. | ckg
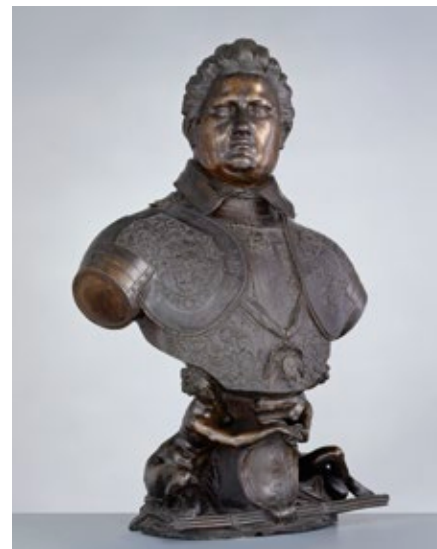
Elector Christian II of Saxony

Adriaen de Vries

The Hague c. 1545–1626 Prague

1603
Bronze; 96 × 66 × 41 cm
Given as a gift by Emperor Rudolf II in 1607
Inv. no. H4 1/4

The bust was commissioned by Emperor Rudolf II in Prague, where Adriaen de Vries had been appointed court sculptor in 1601. It was made in the same year that the artist created his portrait of the emperor, which in turn was based on the bust of Charles V by Leone Leoni (both today in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum). Leoni's work represented an innovation in that it depicted the whole upper body of the monarch down to the waist and placed this torso upon a figural base that presents an additional level of meaning. In the portrait of Christian, the bust is cut off at a higher point in order to make clear the difference in rank between emperor and elector, while the base conveys the close ties between the two monarchs: over the centrally placed Saxon arms crowned with the electoral coronet, two female figures gracefully extend their hands to each other in a friendly gesture as a symbol of concord. Before them lies a sheaf of arrows as an emblem of their united strength, alluding to the fact that a sheaf cannot be broken as easily as a single arrow. Christian wears a medallion, suspended on a ribbon, showing a portrait of Rudolf clasped in the talons of the imperial double-headed eagle.

The elector received the bust as a gift during his visit to Prague in 1607. It shows him as a young, beardless man with idealized features that merely hint at his considerable corpulence. The proudly raised head and gaze directed into the far distance imbue the portrait with a heroic character. | ckg
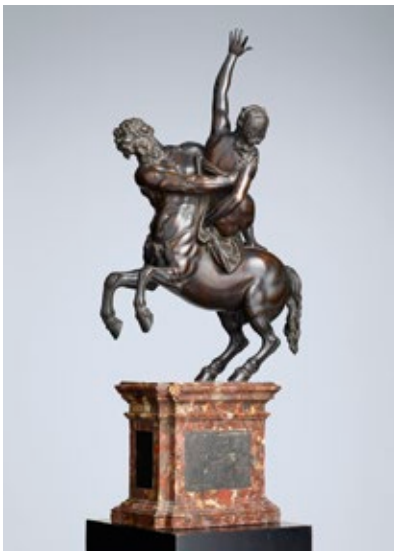
Nessus and Deianira

Jean de Boulogne, called Giambologna, workshop

Douai 1529–1608 Florence

c. 1600
Bronze; 77.7 × 48.5 × 29 cm
Purchased in Venice, c. 1722/23
Inv. no. H4 156/51

This depiction of Nessus and Deianira is an enlarged and reversed version of a small bronze signed by Giambologna and sent to Dresden in 1587 (p. 134). Also this group – although its modelling is of a less fine quality – has a remarkable provenance: the magnificent marble plinth and inscription tell us that it can be identified with a statuette that by 1605 at the latest decorated the *palazzo* of Count Agostino Giusti (1546–1615) in Verona. Giusti was a key figure of cultural life in Verona, even acting as the city's ambassador at the 1589 wedding of Ferdinand I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany and Christine of Lorraine. In 1600, the count accompanied Maria de' Medici to France for her marriage to King Henry IV. The grand duke might have presented the bronze subsequently as a gift to Giusti who then commissioned the inscribed pedestal in a particularly rare marble from Vallarsa, north of Verona. After the count's death, the Marcello family of Venice purchased the figural group. In the early 18th century, it was owned by the Venetian art dealer Valentino Nicoletti, from whom Leplat ultimately acquired it for Dresden. The fact that it was documented during Giambologna's lifetime shows that his workshop produced bronzes of far more varying quality than previously thought. | CKG
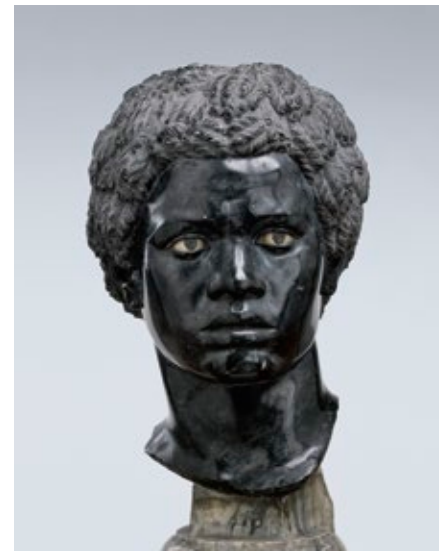
African

Nicolas Cordier (attributed to)

Saint Mihiel 1567–1612 Rome

c. 1610
Marble; height 34
Purchased from the Chigi Collection, Rome, in 1728
Inv. no. Hm 187a

The sculptor Nicolas Cordier, who hailed from Lorraine, settled in Rome around 1592/93, where he was employed by Pope Clement VIII, Pope Paul IV, and Cardinal Scipione Borghese. Cordier was one of the first sculptors of the early modern period to work with the representational possibilities of coloured marble in the style of antique models. For his famous *Moro Borghese* (today in the Louvre, Paris), for example, Cordier took an ancient Roman fragment, the torso of a draped statue in reddish alabaster, to which he added head and limbs in black marble in order to create the image of a young African man. The statue's characteristic head and tight, wiry curls are obviously reproduced in this bust. It came from the Chigi Collection in Rome, and was mistakenly considered an antique original when it was purchased for the Dresden collection at a phenomenal price.

In its execution, the Dresden head is even more finely worked than the *Moro Borghese*. The dark marble of the face is polished to a high gloss, while there is a marked absence of finish in the treatment of the hair that deftly reproduces the natural texture of frizzy African hair. To enhance the effect, the artist inlayed the eyeballs in white marble, lending the subject a lively, if somewhat nervous, appearance. | CKG

Leda with the Swan

### Corneille van Clève

Paris 1645–1732 Paris

1680/1690
Bronze; 63.5 × 23.8 × 24.5 cm
Purchased from the estate of Count Heinrich von Brühl in 1765
Inv. no. H4 154/28

Corneille van Clève descended from a Flemish family of goldsmiths. After apprenticing with Michel Anguier, he spent several years in Rome and Venice. In 1678 he returned to Paris and commenced a brilliant career in the service of the king and French nobility. Particularly popular were the small bronzes Van Clève made for private collectors. In some ways, he thus continued the tradition of Giambologna's Florentine workshop, modifying the popular Italian small bronzes to suit the tastes of the French Rococo. Most of his bronze groups depict erotic tales from Greek mythology, and would have harmonized perfectly in their original display contexts with paintings by his contemporary Antoine Watteau (1684–1721) of bucolic scenes and *fêtes galantes*.

Depictions of the Aetolian princess Leda have enjoyed great popularity since antiquity. According to the Greek myth, Zeus, king of the gods, seduced Leda in the guise of a swan, a union that produced among others Helen of Troy. Since the Renaissance, depictions have followed one of two models: Leonardo da Vinci's standing Leda, who is nuzzled tenderly by the swan, or Michelangelo's somewhat coarser reclining Leda. Van Cleve has depicted her standing, holding the swan's elongated neck as if to prolong their moment of intimate eye contact. | CKG
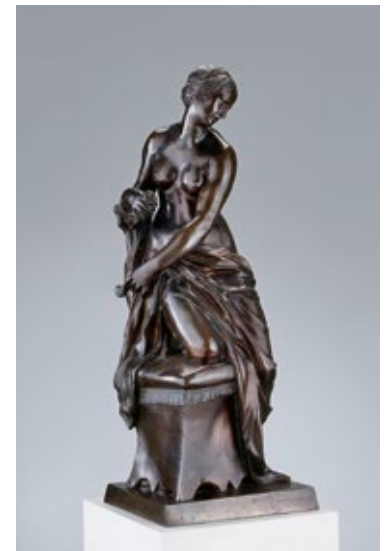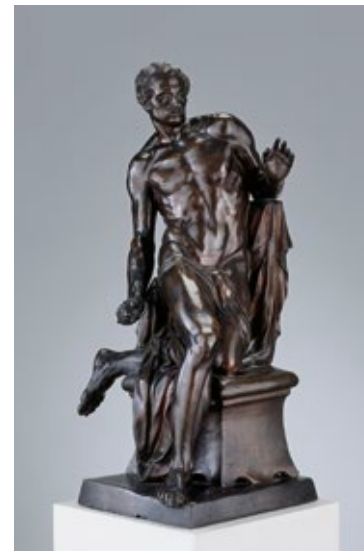
Suicide of Cato and Suicide of Porcia

François Duquesnoy (follower)

Brussels 1597–1643 Livorno

c. 1700
Bronze; 67 × 32.5 × 30.5 cm and 70.3 × 26.7 × 26.8 cm
Purchased in Paris in 1715
Inv. nos. H4 155/29 and Hase1 14/59

The Roman senator Marcus Porcius Cato (95–46 BC), who to avoid confusion with his grandfather and namesake is called either Cato the Younger or Cato Uticensis, (a reference to Utica, where he committed suicide), was considered the epitome of moral integrity and ancient Roman virtue, on account of his discipline, willpower, and incorruptibility. A defender of the Roman Republic until its very end, he was one of Caesar's most significant adversaries. When Caesar won the civil war, Cato committed suicide, preferring death to a possible pardon by the tyrant. According to Plutarch, Cato's daughter Porcia took her own life by swallowing burning coals after the death of her husband Brutus, who had a hand in Caesar's assassination. This legend was devised to cast her as an ideal wife and worthy daughter of Cato.

During the Renaissance, small bronzes were kept in intimate *studiolos* – small rooms, dedicated to reading, studying, and writing – where collectors would go to admire and hold them. But during the Baroque period they became a status symbol and were accordingly placed among other decorative elements in stately reception rooms. The statuettes were now larger, and because contemporary interior design emphasized symmetry, artists often created pendants. It is unclear who made these two bronzes. Baron Leplat, art agent to Augustus the Strong, purchased them in Paris, which is why one believes that they are the work of a yet unidentified French follower of Duquesnoy. | CKG
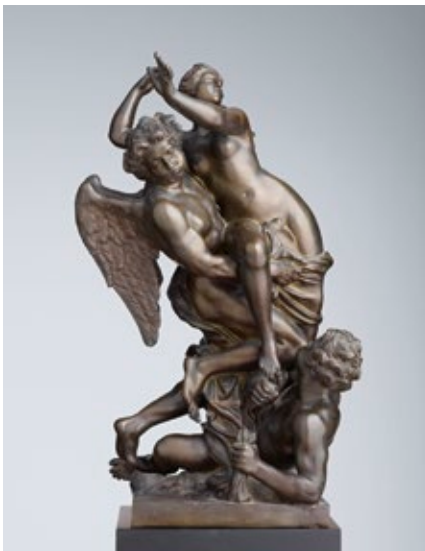
Boreas abducting Oreithyia
After Gaspard Marsy

Paris, c. 1700
Bronze; 53 × 32.5 × 31.5 cm
Purchased in Paris in 1714
Inv. no. H4 154/13

The two bronzes are small-scale reproductions after famous marble statues which decorate the park of Versailles. One group shows Boreas, the personification of the winter north wind, abducting the nymph Orithyia. Crouching at the nymph's feet is Zephir, the clement westerly wind. Once intended as part of the cosmological decoration of the Parterre d'Eau (itself the vision of court painter, Charles Le Brun), the sculpture represents the element of air. Designed by Gaspard Marsy in 1677, the sculpture was realized by his assistant Anselme Flamen after his death.

The element of fire is represented by a sculpture of the rape of Proserpina, which was completed in 1699 by François Girardon. Proserpina was abducted by Pluto, god of the underworld, (hence the association with fire). This left Proserpina's mother, Ceres, the goddess of agriculture, so heartbroken that she turned the earth barren. To put an end to this untenable situation, an agreement was reached whereby Proserpina would spend half of each year with her mother, and the remaining six months with Pluto, thus giving rise to the seasons.

Viewed as the very acme of elegance, the sculptures adorning the French king's park were often reproduced as small-scale bronzes. Displayed individually or combined as pendants, the bronzes were cast in two sizes: one of about 105 centimetres, and one of roughly half this height at 55 centimetres. The Dresden pair is among the earliest documented small casts of this popular model. | CKG

Pluto abducting Proserpina

After François Girardon

Paris, c. 1700
Bronze; 57 × 26.5 × 28.5 cm
Purchased in Paris in 1714
Inv. no. H4 153/8