PRESS RELEASE
18 October 2010

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz
Max-Planck-Institut

http://expo.khi.fi.it

Sculptures from the Boboli Gardens – An Online Exhibition of the Photo Library of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut

The Photo Library of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut regularly conducts photographic campaigns and places high-resolution digital copies at the disposal of scholars. A part of the sculptures of the Boboli Gardens in Florence, documented with the support of the Administration of the Boboli Gardens as part of a wider ranging campaign since 2008, can now be viewed in an online exhibition.

The exhibition presents 58 photos illustrating sculptures from the so-called *Stanzonaccio* of the Boboli Gardens in Florence. Built in the 17th century, the *Stanzonaccio* is a service building on the western wall of the Boboli Gardens, located in the so-called *Giardino degli Agrumi* (citrus garden) or *Giardino della Lavacapo*. After the flood in Florence in 1966, the *Stanzonaccio* was divided into small rooms and has since served the *Soprintendenza dei Beni Ambientali e Architettonici* as storerooms. It was fully restored in 2002 and since 2007 has housed sculptures brought here from the Gardens to protect them from damage from atmospheric agents.

The extensive Boboli Gardens arose in conjunction with the enlargement of the Palazzo Pitti and its conversion into a grand-ducal residence in the mid-16th century. The architect Nicolò di Raffaello, called "Il Tribolo", was in fact hired by Grand-Duke Cosimo I de' Medici to lay out the Gardens in 1549. He worked on the project till his death in 1550. He was followed by Giorgio Vasari, Bartolomeo Ammannati and Bernardo Buontalenti as architects of the garden layout. A century later, the Gardens were extensively redesigned, especially under Grand-Dukes Cosimo II de' Medici (1608-1621) and Ferdinando II de' Medici (1621-1670) and their architects Giulio and Alfonso Parigi. This remodelling has unmistakeably shaped the morphology of the Gardens down to the present day.

One of the first sculptural groups to be installed in the Boboli Gardens was the statue of the *Dwarf Morgante Riding a Tortoise*. It was also one of the earliest representations of a dwarf in the context of a garden layout. Cosimo I de' Medici commissioned the statue of his court-dwarf Morgante from the Settignano-born sculptor Valerio Cioli between 1561 and 1564. Originally it was installed under a pergola close to what is now the Piazza Bacco, but already in 1579 was reconverted to serve as a fountain and transferred to the garden exit. There it was replaced by a copy in 1986. The original, after thorough restoration, was then transferred to the *Stanzonaccio* where it still remains.

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Under Grand-Duke Peter Leopold of Habsburg Lorraine (1765-1790), the Boboli Gardens were further enlarged and remodelled. He commissioned not only the *Kaffeehaus* in the eastern part of the gardens, but also the terrace situated in front of it, at whose centre a fountain was installed in 1776. The statue of *Ganymede on an Eagle* that dominated its upper basin had been created by the sculptor Battista Lorenzi (he too from Settignano) for the Villa Poggio Imperiale, situated not far from the Palazzo Pitti, in the second half of the 16th century. It was presumably commissioned by the daughter of Cosimo I de' Medici, Isabella de' Medici, to adorn the villa she had received as a gift from her father in 1565. She also acquired Vincenzo Rossi's sculptural group *Bacchus with a Satyr* for her Villa Poggio Imperiale; it was later brought to the Boboli Gardens in 1777 and installed not far from the entrance by the Porta Romana.

With the later 18th century layout of the *Prato delle Colonne*, a large semicircular area of lawn on the southern margins of the Boboli Gardens, which derives its name from the two red-granite columns raised at its centre, a suitable venue was created for the installation of colossal antique busts. Here among others the large (over 1 metre high) marble bust of the Emperor Hadrian dating to the 2nd century AD was installed; it had previously been displayed in the Uffizi. The bust, its upper torso a later restoration, can be regarded as a pendant of the equally colossal bust of the Emperor Hadrian in the Rotunda of the Vatican Museums, which had been discovered in the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome, Hadrian's mausoleum, in the early 18th century. Replaced by a copy in the Gardens, the bust is now housed in the *Stanzonaccio*.

The online exhibition "Sculptures from the Boboli Gardens" shows a total of eight sculptures, which have now been transferred to the *Stanzonaccio* for conservational reasons and are currently inaccessible to the public. It describes their style and iconography and traces the history of their display in the context of the changing layout of the Boboli Gardens. The high-resolution digital photographs permit not only study of these statues in the context of the many-sided political and cultural conditions that determined their creation, but also examination of their surfaces in detail.

Sculptures from the Boboli Gardens – An Online Exhibition of the Photo Library of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut
Director of the Photo Library: Costanza Caraffa
Concept, text and coordination: Almut Goldhahn
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The next online exhibition will be opened on 13 February 2011 and will be devoted to newly attributed drawings in the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe of the Uffizi.

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Photographic Material

Valerio Cioli, The Dwarf Barbino, 1561-1564, marble, Florence, Boboli Gardens, Stanzonaccio;

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Valerio Cioli, The Dwarf Morgante Riding a Tortoise (detail below), 1561-1564, marble, Florence, Boboli Gardens, Stanzonaccio;
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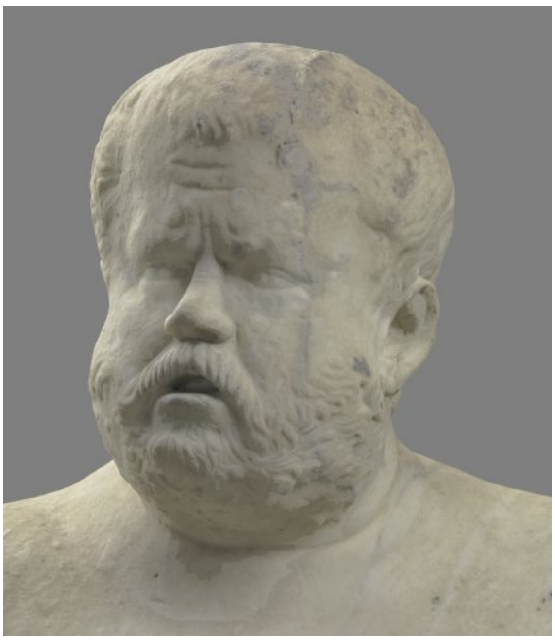

Battista Lorenzi, Ganymede with the Eagle, 1550-1600, marble, Florence, Boboli Gardens, Stanzonaccio;
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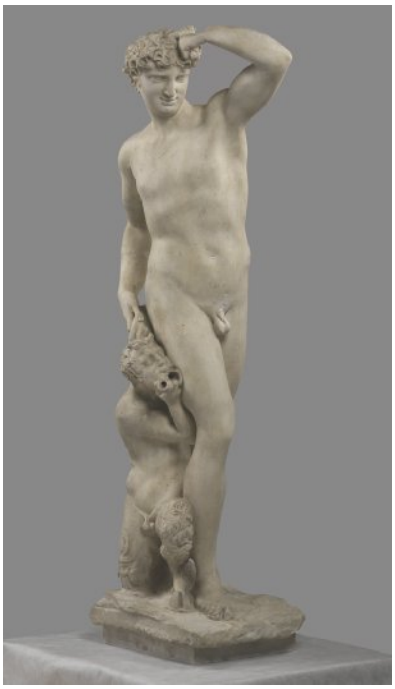

Vincenzo Rossi, Bacchus with Satyr, before 1576, marble, Florence, Boboli Gardens, Stanzonaccio;
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Bust of the Emperor Hadrian, 2nd century AD, marble, Florence, Boboli Gardens, Stanzonaccio;
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