



athlete in the fifth niche on the right side, as well as 16th- and 17th-century works.

A series of terraces rise above the amphitheatre. On the **first terrace C** are three Roman statues, standing on funerary altars, including a fine *Ceres*, and there are hedged walks with pretty vistas on either side. On the upper level is a large **fishpond D** with a very fine statue of Neptune by Stoldo Lorenzi (1571), an allegory of Cosimo I as Prince of the Seas. Lorenzi was a very skilled Mannerist sculptor in bronze. This 16th-century masterpiece shows the influence of both Giambologna and Tribolo. The pond was surrounded by terraces in the 17th century and planted with plane trees in the Napoleonic era. The Forte di Belvedere can be seen above on the hilltop.

A short detour to the left leads through romantic winding alleys overshadowed by ilexes and a cypress grove, to the Rococo **Kaffeehaus E** (closed at the time of writing), built in 1775 by Zanobi del Rosso, as a pavilion for Peter Leopold to while away lazy afternoons. Del Rosso also designed the Orangery and Casino del Cavaliere in the gardens for the Lorraine grand duke, and in the same period was at work on the Niobe room in the Uffizi. In the garden in front of the Kaffeehaus, which has a good view of Florence and Fiesole, there is a cast of the **Ganymede Fountain F**. The 16th-century original is attributed to Stoldo Lorenzi. Behind the Kaffeehaus there is a gate which sometimes provides a secondary exit from the gardens if you wish to visit the Forte di Belvedere (see p. 281) when exhibitions are in progress.

From the Neptune Fountain steps continue to the top of the garden and a colossal **statue of Abundance G** in a niche of bay and ilex. Begun by Giambologna as a portrait of Joanna of Austria, first wife of Francesco I, it was originally intended for a column in Piazza San Marco. Instead it was finished—and transformed into an allegory of Abundance—by Pietro Tacca, pupil of Giambologna and successor to him as sculptor to the Medici grand dukes. It was placed here in 1636 by order of Joanna's daughter, Maria de' Medici. Pietro's talented son Ferdinando took over from him as court sculptor to Ferdinando II and designed scenery for spectacles held by his brother Cardinal Gian Carlo dei Medici and he also built a permanent theatre, called the Pergola, which opened in Florence in 1658 (and its successor survives to this day). The view from here embraces the whole city, beyond the Pitti and the tower of Santo Spirito.

A short double flight of steps to the right, designed in 1792, continues to the **Giardino del Cavaliere H**, a delightful secluded walled garden with box hedges laid out at the time of Cosimo III on a bastion constructed by Michelangelo in 1529. The fountain has a puito attributed to Pierino da Vinci or Stoldo Lorenzi (originally there were three bronze monkeys attributed to Pietro Tacca, though these have not been returned since their restoration). The view from the terrace is one of the most charming in Florence, embracing the rural outskirts of the city. The fields and olive groves are dotted with beautiful old villas. To the right is the residential area of Bobolino beside a splendid stretch of the city walls.

Museo delle Porcellane

Open as the gardens; closed on second and fourth Sun and first, third and fifth Mon of the month; T: 055 238 8605. Combined ticket with the Museo degli Argenti and Giardino di Boboli.

FRA' ANGELICO

Guido di Piero, born in the Mugello just north of Florence, became a Dominican friar around 1418 at the convent of San Domenico below Fiesole (where he took the name of Giovanni) and then moved to this convent. Because of the deeply religious sentiments in his paintings he came to be known as *angelico* and *beato* (blessed) since he seemed to be divinely inspired. At the time he was at work on the frescoes in the chapter house and monastic cells at San Marco he was one of the most famous artists of his day. He painted numerous altarpieces for churches in and around Florence and also worked for Pope Eugenius IV in Rome and in the cathedral of Orvieto. His works have a universal appeal since they combine a deeply religious sentiment with a sense of serenity and joy, and seem to encourage meditation. At the same time they have a highly intellectual content, and carefully worked out perspective and numerous complicated compositional elements. Angelico's use of colour is also remarkable and he was a master of the technique of fresco as well as that of panel painting and illumination.

Left Corridor

Fra' Angelico's frescoes in the cells are as follows (see plan on p. 156):

- (1) *Noli me tangere*.
- (3) *Annunciation* (with a particularly beautiful angel).
- (5) *Nativity* (perhaps with the help of an assistant).
- (6) *Transfiguration*.
- (7) *Mocking of Christ in the Presence of the Madonna and St Dominic* (perhaps with the help of an assistant).
- (8) *The Marys at the Sepulchre*.
- (9) *Coronation of the Virgin*.
- (10) *Presentation in the Temple*.
- (11) *Madonna and Child with Saints* (probably by an assistant).
- (22) A glass panel in the floor shows the remains of the previous convent here with two late 14th-century fresco fragments of a monk, a *Pietà* and geometric decoration.
- (23–29) Frescoed by assistants of Fra' Angelico, while on the wall outside in the corridor is a *Madonna Enthroned with Saints*, attributed to the master himself.



Fra' Angelico: *Noli me Tangere*.

