



The **National Bargello Museum** is housed in a building that dates back to 1255. The original building was the former palace of the Captain of the People and a short time later, in 1261, it became seat of the Podestà, the highest magistrate of the City Council.

In 1574, it was entrusted to the Captain of Justice or Bargello (from which the present name of the museum derives) and was then transformed into a jail.

The Bargello, meaning head of police, functioned as a prison up and throughout the 18th century and was the setting for many important civic events such as the Council of the Hundred in which Dante took part. The palace went through sieges, fires and executions, the most famous perhaps being that of Baroncelli, involved in the Pazzi conspiracy against the Medici in which Leonardo also participated. In 1786 the Grand duke Peter Leopoldi abolished the death penalty but it remained a police headquarters the same up until 1865 when it became a museum.

The museum displays the largest collection of Gothic and Renaissance sculptures in Italy.

From the medieval courtyard you enter into the first room dedicated to the works of the Florence maestros such as the Tondo Pitti or the Bacco by Michelangelo or the Mercurio and la Firenze vittoriosa su Pisa by Gianbologna. Proceeding to the first floor from the stairway of the courtyard, the first room is the Room of the Ivories (la Sala degli Avori), which contains the ivory pieces of the Carrand collection: 265 pieces dated between the 5th and the 17th centuries, among which there are sacred and pagan themed diptychs, panels, caskets and wings.

In the second room, the real Treasure of the Bargello (Forziere of the Bargello): a collection of precious treated works, which belong to the Carrand collection. On the right side find the entrance to the Chapel of Maria Maddalena and the Sacristy, a room which was reserved to the condemned waiting for their execution. The frescos of the school of Giotto are of great value and enrich the room. From the Treasure (Forziere) of the Carrand collection you enter the Islamic Room (la Sala Islamica) which contains a collection of oriental carpets and objects.

Also on this floor is the Room of the Council and the Room of the Majolica's (la Sala delle Maioliche) that contains exemplars of the workshops of Urbino, Siena, Orvieto and Firenze.

On the second floor, the first room is dedicated to the family of Giovanni della Robbia: it contains terracotta sculptures and a collection of medals donated by the Dukes of Florence. Another room on this floor, the Room of the Arms (la Sala delle Armi), contains a rich collection of weapons for attacks and defences of Medieval origin. Other rooms on this floor are the Room of the Small Bronzes (la Sala dei Bronzetti), the Room of Verrocchio (la Sala del Verrocchio) and, at last, but not least precious the very famous Room of Medals of Florence (Medagliere di Firenze), displaying a rich collection of medals, which in the Renaissance age were commemorative medals of buildings, events and personalities of the Renaissance years.

The Bargello Museum displays a history of the city and of the age, well narrated and expressed through the pieces it contains, which draws the visitor towards an overview of the Renaissance period which made Florence one of the most appreciated world capitals of art.