



Berlin, 4 July 2025

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Museumsinsel Berlin, James-Simon-Galerie**

Bodestr., 10178 Berlin

Opening hours: Tue – Sun 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

### **The Bronzes of San Casciano dei Bagni: A Sensation from the Mud** 5 July – 12 October 2025

A Special Exhibition of Antikensammlung – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

**Press conference:** Friday, July 4, 11 a.m.

**Opening:** Friday, July 4, 2025, 5 p.m.

**Nothing less than the archaeological find of the century will be a guest on Museumsinsel Berlin in 2025: a total of 15 exceptionally well-preserved bronze statues and heads together with hundreds of bronze ex votos unearthed from 2022 to 2024 during excavations at the ancient thermal sanctuary of San Casciano dei Bagni in Tuscany. In the Berlin exhibition, they are now being shown for the first time outside Italy.**

The find was a stroke of archaeological luck and persistence, as ancient bronze figurines - especially in such large quantities - are extremely rare. The circumstances were also unique: the archaeologists literally kept pulling new bronzes out of the mud! In addition to the larger statues, dozens of small bronzes and hundreds of coins were also found, which will also be on display in Berlin. The main lender is the Italian Ministry of Culture through the *Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per le Province di Siena, Grosseto e Arezzo*.

The objects, dating from the 3rd century BC to the 4th century AD, were found in a pool of water next to a still-active thermal spring. Only a construction fence separates the archaeological excavation site from the generally accessible modern thermal pools, where people from the village and the surrounding area can bathe at any time of day. The ancient pool turned out to be the center of an Etruscan-Roman sanctuary. Sick individuals sought healing here, and anxious parents sought divine protection for their children. The statues, as well as many smaller objects, were offerings made by visitors to the powers worshipped here.

The site offers a unique opportunity to examine how a sanctuary functioned during the transition from Etruscan to Roman culture: Who were the deities? How did the local population come into contact with them? Which sections of the population visited the sanctuary? What were their concerns? How long was the Etruscan language still in use in Italy? Etruscan and Roman inscriptions on the votive offerings provide information about the donors, the deities and the occasion. How did these consecration practices compare to those in other sanctuaries?

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NEUES MUSEUM, PERGAMONMUSEUM,  
PERGAMONMUSEUM. DAS PANORAMA

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Ambasciata d'Italia  
Berlino

#### **MAIN LENDER:**



SOPRINTENDENZA  
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It can also be shown that many of the concerns are universally human and that the practice of consecration has a long tradition. Even today, similar objects are still donated in Catholic and Orthodox churches, albeit on a smaller scale and made of less valuable materials. Our own outstanding objects from the *Antikensammlung* and modern consecrations from the *Museum Europäischer Kulturen* in Dahlem complement the Italian loans.

After three exhibitions in Italy, the bronzes will be displayed in Berlin for the first time outside Italy. For the first time, spectacular new finds from the autumn 2024 excavation will also be on display, including a unique half-naked male bronze torso, a bronze replica of a windpipe, a statue of a child with a moving ball in his hand and a bronze snake almost one meter long.

The exhibition in the James-Simon-Galerie will be accompanied by an extensive outreach program with workshops and guided tours, as well as a handy accompanying publication in German and English (Verlag Schnell & Steiner).

The exhibition is made possible by generous funding from the Kuratorium Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Further support is provided by the Museum & Location Veranstaltungsgesellschaft mbH and the association "Freunde der Antike auf der Museumsinsel Berlin e.V.".

Media cooperation for the exhibition:  
Radio3, Tagesspiegel

Press images:

<https://www.smb.museum/en/press/press-images/press-images-download/james-simon-galerie-the-san-casciano-dei-bagni-bronzes-a-sensation-from-the-mud-57-12102025/>

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