



Teatro di Corte in the Palazzo Reale, Naples



Anfiteatro di Boboli beside the Pitti Palace, Florence



light can be admitted through the floor length windows opening along the OP wall onto the Piazza del Plebiscito.

The Pit would hold a chamber orchestra and the stage is a good wingless square. Too formal perhaps for operas about humans, but ideal for small opera seria and concerts.

In a day which had included the frustration of failure to penetrate the Court Theatre in the Royal Palace at Caserta and exclusion from San Carlo because of rehearsals, it was particularly rewarding to find such a delightful theatre open for viewing as just one of the rooms in the Palazzo Reale.

There is also daily open access to the seventeenth century **Anfiteatro di Boboli** in Florence. A large grazed arena for tournaments and equestrian spectacles leads from the courtyard of the Pitti Palace into the Boboli Gardens. The 'playing area' is contained by a horseshoe of elegant stone seating tiers. Leading out of this horseshoe and facing the Pitti courtyard is a long wide rising statue-lined path which provided a dramatic entry for the mounted performers.

Sitting in this amphitheatre, one can get close to the spirit of the prints that are now our only contact with these distant entertainments. However the theatric tourist develops something of a jigsaw imagination: remembering, for example, while sitting in the Boboli the choreography of Vienna's Spanish Riding School. One's imagination can also be fed in the courtyard itself. In 1589 it was roofed with an awning of red silk for a water pageant in celebration of the wedding festivities of Catherine of Lorraine and the Grand Duke of Tuscany — architectural detail in a contemporary engraving corresponds closely to what one finds today.