



**1** Pre-war photograph of the »St John the Baptist« by Donatello (1420s/1430s, bronze, originally 84 cm high). The statue belonged to the Berlin Museums' sculpture collection and was considered lost after 1945. In 2015, it became public that the sculpture had been damaged in the war but kept safely in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow for the last decades. (The vertical line over the face of the figure is an old damage to the negative glass plate)

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## Donatello Forgotten and Rediscovered On Five Works of Art Formerly in the Berlin Museums<sup>1</sup>

### A Research Project

I visited the Bode-Museum for the first time on 20 August 2011. If I can be so precise about the date, it is because in this period I was writing a blog, which consisted of posting an image every morning and a comment every evening. On that date, the image I chose was the face of the Evangelist bending over the dead body of the Virgin Mary in the dramatic group of the »Dormitio Virginis« by Arnolfo di Cambio that was originally part of the façade of the Cathedral of Florence. (*fig. 2*) The group had burnt in Berlin in May 1945 during the tragic fires in the control tower of the Friedrichshain bunker but, unlike many of the works of art that were stored there, it had the luck to survive – which gave it to my eyes a special aura. My comment was a meditation over the aesthetic power of ruins; or how the fragmentary, devastated state of a work of art enhances its attraction, for better or for worse; and how beauty can sometimes survive intact in those damaged works.<sup>2</sup>

I had come to Berlin for a specific purpose: the opening of the blockbuster exhibition on Renaissance portraits organized by the Staatliche Museen and to which I had contributed, on behalf of the partner institution, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. During the opening, I met Julien Chapuis, Deputy Director of the Bode-Museum, with whom I visited the museum again a few days later, including the storerooms. I remember especially many fragmented

ivory reliefs almost reduced to ashes which curators had patiently reassembled. Seeing my interest in the subject, Chapuis opened a binder in his office, containing a set of photographs of the ancient, magnificent rooms of the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum (the pre-war name of the Bode-Museum), with the works that had disappeared in 1945 marked with a red cross. Almost half of the museum seemed to be gone. The impression I had in front of those photographs was extraordinary: it is as if the disappeared works were begging for attention.

Two years later, in 2013, I began to work on a catalogue of the sculptures by Donatello in the collections of the Berlin Museums. The impressive number of creations by the Florentine artist, or directly deriving from him, that are to be found in Berlin are mainly due to the efforts of one man: Wilhelm Bode (called von Bode after 1914). For Bode, Donatello combined the highest values of the Italian Renaissance, a period with which newborn Germany strongly identified itself: the return to classical antiquity was praised in the artist, as was the creative, almost irrepressible force sensible in every of his works. While I was still defining my field, Julien Chapuis showed me another material that was to become, like the photo album, as useful for my research as it was powerful for my imagination: inventory books of the Berlin sculpture collection dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, preserved in an aged and imposing safe in the Bode-Museum. At the beginning of the first volume, a double page is dedicated to Donatello, listing the inventory numbers (still in use today) 50 to 56. (fig. 3) The most famous of these works, bearing the number 51, is a marble relief of the »Virgin and Child« that has been known since its acquisition in 1886 as the »Pazzi Madonna«. The last column of the chart contains entries from the year 1964, with two different indications: Nos. 51, 52, 53 and 56 are said to be in »West Berlin«; Nos. 54 and 55 are »vorhanden« (in place) – that is to say in East Berlin, where this inventory book was being kept in 1964. The first item of the list, a »St John the Baptist« attributed to Donatello and bearing the No. 50, had nothing inscribed on that date: it was not to be found in East Berlin nor in the West. It was gone.

Of the works once in Berlin that were missing since the war, I knew for a long time of some famous paintings, from Signorelli to Caravaggio, not so much of the sculptures. I began studying a catalogue of the lost works from the Berlin sculpture collection, published in 2006, where the works are ordered by school and technique, following the catalogues published before the war.<sup>3</sup> At the end of the volume, a section is dedicated to works that had survived the war in a fragmentary state; the remaining parts are described, but the photographs only show the pre-WWII state.<sup>4</sup> Among the 1622 numbers of this imposing publication, Donatello is mentioned as a (more or less direct) author for no less than



2 A detail of Arnolfo di Cambio's »Dormitio Virginis« (ca. 1300, marble, 60 x 170 cm). The group was severely damaged in May 1945. After the war, the sculpture had been secretly transferred to the Soviet Union, and was returned to East Germany in 1958; it is now at the Bode-Museum in Berlin.

24 objects – including the »St John the Baptist« listed as No. 50 in the inventory book.<sup>5</sup>

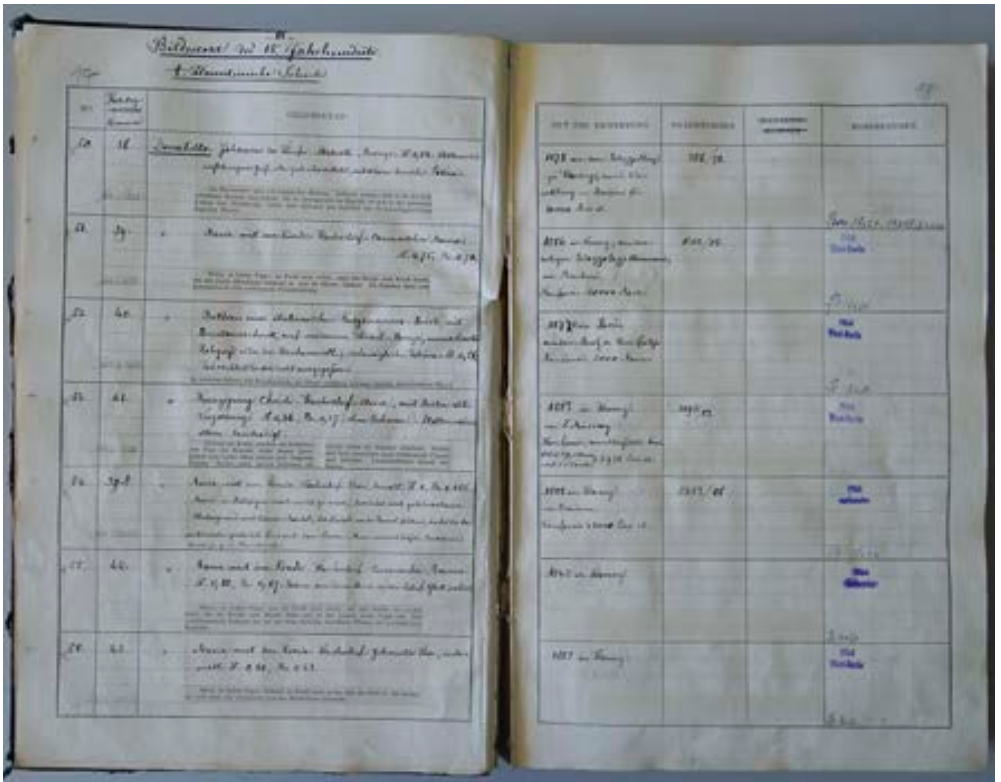
For the needs of my Donatello catalogue, it seemed only natural to me to include the »lost« works from Berlin once attributed to Donatello or his school – even regardless of their current attribution. Studying those objects, I noticed how they had fallen into partial or total obscurity compared to the remaining works I was naturally studying at the same time. Not only their physical absence, but also the lack of continuity in the history of the Berlin Museums had impeded scholars from being certain about whether they had been destroyed or not – an uncertainty that was not in favor of their inclusion in the literature. This lack of knowledge has been a problem even within the Berlin Museums, as two of the 24 »lost« Donatellos should not be considered as such.<sup>6</sup> Of the remaining 22, I will focus here on the art historical destiny of five of them.

### Five Works Related to Donatello

The first object is a small plaquette acquired by Bode in 1880 (Inv. 1034, *fig. 4*), which is familiar to scholars as it exists in at least sixteen versions – the largest being a terracotta relief in the Berlin Museums already mentioned under No. 56 in the double page of the inventory book. The composition of this type is somewhat generic, to the point that it is difficult to find an author or a date for it: if the shell niche and the dynamic attitude of the child surely echo Donatello's inventions, a prototype by the artist has not been identified in any of the known versions, which contain some anatomical weaknesses.<sup>7</sup> Recently, the work formerly in Berlin has only been elusively mentioned in the art historical literature, in catalogue entries dealing with other versions.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast to the plaquette, a bronze »Spiritello« that was probably holding a double flute or a bow, and that was long identified with a »Cupid«, is a unique piece. (Inv. 2764, *fig. 5*) It has an authoritative provenance: during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the work was part of the collection of Giovan Pietro Bellori, a Roman antiquarian better known for his writings on art. Bellori considered the bronze an antique work, and it was while carrying such an aura that it was bought in 1698 by Elector Frederick I of Brandenburg. Seized by the French troops in 1806 and exhibited in the Musée Napoléon in Paris until 1815, it was given back to Berlin and, after 1830, entered the newly created Royal Museum (the current Altes Museum).<sup>9</sup> It was only at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that Wilhelm Bode remarked that it was a work from the Renaissance, connecting it first to Donatello, then to the artist's workshop.<sup>10</sup> The considerable authority of Bode, based on fundamental discoveries (such as, to stick to this typology, the identification and acquisition of Donatello's »Putto with a Tambourine« that came from the Siena Baptistery Font), had the effect that his opinions were often embraced without question by notable art historians. After Bode's death in 1929, however, hardly anyone would go on repeating the attribution to Donatello of the »Cupid«, as it was very difficult to demonstrate by comparison with the certain works by the artist. The physical disappearance of the work in 1945 meant a curious »after-life« for the object: while it is still mentioned in the literature dealing with the fortunes of the Antique during modern times, it is completely absent from the art historical debate on Renaissance sculpture – a very sad fate for a work of such important provenance and notable quality, and of which no other version exists.<sup>11</sup>

Both examples may be seen as incidentally related to Donatello: the first one too generic, the second one too eccentric. More likely to be really created by Donatello appears a work that used to be mentioned in every book on the sculp-



3 Historical inventory book of the Berlin sculpture collection (early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Berlin, Bode-Museum). On this double page dedicated to Donatello, one reads on the column at the far right precious indications about the fate of the sculptures during the Cold War.

tor before the war (and also on top of the double page of the inventory book under No. 50): a bronze »St John the Baptist« bought in 1878 from the Strozzi family in Florence. (fig. 1) Wilhelm Bode immediately attributed the work to Donatello, not only on stylistic grounds, but also on the basis of two documents dated 1424, which referred to a commission to »Donato de Florentia« of a statue of the same subject and technique for the Orvieto Cathedral. For half a century, the thesis remained almost unchallenged, although Bode himself introduced some nuances, attributing at the end of his life the casting of the sculpture, which he judged uneven, to Donatello's collaborator from the mid-1420s to the mid-1430s, Michelozzo.<sup>12</sup> After the death of Bode, scholars doubted the Orvieto origin, but not so much the attribution. In 1957, however, when H. W. Janson published an in-depth monograph on Donatello that has remained, to this day,

the standard book on the artist, the »Baptist« was expelled from the autograph corpus of Donatello, and briefly described as by an anonymous artist around 1470.<sup>13</sup> This dating, significantly detaching the work from Donatello (who died in 1466), was followed by one of the most authoritative scholars in the Anglo-Saxon world, John Pope-Hennessy. Although Pope-Hennessy categorized, in his memoirs, Janson's monograph as »a blind, heavyweight, argumentative catalogue«, he relied on Janson's argumentation to propose in 1980 as an author for the »Baptist« the most famous bronze sculptor in Florence during the 1470s: Antonio del Pollaiuolo.<sup>14</sup> A few years later, Elizabeth Cropper and Kent Lydecker found documents certifying that the »Baptist« was included in the decoration of one of the Florentine palaces of the Martelli family in 1488–89, and named as a Donatello in 1493.<sup>15</sup> Combined, these two pieces of evidence should have been sufficient to reject the hypothesis of Pope-Hennessy: for who, in late 15<sup>th</sup> century Florence, would have attributed to a famous sculptor, who died almost thirty years before, a work by an equally renowned living artist? In her monograph on the Pollaiuolo brothers published in 2005, Alison Wright discussed both hypotheses without taking sides; the »Baptist« was considered as a possible work by Antonio del Pollaiuolo, but also described as a tribute to Donatello.<sup>16</sup> These references show that the »Baptist«, even though physically disappeared, has never fallen into complete oblivion. However, the debate over its attribution made the sculpture disappear from the average Donatello literature, to be confined to some rare footnotes; and in the scholarship of Pollaiuolo, no echo of Pope-Hennessy's proposition was to be read in the catalogue of the recent, exemplary exhibition on the Pollaiuolo brothers organized by the Museo Poldi Pezzoli in Milan in 2014–15 – simply because the curators did not believe it.<sup>17</sup>

Indifference following a connoisseurship issue has also been the fate of another »lost« work that had been considered a Donatello before the war. It is a marble relief representing the Flagellation, bought from the Peruzzi family in Florence in 1892. (Inv. 1979, *fig. 7*) As with the »Baptist«, the attribution to Donatello lasted beyond Bode's lifetime, but ended with Janson's monograph. As early as 1902, Bode had compared the »Flagellation« to a small marble relief in a private collection representing the »Virgin and Child«, an insightful assessment that proved problematic for the fortunes of the piece.<sup>18</sup> In 1948, three years after the disappearance of the »Flagellation«, *The Art Bulletin* would welcome a heated debate between Walter Leo Hildburgh, the owner of the small »Virgin and Child« relief (hence named the »Hildburgh Madonna«), and Janson himself: while Hildburgh attributed his relief to Donatello, Janson considered the work a nineteenth-century forgery.<sup>19</sup> What might have remained a controversy between specialists became a settled truth in 1957 with the publication of Jan-



4 »Virgin and Child in a Niche« (ca. 1430, bronze, 9,8 x 7,8 cm), traditionally ascribed to Donatello. It was part of the Berlin sculpture collection and was considered until 2015 to have been lost since World War II. Many other versions are known, including one in the Bode-Museum, Berlin, and one in the Pushkin Museum, Moscow. On the left: Pre-war photograph; on the right: the »Virgin and Child« photographed in the Pushkin Museum, Moscow, in June 2015. The patina is due to a restoration made in the Soviet Union during the 1950s.

son's monograph: the »Hildburgh Madonna« (which had entered the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 1956) was no longer said to be a forgery, but attributed to a minor master of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and certainly not Donatello. To this same sculptor, Janson attributed part of four reliefs representing the stones of St Geminiano outside the Cathedral in Modena, and the »Flagellation« once in the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, hence the name Janson gave him: the »Master of the Berlin Flagellation«.<sup>20</sup> No other art historian should use that name again. The reliefs outside the Cathedral of Modena are signed by Agostino di Duccio, while the »Hildburgh Madonna« was again being increasingly considered a Donatello, with the possible help of his workshop. Unlike the London relief, the »Flagellation« formerly in Berlin was no longer present to defend its merits; it would be excessive to say that it has disappeared from the literature, but the physical absence of the work has always prevented the majority of art historians from taking a position about its attribution.<sup>21</sup>





Even less attention was paid in art historical literature to a smaller relief representing the Flagellation, this time in bronze, that came – as for the ›Cupid‹ – from the *Kunstkammer* of the Hohenzollern family and that Bode ascribed to Donatello. (Inv. 1027, *fig. 9*)<sup>22</sup> Two other versions of the composition are known, one in the *Musée du Louvre*, the other in the *Musée des Beaux-Arts* in Strasbourg. Like the first plaquette discussed above, (*fig. 4*) the work is only mentioned in the literature when its counterparts are studied; and, of course, in the catalogue of the ›lost‹ works of the Berlin sculpture collection published in 2006.<sup>23</sup>

### The Rediscovery

In February 2014, I spoke of the ›Baptist‹ in a festival of art history (›View‹) organized by the French Institute in London, as I did the following month at the Bode-Museum, on the invitation of the *Kunstgeschichtliche Gesellschaft*. The fate of the sculpture was an occasion to insist on the persisting power of lost works that evoked for me the writings of Aby Warburg and Marcel Proust (the title of the lecture was deliberately very Proustian: ›In Search of Lost Donatellos, from Florence to Berlin‹). An important aspect of the lectures was to share the emotion I had felt in front of artifacts that had ›seen‹ the ›Baptist‹ by Donatello: the photographic negative plates that are still preserved in the Bode-Museum, and the original plaster cast that is at the Berlin Museums replica workshop, the *Gipsformerei*.

All the casts of the ›lost‹ works in the *Gipsformerei*, not only those by Donatello, are deeply impressive. Visiting the *Gipsformerei*, as I first did with Julien Chapuis in November 2013, one has almost the impression to have gone to the limbo, and to be in the presence of ghosts. On 8 May 2014, I told Chapuis that the Bode-Museum should do, nay, must do something for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war that was exactly a year later. In March 2015, that ›something‹ turned into the exhibition ›The Lost Museum. The Berlin Sculpture and Paintings Collections 70 Years after World War II‹.<sup>24</sup> In the exhibition, I had the opportunity to curate the cabinet dedicated to Donatello, where two painted plaster casts of the ›Baptist‹ and of the marble ›Flagellation‹, made for

**5** Pre-war photograph of a ›Spiritello‹ (bronze, originally 26,5 cm high), long believed to be an antique work representing ›Cupid‹. It was part of the collection of the Berlin Antiquarium, until Bode remarked that it was a Renaissance work and it thus was transferred to the sculpture collection.

the occasion by the Gipsformerei, symbolized the works by the artist that had disappeared in 1945. My first thought of showing other »lost« works was dropped for clarity purpose; however, a cast of the »Cupid« was independently displayed in a vitrine in the section dedicated to the Gipsformerei.<sup>25</sup> (fig. 11)

At the time when the exhibition opened, my aforementioned lecture on the »lost Donatellos« was published<sup>26</sup>. The last paragraph began with the sentence: »The search for the lost Donatellos is not over yet; the »St John the Baptist« is possibly preserved to this day in Russia, stored for nearly 70 years in secret caves of some museum«. <sup>27</sup> This sentence was not so much fantasy than logical deduction: in 1997, Konstantin Akinscha, Grigori Koslow and Clemens Toussaint had first made known official Soviet archive documents dating from 1946 and 1955, and an oral testimony from 1991, stating the presence in Moscow of 43 works from the Berlin sculpture collection thought to have been destroyed in 1945.<sup>28</sup> This information was elusively discussed in the catalogue of the »lost« works of the sculpture collection: while the preface, written by the General Director of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Peter-Klaus Schuster, stated that some works, or fragments of works, »are supposed to be located in Moscow« (the lower part of the bust of the »Princess of Naples« by Francesco Laurana, Inv. 260, was explicitly cited), the rest of the catalogue was far more discreet.<sup>29</sup> Only the careful reader of the introduction would discover the long footnote in which the findings by Akinscha, Koslow and Toussaint were cited, merely through a list of inventory numbers – as if one wanted to cite *and* to hide this information at the same time.<sup>30</sup> This hesitation may be explained by the political evolution between 1995, when the first catalogue of »lost« works (dedicated to the painting collection) came out, and 2006, when the volume on the sculpture collection was published: in the preface of the former book, the objective of the publication is clearly stated as obtaining the »restitution« of the listed works that had survived, especially those that were on territory of the Russian Federation; a decade later, the ambition had become only to have access to the storage where those works were preserved, which had already been the case for some archaeological objects.<sup>31</sup> Among the works listed in the article by Akinscha, Koslow and Toussaint, three were related to the project of the catalogue of the Berlin Donatellos: the »St John the Baptist«, the »Flagellation« and the »Cupid«. On that basis, Julien

**6** In the fire of the control tower of the Flakbunker Friedrichshain, the bronze »Spirittello« had lost an arm and a wing (photographed in the Pushkin Museum in June 2015). Its current state makes any attribution very difficult; however, the link with Donatello must be abandoned.





7 Pre-war photograph of a »Flagellation of Christ« relief (ca. 1425–1430, marble, 46,5 x 57,5 cm), which was considered a masterpiece by Donatello until 1948, when it became the subject of a heated debate between two art historians. However, as the work was lost since 1945, most scholars did not take a position on the matter of its attribution.

Chapuis asked Marina Loshak, the recently appointed Director of the Pushkin State Museum of Art in Moscow, if the mentioned works were preserved in storage in her museum. Ms. Loshak invited us to come to Moscow, together with archaeologists working on the Eberswalde Hoard (which was formerly in Berlin and the Pushkin Museum had publicly declared to be holding in 2007). The meeting was scheduled for three months after the opening of the exhibition on the »Lost Museum«.

When we entered the storerooms of the Pushkin Museum on 17 June 2015 it felt a historic and at the same time very banal moment. It was like a scholarly visit to a museum's storage facility anywhere in the world, except that, on two tables, there were five works of art that had not been seen in public for 70 years:



**8** Even broken into pieces and damaged by fire, the marble »Flagellation« shows the quality of Donatello, helped by his workshop as was common practice for the master. Photographed in the Pushkin Museum, Moscow, in June 2015.

the bronze »Baptist«, the marble and bronze »Flagellations«, the »Cupid«, and a »Madonna« plaquette – the very five works I have (not by chance) chosen to discuss in this paper. Alongside was also a small plaquette with a »Madonna Lactans« that older catalogues attributed to the style of Jacopo Sansovino. (Inv. 1032, *fig. 14*)

One could see at first sight that while the works had survived, their condition was far from good (which was consistent with their presence in the Friedrichshain bunker in May 1945, as well as with the documents concerning their transfer in 1946): the »Cupid« had lost an arm and a wing, and almost looked like an ancient bronze that had spent millennia under water. (*fig. 6*) The plaquette of the »Flagellation« had even been distorted by the heat of the fire,



9 Pre-war photograph of a »Flagellation of Christ« (ca. 1450 – 1470, bronze, 15 x 19,6 cm) once ascribed to Donatello and preserved in the Berlin sculpture collection. Only two other versions are known, one in Paris (Louvre), the other in Strasbourg, bought by Bode when he was supervising the acquisitions of the city museum.

and a portion was detached; like the other plaquette, it had been restored with electroplating, which had ruined its patina.<sup>32</sup> (*fig. 10*) The »Baptist« had lost his arms and feet, its surface was worn, but the work remains by comparison in a better state than the other objects in bronze. (*fig. 13*) The marble »Flagellation« has become an incomplete puzzle, and a mysterious one too, with burnt fragments alongside others seemingly intact. (*fig. 8*) Still, the »lost« Donatellos were there, and it was possible to study them and reassess their attribution.

Up to that point, I had already been convinced that the »Baptist« was effectively a work by Donatello: the 15<sup>th</sup>-century archives documenting its presence in a Florentine Martelli palace as a Donatello; the study of the photographs and of the plaster cast made by the Gipsformerei; and the decisive opinion in favor of Donatello published by the best specialist of the artist, Francesco Caglioti – everything went in that direction.<sup>33</sup> The study of the actual work in Moscow



**10** Now the bronze »Flagellation« has resurfaced again, one might question the attribution to Donatello even if the work is of high interest. Photographed in the Pushkin Museum, Moscow, in June 2015

confirmed this opinion. More problematic was the dating, as is often the case with Donatello, an artist who never ceased to re-invent himself. Comparison with the »Prophets« of the Florentine Campanile carved during the 1420s and 1430s points towards this period, leaving the possibility that the 1424 commission from the Orvieto Cathedral was effectively the point of departure of the work, which never reached its destination. The study of the actual work was also very important from a technical point of view: the bronze was cast in several pieces, and then assembled in two vertical halves. (*fig. 12*) The joints are also to be found in other bronze works of Donatello, as (with even better skill) in the »Crucifix« made for the church of the Santo in Padua between 1443 and 1449, implicitly confirming an earlier dating for the »Baptist«.

Seeing the marble »Flagellation« was a decisive step for me to understand the importance of the work. The existing cast and pictures had been difficult to





11 The Gipsformerei of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin still owns a lot of historical molds and can produce plaster casts of works, which were lost in 1945. Here a view of the exhibition »The Lost Museum« held at the Bode-Museum in 2015, with a cast of the so-called »Cupid« once attributed to Donatello.

read, as some parts seemed to be of very high quality, while other more generic. And this is indeed the case: of staggering virtuosity is the executioner hanging Christ at the column, whose bust is a perfect study of foreshortened anatomy and whose left arm is only a line in the marble, as in Donatello's finest shallow reliefs. The comparison first made by Bode with the »Hildburgh Madonna« now in the Victoria and Albert Museum always seems perfectly convenient. As with the latter work, an attribution to Donatello and workshop during the second half of the 1420s seems the most convincing.<sup>34</sup> The relationship of the »Flagellation« to a relief at the base of the »Tomb of Saint Anastasius« in the Cathedral of Split, a work attributed to Giorgio da Sebenico, and to a drawing with the »Flagellation« in the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence attributed to Giovanni Bellini has still to be explained, as do the links with the other »Flagellation« formerly in Berlin (*figs. 9 and 10*) which is more distant from Donatello himself. As always, new findings open new questions. Now that these works have resurfaced, convincing propositions will certainly come – beginning with an attribution for the bronze »Cupid«.<sup>35</sup>

## Making Public

Studying these »lost« Donatellos in Moscow was a decisive, but too private moment. With the colleagues of the Pushkin Museum, we agreed that this rediscovery had to be made public soon. A perfect occasion for this was a long-planned symposium due to take place on 17 and 18 September 2015 at the Bode-Museum, focusing on my 2-year research on the works by Donatello in Berlin as well as on the exhibition on the »Lost Museum«. In response to the invitation of Julien Chapuis, Marina Loshak suggested that the lecture presenting the works, their whereabouts and their condition to the public should be made by Vasily Rastorguev, who had been in charge of those works for only a few months but had shown us in Moscow how deeply he had already studied them. For the first time since World War II, the five »Donatellos« publicly came out of the shadows. One could feel the emotion of the audience, listening to the talk that Rastorguev took the effort to deliver in German. For one decisive point, neither mentioned in the lecture nor asked by the audience, I had to intervene and ask Rastorguev if the rediscovered works were going to stay in Moscow. I already knew the answer, but not the rest of the audience; and the answer was yes.

The day of Vasily Rastorguev's lecture, current photographs of the »Baptist« and the »Flagellation« were published on the website of the Pushkin Museum; they were also included in the catalogue of the exhibition on the »Lost Museum«, which had a post-scriptum written by Marina Loshak and was published in November 2015.<sup>36</sup> Scholarly publication will soon follow, both in my online Donatello catalogue and in a scientific journal, together with the proceedings of the symposium on »Donatello and the Lost Museum«<sup>37</sup>.

The search for new artifacts from the Berlin sculpture collection has to continue; it has already begun with the presence in Moscow, alongside the Donatello, of the »Sansovino« plaque. (*fig. 14*) It should proceed, on the basis of the lists gathered by Konstantin Akinscha and Grigori Koslow, remembering at the same time that these lists are not necessarily complete and that they were made by soldiers who certainly could have mistaken one work for another. It is not known how many pieces could reemerge; in any case, one can be almost certain that some works once in Berlin may never return to light, given their fragile nature.

The Friedrichshain story will always remain a catastrophe – a catastrophe about which there is still much to learn, as the rediscovery of the presumably »lost« Donatellos clearly shows; a catastrophe whose damages can still partially be repaired by careful restoration. From the Berlin side, it does not seem a



**12** The bronze »St John the Baptist« was cast in several pieces and then assembled in two vertical halves. Such a process can be found in other works by Donatello.

waste of time to dedicate so much attention to works that are no longer a physical possession. Quite the contrary: these works had spent decades on the banks of the Spree, they are and will always be part of the memory of the Berlin Museums, which have everything to gain by cultivating their own history.

#### Notes

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**1** This paper is a revised version of a lecture I presented in the Università degli Studi, Trento, on 3 December 2015, on the invitation of Laura Cavazzini, Alessandra Galizzi Kroegel and Aldo Galli, whom I warmly thank. I am also very grateful to Babette Buller, Francesco Caglioti, Julien Chapuis, Andrea Di Lorenzo, Norbert Franken, Birgit Jöbstl, Douglas Kline, Eckhard Kluth, Lothar Lambacher, Rainer Michaelis and Vasily Rastorguev. I would like to dedicate this paper to the memory of my predecessor at the Bode-Museum, Michael Knuth (1949–2010), whom I never had the chance to meet, but whose studies on the Berlin »lost« works were fundamental in this process of rediscovery.



**13** The »Baptist« lost its arms and feet in the Friedrichshain disaster, but it still exists. Photographed in the Pushkin Museum, Moscow, in June 2015

2 The blog, named Rowleyflex, was hosted by the now-closed platform posterous.com. Here is the entire post: »À l'image de la phrase de Pascal sur la peinture, le goût des ruines comporte intrinsèquement une part de vanité: on s'extasie souvent sur elles alors que la vue des monuments ›intégrales‹ ne nous ferait souvent ni chaud ni froid. Ainsi des destructions de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, à commencer par une Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche [à Berlin] qui n'a de valeur esthétique qu'à moitié détruite. Dans cette même ville, il y a pourtant une sculpture qui rend cette question un peu plus complexe : c'est la »Dormition de la Vierge« d'Arnolfo di Cambio. Quand l'œuvre gagne Berlin au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle [*sic* : 1904], c'est déjà un fragment, celui d'une façade de la cathédrale de Florence qui ne fut jamais achevée durant la Renaissance. Et puis les bombardements alliés [*sic*] ont transformé le fragment en ruine, effaçant notamment le visage de la Vierge morte. L'œuvre est donc une parfaite métaphore – physique et symbolique – des horreurs de la guerre. Vue dans son ensemble, elle semble plus touchante que belle. Et voilà que surgit le visage de cet apôtre exploré sur la Vierge. Il est un peu endommagé mais sa beauté a miraculeusement survécu au carnage. Plus qu'une simple relique, cette sculpture démontre ainsi que ›l'art est comme l'incendie, il naît de ce qui brûle.« [»Like the phrase of Pascal about painting, the taste for ruins bears in itself a part of vanity: one admires often a ruin when the view of the ›integral‹ monument would not have our favors. It is so in Berlin with the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche, which aesthetic value is chiefly due to its half destruction. In the same city, however, there is a sculpture that brings more complexity to the matter: it is the »Dormitio Virginis« by Arnolfo di Cambio. When the work reaches Berlin in 1904, it is already a fragment, taken from the façade of the Florentine Cathedral, which was never completed during the Renaissance. Then the 1945 fires transformed the fragment into a ruin, cancelling the face of the dead Virgin. The work is a perfect metaphor, physical as symbolic, of the horrors of war. Taken as a whole, it is more touching as beautiful. But then one sees the face of this deploring Apostle, bending over the Virgin. He is a bit damaged, but his beauty has miraculously survived the carnage. More than a simple relic, this sculpture demonstrates, as stated by Jean-Luc Godard, that ›art is like a fire, it is born of what burns.«.]

3 Lothar Lambacher (ed.): *Skulpturensammlung: Skulpturen. Möbel* (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Dokumentation der Verluste, Vol. 7), Berlin 2006. The completion of the sculpture volume was made together with Michael Knuth and Katrin Achilles-Syndram.

4 According to Lothar Lambacher, the decision to reproduce the pre-war state and not the actual fragments was a pragmatic one (oral communication, June 2016). The »Dormitio Virginis« by Arnolfo di Cambio was not included in this section, as it was considered damaged, but not fragmentary.

5 The 24 works mentioning Donatello as their author, are the following (with their respective attribution, title and inventory number as mentioned in the volume; in italic are the five works studied in this paper): p. 136: *Donatello*, »Flagellation of Christ«, Inv. 1979; Donatello, »Madonna behind a Balustrade«, Inv. 59; p. 137: Donatello (?), »John the Baptist«, Inv. 1793; Workshop of Donatello, »Madonna«, Inv. 63; Workshop of Donatello, »Verona Madonna«, Inv. M 24; Workshop of Donatello, »The Holy Family«, Inv. 2387; Workshop of Donatello, »The Holy Family«, Inv. 61; Follower of Donatello, »Madonna with five Angels«, Inv. 58; p. 138: Follower of Donatello, »Madonna in a Niche«, Inv. 2008; p. 159: School of Donatello, »Madonna«, Inv. 62; School of Donatello, »Madonna«, Inv. 1563; School of Donatello, »Madonna«, Inv. 1565; Donatello or the Master of the Pellegrini Chapel (?), »Madonna«, Inv. 2016; p. 164: *Donatello*, »John the Baptist«, Inv. 50; p. 165: *Donatello* (?), »Amor«, Inv. 2764; p. 166: School of Donatello, »Boy with a Fox Goose«, Inv. M 39/98; Student of Donatello, »Hercules as a Boy, Strangling a Snake«, Inv. 2276; p. 183: *Donatello*, »Flagellation of Christ«, Inv. 1027; p. 188: Donatello, »Madonna in Half Figure«, Inv. 1028; *Donatello*, »Madonna in Half Figure«, Inv. 1034; Donatello, »Mars and Diana«, Inv. 2120; Donatello, »The Triumph of Love«, Inv. 2121; Style of Donatello, »Playing Putti«, Inv. 1026; Style of Donatello, »Putti Picking Grapes«, Inv. 3150.



**14** »Madonna Lactans« (silver-coated bronze, 7,2 x 5,5 cm), once attributed to the style of Jacopo Sansovino. Before World War II, the work was in the Berlin sculpture collection; it was presumed lost since 1945, but is now in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, where it has been photographed in June 2015.

**6** A version of the »Verona Madonna« (Inv. 62) had actually been sold in 1900 when the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museums-Verein bought the papier-mâché version, »lost« since 1945 (Inv. M 24). Another »Madonna« (Inv. 1565) is still to be found in storage in the Bode-Museum, its inventory number having been mistakenly read for decades as 7555. One should also mention a relief in papier-mâché representing the »Holy Family« (Inv. 61), which had been on loan since 1918 in the University in Münster, and that documents dating from 1947 state that it had survived the war – even if I do not know where it can be found now (see a letter by Prof. Dr. Wackernagel on 24 August 1947 preserved in the Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, I/GG Nr. 231). Another work lent to Münster (Inv. 1719) is described in this document as still preserved. I thank Dr. Eckhard Kluth for this information.

**7** Besides Donatello, several other names have been proposed for this prototype: while Giancarlo Gentilini in Paola Barocchi et al. (eds.): *Ommaggio a Donatello. 1386 – 1986. Donatello e la storia del Museo*, exh. cat. (Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 19 December 1985 – 30 May 1986), Florence 1985, pp. 430 – 431, carefully suggested Andrea Guardi or the young Filarete; John Pope-Hennessy: *Donatello Sculptor*, New York / London / Paris 1993, pp. 252 – 253; Anna Jolly: *Madonnas by Donatello and his Circle*, Frankfurt am Main et al. 1998, p. 153; and Douglas Lewis: *Mantova e la produzione di plachette nel XV secolo*, in: Francesco Rossi (ed.): *Placchette e rilievi di bronzo nell'età di Mantegna*, exh. cat. (Mantua, Museo della Città di Palazzo San Sebastiano, 16 September 2006 – 14 January 2007), Milan 2006, p. 7, preferred to think of Michelozzo.

- 8 See Jeremy Warren: *Medieval and Renaissance Sculpture. A Catalogue of the Collection in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, Vol. 3: Plaquettes*, Oxford 2014, p. 812, where the »lost« plaquette is mentioned by a reference to the catalogue of the sculptures once in Berlin. A few years before the fall of the Wall, the plaquette had still been mentioned as existing in: Patrick M. de Winter: *Recent Acquisitions of Italian Renaissance Decorative Arts. Part I: Incorporating Notes on the Sculptor Severo da Ravenna*, in: *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, LXXIII, 3, March 1986, p. 127, note 1.
- 9 On the transfer to Paris, see Bénédicte Savoy: *Patrimoine annexé. Les biens culturels saisis par la France en Allemagne autour de 1800*, II, Paris 2003, p. 74, cat. 132.
- 10 The first mention of the work is in Wilhelm Bode: *Italienische Bildwerke des XV. und XVI. Jahrhunderts. Statuetten, Büsten, Gerätschaften in Bronze*, in: *Ausstellung von Kunstwerken des Mittelalters und der Renaissance aus Berliner Privatbesitz*, exh. cat. (Berlin, Kunstgeschichtliche Gesellschaft, 20 May – 3 July 1898), Berlin 1899, p. 90.
- 11 On the work, see the entry in the online catalogue of the Antique Bronzes in the Berlin Museums, <http://ww2.smb.museum/antikebronzenberlin/index.htm> (accessed on 5.9.2016), where it is catalogued under the inventory number 1844.
- 12 For this posthumous judgment, which followed an opinion by Adolfo Venturi, see Wilhelm von Bode: *Die italienischen Bildwerke der Renaissance und des Barock. II. Bronzestatuetten. Büste und Gebrauchsgegenstände*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Berlin / Leipzig 1930, p. 6, cat. 23.
- 13 H. W. Janson: *The Sculpture of Donatello*, Princeton 1957, II, p. 189, note 3.
- 14 John Pope-Hennessy: *Connoisseurship*, in: idem: *The Study and Criticism of Italian Sculpture*, New York / Princeton 1980, pp. 29 – 31; for the quote, see idem: *Learning to Look. My Life in Art*, London 1991, p. 78.
- 15 Elizabeth Cropper: *Prolegomena to a New Interpretation of Bronzino's Florentine Portraits*, in: Andrew Morrogh et al. (eds.): *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Craig Hugh Smyth. II. Art. Architecture*, Florence 1985, pp. 154, 159, notes 23, 32; John Kent Lydecker: *The Domestic Setting of the Arts in Renaissance Florence*, Ph.D. (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University), 1987, pp. 132 – 133.
- 16 Alison Wright: *The Pollaiuolo Brothers. The Arts of Florence and Rome*, New Haven / London 2005, pp. 351 – 353.
- 17 Aldo Galli and Andrea Di Lorenzo, written communications, September 2016. It should be noted that one of the sculptures of the exhibition, Antonio del Pollaiuolo's »Hercules« in the Berlin Museums, was damaged in the Friedrichshain fires in 1945: see Aldo Galli in: Andrea Di Lorenzo / Aldo Galli (eds.): *Antonio and Piero del Pollaiuolo. »Silver and Gold, Painting and Bronze...«*, exh. cat. (Milan, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, 7 November 2014 – 16 February 2015), Milan 2014, pp. 228 – 231, cat. 21.
- 18 Wilhelm Bode: *Florentiner Bildhauer der Renaissance*, Berlin 1902, p. 19.
- 19 W.L. Hildburgh: *A Marble Relief Attributable to Donatello and Some Associated Stuccos*, in: *The Art Bulletin*, XXX, 1, March 1948, pp. 11 – 19; H. W. Janson: *The Hildburgh Relief: Original or Copy?*, in: *The Art Bulletin*, XXX, 2, June 1948, pp. 143 – 145; W.L. Hildburgh: *Letter to the Editor*, in: *The Art Bulletin*, XXX, 3, September 1948, pp. 244 – 246.
- 20 H. W. Janson: *The Sculpture of Donatello* (as note 13), pp. 242 – 244.
- 21 Among the different voices that spoke of the relief, one must recall the few ones pointing towards Donatello: Charles Avery: *Donatello's Marble Narrative Reliefs*, in: *Le vie del marmo. Aspetti della produzione e della diffusione dei manufatti marmorei tra Quattrocento e Cinquecento*, symposium papers (Pietrasanta, Centro culturale L. Russo, 3 October 1992), Florence 1994, p. 11 (with a possible collaboration with Michelozzo); and Francesco Caglioti: *Fifteenth-Century Reliefs of Ancient Emperors and Empresses in Florence: Production and Collecting*, in: Nicholas Penny / Eike D. Schmidt (eds.): *Collecting Sculpture in Early Modern Europe*, symposium papers (Washington DC, National Gallery of Art, 7 – 8 February 2003), Washington DC 2008, p. 105, note 77.

- 22 Wilhelm Bode: *Denkmäler der Renaissance – Sculptur Toscanas*, Munich 1894, II, pl. 92.
- 23 Bertrand Bergbauer / Manon Six: *La collection de plaquettes du musée de l'œuvre Notre-Dame à Strasbourg*, in: *Patrimoines*, 3, 2007, p. 72.
- 24 For my position on this exhibition, see Neville Rowley: »Le Musée disparu«. *Réflexions autour d'une exposition berlinoise*, in: *Patrimoines*, 11, 2015, pp. 34–41.
- 25 Next to the »Cupid« was exhibited as »lost« a cast of a terracotta group of »Bickering Children« (Inv. 1585) that is to this day in storage at the Bode-Museum (and was relatively slightly damaged in 1945). It is listed as fragmentary in Lambacher: *Skulpturensammlung* (as note 3), p. 253, hence perhaps the confusion.
- 26 Neville Rowley: *À la recherche des Donatello perdus, de Florence à Berlin*, in: *Figura – Studi sull'Immagine nella Tradizione Classica*, 3, 2015, pp. 227–253.
- 27 *Ibid.*, pp. 240–241: »La recherche des Donatello perdus n'est pas achevée : il est probable que le Saint Jean-Baptiste se trouve aujourd'hui en Russie, stocké depuis près de soixante-dix ans dans les caves secrètes de quelque musée.«
- 28 Konstantin Akinscha / Grigori Koslow / Clemens Toussaint: *Russische Dokumente zur Beutekunst. Bemerkungen zum Aktenfonds Akinscha / Koslow im Archiv des Germanischen Nationalmuseums*, in: *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums*, 1997, pp. 137–154.
- 29 Peter-Klaus Schuster: *Vorwort*, in: *Lambacher: Skulpturensammlung* (as note 3), p. 7: »In Moskau soll sich der Büstenteil [der Prinzessin von Neapel], ebenfalls brandbeschädigt, befinden.«
- 30 *Einführung*, in: *Lambacher: Skulpturensammlung* (as note 3), pp. 15–16, note 20.
- 31 See Wolf-Dieter Dube: *Zum Geleit*, in: Rainer Michaelis (ed.): *Gemäldegalerie (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Dokumentation der Verluste, Vol. 1)*, Berlin 1995, p. 7: »Mit der gemeinsamen Sitzung der Regierungskommission der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Russischen Föderation zur Rückführung von Kulturgütern in Dresden in Februar 1993 wurden die Verhandlungen offiziell aufgenommen. Beide Seiten schlugen auf der Ebene einer zu gründenden gemeinsamen Kommission sowie von Fachgruppen den Austausch von Listen über diejenigen Gegenstände, die nach Auffassung der übergebenden Seite der Rückführung unterliegen, vor.«; Schuster: *Vorwort* (as note 29): »Es erscheint deshalb in hohem Maße an der Zeit, dass auch unsere Skulpturensammlung ebenso wie schon andere Sammlungen der Berliner Museen Zugang zu den Depots in Russland erhält, um mit den russischen Kollegen die erhaltenen Werke der Berliner Skulpturensammlung zu sichten.«
- 32 On these restorations, see the essay of Vasily Rastorguev in this volume, pp. 164–187.
- 33 Francesco Caglioti: *Donatello e i Medici. Storia del »David« e della »Giuditta«*, Florence 2000, I, p. 253, note 118.
- 34 For the »Hildburgh Madonna«, see Aldo Galli in Luciano Bellosi / Laura Cavazzini / Aldo Galli (eds.): *Masaccio e le origini del Rinascimento*, exh. cat. (San Giovanni Valdarno, 20 September – 21 December 2002), Milan 2002, pp. 178–179.
- 35 On 17 September 2015, Francesco Caglioti suggested to me to look in direction of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century Florentine sculptor Lorenzetto, in the period of his Roman activity.
- 36 See <http://www.arts-museum.ru/events/archive/2015/donatello> (accessed on 5.9.2016); and Marina Loshak: *Postscript*, in: Julien Chapuis / Stephan Kemperdick (eds.): *The Lost Museum. The Berlin Sculpture and Paintings Collections 70 Years after World War II*, exh. cat. (Berlin, Bode-Museum, 19 March – 27 September 2015), Berlin / Petersburg 2015, pp. 140–141.
- 37 My Donatello catalogue is currently hosted on [www.smb-digital.de](http://www.smb-digital.de); the proceedings of the symposium will be published in *Predella. Journal of Visual Arts*. The works once in Berlin and now in Moscow are to be published in complete collaboration with the Pushkin Museum, which will publish them simultaneously in Russian on the museum's website.