Geraldine A. Johnson, '"To know them thoroughly you must have their photographs": Photographing Donatello in the 19th and early 20th Centuries', *The Sculpture Journal* (accepted for publication in 2025).

Author's Biography

Geraldine A. Johnson is Head of the Department of History of Art at the University of Oxford and a College Fellow of Christ Church, Oxford. She has published widely on sculpture from the late medieval period to the present day, with a particular focus on the work of Donatello, as well as on women and the visual arts, the history of photography, and the historiography of art history. Her most recent publications include a co-edited volume, *Photo Archives and the Place of Photography*, and an edited volume, *Art History Now: Objects, Concepts, Approaches*, both published by Routledge in 2025.

Abstract

The emergence of photographic media in the mid-nineteenth century led to an explosion in printed reproductions of works of art, with Donatello and other sculptors working in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Italy of particular interest to authors and publishers from the early 1860s onwards. The present article traces how statues and reliefs by Donatello and other Italian Renaissance sculptors were illustrated in a wide range of new photographically based media and disseminated through an equally wide range of new printing processes. It also considers how the academic, museological and even geopolitical concerns of art historians and curators working in Europe and North America in the second half of the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth century influenced the kinds of illustrations that were produced of Renaissance sculpture—and, in turn, how the kinds of illustrations made available to scholars shaped the questions they asked. The article focuses in particular on the photographic, engraved and cast reproductions that innovative curators and scholars such as J.C. Robinson in Britain and Wilhelm von Bode and Heinrich Wölfflin on the Continent commissioned, used and sometimes abandoned when studying Donatello and his contemporaries. This demonstrates that questions about photography's role within the discourses of art history were raised early, often and particularly insistently in relation to Italian Renaissance sculpture, in the process playing a crucial role in shaping the discipline's illustrative practices more generally.

Article

What is the object of art history? The ostensible answer, of course, is 'works of art'. While there is no doubt that encounters with actual objects can be crucial to crafting scholarly arguments, in practice art historians spend much of their time looking at, teaching with and writing about photographic reproductions of art (whether analogue or digital), rather than about the works themselves. The present article considers the early history of this paradoxical phenomenon from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century by exploring the photographic and other types of two-dimensional reproductions that innovative curators and scholars such as J.C. Robinson (1824-1913) in Britain and Wilhelm von Bode (1845-1929) and Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945) on the Continent commissioned, used and sometimes abandoned when studying Donatello and other Italian Renaissance sculptors. While other scholars working in Europe and North America during this period also used photography in their work, focusing on these influential figures demonstrates that questions about

photography's role within the discourses of art history were raised early, often and particularly insistently in relation to Italian Renaissance sculpture.[1]

The introduction of photography into publications on sculpture

In John Ruskin's memoir-*cum*-guidebook of 1875, *Mornings in Florence*, he describes encountering the fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century reliefs carved around the base of the city's Campanile. He instructs his reader: 'So far as you can, examine them of course on the spot; but to know them thoroughly you must have their photographs.'[2] A few pages later, he tells his reader to take out a '[magnifying] lens and look at every piece of work [on the Campanile] from corner to corner.'[3] However, it is only in Ruskin's accompanying footnote that one realises that he is not suggesting that his reader study the carvings on the Campanile itself with a magnifying lens. Rather Ruskin is once again referring to their photographic reproductions, which might have included the remarkably sharp albumen prints of the reliefs produced around this time by the Brogi photographic company (fig. 1).[4] Ruskin's concern with how best to use photographic reproductions of sculpture is also evident in his warning to readers not to rely on cropped 'photographs which do not show the masonry all around the hexagon', since these are 'quite value-less for study'.[5]



Fig. 1. Giacomo Brogi, *Astronomy* (relief on Campanile, Florence), c. 1870, albumen print. Source: Wellcome Collection.

I am grateful to the organisers of the 2023 Donatello conference at the Victoria & Albert Museum, which provided the impetus for the present publication, as well as the *Sculpture Journal*'s anonymous readers for their insightful suggestions.

[1] On the impact of photographic reproductions on art history in general, see G.A. Johnson, '*"(Un)richtige Aufnahme"*: Sculpture, Photography and the Visual Historiography of Art History', *Art History,* 36, 2013, pp. 12-51; C. Caraffa (ed.), *Photo Archives and the Photographic Memory of Art History*, Berlin, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011.

[2] J. Ruskin, *Mornings in Florence: being simple studies of Christian art*, Orpington, G. Allen, 1875, p. 161.

[3] Ibid., p. 171.

[4] Already in 1845, Ruskin suggested that photographs could be nearly interchangeable with the works they reproduced; they were 'very nearly the same thing as carrying off the [Venetian] palace itself—every chip of stone and stain is there.' Cited in G. Smith, 'Florence, Photography and the Victorians', in J.E. Law and L. Ostermark-Johansen (eds), *The Victorian and Edwardian Response to the Italian Renaissance,* London, Routledge, 2016, p. 28.

[5] Ruskin, *Mornings in Florence*, p. 172.

The quality of individual photographic prints collected by figures such as Ruskin in the later nineteenth century could be extremely high.[6] However, for art historians working in university or museum contexts, accumulating such photographs as part of their research or projecting high-quality slides in lectures were separate endeavours to presenting their arguments in publications to the wider—and increasingly international—art historical community, as well as to the general reading public.[7] Instead, scholars and curators had to rely on evolving printing technologies that were much less satisfactory in terms of image detail and clarity, although they did allow for wider dissemination of their work.[8] An article in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in 1869 expressed enormous frustration at the 'astonishing' photographs taken of 'humanity's monumental works of art' around the world that could not be made more widely available due to the limitations of 'industrial [printing] processes'.[9] Instead, until halftone printing became widely available in the 1880s, the best one could expect in a mass-market book were illustrations like those found in Charles Perkins's *Tuscan Sculptors*, published in two volumes in 1864. Perkins may have proudly proclaimed on his title page that his books had 'illustrations from original drawings and photographs', but rather than being depicted in photomechanical reproductions, works such as Donatello's *St George* (c.1415-17, Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello) continued to appear in Perkins's volumes in the same kinds of engravings and etchings found in pre-photographic publications, even if the images themselves were now based on photographic prints (fig. 2).[10]

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[6] On photographic media in this period, see D. Stulik and A. Kaplan, *The Atlas of Analytical Signatures of Photographic Processes*, Los Angeles, Getty Conservation Institute, 2013, https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/atlas.html, accessed 1 November 2024.

[7] The slide lecture will not be considered in the present article, but on its early history in art historical contexts, see R.S. Nelson, 'The Slide Lecture, or the Work of Art History in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Critical Inquiry,* 26, 2000, pp. 414-434; K. Miyahara, 'The impact of the lantern slide on art-history lecturing in Britain', *The British Art Journal,* 8, 2, 2007, pp. 67-71; D. Karlholm, 'Developing the Picture: Wölfflin's Performance Art', *Photography & culture,* 3, 2, 2010, pp. 207-215; Z.Ç. Alexander, *Kinaesthetic Knowing: Aesthetics, Epistemology, Modern Design*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2017, pp. 63-65, 90-96; 'Literatur Glasdias', https://wikis.hu-berlin.de/mediathek/Literatur_Glasdias, accessed 1 December 2024.

[8] On photomechanical reproduction in later nineteenth-century art historical contexts, see G.A. Johnson, 'Using the Photographic Archive: On the Life (and Death) of Images', in Caraffa, *Photo Archives and the Photographic Memory of Art History*, pp. 145-56; A. Hamber, 'Facsimile, Scholarship, and Commerce: Aspects of the Photographically Illustrated Art Book (1839-1880)', in S. Bann (ed.), *Art and the Early Photographic Album,* New Haven, Yale University Press, 2011, pp. 123-49; D. Peters, 'Die Welt im Raster: Georg Meisenbach und der lange Weg zur gedruckten Fotografie', in A. Gall (ed.), *Konstruieren, Kommunizieren, Präsentieren: Bilder von Wissenschaft und Technik,* Göttingen, Wallstein Verlag, 2007, pp. 179-244.

[9] J. Grangedor, 'Les derniers progrès de la Photographie', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1 May and 1 June 1869, pp. 447-9. My translation.

[10] C.C. Perkins, *Tuscan Sculptors: Their Lives, Works and Times*, London, Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1864, v. 1, titlepage. On Perkins, see D.H. Stein, 'Charles Callahan Perkins: Early Italian Renaissance art and British museum practice in Boston', *Journal of Art Historiography*, issue 18, 2018, pp. 1-40. The dating and attribution of works



Fig. 2. Unknown printmaker, *Donatello, 'St George',* in Charles Perkins, *Tuscan Sculptors*, 1864, vol. 1, pl. XVII, etching.

J.C. Robinson, the pioneering curator of London's South Kensington Museum (later the Victoria and Albert Museum), believed in using all reproductive means available—'drawings, photographs, engravings, casts, &c.'—to promote the study and understanding of sculpture.[11] In 1862, he commissioned C. Thurston Thompson, the museum's first photographer, to record the institution's growing collection of late Medieval and Renaissance sculpture. As in Perkins's survey, the photographs were used to produce intaglio prints for a volume aimed at the general public, *Italian Sculpture of the Middle Ages and Period of the Revival of Art: A Descriptive Catalogue*.[12] Amongst the twenty engravings were two of marble reliefs attributed at the time to Donatello: *Christ Giving the Keys to St Peter* (c. 1428-30) (fig. 3) and *Christ in the Sepulchre Supported by Angels* (now attributed by a number of scholars to an emulator of Donatello, c.1530-40). At the same time, Robinson produced a supplement to the catalogue, subtitled *A Series of Fifty Photographs*, with high-quality pasted-in albumen prints that included photographs of the two marble reliefs and six other objects attributed or linked to Donatello (figs 4 and 5).[13] Although albumen prints were prone to fading and yellowing, as seen along the edges of both the *Giving of the Keys* and *Christ in the Sepulchre*, such photographs undoubtedly provided more visual information than could be found in more schematic engravings and etchings. Volumes with expensive tipped-in photographs were, however, only accessible to a much more limited readership, as suggested by the fact that only seven copies of *Fifty Photographs* are currently recorded in libraries

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associated with Donatello throughout the present article follow Peta Motture (ed.), *Donatello: Sculpting the Renaissance*, London, V&A Publishing, 2023.

[11] J.C. Robinson, *Italian Sculpture of the Middle Ages and Period of the Revival of Art. A Descriptive Catalogue of the works forming the above section of the museum*, London, Chapman and Hall, 1862, p. x.

[12] Ibid. On this volume, see H. Davies, 'John Charles Robinson's Work at the South Kensington Museum Part I: The creation of the collection of Italian Renaissance objects at the Museum of Ornamental Art and the South Kensington Museum, 1853-62', *Journal of the History of Collections,* 10, 2, 1998, pp. 185-6.

[13] J.C. Robinson, *Italian Sculpture of the Middle Ages and Period of the Revival of Art. A Series of Fifty Photographs of Works in the Above Section of the Museum*, London, Chapman and Hall, 1862. Seven of the twenty sculptures depicted in engravings in the *Descriptive Catalogue* reappear in *Fifty Photographs*.

worldwide, including that of the Marquesses of Bristol at Ickworth House in Suffolk, while nearly 200 public institutions own copies of the *Descriptive Catalogue*.[14] The *Descriptive Catalogue*'s much broader target audience is further confirmed by the bookplates that were inserted into copies given as prizes to art school students by the Science and Art Department of England's Council on Education, the organisation that had commissioned the publication, as stated on the title page. One such bookplate, for example, commemorated the 'success in the National Art Competition' of a Thomas Cherrington at the Dudley School of Art in 1879.[15]

Although detailed line engravings on metal and more schematic engravings on wood, together with plaster casts, had been the principal means by which sculpture had been reproduced in the pre-photographic era,[16] the limitations of engravings in terms of their quality, accuracy and the amount of visual information they could transmit were remarked on by viewers increasingly familiar with photographs from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. For instance, a review of Robinson's *Descriptive Catalogue* complained that 'a frieze, representing "The Charge to St. Peter," is hideously engraved in the present catalogue. The rather exaggerated action of the group of Apostles is here made perfectly grotesque' (see fig. 3).[17] In contrast, a review of *Fifty Photographs* praised the albumen prints for being 'so remarkable as to be almost as valuable to artists as the sculptures themselves'.[18]

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[14] The data comes from searches of WorldCat (https://search.worldcat.org) and the National Trust's holdings (https://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/3107544), both accessed 1 January 2025. The *Descriptive Catalogue* was priced at 7 shillings 6 pence (very roughly equivalent to £39 in 2024), but no price has yet been found for *Fifty Photographs*. See *The National Review*, issue 30, October 1862, pp. 1-8, and Bank of England Inflation Calculator, https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator, accessed 1 January 2025.

[15] The bookplate is in a volume now in the Getty Research Institute (Library Annex NB611.S68 1862). Unlike all other copies of the *Descriptive Catalogue* I have come across, Cherrington's was customised with a dozen photographic prints pasted onto extra blank pages (in addition to the usual 20 engravings) when it was bound. Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Marble Faun* was similarly customised with pasted-in photographs in this period, including of sculpted works. On *The Marble Faun*, see most recently Christopher Reed, 'Looking around "The Marble Faun": Visuality, Authorship, and Authority', *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists*, 10, 2, 2022, pp. 381-409.

[16] On pre-photographic printed reproductions of Renaissance sculpture, see Johnson, '*"(Un)richtige Aufnahme"*', pp. 14-19. On engraved and painted reproductions of ancient sculpture, see S. Betzer, *Animating the Antique: Sculptural Encounter in the Age of Aesthetic Theory*, University Park, PA, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022, Ch. 1 and Ch. 2. For an overview of plaster cast copies in art academy, museum and university contexts, see R. Frederiksen and E. Marchand (eds), *Plaster Casts: Making, Collecting, and Displaying from Classical Antiquity to the Present* Berlin, De Gruyter, 2010. Electrotypes were another, though less common way of reproducing sculpture in the nineteenth century. See M. Baker, 'The Reproductive Continuum: plaster casts, paper mosaics and photographs as complementary modes of reproduction in the nineteenth-century museum ', in ibid., pp. 490-1.

[17] 'Robinson's Italian Sculpture', *The Saturday Review*, 23 August 1862, p. 231.

[18] Baron H. De Triqueti, 'The Italian Sculpture at the South Kensington Museum', *The Fine Arts Quarterly Review*, 1, May-October 1863, p. 101. See the similar comments about photography made by Ruskin in note 4.



Fig. 3. Unknown printmaker, *Donatello. Frieze, in low relief, in Marble. 'Christ Giving the Keys to St Peter*', in J.C. Robinson, *Italian Sculpture: A Descriptive Catalogue*, 1862, between pp. 16-17, engraving.



Fig. 4. C. Thurston Thompson, *Donatello, 'Christ Giving the Keys to St Peter'*, in J.C. Robinson, *Italian Sculpture: A Series of Fifty Photographs*, 1862, no. 10, albumen print.



Fig. 5. C. Thurston Thompson, *Donatello, 'Christ in the Sepulchre Supported by Angels'*, in J.C. Robinson, *Italian Sculpture: A Series of Fifty Photographs*, 1862, no. 9, albumen print.

One solution to the disappointing quality of engravings like those found in the *Descriptive Catalogue* was to try to improve the standard of engraved reproductions more generally in art historical publications. A particularly accomplished, but also incredibly labour-intensive, example is a burin engraving by Ferdinand Gaillard published in 1866 in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* of what was believed at the time to be a bronze model for Donatello's life-size equestrian monument in Padua known as the *Gattamelata* (1445-53)—or, more likely, of a photograph of the supposed model (fig. 6).[19] Over twenty years later, at the time of Gaillard's

[19] Gaillard's burin engraving appeared in G. Campori, 'Nouveaux documents biographique relatifs à Léonard de Vinci', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1 January 1866, between pp. 42-3. On

death, the print was still being praised as a ‘superb piece’ engraved with ‘microscopic fineness’.[20] However, in 1876, Marchese Giovanni di Eroli criticized Gaillard’s print for its lack of accuracy, presumably unaware that it was based on a photograph of a statuette, rather than on the equestrian monument itself. Interestingly enough, a significant portion of Eroli’s discussion of the *Gattamelata* focuses not on the monument, but rather on its many two- and three-dimensional reproductions. Eroli noted that the *Gattamelata* had been ‘portrayed [...] with a burin or on copper or steel, modelled [...] in clay, formed [...] in plaster’, and had been reproduced in the English and French editions of Perkins’s survey, as well as in volumes by Leopoldo Cicognara, Bernardo Gonzati and Pietro Mugna. He also noted that individual photographs of the monument could be purchased in Padua. Finally, he described the copper engraving he had commissioned of the sculpture for his own book on the historical figure of Gattamelata (aka, Erasmo of Narni [1370-1443]), which he was planning to reproduce as a lithograph ‘with photographic effect’.[21] Ensuring that printed reproductions of sculpture looked ‘photographic’ had thus become a goal in and of itself by the mid-1870s, even before photomechanical prints became more widely available after the introduction of the ‘mass production’ Meisenbach halftone printing process in 1882.[22]

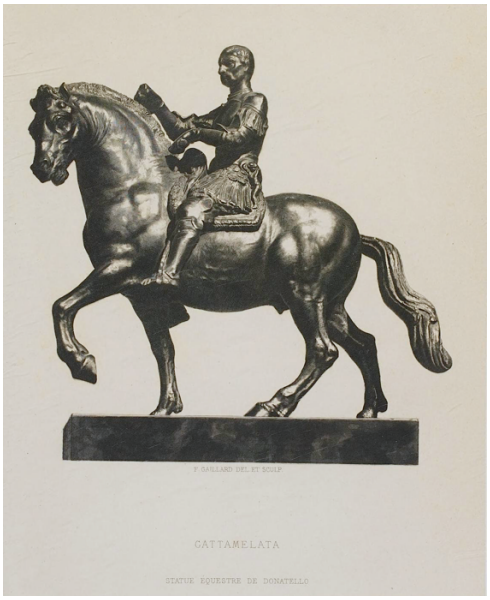

Fig. 6. Ferdinand Gaillard, *Gattamelata: Equestrian Statue by Donatello*, in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1 January 1866, between pp. 42-43, burin engraving of bronze statuette.

The photographically illustrated sculpture monograph

A decade after Eroli’s book appeared, complaints were still being voiced about the poor quality of illustrations in popular publications such as Eugène Müntz’s 1885 Donatello monograph for a series entitled ‘Les artistes célèbres’ aimed at a wide readership and priced

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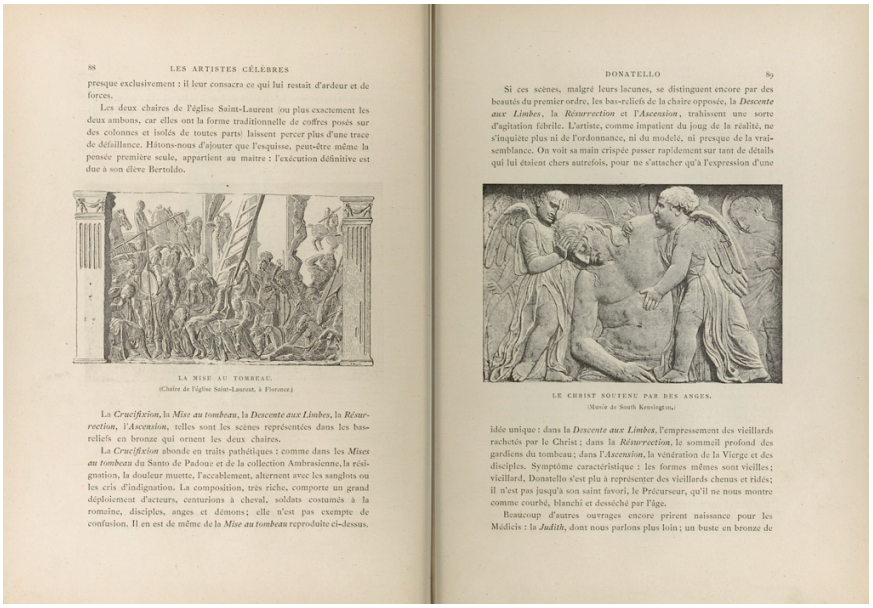
Gaillard’s engravings of Renaissance sculpture, which were probably based on photographs, see S. Bann, 'Photography by Other Means? The Engravings of Ferdinand Gaillard', *Art Bulletin,* 88, 1, 2006, pp. 127-31 and 138, n. 39.

[20] Cited in ibid., p. 131.

[21] G. di Eroli, *Erasmo Gattamelata*, Rome, del Salviucci, 1876, pp. 184 (pl. VII) and 193. My translation.

[22] See Stulik and Kaplan, *The Atlas of Analytical Signatures,* p. 8 (‘Halftone’); Peters, 'Die Welt im Raster’, pp. 179-244.

at just 5 Francs.[23] For instance, a reviewer in *The Athenaeum* commented on Müntz's 'unfortunate', 'unsatisfactory', 'dry and scratchy' illustrations, which consisted of a mixture of engravings and halftones (fig. 7). Even more damning was the reviewer's accusation that the halftones had simply been rephotographed from earlier photographs. '[S]urely, in the case of sculpture', the reviewer implored, 'the photographs should be taken directly from the objects themselves'.[24] In fact, Müntz's halftone reproduction of *Christ in the Sepulchre* does indeed seem to have been rephotographed from *Fifty Photographs* (compare right side of fig. 7 with fig. 5) or from the same albumen print purchased on its own, presumably to avoid the time and expense involved in rephotographing the original relief in London. However, the reviewer had specifically (if probably incorrectly) suggested that Müntz's halftones of the *Gattamelata* and other bronzes by Donatello in Padua had been rephotographed from illustrations that had appeared two years earlier in a 'handsome' volume on the sculptor's Paduan works by an ambitious young curator from the Berlin Museums, Wilhelm Bode (fig. 8).[25] Ironically, the reviewer did not seem to realise that Bode's own photographs had been taken from plaster casts, rather than from Donatello's original bronzes, as will be discussed below.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presque exclusivement : il leur consacra ce qui lui restait d'ardeur et de forces.

Les deux chaires de l'église Saint-Laurent (ou plus exactement les deux ambons, car elles ont la forme traditionnelle de coffres posés sur des colonnes et isolés de toutes parts) laissent percer plus d'une trace de défaillance. Hâtons-nous d'ajouter que l'esquisse, peut-être même la pensée première seule, appartient au maître : l'exécution définitive est due à son élève Bertoldo.

LA MISE AU TOMBEAU.
(Chaire de l'église Saint-Laurent, à Florence.)

La *Crucifixion*, la *Mise au tombeau*, la *Descente aux Limbes*, la *Résurrection*, l'*Ascension*, telles sont les scènes représentées dans les bas-reliefs en bronze qui ornent les deux chaires.

La *Crucifixion* abonde en traits pathétiques : comme dans les *Mises au tombeau* du Santo de Padoue et de la collection Ambrasienne, la résignation, la douleur muette, l'accablement, alternent avec les sanglots ou les cris d'indignation. La composition, très riche, comporte un grand déploiement d'acteurs, centurions à cheval, soldats costumés à la romaine, disciples, anges et démons; elle n'est pas exempte de confusion. Il en est de même de la *Mise au tombeau* reproduite ci-dessus.

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Si ces scènes, malgré leurs lacunes, se distinguent encore par des beautés du premier ordre, les bas-reliefs de la chaire opposée, la *Descente aux Limbes*, la *Résurrection* et l'*Ascension*, trahissent une sorte d'agitation fébrile. L'artiste, comme impatient du joug de la réalité, ne s'inquiète plus ni de l'ordonnance, ni du modelé, ni presque de la vraisemblance. On voit sa main crispée passer rapidement sur tant de détails qui lui étaient chers autrefois, pour ne s'attacher qu'à l'expression d'une

LE CHRIST SOUTENU PAR DES ANGES.
(Musée de South Kensington.)

idée unique : dans la *Descente aux Limbes*, l'empressement des vieillards rachetés par le Christ ; dans la *Résurrection*, le sommeil profond des gardiens du tombeau ; dans l'*Ascension*, la vénération de la Vierge et des disciples. Symptôme caractéristique : les formes mêmes sont vieilles ; vieillard, Donatello s'est plu à représenter des vieillards chenus et ridés ; il n'est pas jusqu'à son saint favori, le Précurseur, qu'il ne nous montre comme courbé, blanchi et desséché par l'âge.

Beaucoup d'autres ouvrages encore prirent naissance pour les Médicis : la *Judith*, dont nous parlons plus loin ; un buste en bronze de

Fig. 7. Eugène Müntz, *Donatello*, 1885, pp. 88-89. Left: Unknown printmaker, *The Entombment (Pulpit of Church of San Lorenzo, Florence)*, engraving. Right: C. Thurston Thompson, *Christ Supported by Angels (South Kensington Museum)*, albumen print rephotographed for halftone reproduction.

[23] E. Müntz, *Donatello* (Les artistes célèbres), Paris, Librairie de l'Art-J. Rouam, 1885. One reviewer stated that series sought to 'popularize art and infuse into the public mind a more exact appreciation of it.' See P. Lepricur, 'Three Great Artists', *The Connoisseur,* 1, 3, March 1887, p. 27. For the Donatello monograph's price, see the review by Marsy in *Bulletin Monumental*, 51, 1885, p. 446.

[24] 'Review of Eugène Müntz, "Donatello"', *The Athenaeum*, no. 3032, 5 December 1885, pp. 737-8.

[25] Ibid., pp. 737-8. Bode's monograph appeared in French and German editions, although it is unclear which version the reviewer was referring to: W. Bode, *Donatello à Padoue: Gattamelata et les sculptures du Santo*, trans. C. Yriate, Paris and London, J. Rothschild and Dulau et Cie., 1883; Bode, *Donatello in Padua: Das Reiterstandbild Gattamelata und die Sculpturen im Santo*, Leipzig, J. Rothschild, 1883.



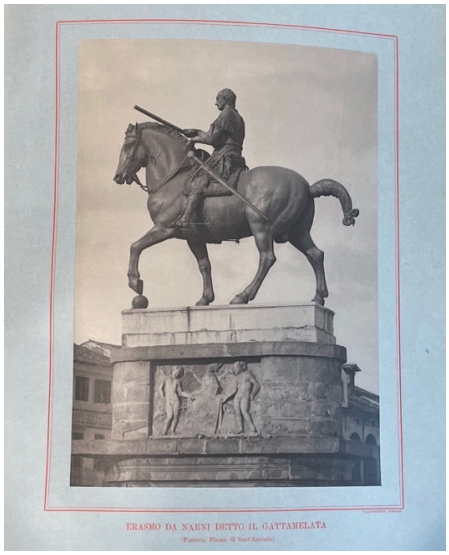

Fig. 8 (left). Unknown photographer, *Donatello, 'Gattamelata'*, in Wilhelm Bode, *Donatello a Padoue*, 1883, between pp. 8-9, collotype print of plaster cast.
Fig. 9 (right). Alinari photographer, *Erasmo of Narni, called Gattamelata (Padua, Piazza Sant'Antonio)*, in J.C. Cavallucci, *Donatello*, 1886, pl. XXVII, platinum print.

The practice of rephotographing photographic prints then reproducing them as halftone illustrations was not uncommon in this period. For example, in Hans Semper's 1887 Donatello monograph, the illustrations are described as being 'After original photographs' ('*Nach der Original-Aufnahme*') provided by the South Kensington Museum and the Alinari photographic firm, with similar wording also seen in some of the captions in Alfred Meyer's 1904 volume on Donatello (see caption on left side of fig. 10).[26] Significantly, Bode's monograph on Donatello's Paduan bronzes relied on expensive, high-quality collotype prints, which meant that only 50 copies of the German edition and 150 of the French edition were produced.[27] In contrast, for a mass-market volume like Müntz's *Donatello* monograph, using labour-intensive collotypes instead of cheaper halftones would presumably not have been cost-effective.

In his book of 1876, Eroli had noted that a campaign organised by the Berlin Museums (overseen by Bode) to make a plaster cast mould of the *Gattamelata* was currently underway (see fig. 8).[28] The *Gattamelata* cast was just part of Bode's ambitious project to cast all of Donatello's sculptures in Padua, including those in the nearby Basilica of Sant'Antonio—plaster casts being, until about 1900, an important if more costly and less easily disseminated mode of reproduction for both Renaissance and ancient sculpture compared to engraved and,

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[26] See the captions in H. Semper, *Donatellos Leben und Werke: Eine Festschrift zum fünfhundertjährigen Jubiläum seiner Geburt in Florenz*, Innsbruck, Wagner'schen Universitaets-Buchhandung, 1887; A.G. Meyer, *Donatello*, trans. P.G. Konody, New York, Lemcke & Buechner, 1904, e.g., pp. 11 (fig. 7) or 68 (fig. 60). The latter volume was first published in German in 1903.
[27] Bode's illustrations are described on the title page as '*Lichtdrucken*', aka, collotypes. See Stulik and Kaplan, *The Atlas of Analytical Signatures*, p. 5 ('Collotype'), who note that collotypes were 'technologically challenging and expensive'. For Bode's two editions, see note 25.
[28] Eroli, *Erasmo Gattamelata*, p. 193.

from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, photographic reproductions.[29] In providing a rationale for this complex and expensive project, Bode explained that it was no longer possible to study Donatello's work at close hand because the Basilica's high altar had recently been reconstructed, making the statues and reliefs difficult to see *and* photograph: 'It is thus difficult to study the originals, and it is almost impossible to take photographs of several of them.'[30] The *Gattamelata* on its elevated pedestal was likewise too high to be closely scrutinised, even if this was not mentioned explicitly by Bode. His solution was to commission plaster casts of all Donatello's sculptures in Padua—which besides the *Gattamelata*, included a bronze Crucifix, seven bronze statues and nearly two dozen reliefs on and around the Basilica's high altar (c.1444-50)—with the financial support of the German government. When the project was finally completed in 1883, the casts and their moulds—the latter said by Bode to be available to make further reproductions for other European collections—were transferred to Berlin, an audacious appropriation of Italian artistic patrimony.[31]

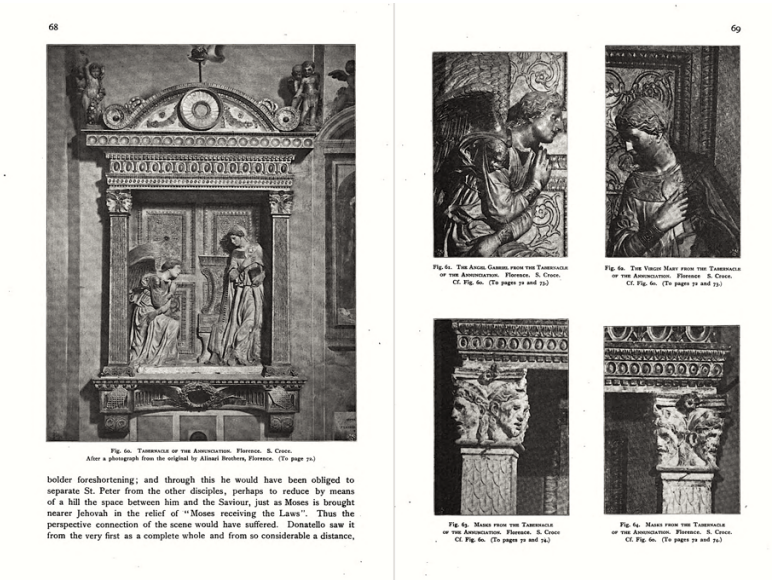

Fig. 10. Alfred Meyer, *Donatello*, 1904, pp. 68-69, figs. 60-64. Left: After a photograph from the original by Alinari Brothers, Florence, *Tabernacle of the Annunciation. Florence. S. Croce*, silver gelatin (?) print rephotographed for halftone reproduction. Right: Unknown photographer, *Details of Donatello's Tabernacle of the Annunciation*, halftone reproductions.

Once the casts had arrived in Berlin, Bode photographed them and then used the images to produce in 1883 the first monograph (in French and German editions) on Donatello entirely illustrated with photographic reproductions—albeit reproductions of casts of his work in limited edition volumes intended for an elite international audience (see fig. 8).[32] A review of the German edition appeared in *The Athenaeum* the following year. Tellingly, the reviewer's focus is almost exclusively on Bode's illustrations, not on the accompanying text. The

[29] On complementary modes of sculptural reproduction, see Baker, 'The Reproductive Continuum', pp. 485-500, and on plaster casts, see Fredericksen and Marchand (eds), *Plaster Casts*.
[30] Bode, *Donatello à Padoue*, p. 6. My translation.
[31] On Bode and German cultural imperialism, see T.W. Gaehtgens, 'Wilhelm von Bode and the Renaissance in the German Empire', in N. Rowley (ed.), *Donatello: Inventor of the Renaissance,* Leipzig, E.A. Seemann, 2022, pp. 85-102.
[32] Bode, *Donatello à Padoue*, and Bode, *Donatello in Padua*.

reviewer concedes that it would have been preferable to photograph the original objects in Padua, but then states that while the colour and surface effects of the bronzes were lost in the plaster casting process, photographs of the casts 'unquestionably [provide] a *more* adequate rendering of the form'.[33] In other words, studying a two-dimensional photographic reproduction of a white plaster reproduction, especially when analysing a sculpture's formal qualities via its external contours (something of particular interest to later nineteenth-century German writers such as Adolf Hildebrand and Wölfflin), could actually be preferable to examining the original object.[34] And, as noted above, even careful readers did not always realise they were looking at photographs of casts.

As the review of Bode's monograph continues, the author increasingly treats the book itself and its photographic reproductions as objects worthy of attention. The author comments at length on Bode's attempts to mitigate the fact that the works being photographed are white plaster copies of bronze originals: 'In execution the twenty-five photogravures [*sic:* collotypes] leave nothing to be desired. Every detail of form and texture is admirably rendered, the ink selected being a warm brown tint, thus removing any suggestion of the plaster cast and attaining something of the glow of the originals.' The reviewer then takes the reader through the volume's illustrations step by step, much like an art historian might analyse the original statues and reliefs on the Basilica's high altar in sequence. First, the reviewer notes the reliefs depicting angels. Next, the reader is told to 'turn the pages, and we find [a relief of] the Man of Sorrows upheld by weeping angels.' The reviewer continues: 'we pass in succession the dramatic [relief] compositions of the miracles of St Anthony, full of life and action, abounding in touches of nature and showing the closest observation of all phases of humanity.' By the end of the review, bronze, plaster cast, photograph and the published book itself seem to collapse into one another, with the reviewer's analysis of Donatello's works and of the work of Bode's team of moulders, photographers and printers having become one and the same: 'these fine photogravures [*sic*: collotypes], whose subtly graded light and shade reach a semblance of reality which is little short of deceptive, may almost be said to constitute a gallery of sculpture in little. [...] Perfect in execution, abounding in all technical and manipulative excellences […]. Their empire over the imagination and their sway over the heart are equally potent.'[35] This recalls the rhetoric found in contemporary discussions of Donatello's actual sculptures, but it is applied here to photographic reproductions of white plaster casts with a dramatically different colour and texture than the dark, partially gilded bronze originals.

The ability of photographic reproductions to provide not just equivalent, but different and additional information to that obtained from the objects themselves is suggested in a monograph on Donatello published by Lord Balcarres (aka, David Lindsay) in 1903. The veins of Donatello's marble *Habbakuk* (aka, *Zuccone)* (c.1426-7 and 1435-6) on Florence's Campanile, for instance, are said by Balcarres to be 'much *more* noticeable in the photograph than when one sees the statue from the Piazza' far below. Even for a work like the *Giving of*

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[33] Emphasis added. 'Review of Wilhelm von Bode, "Donatello in Padua: das Reiterstandbild des Gattamelata und die Sculpturen im Santo"', *The Athenaeum*, no. 2955, 14 June 1884, pp. 763-4.

[34] Hildebrand's understanding of sculptural form as ideally uniplanar enormously influenced Wölfflin. See A. von Hildebrand, *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst*, Austria, J.H.E. Heitz, 1893, and the discussion in Betzer, *Animating the Antique*, Introduction, Ch. 4, and Coda; Alexander, *Kinaesthetic Knowing*, Ch. 2, passim.

[35] 'Review of Wilhelm von Bode', p. 764.

the Keys to St Peter, which could be viewed at close range in the South Kensington Museum, Balcarres claims that its 'composition [...] can *best* be judged in the photograph'.[36] A year later, Benjamin Ives Gilman, the Secretary of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, similarly noted that photographs and casts are 'complementary' to works of sculpture; rather than 'reproducing the original, each gives elements the other lacks'.[37] Wölfflin went even further. Influenced by Hildebrand's theories of sculptural relief, he insisted that sculpture should ideally be reducible to a single plane and thus it was in uniplanar reproductions (whether engraved or photographic) that a sculpture existed in its most perfect and ultimately immaterial form.[38] For Wölfflin, a photograph of a sculpture was thus not merely supplementary or even complementary, but where a work's essence could be most fully and effectively constituted.

Although Bode's costly experiment of publishing an entire volume of photographic reproductions taken from newly commissioned plaster casts understandably did not catch on, deluxe editions with high-quality tipped-in photographic reproductions of original sculpted objects, first pioneered by Robinson in 1862 with his *Fifty Photographs*, continued to be produced, even if only for a limited and fairly well-to-do readership. One example was published by J.C. Cavallucci, President of Florence's Accademia del Disegno and head of the committee organising the celebrations for the 500th anniversary of Donatello's birth in 1887. One year before the festivities began, Cavallucci published a monograph in an edition of just 200 copies dedicated to Umberto I, king of Italy, and illustrated with high-quality platinum prints (aka, platinotypes).[39] Unlike Bode's illustrations, Cavallucci's plates used Alinari photographs taken of Donatello's actual sculptures *in situ*. In the case of the *Gattamelata*, this included glimpses of the surrounding urban landscape, which had been excised from most earlier engraved and photographic reproductions (fig. 9).

Bode himself oversaw the single most ambitious set of publications on Italian Renaissance sculpture ever produced, a series of portfolio volumes issued from 1892 to 1905 under the title *Denkmäler der Renaissance - Sculptur Toscanas*.[40] The Register accompanying the set noted that the reproductions, issued in 112 batches, consisted of over 1,000 high-quality '*Lichtdrucken*' (aka, collotypes) mounted onto 567 individual boards (each 63 cm x 47 cm) and gathered into twelve portfolio boxes (fig. 11).[41] The sculptor named most often in the Register, whether as author, collaborator or inspiration, was Donatello, with approximately fifteen percent of all entries mentioning him, more than twice as many as any other sculptor.

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[36] Emphasis added to both quotations. L. Balcarres, aka, David Lindsay, *Donatello*, London and New York, Duckworth and Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903, pp. 24 and 96.
[37] B.I. Gilman, *Manual of Italian Renaissance Sculpture as illustrated in the collection of casts of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, Boston, Riverside Press, 1904, p. v. See also Baker, 'The Reproductive Continuum', pp. 485-500.
[38] See note 34 above. On sculptural immateriality in German literature in this period, see also C. MacLeod, *Fugitive Objects: Sculpture and Literature in the German Nineteenth Century*, Evanston, IL, Northwestern University Press, 2014.
[39] C.J. Cavallucci, *Vita ed opera del Donatello*, Milan, Ulrico Hoepli, 1886. On platinum prints, see Stulik and Kaplan, *The Atlas of Analytical Signatures*, ('Platinotype').
[40] W. Bode (ed.), *Denkmäler der Renaissance - Sculptur Toscanas in historischer Anordnung*, Munich, F. Bruckmann, 1892-1905, 12 portfolios and Register.
[41] The Register was published in 1905 by Bode with assistance from Frida Schottmüller.

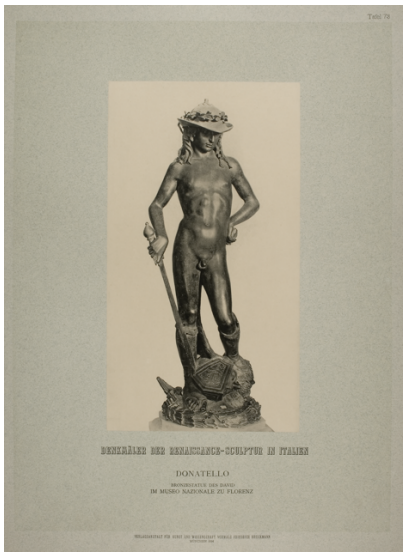



Fig. 11 (left). Bruckmann photographer, *Donatello's Bronze Statue of David,* in Wilhelm Bode, *Denkmäler der Renaissance,* 1894, portfolio 2, pl. 73, collotype print.
Fig. 12 (right). Brogi photographer, *'David' by Donatello,* in Heinrich Wölfflin, 'Wie man Skulpturen aufnehmen soll', *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, n.s. 7, 1896, p. 225, fig. 1, halftone reproduction.

The *Denkmäler* portfolios were a truly monumental—and monumentally expensive—enterprise purchased primarily (though not exclusively) by German museums and university/research institutions.[42] A reviewer writing in 1895 with the initials A.M. (possibly the American sculpture historian Allan Marquand) commented on the quality of the illustrations, as well as the cost:

> The plates are generally excellent, made from clear negatives and well printed. [...] This work, in spite of its expensive character, should find its way into all important libraries where the history of art is cultivated. [...] Whether publications of this character are thoroughly adapted to the financial capabilities of the art-loving public, the publishers doubtless know. [...] We should imagine, however, that the general public is now sufficiently educated and interested in the history of art to demand even more comprehensive corpuses of smaller illustrations at less cost.[43]

A complete set may have cost as much as 2,240 German Marks and thus would have been unaffordable for most individual academics and curators.[44] Indeed, in 1903 Ivan Tsvetaev (aka Tsvetajev), founder of Moscow's Pushkin Museum, stated that no institution in all of Russia owned the portfolios, which he claimed were too expensive even for the Director of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence, Heinrich Brockhaus, to purchase for his own institution's library—although the Kunsthistorisches Institut did eventually buy a complete set.[45]

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[42] A search of Worldcat suggests non-German institutions often owned only the unillustrated Register of plates.

[43] A.M. (Allan Marquand?), 'Review of Wilhelm Bode, "Denkmäler der Renaissance Skulptur Toscanas" ', *American Journal of Archaeology and of the History of the Fine Arts,* 10, 1, January-March 1895, p. 60.

[44] The Register notes that each of the 112 issues cost 20 German Marks, with the total cost thus as high as 2,240 German Marks. It was not possible to purchase individual issues, only complete sets.

[45] See V. Rastorguev, 'Donatello Rediscovered? A Name for the Author of the "Berlin Flagellation" and the "Hildburgh Relief"', in L. Catterson (ed.), *Florence, Berlin and Beyond:*

However, in 1891, one year before the first *Denkmäler* portfolio was issued, Bode had already launched a small-format survey, *Italienische Plastik*, aimed at a mass audience and consisting entirely of works found in the Berlin Museums, with a price of just 1.5 German Marks—about 1/1500th of the cost of the *Denkmäler* set.[46] Unlike luxury editions, publications like *Italienische Plastik* continued to include quite schematic engravings of works by Donatello and other Renaissance sculptors even well into the twentieth century, often published alongside fairly poor-quality halftone reproductions (fig. 13). Indeed, in the 1891 first edition of *Italienische Plastik*, nearly one-third of the illustrations were still engravings.[47]

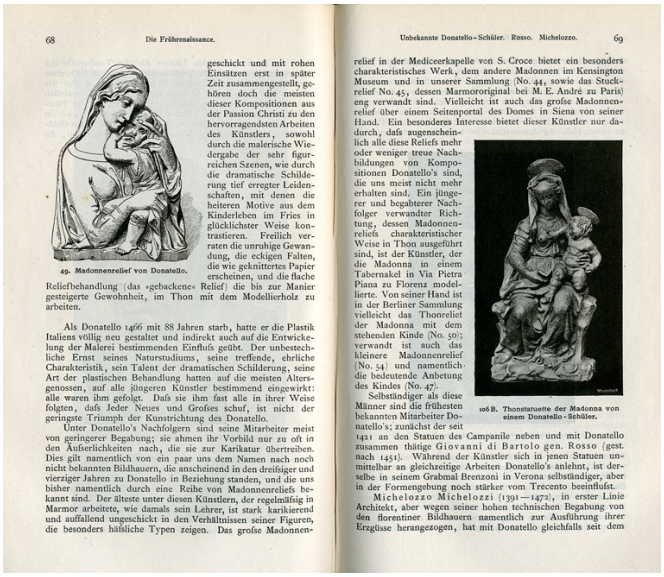

Fig. 13. Wilhelm Bode, *Italienische Plastik*, 1891, pp. 68-69. Left: Unknown printmaker, *Madonna relief by Donatello*, engraving. Right: Unknown photographer, *Terracotta Madonna statuette by Donatello follower*, halftone reproduction.

Formalism, attribution and the photography of sculpture

The mix of reproductive media in Bode's *Italienische Plastik* was most likely due to the fact that schematic engravings of some objects would have been more legible in a cheap publication than poor-quality halftone reproductions. It is thus unsurprising that until the turn of the twentieth century, some art historians continued to argue that engravings could actually be preferable to photographic reproductions. This was even more true if the latter were taken from inappropriate angles by insensitive photographers. In 1897, for instance, in the second of three articles on the photography of sculpture, Wölfflin claimed that a sixteenth-century engraving of the Apollo Belvedere (2nd century CE, Vatican Museums) had successfully

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Late Nineteenth-Century Art Markets and their Social Networks, Leiden, Brill, 2020, p. 461, n. 3. Tsvetaev claimed (also possibly incorrectly—see note 44) that a complete set cost 1,500 German Marks. The Kunsthistorisches Institut bought the portfolios in 1913, as confirmed by Margherita Naim, personal communication, 9 January 2025.

[46] W. Bode, *Die Italienische Plastik (Handbücher der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin)*, Berlin, W. Spemann, 1891 (1st ed.). The price on the cover increased to 2 Marks for the fourth edition in 1905 and 18 Marks for the sixth (final) edition in 1922.

[47] Twenty-eight percent (22 of 78) of the illustrations in the first edition of *Italienische Plastik* were engravings.

captured the statue's uniplanar design by showing the figure 'parallel to the viewer' and 'integrate[d] […] into the wall plane'. This was in sharp contrast to recent 'false' and 'intolerable' photographs that depicted the statue 'obliquely' and thus (to use Wölfflin's own formalist vocabulary) in an inappropriately 'Baroque' manner for a masterpiece of Classical sculpture.[48]

However, by the time the fifth edition of Bode's *Italienische Plastik* was published in 1911, the photographic illustration had finally triumphed over the engraving, with all but four of the book's 102 figures now consisting of halftone reproductions, including the illustration of a Marian relief attributed to Donatello that had been reproduced as an engraving in the volume's first four editions (see the left-hand side of fig. 13).[49] For Bode, criticised by contemporaries such as the art historian Maud Cruttwell for being surprisingly insensitive to the aesthetic qualities of individual art objects, the photographic and engraved reproductions that appeared in his surveys seem to have served primarily as placeholders or *aides-mémoire* for the museum objects he gathered into virtual collections.[50] In contrast, for Wölfflin, reproductions of sculpture were themselves a category of visual material to be interrogated using the same formalist terminology and concepts—'linear' versus 'painterly', 'Classical' and 'Renaissance' versus 'Baroque'—deployed in his analysis of sculptures, paintings and buildings.[51]

Photomechanical reproductions of sculpture were of interest not only to formalists like Wölfflin and curators like Bode, but also to connoisseurs given the ability of photographs to highlight hidden or overlooked details. The growing availability of photographic details of sculpture emerged from—and also contributed to—the work of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century connoisseurs such as Giovanni Morelli, Bernard Berenson, Mary Costelloe Berenson and their followers. A fairly early example is found in Meyer's 1904 monograph on Donatello.[52] As a reviewer in *The Athenaeum* noted:

> It is [...] excellently illustrated, and the author has shown real originality and discrimination in his use not only of familiar photographs of whole monuments, but also of reproductions of separate portions in detail. Not unfrequently such a treatment presents a wholly new idea of the artist's work. Thus, for instance, the separate reproduction of [...] two angels which crown the Sta. Croce Annunciation [1433-5, Florence] gives us the impression almost of a new work of Donatello's, so impossible is

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[48] The articles have been translated by the present author as H. Wölfflin, 'How One Should Photograph Sculpture [1896, 1897, 1915]', trans. G.A. Johnson, *Art History,* 36, 2013, p. 59. On Wölfflin's ambivalence towards photography and his association of the medium with the Baroque, see Alexander, *Kinaesthetic Knowing*, pp. 69-74.

[49] See W. Bode, *Die Italienische Plastik (Handbücher der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin),* Berlin, Georg Reimer, 1911 (5th ed.), p. 78. On the Marian relief's illustrations, see Johnson, 'Using the Photographic Archive', pp. 146-7.

[50] Cruttwell wrote in 1901: 'Bode is interesting. […] but he seems without any sense of what is good in art'. See F. Ventrella, 'Writing under Pressure: Maud Cruttwell and the Old Master Monograph', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 28, 2019, pp. 12-13. For Cruttwell's use of photographic illustrations, see Johnson, 'Using the Photographic Archive', p. 152.

[51] On Wölfflin's formalism and photographic reproductions, see Johnson, '*"(Un)richtige Aufnahme"'*, pp. 27-31; Alexander, *Kinaesthetic Knowing*, pp. 63-96; Betzer, *Animating the Antique*, pp. 209-212.

[52] Meyer, *Donatello*.

> it, before the monument itself [...] to give it the concentrated attention it deserves.[53] [see fig. 10]

Once again, a photographic reproduction was said to provide insights unavailable when confronting the original sculpted object *in situ*.[54]

As other scholars have discussed, photographs also played an important role in the later nineteenth-century market for Renaissance sculpture, both authentic and (as has become increasingly clear) forged.[55] The intersection of photographic reproductions with concerns about authorship and authenticity was already evident in 1875 during the celebrations in Florence for the 400th anniversary of Michelangelo's birth. The grand finale featured a public debate at which academics and artists voted on the attribution of four works associated with Michelangelo. One was the *Bruges Madonna* (c.1504, Bruges, Church of Our Lady), another the so-called *Giovannino* (*Young Baptist*), which had been discovered in the palazzo of a Pisan nobleman just one year earlier. The *Bruges Madonna* was given a unanimous thumbs up by all fourteen committee members. The verdict on the *Giovannino*'s authorship, however, was less clear-cut: while nine voted in favour of a Michelangelo attribution, three voted against, and two abstained.[56] But what, exactly, was being adjudicated? The documentary record makes it clear that the panel was actually judging neither the marble *Giovannino*, nor the marble *Madonna*, but rather plaster casts of the works that had been sent to Florence. In fact, the vast majority of the objects on display at the 1875 exhibition were casts and photographic reproductions of works attributed to Michelangelo—and casts and photographic reproductions also featured prominently at the exhibition for the Donatello anniversary organised by Cavallucci in 1887, mentioned above.[57]

In the case of the *Giovannino*, it was an Alinari photograph of the plaster cast seen head-on that was used most frequently by scholars debating the work's attribution in the pages of

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[53] 'Review of "Donatello" by Lord Balcarres and "Donatello" by Alfred Gotthold Meyer', trans. P.G. Konody', *The Athenaeum*, no. 3982, 20 February 1904, p. 248.

[54] On photographic reproductions being *preferable* to encounters with sculpted objects, see G.A. Johnson, '"The Days before Railways and Photographs": Berenson's Photographic Archive and the Displacements of Art History', in G.A. Johnson and D. Schultz (eds), *Photo Archives and the Place of Photography,* New York and Abingdon, 2025, pp. 97-114.

[55] Lynn Catterson has published extensively on this topic, e.g., see Catterson, 'From Visual Inventory to Trophy Clippings: Bardini & co. and the use of photographs in the late nineteenth-century art market', *Mitteilungen des kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz,* 62, 2020, pp. 69-91.

[56] The vote is described in *Relazione del Centenario di Michelangiolo Buonarroti nel Settembre del 1875 in Firenze*, Florence, Giuseppe Civelli, 1876, pp. 218-19.

[57] Ubaldino Peruzzi wrote on 25 June 1886 that there should be 'an exhibition [in 1887] of original works by Donatello that are available, and [when…] it is not possible to have [works] in the original, […] reproductions in gesso, drawings and photographs' should be used. My translation from P. Barocchi and G.G. Bertelà, 'L'esposizione donatelliana del 1887 e la fortuna del calchi', in L. Bernardini, A. Caputo Calloud and M. Mastrorocco (eds), *Donatello e il primo Rinascimento nei calchi della Gipsoteca* Florence, Associazione 'Amici del Bargello', 1985, p. xlvii, n. 3. The casts and '*migliaia*' of photographs at the Michelangelo exhibition are mentioned repeatedly in *Relazione del Centenario*, e.g. pp. 16, 21, 49, 58, 216-17.

newspapers, books, and scholarly journals (see the central image in fig. 14).[58] However, in 1881, half a dozen years after the Michelangelo extravaganza, Bode illustrated his first article on the *Giovannino* with images of the sculpture seen from the left and right sides, one a high-quality collotype, the other a schematic contour engraving.[59] (The former image was used as the basis for the engraving on the left side of fig. 14, while the latter print shows the statue from a very similar angle to that seen in the halftone on the right side of fig 14.) Bode believed that the less than unanimous verdict on the statue's authorship had allowed the *Giovannino* to be exported by the Italian authorities and purchased by him for the Berlin Museums, as he had been trying to do ever since he had first seen it in Pisa shortly after its rediscovery.[60] It would take nearly five years to conclude the negotiations, but in 1880, in the presence of the German Kaiser, the statue was finally uncrated in Berlin. At long last, Bode and his royal patron believed they had a work by Michelangelo to serve as the cornerstone for the Berlin Museums' growing collection of Renaissance art, a symbol of the German state's cultural and, by extension, geo-political ambitions.[61]

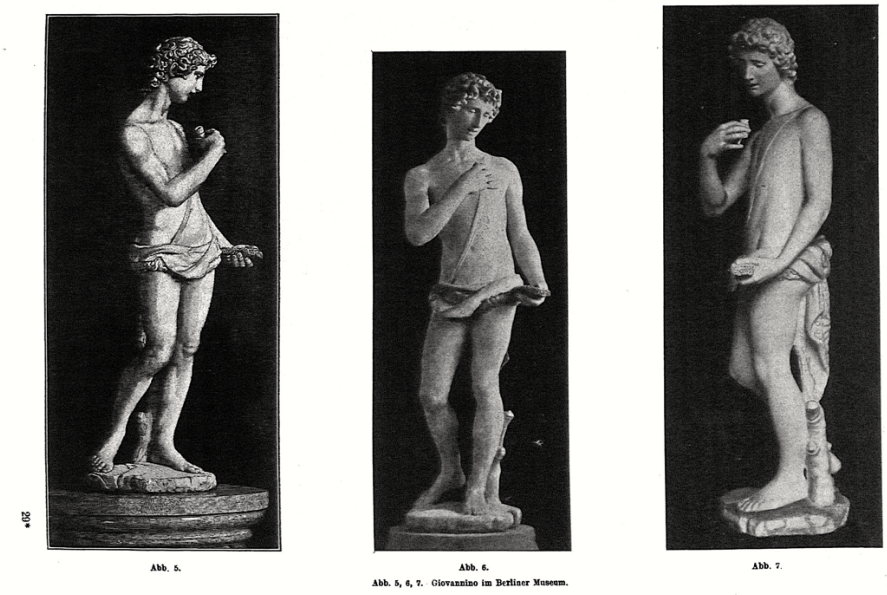

Fig. 14. Heinrich Wölfflin, 'Wie man Skulpturen aufnehmen soll', *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, n.s. 7, 1896, p. 227, fig. 5-7: *Giovannino in Berlin Museum*. Left (fig. 5): Unknown printmaker, engraving after photograph of marble statue published by Wilhelm Bode in *Jahrbuch der Preuszischen Kunstsammlungen,* 2, 1881, p. 68. Centre (fig. 6): Alinari photographer, halftone reproduction of plaster cast, c. 1890. Right (fig. 7): Unknown photographer, halftone reproduction of plaster cast, c. 1890-6.

[58] On the cast of the *Giovannino*, see S. Corsi and C. Sisi, *Michelangelo nell'Ottocento: Il centenario del 1875*, Milan, Charta, 1994, pp. 54-5. Illustrations that use or were based on the Alinari photograph of the cast include: C.H. Wilson, *Life and Works of Michelangelo Buonarroti*, London, John Murray, 1876, pl. 5; H. Wölfflin, *Die Jugendwerke des Michelangelos*, Munich, Theodor Ackermann, 1891, p. 70; M. Reymond, *La Sculpture Florentine: Seconde moitié du XVe siècle*, Florence, Alinari Frères, 1899, v. 4, p. 78.
[59] W. Bode, 'Die Italienischen Skulpturen der Renaissance in den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin', *Jahrbuch der Preuszischen Kunstsammlungen*, 2, 1881, pp. 68, 72.
[60] On Bode's purchase of the *Giovannino*, see A.M. Voci, 'Wilhelm Bode e il falso Michelangelo', *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft,* 37, 2010, pp. 265-78.
[61] See Gaehtgens, 'Wilhelm von Bode'.

Although Bode could be highly critical of anyone who relied on reproductions—whether engraved, photographic or cast in plaster—to evaluate the *Giovannino*, in practice he, his supporters and his detractors all depended on reproductions to make their cases for and against a Michelangelo attribution. In the following decades, Bode commissioned one photograph after another of the *Giovannino* in Berlin, each from a slightly different angle, as though trying to capture a hypothetical beholder's (or perhaps his own) restless perambulations around the statue.[62] However, by the time Bode died in 1929—and certainly by the time the marble was lost in a major fire in Berlin in 1945—the vast majority of scholars had come down firmly against an attribution to Michelangelo.[63]

The initial charge against Bode's attribution, as well as against his perambulating approach to viewing Renaissance sculpture, was led by none other than Heinrich Wölfflin. Like Bode, Wölfflin sought to exploit the possibilities of reproductive media to support a scholarly agenda. Unlike Bode's somewhat haphazard approach to selecting illustrations, Wölfflin instead deployed reproductions very strategically to construct formalist arguments, as demonstrated particularly clearly in his three articles on the photography of sculpture published in 1896, 1897 and 1915.[64] While Bode used reproductions showing the *Giovannino* from every conceivable angle to convince readers that the statue was a work by the young Michelangelo, Wölfflin instead insisted that genuine Renaissance sculptures—like their Classical counterparts—could only have a single dominant frontal plane that a photographer, guided by the trained eye of an enlightened art historian, should try to capture. The fact that the *Giovannino* did, in fact, have multiple satisfactory viewing angles served as proof for Wölfflin that it could not have been made in the Renaissance—an argument he presented to his readers visually by including three views of the *Giovannino* in his first article on the photography of sculpture published in 1896 (see fig. 14). For Wölfflin, photographs and engravings of the *Giovannino* suggested that the statue 'wants to be seen from various sides', thus confirming that it must be the product not of the Renaissance, but of an era of 'multi-faceted, painterly composition'—in other words, of the Baroque.[65] It is therefore not surprising that Wölfflin, based on his formal analysis of the statue's reproductions, declared that the *Giovannino*'s 'painterly content' proved it must have been produced in 'a stylistic period that extends well beyond Michelangelo's youthful oeuvre'.[66]

In the same article, Wölfflin used a photograph of a different plaster cast to suggest how genuine fifteenth-century statues *should* be photographed. While Wölfflin believed that a work like the *Giovannino* was best photographed (and illustrated) from multiple angles to reflect the formal preoccupations of the Baroque, he argued that fifteenth-century statues

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[62] For example, see W. Bode, *Florentiner Bildhauer der Renaissance* Berlin, Bruno Cassirer, 1911 (3rd ed.), pp. 304-5 (figs 164-165). On the 'kinaesthetic' viewing of sculpture in general, associated with contemporary figures such as Vernon Lee and Clementina Anstruther-Thomson and predecessors such as J.J. Winckelmann and Johann Herder, see Betzer, *Animating the Antique*, Introduction, Ch. 4, Coda, and Alexander, *Kinaesthetic Knowing*, Ch. 2, passim.

[63] The lost *Giovannino* is now attributed to Domenico Pieratti in the first half of the seventeenth century; its subject may actually be the Greek god Aristaios. See Volker Krahn's comments in 'The Lost Museum: The Berlin Painting and Sculpture Collections 70 Years After World War II,' https://artsandculture.google.com/story/ugVhYBIL5CzhKA, accessed 1 January 2025.

[64] See Wölfflin, 'How One Should Photograph Sculpture'.

[65] Ibid., p. 56.

[66] Ibid., pp. 56-57.

should only be photographed (and illustrated) head-on in order to emphasise their uniplanar, classicising and thus typically Renaissance qualities. Wölfflin supported this claim by providing a contrasting pair of photographs of Verrocchio's bronze *David* (c.1465, Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello), one taken head-on and labelled 'Correct' ('*Richtige Aufnahme*'), the other photographed slightly from one side and labelled 'Incorrect' ('*Unrichtige Aufnahme*').[67] Ironically, Wölfflin's paradigm of photographic 'correctness' was, once again, taken from a plaster cast of Verrocchio's statue, not from the original bronze in Florence.

Wölfflin also discussed the correct and incorrect way to photograph another fifteenth-century bronze *David*, this one by Donatello. At first glance, the differences between the two photographs of Donatello's *David* (c. 1435-40?, Museo Nazionale del Bargello) highlighted by Wölfflin are almost imperceptible. Nevertheless, Wölfflin insisted that the view published in his own article was 'correct' (fig. 12), while one that had been taken from slightly further to the left was 'incorrect'. Significantly, the 'incorrect' photograph singled out for criticism by Wölfflin had been published by none other than Bode in one of his lavish *Denkmäler* portfolios just two years earlier (see fig. 11). Wölfflin's formal analysis was thus ultimately focused not on Donatello's sculpture, whether the original bronze or its plaster copy, but on its photographic reproductions and how such images revealed how others saw (and, in his opinion, often misunderstood) such works.

Wölfflin's belief that the formal analysis of photographic reproductions was a way of revealing different ways of seeing (and understanding) art is confirmed in his influential *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (*Principles of Art History*) first published in 1915, the same year in which the last of his articles on the photography of sculpture appeared. In the key chapter on 'The Linear and the Painterly', Wölfflin included a halftone reproduction of a Renaissance statue by Jacopo Sansovino, which he contrasted with an illustration on the facing page of a Baroque sculpture (fig. 15).[68] However, instead of assessing Sansovino's statue, it was the work's reproduction that attracted Wölfflin's attention:

> The illustrations here are too small to get a clear impression of the treatment of individual forms, but the contrast between the two styles nevertheless makes itself resolutely felt. First of all, the *James* by Sansovino [c.1511-18, Florence Cathedral] is an example of the classical silhouette effect. Unfortunately, as is so often the case, the photograph has not quite been taken from [a Renaissance sculpture's] the typical frontal view, and the rhythm comes out somewhat vaguely as a result. […] [T]he photographer has moved too far to the left. The consequences of this mistake are palpable everywhere […]. [However,] [w]hen one takes up the correct position everything at once becomes clear.[69]

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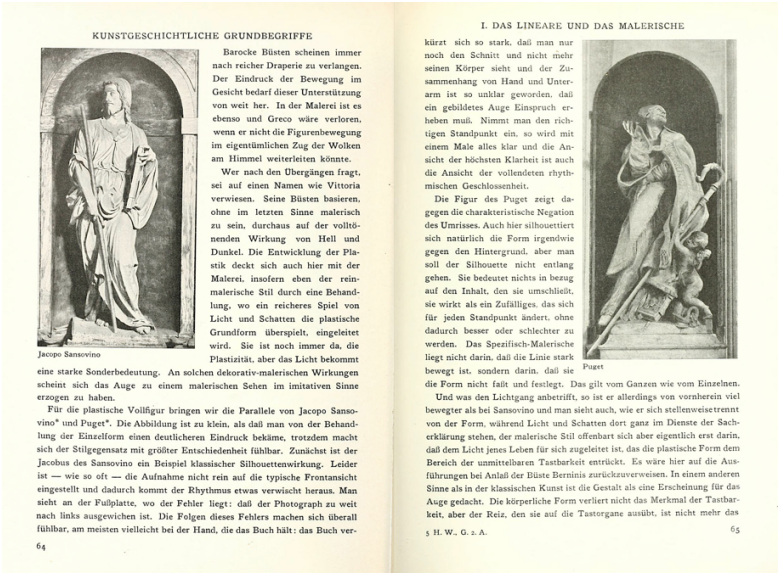
[67] Johnson, '*"(Un)richtige Aufnahme"*', p. 12, fig. 1. On Wölfflin's comparative method in general, see Alexander, *Kinaesthetic Knowing*, pp. 63-96.

[68] This pair of illustrations is also discussed in G.A. Johnson, '"The Life of Objects": Sculpture as Subject and Object of the Camera's Lens', in H. Buddeus, K. Masterová and V. Lahoda (eds), *Instant Presence: Representing Art in Photography,* Prague, Artefactum, 2017, p. 51 and fig. 20. On the book's illustrations in general, see E. Levy, 'Wölfflin's "Principles of Art History" (1915-2015): A Prolegomenon for Its Second Century', in Levy and Weddigen, pp. 4-9.

[69] H. Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Early Modern Art* [1915], trans. J. Blower, ed. E. Levy and T. Weddington, Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, pp. 141-2.



KUNSTGESCHICHTLICHE GRUNDBEGRIFFE

Barocke Büsten scheinen immer nach reicher Draperie zu verlangen. Der Eindruck der Bewegung im Gesicht bedarf dieser Unterstützung von weit her. In der Malerei ist es ebenso und Greco wäre verloren, wenn er nicht die Figurenbewegung im eigentümlichen Zug der Wolken am Himmel weiterleiten könnte.

Wer nach den Übergängen fragt, sei auf einen Namen wie Vittoria verwiesen. Seine Büsten basieren, ohne im letzten Sinne malerisch zu sein, durchaus auf der volltönenden Wirkung von Hell und Dunkel. Die Entwicklung der Plastik deckt sich auch hier mit der Malerei, insofern eben der reinmalerische Stil durch eine Behandlung, wo ein reicheres Spiel von Licht und Schatten die plastische Grundform überspielt, eingeleitet wird. Sie ist noch immer da, die Plastizität, aber das Licht bekommt eine starke Sonderbedeutung. An solchen dekorativ-malerischen Wirkungen scheint sich das Auge zu einem malerischen Sehen im imitativen Sinne erzogen zu haben.

Jacopo Sansovino

Für die plastische Vollfigur bringen wir die Parallele von Jacopo Sansovino* und Puget*. Die Abbildung ist zu klein, als daß man von der Behandlung der Einzelform einen deutlicheren Eindruck bekäme, trotzdem macht sich der Stilgegensatz mit größter Entschiedenheit fühlbar. Zunächst ist der Jacobus des Sansovino ein Beispiel klassischer Silhouettenwirkung. Leider ist — wie so oft — die Aufnahme nicht rein auf die typische Frontansicht eingestellt und dadurch kommt der Rhythmus etwas verwischt heraus. Man sieht an der Fußplatte, wo der Fehler liegt: daß der Photograph zu weit nach links ausgewichen ist. Die Folgen dieses Fehlers machen sich überall fühlbar, am meisten vielleicht bei der Hand, die das Buch ver-

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I. DAS LINEARE UND DAS MALERISCHE

kürzt sich so stark, daß man nur noch den Schnitt und nicht mehr seinen Körper sieht und der Zusammenhang von Hand und Unterarm ist so unklar geworden, daß ein gebildetes Auge Einspruch erheben muß. Nimmt man den richtigen Standpunkt ein, so wird mit einem Male alles klar und die Ansicht der höchsten Klarheit ist auch die Ansicht der vollendeten rhythmischen Geschlossenheit.

Die Figur des Puget zeigt dagegen die charakteristische Negation des Umrisses. Auch hier silhouettiert sich natürlich die Form irgendwie gegen den Hintergrund, aber man soll der Silhouette nicht entlang gehen. Sie bedeutet nichts in bezug auf den Inhalt, den sie umschließt, sie wirkt als ein Zufälliges, das sich für jeden Standpunkt ändert, ohne dadurch besser oder schlechter zu werden. Das Spezifisch-Malerische liegt nicht darin, daß die Linie stark bewegt ist, sondern darin, daß sie die Form nicht faßt und festlegt. Das gilt vom Ganzen wie vom Einzelnen.

Puget

Und was den Lichtgang anbetrifft, so ist er allerdings von vornherein viel bewegter als bei Sansovino und man sieht auch, wie er sich stellenweisetrennt von der Form, während Licht und Schatten dort ganz im Dienste der Sacherklärung stehen, der malerische Stil offenbart sich aber eigentlich erst darin, daß dem Licht jenes Leben für sich zugeleitet ist, das die plastische Form dem Bereich der unmittelbaren Tastbarkeit entrückt. Es wäre hier auf die Ausführungen bei Anlaß der Büste Berninis zurückzuverweisen. In einem anderen Sinne als in der klassischen Kunst ist die Gestalt als eine Erscheinung für das Auge gedacht. Die körperliche Form verliert nicht das Merkmal der Tastbarkeit, aber der Reiz, den sie auf die Tastorgane ausübt, ist nicht mehr das

5 H. W., G. z. A.

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Fig. 15. Heinrich Wölfflin, 'The Linear and the Painterly', *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, 1915, pp. 64-65. Left: Unknown photographer, *Jacopo Sansovino* ('St James'), halftone reproduction. Right: Unknown photographer, *Puget* ('St Alessandro Sauli'), halftone reproduction.

This slippage from the formal analysis of a statue to the formal analysis of its photographic reproduction is not unique to Wölfflin, as examples discussed above have suggested. In Wölfflin's case, however, this slippage is related to his broader project to explore changes in vision itself over time—or as he famously put it in the introduction to *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, 'seeing as such has its own history'.[70] Exploring this history through photographic and engraved reproductions of Renaissance sculpture was, for Wölfflin, as much the proper 'object' of art historical enquiry as was the analysis of original works of art. While we may no longer agree with Wölfflin's conclusions about individual statues or even entire eras, interrogating the two-dimensional reproductions of Donatello's *oeuvre* and that of other Renaissance sculptors not only in formal terms, but also in terms of the reproductive media used and the socio-historical contexts in which they were made and disseminated, provides new and valuable insights into the early history of art history as a discipline. It also reminds us just how central photographic—and now digital—reproductions continue to be in our own scholarly and curatorial practices well into the twenty-first century.

[70] Ibid., p. 93.