

 <p>Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Antje Voigt [CC BY-NC-SA]</p>	<p>Object: David mit dem Haupt des Goliath</p> <p>Museum: Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst Am Kupfergraben 10117 Berlin 030 / 266 42 54 01 sbm@smb.spk-berlin.de</p> <p>Collection: Skulpturensammlung</p> <p>Inventory number: 2262</p>
---	---

## Description

Donatello

David with the Head of Goliath

Cast ca. 1460-70 after a wax model by Donatello ca. 1455

Bronze

Height: 37 cm

The socle dates from the early 19th century and is already visible in a 1896 photograph of the bronze in the Neues Museum, Berlin.

Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Skulpturensammlung, Inv. SKS 2262.

Bode-Museum, on view.

### Provenance

Private collection, Florence; Carlo and Giuliano Della Porta, Gubbio (1887); private collection, Faenza; Bayersdörfer Collection, Munich; London, Henry Joseph Pfungst (until 1895); Berlin, Skulpturensammlung/Neues Museum (1896-1904); Berlin, Skulpturensammlung/Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum (1904-1939); Berlin, storage (1939-1945); Merkers, storage (1945); Wiesbaden, Central Collecting Point (1945-1956); West Berlin, Skulpturensammlung/Museum Dahlem (1956-1990); Berlin, Skulpturensammlung/Museum Dahlem (1990-1997); Berlin, storage (1997-2006); Berlin, Skulpturensammlung/Bode-Museum (since 2006).

### Acquisition

Bought in London from Henry Joseph Pfungst (acquisition file n°1451/95 in the Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin).

#### Other Version

- Washington DC, National Gallery of Art. Provenance: Kenneth Clark, Saltwood Castle (Kent); Sackler collection.

#### Exhibitions

Italian Renaissance Sculpture in the Time of Donatello, Detroit, The Detroit Institute of Arts, 23 October 1985-5 January 1986 and Fort Worth, Kimbell Museum of Art, 22 February-5 April 1986, cat. 25.

Donatello e i suoi, Florence, Forte del Belvedere, 15 June-7 September 1986, cat. 32. (possibly Montreal, 1993)

Il bronzo e l'oro. Il David del Verrocchio restaurato, Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 7 October-9 November 2003; Atlanta, High Museum of Art, 22 November 2003-8 February 2004; Washington DC, National Gallery of Art, 13 February-21 March 2004.

#### Description

This statuette represents the biblical hero David, the future king of Israel, after he killed Goliath, who was terrorizing his people. Although a young boy with far less physical strength than his rival, David was wily: he threw a stone with his sling, hitting Goliath on the head, killing him at once. David then decapitated the giant and came back to his people, showing them the enemy's head. He is seen here, triumphant, with one foot resting on the head; the back of his left hand rests graciously on his raised thigh. In his right hand, David holds an object meant to be the sling, formerly extended by a rope in another material. He is dressed in an Antique tunic, a cape on his shoulders and what seems to be a cap on his head. While some parts of the work are finely chiseled (such as David's legs and arms), others are left unfinished: this is most obviously the case for the hero's face, his right foot or the rear of the sculpture.

The work first became known in 1887, when it was exhibited as a Donatello in the monographic exhibition in Florence marking the fifth centenary of the sculptor's birth. Said then to be owned by a Florentine collector, it changed hands several times until it was bought by Wilhelm Bode in 1895 for the Berlin Museums (the inventory book of the Bode-Museum indicates that it comes from the collection of Henry Joseph Pfungst in London). Bode 1896 endorsed the ancient attribution to Donatello, and connected the sculpture with a celebrated marble ascribed to the same artist then in the Palazzo Martelli, the so-called David of the Casa Martelli (now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, Widener Collection). Even though there are some differences between the two sculptures, not only in size and material, but also in the mantle draped around the bronze David and absent from the marble version, the pose of the two figures is strikingly similar (see Parronchi 1980 for a photo montage of both sculptures). The prevailing theory for much of the twentieth century was that the David in Berlin had been cast from a wax model for the David of the Casa

Martelli (see especially Schlegel 1968).  
A

Entstehungsort stilistisch: Italien

## Basic data

Material/Technique:

Bronze

Measurements:

Höhe: 54 cm (mit Marmorsockel); Höhe: 37  
cm; Breite: 10,5 cm; Tiefe: 10,5 cm

## Events

Created	When	1440-1460
	Who	Donatello (1386-1466)
	Where	

## Keywords

- Bronze