

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-17078-9 - Nicola Pisano and the Revival of Sculpture in Italy

G. H. and E. R. Crichton

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NICOLA PISANO
and the
REVIVAL OF SCULPTURE IN ITALY

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1. *Pisa. Pulpit in Baptistery.*

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BY

G. H. & E. R. CRICHTON



CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1938

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521170789

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First published 1938

First paperback edition 2010

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-17078-9 Paperback

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P R E F A C E

THE pulpit in the Baptistery at Pisa marks a turning-point in the history of Italian sculpture. In order therefore to emphasise the peculiar significance of Nicola Pisano in the long series of great Italian sculptors, an attempt has been made in this volume to set his sculpture against the background out of which it arose. For this purpose the authors have given a short account of the development of sculpture in Italy in the Romanesque period, founded on personal observation and the study of the leading authorities on the subject. They are indebted not only to the general histories on Italian art by Venturi and Toesca, but also to the detailed studies of particular districts by Bertaux, Salmi, Wackernagel and Zimmermann, and to the works of A. Gardner and other authorities on medieval sculpture in France.

In the second part of the book the work of Nicola Pisano has been approached from the descriptive and iconographical point of view rather than from that of art criticism. The pulpits in Pisa and Siena and the fountain in Perugia contain in a small compass the same themes, religious and secular, which on a larger scale are presented on the portals of the great French cathedrals. To deal with this material adequately would require a large treatise, but in the hope of rendering the book of assistance to students and the general reader, a short account of each subject has been given as it arises, and reference has been made to illustrations contained in the histories of Italian art already mentioned and in the works of Dalton, Mâle, Künstle and Bréhier whose researches have thrown so much light on this complicated field.

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PREFACE

Nearly a century has passed since the controversy arose as to the place of origin of Nicola Pisano, and many distinguished scholars have entered the lists on one side or the other. The result has been that the style and technique of his work have been subjected to searching analysis for years past, and the authors owe much in this connection to Frey's edition of Vasari's *Lives*, Swarzenski's book on Nicola Pisano, and the monographs of Venturi and Sauerlandt on Giovanni Pisano. They desire to express their debt to all these writers, and also to acknowledge the kindness and hospitality they have received from the Director and Staff of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence. Four of the illustrations (plates 33, 34, 35, 36) are reproduced from his *Medieval Sculpture in France*, by the kindness of Mr Arthur Gardner whom the authors take this opportunity to thank, as well as the officials of the Cambridge University Press for their care in the production of this book. Permission to print the sonnet by Carducci has been granted by the courtesy of the publishers, S. A. Nicola Zanichelli, Bologna.

G. H. C.

E. R. C.

Dulmain Bridge

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NICOLA PISANO

*Al sorriso d'April che da la tarda
Vetrata rompe e illumina la messa
Par che di greca leggiadria riarda
Il marmo funeral de la contessa.*

*Su la divota gente al suol dimessa
La voce va de l'organo gagliarda,
E sorge e tuona e mormora compressa,
E il sol dardeggia. E Nicolò riguarda.*

*Per la dischiusa porta la marina
Vedesi lungi tremolare, invia
Odori il vento, l'infiorato china*

*Mandorlo i rami. E tra la litania
Che invoca e prega, in umiltà divina
Da la gloria di Fedra esce Maria.*

CARDUCCI

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