

CHAPTER III.

THE COSMATI AND PIETRO CAVALLINI.

It is characteristic of Italian historians that their opinions and ideas as to the revival of art are frequently biassed by narrow views and local prejudices. Far more important in their eyes was the claim of some favoured city to the honour of that revival than a true and comprehensive exposition of the extent or peculiarity, the causes which led to it, or the effects which it produced. True of Florence, of Sienna, and of Pisa, this general reproach would be unjustly extended to the historians of Roman art, who, on the contrary, have done little to illustrate the names of the Cosmati, and their cotemporaries.¹ These artists, whose history fills the whole of the thirteenth century were utterly unknown to Vasari; yet they were not without influence on the general development of Italian sculpture, architecture, and painting. Nay had not the policy of the papacy led to a memorable schism, and thus deprived Rome for a time of its influence, it is likely that that capital might have played a considerable part in the history of the revival of art, and that the Cosmati would have been celebrated as the forerunners of a purely Roman school.

¹ The Cosmati have been noticed by Agincourt, by Cicognara, and by Della Valle. The latter (*Stor. del Duomo di Orvieto* ub. sup. p. 264) states that he treated of this artistic family in an academic oration at Rome in 1788, but this oration seems to have remained unpublished. Rumohr (*Forschungen*, ub. sup. Vol. I, p. 270—1) devotes a few lines to them. The merits of the Cosmati were best understood by Karl Witte of Breslau, of whom an interesting paper appeared in the *Kunstblatt* (Stuttgart) and