

works of Pistoia, sculpture was homely in conception and childish in execution; — that in Parma and Lucca, though still rude and defective, it had a conventional Christian spirit; — and that in the early part of the thirteenth century, it maintained that spirit at Pisa without any very sensible progress in the expression of form. Such was the character of sculpture when, in 1260, Niccola Pisano completed the pulpit of the Baptistery of Pisa.

This remarkable monument, erected in the form of a hexagon, rested upon nine columns; viz. one, central, based on the shoulders of a man, a griffin, and animals, quaintly grouped together, three reposing on the backs of lions and a lioness with her cubs, three on simple pediments, and two supporting the steps. A trefoil arch spanned the space between each of the six principal pillars; and pilasters starting from the capitals, regulated the ornamented cornice of the pulpit. In front of each of these pilasters stood a statue symbolizing one of the Virtues. Fortitude was represented by a figure of the Juvenile Hercules with a lion's cub on his right shoulder and his left hand in the mouth of a slain lion; — Fidelity by a female holding a dog in her arms; — Charity by a woman with an infant. Of other figures, the emblematic meaning was less apparent. For instance at the angle near the steps, an angel was represented sitting on a lion with a deer in its teeth. In one hand, he bore the stump of a sceptre, in the other a small bas-relief of the crucifixion. Possibly this was intended for the symbol of Faith. In the births of the arches four evangelists and six prophets were ingeniously placed. Seven triple columns supported the parapet of the pulpit, and framed five bas-reliefs representing the birth of the Saviour, the adoration of the wise men, the presentation in the temple, the crucifixion and the Last Judgment.

In these bas-reliefs Niccola displayed but elementary knowledge of the maxims of composition. In one of the subjects, that of the adoration of the Magi, a certain symmetry might be found, but elsewhere all equilibrium of mass was absent. Yet in the midst of an obvious imitation of the antique, and subservience of pagan models to Christian subjects and thought, Niccola showed himself gifted with a lively fancy, a considerable talent in the expression of the ruder forms of passion such as despair,