

Giovanni Pisano at the Metropolitan Museum Revisited

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THE METROPOLITAN Museum of Art made three different purchases of sculptures attributed to Giovanni Pisano during a period of eleven years starting in 1910. All the sculptures are carved of Carrara marble. The first purchase in the series was a pair of pilasters, each with two angels blowing long trumpets, as seen in representations of the Last Judgment (Figures 1–4). In excellent condition, these sculptures bear some remains of polychromy, principally in the deeply carved areas.¹ The second purchase, made in 1918, was a lectern in the shape of an eagle grasping an open book in its claws, with an octagonal bookrest (Figures 5, 6). The head, once broken off, had been reattached.² The third purchase, made in 1921, was a standing angel with a lion and an ox crouching on either side, all three of the figures holding closed books (Figures 7–9). This sculpture is, obviously, a representation of the symbols of the Evangelists—a tetramorph—but the symbol of St.

John, the eagle, is missing. Like the pair with the angels, this pilaster presents remains of polychromy.³

Though the relationship of these sculptures with Giovanni Pisano's work was pointed out from the beginning, their provenance was not clear. The angels were first published among new acquisitions by Joseph Breck, shortly after they were bought, as the work of a follower of Giovanni.⁴ Though they were identified by Wilhelm Valentiner as by Giovanni himself, and possibly from the pulpit of the Duomo of Pisa,⁵ it was not until 1932 that Franziska Fried made a positive identification of the two angel pilasters as coming from the Pisa pulpit.⁶ She did not seem to know, however, of the existence of the incomplete tetramorph and the eagle lectern in the Museum's collection, despite their having been published, even if briefly, by Breck in 1921.⁷ The tetramorph was exhibited in Detroit in 1938 and identified by Valentiner as from the Pisa

1. Acc. no. 10.203.1: height 33½ in. (85.1 cm.); width 4¾ in. (10.2 cm.). Acc. no. 10.203.2: height 33¾ in. (84.5 cm.); width 9½ in. (22.9 cm.).

2. Acc. no. 18.70.26: height 28 in. (71.1 cm.); width 23 in. (58.4 cm.); width of base 6¾ in. (17.2 cm.); depth of base 9½ in. (24.1 cm.).

3. Acc. no. 21.101: height 33½ in. (84.2 cm.); width (at the uncarved part of the back) 3¾ in. (9.5 cm.). Like the two angel pilasters, the tetramorph was purchased in London from the English collector and scholar R. Langton Douglas and came from the collection of John Ruskin. The provenance of the eagle lectern was very vague: "a church in Pisa."

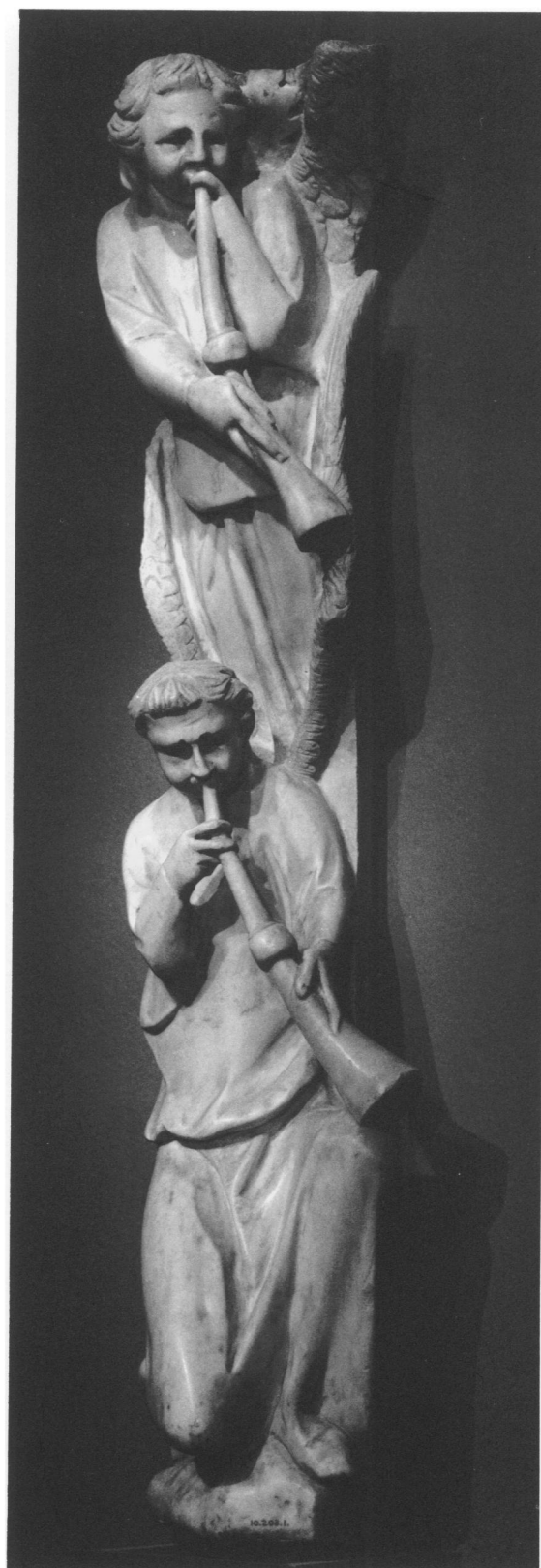
4. Joseph Breck, "Giovanni Pisano: A Recent Purchase of Two Sculptured Pilasters," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 6 (1911) p. 44. Breck believed the angels to have "enframed a relief of the Last Judgment in some sculptured pulpit of which we have no record." And later on: "It is only in occasional passages where the exaggeration is felt to be a mannerism rather than an explanation that ground is given for questioning an unqualified attribution to the master himself."

5. Wilhelm R. Valentiner, "Werke um Giovanni Pisano in Amerika," *Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst* 1919–1920, p. 114.

6. Franziska Fried, "Zwei Engelgruppen von Giovanni's Domkanzel in Pisa," *Josef Strzygowski Festschrift* (Vienna, 1932) pp. 54–56, pl. 10.

7. Joseph Breck, "Sculpture by Giovanni Pisano," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 16 (1921) pp. 145–146, ill. The angels appear this time as by Giovanni.

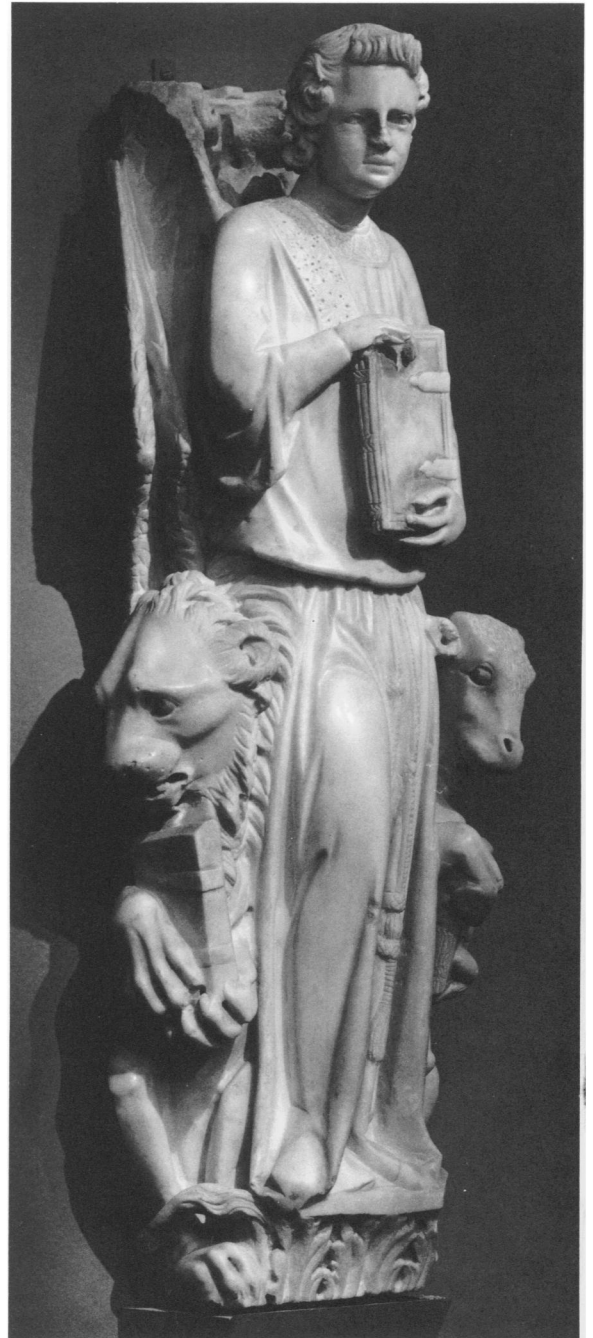
FIGURES 1-4
Two pilasters from
the parapet of a pulpit
with two pairs of
angels blowing the
trumpets of the Last
Judgment. The
Metropolitan
Museum of Art,
Frederick C. Hewitt
Fund, 10.203.1, 2





FIGURES 5, 6

Lectern with the eagle, symbol of St. John the Evangelist, for the reading of the Gospels in a pulpit. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 18.70.26



FIGURES 7-9

Pilaster with the symbols of three Evangelists—the angel of St. Matthew, the lion of St. Mark, and the ox of St. Luke—from the parapet of a pulpit. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 21.101

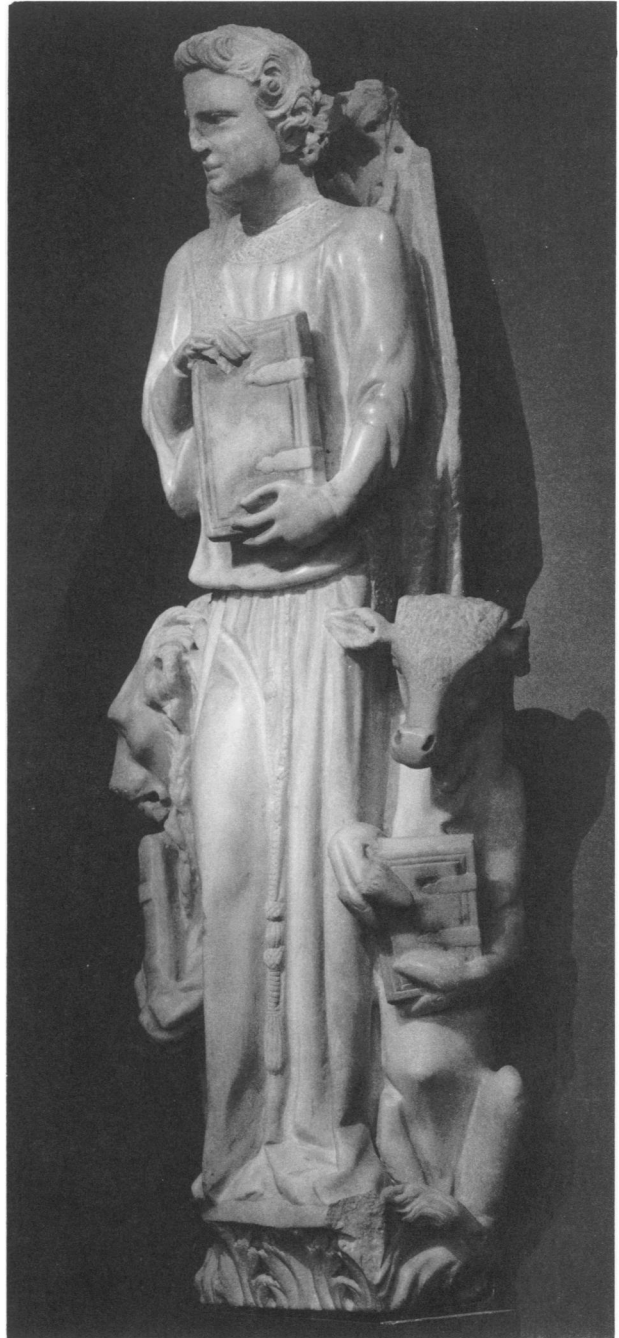




FIGURE 10

Pulpit of the church of Sant'Andrea, Pistoia, by Giovanni Pisano (photo: Brogi)

The identification of the angels of the Last Judgment and the tetramorph with the parapet of Giovanni Pisano's pulpit in the Duomo of Pisa has been generally accepted, though sometimes with reservations due mostly to the difference in style between them.⁹ To explain these differences, one has to consider the circumstances surrounding the construction of the Pisa pulpit, the lack of stylistic unity of its sculptural components, and the adventurous existence of the pulpit itself.

Having collaborated with his father, Nicola, in the pulpit for the Duomo of Siena (1265–1268) and the monumental fountain of Perugia (completed in 1278), Giovanni produced some works on his own prior to the pulpit for the Duomo of Pisa; the most important are the façade of the Duomo of Siena (1248–1299), for which he served as both architect and sculptor, and the pulpit for the church of Sant'Andrea in Pistoia, completed in 1301 (Figure 10). In the latter, particularly, Giovanni abandoned Nicola's monumental classicism, sacrificing perfection of form for a much stronger, deeper, and sometimes tormented expressionism. The figures in the reliefs of the parapet of the Sant'Andrea pulpit, and even more, in the pulpit of Pisa—above all in the scenes of a dramatic character, like the Massacre of the Innocents or the Last Judgment—cannot be isolated from one another. They all breathe together, suffer together, scream together, as in a soulful lament coming from the very depths of the earth. Only in a work like Picasso's *Guernica* can one find a parallel for Giovanni's heartrending tragedy (Figure 11). If the sculptures of the pilasters between

pulpit.⁸ The unfortunate and misleading way that the three pilasters and the lectern were exhibited at the Museum for many years is, perhaps, one of the reasons why these sculptures, which are among the very few examples in the medieval collection that can be attributed to a well-known artist and traced to dated monuments, have been almost completely neglected and left to the sporadic attention of outside scholars who, in most cases, only knew them by photographs.

8. W. R. Valentiner, *Italian Gothic and Early Renaissance Sculptures*, exhibition catalogue (Detroit, 1938) no. 5, ill.

9. In a conversation with the author, held in Florence in 1963, the German Pisano scholar Harald Keller expressed no doubts about the Metropolitan pilasters' coming from the Pisa pulpit. He believed, however, that the angels were by Giovanni himself while the tetramorph was probably the work of an assistant. John Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture* (London, 1955) p. 181, mentions the three fragments (angels and tetramorph) as coming from the Pisa pulpit.



FIGURE 11

The Massacre of the Innocents from the pulpit of Sant'Andrea, Pistoia (photo: Brogi)

the reliefs both at Pistoia and at Pisa and the sibyls and prophets in the spandrels of the arches are more conservative than the figures in most of the reliefs, they are still far from Nicola's classicism and give a feeling of arrested movement, with frequent use of *contrapposto*, which goes beyond the Renaissance and into mannerism.

All these characteristics are consistent throughout the Pistoia pulpit, where the presence of assistants is hard to detect, and even if they were there, Giovanni must have given this work his undivided attention. Moreover, the Pistoia pulpit has not suffered any great damage, losses, or transformations, perhaps because of

its being situated in a small church and in a city with a life much more peaceful than that of Pisa.

At the peak of his career, Giovanni was commissioned by Burgundio di Tado, *operaio* of the Duomo of Pisa, to carve a pulpit to replace the twelfth-century one by Master Guglielmo, which went eventually to the cathedral of Cagliari in Sardinia. If Guglielmo's pulpit was considered old-fashioned in 1302, now it is admired as one of the greatest achievements of the Italian Romanesque.

A series of documents dated from 1302 to 1305, preserved in the Archivio di Stato of Pisa, gives all kinds of details about the acquisition and transportation of

the blocks of marble from Carrara to Pisa and the salaries, names, and towns or regions of origin of a considerable number of workmen who assisted in different capacities in the making of the pulpit.¹⁰ Though most of these assistants must have been just stonecutters, some of them were probably sculptors in their own right even if they were working under the instructions of the *caput magister*, Giovanni Pisano, son of Nicola. The variety of styles and quality of craftsmanship seen in the sculptures of the Pisa pulpit—and not apparent in Pistoia—indicate also that Giovanni left a great deal of the work in the hands of those up to now unidentified assistants who came not only from Pisa but from other Tuscan cities like Florence, Siena, and Pistoia, and from Lombardy.¹¹ Several reasons why Giovanni gave less of himself to this pulpit than to the Sant'Andrea one could be proposed. First, the work was too big and elaborate; second, it had followed too closely the carving of the previous pulpit, and for an artist of an obviously strong and probably difficult temperament—as shown in his quarrel with his patron for economic reasons in 1307—to repeat the same subject in a similar way can be deadly; third, perhaps the master had to attend to other commitments outside Pisa. It cannot be because he was in decline as an artist, as his last major work, the funerary monument of Margaret of Luxembourg, started in 1311, is one of his greatest works and certainly the one in which he shows the deepest and most tender feelings. The pulpit of Pisa was finished in 1310.

As is well known, the Duomo of Pisa was almost completely destroyed by fire in 1595, but the dome did not collapse and protected the pulpit sheltered under it. When the building was reconstructed some years later, Giovanni's pulpit—like Master Guglielmo's three centuries earlier—was considered obsolete, and by 1602 all its marble components were put in storage. Some of

FIGURE 12

Pulpit of the Duomo of Pisa, by Giovanni Pisano and assistants, as reconstructed by Pèleo Bacci (photo: Alinari)

them were used in a new pulpit by the Florentine Chiarissimo Fancelli in 1630, while the rest, with the exception of a few elements that were kept in the cathedral, were put away in the Campo Santo. During the nineteenth century several of the carvings were separated from the rest and some were lost, making it impossible to return the pulpit to its original appearance.

Though there are some descriptions of the pulpit before the fire, none of them is sufficiently informative to allow an accurate reconstruction, even if copies or casts of the separated parts could be incorporated into it.¹² After several attempts, it was not until 1926 that the pulpit was reconstructed as it appears now following Pèleo Bacci's conscientious and rather convincing study and project (Figure 12).¹³ For reasons that are not clear, the pulpit was not returned to its original location, at the intersection of the choir and the right transept, but was placed on the left side of the central nave near the left transept. The sequence of the stories in the parapet was no problem because they follow the New Testament from the birth of the Baptist to the Last Judgment, but other elements, such as the supporting sculptures that were scattered or are missing, have been reinstalled in an arbitrary manner because the complete program of the pulpit is unknown. Though the Pistoia pulpit is considerably smaller, and hexagonal instead of octagonal, the scenes represented in both are similar, and so are the sibyls and prophets of the spandrels. But the Pistoia pulpit stands on seven columns, three of the outer ones supported by a lion,

10. The documents of the construction of the Pisa pulpit were published in Pèleo Bacci, *La ricostruzione del Pergamo di Giovanni Pisano nel Duomo di Pisa* (Milan, 1926) pp. 22 ff.

11. The name of Tino di Camaino was brought into the discussion of the Pisa pulpit by I. Benvenuto Supino, "Il Pergamo di Giovanni Pisano nel Duomo di Pisa," *Archivio Storico dell'Arte* 5, fasc. 2 (1892), but in association with the wrong statues. He changed his opinion a few years later in his *Arte Pisana* (Pisa, 1904). Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic*, p. 182, also saw the possibility of Tino's intervention.

12. Bacci, *Ricostruzione*, p. 19, published these descriptions, one by Marco di Bartolomeo Rustici from about 1425, which refers to columns with figures, and another by an anonymous writer, included in the "Codex Magliabechiano," also from the fifteenth century, which only mentions "undici colonne di pietre fini."

13. As Supino's intervention in 1892 to stop a project of reconstruction by Fontana, whose wooden model is preserved in the Museo Civico of Pisa, is well known and sufficiently published, I am not going into further discussion of the problem.

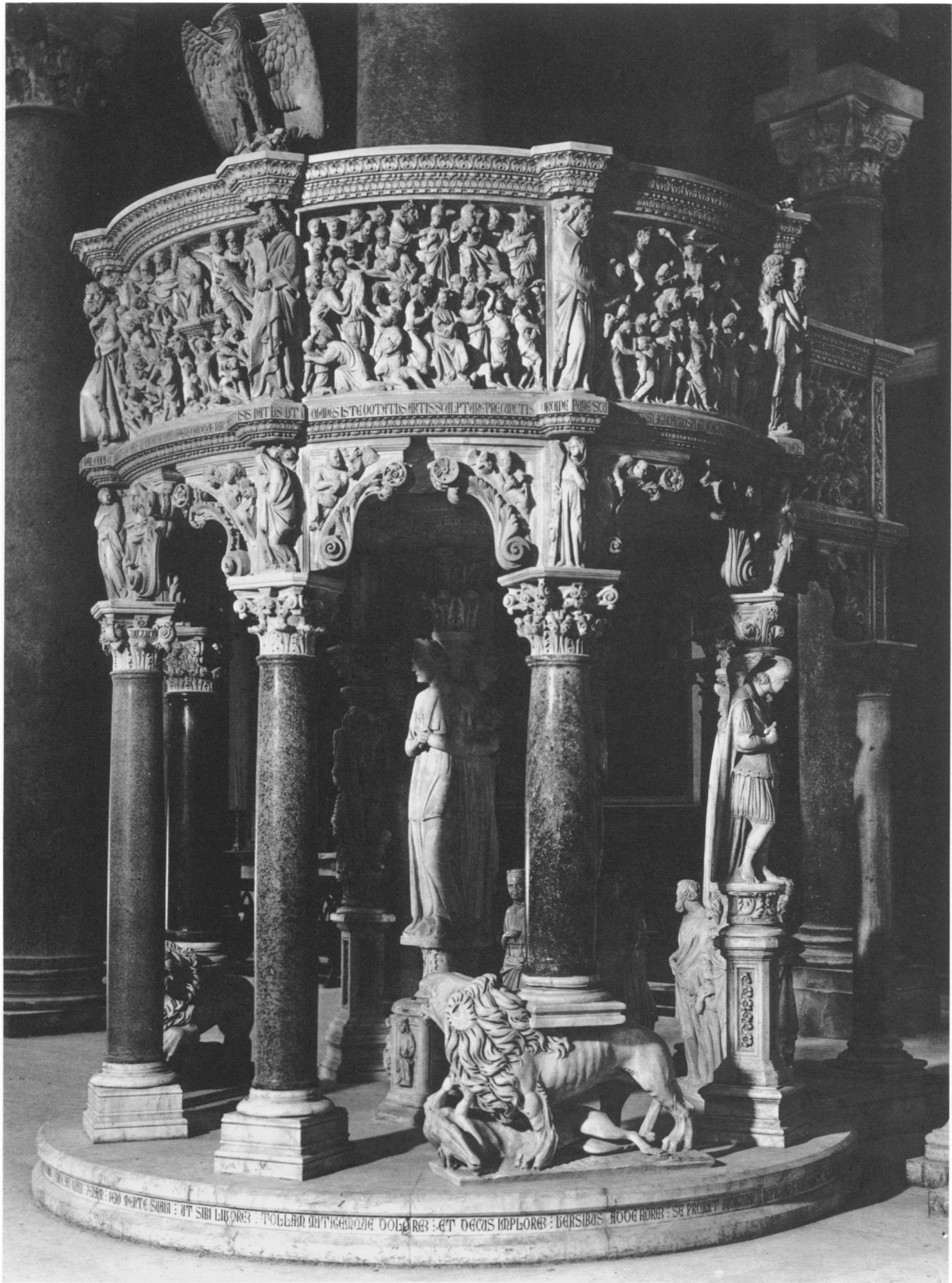




FIGURE 13

Detail of the Last Judgment from the pulpit of the Duomo of Siena, by Nicola and Giovanni Pisano (photo: Alinari)

a lioness, and a crouching atlas, and the middle one by a group with a griffin, an eagle, and a lion; furthermore, it has no supporting sculptures of human shape that could have served as prototypes for the Pisa pulpit.

When Bacci made his reconstruction, two of the sibyls were in Berlin, where they were subsequently destroyed in the fire of 1945 in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum. Bacci replaced them with nineteenth-century copies. He did not know of the existence of the two

pilasters with angels, which, as in Siena and Pistoia (Figures 13, 14), should have been next to the reliefs of the Last Judgment.¹⁴ He suspected, however, that the pulpit must have had a tetramorph, as in the two pulpits just mentioned.¹⁵ To replace it in his reconstruction, Bacci used a prophet carved by the Siennese sculptor Tito Sarrochi (1873–1922), who worked on one of the previous plans for reconstruction that were never accomplished.

14. Instead of figurative pilasters at the beginning and the end of the parapet, Bacci used two ornamental bands.

15. Bacci, *Ricostruzione*, p. 105: "Il collocamento del gruppo comprendente l'Angelo, il Leone e il Bove. . . . Ma il gruppo, pur

troppo, è irrimediabilmente perduto, almeno che non si trovi nascosto e ignorato in qualche Raccolta." As we saw in note 7, the tetramorph had been published five years earlier as having been purchased by the Metropolitan Museum.



FIGURE 14

The Last Judgment from the pulpit of Sant'Andrea, Pistoia (photo: Alinari)

The angel pilasters did not appear in any project of reconstruction until Geza Jászai's in 1968.¹⁶ Though his project is not entirely convincing in some aspects, Jászai places the angel pilasters where they should have been: on either side of the pair of panels with the Last Judgment, which are separated—or rather united—by the pilaster representing Christ as Judge with two

standing angels holding the attributes of the Passion (Figure 15), as in the Pistoia pulpit. There is a difference, however. Since the Sant'Andrea pulpit has five panels instead of nine, the Judgment is represented in a single panel, and instead of two pilasters, each with two angels, it has only one with four angels closing the cycle on the right (Figure 14).¹⁷

16. Geza Jászai, *Die Pisaner Domkanzel* (Munich, 1968) pp. 29–32, note 47, p. 69, ill. 7, 8.

17. The pulpit of the cathedral of Siena, where Giovanni collaborated with his father, also has a single group of trumpet-blowing angels. At present they appear on that pulpit, after a bad reconstruction done in 1837, between the Flight into Egypt and the Massacre of the Innocents. For details about the Siena pulpit, see Enzo Carli, *Il pulpito di Siena* (Bergamo, 1943). If the idea of

the trumpet-blowing angels incorporated into the carvings of a pulpit was taken from existing models—like other features of the Siena pulpit, such as the tetramorph and the Writers of the Canonical Epistles—or whether they were an innovation introduced by Nicola, or maybe by Giovanni, is hard to tell. It is certain, however, that they do not appear in any extant pulpit in Tuscany dating from before Giovanni's time.

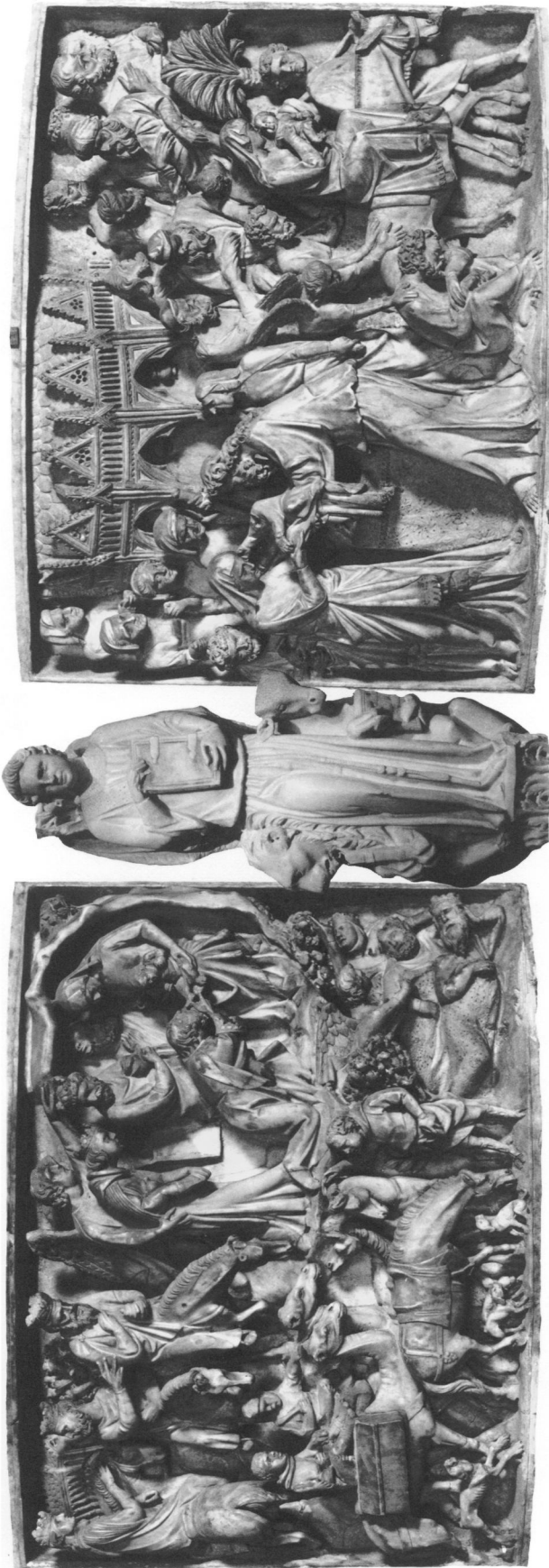


FIGURE 15

The Last Judgment panels and pilaster from the pulpit of the Duomo of Pisa completed with the two Metropolitan Museum angel pilasters
(Pisa photos: Alinari)

FIGURE 16

The Adoration of the Magi and the Presentation at the Temple and Flight into Egypt from the pulpit of the Duomo of Pisa and the Metropolitan Museum tetramorph (Pisa photos: Alinari)



The Metropolitan angels show the attenuated volumes and intense expressiveness of several of the figures of the Pisa pulpit. Their proportions are more elongated, as if the bodies had been stretched to fill in the space that in Sant' Andrea is filled with four angels, but the heads were left small. The eyes are deep and very long, as we see also in some of the figures in the scenes of the Massacre, the Crucifixion, and the Last Judgment both in Pistoia and in Pisa, and their depth is accentuated by the remaining polychromy almost black in color.¹⁸ The angular shapes of the angels give little impression of a body underneath their garments, as if they were just personifications of a vibrating sound, the sound that will raise the dead from their tombs. It is impossible to say whether these two pilasters are Giovanni's own work or an assistant's because we do not know which parts of the pulpit the master carved. We can say that they are by the same hand that carved the Last Judgment panels and played a part in the carving of other panels and some of the pilasters representing prophets and the Apocalyptic Christ. They have little in common with the sibyls and prophets of the spandrels and with the supporting figures, but the similarity to some of the figures in the Pistoia pulpit is rather clear.

In Jászai's project, followed by the much more extensive and comprehensive study by Michael Ayrton, the tetramorph was placed between the panel representing the Adoration of the Magi and the one with the Presentation in the Temple and the Flight into Egypt (Figure 16).¹⁹ Bacci would have placed it between the panel with the Massacre of the Innocents and the panel with the Taking of Christ and other scenes of the Passion, where he placed the nineteenth-century prophet. In Pistoia the tetramorph is between the Massacre and the Crucifixion (as there is no panel with other scenes of the Passion), and the Writers of the Epistles group appears on the other side of the Crucifixion, the most

18. The entire pulpit must have been polychromed, and probably the Pistoia one also. A description made by Raffaello Ronzioni before the 1595 fire speaks about the caryatid representing Ecclesia as having brilliant colors (see Bacci, *Ricostruzione*, p. 59). Harald Keller, in *Giovanni Pisano* (Vienna, 1942) p. 58, indicates the possibility of the Pisa pulpit's having had glass tesserae on the backgrounds, like those still visible in the Nativity panel in Pistoia.

19. Jászai, *Domkanzel*, pl. IV/B; Michael Ayrton, *Giovanni Pisano Sculptor* (New York, 1969) p. 225, figs. 285, 287, 288.



FIGURE 17
Tetramorph of the pulpit of the Duomo of Siena
(photo: Alinari)



FIGURE 18
Tetramorph of the pulpit of Sant'Andrea, Pistoia
(photo: Brogi)

important scene of the cycle and the center of the pulpit. In the Jászai project for the Pisa pulpit, the Epistles group appears between the Passion panel and the Crucifixion—leaving three panels and two pilasters between the two reading lecterns and three other panels on either side of them.

Unlike the angels of the Last Judgment, the tetra-

morph, in the form in which it occurs in Nicola's and Giovanni's works (Siena and Pistoia; Figures 17, 18), appears in several earlier pulpits of the rectangular shape traditional in Tuscany until Nicola introduced the polygonal type in the pulpit for the baptistery of Pisa in 1260. In those earlier examples, such as Guido da Como's pulpit from the church of S. Bartolomeo in



FIGURE 19
Tetramorph from the pulpit of the church of S. Bartolomeo, Pistoia, by Guido da Como (photo: Brogi)



FIGURE 20
Tetramorph from the pulpit of S. Giovanni Fuorcivitas, Pistoia (photo: Brogi)

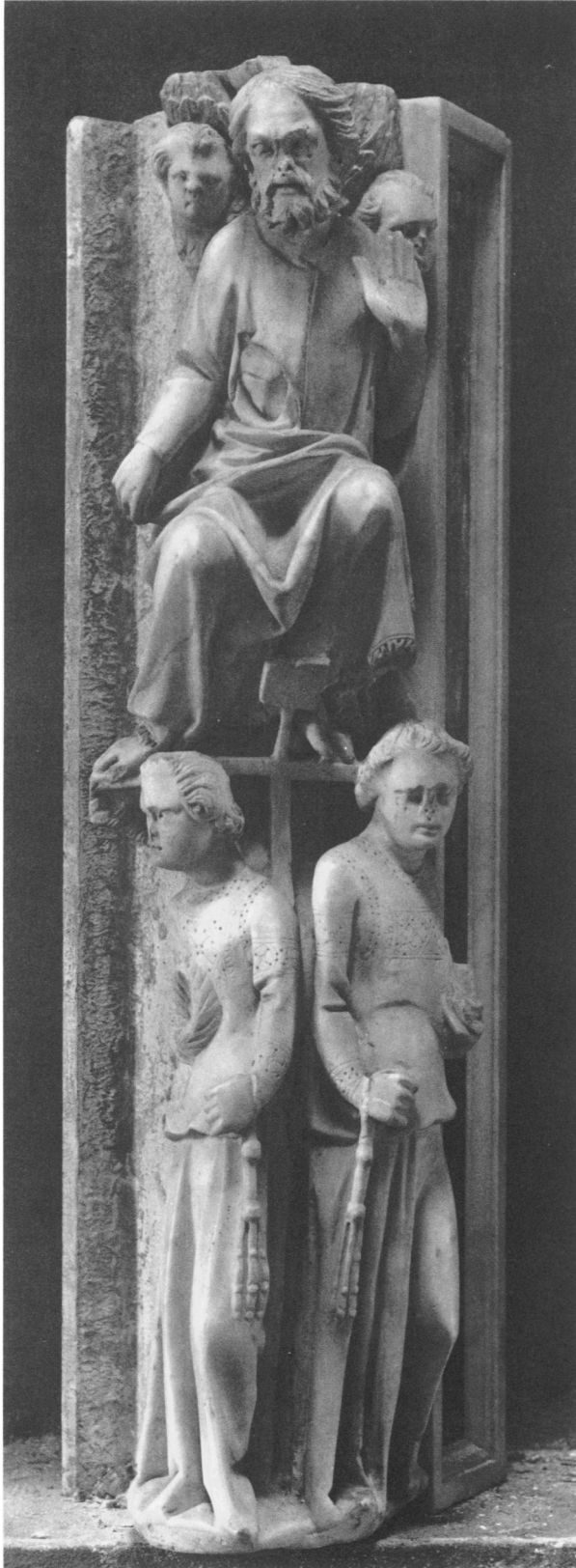


FIGURE 21

Christ as Judge with two angels from the pulpit of the Duomo of Pisa (photo: Alinari)

Pistoia (Figure 19),²⁰ or the twelfth-century one by Master Guglielmo now in Cagliari, the lion and the ox stand with their heads on the same level as the angel's. The same can be applied to several isolated tetramorphs from lost pulpits of the same period preserved in the Campo Santo and other museums. The eagle of St. John, as seen in the S. Bartolomeo and Cagliari pulpits, was used for the reading of the Gospels, while the lecterns above the group with St. Paul, Titus, and Timothy in Guglielmo's pulpit and the group with St. Paul, St. Mark, and St. Peter in the pulpits by the Pisani were used for the reading of the Epistles.

The first time that Nicola and Giovanni used the tetramorph, in the Siena pulpit, they kept the frontality of the Romanesque examples and placed the gigantic eagle above the angel without a cornice in between, also a feature of the prototypes. In the other two beasts, however, they made a rather unsuccessful change. Considering that the standing position of the lion and the ox was illogical, but not knowing very well what to do with them, they placed them above the wings of the angel with proportions totally out of scale with the other two symbols, breaking in this way the balance of the tetramorph, where all the symbols should have the same importance (Figure 17).

In the Pistoia pulpit Giovanni changed completely the Romanesque concept of the tetramorph, producing one of the most beautiful sculptural groups of Italian art (Figure 18). The angel, no longer frontal and hieratic, stands in a relaxed posture—right knee bent, head turned to the right and lifted in an almost arrogant attitude, with hair floating back as if pushed by an invisible breeze, and lips parted as if ready to start enouncing the Word of the Lord. The lion and the ox are no longer standing or perched on top of the angel's wings. With magnificent heads and powerful bodies, they crouch on either side of the angel holding their Gospel books. This apparently new and more natural way of representing these beasts was not Giovanni's invention. Though still rectangular and with the scenes distributed in two stories, like in the Romanesque examples, the pulpit still *in situ* in S. Giovanni Fuor-

20. Now in the Museo Civico in the Palazzo Marchetti, Pistoia.



FIGURE 22

Christ as Judge with two angels from the pulpit of Sant'Andrea, Pistoia (photo: Brogi)

civitas, Pistoia, carved in 1270 by a contemporary of Nicola's, Fra Guglielmo, already presents the lion and the ox in the same naturalistic posture, and the angel somewhat more relaxed than in the earlier examples and with longer and fluffier hair (Figure 20). The eagle is still as gigantic as the one in Siena. It seems quite positive that Giovanni became familiar with Fra Guglielmo's pulpit when he went to work in Pistoia, but he could not have seen it when he worked on the Siena pulpit because the latter was finished two years earlier.

The Metropolitan Museum tetramorph is basically like the one in Sant'Andrea but lacks its power and originality, and though quite beautiful and appealing, it shows a timidity and slickness that would seem to be characteristic of the work of one of Giovanni's assistants. Its style is very close to that of the Christ as Judge and, above all, the two accompanying angels with the attributes of the Passion in the Pisa pulpit (Figure 21), which are also much softer than their counterparts in Pistoia (Figure 22). There are other figures in the pulpit of Pisa that could also be by the same artist. One is the figure of St. Michael (Figure 23), which shows similar softness and a fondness for delicate punched and incised decorative motifs of the type used by Nicola and some of his contemporaries and by conservative sculptors like Tino di Camaino, who worked in the Pisa Duomo in the years Giovanni's pulpit was being carved and became *capomaestro* in 1315. The same type of decoration appears also in the two angels below the Christ as Judge, which are, perhaps, the closest in every way to our tetramorph (Figures 21, 24). The works of Tino di Camaino in Pisa have been almost completely destroyed, but what is left from that early period of his career does not seem close enough in style to any of the figures or reliefs in the Pisa pulpit to enable us to theorize about the possibilities of his working on it.²¹

21. The figures of the Theological Virtues in the middle pillar of the Pisa pulpit are among the less convincing as works by Giovanni of all the supporting figures. They recall the sculptures of the Virtues in Tino di Camaino's Monument of Marie de Valois in S. Chiara, Naples. Chronological and geographical distances, however, make impossible any connection between them. For more about the problem of Tino and the Pisa pulpit, see note 11.



FIGURE 23
Saint Michael, supporting figure from the pulpit
of the Duomo of Pisa (photo: Anderson)

I have been deliberately keeping the discussion of the Metropolitan eagle lectern apart from that of the angels and the tetramorph. The misleading way this piece was exhibited above the pilasters created a feeling of suspicion as it was quite clear that they did not

FIGURES 24–26

Details of the angel, the lion, and the ox from the
Metropolitan Museum tetramorph

belong together, being very different in style and concept, and if the pilasters were considered as Giovanni's work, most probably the eagle could not have been. Apart from these discrepancies, it could not be the lectern of the Pisa pulpit because the latter, which was not used by Bacci but is now on the pulpit, had been used for centuries as a lectern in the choir of the Duomo (Figure 27). The epistle lectern is still on the left of the choir. Broken and restored with a piece of uncarved marble, this lectern represents a half figure of Christ between two angels, the Corpus Christi.²² Both lecterns have the same border of incised parallel lines that we see in the books of the angel, the lion, and the ox of our tetramorph (Figures 24–26). The eagle lectern in Pisa and the angel of our pilaster are looking to the left, which would have been in the direction of the main altar when the pulpit was in its original location.

The pulpit of Sant'Andrea in Pistoia, which has suffered only minor losses—like the two lecterns—is located on the left of the central nave; the angel of the tetramorph faces to the right, toward the main altar, and so would the eagle above him. The eagles of other extant tetramorphs in Tuscan pulpits look in the same direction as the angel, which is to the front. The Metropolitan Museum eagle has the head turned to the right and tilted up at very much the same angle as the head of the Pistoia angel. A comparison between the Metropolitan eagle and the eagles carved by Giovanni Pisano, such as the two in the reliefs of the Perugia fountain (Figure 28), another from one of the decorated columns of the façade of the Duomo of Siena (Figure 29), and the one at the base of the middle supporting column of the Pistoia pulpit (Figure 10), reveals similarities of style and conception that are quite obvious, the most striking being an aggressive bravura in the rendering of the feathers with strong, sweeping strokes of the chisel, almost horizontal in the legs, which conveys a feeling of air and movement. Even in the way the legs are set apart and the wings cut in sharp angles, the Museum's eagle is extremely

22. See Ayrton, *Giovanni Pisano*, fig. 301a.

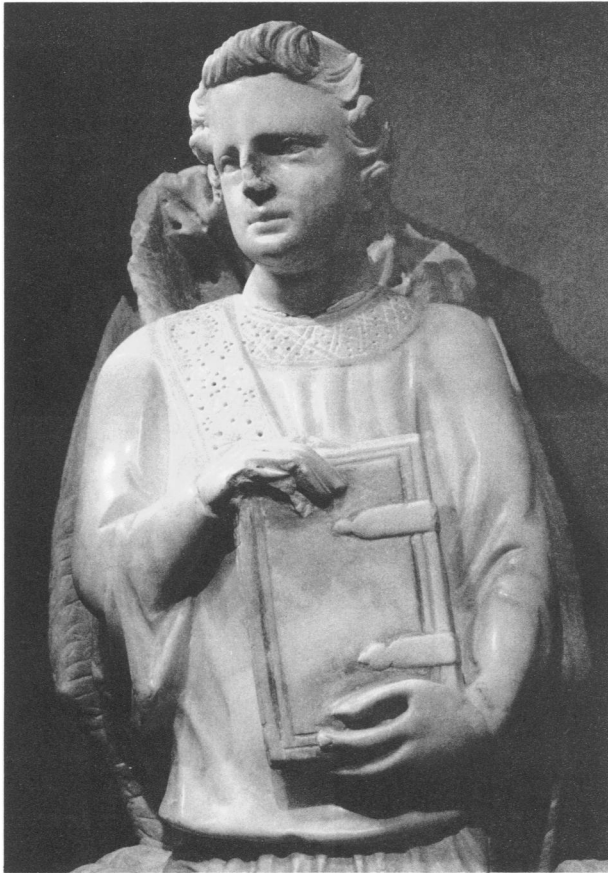




FIGURE 27

Eagle lectern for the reading of the Gospels from the pulpit of the Duomo of Pisa (photo: courtesy of the Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale)

close to the Perugia and Siena ones.²³ All these examples are very far in style from the eagle of the Pisa lectern—with its heraldic quality and conventional way of describing the feathers, row upon row in a manner more decorative than naturalistic—which, in

FIGURE 28

Two eagles from the Fontana Maggiore of Perugia, by Nicola and Giovanni Pisano





FIGURE 29
Eagle from a column on the left side of the façade
of the Duomo of Sienna, by Giovanni Pisano

turn, coincides in its more quiet mood and precise but soft technique with the Metropolitan tetramorph, or, we could say, the Pisa tetramorph.

Jászai, and Ayrton after him, published the Metropolitan eagle lectern as from Pistoia but without giving any explanation. Probably they concluded: We have a tetramorph without an eagle and an eagle without a tetramorph. Why not put them together? One can only make this strong suggestion basing it on size, style, position of the head, and an originality of con-

23. The detail of the eagle from the decorative motifs of the façade of the Duomo of Siena appeared for the first time in Max Seidel's brilliant study "Die Rankensäulen der Sieneser Domfassade," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 11 (1969) pp. 81–157, fig. 38. I am very indebted to Max Seidel for his generosity in providing me with that photograph and the one of the Perugia eagles (published in the same article, fig. 39) and for his friendliness in exchanging ideas and listening to my problems.

24. I owe my gratitude to Ursula Mende for her kindness in providing me with the photograph published here and to Peter Bloch for granting the permission of publication.

25. Jászai, *Domkanzel*, fig. 3; Ayrton, *Giovanni Pisano*, p. 223, fig. 302; Gian Lorenzo Mellini, *Il pulpito di Giovanni Pisano a Pistoia* (Florence, 1969) fig. 110.

ception that corresponds to Giovanni's most successful works. Among the original features of our eagle are the open book—the others are all closed—and the polygonal bookrest.

There is another lectern representing the Corpus Christi—like the one from the Pisa pulpit—in the Berlin-Dahlem Museum (Figure 30).²⁴ It has been published as from Pistoia by Jászai, Ayrton, and Gian Lorenzo Mellini.²⁵ Though somewhat clumsier and less vigorous than the Christ as Judge and the two angels below him in the scene of the Last Judgment of the Pistoia pulpit (Figure 22), there is no question in my opinion about the strong similarities, above all between the angels. Since I have not been able to study personally the Berlin lectern, it is difficult to be more positive. Nevertheless, I think that if Giovanni had any assistants on the Pistoia pulpit—as he probably did—one of them could have taken an active part in the carving of the Berlin lectern, and this would account for the weaker quality of the Berlin piece as compared to the group mentioned above, which is iconographically the closest parallel we can find in the

FIGURE 30
Corpus Christi lectern for the reading of the
Epistles, attributed to Giovanni Pisano. Courtesy
of the Staatliche Museen, Berlin-Dahlem





FIGURE 31

The Metropolitan Museum tetramorph with the eagle lectern from the Pisa pulpit



Sant'Andrea pulpit. The Berlin-Dahlem epistle lectern looks like a perfectly genuine work of art, and if it does not come from the Pistoia pulpit, I cannot think of another one to which it could belong.²⁶

In conclusion, after long comparison and debate, using the photographs of the Metropolitan pieces against the original pulpits of Pisa and Pistoia several times and during several years in and out, with a completely open mind, I believe: The two pilasters with the angels of the Last Judgment and the pilaster with the angel of St. Matthew, the lion of St. Mark, and the ox of St. Luke belong to the pulpit of the Duomo of Pisa, carved by Giovanni Pisano and assistants between 1302 and 1310, though the actual work did not start, probably, until 1305. The angels are in the style of Giovanni's most expressionistic period and are probably the work of a very close assistant, whose deviations from the master's style can barely be detected. The tetramorph is the work of another assistant, one more conservative and delicate in his handling of the chisel and with a fondness for carefully rendered decorative motifs within the tradition of Nicola Pisano, his contemporaries, and later masters like Tino di Camaino; the personality of this artist can be detected in several figures of the Pisa pulpit, as described above, which have little in common with Giovanni's progressive expressionism (Figure 31). And finally, the eagle lectern must come from the Sant'Andrea pulpit at Pistoia and is probably the work of Giovanni himself, with or without the assistance of a helper, who, if he did any work on it, did not leave any mark of his personality (Figure 32).

26. Max Seidel, who knows the Berlin lectern well, has doubts about its belonging to the Pistoia pulpit. A cast of each lectern, Berlin and Metropolitan, should be made sometime so that we can determine *in situ* whether both of them come from the same pulpit.



FIGURE 32
The Sant'Andrea tetramorph with the Metro-
politan Museum eagle lectern

