

# **ROBBIA HERALDRY**

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Robbia Heraldry by Allan Marquand

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**ALLAN MARQUAND**

**ROBBIA  
HERALDRY**



PRINCETON MONOGRAPHS IN ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

# ROBBIA HERALDRY

BY

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TO MY FRIEND  
RUFUS GRAVES MATHER  
TO WHOSE RESEARCHES I AM INDEBTED FOR  
ALL OF THE DOCUMENTS AND FOR MANY  
IDENTIFICATIONS OF COATS OF ARMS PUBLISHED IN  
THIS VOLUME





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## I. INTRODUCTION

In attempting to define the authorship and date of the very numerous products of the Della Robbia school I have been embarrassed by the lack of documentary and historical evidence and consequently have usually been compelled to rely on the evidence of style alone. I count it most fortunate for these studies that my friend Mr. Rufus G. Mather, residing in Florence, was prepared to devote his energies to the discovery of documents, which in many cases have proved to be invaluable. These he is publishing in Italian periodicals while I am utilizing them in these Princeton monographs.

A much neglected series of Robbia monuments are the coats of arms, which are found on altarpieces and other monuments, or set up as memorials of office on the Communal Palaces of many Italian towns. These coats of arms not only throw light upon the activities, religious and political, of many aristocratic families of Tuscany, but with them are associated dated inscriptions, which assist us in fixing the period of undated monuments. Robbia Heraldry, as a special department of a broader Italian Heraldry, is specifically Tuscan, and limited to the productions of a school of artists who worked almost entirely in glazed terra-cotta. Some of the tinctures of Robbia coats of arms may be considered as conventional substitutes. Thus white is the colour used for *argent*, and yellow for *or*. *Gules* was difficult to obtain in baked glazes and assumed various tints of violet or manganese. A dark violet served also for *sable*. But while the tinctures applied by superficial paint to coats of arms executed in stone or marble have faded away, those of the Della Robbias remain unchanged and render bright and interesting the dull façades of the City Halls in Italian towns.

This monograph was not written as a contribution to heraldry, but inasmuch as it represents coats of arms not recorded in such a corpus as Crollanza's *Dizionario storico-blasonico delle famiglie Italiane* and in many instances records variations therefrom, it should have some importance for the student of heraldry. It was intended as an aid to the history of Italian art. Hence I have interested myself more in the forms of the shields, in the types of the garlands, in the stylistic qualities of the inscriptions, than in the variations from type in the heraldic emblems or their tinctures.