

MEDALS OF THE RENAISSANCE

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Medals of the Renaissance by G. F. Hill

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G. F. HILL

**MEDALS OF THE
RENAISSANCE**



ALFONSO V OF ARAGON BY PISAÑELLO

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MEDALS
OF THE
RENAISSANCE

BY

G. F. HILL

FELLOW OF THE BRITISH ACADEMY

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OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1920

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PREFACE

IN the autumn of 1915, at the invitation of the Council of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, I had the honour of delivering in Edinburgh the Rhind Lectures, of which this book is the outcome. In preparing it for the press, the matter of the lectures has been revised, partly re-arranged, and occasionally re-written with large additions, while footnotes have been supplied throughout with the object of making the book of some use as a work of reference. There are many volumes on separate portions of the subject, but none, I believe, that can be regarded as an attempt to give a general summary of the whole.

Illustrations have been a serious difficulty. In delivering the lectures, every medal that was mentioned was also illustrated. Was the same plan to be followed in the printed book? That would have meant either an unusually lavish amount of illustration or else the cutting out of a great number of links in the argument. I have preferred to leave many of the pieces unillustrated, in the hope that those who take a real interest in the subject will refer to the illustrations which are to be found elsewhere, and to which references are supplied.

The arrangement of the medals on the plates will, I fear, prove irksome. Thus, medals by the same artist are illustrated on different plates, and not in the order in which they are mentioned in the text, an inconvenience which is due to the fact that some of the plates are from borrowed negatives, while others are newly photographed. Again, the scale on which the reproductions are made has inevitably varied with the size of the original. Reproduction is now so costly that it was absolutely necessary to borrow negatives and, further, to reduce the scale of reproduction of many pieces; the result is a distribution of the medals which is anything but scientific.

Two works on Italian medals which are seldom mentioned in the footnotes—simply because the only alternative would have been to mention them on every page—are Alfred Armand's *Médailleurs de la Renaissance*, which, with all its faults, remains and will long remain the standard book on the subject, and Cornelius von Fabriczy's clever though rather ill-proportioned sketch, which I have cited by Mrs. Hamilton's translation, entitled *Italian Medals*. Any references given in my notes for details about an Italian medallist should be supplemented by reference to these books, which are fully indexed.

PREFACE

The leading works on other branches of the art are, I believe, fairly indicated in the footnotes and in the bibliography. Perhaps I should apologize for the frequency of the references to books and articles of my own. My excuse must be that, since I have now for many years been trying to fill up the gaps necessarily left in their work by the pioneers, these references are required to complete the bibliographical apparatus, until the time comes for a book which will gather up all the scattered material. The materials for such a book have for over fifteen years been accumulating in my hands; but since 1914 some of the most fruitful sources have been cut off, so far as men of my generation are concerned, and what I had hoped would be a *corpus* will, if it appears at all, be but an imperfect *torso*.

One of the tragedies of the war has been the death, fighting for his country, of Jean de Foville, an enthusiastic student of Italian medals, of whom great things were hoped. There are still many collectors and connoisseurs, and able compilers of sale-catalogues; but of serious systematic students of the subject, if one may judge from the periodical literature, there are sadly few left on the Continent.

My thanks are due to the Trustees of the British Museum for the loan of the negatives from which Plates I, IV, VIII, and XV, as well as portions of a number of other plates, are printed; to the Directors of the *Burlington Magazine* for permission to reprint in the Introduction the substance of two articles; to the owners of the medals which are illustrated, more especially to my friend Mr. Maurice Rosenheim; to Miss Helen Farquhar for certain suggestions in connexion with Chapter VIII; and to Mr. George Macdonald for reading the whole of the proofs and making many helpful criticisms.

BRITISH MUSEUM,
1919.

G. F. HILL.

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Le sonnet . . . sans se refuser à un souffle romantique, est essentiellement classique parceque, comme la médaille de bronze, il enferme dans un étroit espace un tableau achevé, une impression définie ou suggérée, un tout qui, parfois, est peu de chose, mais qui se donne tout entier et dont l'expression est adéquate.

AUGUSTIN FILON, *Journal des Débats*,
25 mars 1914.