

## NOTE ON A SILVER PARCEL-GILT CROSS FROM THE ABRUZZI

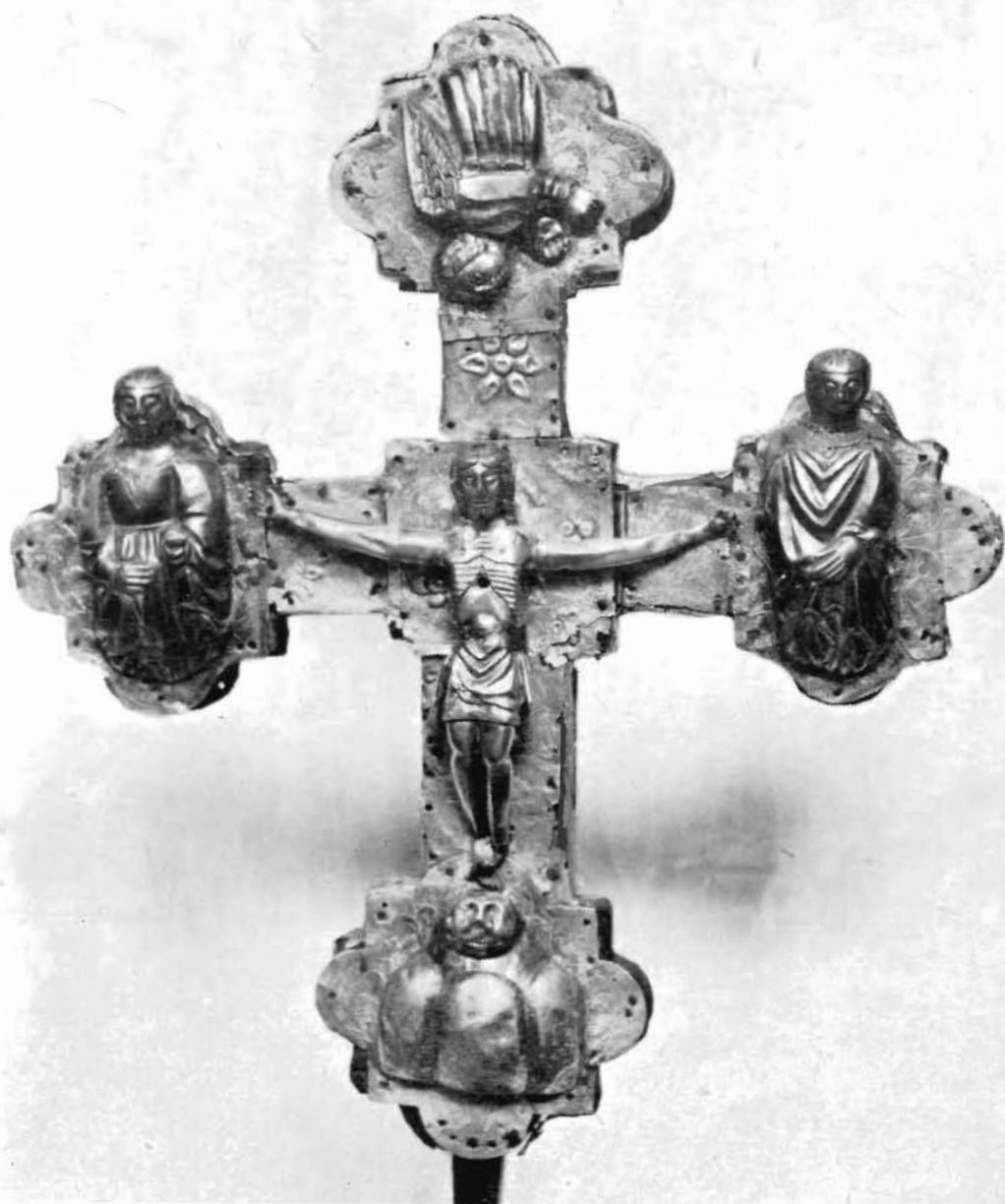
By W. L. HILDBURGH

Adjoining the Province of Rome, and between it and the Adriatic, lie the Abruzzi—the Provinces of Teramo, Aquila, and Chieti. During the fourteenth century and the fifteenth there were in the Abruzzi several very active centres for the production of fine ecclesiastical metalwork, whereof much has survived. Doubtless, corresponding secular metalwork was also made there in quantity, but of that, in comparison, very little remains to us. Presumably the usual factors—domestic wear and tear, the normal desire for things whose shapes and styles of decoration conform to the prevailing fashion rather than to one regarded as antiquated, the need for money readily obtainable through the sale of objects for the value of their mere content of metal—have contributed towards the destruction of the secular things, while those for ecclesiastical uses have tended to remain, unless disturbed by the vicissitudes of war or by some churchly need for cash, safe in the custody of the institutions to which they belonged. Manufacture of at least the church-furniture was carried on, seemingly, mainly at Sulmona—whose identifying mark is on many pieces of silversmiths' work of fine quality—and at Guardiagrele; and to some extent also at Teramo and at Aquila. A very considerable number of things of that sort have been recorded, largely by local scholars justly proud of the artistic achievements of their forefathers, in text and in a wealth of photographic illustrations.<sup>1</sup>

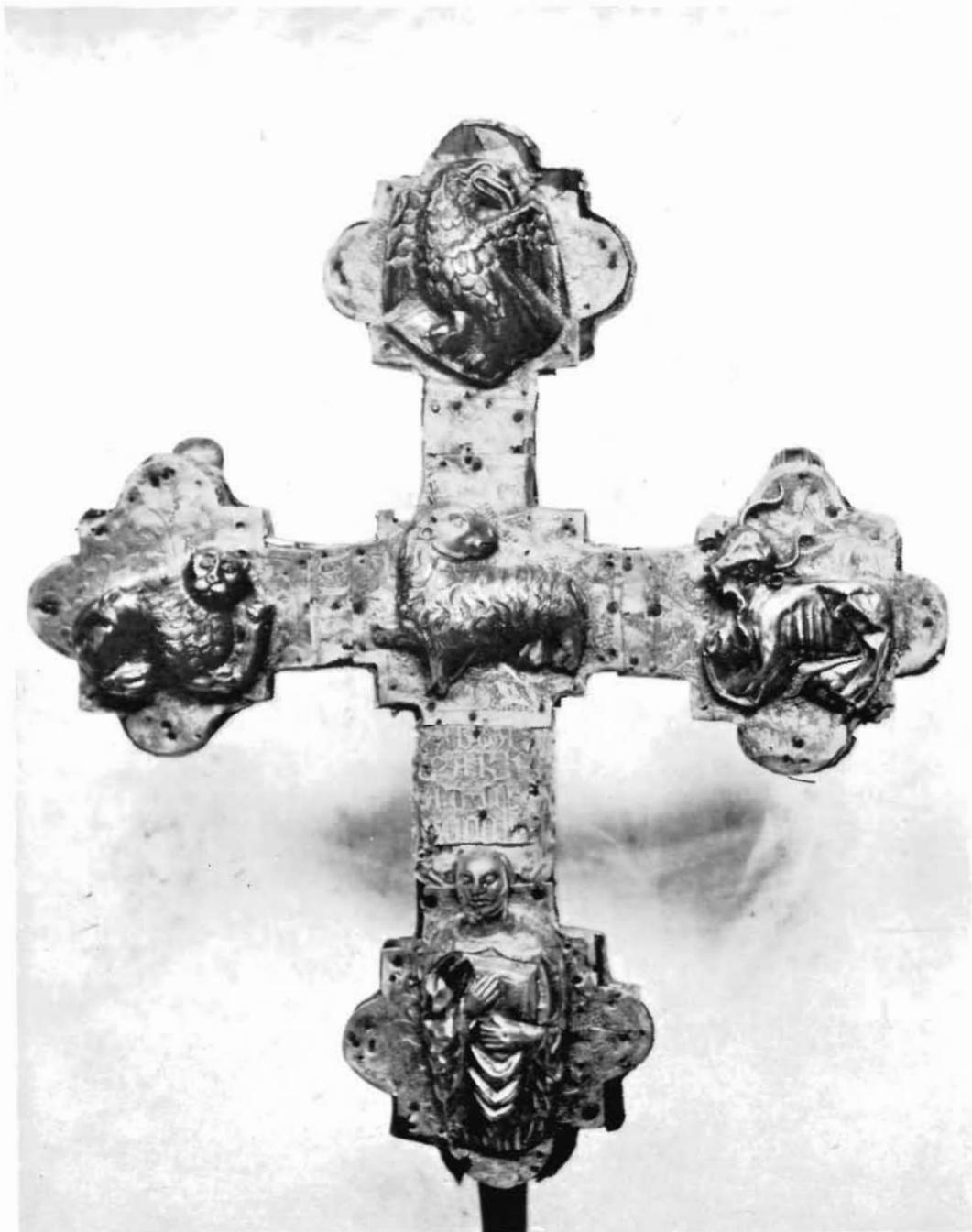
Of the surviving objects, by far the largest proportion consists of processional crosses, made of wood covered with sheets of embossed metal, often silver. Some of such silver crosses are indeed notable for their artistic qualities, both in design—though in some cases perhaps far too ornately garnished, with free-standing balls along their edges, for our taste—and in craftsmanship, while many of them are adorned with gilding and with fine translucent enamels. Others of them are simpler in character, and by their workmanship indicate that they were products of an industry carried on—as were a not inconsiderable number of other medieval industries—along lines analogous to those of to-day's quantity-manufacture; not alone are their edges covered with strips of thin sheet-metal whose ornament was impressed by means of iron moulds in a way described by the monk Theophilus,<sup>2</sup> but in a number of them the plaques covering the faces of the cross and displaying figures human or divine or of the Symbols of the Evangelists, or motives merely decorative, have been embossed by the use of such moulds. The cheapness of this method of production, as compared with that of making equally satisfactory reliefs

<sup>1</sup> Cf. V. Bindi, *Monumenti storici ed artistici degli Abruzzi* (Naples, 1889); id., *Artisti abruzzesi* (Naples, 1883); V. Balzano, *L'arte abruzzese* (in Series 'Raccolte d'Arte': Bergamo, 1910), (chapter on 'Oreficeria'), 69-116; L. Gmelin, 'Die mittelalterliche Goldschmiedekunst in den Abruzzi', in *Zeitschrift des Bayerischen Kunstgewerbe-Vereins* (Munich, 1890), 10-15, 133-49; U. Gnoli, *L'arte umbra alla mostra di Perugia* (in Series 'Raccolte d'Arte': Bergamo, 1908); id., 'L'oreficeria alla mostra di Perugia', in *Emporium*, xxv (1907).

<sup>2</sup> Of the numerous editions and translations of the *Schedula*, probably the best and most fully annotated is W. Theobald's *Technik des Kunsthandwerks im zehnten Jahrhundert des Theophilus Presbyter Diversarum Artium Schedula* (Berlin, 1933). R. Hendrie's edition (London, 1847), in English, the *Essay upon Various Arts*, gives this description under the heading 'Of work which is impressed with stamps'.



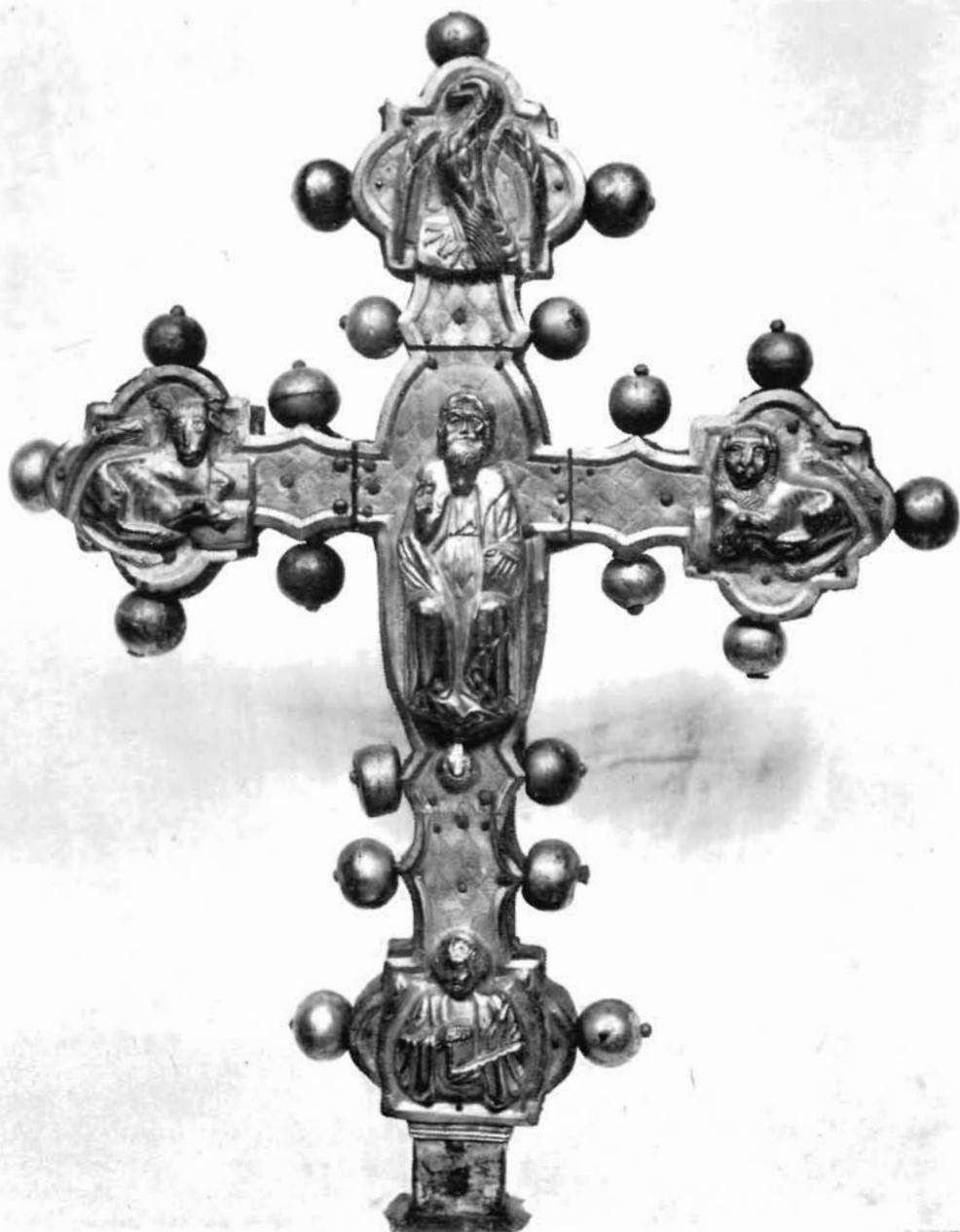
SILVER PROCESSIONAL CROSS FROM THE ABRUZZI, c. 1450-60. FRONT



SILVER PROCESSIONAL CROSS FROM THE ABRUZZI, c. 1450-60. BACK



COPPER-GILT PROCESSIONAL CROSS FROM THE ABRUZZI, *c.* THIRD QUARTER  
OF XVTH CENTURY. FRONT



COPPER-GILT PROCESSIONAL CROSS FROM THE ABRUZZI, c. THIRD QUARTER OF XVIIth CENTURY. BACK

without the use of moulds, stimulated the fabrication in quantity of crosses sheathed with gilded copper, though otherwise similar to the silver ones just cited, a very considerable number of which—as well as others following in gilded copper the more elaborate of the silver ones—still exist.

The processional cross (pls. I, II) which is the subject of the present note is covered with pieces of sheet-silver, fairly stout where embossed with figures in high-relief, thin in the binding round the edges, gilded in parts. Although in its original state it must have been of striking appearance, it has suffered such serious damage that now it would merit hardly more than a cursory record of its existence were it not for certain features which, as I think, render it worthy of more detailed study. Its wooden framework, although ancient, seems clearly to be shorter than it was initially, notably in the portion below its arms, because not only do its proportions differ from those normal in processional crosses of the type, but the lower member is too short to accommodate such an inscription as, obviously, once was on the silver sheathing. The terminals, square with semicircular projections on their three free edges, have a form common in Italian processional crosses of the period, and there is a square at the centre where the members meet. Perhaps when it was new the cross was enriched by small free-standing balls, held by pins through their axes, at the outermost points of the semicircular edges of the terminals; and conceivably also, as in some of the more elaborate of the Abruzzi crosses, by similar balls attached at other places along the edges (cf. pls. III, IV). As the strips of silver round the edges have been shifted during the cross's reconstruction, we are unable to determine, from the pin-holes in those strips, with any degree of certainty whether—and if so where—such little balls adorned the cross.

The surviving silver sheathing of the obverse (pl. I) comprises: four pieces in high relief, embossed respectively with figures of a censuring angel, the Virgin Mary, and St. John, and a symbolization of Golgotha; a central piece displaying some conventional ornament; and some small decorated pieces utilized to cover gaps. That of the back (pl. II): four pieces in high-relief showing respectively the Symbols of the Evangelists; a similar central piece, with an image of the Lamb of God; a piece whereon is part of a dated inscription; and some small pieces used to cover gaps between the principal pieces. Lengths of thin silver ribbon, embossed by means of a die with a conventional scroll in low relief, cover the edges.

The crucifix, a separate figure in the round, has been modelled in stout silver sheet. It is fastened directly to the main body of the cross—there appears to be no trace of an interior cross (to which, instead, it might have been attached) such as is present on very many (e.g. on the cross of pls. III, IV) of the Italian processional crosses, whether they be made of metal or be of wood alone and painted.<sup>1</sup> The eyes are closed, the Saviour being represented as dead. The feet are crossed and are held by a single nail. As in some other crosses of the particular group to which our cross belongs, each hand—pierced by a nail—is made of a thickish piece of sheet, cut into the shape of a hand with its fingers individualized, cupped so that the fingers point forward; that is, the hands are solid, not hollow as are the other parts of the crucifix. The face is sharp-featured, with the beard and the eyebrows represented by groups of short engraved lines; the hair, like the wool of the Lamb and the Lion's mane, is treated in a way reminiscent of cast metal rather than of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. n. 3, p. 110.

chased; a small socket in the top of the head shows that, as on some of the other crosses of the group, the nimbus had the form of a disk set approximately at a right angle to the axis of the body. The ribs are strongly marked; there are tiny circles to represent the nipples; the wound in the side and the blood trickling from it are engraved; and some body-hair—e.g. round the nipples, on the chest, and in the armpits—is depicted by series of short straight engraved lines. The rather Gothic loin-cloth, ending well above the knees, hardly reflects, as do the loin-cloths of a number of contemporary crucifixes of the Abruzzi, the influence of the budding Renaissance.

In the terminal plaque above the Saviour's head is a figure of an angel, flying head downward, from whose hands a small censer once hung freely. This somewhat unusual feature—which, however, is quite in line with the Ox's horns, the Lamb's cross-staff (whereof only a fragment remains), and the tiny horns of the Lamb, all realistically formed of wire—is of peculiar interest in that it so closely parallels a regular feature of a certain group of Spanish processional crosses (cf. *infra*). In Italian metalwork attributed to the twelfth century—e.g. on the repoussé sheathing of a wooden container, enclosing a sixth-century manuscript, in Perugia Cathedral,<sup>1</sup> where there is a censuring angel at either side of Christ's head, and on a cross, covered with embossed sheet-metal, at Assisi, which has above the Titulus a flying angel, head upward, swinging a censer from the right hand and holding a book in the left<sup>2</sup>—we may see censuring angels near to or above the head of the crucifix. They would seem, however, to be of comparatively rare occurrence in medieval Italian art, and—so far as my somewhat cursory examination of the matter suggests—to have had in it no deep roots. I do not recall examples of censuring angels placed above the crucifix's head on any of the many existing painted wooden crosses of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,<sup>3</sup> nor among the many surviving ivory carvings of that Byzantine school which so greatly influenced Southern Italian art—there are, indeed, on some Byzantine ivories pairs of angels above the arms of the Cross, but none that I recall hold censers.

But in Spain of the fifteenth century there were manufactured in quantities metal processional crosses, many of which survive,<sup>4</sup> whereon a censuring angel regularly is present above the head of the crucifix. Most of the existing examples are

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gnoli, *L'arte Umbra* . . . , fig. 163.

<sup>2</sup> Large reproduction given by Gnoli in 'L'oreficeria . . . Perugia', p. 434, with back on p. 435; small picture of front given by E. Sandberg-Vavala, *La croce dipinta italiana* (Verona, 1929), fig. 39. I am inclined to think that this cross should preferably be attributed to a later period rather than to the twelfth century. A cross of wood sheathed in embossed sheet-metal, very archaic in appearance, from Teramo, reproduced by Balzano on p. 70 of *L'arte abruzzese*, has above its crucifix an angel holding what may perhaps have been designed to represent a censer, but it is so rude in workmanship that the small half-tone illustration does not show this clearly. It would seem probable that the intention here was indeed to show a censer, because there was in the A. Rutsch Collection, at Zurich (dispersed by auction at Lucerne in 1931), a beautifully preserved Abruzzi cross, of wood sheathed with silver-gilt sheets embossed (including one on the front with the crucifix and the central one, with

God the Father, or perhaps a Saint, on the back) in moulds, whereon a half-figure of an angel quietly holding a censer is above the crucifix's head; the cross was attributed to 'Oberitalien um 1440' (cf. O. von Falke, *Alle Goldschmiedewerke im Zürcher Kunsthaus* (Zurich and Leipzig, 1928), no. 206, with front and back on pl. 43).

On a splendid silver cross, of the Guardiagrele School, at Visso (cf. Gnoli, 'L'oreficeria . . . Perugia', p. 451, where it is called 'Maniera di Nicola da Guardiagrele'; id., *L'arte umbra* . . . , p. 189, where it is given as work of Nicolo Gallucci of Guardiagrele; and Balzano, *L'arte abruzzese*, p. 107), there is an angel, flying head downward, shown from the back (i.e. not in profile), holding a crown for placing on the Saviour's head.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Sandberg-Vavala, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> For citations of a few of these, cf. W. L. Hildburgh, *Medieval Spanish Enamels* (Oxford, 1936), 124, n. 3; 125, n. 2.

formed of thick copper sheet, engraved,<sup>1</sup> gilded, and in many cases further adorned with small plaques of copper champlevé enamel affixed to them, and have on their obverses, besides a crucifix cast from bronze, small applied figures—the censuring angel at the top, the Virgin Mary and St. John on the arms, and at the bottom Adam rising from a sarcophagus—of bronze cast in standardized forms of so few patterns as to indicate that they were the output of a single workshop, or of a very limited number of workshops, carrying on along lines of quantity-manufacture, rather than products of craftsmen working separately on their own accounts. Very commonly the Spanish censuring angels are in profile and with head downward,<sup>2</sup> as on our Abruzzi cross, and with the censer an integral part of the casting (see pl. VI, 1).<sup>3</sup> Somewhat less often, but still quite commonly, they are present in the shape of a half-figure in the round, with wings cut from thin sheet-metal, emerging frontally from a cloud (represented by a circular boss having an irregularly repoussé surface), head upward and swinging a separate censer hanging from a short chain (see pl. VI, 3).<sup>4</sup> Both varieties of such angels appear also on contemporary Spanish silver crosses. The frontal type with free-swinging censer is exemplified by a splendid cross, adorned with plaquettes of silver champlevé enamel, in the Victoria and Albert Museum,<sup>5</sup> still retaining the circular boss from which the angel (now missing) emerged. The downward-flying profile type finds exemplification on a cross exhibited at Burgos in 1921,<sup>6</sup> whose angel—like the angel on our Abruzzi cross—held (as indicated by a hole for a chain or a piece of wire) a free-swinging censer.

A very considerable number of the copper crosses of the kinds referred to above have survived in the neighbourhood of Burgos,<sup>7</sup> and since, furthermore, the silver

<sup>1</sup> Such engraved sheet-copper crosses in Spain were paralleled in contemporary Italy by crosses, also of engraved sheet-copper and analogous in iconography, of which very considerable numbers may be seen in museums and in private collections. These, I think, were made mostly in Tuscany, and presumably at or near Siena. For a few examples of crosses of the kind, cf. F. Witte, *Die liturgischen Geräte und andere Werke der Metallkunst in der Sammlung Schnüger in Köln* (Berlin, 1913), pl. 34, 4 and 5; pl. 36, 5. While these and the Spanish crosses of the sort seem to have developed, as general types, independently of each other, it would seem not unlikely that iconographically there may have been an interchange of influences between them.

<sup>2</sup> In the British Museum there is a fine cross, of engraved sheet-copper, belonging to the same group, upon whose obverse were, instead of figures cast in bronze and attached thereto, champlevé enamelled plaquettes depicting the censuring angel (in the attitude above described), the Virgin Mary, St. John (now missing), and Adam. A cross so similar to this that certainly it must have emanated from the same workshop, and very likely was made by the same hand, in the Comte de Guell's Collection, is reproduced in J. Gudiol i Cunill's 'Les creus d'argenteria a Catalunya', in *Anuari de l'Institut d'Estudis Catalans*, vi (1920), figs. 52, 53.

<sup>3</sup> There were a number of crosses of the kind exhibited at the Burgos Exposición de Arte Retrospectivo, but unfortunately the text of the illustrated *Catálogo general* (Burgos, 1926)

does not make clear the type to which their censuring angels conformed. Another, in the Comte de Guell's Collection, is reproduced by Gudiol, 'Les creus . . .', fig. 56. Many others are in museums and in private collections—I have five (including both the one illustrated in pl. VI, 1, above, and one from which the relief, whose former situation is marked by a space reserved in the ornamental engraving), in mine alone.

<sup>4</sup> Reproduced by courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the possessor of this exceptionally fine cross (for the complete cross, cf. P. S. Harris, 'A Processional Cross . . .', in *Bull. Metropolitan Museum of Art*, xxxii [1937], 95 f), from which, however, the censer itself and its chain unfortunately are missing. Other examples are illustrated in the Burgos *Catálogo* above cited, nos. 455, 492. The Barcelona municipal Museo de Arte y Arqueología has a cross of the sort, with its angel still retaining both wings and free-hanging censer.

<sup>5</sup> No. 514, 1873; cf. J. F. Riano, *The Industrial Arts in Spain* (London, 1890), line-engraving on p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Catálogo cit.*, no. 656, on pl. XXXIII.

<sup>7</sup> There were at least seven, from churches in the Diocese of Burgos, in the 1921 Exhibition; Harris gives (*op. cit.*, 96) a list of eight other places, 'mostly in Burgos and Palencia', whose parish churches possessed crosses similar to the one acquired by the Metropolitan Museum; and several of my own examples came either direct from Burgos or from vendors who had bought them in the Burgos district.

sheathing of the Victoria and Albert Museum's fully analogous cross is stamped in several places with the identificatory mark of the town of Burgos, it would seem reasonable to presume that there was in the vicinity of that town an industry which produced a large proportion (if perhaps not indeed all) of the sheet-copper crosses of those particular sorts. Their manufacture appears to have been carried on in the course of the fifteenth century—so far as I am aware their period has not been fixed for us more precisely—although the archaistic features of certain ones of them have led some scholars<sup>1</sup> to assign their group to the fourteenth; the Victoria and Albert Museum's silver cross, presumably contemporary with them, has been attributed to the early fifteenth century.

Censing angels, cast in metal, represented in profile and flying downward, in shape very similar to those on the (presumably) Burgos crosses made of heavy sheet-copper, may be seen on processional crosses made of wood sheathed with thin brass embossed in moulds (cf. p. 108 *supra*), attributed to a Catalan industry of the fourteenth century. One such cross was exhibited before the Society of Antiquaries in 1921.<sup>2</sup> On another similar, but very fragmentary, cross of (presumably) Catalan stamped sheet-brass, which likewise is in my possession, the affixed censing angel is, although analogous in shape, made of sheet-brass repoussé and is crude in workmanship; the cross may, I think, well be of earlier date than the one first cited, but I am not certain that its present censing angel originally formed part of it. At Riells del Fay there is (or at least was) a cross of an archaic shape and of workmanship almost certainly attributable to the fourteenth century—if not indeed (as claimed) to the thirteenth—made of wood sheathed with thin silver sheets crudely embossed, whose censing angel is standing, not flying, and occupies a circular space a little above the head of the crucifix,<sup>3</sup> which I think we may accept as testimony indicating that a censing angel above the head of a crucifix was not a fifteenth-century innovation in Catalonia.

Again, on the silver parcel-gilt (on a wooden foundation) processional cross from San Salvador de Fuentes, near the town of Oviedo, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art,<sup>4</sup> which very probably was made between the middle of the eleventh century and the middle of the twelfth, the terminal above the Saviour's head is embossed with an angel, standing, swinging a censer (see pl. VI, 2<sup>5</sup>). It is perhaps worth noting, in connexion with this cross, that, like our Abruzzi cross, it consists of repoussé sheets on a wooden foundation, having on the obverse a censing angel, Mary, John, and (in the stead of the mound surmounted by Adam's skull) Adam rising from his

<sup>1</sup> E.g. those responsible for the Burgos *Catálogo*, who go so far as to assign certain members of the group to the thirteenth. Harris analogously attributes the Metropolitan Museum's cross to the fourteenth century. M. Gómez-Moreno, one of the soundest authorities on the dating of Spanish objects, referring to a copper cross of the kind (cf. *Catálogo monumental de España: Provincia de Leon 1906-8* (Madrid, 1925-6), fig. 60 and text p. 128), says that although its crucifix is like crucifixes of the fourteenth century, the cross as a whole does not appear to be earlier than the first half of the fifteenth.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hildburgh, 'Some Examples of Catalan

Medieval Stamped Sheet-metalwork', in *Antiq. Journ.*, ii (1922), 122ff, with fig. 3. The angel of this has been, in error, set head upward.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. Gudiol [i Cunill], 'Una antigua producción catalana' [i.e. objects of wood covered with embossed sheets of thin metal], in *Museum* (Barcelona), iv (1914-15), 40, with figs. D, E.

<sup>4</sup> For a brief discussion of certain features of this cross, and some references to literature concerning it, cf. Hildburgh, *Medieval Spanish Enamels*, 84.

<sup>5</sup> Reproduced by courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



FIG. 1. THE VIRGIN MARY

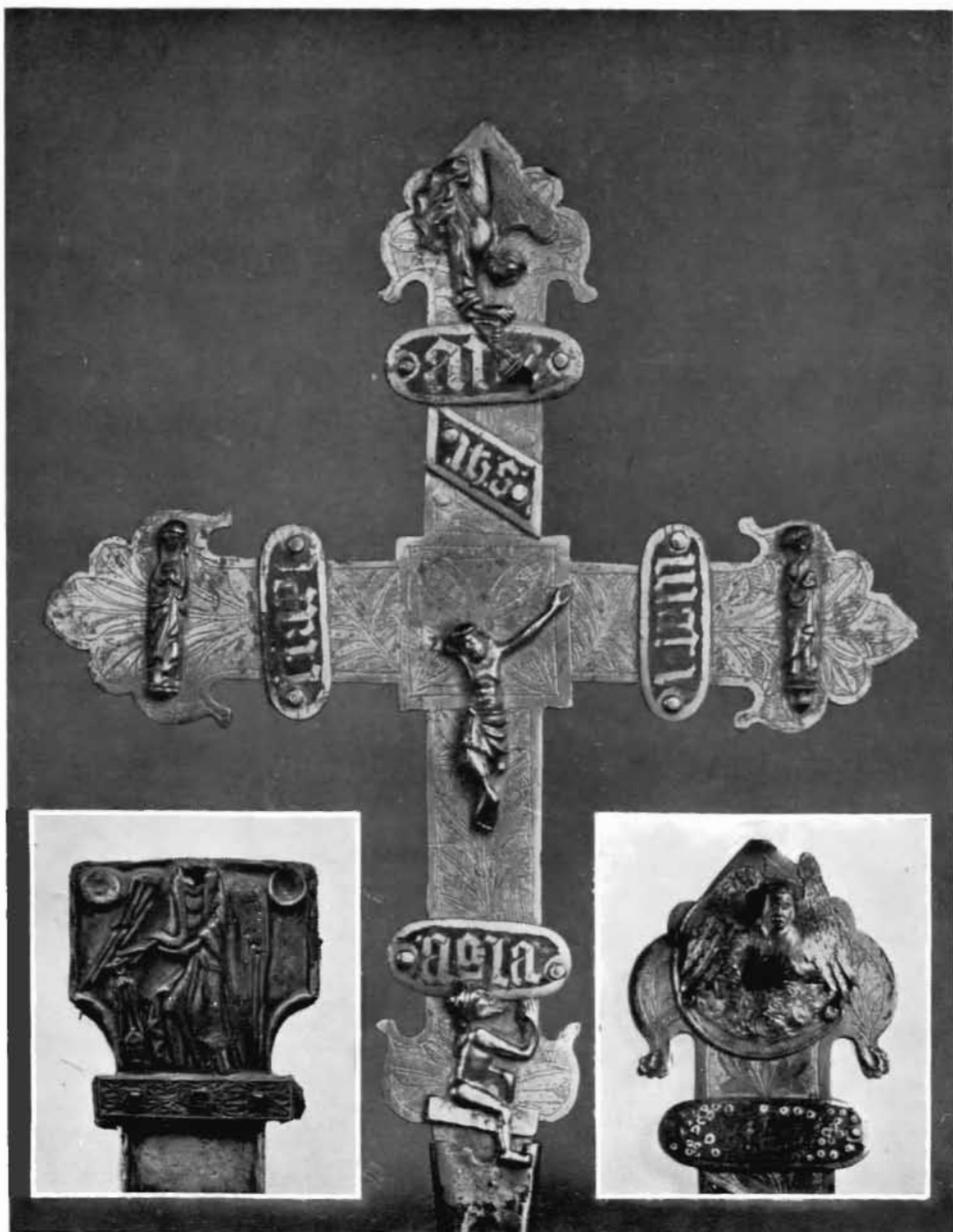


FIG. 2. SYMBOL OF ST. MATTHEW



FIG. 3. FRAGMENTS OF AN INSCRIPTION

DETAILS OF SILVER PROCESSIONAL CROSS FROM THE ABRUZZI



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1. COPPER-GILT AND ENAMEL PROCESSIONAL CROSS, PROBABLY BURGOS, XVTH CENTURY.  
FRONT
2. CENSING ANGEL ON A SILVER CROSS, OVIEDO, c. 1050-1150
3. CENSING ANGEL ON A COPPER-GILT AND ENAMEL PROCESSIONAL CROSS, PROBABLY BURGOS, XVTH CENTURY

tomb, these several figures being in relief and with their heads in the round ; while on the reverse the centre is occupied by the Lamb of God surrounded by the Eagle, the Lion, and the Ox (the piece which bore the Symbol of St. Matthew is missing), in just the same situations (less common, in the Abruzzi, than with the quadrupeds reversed) as on our cross.

As perhaps cognate to this abundant evidence of the antiquity in Spain of the setting on a cross, above the head of its crucifix, of an image of a censuring angel, there may be recalled the copper champlevé enamelled plaque, from the front of the sloping roof of a small ch<sup>â</sup>sse, formerly in the Bardac and Morgan Collections and now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, whereon there are two kneeling angels swinging censers toward the Hand of God and immediately above the seated Christ depicted on the plaque forming the vertical portion of the front of the ch<sup>â</sup>sse.<sup>1</sup> Although the set of plaques from this ch<sup>â</sup>sse has been repeatedly claimed as of French make,<sup>2</sup> there would appear to be very good reasons for attributing them, rather, to a school of enamelling which I take to have been closely associated with a particular group of Benedictine monasteries in Spain, and to have had its seat somewhere in the neighbourhood of Burgos—possibly at Silos, either in the Abbey of Santo Domingo de Silos or in the town itself<sup>3</sup>—probably about the first quarter of the twelfth century.

The above-cited illustrations appear to me as of especial interest in that quite possibly they are evidence of contacts between the silversmiths of the Abruzzi, during the period when their skill was at its best, and those of Spain. They seem to me to suggest strongly—though we can hardly go so far as to say to prove—that the censuring angel placed above the head of the Crucified Christ, which had a solid and long-established background in Spain, was taken up in the Abruzzi ; and that, reciprocally, the free-swinging censer—which would seem to be a probable development within an industry which was accustomed to represent details by pieces of wire inserted or otherwise attached to plaques of embossed sheet-metal, rather than within one whose embossed work was not tricked out with somewhat incongruous materials—went from the Abruzzi to Spain. In this connexion there may be cited a processional cross made of heavy sheet-copper, of the typically Spanish shape and technique referred to above as presumably associable with the vicinity of Burgos, whose edges have attached to them, at most of their many salient points, precisely the same sort of small openwork globular ornaments as regularly form a corresponding feature of Abruzzi crosses.<sup>4</sup> Artistic relations, of various kinds, between the Abruzzi and Spain in the period with which we are here concerned, must have been furthered by the close dynastic connexions between them. The Abruzzi had, long

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Perate, *Collections Georges Hoentschel : Émaux du XII<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1911), pl. XVII, in colour ; Hildburgh, *Medieval Spanish Enamels*, pl. VIII ; M. C. Ross, 'An Enamelled Reliquary from Champagnat' in *Mediaeval Studies in Memory of A. Kingsley Porter* (Harvard University Press, 1939), figs. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Perate, *loc. cit.* ; Ross, *loc. cit.* ; etc.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Hildburgh, *Medieval Spanish Enamels*, 57 ff, 122 ff, 94 ; Hildburgh, 'Varieties of Circumstantial Evidence in the Study of Mediaeval Enamelling', in *Speculum*, xvii (1942), 394 f.

<sup>4</sup> This cross, bought at an antiquity-shop in Cologne, is in the Schnutgen Museum ; cf. Witte, *op. cit.*, pl. 33, 2. The *Catalogue* attributes it to 'Central Italy, XV Century'. A peculiar feature, suggesting as probable that it went from Spain to Italy and in Italy was refurbished, for ecclesiastical use, with the globular adornments, is that the cast-bronze censuring angel (of the profile type) above the crucifix is duplicated below it, but inverted so that the second angel (which, so far as we can judge from Witte's small half-tone, might well be a *surmoulage* of the one at the top) seems to be

before, become a province of the Kingdom of Naples; early in the fifteenth century Naples came under the rule of Alfonso V of Aragon; and, later in that century, Joanna, daughter of John II of Aragon (1458-79), married King Ferdinand of Naples (1459-94). And in that same period Aragon was so closely associated with adjacent Castile, both dynastically and through the very considerable traffic along the pilgrimage-roads leading to Santiago de Compostela and to such lesser shrines as that of Santo Domingo de Silos, that we need feel no surprise at interrelations, such as those which would appear to have subsisted between the art of the metalworkers of the Abruzzi and that of those of the Burgos district, despite the geographical separation resulting from the situation of Burgos far inland in the northern part of the Iberian Peninsula and that of the Abruzzi on the eastern coast of Italy.

The figures of the Virgin Mary and St. John, represented at about three-quarters length on our cross, although somewhat puppet-like in form (in this following a number of Abruzzi crosses of cruder workmanship, presumably earlier in date), have been quite skilfully chased. According with a practice much in favour in the Abruzzi of the period, each has its head in the round while the rest is in merely high relief. Mary's left hand, which was in the round and projected in front of her, has been broken away. Her head-dress (see pl. V, 1) is curious; her garment is, along its edges over her bosom, adorned with an engraved border. In the case of John, the original head has been replaced by another similar in type and (although much less in depth from front to back) in general character, but inferior in workmanship. It may be that the craftsman who made the cross designed to show John holding his Gospel in his right hand; but if so, he has not done it clearly.

Below the crucifix is a curious representation, for which I recall no precise parallel, of Golgotha, 'which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull'.<sup>1</sup> On top of a small conventionalized mound lies a human skull. The fifteenth-century Abruzzi crosses very often have, below the feet of the Crucified Saviour,<sup>2</sup> a symbolization

shown as censuring the Saviour's feet. Furthermore, the cross's crucifix, made of lead (instead of the normal bronze), looks to be a *surmoulage* from an Italian original later in type than such crucifixes as are proper to the thick sheet-copper crosses of Spain.

<sup>1</sup> Mark xv. 22; Matthew xxvii. 33; John xix. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Often on Italian processional crosses of the period of our cross, Christ is represented as immediately crucified upon a lesser cross situated well within the edges of the processional cross—whose service then becomes essentially that of a *carrier* for the symbolic representation of the Crucifixion—and this lesser cross is set directly upon the symbolic Golgotha. Although such a lesser cross appears on a number of analogous processional crosses made in the Abruzzi at about the same time as our cross, it has been omitted—quite possibly owing to the iconographical ignorance which seems to have affected certain of its other features—from the latter.

In this connexion it is perhaps worth observing that on several exceptionally fine Abruzzi

processional crosses such lesser crosses have somewhat unusual forms. Thus, a cross at Lanciano (cf. Bindi, *Monumenti*, pl. 99; Gmelin, *op. cit.*, 146), made in 1422 and ascribed to Nicola di Guardiagrele, carries a lesser cross, complete in itself, shaped as if composed of logs whereon remain stumps, equally spaced and all of the same length, of branches—a form common enough, in various parts of Europe, for processional and altar crosses themselves, but rare as employed here. Again, the cross at Visso (cf. n. 2, p. 110, and p. 116 *infra*) has its inner cross, which is similarly complete in itself, of closely analogous type but unique (so far as I recall) in being represented as if completely encased in little cylindrical shoots whose ends are flat, the cylindrical forms seemingly indicating that we have to do with an exceptional example of the type of the one on the Lanciano cross, and not with a cross formed from logs of palm-tree (cf. Hildburgh, 'On Palm-tree Crosses', in *Archaeologia*, lxxxix [1931], 49 ff.). And on the Rosciolo cross (cf. n. 1, p. 115) the inner cross, embossed in the sheathing of the main cross, is represented in the form of a dead tree (cf. M. R. Bennett, 'The Legend of the Green Tree

of Golgotha, sometimes as a mound upon whose sloping side (or within a hollow of which) rests a skull, often among rocks and/or accompanied by bones,<sup>1</sup> sometimes as a mound-shaped tomb wherein sits Adam awaiting, according to a popular belief of the Middle Ages,<sup>2</sup> resurrection through the life-giving drops which should fall from the Saviour's wounds upon his subterranean abode.<sup>3</sup> As already observed (p. III *supra*), in connexion with the group of Spanish crosses cited as displaying an image of a censing angel above the head of the crucifix, a regular feature of such crosses is a representation, below the feet, of Adam rising from a sarcophagus.

The central panel of the reverse of our cross incorporates an image of the Lamb of God, in high relief supplemented by bits of wire representing the tiny horns and by a piece of stout wire, now only between the left foreleg and the creature's belly, but originally continued through its body and constituting the cross-staff commonly accompanying that symbol of the Saviour. The chasing is unusual in its combination of embossing for the locks of wool on the body and engraving, precisely like that employed for the beard of the Man of St. Matthew (cf. pl. V, 2) and used in a similar manner, for accentuating the lower edge of the head. Portrayals of the Lamb with the Symbols of the Evangelists round it are quite normal on Italian crosses of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and may be seen on the engraved reverses of many of the thick sheet-copper crosses to which I have alluded in n. 1, and on p. III, n. 1. They are well rooted in Italy: e.g. they appear on the sheet-metal-covered cross from Assisi, which has been attributed to the twelfth century (cf. n. 2, p. 110); embossed in low relief on a silver-gilt cross, attributed to the School of Monte Cassino, in Naples Cathedral;<sup>4</sup> and on the well-known cross, adorned with gold cloisonné enamels, in Velletri Cathedral.<sup>5</sup>

Of the Eagle of St. John, which as usual is at the top, little need be said; it is a simple piece of embossing, without applied additions. But the Ox of St. Luke is of greater interest, being an exceptionally good example of the technique, which would seem to have been much in favour among Abruzzi silversmiths of the fifteenth century, whereof we have already noted applications in the cases of the Lamb (cross-staff and horns) and the censing angel (free-hanging censer). Embossed in high relief, it has horns made of stout wire, curved and recurved, tapered to their

and the Dry', in *Arch. Journ.*, lxxxiii [1926], 21ff, irregular in its outlines and having all its terminals rounded, with two great branches supporting the Saviour's arms and short minor branches projecting from both the trunk and the two great branches.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. on the crude low-relief repoussé metal-work of a cross attributed to the twelfth century, from the Commune of Cascia (cf. Gnoli, *L'arte umbra* . . . , fig. 138; id., 'L'oreficeria . . . Perugia', 436), and on other silver crosses reproduced by Balzano, *op. cit.*, 88, 106. On an Abruzzi cross, in private possession, reproduced by Gmelin, *op. cit.*, 157, the mound is covered with foliage round the skull; foliage is round the skull also on the mound of the fine cross, made in 1334, at Rosciolo (*ibid.*, 148; Bindi, *op. cit.*, pl. 206), but on this cross it is further used as fillings for the flat grounds, from which the figures project, of the terminal plaques.

Round the skull, on the mound of a silver-gilt cross at Isola del Gran Sasso, in Teramo (cf. Balzano, *op. cit.*, 76), are what seem to be representations of stems of dead vegetation. A mound with a skull lying upon it often appears on such crosses of engraved stout sheet-copper as have been cited in n. 1, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. S. Napier, *History of the Holy Rood-tree* (Early English Text Soc., no. 103; London, 1894); R. Morris, *Legends of the Holy Rood* (E.E.T.S., no. 46; London, 1871); W. Caxton, *The Golden Legend*, 'Of the Invention of the Holy Cross'.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. on a number of crosses, all from places in the Province of Teramo, reproduced by Balzano, *op. cit.*, 70, 71, 75, 88.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Y. Hackenbroch, *Italienisches Email des frühen Mittelalters* (Basel and Leipzig, 1938), fig. 51 (with text and bibliography, 56 f).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, fig. 34 (with long bibliography, 49 f).

ends. Horns of the same kind, but bent in a single curve only, appear on a number of other silver crosses in the Abruzzi—e.g. one at Tione (in Aquila),<sup>1</sup> another at Montepagano (near the town of Teramo),<sup>2</sup> and a third at Visso.<sup>3</sup> The Ox's ears are, like those of the Lamb and of the Lion, made of bits of sheet-metal bent and affixed to the embossing. At present the Ox is, as are the Lion and the Man, wingless; in the two first-named there are, however, traces of the former presence of attached wings made of sheet-metal—an artifice which, although we find it in use also on the cross at Visso, is somewhat exceptional, the Abruzzi silversmiths, like their counterparts elsewhere in Italy, almost invariably fashioning the body and the wings of a Symbol in a single piece of material.

The Symbol of St. Matthew (see pl. V, 2) is so unusual as again to suggest that the maker of our cross had been inadequately instructed concerning the iconography to be followed. Instead of being, as normally, represented as youthful,<sup>4</sup> the Man is shown bald and bearded—one might well guess that the craftsman thought that he should depict St. Matthew himself.<sup>5</sup> Just below his right shoulder there is, attached only to the ground, a small piece of a sheet-metal wing, presumably a fragment placed there in error when the cross was reconstructed, since there seems to be no trace of a corresponding wing by the figure's left shoulder. The figure's head is, like that of the figure of Mary (pl. V, 1), in the round, and to it—as well as to the upper part of the garment—engraving has been added.

A thin square of silver, now fastened between the Lamb and the Man, bears part of an inscription (see pl. V, 3), of value to us in fixing closely the date of the cross. Clearly, the beginning of the inscription and the portion immediately after the section on the square are missing; but on another fragment (pl. V, 3), which was casually attached so as to cover a gap in the present arrangement of the silver sheathing, there is a single line—presumably, since there is a plain border below it, the final one. Even were it not indicated by the present proportions of the cross, the abbreviated inscription would suffice to show that originally the cross's lower limb was considerably longer than it now is. Quite possibly our cross's proportions, when it was new, were very like those of the cross at Tione, cited above as one of those having the Ox's horns shaped from wire, which in a number of features so nearly parallels ours<sup>6</sup> as to suggest a fairly close relationship between them. On the Tione cross the considerable space between the image of the Deity—here replacing our Lamb—and the head of the Symbol of St. Matthew contains an inscription, complete in five lines, relating to the order for the making of the cross, but not including a date.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Balzano, *op. cit.*, 110.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bindi, *Monumenti*, pl. 20; and p. 118 *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. n. 2, p. 110, and n. 2, p. 114.

<sup>4</sup> Almost invariably on Italian crosses of the period the Man is youthful and, like the other Symbols, winged; occasionally, but I think very rarely, he appears youthful but wingless.

<sup>5</sup> There would seem, too, a possibility that the bearded figure originally occupied a quadrilobe—such as is present on many Italian crosses of the time—situated about halfway between the Lamb and the quadrilobe carrying the Symbol of St. Matthew, and that mistakenly it has been

re-used to take the place of a lost Symbol of St. Matthew. Or perhaps the craftsman, in error, took as his model some such image of a Saint as is occasionally at the foot of the *front* of a cross—e.g. on the cross at Rosciolo (cf. n. 1, p. 115, and n. 2, p. 114), which has St. Michael at the summit, Mary, John, and at the bottom a bearded man holding a book.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Balzano, *op. cit.*, 110; unfortunately the reverse alone is reproduced. As on our cross, the Lion and the Ox (which, however, occupy situations the reverse of ours) are recumbent, with bodies as well as heads turned towards the centre, and the Eagle is in half-profile; the Man is unlike ours.

The well-shaped lettering of our inscription is reserved in a ground, precisely like that of the conventional foliage which forms a background for the embossed symbolical figures, composed of tiny circles produced with a hollow-ended circular punch, closely but irregularly set together. The left edge of the larger fragment is intact, but small parts of its right edge have been so injured as to make difficult determination of some of the final letters. The first line, clearly, is 'ABBAS'; in the second 'PAR' is clear, but the succeeding letters (or perhaps a single letter carelessly transcribed), which conceivably may be an 'I' and an 'F' or an 'S' casually linked near their tops, are not; the third line, clearly, is 'A.D.M'; and the fourth has 'CCCCLV' legible, possibly an 'I', and finally a broken edge beyond which there perhaps was room for another 'I'. We may, therefore, very reasonably presume that our cross was made between 1455 and 1458. The smaller fragment, whose width is the same as that of the larger, bears two letters—presumably 'B' and 'L'—and a mutilated third (?), above which is a small rounded rectangle probably part of a contracted word; to the right of these is conventional foliage in the usual ground of tiny circles.

I have said (p. 108 *supra*) that much fine ecclesiastical metal-work was produced in the Abruzzi in the fourteenth century and the fifteenth, seemingly mainly in Sulmona, Guardiagrele, Teramo, and Aquila. In the surviving objects attributable—whether definitely through their silver-marks or merely presumptively in view of their style or their iconography—to Sulmona<sup>2</sup> I perceive little to suggest that our cross was made there rather than by a craftsman associated more closely with Guardiagrele, with Aquila, or—as I am inclined to think—with Teramo. Even at the beginning of the fifteenth century Guardiagrele had long been renowned for its excellent work in the precious metals; it is recorded as having had, already in 1313, a 'strada degli Orefici'.<sup>3</sup> Of its silversmiths, the most famous was one Nicolo Gallucci (Nicola di Andrea da Guardiagrele), a dozen or more of whose definitely identifiable productions, datable between 1400 and 1455, have been recorded.<sup>4</sup> In those productions we may observe such salient characteristics of the 'scuola guardiese' of the fifteenth century that we may well believe that that school was very strongly influenced by his work and by his personality. And Nicola's artistic stature would lead one to think that the Guardiagrele School probably had some considerable effect on the silversmithing of other towns of the Abruzzi—Ferrari (whose civic pride should, however, be allowed for) says that the 'guardiese' style had its followers in Aquila and in Teramo—although it may be rather directly, modifying the local traditions of their craftsmen, than in an imposition of radical changes.

Our cross is closely related to Guardiagrele work. The elaborate cross at Visso, the horns of whose Ox are formed of wire (cf. p. 116 *supra*), has been described as being 'in the style of Nicola da Guardiagrele' (cf. n. 2, p. 110); and the one at Tione

<sup>1</sup> If these be indeed the letters intended, the 'F' would probably have been an abbreviation for 'fecit', 'facta fare', or something of the kind. 'PARI', whether as the name (or an abbreviation of the name) of an abbey or of an abbot, I have been unable to trace.

<sup>2</sup> Gmelin's long paper (cf. n. 1, p. 108) is concerned mainly with the work of Sulmona silversmiths.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. F. Ferrari, *L'arte di Guardiagrele nella*

*mostra d'arte antica abruzzese in Chieti* (Guardiagrele, 1905), quoting (but without precise reference) L. A. Antinori, a historian of the Abruzzi who, Ferrari notes with civic pride, 'Although a native of the Province of Aquila, speaks of the finest silversmiths' work as being, not of Sulmona nor of Teramo nor even of his own Aquila, but of Guardiagrele'.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ferrari, *op. cit.*, 15 f, for a list citing twelve.

(cf. p. 116 *supra*), whose Ox is similarly provided with horns, as 'imitating the Guardiagrele School'.<sup>1</sup> Although I recall no precise, or even nearly precise, parallel to it, I think that we may perhaps find a clue to its origin in the fine cross in the parish church at Montepagano, not far from the town of Teramo. That cross,<sup>2</sup> whose terminals have the same form as those of our cross, is similarly sheathed with thin silver embossed with sacred figures in grounds of conventionalized floral ornament. Its crucifix (although on, as ours is not, an interior cross<sup>3</sup>) has, as has ours, its loin-cloth well above the knees, legs somewhat angular (as are those of ours) in front, trunk-muscles moulded as in our crucifix; it has not, however, the individualized ribs of the latter, nor its depiction of body-hair. Unfortunately, the printed reproductions do not show the face sufficiently clearly for us to compare it with that of our crucifix; its faces of Mary and John do, however, appear rather like the latter's in style. In the top of the head is a socket, like the one in the head of our crucifix, to hold the central pin of a disk-type nimbus; and, as in the case of our crucifix, the hands are formed of thick sheet, are cupped inward, and have the fingers individualized. The iconography of the remainder of the Montepagano cross is unlike that of ours, while the folds of the garments of Mary, of John, and of a Saint (holding a book) at the summit, as well as those of the loin-cloth, are more rounded and less archaistic than analogous folds on our cross. On the reverse, the central figure is that of the Deity, seated, and the treatment of the Symbols is quite other than that on our cross. But notwithstanding the differences between the two crosses, I have an impression that they are fairly closely related to each other.

Now, an inscription on the Montepagano cross informs us that it was made, in the year 1500, by one Pietro [de] Santi, of Teramo—'a distinguished goldsmith and engraver, unknown in the history of art and to all writers of his native land'—who, flourishing about 1482, 'executed many fine works, among which the Montepagano cross is the most admired'.<sup>4</sup> I would suggest, therefore, that our cross well may be an early work of this artist, produced at a time when he was still strongly influenced by the archaism observable in works such as yet remain in the Teramo district, but sufficiently independent to introduce unusual—perhaps his own original—touches in the iconography as well as certain mannerisms in his treatment of his materials. The date in the later 'fifties of the fifteenth century would not be too much out of accord with 1482, in which year we are told that he was working. Were our cross to be indeed identifiable as made by him, it would be of peculiar interest as enabling us to set back by more than two decades the period during which that accomplished craftsman was at work.

<sup>1</sup> Balzano, *op. cit.*, 110.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 81; Bindi, *Monumenti*, pls. 19, 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Cf. n. 2*, p. 114.

<sup>4</sup> *Cf. Bindi, Artisti abruzzesi*, 262, sub 'Santi o de Santi, Pietro'.