



OBJECT ID	F2012.13
OBJECT NAME	Cross
MATERIAL	Metal
ACCESS POINTS	ceremonial ceremony church cross Orthodox procession Processional Cross Resurrection

OBJECT DESCRIPTION

This processional cross is complete minus the pole/stand. The entire object seems to have been covered with an matte gold spray paint. The sheath at the bottom has two dents on the left side on two flaring parts. There is another small dent on the front of the front of the lower flare. On the obverse, there is a pinched dent at the point where the shaft meets the upper bulb. There is light scratching and wear on the sheath. The cap at the top of the sheath along the bolt has two small cracks at the bottom and is loose.

Attached to the bolt is a central armature. On each side of this is attached six hammered pieces of metal. There is an ornately decorated cross, which serves as the background and there are 5 pieces attached to this. There are four scenes, one at each end of the cross with three saints in each, which are the same on both sides. The central figure is the only difference between the two sides. The central figure on the obverse is the crucified Christ. On the reverse, the central figure is an icon of the Resurrection. On the obverse, the background cross is bent outward at the bottom and bent inward on the right tip of the crossbar. The finish is worn around most of the edges. There is one pin missing from each of the bottom and right scenes of the saints. The implement held by the rightmost saint in the right group is bent. There is some scratching and wear on the outermost edges of all five of the attached pieces of metal on the obverse. On the reverse, the background cross is bent outward at the bottom and inward at the top. The right side of the crossbar is bent inward and the left side is bent outward at the left and inward at the bottom. There is general wear to the finish along the edges of the cross. The lower left pin is missing from the top scene of the saints. There are also two pins missing from the bottom of the resurrection scene. Once again there is wear on the outermost surfaces of the decoration.

Working outward, the background cross has a quilted pattern. Each of the small diamond shapes has a large circular indentation in the center and four small circular indents at each of the corners. Between two thin twisted borders (1/8 in.) is a thin band (3/8) with vines culminating in five-petaled flowers in the four inner corners. At each of the four ends of the cross is a plain trefoil space which acts as the background for the saint scenes. These trefoils have a similar twisted border. Wrapping around the entire exterior is a simple stylized rolling acanthus pattern.

For the three saints at the bottom, all three have halos, wear similar robes, and goatee beards. The figure on the left is in 3/4-view, facing right and has long hair and a long beard, he rests his hands on an unidentified saw-toothed object. The central figure is frontal and has his head tilted to his left. He has short hair and a short beard. He holds a book with both hands over his chest. The figure on the left's body is in 3/4 view and his head is in profile, facing left. He has long hair and a long beard. He holds a key in his left hand and possibly an unraveled scroll in the right outstretched hand.

The saints at the top all have halos. The saint on the left has his head turned to the right in a 3/4-view, facing right, and his body is frontal. He has medium length hair and a well kept goatee beard. He holds an unidentified object in his right hand and his left is outstretched and overlaps the central saint. The saint in the center is frontal but turns his head slightly to his right and drops his left shoulder to give the sense of a weight shift. His right arm crosses over the body. His left hand holds a cluster of keys, which are slung over his left shoulder. He has a long beard. The figure at the right has a frontal body and the head is turned to face the left and appears in a 3/4 view. He holds a book in his right hand at chest level and a sword in his left hand, which points upwards and rests on his left shoulder. He has a long beard and hair.

The saints at the left end of the crossbar are all wearing similar dress and have halos. The figure at the left has their face in profile and body in 3/4 view. He has long hair and no beard. His head is turned to face down and to the right. He is viewing the outstretched scroll across his lap, which is held at each end by his two hands. The top figure has long hair and a beard. He looks down at to the left toward the figure at the left. The top figure has a frontal body and a 3/4 view face. His right hand holds a self-referential processional cross and his left hand is placed on his chest. The bottom figure has both a frontal head and body. There is a slight tilt based on relief depth to the right, which allows the gaze of the figure to both come out at the audience and toward the central figure of Christ. The figure has short hair and a long beard. His right elbow is out as if it is resting on an armrest, but the throne is missing. He holds a book in the right hand near his right side of his lap. His left hand is raised up above his left shoulder.

The saints at the right end of the crossbar are all wearing similar dress, have goatees, have halos, and all three turn to look to the left toward the central Christ figure. The top figure has medium length hair and a long beard. The body and head are frontal. His hands are clasped in a praying gesture in front of his right shoulder, which gives a twist to the frontal body. The bottom figure has short hair and a short beard. He has a frontal body and a head that denotes the turn by depth of relief to get a 3/4 view. He has his right hand outstretched, palm up, toward the central Christ figure. His left hand rests in his lap holding an unidentified implement. The figure at the right has long hair and a beard. Both his body and head are in 3/4 view. His right hand crosses over his chest and rests on the left side of his neck. He holds an implement, possibly a staff, in his left hand that stretches above his shoulder.

The central figure on the obverse is the crucifixion of Christ. The cross is the interior quilted one of the background piece of metal. Only Christ is presented in the fifth attached piece. He is frontal and his head slinks down to the left, with the chin in the deepest relief, so much so that the beard is nearly invisible. The halo behind his head has a solid band at the outside and a pointy pedal design on the interior. There are a few relief lines on the arms to denote the emaciated nature of Christ. This is further demonstrated by the high relief of the ribs which extend as far as the pectorals. He has the solitary loincloth garment. The feet stretch down with his right foot covering his left. It is unclear but there seem to be a second set of feet stretching down. The three pins to hold this piece to the armature are placed at the ankles and one at each wrist, mimicking the nails which held Christ to the cross.

The central figure on the reverse shows the resurrection. The gaunt, emaciated figure of Christ is similar to the obverse. He also has the same halo with pointy pedals. Only the torso of Christ is shown. His lower body is not shown and the figure ends in wind-blown drapery stretching down from his right shoulder. His right hand is stretched out to hold a cross on a staff which also bears a wind-blown banner also featuring a cross. His left arm is stretched out above his head. The two top pins are in his hands and the two bottom pins, which are missing, should be at the bottom, right side of the drapery.

ORIGIN

"The processional cross is used for processions such as the Little Entrance during Vespers, the Little and Great Entrances during Liturgy and other times throughout the year. On one side of the cross there is an icon of the Resurrection, which is displayed during a resurrectional service (Sunday Liturgy) and the reverse side is the icon of Christ on the cross, which is displayed in non-resurrectional services." (<http://www.holyascension.net/virtualchurch/altar.php>)

The processional cross is visually similar to a shepherd's crook and brings to mind the images of Christ as the good shepherd.

Although it is clear that the central figure is Christ on both sides it is unclear who the other saints are. There are 12 figures total broken into four groups of three. These numbers may refer to the 12 apostles, the four gospels, and the three holy hierarchs.

This processional cross was found in the collection on 9/18/2012 and given its accession number the same day.

CITATION

Cross, *National Hellenic Museum*, <https://collections.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/Detail/objects/>. Accessed 04/25/24.