

## ST. GEORGE THE MARTYR

field. The Church may have seen in him also the Vanquisher of the Forces of Evil, in fact another St. Michael. But since in art St. George's dragon is always a real dragon, if the term may be allowed, and not one of those semi-human monsters that are pierced by the spear of the Archangel, we may assume that this interpretation was not much insisted upon.

An erudite German has studied in detail the iconography of St. George in Italian Art. The type of the rider slaying a monster is, as he shows, only a natural development of various equestrian groups, of deities or emperors, with sometimes human, sometimes animal foes prostrate beneath their steeds. Given a horseman and a dragon-foe, it is difficult to see how any type, other than that which was familiar on reliefs and coins since Hellenistic times, could have been adopted. The thirteenth-century relief over the Porta S. Giorgio at Florence is a lineal descendant - for the resemblance can hardly be a mere coincidence - of the funeral monument of Dexileos at Athens. It is not until we reach the fourteenth century that all the essentials of the scene appear: - the saint armed with shield as well as spear, the dragon not placed hieratically under his horse but attacking from a distance, and, above all, the Princess and spectators. This last development is especially the mark of the