

Superficial Branches of the Cervical Plexus (Fig. 805).—The **Smaller Occipital Nerve** (*n. occipitalis minor*; *small occipital nerve*) arises from the second cervical nerve, sometimes also from the third; it curves around and ascends along the posterior border of the Sternocleidomastoideus. Near the cranium it perforates the deep fascia, and is continued upward along the side of the head behind the auricula, supplying the skin and communicating with the greater occipital, the great auricular, and the posterior auricular branch of the facial. The smaller occipital varies in size, and is sometimes duplicated.

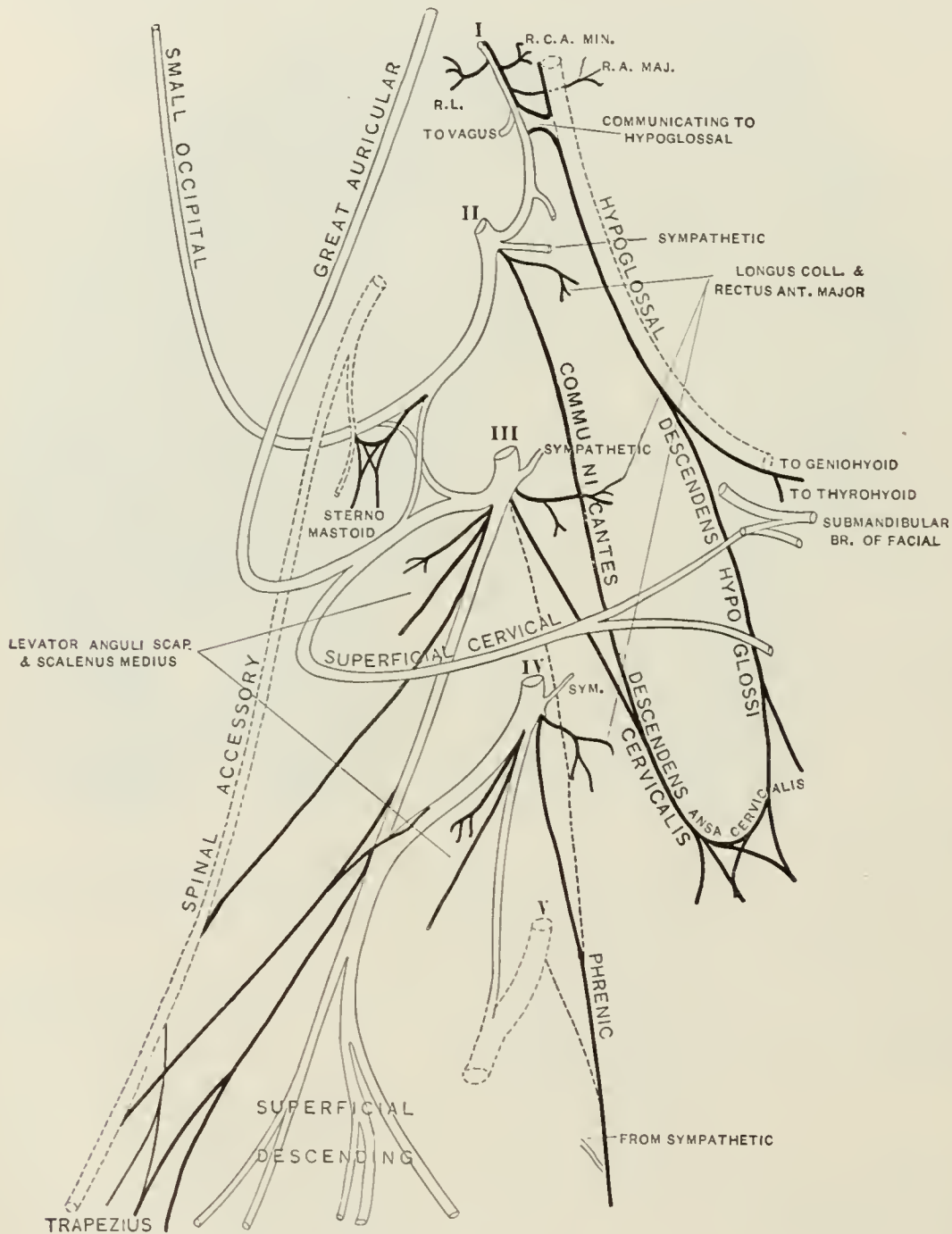


FIG. 804.—Plan of the cervical plexus. (Gerrish.)

It gives off an **auricular branch**, which supplies the skin of the upper and back part of the auricula, communicating with the mastoid branch of the great auricular. This branch is occasionally derived from the greater occipital nerve.

The **Great Auricular Nerve** (*n. auricularis magnus*) is the largest of the ascending branches. It arises from the second and third cervical nerves, winds around the posterior border of the Sternocleidomastoideus, and, after perforating the deep