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THE CROSS

by

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(A series of sketches accompany this presentation.)

The Cross, in varying forms, has been from very ancient times, and in all countries, a sacred symbol or ornament. It is depicted on the oldest monuments and buildings of Egypt, Assyria, Hindustan and Mexico. It was a symbol throughout the Pagan world long previous to its becoming an object of veneration to Christians. In ancient symbology it was a symbol of eternal life. The ancient worship of the Cross seems to have been a worship of such peculiar nature as to exclude the worship of idols. This symbol that beyond all others has fascinated the human mind finds its source and meaning in many natural religions. It is but another symbol of the four cardinal points, the four winds of heaven venerated by aboriginal tribes, in the New World as well as the Old. The Celts and other ancient people built their cruciform temples as a symbol of the World, of which the four cardinal points constituted the boundaries. The Cross was not a religious symbol until the Church made it so.

It was not until late pre-Christian times that it began to be used for other purposes. especially for ridicule or torture for recalcitrance or criminals, to which the victim was fastened for a time sometimes unto death. The Romans particularly used it for the execution of traitors or rebels. The Roman gallows crosses are generally listed as four: "Crux Simplex" a simple stake; "Crux Commissa" a Tau or St. Anthony's Cross; "Crux Immissa" a Latin or Passion Cross: "Crux Decussata" a Saltire or St. Andrew's Cross. The Cross was abandoned by the Romans as an instrument of execution in the fourth century.

The Pale (Crux Simplex), though not a Cross, was the forerunner of the Cross as an ancient form of punishment. It is a stake or sharp pointed slab to which a victim was tied, chained or nailed, and at times impaled upon its sharp end or burned to death fastened to it. It was the principle instrument of execution by fire, the Church sometimes burned heretics on the Cross

The Tau Cross (Crux Commissa), developed from the Pale by fastening a cross arm on top, sometimes called the Gibbet. The victim was chained to it and left for a time for public ridicule and sometimes to die. It is also called the Cross of St. Anthony for on such a Cross St. Anthony suffered Martyrdom. Historically it is probably the Cross on which Christ was nailed. In many cases the condemned carried only the crossarm and not the whole cross to the place of execution. Incidentally,
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many old paintings and sculptures show the figure tied to the cross as the body would have fallen if only nailed. Hence the saddle or suppedaneum to support the weight of the body. Some Eastern Crucifixes show little, if any, projection of staff above the crossarm. It was not until the Council of Trullo in 694 A.D. that the Church decided upon the crucifix as we know it, showing a Latin Cross with the staff projecting above the cross-arm as the emblem of crucifixion. The Tau Cross is our letter "T" and from it many variations have evolved. When three Tau Crosses are joined at their bases we have the Triple Tau of the Royal Arch of the York or American Rite of Freemasonry. This cross has peculiar significance to the Hebrew People.(Ezekial 9:4). In our Masonic Degrees whenever a cross is inscribed it is usually a Tau Cross but sometimes a St. Andrew's

Cross.

The Ankh a Tau Cross with a loop on the top, also called the Crux Ansata or Ansate

Cross, was venerated in ancient Egypt as a symbol of generation or enduring life. It is a symbol in several of the degrees in the York as well as the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry. When entwined by a serpent is a symbol of immortality. It has also been called a Nilometer

The Greek, or Hebrew Cross, with arms of equal length is the simplest form of cross and from it many variations have developed. It is also known as the Cross of St. George. It is part of the canton of the Union Jack of Britain. It was widely and continuously depicted in both the Old and New Worlds, and dates from Paleolithic times. To the Hebrews it represented the Almighty; with crosslets near the extremities of its bars, it is a symbol of Epiphany and when slanted is the Cross of St. Julian, with cross bars at its extremities it becomes the Cross Potent or Teutonic Cross, used as the base of many of the emblems of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry and is the Jewel of the Kadosh of that Rite. When fitched or pointed it is the Cross of St. Jerome the translator of the Vulgate Bible. The Egyptians marked their water jars dedicated to Canopus with this and the Tau Crois. When displayed with four Greek Crosslets, one in each corner, it is the Jerusalem Cross often seen upon religious literature. This Cross was adopted by Baldwin as the arms of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

The Crux Dissimulata, meaning concealed cross, is also known as the Fylfot, or many footed, or Swastika. With its arms having extensions at right angles, facing counter clockwise, was used as a symbol or ornament in the Old World and in America from pre-historic times. The Scandinavians called it Thor's Hammer and the Chinese called it Wands. It was found on monuments in India, in the ruins of Troy and on North American Totem Poles With clockwise arms extensions it was the symbol of the Nazi Party and the Third Reich of recent memory.

The Most common form of Cross, with shaft projecting above cross bar and lower part lengthened; known as the Latin or Passion Cross also dates from antiquity. There are many adaptations of this cross. When mounted upon a laminated base of three steps it is the Cross of Calvary. When imposed upon effulgent rays of red it is the insignia of a Commander of a Corumandery of Knights Templar. This designation seems to be indiscriminately applied to any cross where lower extremity is longer than the upper.

The Moline Cross is a Greek Cross, the terminals of which are split and turned back at the ends. This cross while seeming to be Heraldic, has religious significance. In family crests it is used as the cadency mark of an eighth son.

The Greek and Russian Orthodox Crosses used by Eastern Slavonic Churches have three transverse bars, the top one shorter than the main bar, the lowermost, called the Suppedaneum, to support the feet and weight of the crucified victim, (although the body of most victims was supported by a projection or saddle at the crotch), is diagonal, supposedly wrenched from its normal position by the Good Friday earthquake.. Russian Crosses differ from the Eastern, having the suppedaneum slant with the right side higher (the Cross's own right). These crosses are to be seen in

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many of our cemeteries as well as in houses of worship. Some crucifixes shown

in Eastern Churches show the feet of the victim on the slanted cross bar. Some of our Greek Churches display Celtic or Budded Crosses rather than the Eastern Cross.

The Cross Fleury, is a Greek Cross the terminals of which are Fleurated, meaning the bound Iris petals we know as Fleur-de-Lis. This cross is also called the Cross of Constantine and when fitched is the Cross of St. James. It was supposedly adopted by Constantine, who later became Emperor of Rome, after the battle of Saxa Rubra, so called from the Red Cliffs in the vicinity of Milvion Bridge, where he defeated Maxentius October 18, 312 A. D., the collapse of the bridge under Maxentius' troops contributing to his victory. It was adopted and worn by his soldiers as a commemoration of the victory. From this incident the Order of the Red Cross of Constantine was created. The Labarum, sometimes called the Cross of Constantine, a St Andrew's Cross with a staffed letter "p" rising from its center. Superimposed upon the Cross Fleury is the emblem of the Order of the Red Cross of Constantine. The Cross Fleury is the emblem on the Mantle worn by the Canadian Members of this order.

The Cross Patée or Templar Cross with arms spreading at the outer ends, or four triangles with Apexes joining at the center, is worn by the Knights Templar. The Royal Cross Patée is also known as the Victoria Cross. It is made of Bronze and bears the inscription "For Valor". Instituted by Queen Victoria in 1856, it is awarded in Britain's armed forces for conspicuous bravery. It tops the sovereign crown of England. The Portuguese National Cross topping the Jeronymos in Lisbon has its parallel sided arms terminating in the form of a Patée.

The Maltese Cross is a deep notched Cross Patée, having eight points. A combination of this and the Templar Cross was found on an ancient Babylonian Monarch and was believed to possess certain protective powers from harm and danger.

The Pary of the Crusaders differs from the true Patée in that the inner edges of the wide faced arms are curved concavely. Often called the cross Formée, it is sometimes shown with slightly concave or Vee cut ends, sometimes fitched. Worn by the Knights of the Crusades it also appeared on the flag flown by Columbus on the Santa Maria.

A combination of the Maltese and Crusaders Cross was used by Ponce de Leon, painted Red across the main sail of his flag ship, it is often called by his name.

The Celtic Cross has its arms and shaft intersected by a ring or circle. That of the ancient Gauls had its ring at the outer ends of the bar and shaft projections. Those with which we are familiar have circle near the intersection of shaft and bar. It is an emblem of life. The most common are similar to the Iona Cross. Part of the fame of Iona rests in the fact that Duncan and MacBeth and 48 other Scottish Kings, together with eight Norwegian and Danish and four Irish Kings and many chiefs lie buried there. This famous center of Celtic Christianity is fifty miles west of Scotland in the Argyleshires.

The Cross of St. Andrew, in the form of a letter "X" is the cross upon which St. Andrew suffered Martyrdom and dates from the Bronze age. In heraldry, this cross, when displayed in silver on a blue shield, is known as the Cross of St. Andrews; in red on a silver shield, the Cross of St. Patrick; in

gold on a blue shield, the Cross of St. Alban; in black on a gold shield, the Cross of St. Osmond. This cross is part of the canton of the Union Jack of Britain and part of the Jewel of the Grand Master Mason of Scotland. It is also the emblem of the 29°, the Scottish Knight of St. Andrew, of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry.

The Trinity Cross has three Fleur de Lis at the end of each arm and is widely used symbol of the Holy Trinity. The adaptation of the cross, in various and elaborated forms, into heraldry dates from its use in the Holy or crusading wars of the middle ages and some of its variants

13. became symbols of religious and military organizations, such as the Maltese and Teutonic crosses, and is much in evidence in family crests and coats of arms. Of the many heraldic crosses only a few will be mentioned.

The Cross Fourche, a Greek type cross, has forked ends terminating the arms.

The Cross Botone, or Budded Cross, its arms terminating in a Trefoil (clover leaf), is used atop Christian flag poles, as well as on houses of worship. It tops the Dome of St. Peter's in Rome, St. Paul's in London, and many other cathedrals. A great many of our neighborhood churches are surmounted by this cross or have it as a decoration. It is perhaps the most commonly used design.

The Cross Avellane has the outer edges of its arms curved convexly near the center and concavely toward the ends, terminating like unhusked filbert. It is one of the most elegant designs, much used as Altar and Pulpit crosses, more often freestanding than fixed.

The Cross Saltire, much used in military and family crests, formed of two bands drawn diagonally on the shield, crossing at the center, the arms ending fitched or pointed. It is similar in design to the Cross of St. Andrew.

The Cross Pommée or Anulate (Meaning rounded ends or knobs) is used on sword hilts and on standards.

The Cross Urdé', with bluntly, or diamond, pointed ends is a common design on processional standards and sometimes surmounting cupolas of churches and in many other places. When the terminals are splayed, either square ended or diamond pointed, it is common on sword hilts and standards. All Commandery swords have hilts of this type

The Cross Urdé-Cleché, an elaborated Passion Cross, with splayed ends on both shaft and bars, a diamond point issuing from its Veed ends, is the emblem of a Knight Commander of the Court of Honor of the Scottish Rite of the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States.

The Huguenot Cross is not usually shown in a display of crosses. It probably was devised following the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre, August 24, 1572, when some 3000 Huguenots were slaughtered like caged pigeons at the instigation of Catherine de Medicis and the Guises. The Edict of Nantes by Henry IV, April 15, 1598 protected them until it was revoked by Louis XIV, October 18, 1685. after which thousands fled the country.

Processional and ceremonial crosses, seem first to have been used in the fourth century in processions to popularize Arianism. By the ninth century two versions of the Cross were in common use, the ordinary one used in religious processions, and a type reserved for use by Patriarchs, Metropolitans, Archbishops, Legates, and Sovereigns as a sign of authority.

The Patriarchal Cross, the shaft being twice crossed near its top, the upper bar shorter than the lower, was adopted from a form used by the Hermits of Mt. Athos and was used in ecclesiastical processions preceding minor dignitaries. Slanted, it is the symbol of the Honorary Members of the Supreme Council 33°, of the Scottish Rite of the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States and with crosslets near the extremities of its bars and shaft is the insignia of the Active Members of the Supreme Council, 33°. It is also the insignia of the officers of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar. With its shaft abbreviated and cross arms slightly more separated, it is the Cross of Loraine, used as the emblem of many health organizations. It is also the symbol of Liberated France.

The Cross of Salem, having the upper staff crossed by three bars, the upper and lower shorter

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than the middle one, was developed by artists and heralds in the latter half of the fourteenth century as a hierarchical distinction to the then recently designated Patriarchal Cross. Slanted with crosslets near the extremities of its bars and shaft, it is the insignia of the Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council, 33°, of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry of the Southern jurisdiction of the United States, and without crosslets, of the Grand Master and Past Grand Masters of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States

The Papal or Pontifical Cross, its upper staff being crossed by three bars, the upper short, the middle slightly longer, and the bottom one still longer, came into being about the time of the design of the Patriarchal and Salem crosses as a distinctive symbol of the Papacy. It precedes the Pope in ceremonial processions

The Cross Crosslet consists of four Latin Crosses with shafts joined at the center. It might also be described as a Greek Cross with crosslets near the extremities of its arms, usually shown with fitched staff as it might be when used as a standard

The Cross of the Covenant has peculiar significance to the Hebrew people.

The Cross of the Faithful is one about which I find few comments. Fish have an ancient symbolism and this design was found in the Catacombs of Rome and was symbolical of the faithful of that time. Fish are symbols in some of our Scottish Rite degrees, particularly the 26°. A fish also precedes the cornucopia in the badge of the early Stewards of the Grand Lodge of England and is an item in the seal of the Grand Lodge of Quebec and in other masonic insignia. The sign used to designate a fish is credited by some to have inspired the Gothic Arch

The Nestorian Cross is one of delicate tracery and design. There are believed to be no more than 100,000 adherents of this Faith left in the Eastern World. They are an off-shoot of Arianism.

Artists and heralds have created many variations and elaborations of the Cross

but though arms are indented, splayed or fitched, the Cross usually retains its proper proportion. There are dozens of variations and perhaps hundreds of elaborations.

We have glorified the Cross, its primitive horror and rudeness is forgotten in gold and gems; we collect crosses like coins or postage stamps; they shine from the Domes of churches and adorn the bosoms of our loved ones. The Cross remains a sacred symbol, but is also a talisman and a charm like the Tau, the Ankh and the hammer of Thor.
