

## The Universal Symbol of the Cross: A Geometrical Motif and a Religious Symbol. Study into Comparative Aesthetics

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**Abstract.** *Aim of the article.* This comparative study is going to prove that a form and a symbol of the cross are the man's companions from the very emergence of the human civilisation. Firstly, I will present and discuss the earliest expression of the idea of the cross as the man's mental concept. This being evidenced by findings of cultural anthropologists world wide, with emphasis put on the prehistoric sign of a *tetragammadion* or *fylfot*, *svastika*. Secondly, the research is gravitating towards developmental symbolism of the Christian cross which initially did not bear a figure of the crucified God's Son, but it manifested strikingly its direct origins from the Hebrew temple priest's breast place called *Urim and Thummim*, *lights* and *perfection* in Hebrew. While approaching the shape of the Christian cross, we need bear in mind yet two distinctive semantics and mental concepts of its most commonly spread images. Namely, the Greek and the Roman variant forms which show different conceptual and aesthetic expressions of the same phenomenon. *Results.* The research subject matter is examined from the cross disciplinary perspective spanning choreological studies with semiotics, logic, history of art and cultural studies. However, given ubiquitous association of the cross with Jesus's redemptive sacrifice some conclusive remarks will be made by the way of a descriptive presentation of the two extraordinary art works belonging to the High Gothic, namely, the 12<sup>th</sup> century Catalanian rood called *Majestat Batilo*, Spain, and the 13<sup>th</sup> century Rood from *Kamień Pomorski*, Poland. *Scientific novelty.* The new study on the symbolism of the cross being unfolded from comparative approach will allow for deeper insight into cultural emergence of this ever-present sign inviting more specifically data from exact science, to mention only mineralogy or astrophysics. The further research premise suggests that dynamics of the cross might be a constitutive principle of matter formation. *Conclusions.* The research is intended to encourage further exploration of the sacred meaning of that primordial sign that goes far beyond any particular denomination.

*Keywords:* three dimensional cross; tetragammadion; crux gemmata; phenomenology of the cross

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### Introduction

Before the key arguments of my paper are addressed in the order of their propounding appearance within the abstract framework, I should highlight at the outset the mythical dimension of the spatial manifestation of the cross which surfaced most significantly with the meeting of the four roads.

Putting man in accord with nature and God, from one side, a myth stems from deep, subconscious realizations that can only express themselves symbolically, from the other, myths are closely related to the biolo-

gical functions of the body for myth is a transformational metaphor that arises from “human imagination moved by conflicting urgencies of the organs (including the brain) of the human body” (Campbell, 2002). The thought of American scholar, 1904–1987, seems to synthesize relative findings by Mircea Eliade, 1907–1986, the religious studies and Carl Jung's 1875–1961, depth psychology. The word myth or mythos is a Greek word *μῦθος* which means story or tale. The Greek tradition of mythopoesism suggests a vital role of narrative being able to release the funding emotional energy of the human archetypal experience. Greek art, especially the one

of the archaic period, provides powerful examples of the mythopoetic function of the works of arts which express meaning every so often unutterable, to recall only a figure of a sphinx.

Somewhere in Greece, in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, Sophocles (c. 497/496-406/405 BC) had poignantly noticed the man's cognitive incapacity to choose unerringly the one and the infallible course of his/her action when they happen to find themselves at their existential crossroads. Indeed, the four equipotent courses of actions being considered simultaneously may put a man in extreme inertia in the middle of nowhere, and they can induce an overwhelming anxiety. The Oedypus fate and more exactly, the oedypically human inability to decide reasonably and validly while missing a faultless and inerrant end, they both reveal their cruciate or cross-shaped genealogy. As we notice, they stem from the very cruciform symmetric fundament of the man's existential time-space situs which is the ontic intersection of the human being with the external world. Needless to say, the encounter is subjected to the working of the physical laws.

Here, below the three dimensional cross by Rudolf Laban (1966), proposed from the choreological-cognitivist stand (see Fig. 1). This graphic abstraction comes from seminal work by the 20<sup>th</sup> century European theoretician of the human movement in the field of dance studies. Laban (1879–1958), after having claimed the unity of space and movement resulting from the natural order of the Universe, he examined the organic paths that the limbs of the body traced on the space around the body and named them trace forms. Here, the basic directional movement of the human body, studied at three levels; the low one with knees bent: a black sign; a medium one, a standard stance, a plain with a dot; finally, a high one, on the raised feet, a cross-hatched sign.

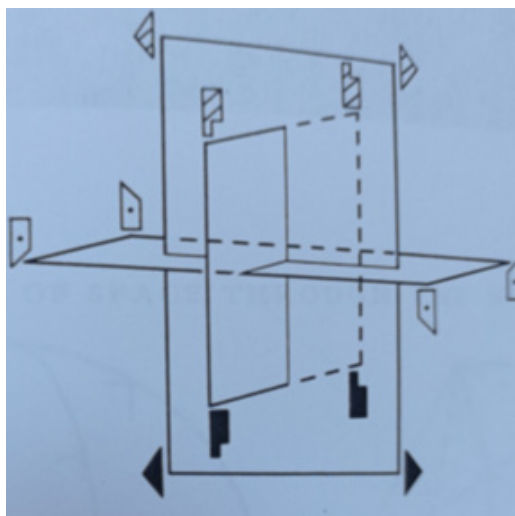


Fig. 1. A drawing by Rudolf Laban. Source: (Laban, 1966).

The evidence coming from choreological studies instances my research proposition taken to be valid and indisputable while being associated immediately with the evolutional progress enhanced by bipedalism of anthropoid mammals: there has not been a cross sign created had our ancestors remained on fours.

A few centuries after the Sophocles, Byzantine sacred art<sup>1</sup> seemingly cut through this paradigmatic existential deadlock as being presented in Oedipus' tragic plight. Now, in Pantocrator images from the very beginning of Byzantine art Christ always appears with a cruciform halo — a halo with the outline of a cross within it with a remarkable purpose to present the head of Christ at the intersection of the horizontality and the verticality (see Fig. 2). The aesthetic concept may suggest that divinity manifests itself cogently and effectually as dynamic counterpoise or unity of opposites.



Fig. 2 The image of Christ Pantocrator. A detail from Deësis, Δέησις, "Entreaty", mosaic in the Hagia Sophia, Ἁγία Σοφία. On the walls of the upper southern gallery, 4.08 x 4.2m. The picture shows the Christ's head placed on the crossroad nimbus, c. 13<sup>th</sup> century. Constantinople, modern Istanbul. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

On the strictly theoretical level, which stays embedded into an astonishingly immense wealth of various readings of the sign of the cross, we are bound to poise a question about the very *haecceity* or thisness of the sign of the cross as such. Through this methodological choice, a research move will inevitably lead us to a foundational symbolisation process itself. The investigating tactic appears to be of a paramount importance for a further elu-

<sup>1</sup> Byzantine art pertains to the Christianized Greek culture of the Eastern Roman Empire evolving from the strong classical Greek heritage as for modes of style and iconography. Its history has been agreed to have been developing in three consecutive periods: Early Byzantine (c. 330–843), Middle Byzantine (c. 843–1204) and Late Byzantine (c. 1261–1453).

cidation of a semantic essence of the phenomena. Hence a *signifiant* and a *signifier*, the two analytical and intrinsically interrelated terms will allow a deeper insight into the subject matter in question (de Saussure, 1961). The *signifiant* here is a geometrical figure consisting of two interacting lines or bars, most often than not perpendicular to each other. The lines usually run vertically and horizontally. A variant form of it is a cross with oblique or slanted lines. It reminds a shape of the Latin letter X and heraldists term it a saltire. In the Greek orthodox church it is called the cross of Saint Andrew. At that point, the standard inference strategy would suggest that we need to arise a question, namely, what does a *significant signify*? The answer is unerringly culture dependent, and previous studies on symbolic meaning of the cross provide a wide array of meaning assigned to the form of the cross. They range from the prehistoric cave glyphs, different svastikas, through a breath pause in the Byzantine music notation, next, a mathematical sign for plus, and finally to a powerful symbol of the mankind's redemption. We might deduct that it is the human mind that attributes or attaches local or regional significance to visible forms of the cross, which in turn mirror their specific existential experience of the verticalness or uprightness and horizontalness being intersected.

As we recollect in the pre-Christian time the cross as a pagan religious symbol was in use throughout Europe and Western Asia. Understandably enough, the two intersecting lines make the simplest possible design. As a result, cross-shaped incisions make their appearance from deep prehistory. These can be found in the form of petroglyphs in the European cult caves as early as the beginning of the Upper Paleolithic (which very broadly dates to between 50,000 and 12,000 years BC, the beginning of the Holocene), throughout prehistory to the Iron Age (started between 1200 BC and 600 BC). Speculations has associated the early cross symbol with astronomical or cosmological symbology indicating “four elements”, next they point to unity of the vertical axis mundi or celestial pole with the horizontal world that balances matter and spiritual realms.

The equilateral cross with its legs bent at right angles called svastika is a millennia-old sacred symbol of Greece, Middle Europe and Asia. Parallel to Hinduism a fylfot propagated widely in Buddhism and Jainism as well, accumulating local semantics imbued by the relative spirituality and schools of thought. However, its universal message connotes a complex semantics of peace and good fortune notions. Especially in India, it is considered to be originally a solar symbol, derived from the motion of the sun through the four quarters and seasons. In ancient China, the swastika was a Taoist symbol of eternity.

The *swastika* (from Sanskrit **स्वस्तिक**, *svastika*, from *su* “well”, and *asti* “being”, thus “good fortune” or

“well-being”) assumes a form of the equilateral cross with its arms bent at right angles in either left-facing (卍) or right-facing (卐) direction. Some versions are often decorated with a dot in each quadrant.

Suffix *ka* has many different meanings, for its extensive semantics see the Wisdom Library at (<https://www.wisdomlib.org/>)

In the Western world, it is most widely known and used as a symbol of Nazism (the Hakenkreuz, “hook-cross”) and this political association has eclipsed and corrupted its historical status as the powerful and auspicious sign of the fylfot. However, as it seems, nothing can overshadow the powerful message of never restricted flow of life as embodied in the ubiquitous sacred sign of the tetragammadion, here exemplified by the archaic Greek pottery painting (see Fig. 3–4).



**Fig. 3.** Tetragammadion on the cover of lekanis, red-figure pottery, middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, Δ 765, Paul and Alexandra Canellopoulos Museum, Athens, Greece. Source: Photo by Wiesna Mond



**Fig. 4.** Fylfot motif in the Greek pottery of the archaic period, 15<sup>th</sup> century BC. Paul and Alexandra Canellopoulos Museum, Athens, Greece. Source: Photo by Wiesna Mond

It is traditionally oriented, so that a main line is horizontal, though it is occasionally rotated at for-



ty five degrees The swastika is also known as the tetragammadion (Greek: τετραγαμμάδιον) or cross gammadion (Latin: crux gammata; French: croix gammée), as each arm resembles the Greek letter Γ (gamma). All four extensions pointing in the same direction, either right (clockwise) or left (counter-clockwise). The earliest recorded occurrences of the swastika seem to have been at Samarra in central Mesopotamia and at Susa in western Iran, where clear swastikas appear on pottery from about 4000 BC, and earlier, in Greece. Somewhat later, the swastika was depicted on pottery from Hissarlik, Anatolia or Asia Minor, and on seals from the Harappan civilization of ancient India. By the beginning of the Christian era, the swastika was well established in an area from India through Western Asia into Europe. This zone can be considered the area of the primary diffusion of the swastika and it largely coincides with the area settled by speakers of Indo-European languages.

Also of prehistoric age are numerous variants of the simple cross mark, including the Egyptian crux ansata, *ankh*, with a loop. In the European Bronze Age, a historic period lasting approximately from 3300 BC to 1200 BC) the cross symbol appeared to carry a religious meaning, perhaps as a symbol of consecration, especially pertaining to burial. The cross sign occurs universally in tally marks, and develops into a number symbol independently in the Roman numerals (X "ten"), the Chinese rod numerals (+ "ten") and the Brahmi numerals<sup>2</sup> ("four", whence the numeral 4 is represented by a mark +). The sign of a cross first and foremost stands for a plus in mathematics. In the Phoenician alphabet the cross symbol represented the phoneme /t/, i.e. the letter tau, which is the historical predecessor of Latin T. The letter name *taw* means "mark", presumably continuing the "two crossed sticks" in Egyptian hieroglyphic writing. We have observed that a purport of the sign of the cross is extremely polyvalent as it tends to link opposite semantics and balances them.

Decoration of the chancel arch at the Saint Irene Temple in Athens, Greek Orthodox Church (see Fig. 5), shows a rhythmic interlacing of fylfots and equilateral crosses, thus proving some cohesiveness of the ceaseless cultural tradition, cognitively coping with an urge to express some substantial ontic conditions of the human being. It is a strike evidence of underlying semantics lining tetragammadion with the shape of the Greek cross. To the right, there is an elaborate ceiling ornament, composed of three central Greek crosses, and flanked by the two Roman ones.



**Fig. 5.** Decoration of the chancel arch at the Saint Irene Temple in Athens, Ἱερός Ναός Αγίας Ειρήνης, romanized: *Ierós Naós Agías Irinis*, Greek Orthodox Church, Aiolou 36, Athina 105 60.  
Source: Photo by Wiesna Mond

*Analysis of previous studies.* The exegesis and semi-osis of the sign of the cross has been enjoying interrupted interest from many academic stands and traditions since the rise of the man's both learning and art. Apart the religious studies, theological studies, aesthetics, cultural studies and semiotics there is a significant contribution from anthropology, psychology or hermetic studies.

<sup>2</sup> Brahmi numerals are the graphic numeral system invented in the Indian subcontinent from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. Conceptually distinct from other approaches related to numbers, it was non positional decimal system and did not include zero.

The latter contribution, marked extensively by Mark Stavish (2016) who discusses, among others, the Jungian interpretation of the cross symbolism. Equally compelling contributions to the subject matter are artistic approaches and literature intuitive insights. The reading for the purpose of this research was performed selective with emphasis put on the cross disciplinary approach. Thus, the most influential study was research of Freed Stanley and Freed Ruth (1980), taken from comparative anthropology stance. Yet none of the approaches took interest in exact science, so this research novelty might be credited with cross-boundary research horizon that would open a dialogue between humanities and exact science what is going to be the next research step planned to be undertaken by the Author.

**The aim of the article.** Research, presented in this paper, has its clear telos. One of the main concerns of the aesthetics as the branch of philosophical studies is to restore the man's authentic relationship with oneself and with others. The former one consists in true and exploratory self-knowledge, the latter one, in understanding the semiotic nature of the learning and thinking activities.

We do live in the forest of signs, and we indeed produce messages through the languages of signs, words, gestures, sounds or impressive works of arts. Confronting any sign is a real both emotional and cognitional challenge which requires one's immersive response, and calls for intellectual commitment and exercise. The form of cross, inherent to the human physical and mental existence, possesses its fontal thisness, and this very ontic quality was an underlying research objective.

The descriptive and inferring tools of the aesthetics' approach, combined with logical reasoning, have been applied to help the reader to have an insight into the puzzling semantics of the shape of the cross.

## Results

### Christian cross and symbolism of precious stones on the *crux gemmata*, a jewelled cross

A *crux gemmata* (*Latin for: a jewelled cross*) is a form of cross typical of Early Christianity and Early Mediaeval art. Its versions are found as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> century in mosaics. The early variant of the Christian cross, which initially did not bear a figure of the crucified God's Son, unerringly manifests its direct origins from the Hebrew temple priest's breast place called Urim (ʿ*Ūrīm*, lights אֲזָרִים) and Thummim (Tummīm, תִּמְמִים; perfection). A *hoshen* (Hebrew: חֹשֶׁן הַיְהוָה) is a device for obtaining oracles in a form of a breastpiece or a pouch attached to the high priest's ephod (an apron like garment), that was inlaid with

12 precious stones, these in turn engraved with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. Although a rectangular in form, with 3 horizontal rows of 4 gemstones each, the Hebrew sacred *hoshen* seems to be a very prototype of the early Christian *crux gemmata*, bedecked with almost the same jewels obviously with different self-relevant symbolism. The jewelled cross was common from Late Antiquity, both as a decoration in churches and also among wealthy Christians as an object of private devotion or a piece of jewelry.

Maria Florkowa (1993) was pursuing symbolism of precious stones from hermetic perspective. She linked it to their mineral properties. The Polish author pointed to ethical properties attributed to precious and semi-precious stones and this very attitude was highlighted in the choice of the biblical stones. The cross, or at least its front side, is principally decorated with rich jewels — rubies, emeralds, sapphires, diamonds. The number of jewels was initially not important but in later times, it has become customary for the cross to have 13 stones, representing Christ and the 12 apostles. There were inlaid 12 sacred gemstones of Revelations that is Jasper, Sapphire, Chalcedony, Emerald, Sardonyx, Sardius, Chrysolite, Beryl, Topaz, Chrysolite, Jacinth, and Amethyst. Many also believe that there is a clear association between twelve apostles and twelve gems from the walls of Jerusalem. There are many biblical references to gemstones, but the most important are considered to be Aaron's breastplate (Exodus 28: 15-20 and 39:10-13, then the stones in the foundations of the wall of New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:18-21), and the precious stones that were among the King of Tyre's treasures. Ezekiel 28:12-13.

The examination of the symbolical meaning of these precious stones is based upon mediaeval biblical commentaries to the Scripture, particularly commentaries on the "Revelation of St. John." In the fourth chapter (Rev. 4,3) St. John describes a vision of God's Majesty resembling jasper and sardius surrounded by the emerald rainbow; in the twenty-first chapter (Rev. 21,19-21) he describes the appearance of Heavenly Jerusalem, whose city foundations are adorned with twelve precious stones. Green stones (jasper and emerald), linked to vegetation on account of their colour, are symbols of faith, Christ and the desire for eternal life; the combination with red makes them symbols of Christ's divine nature. The red stones are identified with Christ and are symbols of his suffering, emphasising his human nature. Purple was always the colour of royal garment, and so amethyst too becomes a symbol of the Heavenly Kingdom (Šedinova, 1999; Uličny, 2023). The jewelled cross also served as a symbol of the Christian version of the Tree of Life, especially when the arms

are shown putting out shoots from their corners. The Staffordshire Hoard 'crumpled cross' has vine leaves showing at the corners and represents Jesus the vine. It is sometimes shown on a mound representing paradise, with four rivers flowing down it (the four rivers were understood as representing the Four Gospels); a stepped base represents the hill in actual crosses or more confined depictions. They link the cross generally with the Tree of Life. Among various and splendid examples of this cross variant there are three that stand out and are worth mentioning in the context of this work, namely, the Cross of Justin II (also known as *Crux Vaticana*, Latin for "Vatican Cross") which is a processional cross dating from the sixth century, kept in the Treasury in St. Peter's Basilica, in Vatican City. It is also one of the oldest surviving claimed reliquaries of the True Cross, if not the oldest. Next, the 6<sup>th</sup> century cross of Stafford hoard that shows the interlace on its front corresponding with the river or tree of life described in Revelation 22. 1–2. It is the Anglo-Saxon pectoral cross, decorated with golden filigree and a central garnet gem, and finally, *Crux gemmata* and the Tomb of Christ, created around the 14<sup>th</sup> century AD, placed in the window niche by the chapel of St. Catherine, Bohemia.

The anonymous Old English visionary and mystic poem *The Dream of the Rood* (2006) provides yet another insight into cosmic interpretation of the jewelled cross: *I seemed that I saw a most wondrous tree/ Raised on high, circled round with light/ the brightest of beams All that beacon was/ covered in gold: gems stood/ fair at the earth's corners, and five there were bedecked with gold; gems had/ covered worthily the creator's tree.* The cited Old English poem and Early Latin hymnology constitute a phenomenon of correspondence of arts with the same topic being expressed according to the nature of the specific art's fabric and material. The 6<sup>th</sup> century had seen magnificent works of poetry praising mystery of the cross which might influence all kinds of arts. It is Venantius Fortunatus, 530–610, that stands alone with his the *Pange Lingua Gloriosi*:

*Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle  
Sing the last, the dread affray;  
O'er the Cross, the victor's trophy,  
Sound the high triumphal lay:  
Tell how Christ, the world's Redeemer,  
As a victim won the day* (Fortunatus, n.d./1922).

### The Greek and the Roman variant forms of the cross

The equal-armed cross, also referred to as the square cross, the balanced cross, and the peaceful cross, is a name for the Greek cross. An equal-armed cross (often within a circle) represents the planet

Earth in traditional astrological/astronomical symbols. This form of the cross is believed to represent as well the union between male and female. It does not mean to symbolize the cross Jesus died on, but the church itself spreading the gospel to the North, South, East, and West, as well as the four elements of Plato's cosmology: air, earth, fire, water (Plato, 2000).

As for the Roman cross, it indicates the kind of death Jesus was put to, the martyrdom. This variant form occurs with a longer descending arm and it represents the cross of Jesus's crucifixion.

The physical sign of the cross traces back to Early Christianity (up to the 4<sup>th</sup> century). A kind of a physical gesture made by Christians it is a motion associated with reference to Ezekiel (9:7) and The Revelation 7:13, 9:4, 14:1), all of which describe believers bearing God's seal on their foreheads. Such a gesture is considered to be holy and it is claimed to have its roots as prayer in apostolic times. The movement of the hand is accompanied with the Trinitarian formula: "In the name of the Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit Amen". This mode of behaviour is recognised as a small exorcism; tracing the sign of the cross on the body as a protection from evil or as an assertion of faith. Orthodox Greek Christian touch their forehead, then their lower chest, the right shoulder and then the forehead. This is to acknowledge that all the faculties, mind, heart, soul, and all believer's strength is dedicated to God. It is done with faith, conviction and humility. It is almost a second nature for Orthodox Christians to cross themselves. Most commonly the sign is made when entering church or passing by one, when hearing the words "Father, Son and Holy Spirit", or at the Trisagion prayer "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us" (Constantelos, 1990; Ghezzi, 2006).

The European High Gothic saw the emergence of another idea of the cross, strictly connected with the ethical code of the noble Christian class of those days. It was meant to inspire Christ's followers as to the right attitude in the face of inevitable trials of life. It is evidenced here with the two examples of mediaeval art works of extraordinary beauty.

Batló Majesty, Anonym (see Fig. 6), presents Christ on the cross triumphing over death (a triumphant Christ bearing his suffering with noble stoicism). Although, the corners of his mouth turn slightly downward, Christ's open eyes and an unfurrowed brow create the impression of a self-possessed detachment, aloofness and impassivity. He is wearing a colobium (a long sleeveless tunic). The frontal geometric composition of the tunic, decorated in circles and floral motifs, is reminiscent of the refined Byzantine and Hispano-Moorish fabrics considered posh in the epoch (Mann, 1993).





**Fig. 6.** Batlló Majesty, Anonym, National Art Museum of Catalonia.  
Source: ("Archivo: (Barcelona) Majestat Batllo", 2023)

Another example of the Majestat, more specifically, the Nude Majestat, portraying Son of God almost bare, wearing a perisonium, a loin cloth. Here, Christ is with a furrowed brow, nevertheless emanating gentle impregnableness to suffering (see Fig. 7).

Greek περίζωμα (from περί, peri “around”, and ζωμα, zoma “band, belt”) is a draped loincloth of the

crucified Jesus Christ. So, often a perisonium appears as an art of work itself, and to recall only Veit Stoss’s roods. It is originated with the Minoan civilisation in Crete, where the survived wall painting in the Knossos palace shows male and female acrobats dressed in loincloth, for example, in the Bull-Leaping Fresco or Tauromachia.

The Polish art historian left unparalleled study on this work of art, attributing it to the style of the Noble Gothic originated in France and England. She backed her description and interpretation of the rood on the scholastic philosophical tradition, the Book of Psalms, and the mystical tradition of the High Middle Ages (Krzymuska-Fafius, 2009).



**Fig. 7.** The Cross of Kamien Pomorski, a detail.  
Source: National Museum in Szczecin, Poland,  
c. the 13<sup>th</sup> century

## Conclusion

The outcome of the research appears more like an unfolding project than a completed one. The interdisciplinary study in the field of humanities provided some fundamental concepts that guided both empirical and theoretical investigation into the ontology and universal symbolical meaning of the cross. Given the role the sign plays in Christianity, this study focuses on the forms and meaning attributed to the main Christian variants the Greek and the Roman one.

However, some investigating light has been shed on the crucial pre-Christian cross forms which are a fylfot and a hoshen. A powerful old Egyptian cross-like sign ankh, *crux ansata*, deserving to be considered as yet another prototype of the Christian cross has been deliberately excluded as belonging to entirely different cultural and spiritual tradition. For we are bound to confess that it has still been inaccessible to our contemporaneity due to its aborted living heritage that lost its developmental gravitating. In the vein of bridging humanities with exact science, there is a significant clue from physics and chemistry which invites further investigation as for a “trace forms” left by physical forces and mineral chemical processes. The findings in geophysics, as propounded by M. S. T. Bukowinski (1994), open a space for wider cross disciplinary approach. Thus, the post research question is bound to arise, namely, can dynamics of the cross be found in the natural phenomena?

*Scientific novelty.* The new study on the symbol-

ism of the cross being unfolded from comparative approach will allow for deeper insight into cultural emergence of this ever-present sign inviting more specifically data from exact science, to mention only mineralogy or astrophysics.

The *further research* premise suggests that dynamics of the cross might be a constitutive principle of matter formation.

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## Універсальний символ хреста: геометричний мотив і релігійний символ. Вивчення порівняльної естетики

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**Анотація.** *Meta stammi.* Це порівняльне дослідження має намір підтвердити істинність того, що форма й символ хреста є супутниками людини з часів виникнення людської цивілізації. По-перше, на розгляд буде представлено найбільш раннє вираження ідеї хреста як розумового концепту людини. Про це свідчать знахідки спеціалістів з культурної антропології всього світу, в яких наголошується на доісторичному знаку тетрагамадіону, або філфоту, свастики. По-друге, дослідження тяжіє до розвитку символіки християнського хреста, який спочатку не мав фігури розп'ятого Божого Сина, проте яскраво демонстрував своє безпосереднє походження від місця грудей священика в єврейському храмі, що називалося урім і туммім, *світло* й *досконалість* на івриті. Розглядаючи форму християнського хреста, необхідно зважати на дві відмінні семантики та ментальні концепти його найпоширеніших зображень, а саме на грецькі й римські варіанти форм, що демонструють різні концептуальні та естетичні вираження того ж самого предмета. *Результати дослідження.* Предмет дослідження розглянуто з міждисциплінарної точки зору, що охоплює перспективні хореологічні дослідження з семіотики, логіки, історії мистецтва та культурології. Проте, враховуючи повсюдне асоціювання хреста з викупною жертвою Ісуса, певні висновки зроблено завдяки опису двох надзвичайних мистецьких творів, а саме: Каталонський рух XII століття під назвою *Majestat Batilo* (Іспанія); Рух XIII століття з Камень-Поморського (Польща). *Наукова новизна.* Нове дослідження символіки хреста, проведене в аспекті порівняльного підходу, дозволяє глибше зрозуміти появу цього давнього знака в культурі, долучаючи знання з точних наук, зокрема мінералогії або ж астрофізики. Подальші передумови дослідження припускають, що динаміка хреста може бути конститутивним принципом формування матерії. *Висновки.* Дослідження має на меті заохотити до подальшого вивчення сакрального значення цього первісного знака, що виходить далеко за межі будь-якої конкретної конфесії.

*Ключові слова:* тривимірний хрест; тетрагамадіон; *сгух gemmata*; феноменологія хреста

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