ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem

Crosses

Table of Contents
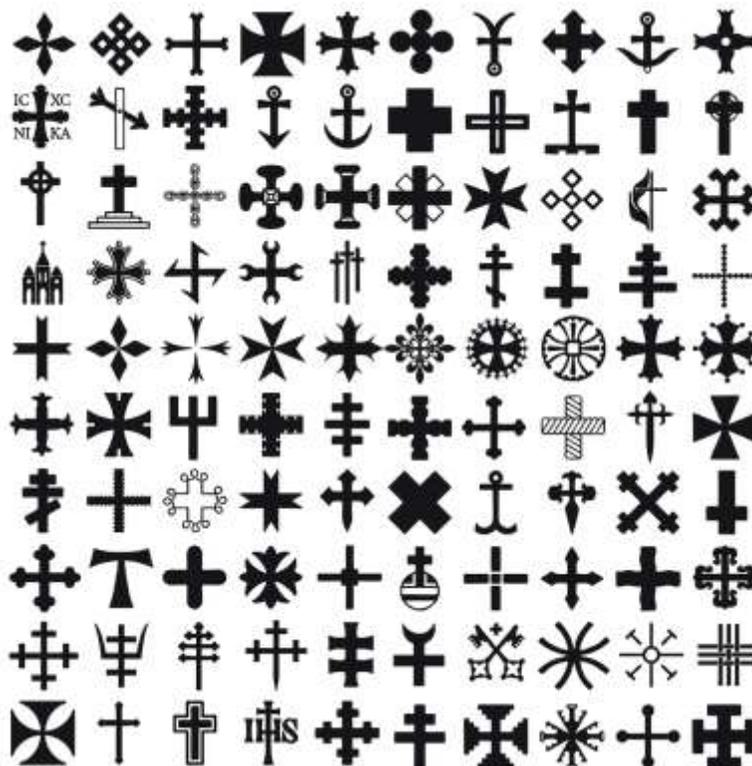
Crosses

I n the simplest of terms, a cross is a geometrical figure consisting of two intersecting lines or bars, usually perpendicular to each other. The lines usually run vertically and horizontally. The Christian cross, seen as a representation of the instrument of the crucifixion of Jesus, is the best-known symbol of Christianity. It is related to the crucifix (a cross that includes a *corpus*, usually a three-dimensional representation of Jesus' body) and to the more general family of cross symbols, the term *cross* itself being detached from the original specifically Christian meaning in modern English.

This publication is a brief overview of the crosses associated with the Knights Templar – ancient and modern.

History

The word *cross* is recorded in 10th-century Old English as *cros*, exclusively for the instrument of Christ's crucifixion, replacing the native Old English word *rood*. The word's history is complicated; it appears to have entered English from Old Irish, possibly via Old Norse, ultimately from the Latin *crux* (or its accusative *crucem* and its genitive *crucis*), "stake, cross". The English verb *to cross* arises from the noun c. 1200, first in the sense "to make the sign of the cross"; the generic meaning "to intersect" develops in the 15th century. The Latin word was, however, influenced by popular etymology by a native Germanic word reconstructed as **krukjo* (English *crook*, Old English *crycce*, Old Norse *krokr*, Old High German *krucka*). This word, by conflation with Latin *crux*, gave rise to Old French *crocier* (modern French *crosse*), the term for a shepherd's crook, adopted in English as *crosier*.

Latin *crux* referred to the gibbet where criminals were executed, a stake or pole, with or without transom, on which the condemned were impaled or hanged, but more particularly a cross or the pole of a carriage. The derived verb *cruciāre* means "to put to death on the cross" or, more frequently, "to put to the rack, to torture, torment", especially in reference to mental troubles. In the Roman world, *furca* replaced *crux* as the name of some cross-like instruments for lethal and temporary punishment, ranging from a forked cross to a gibbet or gallows.

A *crux* can be of various shapes: from a single beam used for impaling or suspending (*crux simplex*) to the various composite kinds of cross (*crux compacta*) made from more beams than one. The latter shapes include not only the traditional †-shaped cross (the *crux immissa*), but also the T-shaped cross (the *crux commissa* or tau cross), which the descriptions in antiquity of the execution cross indicate as the normal form in use at that time, and the X-shaped cross (the *crux decussata* or saltire).

Due to the simplicity of the design (two intersecting lines), cross-shaped incisions make their appearance from deep prehistory; as petroglyphs in European cult caves, dating back to the beginning of the Upper Paleolithic, and throughout prehistory to the Iron Age. Also of prehistoric age are numerous variants of the simple cross mark, including the *crux gammata* with curving or angular lines, and the Egyptian *crux ansata* with a loop.

In the European Bronze Age the cross symbol appeared to carry a religious meaning, perhaps as a symbol of consecration, especially pertaining to burial. The cross sign occurs trivially in tally marks, and develops into a number symbol independently in the Roman numerals (X "ten"), the Chinese rod numerals (十 "ten") and the Brahmi numerals ("four", whence the numeral 4). In the Phoenician alphabet and derived scripts, the cross symbol represented the phoneme /t/, i.e. the letter taw, which is the historical predecessor of Latin T. The letter name *taw* means "mark", presumably continuing the Egyptian hieroglyph "two crossed sticks" (Gardiner Z9).
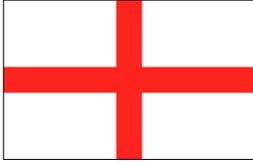
Cross of St. George

Associated with the crusades, the red-on-white cross has its origins in the 10th century. It was used as the ensign of the Republic of Genoa perhaps as early as during the 10th century. The red-on-white cross used extensively across Northern Italy as the symbol of Bologna, Padua, Reggio Emilia, Mantua, Vercelli, Alessandria, is instead derived from another flag, called the "Cross of Saint Ambrose", adopted by the Commune of Milan in 1045. The symbol was adopted by the Swabian League in the pre-Reformation Holy Roman Empire. Saint George became associated as "patron saint" of England after the English reformation. Since the early modern period, his flag came to be identified as the national flag of England. Saint George is the patron saint of Catalonia and also of Georgia. The national flag of Georgia (2004) displays a combination of Saint George's cross and the Jerusalem cross.

Christian Cross

The basic forms of the Christian cross are the Latin cross with unequal arms and the Greek cross with equal arms, besides numerous variants, partly with confessional significance, such as the tau cross, the double-barred cross, triple-barred cross, cross-and-crosslets, and many heraldic variants, such as the cross potent, cross pattée, cross moline, cross fleury, etc.

There are few extant examples of the cross in 2nd century Christian iconography. It has been argued that Christians were reluctant to use it as it depicts a purposely painful and gruesome method of public execution. A symbol similar to the cross, the staurogram, was used to abbreviate the Greek word for *cross* in very early New Testament manuscripts. The extensive adoption of the cross as Christian iconographic symbol arose from the 4th century.

However, the cross symbol was already associated with Christians in the 2nd century. The oldest extant depiction of the execution of Jesus in any medium seems to be the second-century or early third-century relief on a jasper gemstone meant for use as an amulet, which is now in the British Museum in London. It portrays a naked bearded man whose arms are tied at the wrists by short strips to the transom of a T-shaped cross. An inscription in Greek on the obverse contains an invocation of the redeeming crucified Christ. On the reverse a later inscription by a different hand combines magical formulae with Christian terms.

While early Christians used the T-shape to represent the cross in writing and gesture, the use of the Greek cross and Latin cross, i.e. crosses with intersecting beams, appears in Christian art towards the end of Late Antiquity. An early example of the cruciform halo, used to identify Christ in paintings, is found in the *Miracles of the Loaves and Fishes* mosaic of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna (6th century). The Patriarchal cross, a Latin cross with an additional horizontal bar, first appears in the 10th century. A wide variation of cross symbols is introduced for the purposes of heraldry beginning in the age of the Crusades.

St. George's Cross

In heraldry, Saint George's Cross, also called the Cross of Saint George, is a red cross on a white background, which from the Late Middle Ages became associated with Saint George, the military saint, often depicted as a crusader.

Saint George became widely venerated as a warrior saint during the Third Crusade. There was a legend that he had miraculously assisted Godfrey of Bouillon; also that Richard the Lionheart had placed himself under his protection. According to legend, the crusaders received miraculous help at the siege of Antioch on June 28, 1098 from a great army on white horses, clothed in white and bearing white banners, led by St George, St Demetrius, and St Mercurius. However, there was no association of the red cross with St George before the end of the crusades.

Figure 1 Saint George as a crusader knight, miniature from a manuscript of Vies de Saints, c. 1340

The *red* cross in particular was associated with the Knights Templar, from the time of the Second Crusade (1145), but in 1188 red and white crosses were chosen to identify the French and English troops in the "Kings' Crusade" of Philip II of France and Henry II of England, respectively. Together with the Jerusalem Cross, the plain red-on-white became a recognizable symbol of the crusader from about 1190, and in the 13th century it came to be used as a standard or emblem by numerous leaders or polities who wanted to associate themselves with the crusades. The red-on-white combination was chosen by Genoa and Aragon, among others. Saint George was depicted as a crusader knight during this time, but the red cross had no particular association with him. A crusader-era fresco in the crypt of Trani cathedral shows Saint George wearing a white cross on a red surcoat. The white-on-red version was chosen as the *Reichsbanner* ("imperial banner") by the German crusaders in the 12th century, and Emperor Frederick II used it in his European campaigns of the 1250s after he had returned from the crusades.
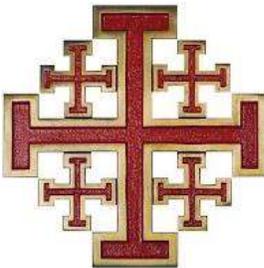
Jerusalem Cross

Figure 2 a Jerusalem cross

The Jerusalem cross (also known as "Five-fold Cross", or "cross-and-crosslets") is a heraldic cross and Christian cross variant consisting of a large cross potent surrounded by four smaller Greek crosses, one in each quadrant.

While the symbol of the five-fold cross appears to originate in the 11th century, its association with the Kingdom of Jerusalem dates to the second half of the 13th century. The symbolism of the five-fold cross is variously given as the Five Wounds of Christ, Christ and the four evangelists, or Christ and the four quarters of the world. The symbolism of five crosses representing the Five Wounds is first recorded in the context of the consecration of the St Brelade's Church under the patronage of Robert of Normandy (before 1035); the crosses are incised in the church's altar stone.

The "cross-and-crosslets" or "Tealby" pennies minted under Henry II of England during 1158–1180 have the "Jerusalem cross" on the obverse, with the four crosslets depicted as decussate (diagonal). Similar cross designs on the obverse of coins go back to at least the Anglo-Saxon period.

Figure 3 Tealby penny

Figure 4 Godfrey of Bouillon with cross of Jerusalem on surcoat

As the arms of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the design is traditionally attributed to Godfrey of Bouillon himself. It was not used, however, by the Christian rulers of Jerusalem during the 12th century. A simple blazon of *or, a cross argent* is documented by Matthew Paris as the arms of John de Brienne, who had been king of Jerusalem during 1210–1212, upon John's death in 1237.

The emblem used on the seals of the rulers of Jerusalem during the 12th century was a simplified depiction of the city itself, showing the tower of David between the Dome of the Rock and the Holy Sepulchre, surrounded by the city walls.

The coins minted in Jerusalem during the 12th century show patriarchal crosses with various modifications. Coins minted under Henry I (r. 1192–1197) show a cross with four dots in the four quarters, but the Jerusalem cross proper appears only on a coin minted under John II (r. 1284/5).

At about the same time, the cross of Jerusalem in gold on a silver field appears as the coat of arms of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in early armorials such as the *Camden Roll.* The arms of the King of Jerusalem featured gold on silver (in the case of John de Brienne, silver on gold), a metal on a metal, and thus broke the heraldic Rule of Tincture; this was justified by the fact that Jerusalem was so holy, it was above ordinary rules. The gold and silver were also connected to Psalms 68:14, which mentions a *"dove covered in silver, and her feathers with yellow gold".*

In late medieval heraldry, after the failure of the Crusades, the Crusader's cross was used for various Crusader states. The 14th-century Book of All Kingdoms uses it as the flag of Sebasteia. At about the same time, the Pizzigano chart uses it as the flag of Tbilisi (based on the latter example, the Crusader's cross was adopted as the flag of Georgia in 2004).

Figure 5 Arms of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem

The papal Order of the Holy Sepulchre uses the Jerusalem cross as its emblem. It is also used by the Custodian of the Holy Land, head of the Franciscan friars who serve at the holy Christian sites in Jerusalem.

In the early 20th century, the Jerusalem cross also came to be used as a symbol of world evangelization in Protestantism. A derived design known as the "Episcopal Church Service Cross" was first used during World War I by the Anglican Episcopal Church in the United States. The Jerusalem cross was chosen as the emblem of the Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag (German Evangelical Church Congress) in the 1950s, since the 1960s shown in a simplified form where the central Cross potent is replaced by a simple Greek cross.
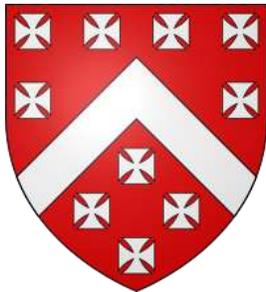

Figure 6 Arms of the Custodian of the Holy Land

Cross Pattée

Figure 7 A cross pattée

A cross pattée (or "cross patty" or "cross Pate", known also as "cross formée/formy" or croix pattée) is a type of Christian cross which has arms narrow at the center, and often flared in a curve or straight line shape, to be broader at the perimeter. The word *pattée* is a French adjective in the feminine form used in its full context as *la croix pattée*, meaning literally "footed cross", from the noun *patte*, meaning foot. In German it is called *Tatzenkreuz* from *Tatze*, foot, paw.

The form appears very early in medieval art, for example in a metalwork treasure binding given to Monza Cathedral by Queen Theodelinda (d. 628), and the 8th century lower cover of the Lindau Gospels in the Morgan Library. An early English example from the start of the age of heraldry proper (i.e. about 1200) is found in the arms of Baron Berkeley.

Several variants of the cross pattée exist including:

Figure 8 Arms of Baron Berkeley

The cross pattée is sometimes associated with the Knights Templar, though as with the Teutonic Knights, it was not used consistently.

The papal bull, *Omne datum optimum* (Latin for "Every perfect gift", a quotation from the Epistle of James) issued by Pope Innocent II in 1139 that initially endorsed the Order of the Poor Knights of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon (Knights Templar), in which the Templar Rule was officially approved, and papal protection given, states:

> *Although you were by nature sons of wrath, committed to the pleasures of this age, through inspiring grace you became attentive hearers of the Gospel, having forsaken worldly ostentation and private property, indeed having abandoned the wide path that leads towards death, you humbly chose the hard way that leads to life and in order to justify being considered among the knighthood of God you always bear on your chest the sign of the life-giving cross.*

It does not designate what kind of cross or color of cross.

Milites Templi (Latin for "Soldiers of the Temple") was a papal bull issued by Pope Celestine II in 1144. It ordered the clergy to protect the Knights Templar and encouraged the faithful to contribute to their cause. It allowed the Templars to make their own collections once a year, even in areas under interdict. It mentions "cross" only once:

> *Go forth confidently then, you knights, and repel the foes of the cross of Christ with a stalwart heart. Know that neither death nor life can separate you from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ, and in every peril repeat, "Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."*

The *Militia Dei* (Latin for *Soldiers of God*) issued by Pope Eugene III in 1145 consolidated the Knights Templar's independence from local clerical hierarchies by giving the Order the right to take tithes and burial fees and to bury their dead in their own cemeteries.

The cross pattée variant appears in the context of the Knights Templar towards the end of the order's existence, in the late-13th-century frescoes at San Bevignate, Perugia.

Figure 9 Frescoes of San Bevignate Templar chapel, Perugia, Italy. 13th century

Variants of the cross pattée appear in the magisterial arms and logo of the international Order (OSMTH), and the logo of the Order of Merit and Grand Croix design of the Autonomous Grand Priory of the United States of America.

Figure 10 OSMTH arms

Figure 11 OSMTH logo

Figure 12 Logo of the GPUSA Order of Merit

Figure 13 GPUSA Grand Croix

During the first four decades of the modern Order's history, the red patriarchal cross, which is a trademarked symbol of the SMOTJ, was affixed to the left breast. By action of the Grand Council, the cross used on the mantle was changed to a red cross patteé, effective April 28, 2007. Commensurate with that decision, those Knights and Dames whose robes were originally adorned with the patriarchal cross were granted the right to wear that cross on their capes in perpetuity; those Knights and Dames were encouraged to switch to the new cross design to assure uniformity of appearance. The capes of all new Knights and Dames are adorned with the red cross patteé.

Patriarchal Cross

The cross of our Order is a two-barred cross. A two-barred cross is like a Latin cross with an extra bar added. In most renditions of a two-barred cross, the horizontal bars are "graded" with the upper bar being shorter than the lower bar; although variations with the bars of equal or near-equal length are also seen.

Figure 14 Latin cross   *Figure 15 Lorraine cross*   *Figure 16 Patriarchal cross*

The Lorraine Cross is a two-barred cross consisting of a vertical line crossed by two shorter horizontal bars. The *Lorraine* name has come to signify several cross variations, including the patriarchal cross with its bars near the top. In heraldry, the Lorraine Cross is a localized (French) form of Patriarchal Cross. Its popularity has spread worldwide and is known by various names, depending on the local language and use.

The Patriarchal Cross - the emblem of an archbishop - became the arms of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who granted its use to the Knights Templar to wear in addition to their Cross Pattée. Pope Eugene III granted them the Cross of Lorraine and made them answerable to the Pope alone (Pope Eugene III was also a disciple of St. Bernard of Clairvaux who founded the Templars at the Council of Troyes, northeastern France, in the 12th century).

The two-barred cross signified higher authority, Metropolitanical and Patriarchal. That it was granted to a religious Order of Knights was quite remarkable. On their flags and shields, the Templar two-barred cross would have simply been two horizontal bars of equal length going from end to end. However, the particular two-barred cross the Templars bore, as indicated by the ones the commanders wore around their necks – and which the Order wears today – show that the second bar was not above the patibulum, but below which is where the feet of Christ would have been nailed, that is prominent in Eastern Crosses, especially the Russian Orthodox Calvary Cross.

For the Templars, the red cross represented at once their mission to protect the pilgrims to the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and self-sacrifice in imitation of the One crucified on it. A number of their grand masters had the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on their coats of arms or seals and this also represented for them the 'Temple of Jerusalem' (prefigured in the Old Testament by the Temple of Solomon near where they had their HQ).

When the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem was organized in the United States, it chose the double-barred red patriarchal cross, as is borne in Switzerland, Portugal, England, and elsewhere. The official cross of the United States Order is a *modified* Patriarchal Cross *gules* (red) with two bars, the lower of which is shorter. On the insignia, it is surmounted by the crown *or* (gold), which is used by the American Templars to emphasizes the term "Sovereign" - a term that in the United States connotes "independent of church and state." The modified patriarchal cross is also seen in the arms of GPUSA

Figure 17 Official insignia of GPUSA

Figure 18 GPUSA arms

GPUSA uses the cross patteé, and modified patriarchal cross in its award designs.

Figure 19 GPUSA awards

Marian Cross

Figure 20 Marion cross

The Marion cross is an informal name applied to a Roman Catholic cross design. It consists of a traditional Latin cross with the crossbar extended on the right, and a letter "M" (for the Virgin Mary) in the lower right quadrant. A publicized use of the Marian Cross was on the personal coat of arms of Pope John Paul II, displayed prominently on his casket at his funeral, although it may have been in use before this. A similar design had appeared over a century earlier on the Miraculous Medal due to a Marian apparition to Saint Catherine Labouré in 1830, where the M represents the Virgin Mary standing at the foot of the cross during the Crucifixion of Jesus. The coat of arms for Pope John Paul II is intended to be a homage to the central mystery of Christianity, that of Redemption. It mainly represents a cross, whose form however does not correspond to any of the usual heraldry models. The reason for the unusual shift of the vertical part of the cross is striking, if one considers the second object included in the Coat of Arms: the large and majestic capital M, which recalls the presence of the Madonna under the Cross and Her exceptional participation in Redemption. The Pontiff's intense devotion to the Holy Virgin is manifested in this manner."

Figure 21 Pope John Paul II arms

Pope John Paul II's coat of arms was thus based on his strong Marian devotion and attachment to the Rosary. In an address to the Montfortian Fathers, he attributed this partly to reading one of Saint Louis de Montfort's books, True Devotion to Mary as a "decisive turning point" in his life. He also singled out de Montfort's work in his encyclical entitled Redemptoris Mater as a key example of Marian devotion. And in his Apostolic Letter, Rosarium Virginis Mariae Pope John Paul II discussed the inspiration of the rosary and how his motto Totus Tuus was inspired by the Mariology in the writings of Saint Louis de Montfort.

The Marian Cross is featured in the arms of the Priory of St. Mary the Virgin and the Priory's medal.

Figure 22 Priory of St. Mary the Virgin arms

Figure 23 Priory of St. Mary the Virgin medal

Crosses