

Taxonomy of Crosses

Tomasz Przechlewski

August 11, 2021

1 Shape variants

Basically as 90% population in Poland declares themselves as Roman catholic we (and Protestants ie Christians who departed from Catholicism) use Roman variant of the cross and I am accustomed to this variant. At the east (which was once a part of Russian Empire) lives orthodox minority and they use *Suppedaneum* cross (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Orthodox_cross) which is Russian Orthodox cross not Orthodox cross as I falsely thought (or not as Unicode claims it is Orthodox cross—see below).

What is 'proper' an orthodox cross is a mystery to me. Perhaps there is not such a thing. But one of oldest cross shapes is

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchal_cross

developed in Byzantine Empire a long time ago—so definitely it is an orthodox one... This shape is also known as **Anjou** or **Lorraine**. It is just cross with two bars.

The whole story about Cross of Lorraine:

<https://frenchmoments.eu/cross-of-lorraine/>

(note some connections to Jordan:-))

Or https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross_of_Lorraine

Note that it originating on the East, then become popular in France and finally it was used in the whole Europe (as it can be found on coat of arms in Lithuania, Hungary and Solvenia (see Wiki page). – all countries are historically catholic.)

2 Production variants

The other issue is the material used. Usually stone or metal (gold:-)) but also wood. Wooden crosses especially made of birch are associated in Poland with fallen war heroes/soldiers. They were buried quickly and they graves were marked with crosses made of something readily available at the battlefield. Most of them disappeared for obvious reason, but some were preserved in its original form:

https://pl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plik:Kwatera_Batalionu_Zo%C5%9Bka_Cmentarz_Wojkowy_na_Pow%C4%85zkach_010.JPG

Another interesting example is a cross made from cast-iron. Popular in XIX century. Basically iron crosses were casted or forged. In both cases by local craftsmen.

`google:cast+iron+cross` (click images)

Very original are crosses (and paintings) developed in Ethiopia (orthodox church):

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopian_cross

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopian_Orthodox_Tewahedo_Church

see also:

`google:ethiopia+icon+church` (click images)

Paintings (icons) are painted on the on goat skin.

3 Unicode and crosses

A few crosses were defined in Unicode and developed in various fonts including popular Emoji font (for example Google Noto <https://www.google.com/get/noto/help/emoji/>):

<https://unicode-table.com/en/search/?q=cross>

U2626 (✚) is orthodox cross with quite a long description about the meaning of the symbol

<https://unicode-table.com/en/2626/>

Unfortunately for Lorraine cross (**U2628** or) the description is much shorter:

<https://unicode-table.com/en/2628/>

See also:

<https://emojipedia.org/symbols/>

<https://fsymbols.com/signs/cross/>