

# Types of crosses present in artworks found in Macedonia

Snežana Filipova

Faculty of Philosophy  
University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje

[zanafila@gmail.com](mailto:zanafila@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

Artworks from the Early Christian period discovered on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia incorporate many different types of crosses. The rarest type to have been found so far is the *crux gemmata*. The inhabitants of Stobi preferred crosses with widened ends filled with a fishbone motif or decorated at the ends with pearls. The inhabitants of Plaošnik and Heraclea were fond of the swastika cross in their mosaic pavements. Reliquary crosses worn by distinctive and rich persons are numerous. The earliest dated encolpion comes from Strumica, Carevi Kuli, and is dated to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The luxurious gilded encolpia crosses from Stobi and Negotino stand out. Ruby stone decorates the elegant simple crosses from Kočani and Prilep.

Lamps of a typically South African form show six armed crosses or crosses with pearls decorating the space around the central hole, and also crosses filled with circles (Scupi, Strumica, Heraclea and the Museum of Macedonia). One of the Early Christian tombs discovered beneath the medieval Church of the Fifteen Martyrs in Strumica has a unique type of cross decoration: a Latin cross enclosed in a circle with four pendants hanging from the horizontal bar. This cross is a rather simplified version of the cross of Justin II gifted to the Vatican, which may indicate a 6<sup>th</sup> century origin.

The processional crosses which are frequently found are rather simple iron or bronze Latin crosses (Prilep, Taor).

A Constantine victorious cross inlaid with pearls decorates the relief plates from Vinica. Vinica also shows the unique St. Andrew's cross filled with small fish, a crab and a lamb.

*Keywords: cross, swastika, cross with pearls, crux gemmata, Eight-armed cross, a cross within a wreath, a Latin cross combined with alpha and omega, reliquary crosses, Early Christian art, frescoes, mosaics, encolpia, Stobi, Vinica, Bargala, Holy Fifteen Martyrs in Strumica*

## Types of crosses

The most frequent type of Early Christian crosses found in the Republic of Macedonia, applied to decorative sculpture, mostly altar and parapet slabs, capitals, parts of ambos and fountains, were simple Greek ones inscribed in circles or wreaths; a Latin or Greek cross combined with Rho (capitals from Stobi, Bargala and Vinica, [1] a

slab from Valandovo, Isar). [2] The simplest parapet slabs, with vertically or horizontally positioned Latin and Greek crosses, divide the naves and make up the altar screen of the basilica in Makedonska Kamenica. Equally simple crosses, but combined with Rho, divide the naves and form the altar screen of the Episcopal basilica in Bargala. Crosses inscribed in a circle decorate the small basilica in Heraclea.

A red painted cross dominates the ceiling of the last phase of fresco decoration of the baptistery of the Episcopal basilica in Stobi, [3] while a red cross inscribed in a circle decorates the vaulted tomb in Kalauzlija, Kale, near Štip, [4] and the walls of the tombs under the Holy 15 Martyrs in Strumica, while swastikas were widespread on mosaics from Plaošnik, Ohrid and Heraclea, a wooden relief from Bargala, the lower zone of the frescoes of the Episcopal basilica and mosaics from Stobi, object on the south of the basilica. [5] There are also red painted swastikas and red simple Greek crosses within the border of the mosaic of the baptistery at Plaošnik, at the east end of the old St. Clement church. The cross within a wreath is dominant at Stobi on the frescoes and parapet slabs, [6] and sporadically appears at Heraclea (Bukovska naselba, near Heraclea, parapet slab, eight-bar cross within a wreath), Scupi, Šiševo (only once do we find an eight-bar cross within a circle, combined in the empty space between the bars with rotating rosettes and small circles). [7]

Less frequent is the *crux gemmata*: (Konjuh, a slab and a capital; Krivi Dol, Štip, parapet slab; Drenovo, Ionic impost capital). [8]

So far there is one parapet slab from Drenovo, at the newly discovered basilica, and a capital from the village of Nebregovo, near Prilep, [9] where a Greek cross standing on a small circle (an ampoule for Christ's blood) is represented. Analogies come from all over the Christian world, parapet slabs from St. Clemente, Rome and St. Sophia, Constantinople to be only mentioned here. [10] There are crosses formed by fish inscribed in an octagonal frame (the mosaic from the narthex, lower border, left side, Large basilica, Heraclea; the central nave of the basilica at Mančevci, Ohrid) [11] or we see unique crosses filled with fish, shells and crabs (St. Andrew's type of cross, Vinica, relief plate discovered in 2001–2002). Also the bottom of the cross and the space below the horizontal beam may be filled with a pair of birds and fish (St. Nicholas, Prilep, impost capital). Birds or six-petal rosettes flanking a cross can be seen on numerous capitals from Prilep, thus the cross becomes a substitute or variant for the central *cantharus* or the tree of life (a typical scene for the mosaics, decorative capitals and parapet slabs). On the parapet slab from Krivi Dol, Štip, a pair of birds stand on the horizontal beam of the large-scale cross with widened split ends scrolled around each side, vividly represented as cleaning their feathers or looking in opposite directions. [12]

A text related to Constantine I's victory over his enemy is inscribed over the Latin cross decorated with pearls on several relief icons from Vinica; this is the Cross Triumphant. It is represented there on 26 relief plates-replicas. Dimitrova supposes the text, which in the imperative reads "Crux Christi vince et vincere presta omnibus sperantibus in te," was read on certain holidays to celebrate the Holy Cross. [13] If we relate this to the marble slab with cavities for relics from the same site, we may

tentatively suppose the possession of pieces of the True Cross as the most important relic in the city of Vinica very early in Christian history.

Christ monograms, Tau Rho or Chi Rho crosses, [14] may be seen mostly at Stobi, and Bargala, and sporadically elsewhere (Skopje – Matka, fragmented slab-spolia, Heraclea and Krupište capitals, a column at Valandovo, Hisar). An elaborate Tau Rho decorated with a fishbone motif inside, has been painted on an Ionic impost capital from the Episcopal basilica in Stobi. The meaning of the Christogram has been nicely explained by Migotti: “as a metaphor of Christ’s victory over sins and death, fulfilled by His suffering and resurrection, while cosmic bodies reflect God’s power over the whole cosmos.” [15]

There are several early Christian lamps from Stobi on which the handle is a large Latin cross with spread ends, once combined with a heart-shaped form, and there are a few lamps from Scupi decorated around the top opening with the Latin cross with spread ends, filled with two small concentric circles at each end, a motif that is very popular on encolpia and reliquary crosses. [16] The Vinica relief plates with single large crosses have pearls decorating their ends. [17]

There are transennae decorated with large circles filled with four half-circles and central crosses inside, or crosses and small birds, acanthus leaves or fish-scales, sometimes filled with small crosses (Gorica Vinica basilica, Episcopal basilica and *Extra muros* basilica in Bargala, the Holy 15 Martyrs, Strumica, etc.). The most interesting decoration made in ajour technique was applied at the transennae of the Episcopal basilica in Stobi, including several animals, including a donkey. [18]

### **Various types of crosses and their meaning/context**

St. Ignatius of Antioch (prior to 107 A.D.) is believed to have initiated the practice for Christians to sign an X on their foreheads as an individual act of devotion, to fortify themselves or to ward off evil. This same sign on the forehead was used during the sacrament of baptism and in prayer. Tertullian (160–225) writes: "At every forward step and movement, at every going in and out, ... in all the ordinary actions of life, we trace upon the forehead the sign of the cross." The fuller sign using the hand or a cross as a blessing came into use later, around the 5th century. Signing the cross was considered more powerful than any amulet. [19]

From a secret sign of the Christian community, the cross became a designation for Paradise and the graphical sign of Christian salvation, developing into a sign protecting a particular person or place, a replacement for the name and teaching of Jesus Christ, or a symbol of exactness and a warranty for the security of things spoken and written. The cross was to secure a victory in the battlefield, a sacred symbol of the Passion, consequently a sign of protection and defence. [20]

Carrying the cross was a sign of having accepted the Holy Secret of Baptism and thus having acquired the chance of future salvation. Several private tombs and a few mosaic pavements, along with frescoes unearthed within the Episcopal sites in the vicinity of the Republic of Macedonia, show Christ monograms and many different types of crosses. Stobi artists seem to have been very fond of combining crosses with the

fish-scale motif on capitals and even on jewellery (the Episcopal ring from the Episcopal palace in Stobi has a central cross made of ruby and pearl, and the metal ring is decorated with fish-scale). [21]

The eight-armed cross is a Greek cross superimposed on a Greek chi. Since the number eight is symbolic of rebirth or regeneration, this cross is often used as a baptismal cross. There are a lot of impost capitals found in Ohrid at various sites or with unknown origin that show a six-armed cross enclosed in a circle.

Decorative sculpture does not show a Latin cross with hanging alpha and omega. There is only one painted cross in a wreath from the ceiling of the naos in Stobi where instead of omega,  $\theta$  has been painted (or it may be actually omega written with an upper horizontal ending  $\omega$  that misled the conservator to suppose it to be the sign  $\theta$ ?). [22] The Latin cross combined with the Greek alpha and omega reminds us that although Christ died on the cross for our sins, He now reigns in glory forever. "He said to me: 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.'" (Revelation 21:6).

There is only one impost capital from the Lapidarium of the Museum and Gallery, Ohrid, unknown site, and a plate from the *extra muros* basilica in Bargala that show crosses and plants filling the half-circles that divide the whole surface, resembling mosaic floors. [23]

Some of the reliquary crosses show a very good quality of design and their early date (an encolpion from Strumica dated to the second half of the 4th century) [24] confirms the very early spread and acceptance of Christianity. The luxurious encolpia from Stobi (cast in liquid silver, decorated in filigree, and with glass paste) [25] and Negotino (6th century, emerald stone, gold leaf with granulated ornamentation) stand out. Ruby stone decorates the elegant simple crosses from Kočani and Prilep. [26] The reliquary crosses show the private taste of their owners, and also help us make tentative statistics about the dominant cults of saints. So far the most precious encolpia are gilded silver or filigree, sometimes with a precious central stone. They were decorated at the ends with several small pearls (usually three). The oldest one comes from the site of Isar, above Strumica (late 4th, early 5th century). [27] The saints represented on the encolpia from the Vinica, Negotino, Strumica and Gevgelia crosses dated to the 6-7th centuries are usually Christ, the Holy Virgin (usually Orans type or Nikopoios), St. John, St. George, and St. Michael. [28]

One Vinica ceramic plate shows an unusual type of St. Andrew's cross with a pair of fish, crabs, and peacocks in the four corners, indicating the existence of first class relics of this apostle, or 2nd /3rd class relics object related to St. Andrew where this tile was covering the wall. [29]

The frescoes and decorative sculpture of the Episcopal site in Stobi show that its citizens preferred crosses with widened ends filled with a fishbone motif or decorated with pearls. Even the bishop's ring found in the Episcopal residence in Stobi, decorated with ruby and pearl, has a metal ring decorated with a fish-bone motif. Another model of cross present only at the Episcopal basilica in Stobi capitals is a Latin cross with small

circles at the crossing and inside each ends, enclosed in a circular ring made of triangles. This type of cross resembles the most frequent decoration of encolpia from the 5<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> centuries. [30]

The citizens of Plaošnik and Heraclea were fond of the swastika within mosaic pavements. [31] Artists put the swastika inside the cantharus from which peacocks drink in Eucharistic compositions (Heraclea, refectory of the Episcopal palace, Plaošnik, the mosaic between the naos and the north ambulatory of the Polyconchal church). There is only one swastika represented, in the middle of a circle enclosed in a lozenge, on the frescoes of the lower zone of the narthex of the Episcopal basilica in Stobi. [32] The wooden relief from Bargala also shows large swastikas dividing the animals of the frieze. [33]

The ambo plates from Bargala, Štip, with simple Latin crosses with widened ends in a rectangular molding, have analogies in the slabs and Impost capitals from all Early Christian archaeological sites in Macedonia. Simple Greek crosses with widened ends decorate the incense-burner from the Episcopal residence in Stobi. [34]

The leaved cross is frequent on the capitals from Plaošnik, Morodvis, Stobi, Bargala (Ionic imposts of the Episcopal basilica), while provincial variants show crosses surrounded by stylized large ivy, water leaves and other leaves. [35]

There are also Latin or Greek crosses inscribed in a half circle, and a six-armed cross inscribed in a circle (Heraclea, Ionic impost capitals of the Large Episcopal basilica, sometimes with a heart-like space between the arms (Krupište impost capital, Heraclea-city fountain). A cross within a circle or cross with multiple rays like spokes from a wheel is an emblem of the sun and is found on many stone carvings and objects prior to Christianity.

The transenae from the Gorica Vinica basilica show a “developed” type of Greek cross with widened ends surrounded by four half-circles that are enclosed—i.e., become part of a large circle—and also a six-petal rosette cross surrounded by six half-circles enclosed by a large circle. Speaking of the parapet slabs from Manastirine, Salona, Sirmium and Karataš (where the middle cross is an eight-bar one), Ivanka Nikolaevich dates the cross to the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. [36]

The variant of a simple leaved cross with two ivy-leaves growing from its horizontal or vertical bar is present on a few capitals, mainly from simple local single nave churches or used as spolia (Štip, Kočani). The material in Konjuh shows seven different types of crosses, among which the most representative is the *crux gemmata*. [37] This cross has the horizontal and upper bar of the cross filled with two pearls and beads and the lower bar with 4 pearls and beads. The crosses from the rotunda in Konjuh have an equal number of pearls in each cross bar (three), the same as the cross on the Ionic impost capital from Drenovo.

So far, there is only one monogram of a bishop (or archbishop) on a capital from Heraclea, Bitola, [38] which shows his possible Syrian origin.

Christ monograms are frequently painted in tombs and engraved on sculpture. Some crosses represented on parapet slabs resemble metal works. An arrangement with

a wheel with five spokes, flanked by two crosses, each with a rosette in the intersection or a six-petal rosette as a central emblem, from which ties lead to neighbouring crosses, or a wreath with a cross, was a common device in the 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> centuries. Most of the Episcopal sites use six- or eight-bar crosses inscribed in a circle for the decoration of parapet slabs, fountain slabs or capitals (Stobi, Episcopal basilica, Large and Small basilica, Heraclea; [39] the Holy Virgin, Veljusa; spolia from the Treskavec monastery; Isar, Valandovo; Šiševo, Skopje; and Suvodol, Prilep).

The most beautiful and technically most perfectly executed and skilfully drawn, painted in red and gilded, is the marble impost capital from the apsidal wall of the Episcopal Basilica in Stobi, discovered several years ago. Here the central cross, combined with the letter Ro, filled inside with fishbone motif, A and Ω hanging from its horizontal beam, is flanked by a peacock. [40] This type of cross filled with fishbone is represented on the impost capitals from the same basilica discovered many decades ago. [41] It seems that red was a common colour for painted crosses. The cross from the vaulted tomb of the Holy 15 Martyrs, Strumica, is a Latin cross enclosed in a circle with four pendants hanging from the horizontal bar. [42] This cross is a quite simplified version of the cross of Justin II gifted to the Vatican, which may indicate a 6<sup>th</sup> century date.

Processional crosses are frequently found and they are rather simple iron or bronze Latin crosses (Prilep, bronze). The cross from the site of Gradište, near the village of Stenče, shows a longer horizontal beam, and the endings are slightly widened. The one from Taor, Skopje, is a very simple iron cross. One military labarum dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century has been found at Veles, [43] and the exact same one is represented held by St. Christopher and St. George on a relief plate from Vinica. [44]

There is a special type of cross under an arch that has been preserved on several parapet slabs, the one found at Dreveno, Peštno (Greek cross), the other from the consignatorium of the Episcopal basilica in Bargala (Latin cross under an arch with a marginal frame filled with a sinusoidal branch with vine leaves and grapes), and the third from the newly excavated basilica at Konjuh (the simplest one - a Latin cross under a simple arch). Dreveno's cross under an arch is enclosed within two crossing lozenges and finally put in a circle with four small outer circles (loops). The same composition but with a cross enclosed in a small circle and then in two crossing lozenges and a larger circle with 8 outer small circles (loops) may be seen at the newly excavated basilica at Bargala. [45]

A fragmented white marble slab from Vinica Kale shows cavities for reliquary crosses, [46] a large one with an arch, and small-scale inscribed crosses around it. This finding has not been recognized as such. Balabanov even proposed it was a representation of an object with an apse—a kind of palace (castle). [47]

The only church with an inner cross within the plan of a shortened or pseudo basilica (no columns or pilasters are visible on the plan) has been excavated at Raštani, Kale, near Bitola. [48]

Caskets containing the most precious relics, encolpia and reliquary crosses have been preserved and kept in many Macedonian churches and museums, in spite of much

plundering, wars and thefts. [49] Some precious relic crosses once belonging to archbishops have become part of private collections. Everywhere the cross is an inevitable image, no matter whether walking on the Early Christian basilica's mosaics, visiting church shrines, altars, museum collections of encolpia or private collections of crosses. Its many visual artistic variants make the believer and scholar search for deeper and profound study.

## Notes

- [1] Filipova (2006), 263, fig.194, 265, fig.195. Balabanov (2006), 26.
- [2] Tomovski (1975), 271-278, fig 4.
- [3] Aleksova (1997), colour ill. 17.
- [4] Beldedovski, Šterjov (2010), 309–320. The letter X combined with the letter P, the first two letters of Christ (ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ), is the most common monogram of Christ. The sign was an abbreviation of *chreston*, "auspicious", used by scribes to mark a good passage in papyri. The sign is often combined with the letters Alpha and Omega to indicate Christ as the beginning and the ending. In early Christian uses, the sign is found on oil-lamp handles, glass gold plates, various utensils (spoons for the host), and marked or carved in catacombs.
- [5] Cvetković Tomašević (1978), fig. 24, Bitrakova Grozdanova (1997), 75–77. Filipova (2006), Proceedings, 315–317, London. Among the earliest cultures to use the swastika was the Neolithic Vinča culture, and it was also frequently used in Ancient India. The genesis of the swastika symbol is often related to cross symbols in general. They may symbolize the sun, or the four aspects of nature - the sun, wind, water, earth. The four arms of the cross may stand for the four seasons. The Christian cross, the Jewish hexagram star and the Muslim crescent moon are seen to have their origins indifferent views regarding which calendar system is preferred for marking holy days. According to Reza Assasi, the swastika is a geometric pattern of the sky, a primitive astrological symbol representing the north ecliptic pole centered on Zeta Draconis. He argues that this was later called the four-horse chariot of Mithras in ancient Iran and represented the centre of the Ecliptic in the star map. In Iranian mythology, the cosmos was believed to be pulled by four heavenly horses. He suggests that this notion was transmitted to the west and flourished in Roman Mithraism. Carl Sagan, in his book *Comet* (1985), suggests that in antiquity a comet could have approached so close to Earth that the jets of gas streaming from it, bent by the comet's rotation, became visible, leading to the adoption of the swastika as a symbol across the world. (See Rosenberg, Jennifer, [History of the Swastika](#). *about.com*. Retrieved 26 April 2013.) We should not neglect the use of swastikas on the shields and coins of the inhabitants of Macedonia in the Ancient period.
- [6] Lilčić (2002), 815–888.
- [7] *Ibid.* 662, 748.
- [8] *Ibid.* 579, 583, 906, 1003.
- [9] Ćorǵieva, Lilčić, Filipova (2009), 69, fig. 6; Лилчиќ (2003), 947-952.
- [10] Guidobaldi, Barsanti, Guidobaldi (1992), 256, 365.
- [11] Tutkovski (2012).
- [12] Filipova (1997), T CXX.
- [13] Dimitrova (1993), 130.
- [14] As a pre-Christian symbol, the Chi-rho signified good fortune. The Chi rho became an important Christian symbol when adopted by the Roman Emperor Constantine, representing the first two letters in the name of Christ- the Chi, or 'ch', and Rho, or 'r.' According to the

Church Father Eusebius, on the eve of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, the Emperor saw the emblem in a dream, with the inscription: "By this sign, you shall conquer."

- [15] Migotti (1997), 117.
- [16] The Scupi lamps were exhibited this year as part of the annual exhibition of the Museum of Macedonia (unpublished material). For the Stobi lamps, see the catalogue *Crosses*, (2008), 20, fig. 4,5. They are dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> Century.
- [17] Dimitrova (2012), 232–235, 189–197.
- [18] Filipova (1997), T XLII, T XLIII, T XLIV, 1, 3, 5, 2a.
- [19] Dunn (2004).
- [20] St. Paulinus of Nola, "Carm. in Natal. S. Felicis", XI, 612; Prudent., "Adv. Symm.", I, 486.
- [21] Mikulčić (2003), 199.
- [22] Dimitrova, Tutkovski, Blaževska (2012). Dimitrova dates the cross in the wreath from the roof of the north nave to the 4<sup>th</sup> century (op.cit, 26).
- [23] Filipova (1997), TXIX, 1 b.; Filipova, (2006), 424, fig. 416.
- [24] *Crosses from the Collections of the Museum of Macedonia (catalogue)*, Skopje 2008, fig.1.
- [25] Ivanova (2010), 305–308.
- [26] Manolev, Simovski (2000), 6, 11, 12.
- [27] *Crosses from the collection of the Museum of Macedonia /Krstovi, (catalogue)*, Skopje 2008, page 6, fig. 1. For details see Filipova (2012), 2012, 113-130
- [28] Manolev, Simovski (2000), 38, 42,
- [29] Balabanov (2011), 135-151, fig. 1–7. Most of his bones were enshrined in Amalfi, Italy, where the legend says that a mysterious manna-like oil is produced from his tomb. His head was retained in Patras, Greece, the site of his death.
- [30] As can be concluded from the private collection of Trifun Kostovski. See Manolev, Simovski (2000) Fig. 25, 28, 30, 38, 41, 48, 51. For the ring, see Mikulcic (2003), 99.
- [31] Filipova (2010), 147, fig. 4., fig. 10, fig. 12. Tutkovski (2012) 5.5.21
- [32] Mikulčić (2003), 130.
- [33] Filipova (2006), *Proceedings*, London.
- [34] Mikulčić (2003), 199.
- [35] Filipova (2006), 446, 286, 261, 235, 67.
- [36] Nikolajević (1968), 18–20.
- [37] Radojčić (1952), 148–167. The *crux gemmata* denotes a glorification of the cross. This form was inspired by the cult of the cross that arose after Saint Helena's discovery of the True Cross in Jerusalem in 327. Gold and precious stones were used on crosses to represent the glory of God. Theodosius II placed a jewelled cross on Golgotha around 420. One of the most famous crosses is the *Crux Vaticana* donated by the emperor Justin II. There were several variations of the *crux gemmata*. In some cases there were five stones on the cross, representing the five wounds of Christ; others had 13, for Christ and the 12 disciples. Similar crosses hung from votive crowns.
- [38] Filipova (2006), 342, fig. 305.
- [39] Filipova (2010), 144, fig.20.
- [40] Filipova (2010), 145, fig. 14.
- [41] Filipova (2006), 151-154, and older literature. I thank Silvana Blaževska, manager of the Stobi site, for the explanation of some details about the shorter sides of the capital.



- [42] I thank my colleagues from the Museum and Gallery of Strumica for the photo of this cross. There are several tombs discovered beneath the early Christian church and the material is yet to be published, as I have been informed by the archeologist Margarita Aleksovska.
- [43] Manolev, Simovski (2000), 22.
- [44] Dimitrova (2012), fig. 234.
- [45] Filipova (2010), 143-4, fig. 6, 10, 19.
- [46] This kind of usage with many Byzantine examples among which a few come from Macedonia have been discussed in detail by Mussin (2012), 61–94. The example mentioned in this text was not known to Mussin nor has it received adequate attention by Macedonian explorers.
- [47] Balabanov (2006), 26. The explanation for the purpose of the slab has been given under its illustration.
- [48] Lilčić (2002), 775. He explains that the church also had a medieval phase (10–11<sup>th</sup> century) but the church dimensions are too large for the later phase.
- [49] Filipova (2012), 113-130.

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# Типови крстови присутни во уметничките дела во Македонија

## РЕЗИМЕ

**Снежана Филипова**

Филозофски факултет  
Универзитет Св. Кирил и Методиј

Клучни зборови: крст, свастика, крст со перли, осумкрак крст, шестокрак крст, стух gemmata, крст во венец, крст со алфа и омега, крстови реликвијари, ранохристијанска уметност, фрески, мозаици, енколпион, Стоби, Виница, Баргала, Хераклеја, Св. 15 маченици-Струмица

Во ранохристијанската уметност откриена на територијата на Република Македонија се користеле голем број крстови. Најредок тип е стух gemmata. Жителите на Стоби преферирале крстови со проширени краеве, однатре исполнети со мотив на рибја коска, или декорирани на краевите со перли. На жителите пак на Хераклеја и Плаошник им се допаѓала свастиката во мозаиците. Бројни се крстовите реликвијари кои ги носеле истакнати и богати луѓе.

Најстариот крст енкалпион доаѓа од Струмица, Цареви Кули (2/2 на 4 век). Најлуксузни се позлатените енкалпиони од Стоби и Неготино. Рубинот ги краси едноставните елегантни крстови од Кочани и Прилеп.

Лампите кои вообичаено се од северно африкански тип се декорирани околу централниот отвор со крстови со перли, или крстови исполнети со кругови (Стоби, Скупи, Струмица, Музеј на Македонија). Една од ранохристијанските гробници откриени под средновековната петкуполна црква Св. Петнаесет маченици во Струмица има уникатна фреско декорација од црвено обоен латински тип на крст, впишан во круг, од чија хоризонтална греда висат четири висулци. Ова е многу едноставна верзија на позлатениот крст со скапоцени камења кој Јустин го поклонил на Ватикан што може да индицира дека потекнува од 6 век.

Процесионалните крстови се чести меѓу наодите и се најчесто изработени од железо или бронза (Прилеп, Таор).

Константиновиот победнички крст кој е истовремено и крст со перли, е присутен на рељефите од Винаца. Во Винаца се среќава и крстот на Св. Андреја, кој внатре е исполнет со мали риби, рак и јагне.