

2020

## THE CONCEPT AND UTILIZATION OF SWASTIKA 'HOOKED CROSS' ON ISLAMIC ARTEFACTS

Dr.Boussy Zidan

*Associate professor of Islamic History and Archaeology - Faculty of Tourism and Hotels - Suez Canal University, dr.boussyzidan@tourism.suez.edu.eg*

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### Recommended Citation

Zidan, Dr.Boussy (2020) "THE CONCEPT AND UTILIZATION OF SWASTIKA 'HOOKED CROSS' ON ISLAMIC ARTEFACTS," *Journal of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists*: Vol. 5: Iss. 1, Article 2.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.aaru.edu.jo/jguaa/vol5/iss1/2>

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## The Concept and Utilization of Swastika ‘Hooked Cross’ on Islamic Artefact Dr.Boussy Muhammad Hussein Zidan

*Associate Professor of Islamic Arts & Archaeology-Faculty of Tourism and Hotels  
Suez Canal University*

### **Abstract**

Swastika’ is an equilateral hooked cross, it is one of the symbols that became popular to several nations of different cultures since prehistoric times. This symbol was associated, or rather, became symbol for some religious beliefs and spiritual concepts in some ancient civilizations. It has been extensively transmitted among several nations. Such prevalence proves the popularity that hooked cross ‘Swastika’ had attained, however, this caused the difficulty in determining its place of origin. Some historical studies suggested India as ‘Swastika’s’ homeland by the end of the Bronze Age, since it was predominantly a religious symbol of Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists. The spread of Buddhism religion which held the hooked cross ‘swastika’ as a holy symbol, led to the emergence of swastika in China and Japan as symbol of prosperity. However, due to some evidences; others pointed out to Mesopotamia, land of the oldest known civilization on universe, which later became a cultural center extended from the Near East to Central Europe, and in Asia it had widespread and reached as far east as China. In addition, hooked cross had been contemporary to ancient Egyptian civilization. This had been assured by the discovery of a rock drawing in the western desert of Upper Egypt. In late historical times, precisely, the Byzantine empire, hooked cross was also in use. Furthermore, it was in use in the Coptic art as well. Hooked cross ‘Swastika’ continued to be used in ancient historical eras; contributed in their arts, and till the modern era. In addition, the widespread of ‘Swastika’ resulted in being associated with several terms; *Gammadion* cross or *Crux Gammata*, *Hakenkreuz*, *Fylfot* (*fower foot*), *Wan in china*, *Manji in Japan*, *Tau cross*, and *Thor’s hammer*. In addition, each society used Swastika in a distinct fashion; it sometimes symbolized the Sun, good fortune, fertility, religious beliefs, etc. Through this stretched history, hooked cross’s symbolism had radically changed, especially in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D, after being chosen as symbol for the blossoming Nazi party founded by Adolf Hitler in Germany. Since then, the ‘Swastika’ had been effectively detached from its past, Germanized and reinvented as a symbol of German purity and supremacy. This paper enclosed a briefed history of the hooked cross ‘Swastika’ since its emergence, with stating the diverse thoughts of its place of origin. This is succeeded by the symbolism of the hooked cross ‘Swastika’ and the changes happened lately. The final point is the outline of applying hooked cross ‘Swastika’ in Islamic Art, this is supplemented by some chosen Applied artefacts demonstrating this.

**keywords:** Hooked cross, Swastika, Indian Civilization, Mesopotamian Civilization, ancient epochs, Islamic Art, Nazi Party

### This paper aims at:

- Illuminating on one of the most unique symbols with different meanings and argumentative as well.
- Focusing on themes of association between different nations on vast areas since very ancient times.
- Deducing the Islamic art's tendency to admitting decorative elements of several cultures, if there is no conflict with Islamic faith.
- Hinting that absolute facts or concepts are not exist, and symbols – such as 'Swastika' are liable to multiple changes.

### Research's plan:

- I. History of hooked cross 'Swastika'
- II. Symbolism of hooked cross 'Swastika' in variant cultures through ages
- III. Hooked cross 'Swastika' in Islamic Art
- IV. Descriptive study for certain applied artefacts
- V. Systematic analysis for the paper's discussed artefacts

### Introduction

Islamic art occupies a unique position through the history of arts. It has influenced a vast area from Spain in the West to China in the Far East. In addition, it extends for a long chronological range, from the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.H/ 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D to the present.<sup>(1)</sup>

Due to the expansion of Islamic empire, Muslims had the chance to be in close contact with Greco-Roman, Byzantine, Coptic, Sassanian, Buddhist, and Chinese civilization. As a result, Muslims had greatly affected by artistic traditions of these diverse nations.<sup>(2)</sup> In addition to these sources, the native arts in various countries of Islam, such as Persia, had continued.<sup>(3)</sup> Thus, Muslim

artisans had combined these multiple artistic traditions, and shortly managed to evolve most features of precedent arts. Thus, they created their own style that corresponded to the teachings of Islam, and so shaped their own aesthetics.<sup>(4)</sup>

Islamic art is famous for three types of non-figural ornaments. These are calligraphy, vegetal patterns and Geometric ones.<sup>(5)</sup> Along two thousand years; ornaments had greatly been developed. Muslim artisans were the pioneers in using calligraphy as a decorative element. They used single letter, an entire word, or complete phrases as decorative elements. These calligraphy ornaments had been combined with figural ornaments of animals, birds, and sometimes with non-figural vegetal or geometric patterns on the same surface. Such ornaments were used in manuscripts and several artefacts such as rugs, textile, metalworks, pottery, etc.<sup>(6)</sup>

Another type of decorative elements in Islamic art is the vegetal patterns which had been adopted from the late Roman art. However, Muslim artisans managed to transform the natural shape of floral stems and leaves to be coiled around each other with neither beginning nor end, so forming a unique decorative style, entitled 'Arabesque'.<sup>(7)</sup> An additional form of Islamic art ornaments is Geometric patterns, of which basic shapes - quadrangles, circles, and lozenges- were common elements in both Roman and Sassanian decorations.

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Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan, 1937, p. 185-189  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25167037> accessed: 16-08-2019 02:17 UTC

<sup>(4)</sup>Wajdan Ali, *The Arab Contribution to Islamic Art*, p. 13

<sup>(5)</sup>Department of Islamic Art "Geometric Patterns in Islamic Art". In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000, [https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/geom/hd\\_geom.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/geom/hd_geom.htm) accessed: 28-08-2019 1:30 UTC

<sup>(6)</sup>Ḥassan El-Bāshāh and others, *Mawsū'at al-'Emārah wā al-Athār wā al-Funūn Al-Islāmīyyah*, al-Mujalad ath-Thānī, at-Tab'ah al-Ūlā, Bierut, Lebanon, 1999 A.D, p. 102

<sup>(7)</sup>Ernst Diez, *Simultaneity in Islamic Art*, *Ars Islamica*, Vol. 4, p. 185-189

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<sup>(1)</sup>Bernard O'kane and others, *The Illustrated Guide to the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo*, The American University in Cairo Press, Cairo- New York, 2012, p. 1

<sup>(2)</sup>Wajdan Ali, *The Arab Contribution to Islamic Art from the Seventh to the Fifteenth Centuries*, The Royal Society of Fine Arts, Jordon, The American University in Cairo Press, Cairo, Egypt, 1999, p. 13

<sup>(3)</sup>Ernst Diez, *Simultaneity in Islamic Art*, *Ars Islamica*, Vol. 4, The Smithsonian Institution and

Moreover, they employed other geometric elements of variant origins; such as *Chintamāni*, baskets 'Silāl', hooked cross 'Swastika', etc.<sup>(8)</sup> Though, due to their supremacy in Mathematics; Muslim artisans managed again to produce new geometric elements by combining more than one shape together,<sup>(9)</sup> and thus created innumerable geometric shapes. Of these; six-sided stars - composed of a lozenge penetrated by a quadrangle or a circle-, *Duqmaq*, *Krandāz*, *Ma'qili*, *Mafrūqah*, etc.<sup>(10)</sup>

The following lines deal particularly with the hooked cross 'Swastika'; one of the prominent geometric patterns, and most arguing as well. At the beginning, a brief history of the hooked cross, its origin and several names are discussed. This is followed by the hooked cross's symbolism through its long history until the events that caused a radical change in its symbolism. This is succeeded by the employment of hooked cross 'Swastika' in Islamic art and its symbolism if there! Finally, a descriptive study of certain artefacts of Islamic applied arts as evidence for the use of hooked cross 'Swastika' is annexed.

<sup>(8)</sup>Chintamāni is an ornament of Chinese origin composed of three circles or spheres arranged in a triangular shape underlined with two small zigzag and paralleled lines.

- Baskets 'Silāl' is a braided decorative form known in Coptic art and continued in Islamic art, taking several forms of braids, and coiled bands.

Ḥassan El-Bāshāh and others, *Mawsū'at al-'Emārah wā al-Athār wā al-Funūn Al-Islāmīyyah*, al-Mujalad ath-Thānī, p. 98

<sup>(9)</sup>Ernst Diez, *Simultaneity in Islamic Art*, *Ars Islamica*, Vol. 4, p. 185-189

<sup>(10)</sup>*Duqmaq* is a geometric T shaped composition arranged in a circular form around a central point.

- *Krandāz* is an ornament of Y shaped alternately arranged as adjusted ones and others reversed composing bands.

- *Ma'qili* is hexagonal shapes of equal sides intertwined together, so forming three sided shapes, each for hexagons are linked so forming a six -sided star.

- *Mafrūqah* is a form derived from *Ma'qili* ornament, in T shape faced by another one; but conversed. In addition, it may be found adjusted or inclined as well. This pattern of *Mafrūqah* may compose his majesty term 'Allah' in square kufi script.

Ḥassan El-Bāshāh and others, *Mawsū'at al-'Emārah wā al-Athār wā al-Funūn Al-Islāmīyyah*, al-Mujalad ath-Thānī, p. 96-99

## I. History of hooked cross 'Swastika'

Swastika is an equilateral hooked cross, derived its name from the Sanskrit<sup>(11)</sup> language as '*Svastika*', this literally means 'object of good fortune'.<sup>(12)</sup> There are two forms of the Swastika; right -hand one turning in clockwise direction, which is widely used and normally known as Swastika or *Svastika*, and left-hand one turning counterclockwise direction, known as *Sauvastika*.<sup>(13)</sup>

According to some scholars' thoughts; Swastika had originated in India by the end of the Bronze Age<sup>(14)</sup>.<sup>(15)</sup> It was predominantly a religious symbol of Hindus, Jains,<sup>(16)</sup> and Buddhists.<sup>(17)</sup> The spread of

<sup>(11)</sup> Sanskrit is an Indo-European language, a member of the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-Iranian subgroup of that family. It is chronologically and in terms of linguistic development the 'oldest' Indo-Aryan language and consequently often referred to as Old Indic (Altindisch) or Old- Aryan; its descendants include a range of linguistic varieties classified under the rubric middle Indic (or Prākṛit), as well as the modern Indic (new Indo-Aryan) languages spoken today, such as Hindi, Gujarati, Bengali. The oldest form of Sanskrit is so-called vedic Sanskrit, the language of the four collections of liturgical texts known as the Vedas of the early exegetical literature on these texts.

Stephanie W. Jamison, *Sanskrit; The Ancient Languages of Asia and the Americas*, edited by Roger D. Woodard, Cambridge university press, 2008, p. 673

<sup>(12)</sup>Thomas L. Wilson, *The Swastika: The Earliest Known Symbol and its Migration*, Washington, government printing office, 1896, p. 769

<sup>(13)</sup><https://www.britannica.com/topic/swastika>

Accessed: 14-07-2019 12:57 UTC

<sup>(14)</sup>Bronze Age is the third phase in the development of material culture among the ancient peoples of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, following the Paleolithic (Old Stone Age) and Neolithic (New Stone Age) periods. The term also indicates to the first period in which metal was in use. The date at which the age began varied with regions; in Greece and China, for instance, the Bronze Age began before 3000 BCE, however in Britain it did not start until about 1900 BCE.

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Bronze-Age>

Accessed:09-08-2019 00:24 UTC

<sup>(15)</sup>Stanley Freed and Ruth S. Freed, *Origin of the Swastika; the Natural History*, 1980, p. 68-74

<sup>(16)</sup>**Jainism is one of the three ancient Indian religions beside Hinduism and Buddhism. The Jain tradition must be regarded as an independent phenomenon rather than as a Hindu sect or a Buddhist heresy, as some earlier Western scholars**

Buddhism religion which held the swastika as a holy symbol, led to the emergence of swastika in China and Japan as symbol of prosperity.<sup>(18)</sup> Earlier researches had associated hooked cross 'Swastika' with the Aryans,<sup>(19)</sup> and so interpreted it as a "solar symbol".<sup>(20)</sup>

The earliest occurrence of the symbol of Swastika in India had been found engraved in the steatite seals of Harappa, Mohenjo Daro and Lothal. This had been found on the earliest currency of India, namely the punch-marked coins.<sup>(21)</sup> Of these a coin (fig.1A, B) from the great Andhra dynasty,<sup>(22)</sup> with the name of Gotamīputra Vilivāya Kura. Its obverse is adorned with chaitya (Buddhist chapel) within railing, topped with Swastika, and a tree is on the right side (fig.1 A). However, its reverse is adorned with bow and arrow (fig.1 B); around

**believed. The name Jainism derived from the Sanskrit verb ji, "to conquer."**

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Jainism> accessed: 02-09-2019 23:24 UTC

<sup>(17)</sup><https://www.britannica.com/topic/swastika>

Accessed: 14-07-2019 12:57 UTC

<sup>(18)</sup>Thomas L. Wilson, The Swastika: The Earliest Known Symbol and its Migration, p. 769

<sup>(19)</sup>The word "Aryan" appeared multiple times in the Vedas, a sacred Hindu text, almost referred to a band of conquerors. This actually mean that all modern Indo-Europeans, descendants of "Aryans" had roots in the Asian sub- continent.

Burnouf, Emile, the Action of Races, the Science of Religion, Maisonneuve, 1876, p. 186-200

<sup>(20)</sup>John Prince Loewenstein, The Swastika; its History and Meaning, Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland Sable, Man, Vol. 41 (May-June 1941), p.54

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2793344> accessed:02-07-2019 23:57 UTC

<sup>(21)</sup>K. S. Ramachandran, Swastika as a decorative Motif of Indian Pottery: A short Note, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Vol. 23, Part I (1960), pp. 81-83

<sup>(22)</sup>The Andhras probably became independent about the year 230 B.C, and their rule lasted for four and half centuries. Their coins of various types have been found in Mālwa, on the banks of the Krishna and Godavari rivers, the original home of the race, as far as Madeas, in north Konkan, and elsewhere in the Deccan and the central provinces. The earliest to which a date can be assigned are those bearing the name of king Śrī Sāta, about 150 B.C

C.J. Brown, M.A, the Heritage of India Series: The Coins of India, London, Oxford University Press, , 1922, p. 21

Raño Gotamiputasa Vilivāyakurasa "(coin) of Rāja Gotamiputra Vilivāyakurasa."<sup>(23)</sup>

Though earlier Swastikas were found in India; more ancient ones had been discovered as well in Asia, the Indus valley,<sup>(24)</sup> and southern-central Europe.<sup>(25)</sup>

In addition, as a symbol of a religion in India; it was believed that the hooked cross 'Swastika' had been migrated in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C to lands in both northern and southern portions of the western hemisphere; later known as North and South American.<sup>(26)</sup>

The occurrence of the Buddhist religion and the Swastika symbol together in America, at a locality beyond the possibility of modern European or Asiatic contact would be evidence of pre-historic migration. If the Swastika and Buddhism migrated to America together it must have been since the establishment of the Buddhist religion, which is almost fixed in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. It is worth mentioning that crosses of variant forms; from Greek cross (fig.2 A, B) to Swastikas on shells (fig.3 A, B) and others on pottery (fig. 4 A, B); had been utilized among North American Indians.<sup>(27)</sup>

<sup>(23)</sup>C.J. Brown, M.A, the Heritage of India Series: The Coins of India, p. 21, pl. I, 7

<sup>(24)</sup>**Indus valley civilization or Harappan civilization**, is the earliest known urban culture of the Indian subcontinent. The nuclear dates of the civilization appear to be about 2500–1700 BCE, though the southern sites may have lasted later into the 2nd millennium BCE.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Indus-civilization> accessed 30-08-2019 00:02 UTC

<sup>(25)</sup> - John Prince Loewenstein, The Swastika: Its History and Meaning, p. 52

<sup>(26)</sup> - It is worth mentioning that these lands had first been inhabited since the last glacial period (40.000 to 17.000 years ago). However, these lands were entitled as the New world since the 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D, then as North and South Americas due to the name of the Italian explorer Americus Vesputius, who made several voyages to the Western Hemisphere in the 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D, and described his travels in letters to friends in Italy, using the term "Mundus Novus" ("New World") in referring to North and South Americas.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Americas> accessed 15-01-2020 03:08 UTC

<sup>(27)</sup>Thomas L. Wilson, The Swastika: The Earliest Known Symbol and its Migration, p. 928, 957, Pl. 19, figs. 2,8, 10, 11, 12, 13)



Other sources stated that the hooked cross had been widely famed in Mesopotamia; land of the oldest known civilization on universe, which later became a cultural center extended from the Near East to Central Europe, and in Asia it had widespread and reached as far east as China.<sup>(28)</sup>

Concerning the probable origin of Swastika; there is almost an agreement of the antiquarians' opinions that the swastika had no foothold among the Egyptians.<sup>(29)</sup> Others stated that the only sign approaching the fylfot<sup>(30)</sup> in Egyptian hieroglyphics could be originated from the Egyptian cross (*Crux ansata*) known as key of life (fig. 5), which according to Egyptian mythology was Ankh, the emblem of Ka, the spiritual double of man, and the union of Isis and Osiris, but it is not very similar to the fylfot.<sup>(31)</sup> *Crux ansata* was regarded as a symbol of the generative principle of nature.<sup>(32)</sup> Nevertheless, there are several samples assuring its utilizing in ancient Egypt, of these; the discovery of a rock drawing in the western desert of Upper Egypt, showing two human feet, one bears an indubitable hooked cross on its sole, and the same sign occurs above the toes of the other (fig. 6). This drawing indistinctly dated back to dynastic times about 4000 B.C.<sup>(33)</sup> Other specimens of the swastika have been found in Naukratis in Egypt; these are said to be Greek vases (fig. 7) which have been imported into Egypt. However, being excavated in Egypt, they are geography

classified as not Egyptian but Greek. From Egypt the *Crux ansata* spread first among the Phoenicians, and then throughout the whole Semitic world, from Sardinia to Susiana.

Proceeding on the debate concerning the place of origin of the hooked cross, the symbol was definitely in use at least two thousand years - in Mesopotamian, ancient Egyptian, and Indus valley civilizations- before it had a name, predating both the Sanskrit language and Buddhism religion.

Nevertheless, in 1896 Thomas Wilson Drew a map showing the distribution of hooked cross 'Swastika' all over the world's seven continents; proving its existence in the five inhabitable ones (fig.8).<sup>(34)</sup> Here is such a serious inquiry; how this symbol had found its way to such vast areas in Early historic periods. And the answer could refer to possible ways; trade routes, conquering tribes, migrating troops, or alongside particular religions, such as the Dravidians<sup>(35) (36)</sup>.

In the Near East and Europe, there are evidences that the spread of hooked cross 'Swastika' was from the South to the North-West,<sup>(37)</sup> precisely Troy in the Near East was the entry point of 'Swastika' to Europe, through the Aegean Sea to Greece, where it spread through southern Europe about the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C on pottery objects traded across the continent. Moreover, the Hittites<sup>(38)</sup> were another

<sup>(28)</sup> John Prince Loewenstein, The Swastika; its History and Meaning, p. 51, 52

<sup>(29)</sup> Goblet d'Alviella, Eugène, La Migration des Symboles. Medical Heritage Library. Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1891, p. 51, 52

<sup>(30)</sup> Fylfot is Scandinavian word, commonly used in Great Britain to Swastika from the Anglo-Saxon times, derived from the Anglo-Saxon *fourer fot*, meaning four-footed or many footed.

R. P. Greg, The Fylfot and Swastika," *Archæologia*, XLVIII, part 2, 1885, p. 298

W.G. V Balchin, The Swastika, *Twilight of A Universal Symbol*, Folklore Vol. 55, No. 4, p. 167

<sup>(31)</sup> J. B. Waring, *Ceramic Art in Remote ages*, London, published by John B. day, 1874, P. 82

<sup>(32)</sup> Thomas L. Wilson, The Swastika: The Earliest Known Symbol and its Migration, p. 766

<sup>(33)</sup> H. A Winkler, *Rock Drawings of Southern Upper Egypt*, Vol. II, London, 1939, p. 13, Pl. IX, No. 2

<sup>(34)</sup> - Thomas L. Wilson, The Swastika: The Earliest Known Symbol and its Migration, p. 769, 834, 961

<sup>(35)</sup> - The term Dravidian once referred to people who lived in South India, whom spoke one or other of a series of closely related languages, differing radically from the Aryan languages of North India.

C. K. Das, The Dravidians of South India: Their Distribution, History and Culture, *Geographical Association*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (AUTUMN, 1921), pp. 142-148

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40555630> Accessed: 31-08-2019 02:49 UTC

<sup>(36)</sup> Brown Norman W., The Swastika: A study of the Nazi Claims of its Aryan Origin, p. 13, 14

<sup>(37)</sup> John Prince Loewenstein, The Swastika; its History and Meaning, p. 52

<sup>(38)</sup> The Hittites were among the ancient Indo-European nations. They resided in Anatolia since the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C, and shortly became one of the chief powers in the Middle East.

possible center from which 'Swastika' had spread out when they conquered neighboring cultures.<sup>(39)</sup> However, concerning Asia, such evidences to defining initiating center are missing, though, it was suggested that hooked cross 'Swastika' travelled across southeastern Asia through trade routes.<sup>(40)</sup>

Such widespread of Swastika resulted in difficulty of determining its exact center of origin. Nevertheless, due to positive evidences of its discovery in early cultures of the Bronze Age, anthropologists can, with no doubt, ascribe a prehistoric origin of hooked cross 'Swastika'.<sup>(41)</sup> In addition, the widespread of 'Swastika' resulted in being associated with several terms; *Gammadion* cross or *Crux Gammata*,<sup>(42)</sup> *Hakenkreuz*, *Fylfot* (fower foot), *Wan in china*, *Manji in Japan*,<sup>(43)</sup> *Tau cross*, and *Thor's hammer*.<sup>(44)</sup>

In late historical times, in precisely, the Byzantine empire, hooked cross was also in use.<sup>(45)</sup> Great discoveries have been made in upper Egypt in Sakkara, Fayoum, and Achmim, the inhabitants of Copts and the surrounding or neighboring cities were Christian Greeks, who migrated from their country during the first centuries A.D and

settled in various regions in Egypt. Those people were famed with their superior ability as weavers and embroiders. Several samples of these products were lavishly decorated with both natural and geometric figures. Among them was Swastika, which had been repeatedly applied in different sizes, inserted in borders, and sometimes adorning the corners of the tunics and togas as a large medallion. On one of these artefacts, is a Greek linen tapestry, where a normal Swastika -embroidered or woven- occurs, tapestry fashion with woolen thread. It is attributed to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries A.D (fig. 9).<sup>(46)</sup>

However, there are several samples – chosen randomly- of Coptic artefacts testify on the utilization of hooked cross 'Swastika'. Of these; a limestone engaged Capital with animals dated back to 5<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D is on display in the Cleveland museum of art. It bears high relief carved and interlaced 'Swastikas' (fig. 10).<sup>(47)</sup> Further sample is a limestone stela dated back to 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D on display in the British museum. It has an outer border of interlaced lines forming squares with lobed flowers and Swastikas (fig.11).<sup>(48)</sup> A further Coptic artefact with 'Swastikas' is a textile of woven silk dated back to 501-600 A.D, had been found in Qau el-Kebir,<sup>(49)</sup> among the collection of Fitzwilliam Museum. This object is bordered with blue fret triangular pattern alternating with red flowering trees, with swastikas and flower motifs (fig. 12).<sup>(50)</sup> Another Coptic -

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hittite> accessed: 08-09-2019 22:26 UTC

<sup>(39)</sup> - Brown Norman W., The Swastika: A study of the Nazi Claims of its Aryan Origin p. 24, 25

<sup>(40)</sup> - John Prince Loewenstein, The Swastika: Its History and Meaning, p. 38, 52

<sup>(41)</sup>W.G. V Balchin, The Swastika: Twilight of A Universal Symbol, Folklore Vol. 55, No. 4, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. On behalf of Folklore Enterprises, Ltd. 1944, p. 167-168

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1257797> accessed: 02-07-2019 23:33 UTC

<sup>(42)</sup>Gammadion cross or Crux Gammata, a term of the hooked cross in Byzantine empire, probably for being composed of four Greek gammas (Γ) of the Greek alphabet.

Tim Healey, The Symbolism of the Cross in Sacred and Secular Art, The MIT Press, Leonardo, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Autumn 1977), p. 289-294  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1573764> accessed:14-08-2019 00:39 UTC

<sup>(43)</sup>Tim Healey, The Symbolism of the Cross in Sacred and Secular Art, p. 289-294

<sup>(44)</sup> - Stanley Freed and Ruth S. Freed, Origin of the Swastika; the Natural History, 1980, p. 68-74

<sup>(45)</sup>Tim Healey, The Symbolism of the Cross in Sacred and Secular Art, p. 289-294

<sup>(46)</sup>R. Forrer, Die-Gräber- und Textilfunde von Achmim- Panopolis," Strassburg, 189, p. 5,6, 20)

<sup>(47)</sup>The Cleveland Museum of Art. Handbook of *The Cleveland Museum of Art* Cleveland, Ohio, the Cleveland Museum of Art, Mentioned and Reproduced 1958, cat. no. 66  
<https://archive.org/details/CMAHandbook1958/page/n17> accessed: 22-08-2019 04:20 UTC

<sup>(48)</sup>[https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=124313&partId=1&searchText=limestone+coptic+stela&images=true&page=1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=124313&partId=1&searchText=limestone+coptic+stela&images=true&page=1) accessed: 22-08-2019 23:48 UTC

<sup>(49)</sup>Qau el-Kebir is a monumental region in Markaz al-Badari, Assiut Governorate.

<sup>(50)</sup>Guy Brunton, Qau and Badari III, British school of Archaeology in Egypt, 1930, p. 26, pl. LI,5  
<https://archive.org/details/ERA50/page/n37> accessed: 23-08-2019 00:47 UTC

or Byzantine-sample with Swastikas is a half limestone arch (spandrel) dated back to 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D (fig. 13). It is decorated with running rosettes, swastika pattern, with incised Greek text in the upper corner saying + EYXAPICTHPION / KAI ΘΕΟΦΑΝΙΑ +, which meaning 'Thank-offering and vision of God.' It is 81 cm long, 58 cm wide, and 17 cm thick. It is preserved in the British museum, registration number 1930,0609.5.<sup>(51)</sup> Further Coptic sample is an engaged limestone Column Part with Meander Pattern in the form of interlaced Swastikas attributed to *Bawit* in Egyptian western desert, where a monastic community had been founded in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. This object is dated back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. It is 31.4 cm high and 21.4 cm wide and preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art; accession no. 09.217.10 (fig. 14). This architectural object is highly sculptured with rosettes and acanthus leaves confined between meanders of swastikas. Such motifs are inspired by classical art.<sup>(52)</sup>

A further step and more distinct usage of 'Swastika' is in Islamic art on architecture and applied arts as well. The following lines will discuss such point in detail. Nevertheless, the 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D considered a radical twist in the employment of hooked cross 'Swastika', when had been adopted as symbol for nascent Nazi party in Germany.<sup>(53)</sup>

## II. Symbolism of Swastika in variant cultures through ages

Being known in several cultures through long times; hooked cross 'Swastika' had several

meanings as well.<sup>(54)</sup> Each society used Swastika in a distinct fashion; it sometimes symbolized the Sun, good fortune, fertility, religious beliefs, etc.<sup>(55)</sup>

In cultures of the Near East in Samarra and Susa which knew hooked cross 'Swastika' since 4000 B.C.; it was associated with several symbolic representations. In Samarra, female figures were venerated as symbol of fertility; and so, 'Swastikas' were formed of four female figurines (fig.15 A, B). Moreover, female idols bearing 'Swastika' (fig.16 A, B) had occurred in Cypress, Greece, beside several South-east European countries. Such association with woman had occurred in the Ice Age culture of Mezine in Russia, and the Negro tribes of central Africa as well. Once 'Swastika' was formed in female figures, thus, Swastika itself considered as fertility symbol. Furthermore, 'Swastika' was occasionally associated with several creatures; fish, snake, and lizard. In ancient culture of Samarra, those creatures were commonly applied on funeral pottery; referring to their ability of regeneration, so once again assured man's fertility. Once, 'Swastika' was either applied on funerary pottery; it was regarded as owing the ability of regeneration as well.<sup>(56)</sup>

Sometimes hooked cross 'Swastika' was imbued with religious symbolism. It was linked with a Hindu ceremony termed "*Graha*" dating back to the ancient Harappa civilization in Indus valley.<sup>(57)</sup> The hooked cross 'Swastika' appeared as a Buddhist symbol as "Buddha's footprints". The symbol was also associated with Jupiter, Thor, Artemis, Hera, Demeter, and the Egyptian Lotus.<sup>(58)</sup> In addition, it was greatly venerated such as the scarabaeus -symbol of eternity- in ancient Egypt, and the Latin cross

<sup>(51)</sup>[https://research.britishmuseum.org/research/collecti on\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=124217&partId=1](https://research.britishmuseum.org/research/collecti on_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=124217&partId=1) accessed 17-01-2020 02:00 UTC

<sup>(52)</sup>[https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/456088?rpp=90&pg=27&rndkey=20150709&ft=\\* &wh at=Sculpture&pos=2393](https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/456088?rpp=90&pg=27&rndkey=20150709&ft=* &wh at=Sculpture&pos=2393) accessed 15-01-2020 01:10 UTC

<sup>(53)</sup>Lindsey L. Turnbull, The Evolution of the Swastika: from Symbol of Peace to Tool of Hate, a published thesis, college of Arts and Humanities, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida, 2010, p. 12,13

<sup>(54)</sup>Brown Norman W., The Swastika: A study of the Nazi Claims of its Aryan Origin, p. 17, 18

<sup>(55)</sup>Lindsey L. Turnbull, The Evolution of the Swastika: from Symbol of Peace to Tool of Hate, p. 1, 2

<sup>(56)</sup>John Prince Loewenstein, The Swastika; its History and Meaning, p.50

<sup>(57)</sup>Stanley Freed and Ruth S. Freed, Origin of the Swastika; p. 74

<sup>(58)</sup>Stephen Heller, The Swastika: Symbol beyond Redemption, Newyork, Allworth press, 2000, p. 6



in Christianity. Even the early Christian church seems to have discussed the issue of adopting Swastika as a symbol of the religion. However, generally, there are few instances referring to the religious uses of 'Swastika', and that it had almost been confined to be just a symbol for charm.<sup>(59)</sup>

Nevertheless, the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D had witnessed a radical change in 'Swastika's' symbolism.<sup>(60)</sup> Due to the racial connotations which had recently been associated with after being chosen as symbol for the blossoming Nazi party founded by Adolf Hitler in Germany.<sup>(61)</sup> Since then, the 'Swastika' had been effectively detached from its past, Germanized and reinvented as a symbol of German purity and supremacy.<sup>(62)</sup> The 'Swastika' became the featured symbol of the third Reich under Adolf Hitler through consistent association of the 'Swastika with the ideas of the *volksgemeinschaft*<sup>(63)</sup> or racial state. In addition, it became a key piece of propaganda on its own. For being known as a symbol of good luck, it was shown in positive images of a new, stronger united

Germany.<sup>(64)</sup> Contemporary to these events, the national flag of Germany had a black 'Swastika' on a white circle over a red background (fig.17). Conversely, after the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war, the use of Swastika had come to an end.<sup>(65)</sup>

Conclusively, the adoption of 'Swastika' by the Nazis with their racial and hostile ideology, resulted in the disappearance of 'Swastika' from all civilized communities. Thus, destroyed its historical attribute of charm or its veneration as a good fortune amulet.<sup>(66)</sup>

### III. Hooked cross 'Swastika' in Islamic Art

Away from ancient symbolism associated with the hooked cross; however, 'Swastika' in Islamic art was deprived of any symbolism. It is worth mentioning that 'Swastika' had found its way to Islamic art through Mesopotamian artistic traditions, which influenced Anatolian, Syrian, and Cyprian civilizations. 'Swastika' was employed in Islamic structures and either applied arts as a geometric decorative element. When the Islamic Caliphate had emerged in the Levant; archaeological and variant applied arts had flourished. As a result, multiple figural and non-figural decorative elements had flourished. Hooked cross 'Swastika' was a prominent element of non-figural geometry ornaments.

Since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.H/ 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D, hooked cross 'Swastika' was applied - accompanied by circles, squares, and star shapes- on the mosaic pavement (fig. 18) in one of the rooms of 'Al-Maniah' palace erected by Al-Waleed ibn Abd el-Malik in 705-715 A.D. Another sample is the ruins of Hisham ibn 'Abd el-Malik's palace next to Jericho 'Arīḥā' in Palestine which dated back to 724-743 A.D, it had been lavishly adorned with geometric elements, where the hooked

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<sup>(59)</sup>W.G. V Balchin, The Swastika: Twilight of A Universal Symbol, Folklore Vol. 55, No. 4, p. 168

<sup>(60)</sup>Lindsey L. Turnbull, The Evolution of the Swastika, p. 12

<sup>(61)</sup>W.G. V Balchin, The Swastika, Twilight of A Universal Symbol, Folklore Vol. 55, No. 4, p. 167

<sup>(62)</sup>Lindsey L. Turnbull, The Evolution of the Swastika: from Symbol of Peace to Tool of Hate, p. 27

<sup>(63)</sup>The Volksgemeinschaft was a corner stone on Nazi philosophy; which regarded Germany as a new society rejecting old religions, ideologies, and class divisions. And instead, forming a united German identity based on ideas of race, struggle, and state leadership. The aim was the creation of the Volk, a nation or people of the most superior of the human races. This concept was derived from the idea that humanity was composed of different races, and the Nazis thought they were the Herrenvolk -Master Race- and they considered themselves to be pure Aryans; every other race was inferior. Thus, the Volksgemeinschaft was inherently racist and contributed greatly to the Nazi's attempts at mass extermination.

Robert Wilde, "Understanding the Nazi Idea of Volksgemeinschaft." ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-was-volksgemeinschaft-1221370> accessed: 09-Sept.- 2019 03:31 UTC.

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<sup>(64)</sup>Lindsey L. Turnbull, The Evolution of the Swastika: from Symbol of Peace to Tool of Hate, p. 28, 44

<sup>(65)</sup><https://www.britannica.com/topic/swastika>

Accessed: 14-07-2019 12:57 UTC

<sup>(66)</sup>W.G. V Balchin, The Swastika: Twilight of A Universal Symbol, Folklore Vol. 55, No. 4, p. 168

cross 'Swastika' was included as well (fig. 19).<sup>(67)</sup> Some scholars assumed that the adoption of the hooked cross the Umayyad epoch had adapted Greek hooked cross 'Swastika'. This assumption greatly ignored the deeply rooted origin of the hooked cross in Mesopotamian civilization as the main center from which this element had originated, and then been transferred to variant cultures all over the world.

In Abbasid epoch, hooked cross 'Swastika' had appeared for the first time with several square shapes over Baghdad's gates in *Ar-Raqqah*, dating back to 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.H 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D (fig.20). Later, when Abbasid Caliphate's capital had been switched to Samarra; Islamic decorative style had greatly flourished, and thus had influenced other territories of Islamic Caliphate. Of these, Egypt through the Tulunid epoch, this was evident in the existence of hooked cross 'Swastika' carved on some of homes in Al-Fustat, which Egyptians called it *mafruqah*.<sup>(68)</sup> Another sample of employing hooked cross 'Swastika' in the East was in ancient Persia, now Iran. This is in *Gonbad-e- Sorkh* in Maragheh in Iran, several geometric ornaments dated back to mid of the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.H/ 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D, basically composed of hooked cross.<sup>(69)</sup> Using hooked cross 'Swastika' among Islamic geometric ornaments did not confined on the Orient but reached to the Andalusian city *madīnat Az-Zahrā* erected by Abd el-Rahman al-Naser in the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.H/ 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D, the western palace in the city, and in part of its mosque's eastern façade as a part of the Western Umayyad style.

Using the hooked cross 'Swastika' in this epoch in Islamic structures in Baghdad and other regions of the Islamic Caliphate was symbolizing the return to its Mesopotamian origin with its spiritual

concepts. As a conclusion, hooked cross 'swastika' of Mesopotamian origin retained its concepts as symbol of immortality while transferred from an area to another along several historical epochs of different intellectual, religious, social, and cultural aspects.<sup>(70)</sup>

The following lines include a descriptive study of some certain applied artefacts of Islamic art, to demonstrate the applying of hooked cross "Swastika". These are some metalworks and textile fragments from several territories of the Islamic Caliphate.

#### IV. Descriptive study for certain applied artefacts

- Textile fragment with linked squares and 'Swastikas' (fig. 21)

This is a linen fragment embroidered with brown silk. It had been found in Egypt, almost al-Fustat, and attributed to the 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> century A.H/10<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> century A.D. This fragment measures 15.5 cm. in length and 5 cm. in width. This fragment shows a repeated design of small linked squares filled with hooked crosses 'Swastikas' -some of which turning clockwise, and others turning counterclockwise-, which has border, so creates a complex design of interlace. Brown embroidery provides the background to the 'Swastika'. This masterpiece is on display in Ashmolean museum accession no. EA 1984.381.<sup>(71)</sup>

- Textile fragment with 'Swastikas' and stars (fig. 22)

A linen textile fragment embroidered with yellow and brown silk, beside blue flax with a rolled hem in flax. This fragment is attributed to Egypt and dated back to 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> century A.H/ 10<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> A.D. It measures 16 cm x 6.5 cm (warp x weft). This fragment displays three vertical bands; two bands of 1.5 cm wide embroidered with blue 'Swastikas' set into squares, beside a 2 cm.

<sup>(67)</sup>Balqīs Mūḥsin Hadī, *Derāsāt fī al-Fan al-Islāmī*, Dar 'Alaa el-dīn, Damascus- Syria, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 2010, p. 79-84

<sup>(68)</sup>Balqīs Mūḥsin Hadī, *Dirasat fī Al-Fan al-Islāmī*, p. 85-88

<sup>(69)</sup>Zakī Muhammad Ḥassan, *Al-Funūn Al-Īraniyyah fī Al-'Aṣr Al-Islāmī*, Dar Al-Kutub, Al-Qahirah, 1940, p. 216

<sup>(70)</sup>Balqīs Mūḥsin Hadī, *Dirasat fī Al-Fan al-Islāmī*, p. 85-88

<sup>(71)</sup>Barnes, Ruth and Marianne Ellis, 'The Newberry Collection of Islamic Embroideries', 4 vols., 2001, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, cat. vol. iii, illus. vol. I. <http://jameelcentre.ashmolean.org/collection/7/10222/10230/15969> accessed: 20-08-2019 04:38 UTC

wide band with three stars partly filled with yellow embroidery against a blue background. Some of the 'Swastikas' displayed here are turning clockwise alternated with others turning counterclockwise. All three bands are parallel to each other, at a distance of 3 cm. There is a selvedge along one side of the fragment, and a rolled hem along the opposite side. The bands are at right angles to hem and selvedge. This artifact is on display in the Ashmolean museum, with Accession no. EA 1984.377.

- A textile fragment with grid and 'Swastikas' (fig. 23)

A textile fragment of silk with partly dyed dark-blue and light-blue, and probably plain woven. This fragment is 21 cm. long and 17 cm. wide and shows a dark blue grid against a natural colored ground, with small 'Swastikas' – all are turning in clockwise direction-at the intersection. It is attributed to the Near East, particularly Egypt, and dated back to the 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> century A.H/ 10<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. this artifact is on display in Ashmolean museum, with accession no. EA1988.65.

- A textile fragment with 'Swastika'-filled squares (fig. 24)

A linen textile fragment had been made in the Near East, excavated in Egypt, and dated back to 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> century A.H/ 10<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. It measures 19x 19.5 cm (warp x weft). Such masterpiece is embroidered with brown and red silk, and displays a grid of small, linked squares set diagonally into the fabric corner. Each square contains a 'Swastika' some of which turning clockwise, and others turning counterclockwise; brown color determines the design's borders. One of the fabric's borders is framed with a row of red embroidery squares. This masterpiece, similar to previously discussed ones; is among the collection of Ashmolean Museum, with accession no. EA1984.398.<sup>(72)</sup>

- A mamluk brass basin with silver inlay (fig. 25 A, B)

A basin of sheet of brass, inlaid with silver, although most of its inlay is no more exist. It is attributed to Syria from the Mamluk epoch about 7<sup>th</sup> century A.H/13<sup>th</sup> century A.D. This basin is 13.5 cm. in height, 28.5 cm. in diameter, its opening is about 25 cm. It is preserved in Benaki museum in Athens. An inscription in bold *naskhi* calligraphy runs around the basin's whole body. This inscription is applied over a ground of scrolls and stylized flying birds. Such inscription is anonymous. However, six circular medallions are penetrating this inscription at equal areas, three medallions show polo players, and three others filled with scrolls and flying ducks (fig. 25 A). The basin's interior bottom shows an engraved design of six fish arranged in a circle around a central whorl. Another incised line of inscription runs around the basin's body. The centers of the three decorative medallions -with scrolls and flying ducks- in the anonymous inlaid inscription had originally contained six-armed 'Swastikas' set in small circles. This ornament had been later replaced by inlaid crescents. Traces of inlay indicates that this heraldic decoration consisted of silver crescent over a red copper ground. Traces of the original swastika design can still be seen where the inlay of these blazons has fallen off (fig. 25 B).<sup>(73)</sup>

- A brass Candlestick (fig. 26 A, B)

A sheet brass Candlestick inlaid with silver, attributed to Eastern Anatolia and dated back to mid- 7<sup>th</sup> to mid 8<sup>th</sup> century A.H/ mid-13<sup>th</sup> to mid-14<sup>th</sup> century A.D (fig. 26 A). It measures 24.4 cm. Its base is 21.3 cm in diameter. The extensive decoration is arranged in bands with roundels displaying birds in flight and foliate scrolls on a background of hexagonal (six-armed) 'Swastikas', which were thought to have been sun symbols. The six-armed 'Swastikas' are applied on the neck (fig. 26 B). This artifact is on display in the

<sup>(72)</sup>Barnes, Ruth and Marianne Ellis, 'The Newberry Collection of Islamic Embroideries', cat. vol. iii, illus. vol. I

<sup>(73)</sup>D. S. Rice, Studies in Islamic Metal work, Bulletin of the school of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. 14, No. 3, Cambridge University Press on Behalf of School of Oriental and African studies, 1952, p. 564-578 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/609116> accessed: 14-08-2019 01:04 UTC

Cleveland museum of art accession No. 1951.539<sup>(74)</sup>

- A copper alloy candlestick (fig. 27 A, B)

A candlestick of copper alloy inlaid with silver and gold. It is attributed to the Mamluk epoch, precisely 667 A.H/1269 A.D. This candlestick is on display in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo no. 1657 (fig. 27A). It measures 25.5 cm high, and 25 cm in diameter. This artifact is of particular importance; it had the signature of its craftsman Muhammad ibn Hassan al-Mawsili and stated that this artifact had been made in Cairo. The candlestick's neck is adorned with medallions showing musicians. However, the candlestick's body is adorned with several arabesque ornaments, beside a wide band of kufic inscription -which was once inlaid with silver, but now lost- penetrated by lobed medallions enriched with arabesque ornaments. This band is confined between two narrower bands, each encloses several circular medallions with hexagonal (six-armed) 'Swastikas' (fig. 27 B).

- A mamluk copper alloy basin with silver inlay (fig. 28 A, B)

A copper alloy basin inlaid with silver, from the early Mamluk epoch about 8<sup>th</sup> century A.H/ 14<sup>th</sup> century A.D. It is among Harari collection, preserved in museum of Islamic art in Cairo no.15092.<sup>(75)</sup> It measures 12 cm. in height and 24 cm. in diameter. Similar to the previously stated masterpiece (fig. 25), this basin's body (fig. 28 A) is encircled with an anonymous inscription ending with the phrase '*al-malikī an-Nāṣirī*' referring to an Emir who was in service of the sultan *an-Nāṣir Mūḥammad* (about 693- 741 A.H/ 1293-1341 A.D) or the sultan *an-Nāṣir Ḥasan* (about 762 A.H/1366 A.D). In addition, and

what is prominent here is the four roundel medallions interrupting the inscription, each of which displays six flying ducks grouped round a central hexagonal (six- armed) 'Swastikas' (fig. 28 B).<sup>(76)</sup>

## V. Systematic analysis for the paper's discussed artefacts

The paper's artefacts are varied in types between metalwork artefacts and textile fragments. Metalwork artefacts are, in turn, varied between basins and candlesticks; almost similar in manufacturing technique of brass or copper, and inlaid with silver and gold. However, they are of diverse places of origin. One copper basin had been manufactured in Egypt, however, the other is of Syrian origins. Besides two candlesticks, one of them was manufactured in eastern Anatolia, and the other one was modeled in Egypt by a craftsman of Khurasan whom took Mosul a refuge after the Mongols' invasion in 1221 A.D. All metalwork artefacts had been dated back to 7<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> centuries A.H/ 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. All these artefacts display hexagonal (six-armed) 'Swastikas', which was referring to life permanence.

Other type of artefacts discussed here are several textile fragments. They are manufactured of linen or silk and embroidered with silk of multiple colors. These artefacts had been all manufactured in Egypt and discovered there as well. Here, hooked cross 'Swastika' is applied in its normal equilateral four-armed form. One textile fragment no. EA1988.65 in Ashmolean museum (fig. 23) displays 'Swastikas' all are turning in clockwise direction. However, the other fragments (figs. 21, 22, and 24) display 'Swastikas' turning alternately in clockwise and counter clockwise directions. All these artefacts had been attributed to a period that is varied between 4<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup> centuries A.H/ 10<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.

This means that 'Swastika' was a predominant decorative element on Islamic

<sup>(74)</sup>Melikian-Chirvan and Assadullah Souren. Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World, 8-18th Centuries, London: H.M.S.O., 1982, p. 152-156, no. 72

The Cleveland Museum of Art. Handbook of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, The Cleveland Museum of Art, reproduced 1978, p. 265 <https://archive.org/details/CMAHandbook1978/page/n285> accessed: 22-08-2019 03:54 UTC

<sup>(75)</sup>Bernard O'kane and others, The Illustrated Guide to the museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, p. 162 record no. 15092

<sup>(76)</sup>D. S. Rice, Studies in Islamic Metal work, p. 564-578, (pl. 8 a)



artefacts through Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk epochs.

Such artefacts are just a random specimen of 'Swastikas' applied on Muslim applied arts. This specimen was for daily use purposes; whether the metalwork pieces or textile fragments. This abrogate 'Swastika's' association with religious beliefs, funeral purposes, fertility, or charm as was in earlier civilizations. Nevertheless, in Islamic civilization, 'Swastika' was applied in six-armed and four-armed shapes, both were just employed for decorative purposes.

### Conclusion

- Muslim artisans had combined artistic traditions of diverse nations, along with native ones. Shortly, they managed to create their own aesthetics.
- Among decorative features of Islamic art is geometric elements, which had flourished due to Muslims' superiority in mathematics. They created several geometric shapes such as six-sided stars, *Ma'qili*, *mafrughah*, etc.
- In addition to newly created geometric elements; Muslim artisans continued in employing several geometric forms of earlier civilizations; of these, the hooked cross 'Swastika'.
- Since prehistoric ages; hooked cross was broadly known to the oldest civilizations on universe. Such widespread resulted in numerous names and multiple objectives as well.
- Through its long history; hooked cross 'Swastika' had been regarded as symbol of sun, good fortune, and fertility. Furthermore, it had been occasionally associated with some religious beliefs. Nevertheless, its employment on Islamic civilization on structures and several applied artefacts was abstracted from any symbolism, except as a decorative element.
- There is an argument that Swastika may had reached to Muslim artisans through ancient Egyptian cross (*Crux ansata*) known as key of life, besides its employment in several Coptic artefacts.
- Hooked cross 'Swastika' had been employed on several Oriental structures within mosaic

pavements in several royal palaces; such as 'Al-Maniah' palace (705-715 A.D.), the ruins of Hisham ibn 'Abd el-Malik's palace next to Jericho 'Arīhā' (724-743 A.D), and in ancient Persia in *Gonbad-e- Sorkh* in Maragheh. In addition, western structures had witnessed the utilization of Swastika on Muslim structures. Of these the Andalusian city *madīnat Az-Zahrā* 4<sup>th</sup> century A.H/ 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D, the western palace in the city, and in part of its mosque's eastern façade.

- Hooked cross 'Swastika' on Islamic artefacts had appeared into two shapes; one of them is the traditional shape of four equilateral arms turning either on clockwise or counter clockwise directions. Other samples, particularly, metalwork artefacts show hexagonal (six-armed) 'Swastika'
- The 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D has witnessed a radical change in hooked cross's 'Swastika' symbolism. For became the main symbol for the Nazi Party in Germany, with their -worldwide famed-racial and hostile ideology. Thus, destroyed the ancient positive concepts associated with 'Swastika', and became forbidden in all civilized communities.

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## Figures



A



B

(Fig. 1)

A coin from the great Andhra dynasty showing Swastika over the chaitya (Buddhist chapel)  
C.J. Brown, M.A, the Heritage of India Series: The Coins of India, London, Oxford University Press, , 1922, p. 21, pl. I, 7



A

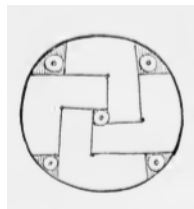


B

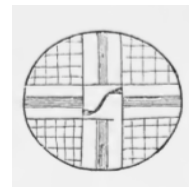
(Fig. 2)

Greek and late Greek crosses

Thomas L. Wilson, The Swastika: The Earliest Known Symbol and its Migration, p. 928 Pl. 19, figs. 2,8



A



B

(Fig. 3)

Swastikas on shells

Thomas L. Wilson, The Swastika: The Earliest Known Symbol and its Migration, p. 928 Pl. 19, (figs.10, 11)



A



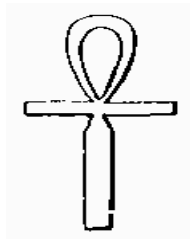
B

(Fig. 4)

Swastikas on pottery

Thomas L. Wilson, The Swastika: The Earliest Known Symbol and its Migration, p. 928 Pl. 19, (figs.12, 13)

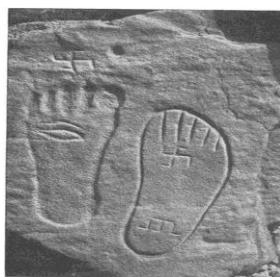




(Fig. 5)

Egyptian cross (*Crux ansata*) The key of life

Thomas L. Wilson, *The Swastika: The Earliest Known Symbol and its Migration*, p. 766 fig. 4



(Fig. 6)

A rock drawing in the western desert of Upper Egypt, showing two human feet bears an indubitable hooked cross

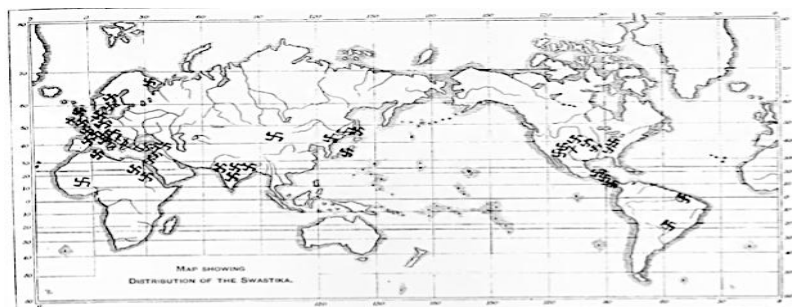
H. A Winkler, *Rock Drawings of Southern Upper Egypt*, Vol. II, London, 1939, Pl. IX, No. 2



(Fig. 7)

Greek vase showing deer, geese, and Swastika, from Naukratis, ancient Egypt, dated back to 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C

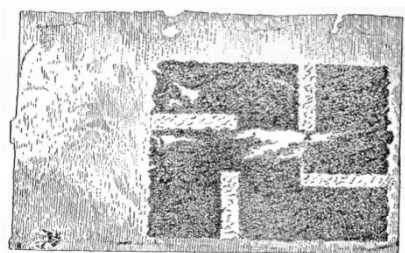
W. Flinders Petrie, *Third Memoir of the Egypt Exploration fund*, part I, Pl. 4, Fig. 3



(Fig. 8)

A map showing the distribution of Swastika in prehistory

Thomas L. Wilson, *The Swastika: The Earliest Known Symbol and its Migration*, Washington, government printing office, 1896, pl. 18



(Fig. 9)

Greek tapestry, from Copts Egypt, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries A.D

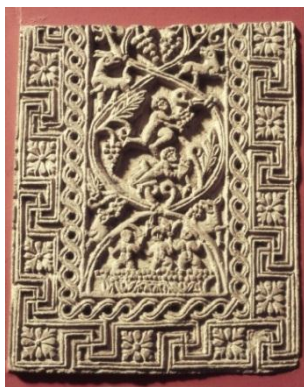
R. Forrer, Die-Gräber- und Textilfunde von Achmim- Panopolis,” pl. A, 1



(Fig. 10)

A limestone engaged Capital with animals dated back to 5<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D bears high relief carved and interlaced ‘Swastikas’

<http://clevelandmuseumofart.art/art/1955.64>



(Fig. 11)

A limestone stela dated back to 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D with an outer border of interlaced lines forming squares with lobed flowers and Swastikas

[https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details/collection\\_image\\_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=394647001&objectid=124313](https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=394647001&objectid=124313)



(Fig. 12)

A textile of woven silk dated back to 501-600 A.D, from Qau el-Kebir showing Swastikas

<https://webapps.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/explorer/index.php?oid=52299> accessed: 23-08-2019

00:02 UTC accession No. E.53.1923



(Fig. 13)

Coptic -or Byzantine- half limestone arch (spandrel) with Swastikas dated back to 5<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D

[https://research.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=124217&partId=1](https://research.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=124217&partId=1) accessed 17-01-2020 02:00 UTC



(Fig. 14 )

Engaged limestone column with meander pattern with swastikas

[https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/456088?rpp=90&pg=27&rndkey=20150709&ft=\\*&what=Sculpture&pos=2393](https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/456088?rpp=90&pg=27&rndkey=20150709&ft=*&what=Sculpture&pos=2393)



A



B

(Fig. 15)

Swastikas composed of four female figurines

John Prince Loewenstein, The Swastika; its History and Meaning, p.49-55, pl. C 1 ,2

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2793344>



A

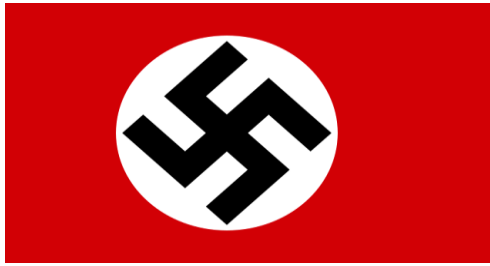


B

(Fig. 16)

Female idols bearing 'Swastika' occurred in Cypress, Greece, beside several South-east European countries.

John Prince Loewenstein, The Swastika; its History and Meaning, (Fig. 7 B, C)

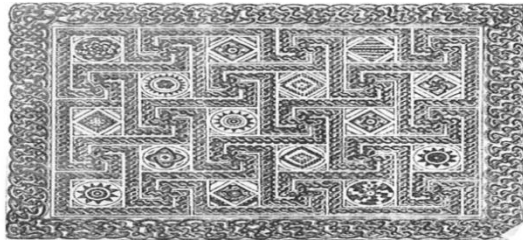


(Fig. 17)

The national flag of Germany between 1935- 1945 composed of a black ‘Swastika’ on a white circle over a red background

Fornax – Own work, Public Domain,

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4713270>



(Fig. 18)

A hooked cross ‘Swastika’ on the mosaic pavement in one of the rooms of ‘*Al-Maniah*’ palace 705-715 A.D.

Balqīs Mūḥsin Hadī, *Dirasat fī Al-Fan al-Islamī*, Dar ‘Alaa Eldīn, Damascus- 47yria, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 2010, fig. 6 A



(Fig. 19)

A piece of the ruins of Hisham ibn ‘Abd el-Malik’s palace ( 724-743 A.D), adorned with geometric elements and the hooked cross ‘Swastika’ included.

Balqīs Mūḥsin Hadī, *Dirasat fī Al-Fan al-Islamī*, fig. 6 B

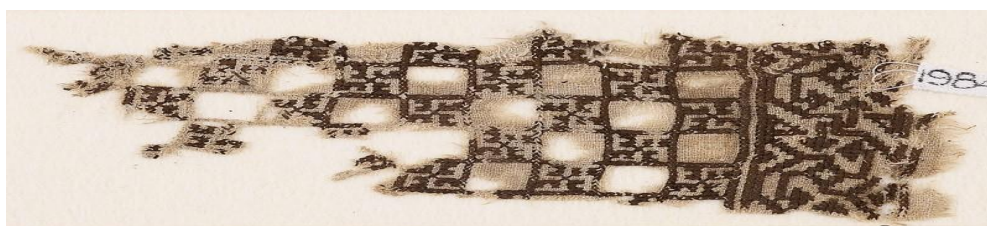




(Fig. 20)

Baghdad's gates in *Ar-Raqqah*, dating back to the Abbasid epoch, 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.H 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D with hooked cross ‘Swastika’

Balqīs Mūḥsin Hadī, *Dirasat fī Al-Fan al-Islamī*, fig. 7



(Fig. 21)

Textile fragment with linked squares and ‘Swastikas’ Egypt, the 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> century A.H/10<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

<http://jameelcentre.ashmolean.org/collection/7/10222/10230/15969> Accessed: 20-08-2019 04:38 UTC Ashmolean museum, university of Oxford, Accession no. 1984.381



(Fig. 22)

A linen textile fragment with ‘Swastikas’ and stars, Egypt 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> century A.H/ 10<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> A.D. <http://www.jameelcentre.ashmolean.org/collection/921/object/15965> Accessed: 20- 08- 2019 03:03 UTC Ashmolean museum, university of Oxford, Accession no. EA 1984.377



(Fig. 23)

A textile fragment of silk with grid and ‘Swastikas’, Egypt, 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> century A.H/ 10<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D <http://jameelcentre.ashmolean.org/collection/921/object/15851> Ashmolean museum, university of Oxford, Accession no. EA 1988.65



(Fig. 24)

A linen textile fragment with 'Swastika'-filled squares, Egypt, 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> century A.H/ 10<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.

<http://jameelcentre.ashmolean.org/collection/921/object/15865>  
university of Oxford, Accession no. EA 1984.398

Ashmolean museum,



A



B

(Fig. 25)

A mamluk brass basin with silver inlay, Syria – Mamluk epoch 7<sup>th</sup> century A.H/13<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

D. S. Rice, Studies in Islamic Metal work, Bulletin of the school of Oriental and African Studies, pls. 6,7 a



A



B

(Fig. 26)

A sheet brass Candlestick inlaid with silver, Eastern Anatolia  
mid- 7<sup>th</sup> to mid 8<sup>th</sup> century A.H/ mid-13<sup>th</sup> to mid-14<sup>th</sup> century A.D

Accessed: 22-08-2019 03:54 UTC accession No. 1951.539 <http://clevelandmuseumofart.art/art/1951.539>





(Fig. 27)

A candlestick of copper alloy inlaid with silver and gold, the Mamluk epoch

Bernard O'kane and others, The Illustrated Guide to the museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, p. 156  
record no. 1657



(Fig. 28)

A copper alloy basin inlaid with silver, from the early Mamluk epoch

D. S. Rice, Studies in Islamic Metal work, Bulletin of the school of Oriental and African Studies,  
(pl. 8, a)

## الصليب المعقوف "سواستيكا" على التحف الإسلامية... المعنى والدلالة

د.بوسي محمد زيدان

أستاذ التاريخ والآثار الإسلامية المساعد- كلية السياحة والفنادق - جامعة قناة السويس

### الملخص :

الصليب المعقوف " سواستيكا" هو أحد الرموز التي لاقت إقبال كبير من الشعوب المختلفة منذ عصور ما قبل التاريخ. حيث ارتبط هذا الرمز؛ او بالأحرى صار يرمز لبعض المعتقدات الدينية والمفاهيم الروحية في بعض الحضارات السحيقة. حتى انه تم تناقله على نطاق واسع ما بين الشعوب المختلفة. هذا الانتشار يعد دليل على الشعبية الكبيرة التي حظي بها الصليب المعقوف "سواستيكا"؛ إلا انه كان سبباً في صعوبة تحديد منشأه. بعض الدراسات التاريخية تشير إلى الهند، والبعض الآخر - وفقاً لبعض الأدلة- يشير إلى حضارة بلاد الرافدين. واستمر استخدام الصليب المعقوف "سواستيكا" في العصور التاريخية القديمة مساهماً في فنونها وصولاً للعصر الحديث. وخلال هذا التاريخ الطويل حدثت تطورات جذرية برمزية الصليب المعقوف "سواستيكا" خاصة بعد اتخاذه الشعار الرسمي للحزب النازي بألمانيا في النصف الأول من القرن العشرين. يركز البحث على استعراض مختصر لتاريخ الصليب المعقوف "سواستيكا" منذ ظهوره، مع إيراد الآراء المختلفة بخصوص منشأه. يلي ذلك تناول رمزية الصليب المعقوف "سواستيكا" وما طرأ عليها من تغيرات. ثم يأتي إيضاح لصور استخدام الصليب المعقوف في الفن الإسلامي مشفوعاً ببعض التحف التطبيقية التي تدلل على ذلك.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الصليب المعقوف، سواستيكا، حضارة الهند ، حضارة بلاد الرافدين، العصور التاريخية القديمة، الفن الإسلامي، الحزب النازي.