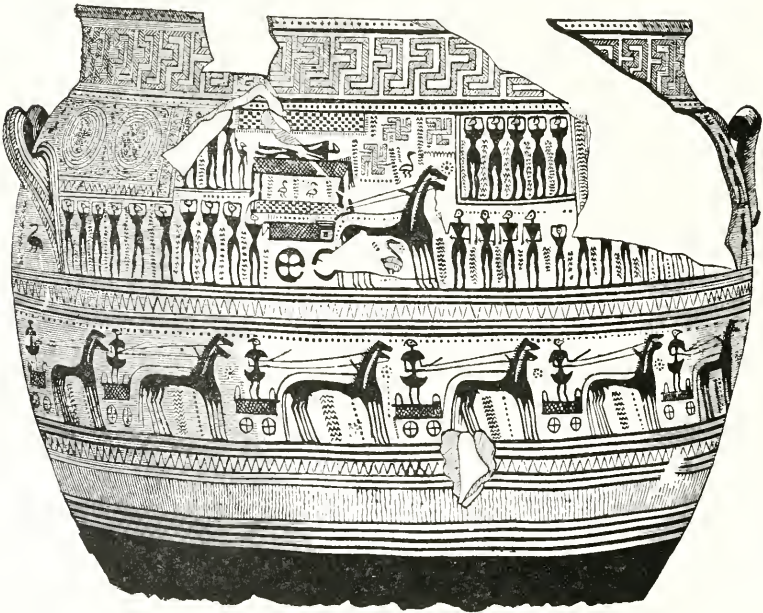


THE FYLFOT AND SWASTIKA.

BY THE EDITOR.

[CONCLUDED.]

THE Dipylon pottery (so called because discovered near the Dipylon gate of Athens) belongs to the pre-Homeric age. It is rich in swastikas which have not yet lost their religious signifi-



DIPYLON VASE. (Museum at Athens.)

cance. We reproduce here one specimen of great beauty which is preserved at Athens in the Museum of the Archæological Society. The urn represents a funeral procession, and over the horses that draw the hearse we see three withershins swastikas. The geese or

swans (birds sacred to the sun, being at the same time emblems of transmigration and resurrection), are not missing; and it is noticeable that the wheels on all the carriages are of the shape of the sun-wheel: they have four spokes only (thus ⊗).

The Greek-speaking population of Thrace used the swastika as a symbol of the day (viz., of "light"). At least, Professor Percy Gardner discovered that on a coin of the City of Messembria (which means midday) it stands for an abbreviation of the second part of the name, thus MEC卐.¹



APOLLO WITH THE SWASTIKA. (From a vase in the Historical Art Museum in Vienna.)²

In ancient Greece the swastika was called gammadion, because its arms are of the same shape as the letter *gamma* (Γ), but its significance was almost forgotten. It appears still on the breast of Apollo, and some Greek antiquarian has ingeniously explained it as a monogram of Zeus, the figure consisting of two Z's placed cross-wise.

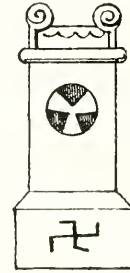
¹ See *Academy*, July 24, 1880.

² Title page of D'Alviella's *Migration of Symbols*.

A slab of an antique tomb at Capua shows a man with a swastika on his breast, which proves that this particular use of the symbol had a religious purpose. The person here represented



SLAB OF AN ANTIQUE TOMB FOUND
AT CAPUA.
(Zmigrodzki, No. 142.)




THE SWASTIKA ON
AN ANCIENT CELTIC
ALTAR.¹

may have been a priest of Apollo, as is indicated by the solar disc that appears above his right shoulder.



ATHENA SLAYING A GIANT. (From *Élite céramogr.*, I., 8.)

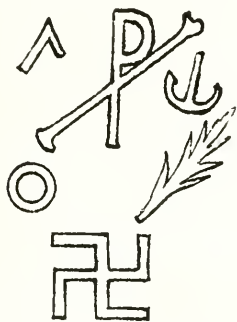
The meander pattern (thus ) that gracefully involved line which was frequently used in embroidery on Greek garments, is commonly supposed to be an artistic development of the swastika.

¹ Made of white sandstone found in the Pyrenees. (Zmigrodzki, No. 161.)

The three-armed swastika in the shape of three feet (a real flyfoot) appears frequently upon Greek shields and became the coat of arms of the three-cornered island of Sicily.

The swastika together with the Egyptian key of life (*crux ansata* †) was used by the early Christians long before they adopted the cross (i. e., the figure of two intersecting lines) as the symbol of their religion, and it is a remarkable fact that the cross is absolutely absent in the oldest Christian catacombs of Rome.¹

Zoeckler² says that the key of life † as well as the swastika 卐 appears on cups and other domestic utensils, on the tombs of martyrs, also on the garments of grave diggers, etc.; and (according to de Rossi³) they were the favorite symbols of the earliest times,



THE CHRISTOGRAM, THE λ , THE RING, THE PALM, AND THE SWASTIKA AS PICTURED ON A TOMB IN THE CATACOMBS.⁴



THE GRAVE DIGGER DIOGENES. NO CROSS BUT SWASTIKAS. Picture on his tomb in the Catacombs of S. Domitilla.⁵

their use being in vogue in the second and third centuries of our era. Gori,⁶ a Roman Catholic archæologist, suggests that the swastika was the monogram of Jesus, in which Christ's name was spelled Zesus and thus abbreviated into two crossed Z's.

The swastika on Christian tombs has been explained by early Christian authors to be the combination of two Z's which were said

¹ The first cross that appears in the catacombs of Rome bears the form of a T and dates from the end of the fourth century. Cf. Rev. Robert Sinker's article in Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, p. 497.

² Zoeckler, *Das Kreuz Christi*, p. 141.

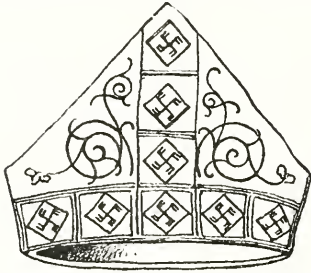
³ De Rossi in *Spicileg. Solesm.*, IV., p. 514, *Roma sotteranea*, p. 318. Cf. Stockbauer's book on the cross, p. 92, which quotes Garrucci and Buoranotti.

⁴ After Perret. From Zmigrodzki, *lic. cit.*, 132.

⁵ After Boldetti, reproduced from F. X. Kraus, *Gesch. d. chr. Kunst*, I., p. 170.

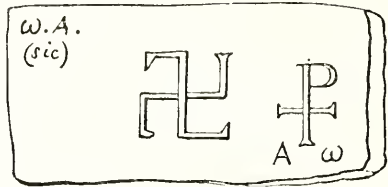
⁶ Gori, *De symb. lit.*

to mean *Zḗstis*, i. e., thou shalt live.¹ This (like the Zeus monogram interpretation of the swastika) is a striking instance of the



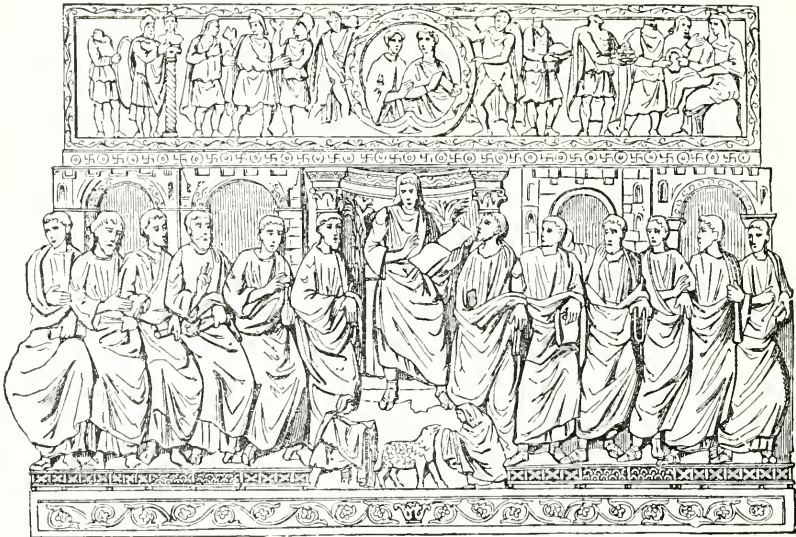
AN ABBOT'S MITRE OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY.

Cahier, *Mélanges d'Archéologie*.
(Zmigrodzki, *loc. cit.*, No. 138.)



CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS IN THE CALLIXTINE CATACOMBS.²

(The Christogram, the Swastika, and the AΩ, the latter in two forms.)



THE SARCOPHAGUS IN ST. AMBROGIO, MILAN.³

Christ with the twelve Apostles. Swastikas and solar discs are employed as ornaments.

use of an old symbol sanctioned by tradition, the explanation of which is a mere afterthought based on an incidental resemblance.

¹ A hand with the inscription ZHCEC, occurring in the catacombs, is reproduced by F. X. Kraus, I., page 117, from Martigny.

² Smith and Cheetham, *Dict. of Chr. Art.*, I., p. 497.

³ From Lübke's *Kunstgesch.*, p. 266.

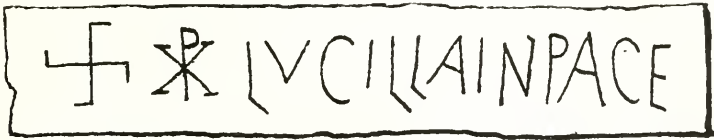
The swastika, being called *gammadion*, was frequently regarded as a composition of four letters gamma (Γ). Zmigrodski (*Zur Geschichte der Swastika*, Fig. 136) reproduces from Rohault de Fleury's *L'Évangile* (Ravenna) a picture of the celebration of the mass (sixth century) where Christ is surrounded by four disciples, perhaps the Gospel writers, each one wearing a gamma.

Balsamon (*De patriarch.*, p. 446) in the enumeration of the marks of patriarchal dignity mentions the robe trimmed with gammas (*διὰ γαμμάτων στιχάριον*), saying :

"These crosses were peculiar to the white eucharistic vestments, those of a purple color being destitute of them."¹

Canon Venables (from whom we quote this extract) continues :

"In the western church the word *gammadia* is of frequent occurrence in the later papal biographies, in Anastasius, in the lists of offerings made to the basilicas



SWASTIKA AND CHRISTOGRAM IN THE CATACOMBS.

(After Boldetti, reproduced from Zmigrodzki, *loc. cit.*, No. 134.)

and churches. E. g., Leo III. among gifts to the Church of St. Susanna gave a purple vestment, 'having on the middle a cross of golden stripes . . . and four golden-striped gammadions in the vestment itself,'² and Leo IV. to the Church of St. Mary at Anagni 'a vestment with gammadions woven in gold.'³ These gammadions were of gold, others were of silver (§ 397). or of Tyrian velvet."⁴

On the appearance of the Christogram (\ast) and the definite acceptance of the cross as the symbol of the Christian faith, the swastika began to fall into disuse, yet it was never entirely abandoned, and we find it still used in the eighth century as an ornament in the embroidery of sacerdotal garments. It is difficult to say whether its reappearance in northern countries, among the Saxons, the Scandinavians, the Poles, and other Slavs, etc., must be attributed to a revival of prehistoric pagan influences or should be regarded as a lingering reminiscence of its use among the early

¹ E. V. in Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, p. 709.

² "Habentem in medio crucem de chrysoclavo . . . atque gammadias in ipsa veste chryso-clavas quatuor," § 366.

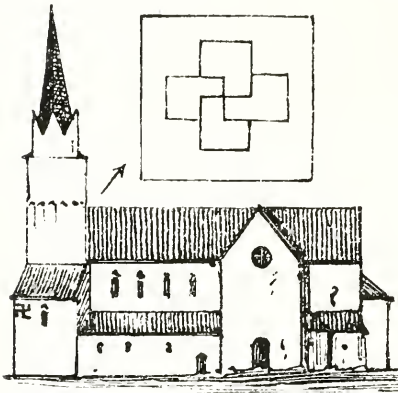
³ "Vestem . . . cum gammadiis auro textum," § 536.

⁴ Cf. Goar, *Eucholog.*, p. 315, col. 2.

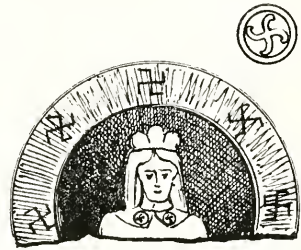
Christians.¹ In either case, however, their use is a continuance of a symbol that has absolutely nothing to do with Christianity.

Thomas Wilson, curator of the Department of Prehistoric Anthropology in the United States National Museum at Washington, has published an account of the swastika² which is as complete a collection of the material as has ever been made in a printed book, and we reproduce from it with the author's permission some of the most important cuts, including the chart showing the places in which swastikas have been found. (March *Open Court*, p. 154.)

Mr. Wilson enumerates (pp. 879 ff.) a goodly number of instances of the use of the swastika among the Indians of America. It figures prominently in the four quarters of the altar of the Navajo



THE OLD CATHEDRAL OF KRUSWICA,
NEAR POSEN. (Twelfth century.
Zmigrodzki, No. 142.)³



MOLDAVIAN PRINCESS.⁴
(Silk embroidery, 14th century.)

Indians, which is a dry painting of colored sand representing a mythological chart when they sing their mountain chant.⁵ Each of these swastikas bears in its midst a cross within a circle and every one is, according to its position in the four quarters, of a different color.

¹The *Century Dictionary*, s. v. *fyfot*, publishes swastika illustrations of a brass plate of the Lewknor Church (Oxfordshire, England) and on the miter of Thomas a Becket.

²Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C., 1896. It appears in the Reports of the U. S. Nat. Mus. for 1894, pp. 757-1011.

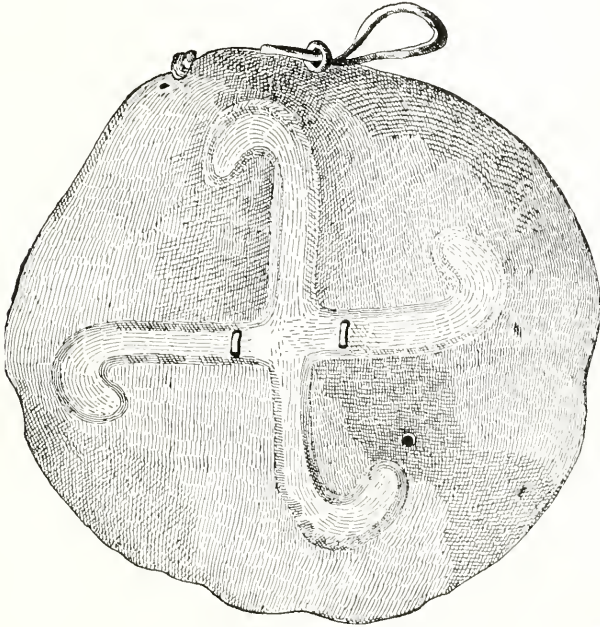
³The swastika is chiselled in granite, outside on one of its walls.

⁴This illustration is the ornament of a death-register, kept in a Greek monastery at Putna, Bukowina. The swastika on the buttons of the Princess's dress is shown more plainly above the picture. See Zmigrodzki, *loc. cit.*, No. 145.

⁵See Dr. Washington Matthews, U. S. A., essay "The Mountain Chant: a Navajo Ceremony," in *The Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, 82 pp., with 9 plates and 9 figures.

The use of the swastika among the red men of the new world is the same as in prehistoric Europe and Asia. It is a symbol of good luck, of protection, of consecration. It appears therefore upon the shield, on amulets, on ceremonial vestments, and also simply as an ornament.

The appearance of the swastika among the nations of both Americas was first a surprise to anthropologists and seemed to give credence to the Chinese account of the spread of Buddhism to Fusang, a country far away East beyond the Pacific Ocean. Mr.



WAR SHIELD OF PIMA INDIANS.¹

Wilson has even discovered in an unquestionable prehistoric mound in Tennessee a figure seated in Buddha fashion;² but the evidence that it is Buddhistic is neither sufficient nor convincing.

Mr. Wilson grants (p. 882) that "one swallow does not make a summer," but he argues that, "taken in connection with the swastika," it furnishes "circumstantial evidence" to prove "the migration of Buddhism from Asia." In our opinion, the shell engraving (though it may be different in style from the usual type of

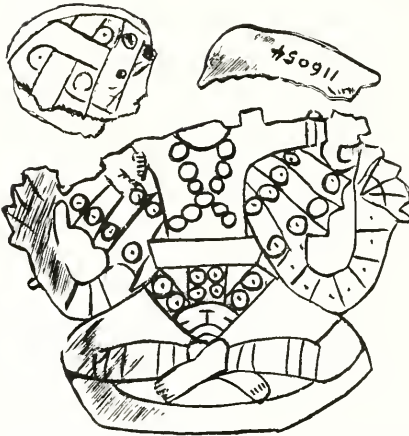
¹ Wilson, *Swastika*, p. 900. The hole on it was made by an arrow.

² See Thomas Wilson, "The Swastika" (*Report of the U. S. National Museum for 1894*, plate 10, facing page 880).

art among the mound-builders) betrays no Chinese, let alone East Indian, taste,—notwithstanding Mr. Gandhi's endorsement of the hypothesis.



THE SWASTIKA ON A SPIDER-GORGET FROM A MOUND IN ST. CLAIR COUNTY, ILLINOIS.¹



SHELL CARVING FOUND IN AN ANCIENT MISSISSIPPI MOUND. (After Wilson.)



A SICILIAN COIN WITH TRIQUETRA.



THE DAKOTA WHIRLWIND SYMBOL.²
(Pottery decoration.)

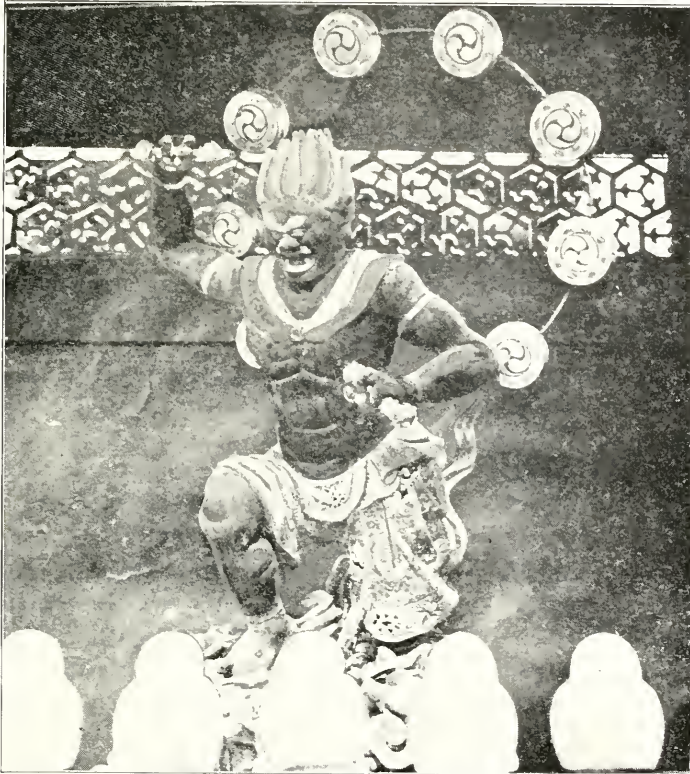
After all, the presence of the swastika in America can be no more surprising than the religious use of the cross, for the swastika

¹ *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, 80-81, pl. LXI, facing p. 288.

² See *Second Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, Plate LXXX, fig. ii; also *Tenth Annual Report* (1888-1889), p. 605.

reaches back to the neolithic age, and the Buddha posture is simply the natural position of a seated man before the invention of chairs.

It seems probable that the use of the swastika in America is not due to importation, and we are inclined to think that the ancestors of the red man carried the symbol from their Asiatic home



THE DEMON OF THUNDER. ON THE DRUMS THE MITZU-TOMO-É.
A Japanese temple statue. (After a photograph.)

in prehistoric times when they first set foot on the soil of the New World.

It almost seems as if the swastika were of so peculiar and odd a shape that (unlike the simple cross) it could not have originated simultaneously in different places and with varying significance. But consider the symbol of the whirlwind among the Dakotas or the Japanese *mitsu tomo-é*, or three-shields-figure, commonly used as a drum emblem. The former looks like a curved swastika and

the latter reminds one of the Triquetra on ancient Greek shields and coins. While the Triquetra¹ appears to be historically connected with the swastika, being a modification of it, neither the Dakota whirlwind symbol nor the Japanese drum emblem seems to have anything to do with the swastika.²

Mr. Wilson's diligence in massing materials is outdone only by that indefatigable collector of swastikas, Dr. M. von Zmigrodzki, a Galician by birth, to whom European and especially the Slavic monuments of folklore are more accessible than to American anthropologists. But his collections are only partly published, and even they are little accessible, being published in anthropological journals of limited circulation.³

In an unpublished communication of some length Dr. Zmigrodzki mentions the Easter folk customs among the Slavs of Russia and Austria, in which eggs marked with swastikas play an important part. They are given as presents to persons of respect, exchanged as tokens of affection by lovers, and carried by the widow to the grave of her husband.

There is no need here of entering into a discussion of the theories concerning the migration and original home of the swastika, as proposed by Mr. Wilson, or its being an evidence of a primitive monotheism, a pure worship of God under the symbol of the solar light, as proposed by Dr. Zmigrodzki. We must rest satisfied with facts.

We leave the questions open whether the original home of the swastika is India or some other country; whether or not it originated in several places in the same or a similar fashion; and finally, what is its original significance: we can only insist on its being a venerable symbol of prehistoric ages which abounds among all the nations of the northern hemisphere, especially the Aryans, the Semites, the Mongolians, but seems to have remained unknown to the natives of the southern continents, the Nigritts of Oceania and the Negroes of Africa, and also the ancient Egyptians.

¹Also called *triskeles*, i. e., "three-legged."

²The Sicilians adopted the Triquetra with special reference to the three-cornered shape of their island, just as the Chicagoans placed the Y in their coat of arms to indicate the tripartition of their city. The Triquetra is not limited to Sicily; it occurs also on coins of Pamphylia. See for instance the silver stater of Aspendus in Baumeister's *Denkmäler*, Fig. 1070.

³Dr. Zmigrodzki made two comprehensive collections of swastikas, both hand-made in the form of large charts, 1 meter in breadth and several, perhaps 10 or 12, meters in length. One was exhibited in Chicago and is now the property of the International Folklore Association, being preserved in the Walker Museum of the University of Chicago. The big scroll is neatly encased in a glass covered table and can by means of a crank easily be rolled backward or forward. Zmigrodzki's second chart was exhibited in Paris in 1900 and may have found there a similar home.