



“You are in need of further Instruction”

Exploring the Symbolism and Wisdom of the Ancients in Craft, Royal Arch, and Athelstan Rituals

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Introduction

In the Ceremony of Instruction, the Candidate is asked to demonstrate the signs and words of the three Craft degrees, followed by the Hailing or Reverential Sign of a Royal Arch Mason. The Candidate is then informed that from the manner he performed them, he is in need of further instruction.

If the Candidate thinks he performed everything correctly, he might ask, "Where did I go wrong?" , You may also ask that yourself as an observer.

That is the question I will try to answer in this paper by reviewing what the Candidate has learned in the earlier degrees and then by delving deeper into the Athelstan Ceremony of Instruction, to discover what we mean by "further instruction" and what it adds to his existing Masonic knowledge.

The Symbolic Nature of Freemasonry

In the early days of Freemasonry ritual was taught by catechism, a series of questions to which the candidate must learn the answers, and recite them when asked. We have moved to a more narrative form of ritual but vestiges of this practice remain, for example, before Passing from the 1st to the 2nd Degree, the Candidate answers a series of 11 questions.

Buried midway through that particular exchange is probably the most important question: "What is Freemasonry" and the Candidate learns that Freemasonry is a system of **Morality**, veiled in **Allegory**, and illustrated by **Symbols**.

It is not obvious to him at that time what that really means, the ceremony moves quickly on; we relate the building of King Solomon's Temple, not really appreciating that this is an allegorical tale. What this means is best illustrated by the words of others:

In the book called The Secret Book of Artephius, written in the 12th Century, this is said:

"Is not this an art full of secrets?: and believest thou, O fool ! That we plainly teach this Secret of Secrets, taking our words according to their literal interpretation?"

Put simply, Artephius warns us about the deliberate veiling of true meanings by allegory, and cautioning us against interpreting words literally. He suggests that such literal readings can lead seekers astray, causing them to "wander in the midst of the labyrinth"

This expanded on by Albert Pike in his book "Morals and Dogma", where he writes about the Craft Degrees:

"Whether these degrees have for you a real value depends upon your capacity to understand them."

"This Degree, like all others in Masonry, is symbolical. Based upon historical truth and authentic tradition, it is still an allegory."

"Masonry is a succession of allegories, the mere vehicles of great lessons in morality and philosophy."

“Masonry...conceals its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be misled; to conceal the Truth, which it calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it. Truth is not for those who are unworthy or unable to receive it, or would pervert it”

Finally , the Rev G Oliver in Historical Landmarks said:

Masons... may be fifty years Masters of the Chair and yet not learn the secret of the Brotherhood. This secret is, in its own nature, invulnerable; for the Mason to whom it has become known, can only have guessed it, and certainly not have received it from any one. he has discovered it, because he has been in the Lodge, marked, learned and inwardly digested.

From this we should be aware that in all Masonic ceremonial, what we read, what we see, and what we hear in explanation, might seem plausible, but we must accept it with caution; it may not be the whole truth; it might even be a distraction, leading us away from the truth.

It's up to us to uncover these hidden messages and meanings, to prove ourselves worthy of receiving them.

.. as Galileo Galilei put it:

“All truths are easy to understand, once they are discovered: the point is to discover them.”

This is the exhortation we all hear spoken by the Worshipful Master when opening a meeting, “to communicate light to those who seek it”.

Historical Context

During the rise of Freemasonry, rituals were rarely written down. Instead, as mentioned earlier, learning involved Masonic Catechism, which consisted of oral questions and answers supported by the enactment of allegorical stories.

These stories are often based on real historical or other events, but keep in mind the caution of Albert Pike, they may be fully or partially factually correct, but their primary purpose is not to teach history but to convey aspects of Morality. They are allegories.

Symbols, such as Tracing Boards, are used in our Ceremonies to elaborate on the allegoric story's message. Even then, the explanation of the symbols may be superficial, or even wrong but plausible, leaving us to search for the true meanings.

Dual Nature of Masonic Instruction

Instruction in Freemasonry takes two forms:

First, we learn the story or allegory itself, including the words and the Rubric. Lodges and Chapters of Instruction focus on this aspect because the oral tradition of passing knowledge through stories, enactments, and symbol explanations remains an important feature of

Masonic Ceremonies and adds to the enjoyment of a meeting. Performing Rituals well is satisfying in its own right for the participants, and entertaining for the audience.

Then we are given an explanation of the moral message they convey, we have all encountered the phrase “ ... but as we are speculative masons we apply this to our morals”

For those wishing to take the next step, we are exhorted in the opening of an Athelstan Court to “seek the light”, so we set about discovering; seeking and understanding the hidden messages within the allegories, ritual and symbols. There is little formal instruction in this area; it is left to us to find the clues and signposts that may guide us to seek that deeper meaning and understanding.

As we learn from the Rev G Oliver, a secret that is given, is not a secret, it has to be discovered to be of any value to the person seeking it. What that means is that being told something does not make it true, however trustworthy the source. It is only that which you discover and learn yourself that is to be trusted. It is your truth and your truth alone, because you sought and discovered it.

The purpose of this paper is to relate my own personal journey of discovery, your journey may be different; as a result your truth may be different. It matters not, it is yours.

Firstly, to set the context, I briefly touch on selected allegoric stories and symbols encountered in our ceremonies; then I see where the clues and signpost lead me to next.

Let us start where it all began, the Craft.

The Craft

The allegory at the heart of the Craft degrees centres on the building of King Solomon's Temple, as related by Dr. Anderson in his 1738 Book of Constitutions. Although Anderson's work has faced criticism for its historical inaccuracies, these critics may be missing the point; that the story is allegorical. Its purpose is not to be a historically accurate account, but to set the stage for the Craft Rituals, and use the allegory to teach lessons in morality.

The building of the Temple was of course a real biblical event, but in Freemasonry we know that it serves as a metaphor for one's own personal, moral and spiritual growth, the temple representing one's self. Through the symbolism of building the metaphorical Temple, and the tools employed to do that, we are reminded of our duty to refine ourselves, support our fellow Masons, and contribute to the betterment of society. Ultimately, we aim to construct a temple of virtue and wisdom within our own lives.

The 2010 Athelstan Ritual Book compares the journey through the Craft degrees with that of the journey through life:

- **Entered Apprentices:** In youth, the goal is to attain useful knowledge – with the compass of attainment – thus introducing the compass as a metaphor for the boundary, as illustrated by the Point with a Circle..
- **Fellow Crafts:** In manhood, we apply our knowledge to fulfil our duties to God, our neighbours, and ourselves, the continuing our research into the liberal arts and sciences. particularly Geometry – we will return to that theme later We often equate the word Science with the school subject of physics, chemistry etc. but the broader dictionary meaning is the acquisition of knowledge through study
- **Master Masons:** In old age, reflecting on a well-spent life, we contemplate the end of our mortal existence with hopes of the life to come.

Turning to the Instruction received in the Craft

In passing symbolically through these stages of life we are, in the vocabulary of Athelstan, instructed; we are taught; we receive knowledge, and we learn.

In our ceremonial we enact a scene, after which our attention is drawn to the Tools, Tracing Boards and lectures where we receive two levels of instruction, first the operative or real world meaning, then their speculative and symbolic meaning. So, early on in our Masonic journey we are taught that there are meanings beyond the operative sense.

But that is not the whole story, because as we are cautioned by Pike, not all we are told is necessarily the whole truth, it may be plausible, but is a distraction; it is up to us to detect this and to seek the real truth.

Our ceremonial is rich in symbology, but for the purpose of this paper I have select a few, simply to support the message I am trying to convey. I will follow certain lines of thought, leaving a trail, then eventually tie them all together – learning is all about connecting seemingly unrelated facts.

The Regular Steps in Freemasonry

During the ceremonies of Initiation, Passing and Raising we are told to take Regular steps in Freemasonry, starting with the feet in the form of a square, lead off with the left, ending with the right foot in its' hollow. Why we do not end with the square is not explained, however, if you look down and you will see it forms the letter "T". When passed to the 3rd Degree we take three such steps, thus forming 3 letter T's. This cannot be arbitrary, there must be a reason. Hold on to that thought...

The Pillars

We are all familiar with the two pillars **Boaz** and **Jachin**, and being told they were so named after real people bearing those names, symbolically representing, in Strength and to Establish respectively. The pillars are described and described in Kings 7:2 and 2 Chronicles 3:17 but there is no mention. of the names of these men being the source; We find find that by using the process of etymology, the word Boaz is derived from a Hebrew root meaning "in him is strength" and Jachin from a root meaning "he will establish". This is not a criticism of our ceremonial, personification is a common technique to explain thing understandable to the audience. The statement caused me to search deeper and find my own truth as stated above, so it served its purpose.



Now I want to talk of the other pillars that feature less prominently in our ceremony, the Three Pillars on 1st and 2nd Degree Tracing Boards. They are described as having the attributes of Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty. In front of the pillars are the tools of the three degrees and are depicted as holding up the canopy of heaven. They lead to the 7 rungs of the ladder which we have to ascend to receive the light – the truth – or indeed. the lost word.

In the explanation of the tracing boards the physical structure of the Pillars is explained in great detail. It says they serve as a memorial, reminding people entering the Temple of their escape from Egypt.

It also explains the moral meanings attributed to the Pillars, which are: **Wisdom** - to contrive; **Strength** – to support; **Beauty** to adorn

Additionally, we learn that two of the pillars are hollow to preserve Masonic knowledge in the event of a disaster.

All very plausible, but once again bearing in mind the advice of Pike, initial explanations may not reveal the full truth. We are all familiar with someone being referred to as "Pillar of the Community" and what that really means. I will leave you with that thought and we will revisit this later.

The Legend of Hiram Abiff

The Craft journey culminates with the dramatic killing of Hiram Abiff by ruffians seeking to obtain his secrets. This is followed by the carrying away his body, his burial and subsequent rising of body from the grave. Significantly only the body is raised, Some Lodges include Ecclesiastes 12:7 in the ceremony, there we are told “the return to God, who gave it”, metaphorically meaning the Secrets remain lost. This gives rise to the need for certain substitute secrets be used “*until time and circumstance restore the original*”.

The phrase until “*time and circumstance restore the original*” is an important clue, it implies that there is an expectation that the secrets will sooner or later be found.

Passing through the Craft Chair

The Fellow Craft and Master Mason apron depict rosettes indicating progress, The Masters’ apron replaces the rosettes with 3 symbols, described in the Book of Constitutions Rule 265 as “Perpendicular lines upon horizontal lines, thereby forming three several sets of two right angles”.



This is a tortuous and non-intuitive explanation; there must be a reason for using Geometry centric wording.

We will come back to this, but for now we can see that these symbols each rotated 180 Deg forms the letter T, or Tau, so as I explained the regular step, we have 3 letter T’s. This cannot be coincidence.

Now, the letter T is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet and is called the Tau. Once we are Master Masons we are encouraged to join the Holy Royal with the promise that the lost secrets will be restored to the Craft. In the HRA, the three T’s are arranged to form what is known as the triple Tau. Just as in the Craft a T is described in Geometric term, so can the Triple Tau, as we will see very soon.

In Summary

We learn of the recurring reference to the three Tau, that the death of Hiram Abiff is a metaphor for loss of the genuine secrets. While the attempts by the Master and the Wardens to raise him in the hope of regaining those secrets are ultimately successful, the secrets remain lost.

We are told that in the Royal Arch we will learn how they were regained and to assist in that quest we pass on 3 important clues, the meaning of Three Pillars, the three Tau and their geometric description.

The Holy Royal Arch

Transitioning through the three Craft degrees is relatively seamless, conducted in the same setting with a progressive revelation of Craft Masonic symbols. In contrast, the Royal Arch setting is distinctly different in layout and symbology, and the ceremony takes on a more reflective tone.

The Royal Arch ceremony blends a historical re-enactment of the allegorical tale of the building of the second Temple with teachings of morality through scriptural readings, which make extensive use of metaphors. More symbols are introduced, the meaning of each being explained in the Symbolic Lecture. In this section I will set the scene by relating the allegorical tale then delve deeper into the symbology and its meaning.

For now, remember that when we use the word “temple” we are not referring to a physical building. Rebuilding therefore means re-construct a temple of virtue and wisdom within our own lives – after a loss.

The Allegory

The allegory in the Royal Arch tells the story of three Master Masons discovering a hidden Vault beneath the ruins of the First Temple, and relates the circumstances by which the lost secrets were restored to the Craft.

This of course relates to the death of Hiram Abiff, by which the secrets were initially lost. Metaphorically, in this degree it is the Vault that represents the lost secrets, waiting to be discovered by those who seek them.

This allegorical enactment results in a visually impressive ceremony, with clues embedded in carefully selected portions of the scriptures read at key points. These readings provide the moral messages the enactment is designed to uncover. They serve as clues to a deeper meaning beyond the literal actions that follow. The enactment has one of the Master Masons descend twice into the Vault.

First Descent

Before the first descent, Joshua reads Proverbs 2:1-9 and Proverbs 3:13-20. These scriptures focus on the pursuit of wisdom and understanding, emphasizing that such pursuits lead to a fulfilled and peaceful life, surpassing the value of any earthly riches.

During the first descent that follows, the Candidate descends into the vault, not knowing what he might find. A scroll and other objects are discovered, but in the darkness, they cannot be understood. He leaves the vault bringing the Scroll with him.

Second Descent

Before the second descent, Haggai reads from Haggai 2:1-9. This allegorical tale tells of the workers comparing the new temple to the glorious temple of Solomon, leading to disappointment and discouragement when they perceive their work as insignificant. God reassures them that the future glory of the new temple will surpass the former, acknowledging their disappointment and

encouraging them to continue their work. Remember, the temple is a metaphor for self – the new you will be better than the old.

In the second descent, the Candidate is obligated, then figuratively restored to light, enabling him to see and understand what he previously discovered, namely the Scroll and the Sacred Name.

The Scroll

When restored to Light, a Metaphor for knowledge and truth, he reads the contents of the Scroll, and he is told that they are the first words of the Sacred Volume. This text relates to Genesis 1, the Hebrew version of Story of Creation. Subsequently he learns that it represents God's Revealed Will, and that we should praise and magnify His Holy Name for that knowledge vouchsafed to us. The use of the verb vouchsafe is deliberate, it means it is privilege extend to those chosen to receive it.

The significance given to the discovery of the scroll suggests that the "lost word" refers to the knowledge vouchsafed to us. Could the focus on the delivery of the Word discovered be, as Pike puts it, a distraction. Masonic Ritual does not give up its secrets easily; they are only available to those who actively seek them. If you only follow the path you are lead down, you are not seeking, you are being told what it is.

So let us take a step back to the restoration of light, the reading from Genesis, and follow a different path.

The Sacred Name

As well as the scroll he discovers the Pedestal with, amongst other thing, S.A.M.N. (the name) upon it

The Ceremony now continues focusing on the name and the method of delivering it, the signs and so on. The Secrets have now been restored to the Craft, we are content. but have they?

Remember the Scroll, the Creation Story, God revealed Will? They are in the Ceremony for a reason, we have been lead in along a different path.

As an aside. The ritual of the 13th degree of the Scottish Rite, involves a symbolic descent into the earth, uncovering the secret vaults one by one, stacked vertically. finally discovering the sacred name of God on a gold plate on a pedestal.

It is appropriate to note in the context of this paper, Higher Degree Masonry in the Scottish Rite was developed out of the 1737 oration of Andrew Michael "the Chevalier" Ramsay.

The HRA Jewel

The clues to our search can be found on the HRA Jewel. It is not just an ornament; it is rich in symbology and key to understanding how to discover the hidden message – the lost secrets.

The Aldersgate Ritual book contains a comprehensive explanation of the Jewel by E Comp Shepherd-Jones OBE, and much has been written and presented about it elsewhere. I will focus on those parts relevant to the theme of the paper.

The Reverse of the Jewel



In the centre there are 2 interlaced triangles, one upward pointing, one downward. Following the clue from the Craft our attention is drawn to the downward triangle which has the following words on its sides:

Wisdom, Strength and Beauty.

Remember, these are the names of the 3 Pillars we encountered in the Craft, but here they are depicted on the Triangle, the symbol of the Deity.

The next clue from the Craft are the three Tau. The downward triangle on the Jewel points to the Triple Tau, a rearrangement of the Three Tau we encountered in the form of the Regular steps, and the Tau on Masters Apron. This is not a coincidence, they are clues. Hold that thought

The Obverse of the Jewel



For the purpose of this paper I will extract the following elements:

1. The inscription within the concentric Circles: ***"Si talia jungere possis sit tibi scire satis"*** meaning, ***"If thou can't understand what follows thou knowest enough."***
2. The inscription of the arms one of the Triangles: Greek **"Ευφκamen"**, Latin **"Invenimus"** , meaning **"We have found"**
4. In the centre, the stylized face, the rays beaming down upon the Compasses covering the Globe. This is the sign of the Creation and emanation of Light (knowledge) to the material world.
5. At the bottom of the Jewel is the inscription: **"Nil nisi clavis deest"**, meaning - **"Nothing is wanting but the key"**.
6. Enclosed in the Inscription is the **Triple Tau** A coincidence, or a clue??

The inscription ***"Nothing is wanting is the Key"*** is significant. It means that the Jewel symbology is encoded, and needs a key to decode the meaning. Enclosing the Triple-Tau in the message signifies it may have a role in decoding the meaning.

Everything in Masonic ritual and symbology is there for a purpose. Going back to the 2nd Degree ceremony, the Charge exhorts us "to study the liberal arts, especially the science of Geometry..."

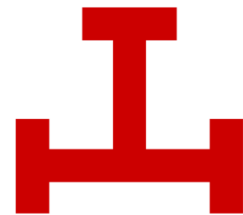
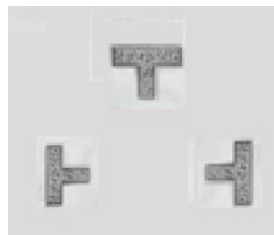
Is this the time to use that knowledge of Geometry? As we have been given a strong hint as to its purpose on the Jewel, let us examine the Geometry of the Triple-Tau.

The Triple-Tau

In the biblical sense, the Tau was used symbolically in the Old Testament, where in the Book of Ezekiel it says: "The Lord said to him, 'Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over the abominations... (Ezekiel. 9:4). The Tau was the sign placed upon the foreheads of the poor of Israel, it saves them from extermination.

In the symbolic sense, the Hebrew form of the word Tau means marking, etching or scrawl. In ancient times, Commanders would place it on a warrior returning honourably from battle. It was also the mark placed on the forehead of those acquitted by judges as proof of innocence. It was therefore regarded as the symbol of life.

In the Geometric sense however, if we accept the clue from the Craft and the HRA Jewel, the triangular arrangement of the Tau on the Master Masons Apron can be transformed easily into the Triple Tau.



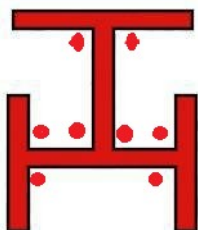
In the Royal Arch Lectures we simply say the *Triple-Tau symbolically alludes to the deity, by whom the horrific, gloomy and un-shapen existence by which chaos was changed into regular form and peaceful existence.*

In other words, referring to Genesis 1, it represent in some way the Creation story as depicted on the Jewel, and referred to in the Scroll, whereby God created the Heavens and the Earth.

Now the Geometry. Our clue again comes from the craft where we learned that the emblems on the Past Master apron are defined as:

"Perpendicular lines upon horizontal lines, thereby forming three several sets of two right angles"

As we know, the Square is an important Symbol in Freemasonry. As a Fellow Craft we studied Geometry, so we know that the Square is an angle of 90 Deg; a Right-Angle. Can we at last put this knowledge to use. Turning to the Geometry of the Triple-Tau and the cue to look for **sets of 2 right angles.**



The Triple-Tau forms two Right-Angles on each of the exterior lines and two others by their union in the centre. The Triple-Tau therefore has 4 sets of 2 = 8 Right-Angles.

We are going to talk about Right Angles a lot, so remember that number, we will come back to it later.

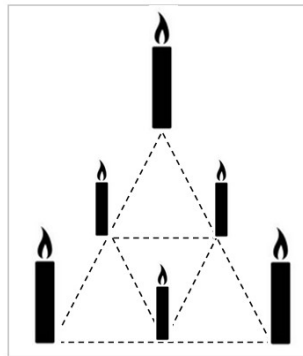
Chapter Layout

We now turn to the symbology represented by the Chapter furniture and layout. Nothing is there for decoration, it has a purpose, and everything has its place. The Jewel has given us the pointer to where we should look, and we find the Triple Tau in 2 places, on the front of the pedestal, and over the 3 Principles' Chairs, bounded by the 4 Leading Banners.

Looking first at the Pedestal. Around the pedestal are several, carefully arranged symbols. the Greater and Lesser Lights, and the 5 Platonic Bodies.

Both the Aldersgate and Domatic versions provide a brief overview of the symbolic meanings of the Greater and Lesser Lights and their relationship to the Triple Tau. The longer version of the lecture, which is rarely delivered, includes the Platonic Bodies and describes their relationship using Geometry. Will expand on that aspect. In the time available I can only give this important subject very superficial treatment, my intention is to point you to further areas of study.

The Greater and Lesser Lights

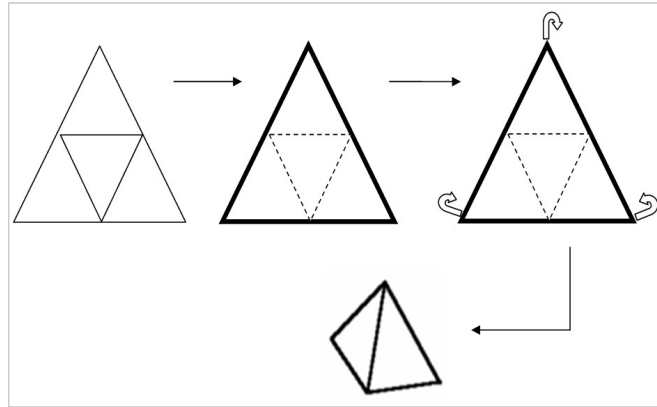


Drawing lines connecting the three Greater Lights, they take the form of an upwards facing equilateral triangle – the Greater Triangle

Doing the same for the 3 Lesser Lights they form an enclosed downwards facing equilateral triangle, the Greater Triangle is therefore divided into 4 Lesser Triangles.

In the front of the Pedestal is the Triple Tau from of 8 Right-Angles. , if we take that as the key, we find that the angles of the 4 lesser Triangles also comprise **8 Right-Angles**. ($4 \times 180 / 90 = 8$) so they have the same root – it show the relationship between the Triple Tau and the greater and the interlaced triangles, but what of the Platonic solids.

The pattern formed by the lines of the Triangles should be familiar to you all who have played with folding paper into geometric shapes. The lines of the Lesser Lights Triangle are the fold lines for the Tetrahedron.



Cut out the shape of the Greater Lights Triangle, fold at the lines of the Lesser Lights Triangle , lift and join the apexes, this forms a solid Tetrahedron, the first of the Platonic Solids.

To get from the Greater and Lesser lights Triangles to the Tetrahedron we used our knowledge of geometry; now let us add our knowledge of mathematics to find out more about the Tetrahedron.

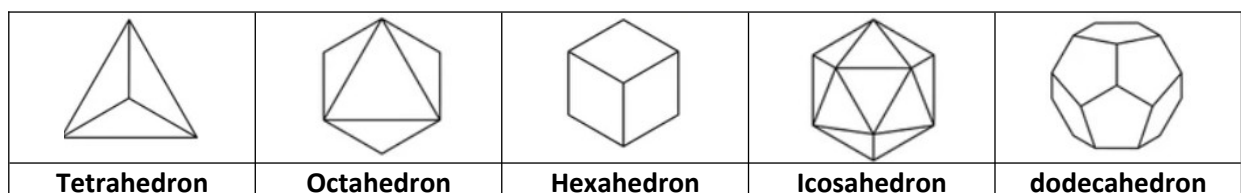
- There are 4 Triangles formed by the faces of the Tetrahedron. There are 3 at the apexes, and one at the base.
- The sum of the internal angles of each is 180 deg. In total there are therefore $4 * 180 \text{ Deg} = 720 \text{ Deg}$.
- Convert the 720 Deg to the number of Right-Angles and we get **the number 8**, the same as the number of right-angles in the Triple-Tau.

This should come as no surprise because the tetrahedron is the 3-D representation of the 2-D layout of the Lights, the important thing is that we are left wondering, what is the purpose of the Platonic Solids.?

The 5 Platonic Solids

On the floor of most HRA Chapters, in front of the Pedestal, are the 5 Platonic solids. We left off the explanation of the Greater and Lesser light with the construction of the Tetrahedron.

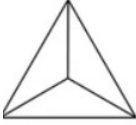

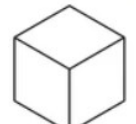


The platonic solids are:



Tetrahedron

As we demonstrated earlier, the Tetrahedron comprises four equilateral triangles; the sum of internal angles of each is 180 deg. $4 * 180 \text{ deg} = 720 \text{ deg}$; Reduce to **Right-Angles = 8**.

To save time, applying the same process to the other bodies we can construct the table below:

Shape	Name	Face Polygon	Face Degrees	Face count	Total Face Degrees	Right Angles
	tetrahedron	Equilateral Triangle	180	4	720	8
	octahedron	Equilateral Triangle	180	8	1440	16
	Cube or Hexahedron	Square	360	6	2160	24
	icosahedron	Equilateral Triangle	180	20	3600	40
	pentagonal dodecahedron	Pentagon	540	12	6840	72

Geometrically therefore, all the symbols are related because they can all be represented as multiples of Right-Angles, and the number 8, which the sum of the internal angles of the Triple Tau and the Tau on the Master Mason's apron (and many others for that matter).

With this new knowledge we can revisit the Interlaced Triangles on the Jewel. All the shapes are depicted in the lines and the intersections of the Hexagram. It is left to you to identify them, how to do this is well explained elsewhere in Masonic literature.

So far so good, the number 8 has lead us to the Platonic solids, they are there for a reason, it is not the end of the trail, simply another clue.

The Greek philosopher Empedocles of Agrigentum (495-435 BC) believed everything in the world was tangible and could be related to the 4 elements, Fire, Air, Wind and Water.

Plato assigned these attributes to 4 of the Solids, namely: Tetrahedron – **Fire**, Octahedron – **Air**, Icosahedron – **Water** and Hexahedron – **Earth**

What of the Dodecahedron?. For that we have to look an important property of the solids.

For each Platonic Solids, it is possible to construct a sphere that completely encloses it, and for which all of the vertices of the platonic solid lie on the surface of the sphere. This means that they all fit inside the same size sphere, and the most encompassing of all is the Dodecahedron. Because of this Plato said "God used this solid for the whole universe"

The 4 Principle Banners

In the HRA lectures the purpose of the banners of the 12 tribes of Israel is explained. However, placed in a prominent position over the 2 Principles are what are referred to as the 4 Principle Banners of the tribes, with the symbols Man, Lion, Ox and Eagle.

The symbolic meaning of the Banners are explained in the Symbolic Lecture, all very plausible. But why single them out when the other Banners on the floor of the Chapter also have symbolic meanings?

For a possible answer we need to refer to the vision of the prophet Ezekiel, who encounters four living creatures; a Man, a Lion, an Ox, and an Eagle.

They have also been linked with the four classical elements: the Man with water, the Lion with fire, the Ox with earth, and the Eagle with air or wind.

They are also the symbols for the cardinal points of the Zodiac – but that is a whole new area of research, that is for another day

So this, and the path through the Platonic Solids suggest we should explore this further and see where it leads us.

In Ezekiel's vision, The same 4 Beings are depicted as a great chariot, and above it, a throne of dazzling brightness. At its highest point sits one who resembles a man; Metatron. Metatron is described as the one closest to the divine, seated just beneath the throne, serving as a bridge between the spiritual and the earthly.

In Kabbalistic mystical tradition Metatron stands below the Crown, enthroned in light, reflecting the divine will.

The Crown as we know is the Jewel of the First Principle, Zerubbabel.

Lets of loose ends to tie together



So the journey through the Royal Arch, in my opinion, does not directly restore the "lost word", Despite focusing of the delivery of the Sacred Name; that is not of itself, the lost word. However there are many clues leading to what the nature of what that term actually means.

The Athelstan ceremony of instruction continues the search for the truth

Athelstan: A Deeper Understanding

The title of this lecture, “**You are in need of further instruction,**” initially suggests a mistake. When we begin this exploration, we carry a distinct impression: that the manner in which the signs were given was somehow defective or improperly performed. It is easy to look at the ritual execution and assume an error has been made.

However, my research reveals a much deeper, more profound truth.

The issue is not with how the signs and words are performed. There is no defect in the mechanics of the ritual. Instead, the specific manner of their delivery indicates the exact stage of progress the Candidate has achieved so far.

Even though he is a Royal Arch Companion, his journey is not yet finished. The ceremony of exaltation is another step on in the journey, it is not yet complete. The Candidate stands before us not as someone who has failed, but as someone who is fundamentally unfinished—and he is, therefore, truly “in need of further instruction.”

The Journey So Far

Following the clues from the Craft and the HRA we are left with an incomplete knowledge of the meaning of the three Pillars. And from the HRA, and the role of Metatron, the Archangel closest to the Supreme Being acting as the Scribe between earthy beings and the Divine knowledge – God’s revealed word and will.

We have explored some of the symbology represented in the HRA Jewel that got us here thus far, but there is one more observation related to the ceremony of instruction.

Between the two concentric circles there is engraved:

Deo, Regi, Fratribus, Honor, Fidelita ,Benevolentia

This is not a Motto. It is a code, The words are actually meant to be read conjointly as Triads, namely Deo Honor, Regi Fidelita, Fratribus Benevolentia.



This decoded transcription is also a translation into Latin of a portion of the prose of the Regius Poem, the most cherished manuscript in possession of Grand Lodge, dating back to the 14th century. It was written by an unknown religious cleric, widely regarded as copying a much earlier master document.

From this the Athelstan ritual extracted 9 of the Charges, delivered by the Circle of 9.

I have translated 3 of the charges from the olde English relevant to the inscription.

“... must love well God and Holy Church algate’ (‘algate’ is an Old English word meaning ‘at any rate’ or ‘by all means’)

This becomes becomes **‘Deo Honor’**;

‘And to his liege Lord the King, To be true to Him over alle thing’

This becomes **‘Regi Fidelitas’**;

‘And thy fellows thou love also, For that the craft will that thou do’

becomes **‘Fratribus Benevolentia’**.

Scripture Reading:

Note that on opening the Council the VSL is opened at the Book of Proverbs, not Kings.

Whereas Kings is about the physical building of the temple, Proverbs is about wisdom, personal growth and character development – the morality message the building tries to convey.

Thus in Athelstan when we talk of “further instruction”, the focus of the Instruction is now the lesson of the System of Morality, the keystone of Freemasonry. Let’s examine what we are told,

To illustrate this we hear many quote from Proverbs, I will not go into them, they are well known to you. The clues are in the careful choice and use of words used during the Ceremony of Instruction.

- The Triple Tau (when advancing to receive the signs)
- Creation
- Knowledge
- Wisdom
- Understanding
- Masculine and Feminine elements of Creation
- the awe beyond our world

Where does it lead us? Three of the list are worth looking into:

The Masculine and Feminine elements of creation.”

This is where it gets interesting, for me at least, we are referred back to the creation story, and in the context of what we found in the vault, i.e. the writings of Genesis 1.27. The terms masculine and feminine simply describe the 2 complimentary aspects of creation, balance.

In the 2010 version of the Ritual is the statement ...

“when we trace creative thought back to its origin beyond thought, we tremble with awe. Wisdom becomes the gateway to the awe that lies beyond our world of thought and form.”

This has been removed in the current version of the Athelstan Ritual, but it is quite fundamental to where the Athelstan ritual is leading us. We are be lead back along a path to the source of all Knowledge, Wisdom and Understanding – vouchsafed to us at the moment of Creation, and subsequently lost, and which we are seeking.

Decoding the Hidden Message

There is yet another signpost in the Athelstan ritual to direct our path to regain that knowledge. It is contained in the Hebrew translation of the words Wisdom and Understanding which is Chokmah and Binah These words are well known to the Kabbalist community from which it seems Athelstan has drawn it’s inspiration.

To underline the significance of those words, our friend Albert Pike devotes a whole chapter about the Kabbalah in his book *Morals and Dogma*. Taking that as a cue, and once you study the Kabbalah Tree of Life all falls into place:

The Kabbalah tree if Life

So we can now apply what we have learned to the value of the Kabbalah Tree of Life as a means of seeking more. I do not intend to delve deep into an explanation of the entire meaning of it, I will present it simply as a framework for learning.

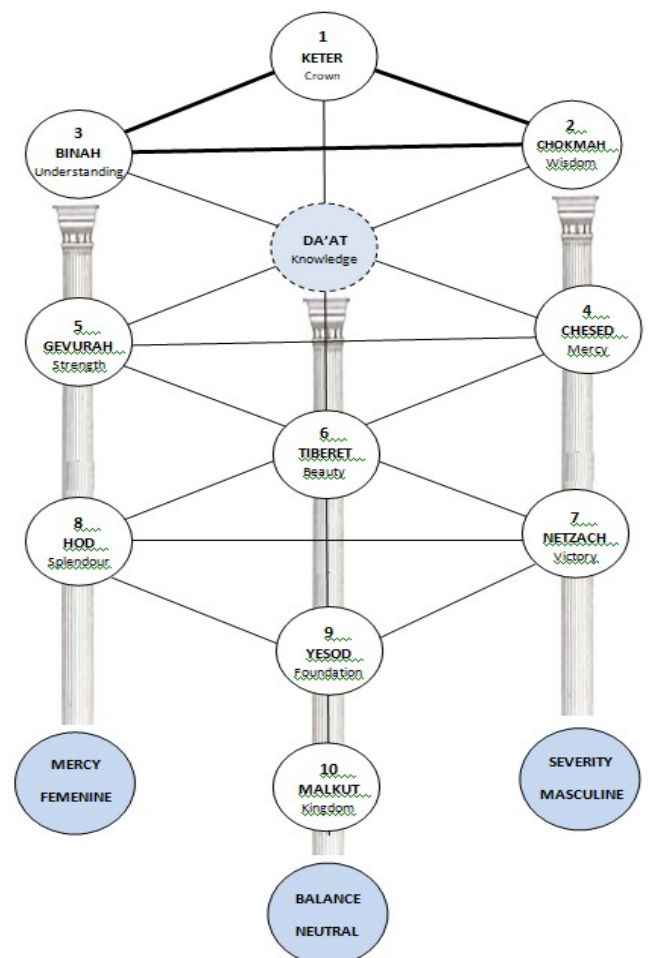
Keter represents the act of Creation, the awe beyond thought refered to in the old Athelstan Ritual, often compared to a "Lightning Flash," which generates Chokmah and Binah.

Wisdom translates as **“Chokmah”** which represents the masculine aspects of Creation

Understanding translates as **“Binah”** and represents the feminine aspects of Creation.

Knowledge is represented by Da’at.

The centre pillar represents **Balance**, e.g between Strength vs Severity



The 10 nodes are called Sefirot and represent areas of Knowledge – called Da’at here to which we apply Wisdom and Understanding, and the lines between them are the paths taken to emanate this to the real world in which we mortals live – Kingdom or Malkut.

The Sefirot are numbered sequentially. The Emanation process traverses downward, symbolizing the path of Creation, culminating in Sephirah 10, Malkut; Kingdom or the real world.

Traversing upward signifies our quest for the Wisdom of Creation. As we ascend, we seek deeper understanding and insight by visiting each Sephirah in turn.

The Three Pillars

The three Pillars of the Craft are depicted different names, same intent. That on the right named Severity, that on the left, Mercy, and the centre pillar, balance. This signifies the importance of judgement; total severity means there is no mercy, total mercy means non-one is brought to account, you need balance to administer justice. This symbol can be seen at the top of the Courts of Justice, balance represented by the scales.

The Scroll

Referring to the Genesis creation story, in Kabbalah terms, the emanation of knowledge to the world, represented on the Tree by Keter.

The Platonic Solids

In Kabbalistic philosophy there are Four Worlds which constitute the Universe. They are **Atzilut** - Fire, **Beriah** - Water, **Yetzirah** – Air and **Assiah** – Earth. This draws a direct parallel in the HRA with the symbolic meaning of the Platonic Solids assigned by Plato, and the 4 Principle Banners

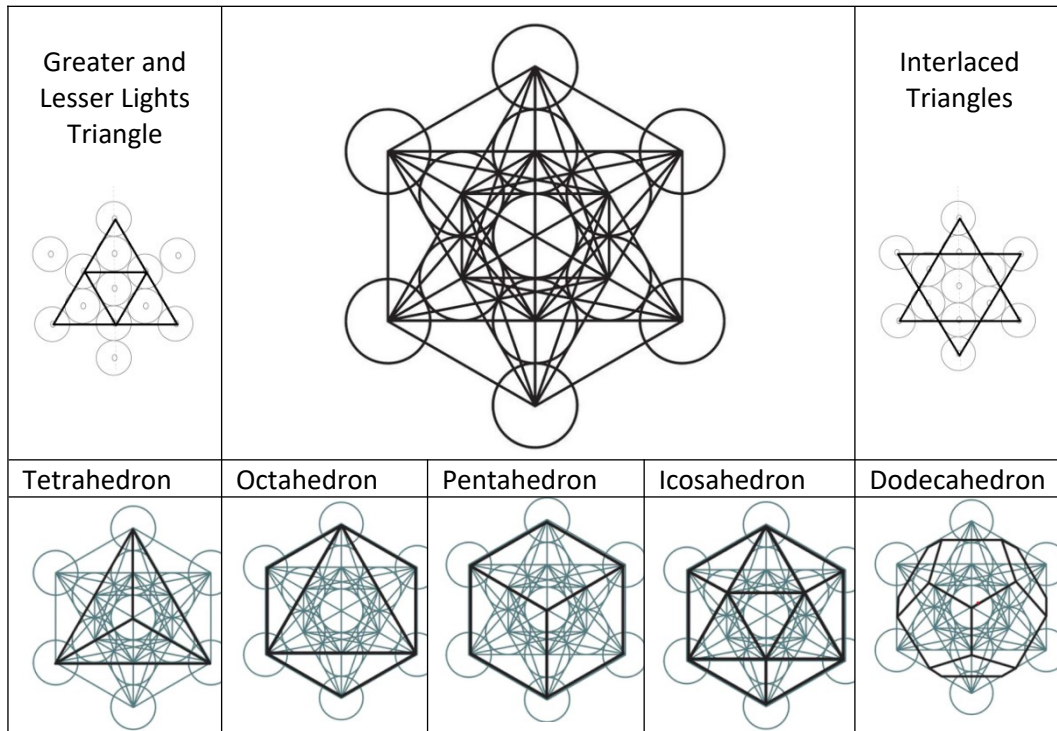
The Sacred name

According to Kabbalah, the Four Worlds and the Four Elements correspond with the Four Letters of the Tetragrammaton (Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh), which is the so-called Incommunicable Name of God, discovered by the Sojourners during the ceremony of exaltation

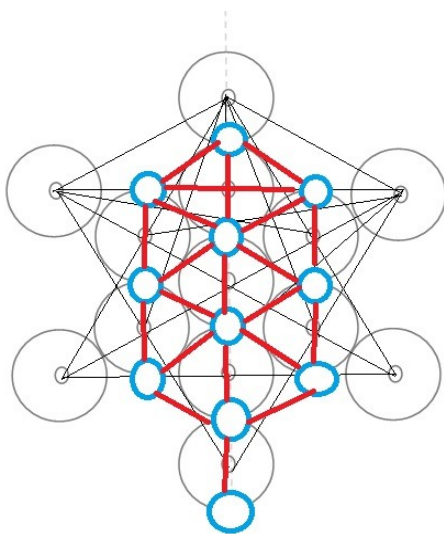
As a matter of interest, in Hebrew the letters Y and J are interchangeable, in translating to latin, which has no Y, it is substituted by J, so we get JHV, or Jehovah, which may explain certain aspects of the Ceremony of Exaltation.

Metatron

We were led to Metatron in the HRA. The significance of this is that introduces the topic of Sacred Geometry, and the drawing known as Metatron's Cube. Using the circles, points, lines and intersections on the cube, all the models in creation can be drawn including the Platonic Solids:



And the Kabbalah the Tree of Life



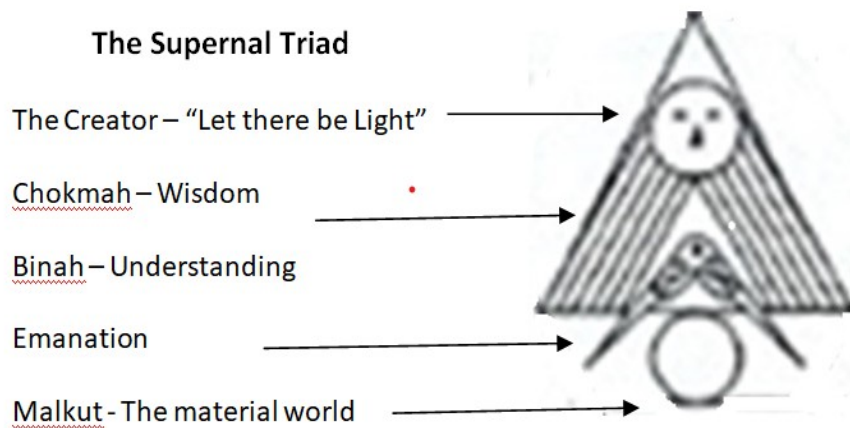
The Creation Symbol

Keter, Chokmah and Binah are known as the Supernal Triad and represent the moment of Creation where the Creator (Keter) represents the divine will or intention. Think of it as the initial spark of divine purpose.

Chokmah is associated with creative insight and inspiration. It's like the flash of brilliance that occurs when a new idea is born.

Binah is the receptive aspect, representing understanding, analysis, and discernment. It's where ideas are developed and structured.

The Supernal Triad reflects the divine process from intention (Keter) to inspiration (Chokmah) and finally to understanding and manifestation (Binah).



So, the Face represents the Creator (Keter), the Rays the Emanations to the 10 Sephiroth— giving meaning the words “restored to light”, and the Compass covering the Globe, i.e. the Kingdom - Malkut.

The Circle of Nine.

The ceremony says there are 9 charges, 19 for all, and but the Regis Poem does not follow this pattern. Nothing is done without reason: Look at the Sephiroth, there are 9 before representing the areas of learning, but as at this time the candidate is not instructed in how to achieve them

Look carefully at the connecting paths, you will find 10, thus as progress from ea through fellow Craft to Master you must traverse all the paths in order to attain the light of Keter, represent physically as the Volume of the sacred law

Conclusion

In the Opening Ceremony of an Athelstan Court, the Worshipful Master declares it to be opened

“...for the purpose of communicating light to those who seek it”

Light being a euphemism for Knowledge. Masonic Ritual does not give up its secrets easily, they have to be sought, and this takes each of us on our own personal journey of discovery; all the Ritual can do is to provide the clues, and the tools to assist you.

To many, the performance of Ritual, being in the right place and the right time, getting words correct are the indicators of achievement, however, what do we learn from Freemasonry that we couldn't learn from the local Amateur Dramatic society?

The clue is at the passage of the instruction ceremony well know to us all where the Worshipful Master says to the Candidate ...

“if you apply earnestly in your own life the teachings inculcated in Freemasonry, you will not only become a better citizen, but also a better father, a better son and a fonder husband”

In other words, it makes you a better man, not, a better Actor.

The signposts and the tools are there. personally, I am indeed still in need of further instruction; I will continue the search.

To quote Sir Arthur C Clark,

“I don't pretend to know all the answers, but the questions are worth thinking about”

Thank you.

Author's Note

Masonic Secrets

When preparing this Paper great care has been taken not to reveal any "Masonic Secrets". Words in this Paper are used in the normal sense, or as component of public ally available models. At no time is any word represented in the sense that would indicate that it is a Masonic Secret.

In a report adopted on 10th March 1999, the UGLE Board of General Purposes stated:

"Every Freemason is bound by his obligations not to reveal the traditional modes of recognition. This admits of no compromise. The ceremonial ways of proving that one is a Freemason should not normally be used outside the context of Masonic meetings. Brethren making improper disclosure or use of the signs, tokens and words of Craft and Royal Arch Masonry render themselves liable to Masonic disciplinary sanction. The promise not to reveal the modes of recognition may also be seen as symbolic of a wider pledge by a Brother to abide by all his obligations, non-Masonic as well as Masonic. Brethren will also wish to bear in mind that it is greatly desirable that even those parts of our ceremonies which do not fall strictly within the scope of the preceding paragraph should be kept private, and not disclosed without very good cause, in order that the impact of those ceremonies on candidates may not be diminished."

Care has been taken to conform to this instruction, bearing in mind there is no danger of a "spoiler" for the intended audience.

Reading List

Almost all the material used to prepare this paper is contained in the Ritual Books, or can be gleaned by simple internet searches.

My interest in Freemasonry means I have read extensively about it, especially during the Covid lockdown. The content of this paper have of course been influenced by the knowledge gained.

My reading list includes

1. The Ritual Books of Craft Taylors Workings, Aldersgate Royal Arch, and Athelstan Ritual 2022 and 2010.
2. Albert Pike. Morals and Dogma
3. Christopher Earnshaw – Freemasonry - Royal Arch (2020)
4. Duncan's Ritual and Monitor of Freemasonry. 1866
5. MacKeys Encyclopedia of Freemasonry