

THE STARS IN FREEMASONRY

By William G. Fellows

The stars in Freemasonry reaches back into antiquity to the ancient mystery schools, teachings, and fraternal religions of Egypt and Hermes Trismegistus. The Freemasonic connection to ancient Egypt is well established by Cleopatra's Needle and the masonic implements or tools under the foot of this great obelisk. The Great Pyramid and the extensive hieroglyphics therein contained develops a connection to the foundations of Freemasonry, leading to our present stage of Speculative Freemasonry. There are accounts in the hieroglyphics of the masonic virtues of "Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth." The knowledge of our ancestral brethren clearly demonstrates an understanding and reverence to the stars above, the cycles of nature, the celestial and stellar bodies and their motions, the luminaries - the Sun and Moon, and the cycles of the equinoxes and solstices.

Figure 1 shows an Egyptian ceremony worshiping the Supreme Deity, as represented by our star, the Sun. Notice that Khuen-Aten is wearing the apron of the Egyptian Pharaohs as Grand Master of the Mysteries, as depicted in Figure 2. The aprons were used in the Mysteries by certain sacred officers, and were of a triangular form, consisting of two parts. In the central part we observe the asps, and the twelve sectors, representing the 12 zodiac signs, as with the breastplate of the High Priest in the Royal Arch Degree. The lower corners are the lion heads representing Leo the Sun. In Masonry the lambskin or white apron alludes to and is emblematic of innocence and beauty, and teaches immortality, as represented by the first astrological sign of the Vernal Equinox, Aries the Ram.

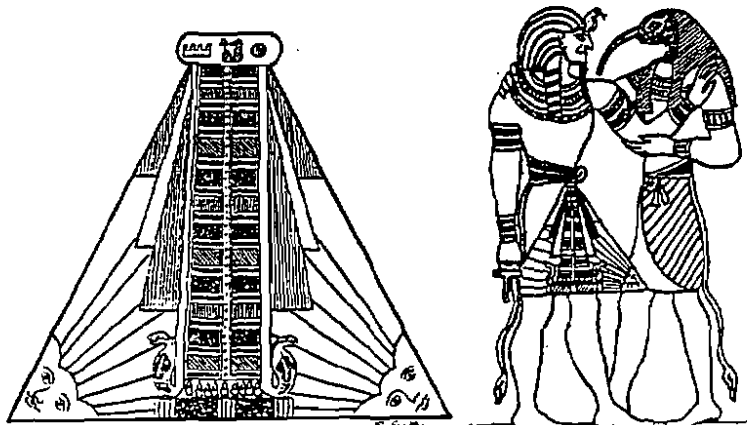
Figure 3 is a First Degree or Entered Apprentice Trestle or Tracing Board showing the Sun and Moon, the three pillars of Freemasonry, the masonic three step ladder, and the seven stars of Pleiades, which is part of the constellation Taurus the Bull. The constellation Taurus was anciently at the vernal equinox, within the Solar New Year beginning at this point. This was the era of Taurus, from approximately 4000 B.C. to 2000 B.C., when the precession of the equinox brought the earth to the era or Age of Aries the Ram. Therefore, the masonic emblem of the seven stars of Pleiades has direct allusion to the spring or vernal equinox, reminding us of the immortality of the soul, and the aspiring of man to the heavens as part of their evolution and growth.

Figure 4 is a trestle-board of the second degree or Fellowcraft, and distinctly shows the two pillars of Boaz and Jachin with the two Celestial Globes, the Globe of the Heavens and Zodiac, and the Globe of the planet Earth. Also the all-seeing eye of Deity, with ancient languages having "eye" and "sun" expressed by the same word. The ancient Egyptians hieroglyphically represented their principle deity, the sun-god Osiris, by the figure of an open eye, emblematic of the sun. In like manner, modern masons have symbolically



Khuen-Aten (Splendor of the Sun) or Amenophis III, father-in-law of Tut-Ankh-Amen. The light rays also indicate geometrical angles.

Figure 1 - Ancient Egyptian Rite.



Apron of the Egyptian Pharaohs as Grand Masters of the Mysteries. From Belzoni.

The god Thoth receiving the word of life from a Pharaoh. From Belzoni.

Figure 2 - Apron of Egyptian Pharaohs



The First Degree Board sets out the general Western metaphysical scheme and shows the place of the human individual within it.

Figure 3 - Entered Apprentice Trestleboard.



The Second Degree Board is a symbolic representation of the individual in greater detail.

Here Jacob's Ladder has become a winding spiral stair leading to the interior of the Temple.

Figure 4 - Fellow Craft Degree trestleboard.

represented the omniscience of the Great Architect of the Universe. Further, the seven steps of learning, or the seven Liberal Arts or Sciences are present, leading into the entrance of the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Lodge. Each Step can be related to a planetary ray, which will be explained later. The seven steps can also be related to the seven rungs of Jacobs Ladder.

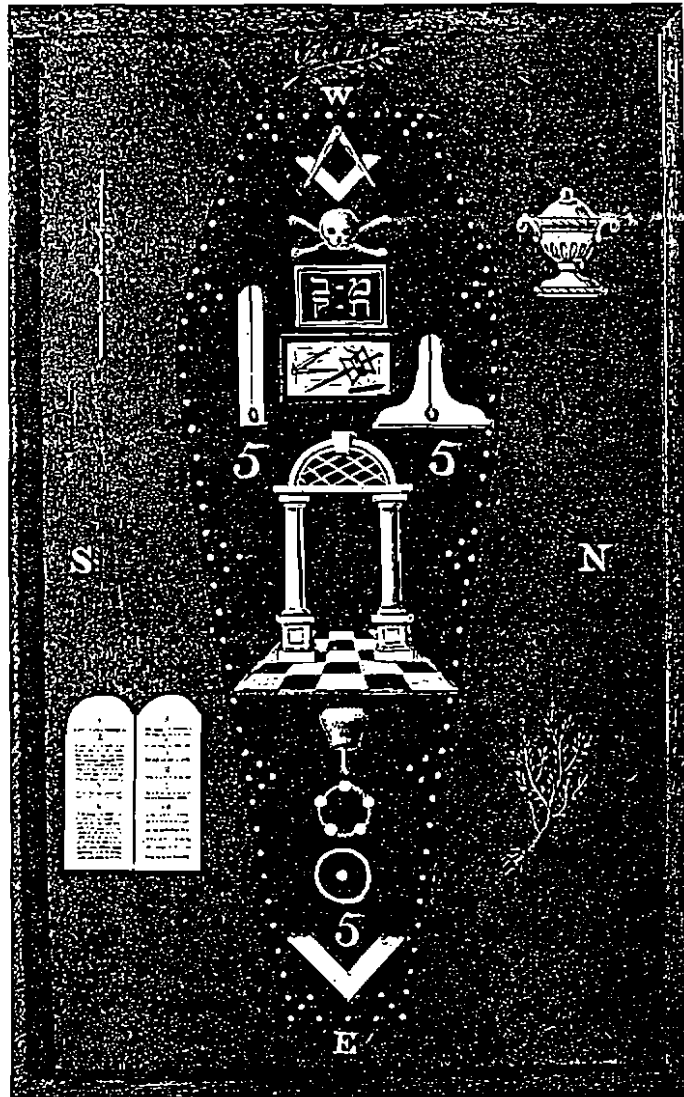
Figure 5 is the Trestle-board of the Third Degree, or Master Mason Degree. The key symbolic figure in this board for this paper is the Royal Arch, which is discussed in Figure 15.

Figure 6 depicts the Celestial Sphere or Globe that is placed on one of the two pillars found on either side of the Senior Warden in the Masonic Lodge. This globe shows the earth, Sun, and Zodiac signs of the Science Astrology. The globes are of modern academic invention, for described in the Bible in relation to King Solomon's Temple were "bommels" or "bowls", and were adorned or covered with a network of two rows of pomegranates that formed wreaths. The Terrestrial and Celestial globes of our modern Lodges are two spherical bodies on convex surfaces which represent and show the countries, seas, and various parts of the earth, the face of the heavens, the planetary revolutions, and other important particulars.

Figure 7 illuminates the principles and celestial knowledge conveyed by the two pillars and the associated globes. The Zodiac band and the movements of the Sun through the Ecliptic is conveyed. These principles and concepts are of immense importance in our present state. In regard to the two pillars, the custom of placing two lofty columns before the porches or entrances of the temples dedicated to the worship of the heavenly bodies, was a very ancient and universal practice. They may also have ornamented these pillars with spheres or globes on their tops, representing the orb of the sun, or Osiris, the other being the full moon or the equinox, or Isis. So it can be deduced that our present or modern practice of the globes is traceable back to the Egyptians and their understanding of the Celestial Heavens above and the cycles of the Stars.

Figure 8 and 10 are two more Masonic trestle or tracing boards representing the symbolic knowledge and lore of Freemasonry. Figure 8 has several symbols that will be discussed, including the masonic three rounds and the point in a circle between two perpendiculars. The classical or exoteric masonic meaning of the point in a circle between two perpendicular lines is explained as such: "the point represents an individual brother, the circle being the boundary lines of his duty to God and man; the two perpendicular lines representing the Holy Saints - John the evangelist and John the Baptist. In Figure 25 an astronomical meaning will be provided.

Figure 9 shows the three Lesser Lights of Freemasonry representing the Sun, Moon, and the Worshipful Master of the Lodge, surrounding the three Great Lights, the Square, Compass, and The Volume of the Sacred Law. This is also very alchemical, alluding to the cycles of nature and the celestial bodies, having a transforming effect on our spiritual self



The Third Degree Board alludes to a process, analogous to death, by which the individual can, if it be God's will, transcend the limitations of ordinary human life and realize a richer interior potential. (Wooden Tracing Boards hand-painted by J. Bowring, 1819)

Figure 5 - Master Mason trestleboard.

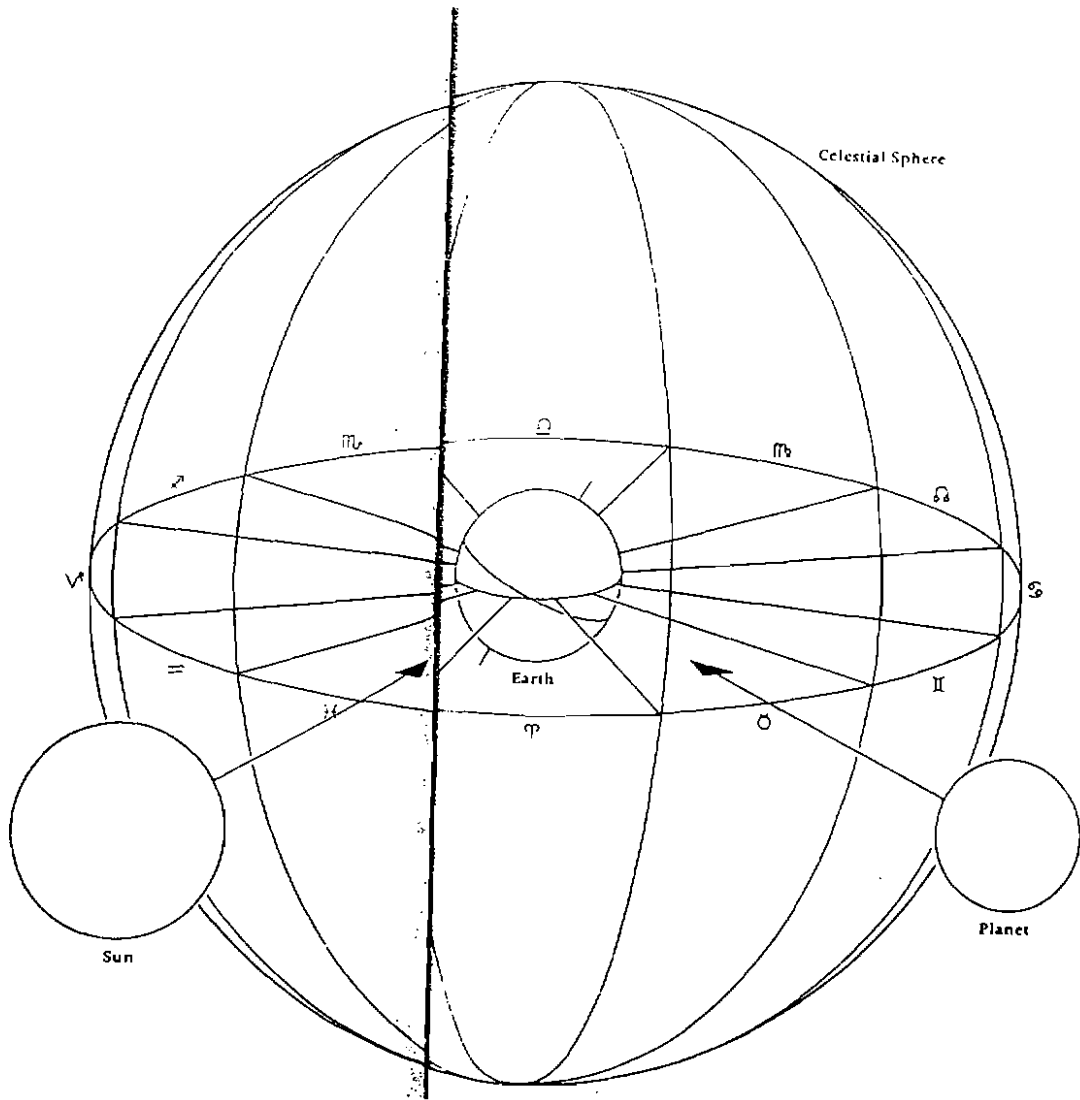
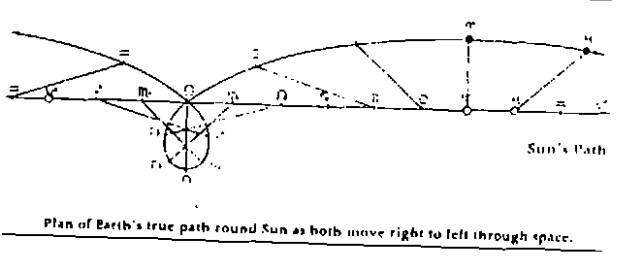
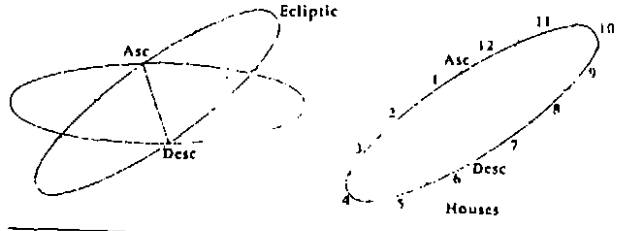
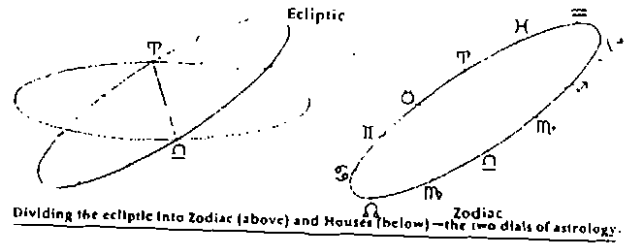
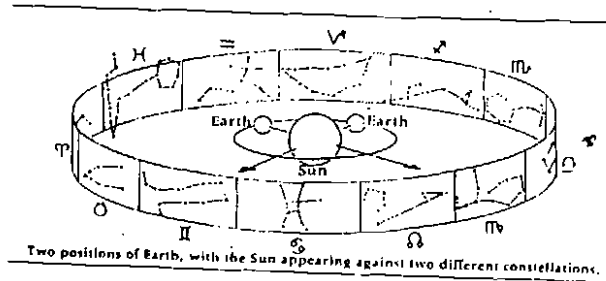
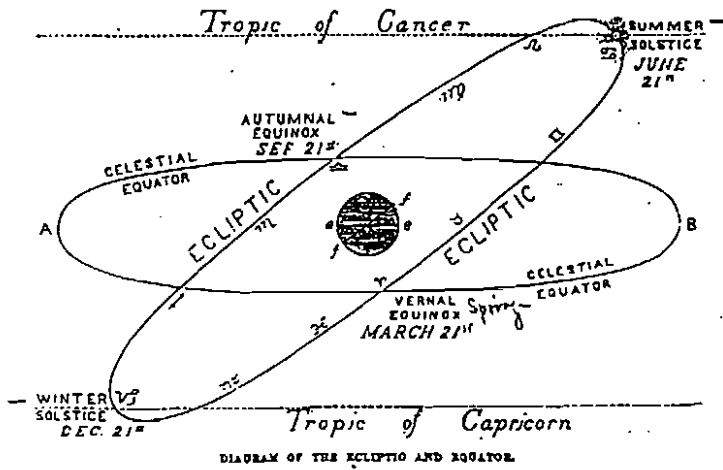


Figure 6 - The Celestial Sphere or globe on the Masonic Lodge pillar.



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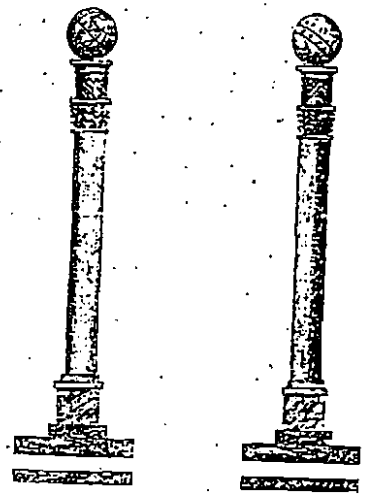


Figure 7 - The celestial zodiac band and movement of the sun through the ecliptic.

as we as humans strive to learn and grow in the Light of Freemasonry to master the self. This is based around the sacred understandings and learning conveyed in the ancient and spiritual mystery teachings of Freemasonry.

Figure 10 is of particular interest, for it introduces alchemical symbolism, and clearly shows the operations of the seven planetary rays on the alchemical process of transformation of the "soul" or "self." The final product of this process of alchemical transformation is the magical creation of the new self, or the newly reborn Master Mason through evolutionary spiritual rebirth. Also, the Royal Arch of the Heavens is clearly depicted. Figure 11 again shows the two masonic pillars of Boaz and Jachin.

Figures 12 and 13 show the Zodiac band and signs, the five planets and two luminaries of the ancients, and the astrological circle of signs and planetary rulers. There are also twelve houses of existence or life associated with the circle or astrological chart. As the Sun rules the day, the Moon rules the night, so does the Worshipful Master have responsibility over the Freemasonic Lodge. These are direct principles from the science of the heavenly bodies. Freemasonry and Astrology have many similarities and common doctrines and principles. They both deal with the understanding of the "self" in relationship to our spiritual application of will, knowledge, light, and understanding of our world in relation to the Cosmic Universe of the G.A.O.T.U. In fact, Freemasonry derives many of its symbols from astrological teachings, for example: the square, triangle, and circle, along with the sun and moon and cycles of the seasons. Astrology and Freemasonry both have inner and outer teachings, dealing with the Hermetic and Cosmic Laws of Rebirth, Cause and Effect, Karma, the Cycles of Time and Nature, and the balance of Will and Desire.

Figure 14 is an astrological representation of a masonic Lodge, showing the various stations and offices having relationship to the Science of Astrology. This is from Higgins book on *Ancient Freemasonry*. I have placed the four Cardinal Signs of the Zodiac at their proper and respective places around the lodge, correlating them to the four seasons as represented by the Spring (Vernal) and Fall Equinox's and Summer and Winter Solstices. This placement forms the Grand Cross of the Zodiac, and represents the square or spiritual foundation of the Freemasonic Lodge. In the center of the Lodge floor is the Blazing Star of Freemasonry. The Blazing Star can be interpreted in several ways, giving association to various phenomenon. It is an ornament of the Lodge connected with the Hermetic Sciences. The symbol of Divine Providence, and emblematic of Prudence. It is not representative of the Sun, which is a misnomer of some philosophical works. It is a symbol of Deity. It has been associated with the Rising Sun or Morning Star. Other writers have identified the Blazing Star with Sirius. The rising of the "Dog Star", Sirius, had many significant implications to the Egyptians, and the season of the rising Nile. Regardless, it has astronomical associations. Higgins, as shown in Figure 14, contends that the Blazing Star should be an eight pointed star, representing the ancient Babylonians and their creative Deity "Llu", whose name is the precursor of the Hebrew "Alahi" and the Arabic "Allah." There is also numerological significance to this interpretation, which is a study unto itself.

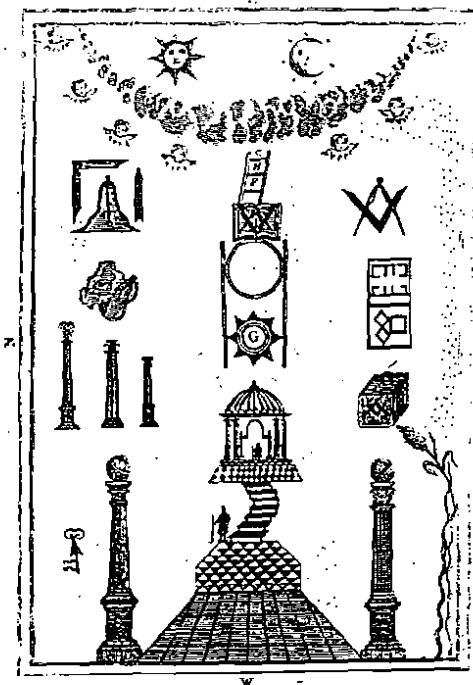


Figure 8 - Masonic Trestleboard with celestial symbols.

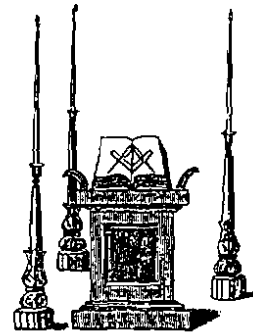


Figure 9 - The three burning tapers of a Masonic Lodge representing Sun, Moon, and Worshipful Master.

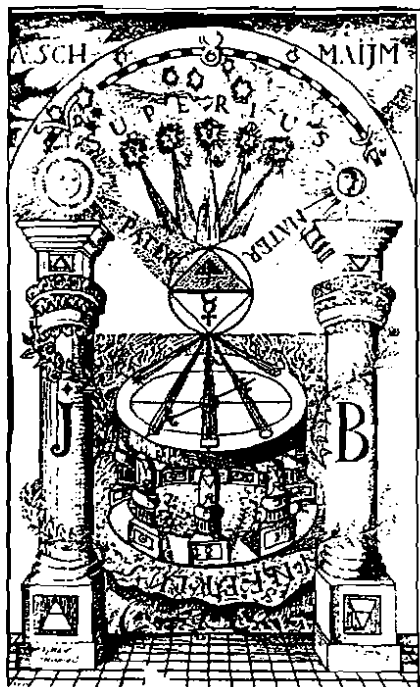


Figure 10 - Masonic trestleboard with alchemical symbolism and the planets of the Zodiac.

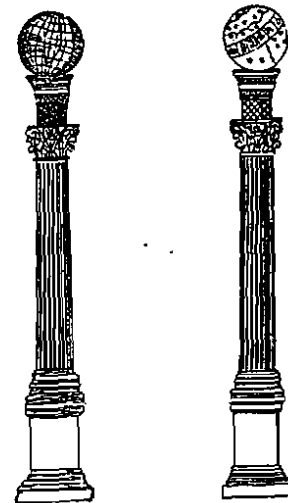
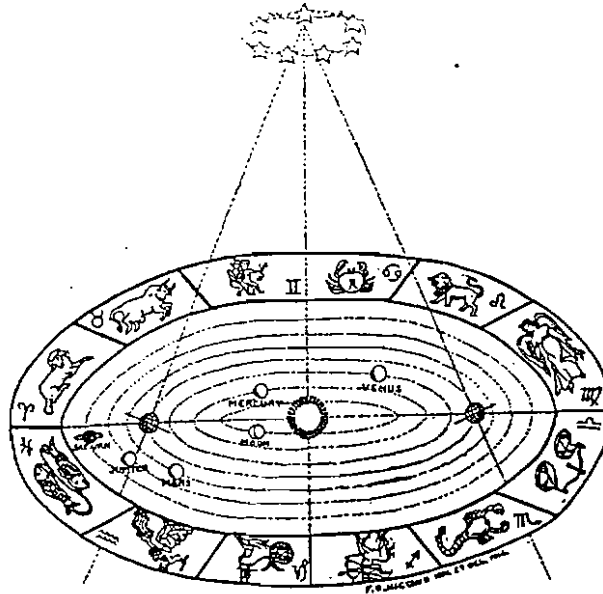
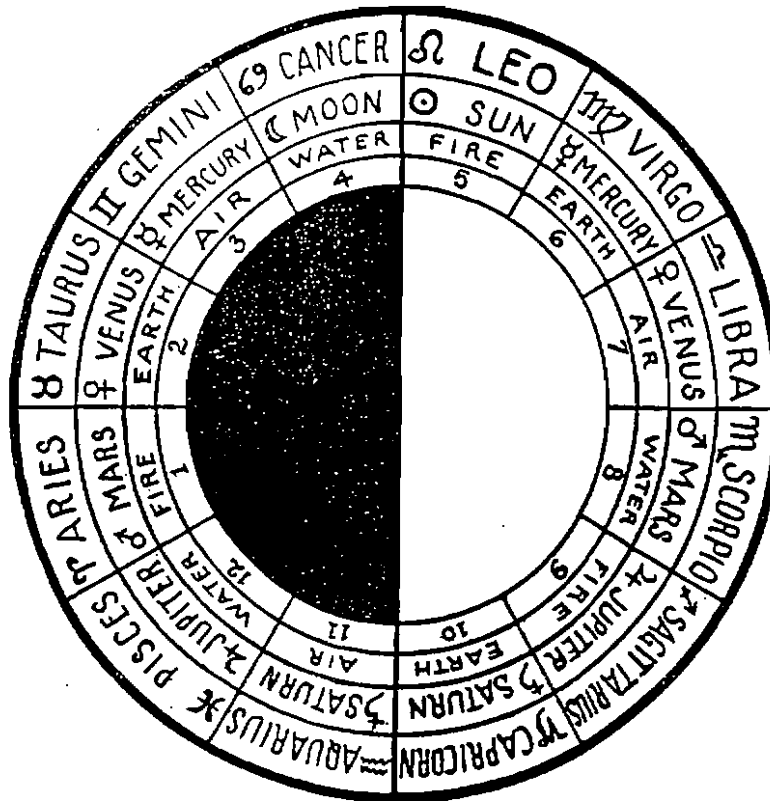


Figure 11 - The two Masonic pillars of Boaz and Jachin with globes.



The Universe, geometrical and cyclic according to the ancient Philosophers

Figure 12- The Zodiac Band relative to the Pole Star.



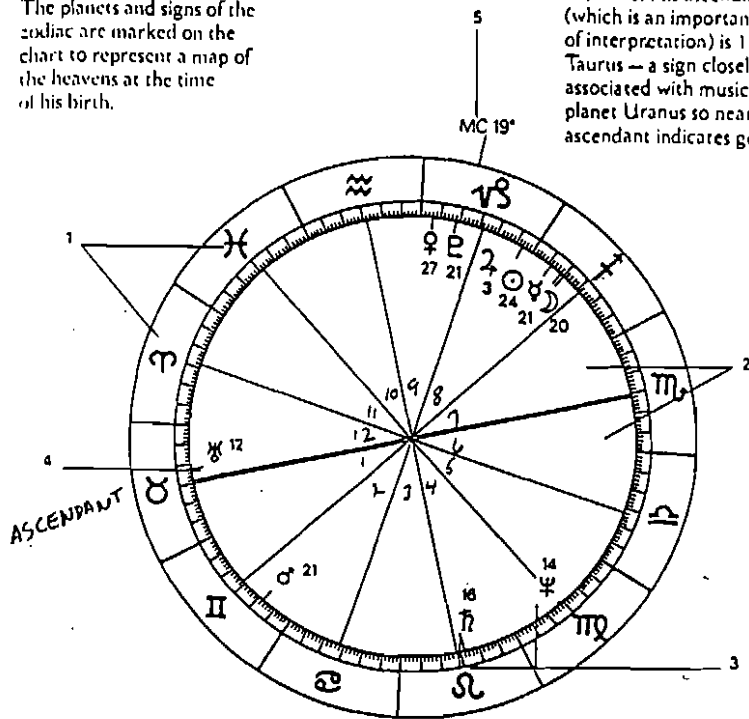
The Astrologically considered Universe of the ancient Mystics, showing the "Day" and "Night" domiciles of the planets and the "triplicities" of the four Elements.

Figure 13 - Astrological Division of day (sun) and night (moon).

The birthchart and its uses

This illustration shows Beethoven's birthchart, as set up by a modern astrologer. The planets and signs of the zodiac are marked on the chart to represent a map of the heavens at the time of his birth.

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn on December 16, 1770. His ascendant (which is an important point of interpretation) is 14° Taurus — a sign closely associated with music. The planet Uranus so near the ascendant indicates genius.



1 Signs of the zodiac.
2 These segments are called "houses."
3 Planets in the houses and signs that they occupied at

the time of Beethoven's birth.
4 The ascendant: the sign and degree of the zodiac that was rising at the time of birth.

5 The MC (medium coeli) is the sign and degree that was culminating at the midheaven at the time.

Glyphs of the signs

♈ Aries	♎ Libra
♉ Taurus	♏ Scorpio
♊ Gemini	♐ Sagittarius
♋ Cancer	♑ Capricorn
♌ Leo	♒ Aquarius
♍ Virgo	♓ Pisces

Glyphs of the planets

☉ Sun	♃ Jupiter
☾ Moon	♄ Saturn
☿ Mercury	♅ Uranus
♀ Venus	♆ Neptune
♂ Mars	♇ Pluto

Meaning of Glyphs

- - circle - Spirit, Giver of Life (sun)
Awareness, Being.
-) - half circle - Consciousness (moon)
Understanding, Feeling.
- + - cross - Matter, (earth).

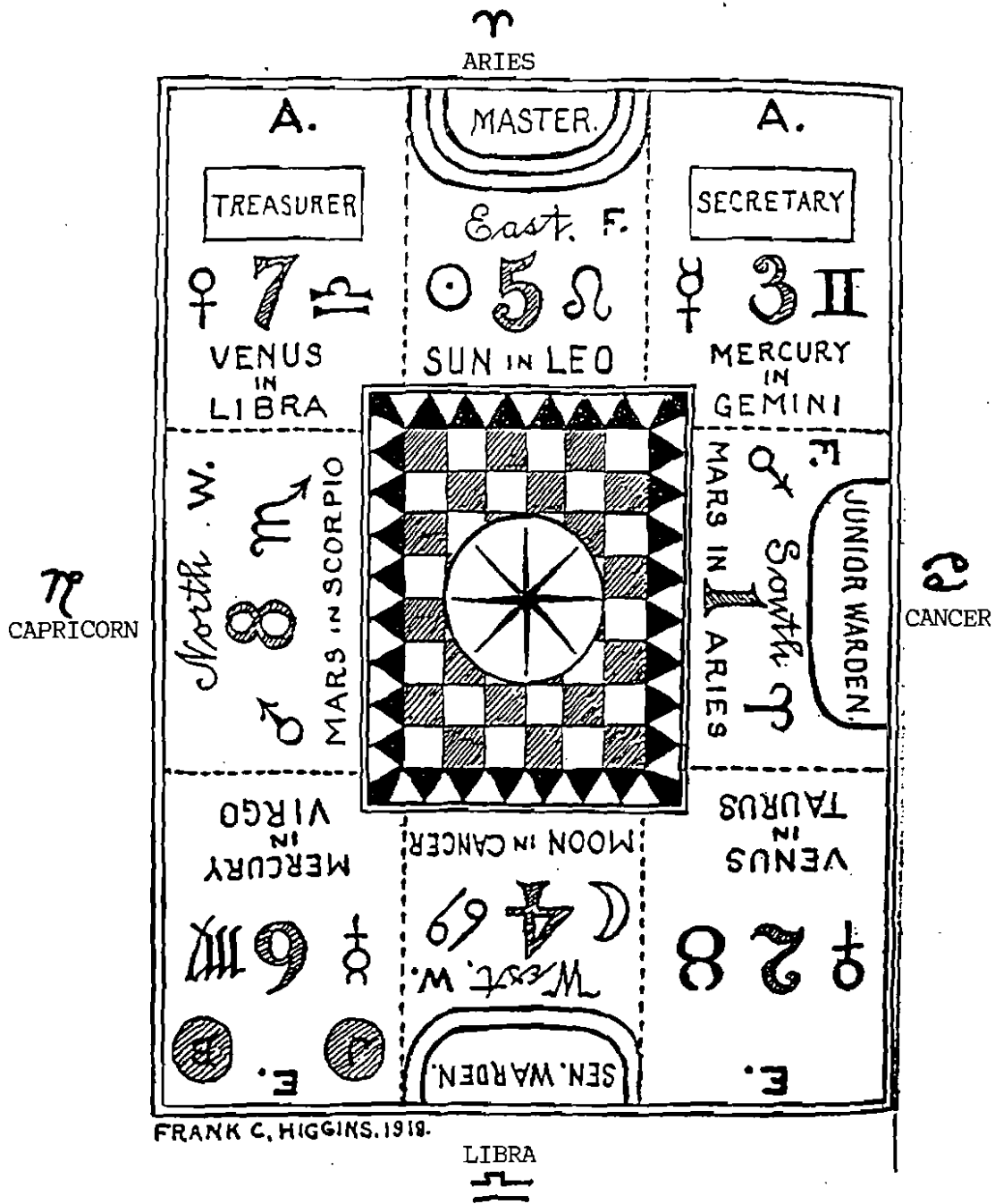


Figure 14. An astrological representation of a Masonic Lodge.

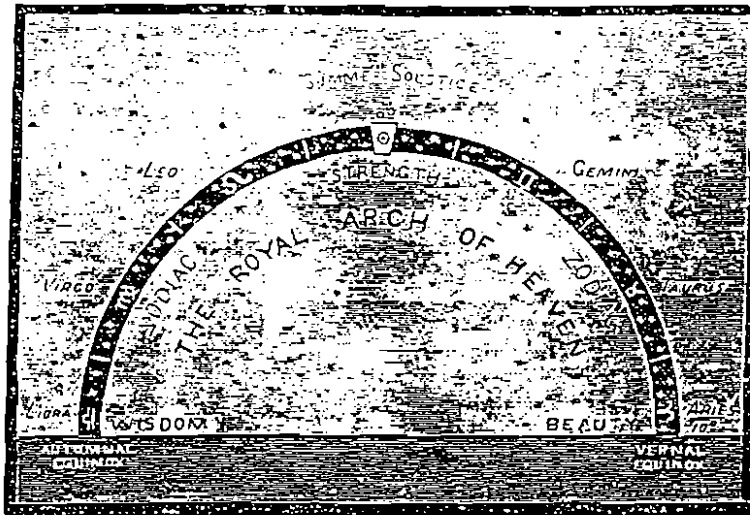
Figure 15 now moves into the astronomical and astrological representations of the Freemasonic Royal Arch. Here we see a depiction of the Royal Arch of Heavens, with the Keystone placed at the Summer Solstice Point, or the highest point in the Mid-heaven. The Royal Arch is the starry vault of the Heavens, or the great Zodiacal arch, reaching from the vernal to autumnal equinox. It is supported by the three cardinal signs of the Zodiac, namely Aries, Cancer, and Libra. Here are the three chairs of the Freemasonic Lodge overlooking the Lodge. They represent wisdom, strength and beauty. The Royal Arch is the canopy of the heavens overlooking, supporting, and guiding the Freemasonic Lodge.

At the mid-heaven point of the Royal Arch is the Great Masonic symbol, the Keystone, as shown in figure 16. The keystone is emblematic of strength, being the strongest part of an arch, binding the several parts together. It has the astronomical allusion to the summer solstice, or key of the zodiacal arch. A circle is inscribed in the masonic keystone, and is the astronomical sign, Egyptian hieroglyphic of the Sun. It is placed in the keystone to denote the sun in the summer solstice, exalted to the summit of the zodiacal arch. The keystone is an astronomical emblem of the mysteries of the summer solstice, or summit of the Royal Arch, after leaving which he is slain, and the body lost to the wintry signs. It is the legend of the lost keystone to be found again, bringing rebirth. Also, the North position in the Lodge is considered dark, as it is with the Royal Arch, the wintry sign of Capricorn concealing the Keystone, the Lost Word, and the body of our Grand Master Hiram Abif, to be found or reborn in the spiritual rebirth of the Sun, or Osiris at the Vernal or Spring Equinox of the sign of Aries the Ram. The great spiritual sacrifice has been fulfilled. Higgins asserts in his book *Ancient Freemasonry*, that the keystone was also the oldest Masonic amulet.

Considering the geometry of the Keystone, and the astronomical positions of the Pole Star, the fixed double star Polaris, in relation to the Sun and Earth, we arrive at a 23 and a half degree angle for the lateral sides of the Keystone. This angle is the axial inclination of the earth to the sun, and its characteristic internal triangles are the same as constitute the vertical section of the Great Pyramid of Gizeh and the side elevations of various Central American pyramids and North American Indian mounds. Ancient keystone relics have been found throughout the ancient world.

Figure 17 is another representation of the keystone, presented by George H. Steinmetz in his book *The Royal Arch, Its Hidden Meaning*. He puts forth the idea that the "perfect" keystone has lateral angles of 30 degrees and represents one of the houses, signs or sectors of the Zodiac in the astrological chart.

The next series of figures 18 through 21 are also important symbolic representations in the Royal Arch Degrees that have significant astrological and celestial meanings. The four veils and banners of the Royal Arch are represented by a Bull or Ox, a Lion, an Eagle, and a Man, which corresponds to the astrological fixed signs of, respectively, Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and



THE ROYAL ARCH

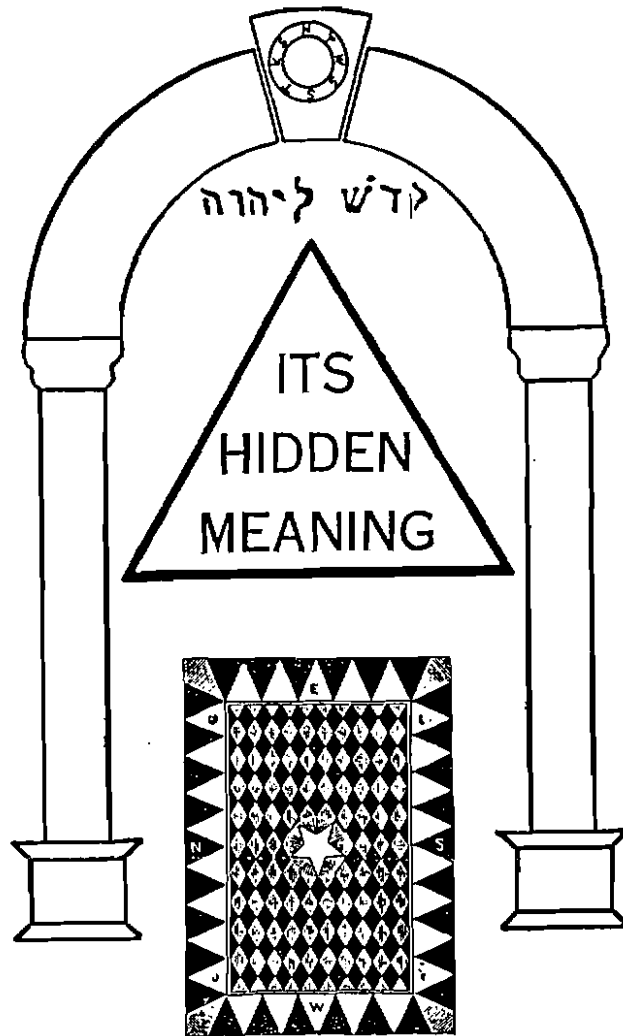
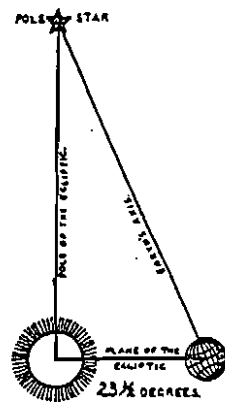
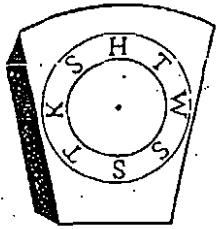
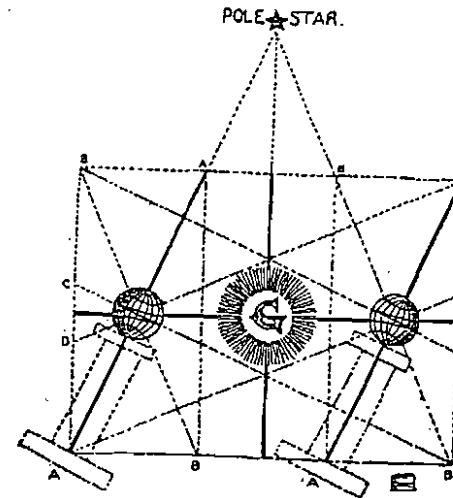


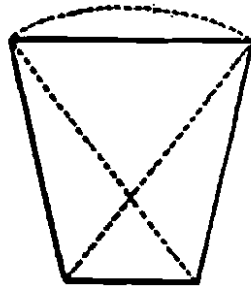
Figure 15. The celestial or "true meaning" of the Royal Arch.



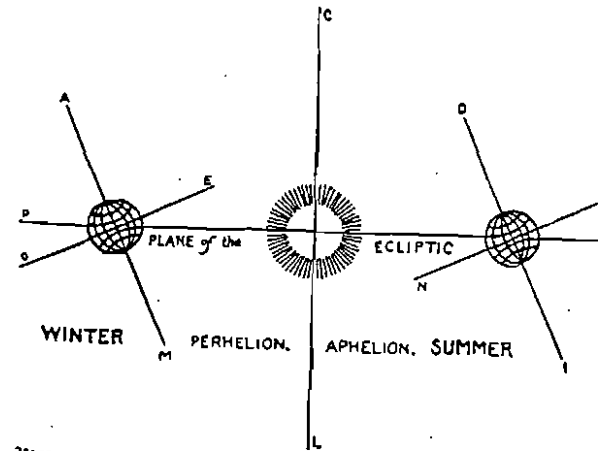
The Three Masonic Dots



Our crystalline geometrical universe, an oblong of 3x4



The geometrical characteristics of the Keystone



$23\frac{1}{4}^\circ$ inclination of the Earth to and from the Sun. The "Keystone" angle

Figure 16. The Masonic Royal Arch Keystone with a celestial interpretation of the angles.

Aquarius. This is also representative of the four elements of Hermetic and astrological principles of Fire, Water, Air and Earth.

As shown in Figure 18, the Christian Theology of the four astrological signs is that of St Matthew being symbolized by Man, air; St. Mark by the Lion, fire; St. Luke by the Bull, earth; and St John by the Eagle, water. The four veils are also representative of the four main tribes of Israel, that each are associated with an astrological sign. Figure 19 is the Royal Arch banner with the four signs or veils contained on its shield.

The Ark of the Covenant in Figure 20 has ancient significance to all the degrees of Freemasonry, but its origins are at least early Egyptian, alluding to the Sun God Osiris, his birth, death and rebirth.

Figure 21 shows the astronomical significance to the Triple Tau. By striking chords and perpendiculars to the Royal Arch, an astronomical Triple Tau can be arrived at, conveying the inherent meaning of the Royal Arch and the Equinox and Solstice points.

A stellar interpretation of the Northeast corner laying of the masonic lodge cornerstone can be derived from the position of the Sun relative to the lodge at the equinox and solstice points. This sequence is shown in Figure 22.

Figures 23 through 25 show further interpretation of masonic symbols as conveyed in the Trestle-boards. Figure 26 conveys several principles and lessons of Freemasonry as contained and derived from the knowledge and science of Astrology. The elements and qualities of the astrology are demonstrated from the Zodiac Chart or circle.

Figure 27. "As It Is Above, So It Is Below."

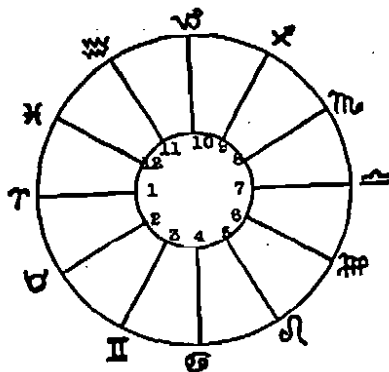


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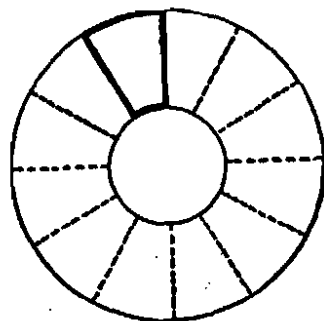


FIGURE. 2.

FIGURE 1. The Zodiac of Astrology with Symbols of the Twelve Signs.

FIGURE 2. The Keystone Demonstrated to be One-twelfth of the Circle, One Sign of the Zodiac.

PLATE No. 3

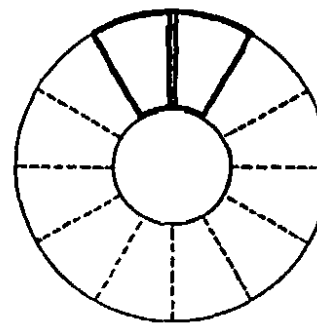


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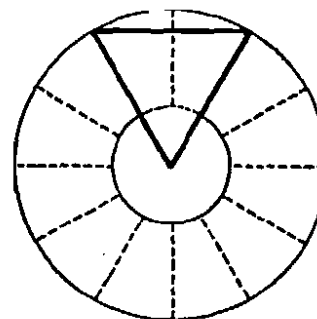


FIGURE: 2.

FIGURE 1. The Twin Keystones. Two Signs, One Sixth of the Circle.

FIGURE 2. The Lines Extended Form an Equilateral Triangle.

PLATE No. 4

Figure 17. An interpretation of the meaning and astrological significance of the Keystone.



The four Zodiacal signs with the lamb on an early Christian mosaic

Figure 18. A representation of the Freemasonic Royal Arch Degree's four veils.



Figure 19. Royal Arch Emblem

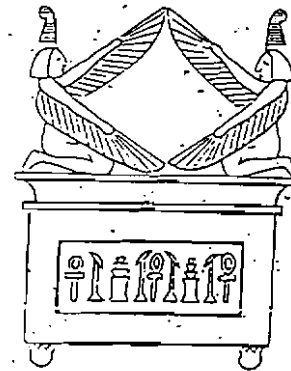
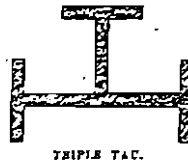


Figure 20. The Ark of the Covenant.



TRIPLE TAU.

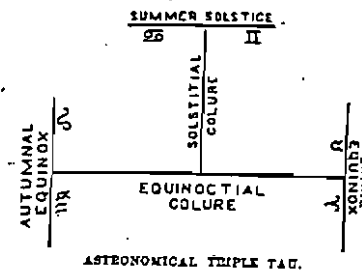
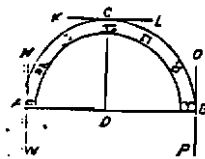
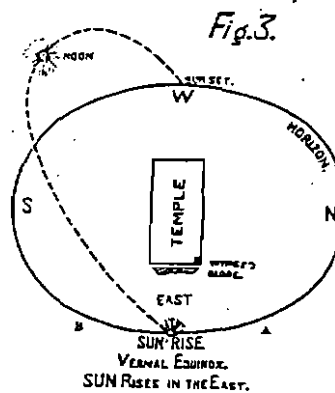
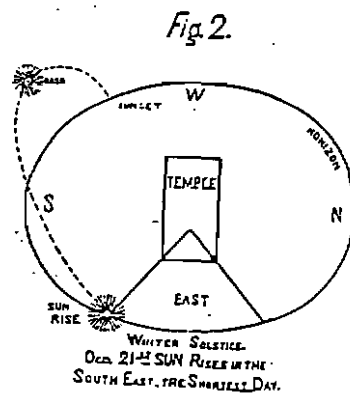
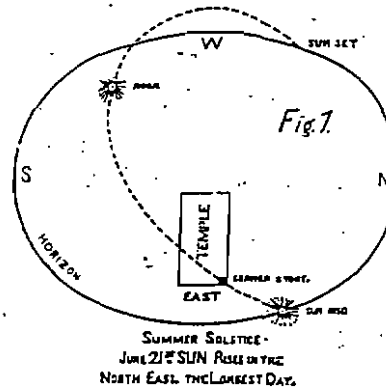
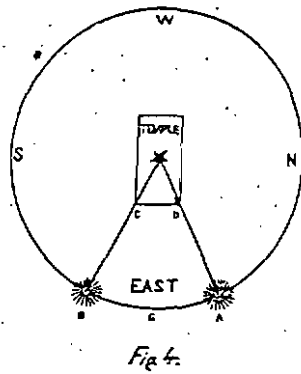
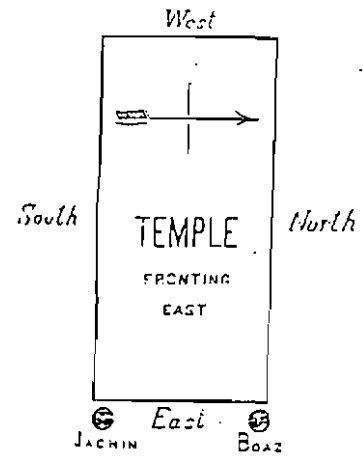
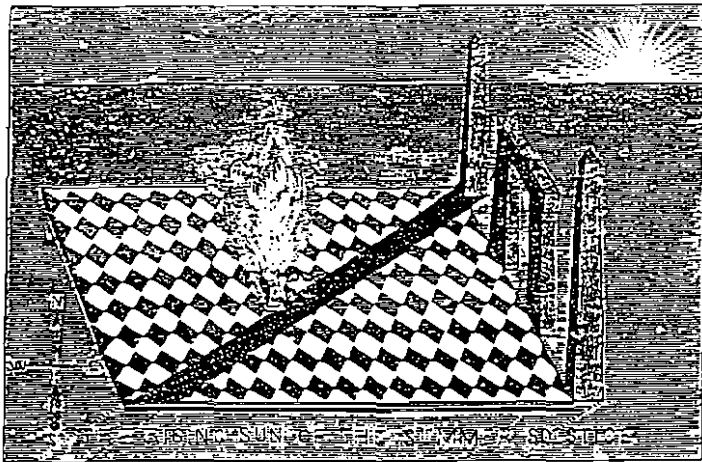


Figure 21. An astronomical/stellar interpretation of the Triple Tau.



WHY THE FIRST STONE WAS LAID IN THE NORTHEAST CORNER.—ITS CONNECTION WITH THE SOLSTITIAL AND EQUINOCTIAL POINTS.

Figure 22. A stellar interpretation of the Northeast corner laying of the Masonic Lodge cornerstone.

Figure 23. Masonic truéstleboard with stellar symbols and Jacob's Ladder.

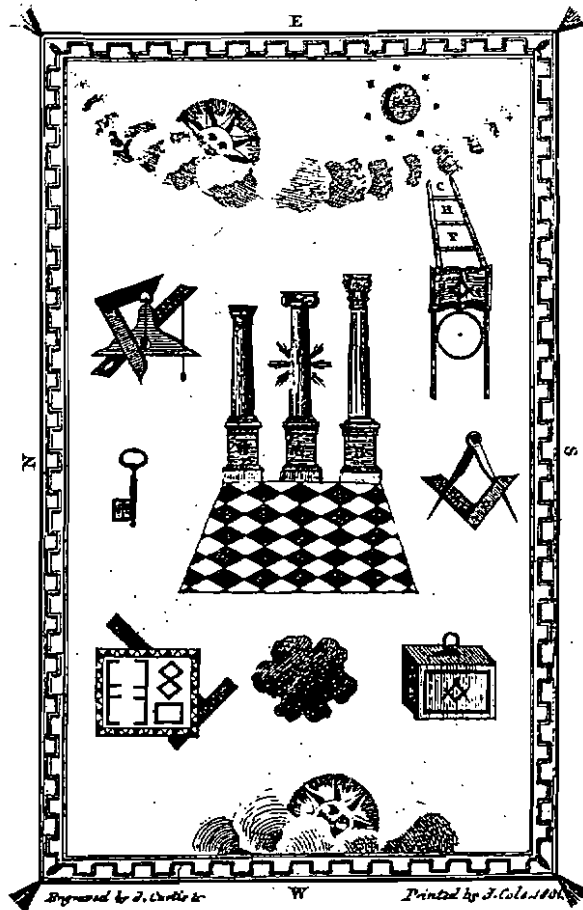


Figure 24. The celestial seven Liberal Arts.

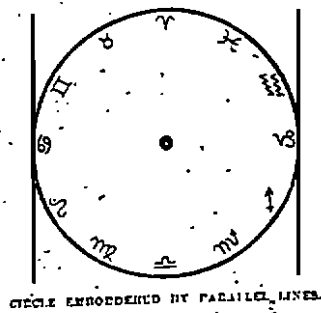
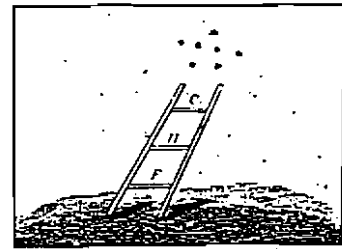
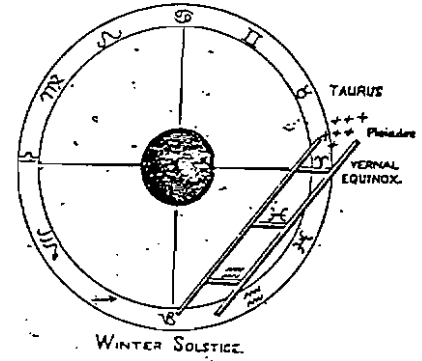


Figure 25. An astrological interpretation of Jacob's Ladder.

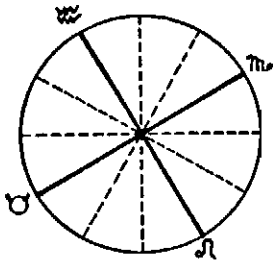


FIGURE. 1.

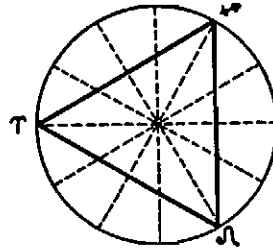


FIGURE. 2.

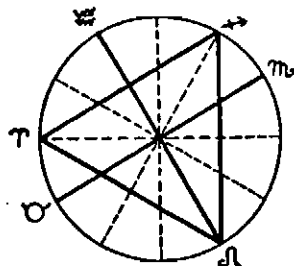


FIGURE. 3.

FIGURE 1. The Four Fixed Signs of the Zodiac Form the "Cross of Matter."

FIGURE 2. The Three Fiery Signs of the Zodiac Form the Spiritual Man.

FIGURE 3. Combined. The Spiritual Man "Crucified" Upon His "Cross of Matter."

PLATE No. 5

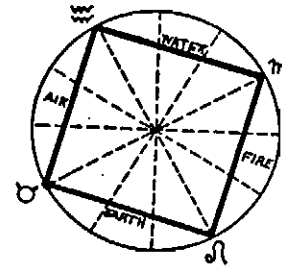


FIGURE. 1.

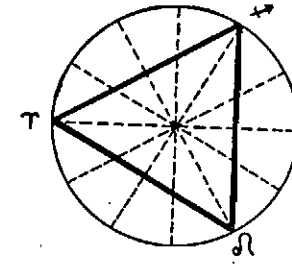


FIGURE. 2.

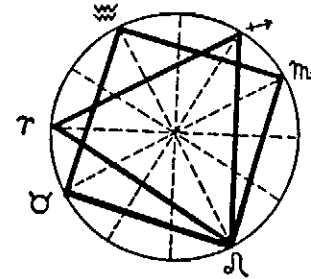


FIGURE. 3.

FIGURE 1. "Squared"—The Four Fixed Signs of the Zodiac Form the Four Material Bodies of Man.

FIGURE 2. "Trined"—The Three Fiery Signs of the Zodiac Form the Three Spiritual Bodies of Man.

FIGURE 3. "Combined"—The Seven Signs of the Zodiac Demonstrate the Seven-Fold Man. The Three Spiritual Bodies Imprisoned in Their Material Tomb.

PLATE No. 6

Figure 26. Masonic lessons and symbols contained in astrology and the elements/qualities of the signs.

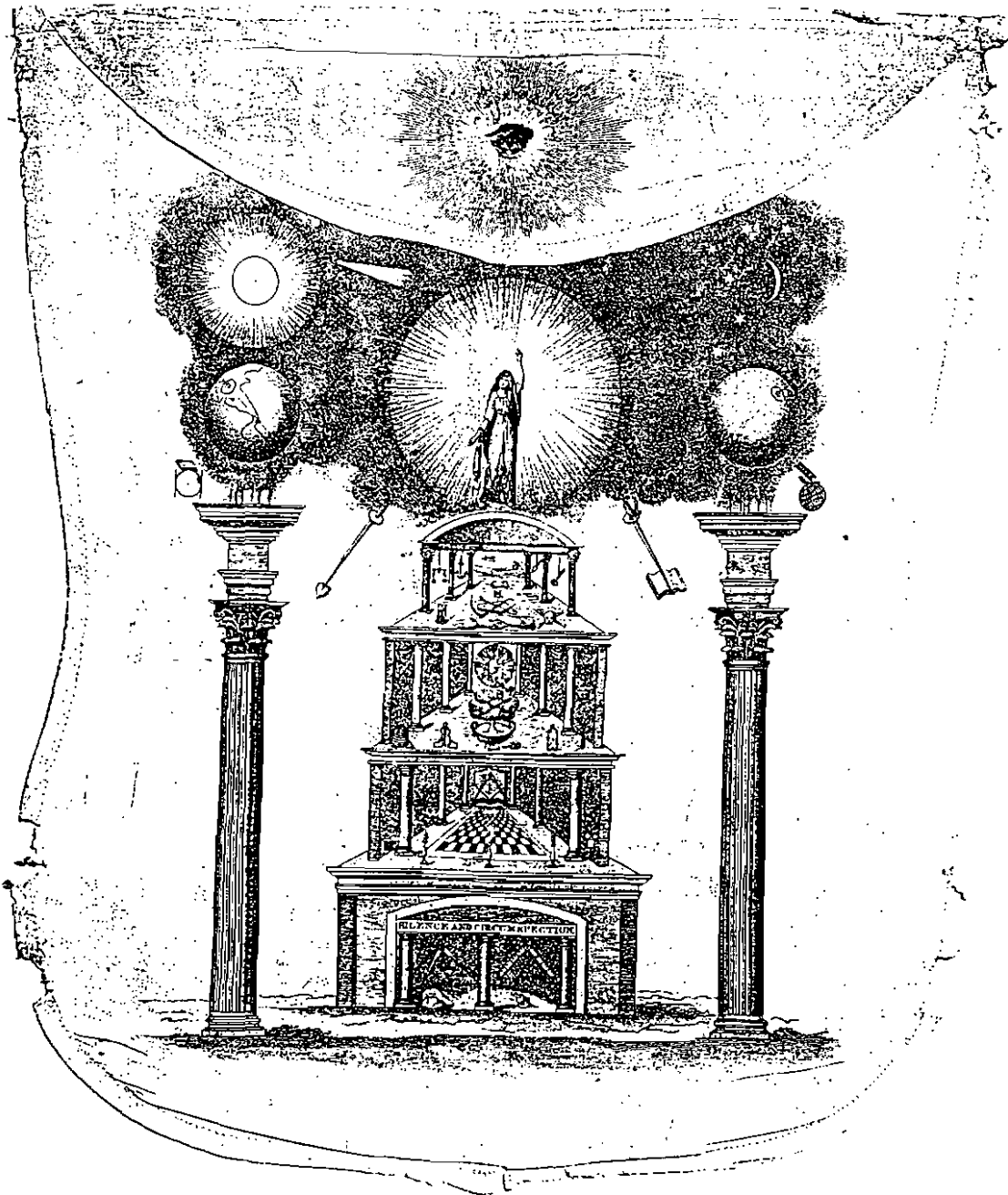


Figure 27. "As It Is Above!"
"So It Is Below!"