

**SYMBOLISM OF THE HOLY ROYAL ARCH JEWEL THE CHEQUERED PAVEMENT**

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Researching a number of sources dealing with the origins of the Masonic chequered pavement, it would appear that the symbology for this may possibly stem from ancient Greek symbolism's connected with the Dionysiac Rites. The Dionysian rites are believed by many researchers to have been venerated through ancient Greek history, right through to the emergence of the Roman empire. The cult was based on the Bacchic- Dionysian traditions and symbolism's which were dedicated to the science of building. They lived around 1000 B.C. and were known for their superb handiwork. The leader was one, Dionysius, who led his artisans in the construction of the amphitheatre associated with Greek drama and music. The interesting thing about them is the manner in which they protected their secrets. It seems that they conducted special rites and communicated them by means of secret signs etc. Legend or myth has it that they were employed by Solomon and Hiram, King of Tyre in the building of Solomon's temple. It seems certain that they built the Temple of Diana at Ephesus, and it seems rather well accepted that they spread their craftsmanship through the Mediterranean littoral.

The Dionysiac craft spread through the ancient empire states of Egypt, the Near East, and eventually with the rise of the Roman Empire reached England. They regarded temple architecture as possessing symmetry and proportion. They perfected the architecture for spans, lintels, arches and domes. Certain temples were initially columned by Doric columns. Corinthian columns were allotted to other special temples while the Ionic columns are believed by some authorities to have been founded upon astronomical principles. One of the legends concerning the origins of the Ionic column tells the story of the principal architect of the day in Athens was searching for inspiration for anew style relate to the Acropolis, it is said was laid out to assimilate the shape of the famous asterism known as the Pleiades, or Seven Sisters.

Hall believes that the Dionysian tradition continued into the mediaeval times in Europe, and constructed the early types of religious architecture such as abbeys and churches. He also attributes the Roman Collegia were derived from the Dionysians. He believes that the chequered pavement in Masonic Lodges originates with the Dionysians, who in mediaeval times called themselves as the Sons of Solomon, motified by the interlaced triangles. There is even a suggestion the that the Knights Templars were associated with them. In transmitting the tradition to Freemasonry, the Dionysians passed the traditions of the secrets of symbolic architecture to Freemasonry. With them passed on the symbols now associated with Freemasonry- the chief symbolism being that of the unfinished temple of civilisation. They used the symbolism's of the rough and perfect ashlar.

If one were to regard the above description has being without credence, then let me refer you to Mackey , who devotes a complete chapter to the Dionysians. He goes one further to describe the festivities constituted dissolute and licentious behaviour. He goes on to describe the various differences between the regional groups of this sect, as it were. However, he also agrees with Hall that they were a society of architects and builders. He even attributes the myth of the slain builder to the Dionysian artificers. However, he does not make any mention of the chequered pavement.

REFERENCES

1. Hall, M. P., 1977, Secret Teachings of All Ages, 164-165, The Philisodphical Research Society, Inc, Los Angeles.
2. Mackey, A. G., 1975, Symbolism of Freemasonry, Chap., 6, Charles T. Powne, Chicago.