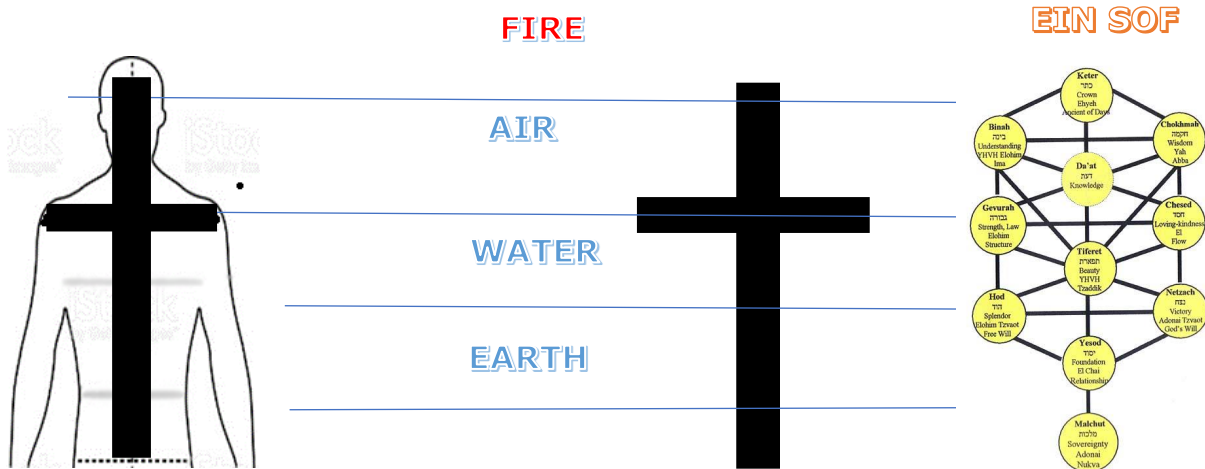


'In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen'

By Frater Edgar Fentum IX Grade
Golden State College S.R.I.C.F.
Presented November 17, 2019

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"In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti", "Amen".



Before I make my presentation, I need to clarify my use of symbolism and the basis upon which it is structured. Symbolism is entirely subjective and depends upon an individual's knowledge, understanding and interpretation of both the exoteric and the esoteric. As such, each individual may interpret a symbol in different ways depending upon their own perception and context in which it appears.

Albert Pike (1809 -91) 33° Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite defined:

'Symbolism should be considered from a moral, political (*sociological*), philosophical and spiritual perspective.'

Alex Horne NCRL 33° in his book 'Sources of Masonic Symbolism' defined as: '...something unusually spiritual or immaterial...'

Daniel Beresniak states that Symbolism '*must be approached through an internal search and introspection based upon acquired knowledge*'. He refers to the Socratic aphorism '*Know thyself and thou shall know the world*'.

Adam McClain, Scottish Masonic scholar and alchemist, in his 24 lessons, explains in great detail that the alchemical symbolism contained in alchemical texts are mostly in the form of allegories with complexities that requires intense study. He further explains that different objects in different contexts can mean different things and understanding these variations requires a profound knowledge.

The basis of my symbolism is quite modest in comparison, it is to draw upon the wisdom of others and from them draw my own conclusions. As such, my study has taken me into Hermeticism, Neoplatonism, Epicureanism, Gnosticism and later both Alchemy and the Kabbalah that forms what is referred to as the Western Mystical Tradition. I have also sort information from Eastern religions and philosophies to expand my understanding.

I do not claim to be an authority of any. I may even, say that my knowledge is superficial. The difference between a symbol and an emblem is that a symbol is invested with deeper meaning, both spiritual and emotional, than an emblem. That, as stated above, can vary according to the context in which the symbol or emblem is found.

The first introduction to the Western Mystical Tradition of esoteric symbolism emerged from Greece and Egypt with the discovery of the Emerald Tablets attributed to Hermes Trismegistus; who was also known as Thoth in Egypt. Hermeticism from the *prisca theologia*, affirms the existence of a single, true theology that is present in all religions and that was given by God to man. By the 3rd Century A.D. some aspects were absorbed into Christian, Judaism with the Kabbalistic teachings and later into Islam. The maxim 'As above – so below' is taken from the Emerald Tablets attributed to Hermes: *"That which is Below corresponds to that which is Above, and that which is Above corresponds to that which is Below, to accomplish the miracle of the One Thing."*

The Jewish tradition of the Kabbalah was transformed into the Christian Cabala during the Italian Renaissance of the 15th Century. The ten Sefirot's were used to link Jesus and his resurrection and atonement. The three upper sefirot represent for the Trinity in the World of Spirituality. From these also emerged the Four Worlds: Material at the base, Formation, Creation (Intellectual) and Spiritual. The Quintessence is the Ein Sof. It also created the FOUR WORLDS.

1. The World of Spirituality referred to as ATZILUT
Neo-Platonism refers to it as the ONE
2. The world of creation referred to as BRIAH
Neo-Platonism consider it as the Intelligible
3. The world of formation referred to as YETZIRAH
Neo-Platonism defines this as the Soul
4. The world of action (Materiality) ASSIAH

Neo-Platonism designates this as Matter

Neo-Platonism from the early 3rd Century was derived from the philosophy of Plato, as interpreted by Plotinus from the teachings of Porphyry. He developed the concept of the 'One' the 'Soul' and the 'All'. It explains Emanations that travel by way of the spirit from the ONE to the ALL. Neo-Platonism respects God; respect humanity; respect a return of the Soul to the Divine; respect other religions when these religions and beliefs are based upon the concept of a benevolent God and an afterlife. It influenced the Renaissance and was absorbed into the existing beliefs of Christianity and other religions.

St Augustine (354-430) found in Neo-Platonism a philosophy that correlated with Christianity. Richard Tarnas states '*Plotinus's philosophy was pivotal in Augustine's gradual conversion to Christianity*'. St. Augustine was a Neo-Platonist during the middle period of his life. Nowhere in Plotinus's philosophy does he mention a 'savior' to intercede between God and Humanity and this was where St. Augustine found a problem. St. Augustine wrote: '*It was somewhat after this, I admit, that I learned how, with regards to those words "The Word was made flesh, Catholic truth is distinguished from the false teachings of Plotinus*'.¹ Nonetheless, Neo-Platonism found its way into the Augustinian teaching and greatly influenced Christian doctrine and Western thinking. The diagram gives a view as to the way this works

Neo-Platonism showing the EMINATIONS from the ONE through the SPIRIT and then to the SOUL in the Material World. Masons will recognize this as "*from the point (God) to a line (Spirit) from a line to a superface (SOUL) and from a superface to a solid HUMAN*)."

Crucifixion is believed to have been brought by the Phoenicians in around the 6th Century B.C. and may have been derived from similar forms of execution in Africa where a tree was used. The Romans developed the torture over the next 500 years until it was abolished by Constantine the Great in around 325 A.D. It was considered as the most brutal and shameful form of death. The Romans used it only upon foreigners and on their own citizens for extreme cases of treason.

Historically, there is some doubt that Jesus was crucified on a cross as we know it but rather on an upright wood stake or a 'T' shape (Tau).

The cross as a symbol of Christianity did not emerge in common usage until around 320 A.D. In 79 A.D. Pompeii was destroyed by a volcanic eruption and there are indications that Christians and Jews were resident. St. Paul visit near the area in 61 A.D. and stayed with 'brethren'. In Pompeii, some 30 miles away, there are signs of crosses in the form of the Tau²:



¹ The Confessions of St. Augustine Book 7 – Ch. 1 -19.

² Bruce W. Longenecker 'The Cross of Pompeii'

In the catacombs of St. Calixtus in Rome there is very little evidence of the sign of the Cross. These engravings date from 150 A.D. to about 400 A.D. The most common symbols are the fish, (Matt: 4:19 *'I will make you fishers of men'*), Chi Rho, Alpha Omega, dove, anchor, peacock, pelican and others.

Another theory is that early Christian avoided being considered worshipers of a symbol of death. The Jews in 63 B.C., after many Jews had been crucified, regarded the cross and crucifixion with scorn and shame as a most evil and demeaning punishment.

There is evidence that the Christian Cross, in those early years, was concealed and used by the select few. There are many reports of the cross as a symbol in the form we know in use as early as 200 A.D.³

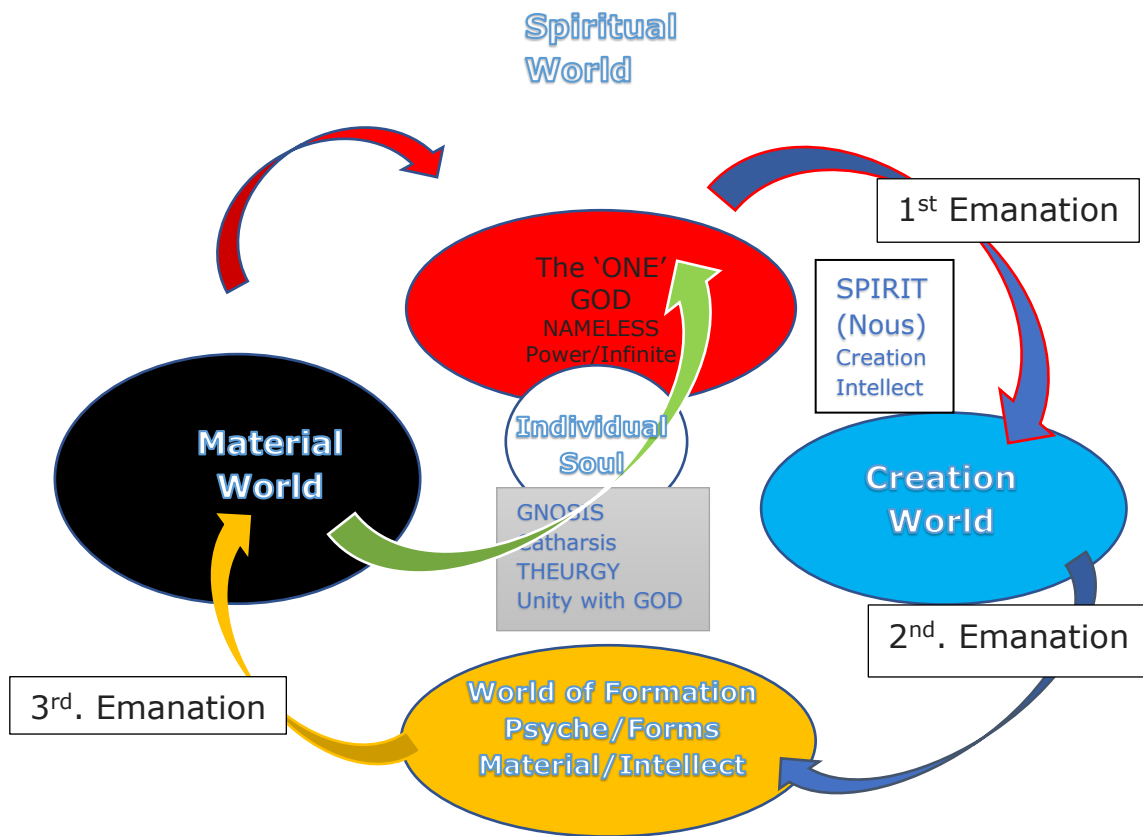
The emergence of the Christian Cross in the 4th and 5th Century has many variants. The general and open use emerged during the reign of Constantine the Great (306 A.D. to 327 A.D.). It is believed that Constantine saw the cross in the heavens with the letters IHSV (*In hoc signo vinces* – *'In this sign thou shall conquer'*) before the Battle of Milvern Bridge in 312 that resulted in his victory. He then became the Emperor of the Roman Empire of the East and West. It is stated that he later converted to Christianity although there is some doubt as to when!

Constantine presided at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. when the first Christian Doctrine was adopted and the Nicæan Creed established. The adoption of the Christian cross has a deep symbolic significance. The shape and form of the cross appears as the Ankh in Egyptian mythology, that goes back to about 3000 B.C. and was considered a symbol of eternal life.

The **ankh** (/ˈæŋk/ or /ˈɑːŋk/; **Egyptian** ḥ), also known as *crux ansata* (the Latin for "cross with a handle") is an ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic ideograph symbolizing "life". The Egyptian gods are often portrayed carrying it by its loop, or bearing one in each hand, arms crossed over their chest.

There is no evidence that for the first 300 years after Christ's death, those claiming to be Christians used the cross in worship. In the fourth century, however, pagan Emperor Constantine became a convert to apostate Christianity and promoted the cross as its symbol. Whatever Constantine's motives, the cross had nothing to do with Jesus Christ. The cross is, in fact, pagan in origin.

³ 200 AD Tetullian used the sign of the Cross on his forehead. Hippolytus records that bishops used the sign.



Which now brings me to the title of this Paper.

These various influences impart to giving the sign of the Cross on one's own body a level of deep significance. It becomes a truly pious sign. It can also serve to focus the mind on the conscious and internalize the sign towards intensify prayer.

The Western Church does not teach how to pray. Many Churches are more concerned with the Sermon, raising finances and creating social friendships than teaching prayer.

There are three levels of Prayer that are commonly recognized: ORAL, MENTAL and MEDITATIVE. I regard Oral Prayer to be that shared in a Community worship. An established form of Liturgy enables the participant not just to form the words, but understand their import. That is why the Liturgy should be in a form that is easily recognized, understood and repeated. It takes time to listen to the word and interpret not just the meaning but to communicate the concepts and relate them with the internal Soul. When this is achieved the level of the Prayer is understood by the brain and resounds with the support of those around speaking the same words. This communal Prayer gives a sense of purpose, belonging and combines to form a group energy. Matthew 20 *'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'* Changes from Latin to the native language has greatly enhanced this process. Yet, to

me certain Latin phrases that I understand have a significant and spiritual import.

Mental Prayer comes with practice when the words need not be spoken aloud or read aloud. The eradication of external distractions allows the brain to focus on the Prayer and so internalize. This is the first stage towards meditation when the communion is directed to a higher level. Through mental prayer one can create pathways that lead towards the emergences of consciousness directly into the Soul.

Meditative Prayer may rise to various levels that depends upon the individual's ability to focus, remove distractions and commune directly at a higher level. Most Christian Religions discount this form and even disapprove its use.

Apart from the obvious sign of the cross as a symbol of the crucifixion of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, there are other ways in which the sign can intensify its meaning and be internalized.

Making the SIGN OF THE CROSS ON YOUR BODY

'In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit'

This is a powerful symbol as it imprints upon the body the whole religious belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. There are variations as to how the sign is given and the position of the fingers of the right hand in giving the sign. The sign is used on the forehead in certain circumstances, such as, baptisms. This sign should be given with great reverence and thought. We often see it used in a perfunctory way, almost as a superstition token, to allow the individual to gain supremacy at sport!

The upper point on the forehead is a reminder of the transcendence⁴ of the Father who is the Creator and exists in the Spiritual world. The second point at the navel is a reminder that he sent his Son into the Material World. *'As above – so below'*. The Son represents the Immanence⁵ of his presence through the line on the body that is traced from the Father. This line to me represents the Holy Spirit descending from the Father and personified by the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ. It shows that the way to the Father is through the Son.

The line from the forehead to the middle of the body represents the Holy Spirit and the communication or first Emanation from the Spiritual World. It passes though Creation and Formation to the Materiality world of our existence where Jesus Christ lived and died for the redemption of the world. It emphasizes that it is through Jesus Christ we communicate with the Father.

⁴ The transcendence of God is a subject that requires more that the time I have available. Briefly summarized it indicates that God (ONE) is above beyond and separate from ALL He create.

⁵ God in his Immanence is the preserver and exists in the ALL but is separated by being beyond and above the all.

In Matthew 18 we see a suggestion of the Hermetic maxim '*As Above – so Below*'. '*Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven*'. That line also is depicted in the Kabbalah the Tree of Life as the line of Harmony and Beauty.

The third touch on the right shoulder and then on the left delineates the division of the Holy Spirit separating the World of Creation from the world of Spirituality. It also touches the Pillar of Wisdom (represented by the Holy Gospel) and the Pillar of Strength (that represents the energy of the Spirit). In this instance, for my own understanding, I have reversed the Tree of life to a position that I am standing behind. The line that crosses the line of the Spirit as in forming the horizontal line of the Cross has many potent implications of transition that are too numerous to discuss in this short Paper. The two pillars of Wisdom and Strength also represents female and male.

The final touch on the center of the body has many symbolic implications. To me it is the quintessence of the entire symbol linking it with my soul. Many make the sign to the lips and that also has many interpretations. In a meditative mode making the cross opens the periphery to a deeper level of prayer.

As I have indicated the World of Spirituality (Atzilut) exists in the Father and the Palaces of Heaven (Ein Sof). This is where the 'I' and 'I am' from the Spirit begins to travel and pervades all nature. However, the Father remains remote as the Creator (Transcendence) and allows access through the Spirit by way of the Son (Immanence).

Above the line of the cross is the World of Creation (Briah). The world of Archangels and the world of Knowledge and realization of the Intellect and the Conscious. This is preparatory to the Ultimate Spirituality through intervention. It is the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit that creates and combines the male and female forces with the Soul that creates the 'I am'.

The line that passes from right to left not only divides but can be interpreted as passing from one level through Spirituality to the unknown – To quote English ritual '*...that mysterious veil through which the eye of human reason cannot penetrate unless assisted by that light which is from above*'.

Below the line is the World of Formation (Yetzirah). This is where we equate both Passive and active Emotional Complexes that find a way to the Tiphareth (Beauty/Self). This is the realm of the imagination where the energy expresses itself through symbols and images and the re-discovery of individuality to conform to the needs of the society in which we dwell by sublimation of ego and Id through the disciplines of meditation and prayer. In this zone we find harmony and balance of all the forces of nature that are within us.

Aspects of 'Moral Causation' are sometimes referred to as 'Karma'. And relates in both a physical sense and moral perspective that every conceived

thought or action leads to another conceived thought or action or reaction. Moral causation is why we are seated in this room.

The Material World (Assiah) is where we find our identity from birth and develop an understanding of moral and conscious precepts. Plotinus recognized GNOSIS - 'Knowledge' attained through four ways:

1. Sense – of truth '*elaborates them to visibility*'
2. Reason – of things '*Soul is the reason-Principle*'
3. Intellect – of ourselves '*to have intuition by memory*'
4. Ecstasy in a spiritual context is of the supernatural (God is One and Creation is varied so to commune with Him. It is a two-way street with many obstacles and failures but has many transitory triumphs). Buddhists refer to this as 'Nirvana' and Christians as 'Communion with the Saints'.

This Material World is forever changing and is it only through a spiritual 'touchstone' that we can progress through the Four Worlds to a communion with God. That 'touchstone' for us is Jesus Christ. Our Lord and Saviour.

Mary Ann Atwood states: "*There are three things necessary for the attainment of Hermetic science: viz., study, experience and the divine benediction; and these depend upon each other; study is required for the theory and this for entering into the central experience, which in the Universal Spirit, is not found without God.*"

Cosimo Di Medici (1389 – 1464) in Florence, Italy was the patron who was responsible for the restoration of ancient texts that he acquired from an Islamic library where they had been preserved during the dark ages when many old texts were destroyed. Islamic scholars saved many texts when the barbaric forces of the Dark Ages was destroying culture. The Emerald Tablets is one example.

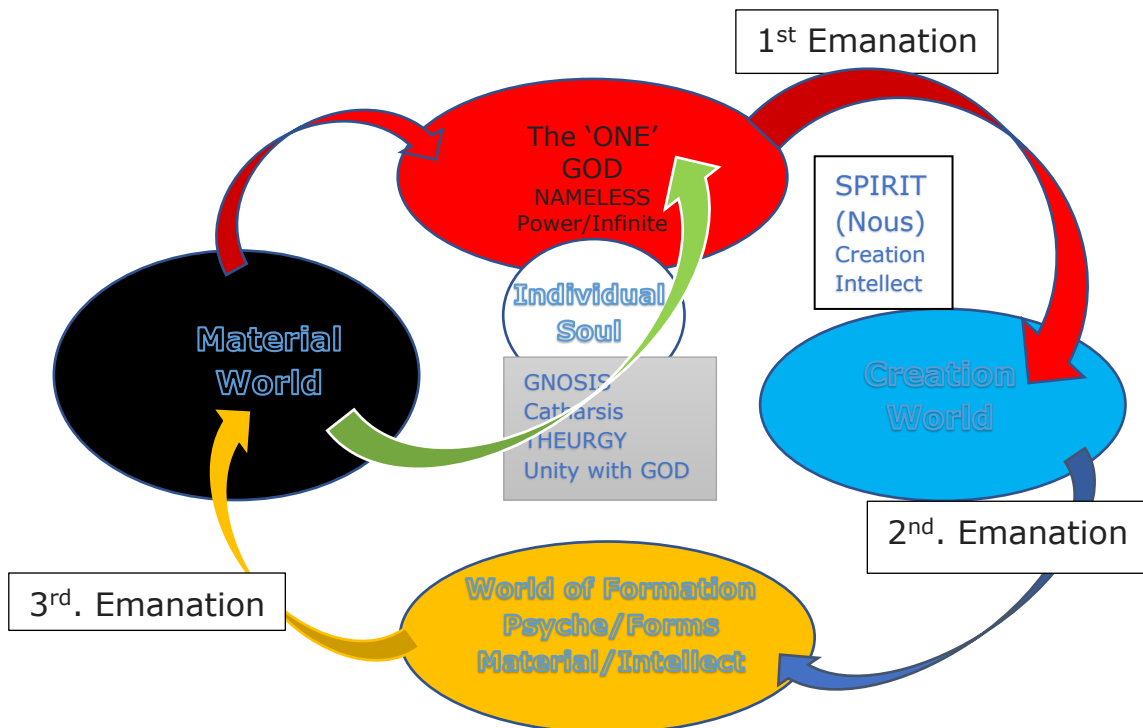
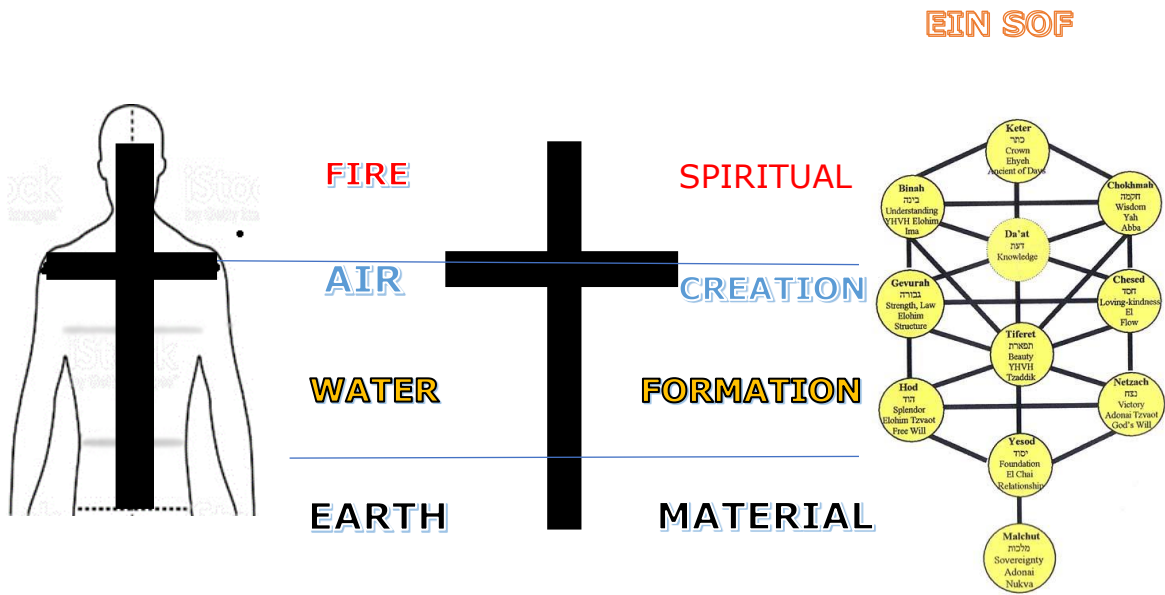
These were translated from Greek into Latin by Pico della Marandola and expanded by Marsilo Ficino. The Renaissance developed and merged into the Reformation and into Age of Enlightenment in the 17th/18th Century.

The Apocryphal gospel of Mary and Philip (for what they are worth!) are full of Hermetic and Neoplatonist concepts. That shows these concepts were known and understood in the early 2nd and 3rd Century A.D.

There is a vast study of Apotropaic ritual signs and symbols that are found in many religions and obscure groups of individuals who use them to ward of evil and superstitions. Too vast for me to cover in this paper!

HAND OUT ATTACHED:

"In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti", "Amen".



Difference between a Masonic Lodge and a College

1. No Altar in the center of the College
2. No obligation only Pledge of Honor
3. No penalties
4. No Bible, square and compasses
5. No Working Tools
6. No step just the 'seven steps of wisdom' to the symbolic center. Both are worthy of deep consideration.
7. Sign but no instruction as to when and to whom it should be given. It is the custom to give the sign to the Celebrant when addressing him.
8. No mention of degrees only Grades and Orders. You were 'elevated' to the Grade of Zelator and awarded the Grades of Theoricus, Practicus and Philosophus, numbered in Roman as I, II, III and IV.
9. No mention of King Solomon's Temple

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"In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti", "[Amen](#)".