

## The Triple Tau in Freemasonry

The emblem of the Royal Arch Degree is called the Triple Tau, and is a figure consisting of three tau crosses. The Tau Cross, or Cross of St. Anthony, is a cross in the form of a Greek T. The Triple Tau is a figure formed by three of these crosses meeting in a point, and therefore resembling a letter T resting on the traverse bar of an H. This emblem, placed in the center of a Triangle and Circle - both emblems of Deity - constitutes the jewel of the Royal Arch as practiced in England, where it is so highly esteemed as to be called the "emblem of all emblems," and "the grand emblem of Royal Arch Masonry."

It was adopted in the same form as the Royal Arch badge, by the General Grand Chapter of the United States of America at a meeting in Chicago in 1859. The original signification of this emblem has been variously explained. Some suppose it to include the initials of the Temple of Jerusalem, T. H., Templum Hierosolymae; others, that it is a symbol of the mystical union of the Father and Son, H, signifying Jehovah, and T, or the cross, the Son. A writer in Moore's Magazine ingeniously supposes it to be a representation of three T-Squares, and that it alludes to the three jewels of the three ancient Grand Masters. It has also been said that it is the monogram of Hiram of Tyre; and other assert that it is only a modification of the Hebrew letter shin, which was one of the Jewish abbreviations of the sacred name.

The equilateral triangle is a symbol of divine union, and was much revered by ancient nations as containing the greatest and most abstruse mysteries, and as a symbol of God, denoting a Triad of Intelligence, a Triad of Deity, a Triune God. Moreover, the Tetragrammaton, or incommunicable name was written by the Jews in a triangular form: the initial letter denoting the thought, the idea of God, a ray of light too transcendent to be contemplated by mortal eye; this name of God, the Tetragrammaton, could not be more aptly placed than in the symbol, or triangle, itself and hence the true meaning of the Royal Arch double triangle, but originally represented thus so that while this sacred emblem was deservedly revered by the Jews, both it and the double triangle itself are adopted as Royal Arch symbols.

The Circle is an emblem of eternity having neither beginning nor end, and reminds us of the purity, wisdom, and glory of the Omnipotent, which is without beginning or end.

A society of Royal Arch Masons is called a Chapter, and not a Lodge, as in the previous Degrees. All Chapters of Royal Arch Masons are "dedicated to Zerubbabel," and the symbolic color of this Degree is scarlet.