

Cryptic Rite Masonry

With thanks to Western Grand Council of Cryptic Rite



PowerPoint by R. Ill. Comp. W. Bruce Miller

**Grand Council
Royal & Select Masters
of Ontario**



*The Grand Council
of Royal & Select Masters of Ontario,*

Is comprised of 22 Cryptic Rite Councils.

- ★ Other regular Jurisdictions include Western & Eastern Jurisdiction of Canada, England, Germany, Israel, Philippines, Scotland, & 49 in the USA.

*They present the degrees of Royal Master &
Select Master*

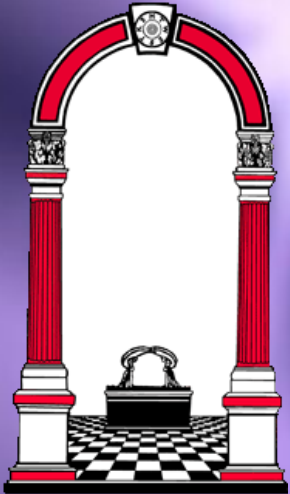
- ✦ Provides access to the degrees of Super Excellent Master & Royal Ark Mariner
- ✦ Four of the most beautiful & fascinating in Freemasonry.



*The first two,
Royal Master & Select Master,
are Cryptic in nature & content.*

- ✦ They explain how the Lost Word of the Master Mason degree,
- ✦ Was rediscovered in Royal Arch degree,
- ✦ Was preserved in the first place





*- in the crypt or secret vault under
Solomon's Temple.*

- ✦ They focus on the core material of Ancient Craft Masonry, without Christian or military emphasis,
- ✦ **Completes the explanation of our Fraternity's most powerful legend.**

He who seeks more light in Masonry -



- ✦ Further enlightenment towards Truth -
- ✦ His enthusiasm will be welcomed & matched by Companions who wish to share with him something very special.

The Cryptic Rite

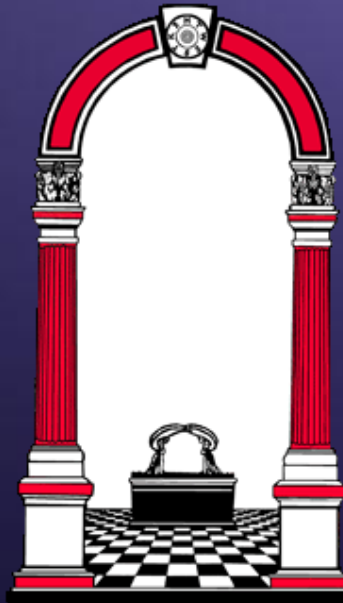


Symbolic Freemasonry, in the Lodge,



- ✦ Begins the powerful story of how the Word was lost, & another substituted.

Capitular Masonry, in the Chapter,



- ✦ Rediscovered the Word, through secrets found in a Crypt under an Arch.

The Cryptic Rite, in the Council,



- ✦ Tells how & why those secrets were preserved there.

The story - Freemasonry's great allegory
- becomes clear & complete, & all the
more powerful & effective.

Those who experience that sense of completion

- ✦ Help sustain the ongoing effort to share it with others,
- ✦ To help complete "the Circle of Perfection of Ancient Craft Masonry".

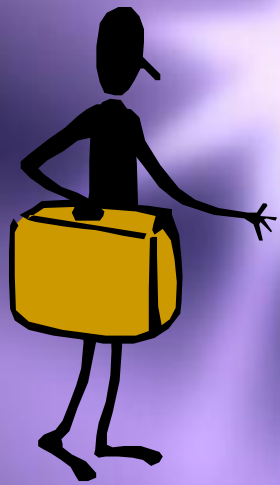


*Councils of Royal & Select Masters are
made up of Masons who:*



- ✦ Recognize inherent values of the Rite,
 - ✦ Join & remain active in Councils because of those values
 - ✦ Not because they need the degrees to gain admission to other bodies.

Origins



Though the core material is earlier,

- ✦ Modern shape of the Royal Master & Select Master degrees probably originated in Ireland,
 - ✦ Passed to England & Scotland,
 - ✦ Thence to Sweden, &
 - ✦ Finally to Prussia & King Frederick's Lodge of Perfection of the Ancient Accepted Rite, today known as the Scottish Rite.

*The degrees were brought to America in
1761 as Scottish Rite "side degrees",*

A.


A.

S.

R.

✦ Including Super Excellent Master.

In 1807 they became popular in New York, Massachusetts & Rhode Island

- 
- ★ Thanks to Jeremy L. Cross, an associate of Thomas Smith Webb, "father of Royal Arch Masonry in America".

It was Cross who described them as "the summit & perfection of Ancient Masonry, without which the history of the Royal Arch Degree cannot be complete."

*Conferral was assigned to chapters of
Royal Arch Masonry*



Until 1870 when the Scottish Rite, &
the General Grand Royal Arch Chapter,
both divested themselves of the degrees.



*In 1880 the first General Grand Council
was formed.*

- ✦ Today, some compare the York Rite Select Master degree to the Scottish Rite Secret Master degree.
- ✦ **Both refer to guardians of secrets & signs of secrecy.**



A Mason entering the Sanctum Sanctorum by mistake appears in both the Select Master & Intimate Secretary degrees.

- ✦ Both the York Rite Council of Royal & Select Masters & Scottish Rite Lodge of Perfection are supposed to have only 27 working members, others being surplus spectators.

The senior Officer in one is

- ✦ Thrice Illustrious Master, in the other
Thrice Puissant Master.

*Thrice Illustrious Masters are
eligible to receive*



- ★ The Order of Thrice Illustrious Master,
& wear the "Silver Trowel" jewel.

The Name
“Cryptic”

The focus of the Royal Master & Select Master degrees is



- ✦ A secret vault beneath the Temple of Solomon.

"Cryptic" means "hidden",

- ✦ From the Latin crypticus, meaning "subterranean" or "concealed".
- ✦ Vaults beneath many churches are called "crypts".
- ✦ The expression "Cryptic Masonry" means, therefore, "Masonry of the Secret Vault".

*The Vault
&
the Mysteries*

*All biblical students &
archeologists know of vaults*

- ✦ Beneath King Solomon's Temple, the focus of Freemasonry's cryptic mysteries.

*Philostorgius,
the Greek historian of 400 A.D.,
wrote the story.*

- ✦ Initiation into the Ancient Mysteries of pre-Christian times involved underground caves, tunnels, or vaults.



*Modern Freemasonry, especially
in the group of degrees known as
The Royal Mysteries,*

- ✦ May sustain some of the truths presented in the Ancient Mysteries.

Certainly, the vault in the Ancient Mysteries

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

- ✦ Was symbolic of the grave,
- ✦ For initiation was symbolic of the passage of death,
- ✦ Where alone Divine Truth is to be found.

*Perhaps Freemasons
adopted the same concept:*



- ★ We teach that death is
- ★ "The gateway of life through which we all must pass, before entering into the beginning of a fuller & larger existence".

*Today, these degrees are not
complex in basic story
presentation,*

- ✦ But they are profound in potential impact on those who study further the words & their history.

Royal Master



The Royal Master, the first Council degree, is conferred in two parts.

- ✦ In the first, Hiram Abif talks to Adoniram about death.
- ✦ In the second, a day after Hiram Abif's death, King Solomon & Hiram King of Tyre cannot communicate the Master's Word without him - not as agreed.



*The dramas illuminate both the
Master Mason & Royal Arch degrees.*

- ★ This is the only degree in Masonry where you can meet - & converse face to face - with Hiram Abif, our central character.



It is an eloquent degree

- ✦ Beautifully symbolizes the labourer seeking his reward,
- ✦ Discusses victory over death.

Select Master

*This degree again is set before
Hiram Abif's death,*

- ✦ Alludes to preparations to hide Secret Treasures.

It provides a much deeper explanation for the meanings of the inscriptions found on the Masters' jewels & the triangle on top of the Ark.

It also explains why King Solomon

- ✦ Selected 24 true, tried & trusty Craftsmen,
- ✦ Together with the 3 Grand Masters (making "27 & no more"),
- ✦ To complete an important part of the Temple.

27

The historical setting of this degree & its symbolism are

- ✦ Intimately connected with the Royal Arch degree.



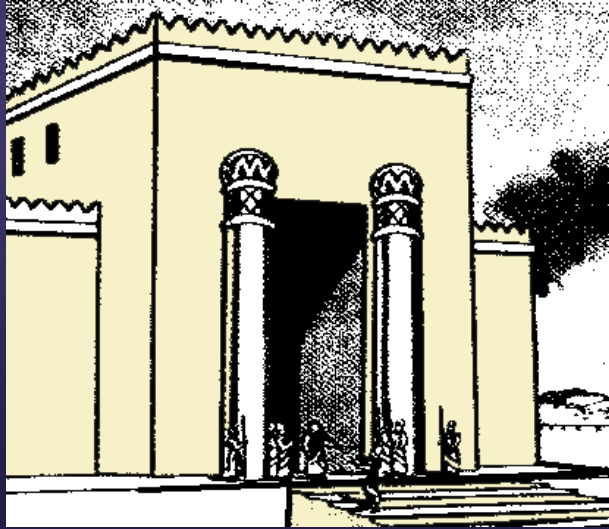
*It is the symbolic link that binds the
Master's degree to the Royal Arch,*



- ✦ Without it the mystery of "The Recovery of That Which Was Lost" remains in darkness.



It is the historical & symbolic bridge



- ✦ Connects the Hebrew Nation with the sad days of its captivity
- ✦ From the completion of the first Temple to the building of the second Temple.

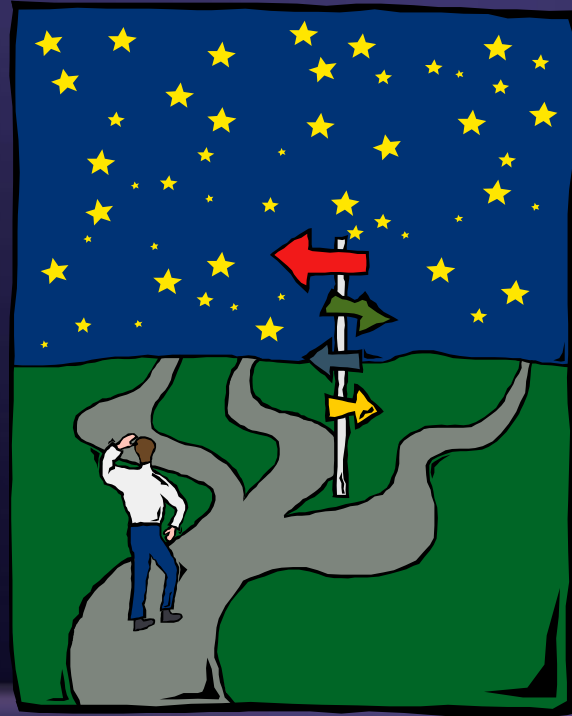
TRUTH

"Truth" seemed lost,

- ★ Yet it was not lost, but only hidden
 - ❖ Until the generation should come which by its perfect & unselfish labors should restore "Truth", & bring to light the Ineffable Secret.

The Select Master degree is said by some to be:

✦ The most interesting degree in Masonry.



*Perhaps because it rationally
accounts for the concealment &
preservation*

- ✦ Essential secrets which were buried in darkness for a period of four hundred & seventy years,
- ✦ Brought to light at building of second Temple.

In 1817, Samuel Cole said:

- ✦ "It is strange, & it is also unfortunate, that very few have received the useful knowledge made known in the Select ... we may, however, pronounce it the key to the Arch."

*Super Excellent
Master*

The Super Excellent Master degree was not originally a part of the Cryptic system,

- ✦ Is still not presented in all jurisdictions.
- ✦ Yet it is one of Masonry's best written rituals.

*It deals with incidents in the reign of
King Nebuchadnezzar*

- ★ Zedekiah, last King of Judah, was conquered & carried captive to Babylon.
- ★ Enlarges upon the Royal Arch with the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonian King, & final destruction of first Temple.



It dramatizes the lesson of fidelity.

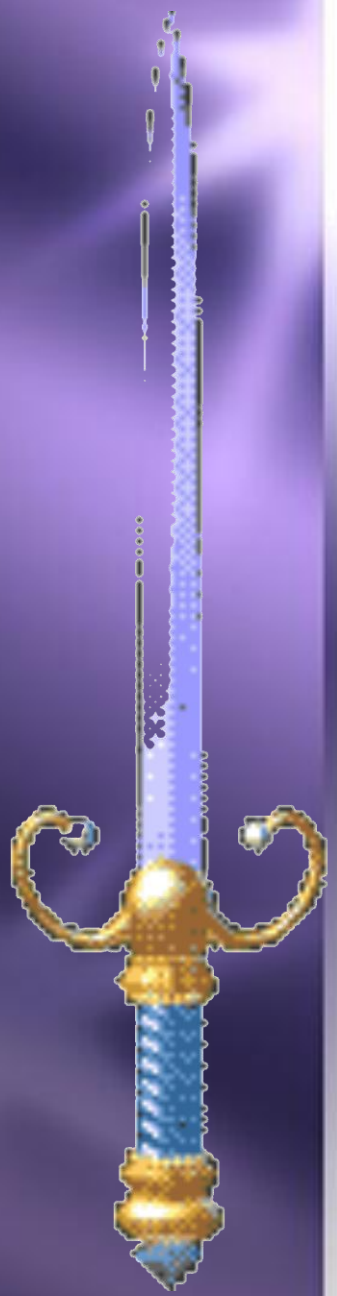
- ✦ It is not a degree of the Crypt;
- ✦ Does not deal with Ancient Craft Masonry.

"the best devised,
most impressive &
beautiful ritual in Masonry."

*In a panorama of exciting events,
biblical characters move across the
stage, illustrating history.*



★ The great Chaldean Monarch,
Nebuchadnezzar, lives again.



- ★ The treacherous & faithless Zedekiah, the last of Judah's Kings, proves the results of infidelity.
- ★ The unswerving Ezekiel, & the melancholy but zealous Jeremiah, prophesy the promises of the Almighty.

*The great lesson is about
fidelity to a trust.*

- ✦ It is a spectacular presentation, usually conferred by two or more Councils assisting one another, as it requires a large cast.

In
“The Grand Council of Ontario”,

- ✦ You must be “Greeted” as a Super Excellent Master
- ✦ Before you are considered a “Companion of Royal & Select Masters”.

Royal Ark Mariner



*This degree is based upon the
story of Noah & his ark.*

- ✦ The presiding officer of a Royal Ark Mariner lodge, the Commander, represents Noah.
- ✦ Senior & Junior Warden = his sons Shem & Japheth.

The ritual emphasizes the cardinal virtues,



- ✦ Using the triangle & the working tools with which Noah built the ark
 - ✦ axe, saw, & auger
- ✦ To point the moral lesson.

The principal emblems of the degree are:

- ✦ Triangle, rainbow, & a dove with an olive branch in its beak.



The earliest record of the degree being worked is Bath in 1790.



- ✦ In our Jurisdiction, Royal Ark Mariner lodges are "moored" to Councils
- ✦ **Select Masters who receive the Royal Ark Mariner Degree may wear the "Rainbow" jewel.**

Seek More Light Now!



Candidates are:

- ✦ "Honoured" as Royal Masters,
- ✦ "Chosen" as Select Masters &
- ✦ "Greeted" as Super Excellent Masters,
 - ✦ usually on separate occasions.

Appropriate dress for both occasions,

✦ is a business suit.

✦ After becoming a Companion of the Cryptic Rite, a Mason is deemed worthy of the appellation,

✦ "The select of the Craft".



As a Royal Arch Mason,

- ★ You have the right to petition for Council membership.





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