

Alpha & Omega
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Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Symbols of our work as Royal Masters, and the labors of the Cryptic Rite's work as a whole- yet have you ever considered its broader connotations? Just beyond a simple idea of being the start and end of something generally? As we consider the deeper ramifications of our labors within the Secret Vault, understanding the scope of our symbols brings greater realization of the path we are on and in turn allows us to more accurately labor with both the trowel and sword. To such a purpose the greater significance of Alpha and Omega as symbols provides- it is our inherent reminder of the beginning and the end, the progression by degrees of our efforts, the cycles of time, the waning and rise of institutions, the constant journey we undertake each day, and the trials upon our various paths in life that we are led toward.

To understand the force and fullness of the symbolism posed by Alpha and Omega we should initially begin with considering the parts prior to the sum. Alpha and Omega are both Greek letters from the ancient Greek alphabet and represent the first and final letters of that arrangement. Alpha is represented by an "Α". Alpha being the first letter of the Greek Alphabet links itself to concepts of primacy, to dominance, and to a beginning. Further Alpha as a word equal to the letter carries connotations that society relates to certain male traits as "Alpha", i.e. Alpha Male, Yet its primacy indicates its presence and perhaps an insinuation of existence since time immemorial, a foundation-always and ever present. It emphasizes "a characteristic a Deity, that of omnipresence or always have been, Eternal."¹ Omega is the opposite of Alpha, being the last and final letter of the Greek alphabet, it is in opposition to the letter Alpha. It is finality. It is end. It is as a word meaning "the objective, the fulfillment; the perfection."² Yet it, as with the letter Alpha represents the deity's permeation and omnipresence. Importantly the two letters form a duad symbol that references the eternal nature of Deity and considering that an understanding of the nature of the Divine is in part we pursue (under the form of the Word) it makes meaningful sense. They represent the beginning and end, and between them what transpires along the way, three parts, with only two actively presented.



So, what relevance does Alpha and Omega provide us now at this point? Inherently Alpha as a representation of the beginning, the birth, youth, the emanation, etc. could be tied to our initial initiatic experiences, our Entered Apprentice Degree. Omega is the end, the closure, the completion, the perfection. Alpha and Omega reveal to us the aspects of life and death through their implications, specifically in the work of the Royal Master, forget not that we are told,

Death is a subject that admits no levity when mentioned by mortal man. The *young may* die, the *old must* die, and the wisest knoweth not how soon. The youngest E.:.A.: upon

¹ Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of Texas: 2022 Cryptic Masonry education Program, Pg. 18; Courtesy of the Gr. Council of R & S. Masters of Texas -Cryptic Masonry Education Special Committee 2022, Comp. J.S. Bennett, Chairman

² *Cryptic Education Course*, R. Davis, Pg.47

the checkered pavement below, dwells even in the shadow of death, while the invisible hand extends equally above K.:S.: in his ivory throne.

We walk upon the ashes of the generations who have gone this way before us, and our bodies must soon crumble to dust... It is through the gate of death that we find an entrance to the place of wages, refreshment and rest.³

Here the implications of the beginning and the end are made. We see clearly in the work the cycles of life, and the rebirth thereafter in the continuity of the soul. Such concepts are illustrated by noted masonic scholar Albert Mackey in his *Manual on Cryptic Masonry* where he tells us,

Alpha(A) is the first and Omega(Ω) the last letter of the Greek alphabet, equivalent to the beginning and the end or the first and last of anything. The Jew used the first and last letters of their alphabet, Aleph and Tau, to express the same idea.⁴

This reference by Mackey also notes the eternal nature⁵ of Deity and considering that an understanding of the nature of the Divine is in part we pursue (under the form of the Word) it makes meaningful sense.

Of course, outside masonic imagery and symbolism as already alluded, the combination of Alpha and Omega have profound symbolism as well, much relating to what we have already explored. Specifically, we are told in the Book of Revelations that, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”⁶

In the greater scope of our experience Alpha and Omega, not only remind us of life and death, of the ever present nature of the divine, but of our nearing completion on the path of Ancient Craft Masonry, our passage into the Secret Vault, just on the horizon (and at the end of the tunnel per say), and the end of our labors at that point- Yet in similar form as the ancient symbol the ouroboros⁷, Alpha and Omega, and not linear, by cyclical, and so we begin a new path, a new journey and begin again, Yes there is a first and last, a beginning and end, but after the end, comes the new dawn, and the new adventure, new challenge, and new mystery for us to contemplate and explore.

³ *The Text Book of Cryptic Masonry*, J. Case, Pg. 11-12

⁴ *Cryptic Masonry: A Manual of the Council*, A. Mackey Pg. 23

⁵ Mackey points to Prudentius, who notes that “Alpha and Omega is He called; the source and the end of all things which are, which were, and will hereafter be.” In reference to Jesus of Nazareth as God, but which can fill into a broader understanding of the Supreme Architect in a form. *Cryptic Masonry: A Manual of the Council*, A. Mackey Pg. 24

⁶ The Holy Bible, KJV: Revelations Ch. 1 v.8

⁷ Frequent symbol of infinity, immortality, or similar concepts represented generally by a serpent forming a circle and eating it's tail.