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| GREAT SYMBOL OF PYTHAGORAS |
|  190 {d, |
|  Figure 12. Pythagoras. |
|  From Pierre Mussard, Historia Deorum Fatidicorum (1675). |



Sheet178

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| GREAT SYMBOL OF PYTHAGORAS |
|  THE 47TH PROBLEM - Euclid |
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|  The 47th problem is this: |
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|  In every right-angled triangle the sum of the squares of the base and  |
|  perpendicular is equal to the square of the hypotenuse, i.e. the line  |
|  which connects the ends of the other two sides. |
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|  If the base be 3 measures and the perpendicular 4, of the same length each,  |
|  the hypotenuse will be 5. If it be not, the base and perpendicular form either  |
|  an obtuse or acute angle, and the triangle is not right-angled. |
|  I have seen several large sheets of paper, covered with intricate diagrams,  |
|  largely intended to illustrate the 47th Problem, in all of which (and they were  |
|  most elaborately and with vast labor drawn), the triangle supposed by its author to  |
|  represent that problem was an obtuse angle, of at least 120 degrees, instead of go,  |
|  (which is a right angle): and yet the geometrician in question, who would"illustrate"  |
|  his figures in the discourse of hours, without communicating to us here a single  |
|  lucid idea, simply because he had none, in regard to his fantastic figures, has estab- |
|  lished a special Masonry of a Degree or two, in which his diagrams were intended  |
|  to be used; and is a fluent writer for Masonic periodicals, a Master in Israel. |
|  If a Mason is carrying up the corner of a building, and wishes to know  |
|  whether it is square, he will measure 3 feet from the corner one way and 4 the  |
|  other. If then a line drawn from the termini is more or less that exactly 5 feet, he  |
|  has not made a square corner. This is a practical use of the problem or theorem. |
|  It is said that when Pythagoras discovered this problem, he sacrificed a hun- |
|  dred oxen. Why? As a mathematical theorem it is of no more importance or interest  |
|  than fifty or seventy five others in Euclid; and of much less than most of them. |
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Sheet179

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|  + THE SYMBOLISM OF THE BLUE DEGREES OF FREEMASONRY + |
|  The explanation is a simple one. He styled it great symbol:Mathematical  |
|  theorems are not ordinarily symbols. He never styled any other theorem a  |
|  symbol, great or small. A circle, a triangle, a square, a cube are symbols, but I  |
|  do not know that any other Problem has ever been so styled. He did not call  |
|  or consider the figure, the right-angled triangle, itself, as a figure, a "symbol."  |
|  Only one which represented the numbers 3, 4, 5 was a symbol for him. Its  |
|  symbolism consisted in its representation of these Numbers; and he called  |
|  it a symbol, and used it as such, because he could, by means of it, express  |
|  to the adepts and entrust to his pupils some great philosophical or religious  |
|  truth or creed, by the use of the measures 3 and 4, the sum of which is the  |
|  always sacred number 7. |
|  The square of a number is produced by multiplying the number by itself. The  |
|  cube of a number is obtained by multiplying its square by the original number.  |
|  The square of 3 is 3 times 3, 9; the square of 4 is 4 times 4, 16; the square of 5 is  |
|  5 times 5, 25; 3 x 3 = 9; 4 x 4 = i6; and 5 x 5 = 25, and 9 + 16 = 25. |
|  Formerly every Masonic square represented the base and perpendicular,  |
|  one being 3 measures in length, and the other 4. But I have seen in the Monitor  |
|  used by all the Lodges in a State, three squares, each of different dimensions  |
|  and neither of them correct. |
|  Formerly, also, the altar-lights of the Lodge represented this theorem, two  |
|  on the East side of the altar, North and South of each other, and 3 feet apart,  |
|  and a third due West of the North light and 4 feet from it. This was in the  |
|  Apprentice's Lodge. In the Master's Lodge there was a group of three lights at  |
|  each of the same points, making 3 times 3. |
|  It is curious how continually the number 7 is forced upon our notice in  |
|  both the Old and New Testaments. The 6 days of creation and one of rest,  |
|  the 7 sprinklings and purifications again and again prescribed, the seven  |
|  churches, seven seals, seven trumpets of the Apocalypse, are a few out of  |
|  the great number of instances. |
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|  192, ,fra5 |

Sheet180