

The Point Within A Circle - Reprised

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In a previous TFTEM (Nov. 2006) interpretations of the “point within a circle” were presented, with the concluding statement that a point within a circle, “...is how you interpret it not as what we see it. But if we have made you think about it, then we have achieved our aim, which is to make you think...” (G. Love)

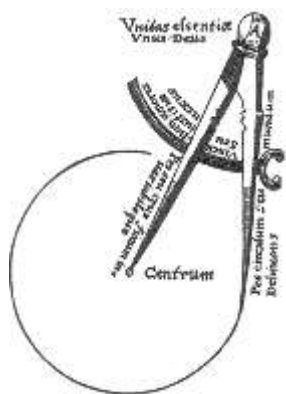
But what is the origin of this symbol? The circle, sometimes with the point, appeared in Egyptian hieroglyphics to denote the sun or light. Pythagoras thought the circle represented eternity whose, “...centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere...”

It is a symbol that appears in various hermetic-chemical tracts of the 16th and 17th centuries, for example, Achilles Bocchius’ illustration “Hermetic Silence” from 1555, or Robert Fludd’s “The Mystic Compass” from 1617 (aka “Universe under its own steam”).

The “point within a circle” symbol may, in a masonic sense, date from the earliest beginnings of speculative Freemasonry. The old charges and early ritual fragments and exposures stressed the importance of Geometry with the letter “G” originally representing the science of geometry.



“Hermetic silence 1555”



The Wilkinson MS;-

Q. What is the Centre of your Lodge?

A. The Letter G.

Q. What does it signify?

A. Geometry

Prichard’s *Masonry Dissected*;-

Q. Are you a Fellow-Craft? A. I am.

Q. Why was you made a fellow-Craft? A. For the sake of the letter G.

Q. What does that G denote? A. Geometry or the fifth Science.

“Mystical compass 1617”

The Cooke MS devotes pages to Geometry stating that, “...all sciences exist only through the science of Geometry...the science by which all reasoning men live...” William Preston in his lectures believed that, “...originally Masonry and Geometry must have been synonymous terms...” (Dwyer - *Symbolism* p.11)

The Regius or Halliwell MS, estimated to have been written around 1390, was originally entitled “The Constitutions of the art of Geometry according to Euclid” The “point within a circle” symbol contains the basic elements of Euclid’s geometry for his sixteenth definition states, “...the point is called the centre of the circle.

From the forgoing we can begin to get a sense of the possible origins of the masonic “point within a circle” symbol, derived from Euclidian geometry and influenced by renaissance hermetics, it became a part of speculative freemasonry during the 1600’s. And by the mid 1700’s it was an essential symbol on early masonic tracing boards.