

## **The Porphyry Stone** (redacted version for public view)

Presented by:  
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Porphyry definition from Merriam-Webster: a rock consisting of feldspar crystals embedded in a compact dark red or purple groundmass.

Feldspar definition: any of a group of crystalline minerals that consist of aluminum silicates with either potassium, sodium, calcium, or barium and that are an essential constituent of nearly all crystalline rocks.<sup>1</sup>

Porphyry, one of the hardest rocks known in the ancient world, is formed by magma flows as they rise and cool. This process results in porphyry being present in many metal deposits, not the least of which are referred to as porphyry copper deposits, which are the largest sources of copper ore that we know of. Before the Bronze Age, copper was the metal of choice for making tools and would explain the significance of porphyry rocks to ancient peoples. And from a practical sense, the hardness and higher density of the rock make it an ideal choice for an anchor.

I would like to explore the connections between this degree and the first three degrees of craft freemasonry. The first time we encounter the anchor is in the first degree of the York and Canadian Rites. In the York Rite on Jacobs ladder extending from earth to heaven we find the cross as an emblem of Faith, the anchor as an emblem of Hope, and the heart as an emblem of Charity (quote removed). The Canadian Rite first degree has a different interpretation (quote removed). Personally I'm more inclined to the Canadian Rite explanation since immortality of the soul is not something I hope in, but that I believe in. The next time we encounter the anchor is with the ark in the York Rite third degree where the explanation is more in line with the lessons of this Royal Ark Mariner degree (quote removed). This is a direct connection to the legend of Noah's ark and the interpretation that the ark represents our final haven of rest as described after the fourth step of this Royal Ark Mariner degree, (quote removed). The opening ceremony of the Royal Ark Mariner ritual mentions that Noah anchored the ark with a porphyry stone upon which he rested while building the ark, he then placed it in the centre of the ark when finished and performed sacrifices to God upon it after landing at Mt Ararat. Perhaps this is a lesson that we should keep the hope for salvation within us all throughout our journey through life, and this hope will become our anchor when our journey finally comes to a rest.

Freemasonry has many symbols and everyone will ultimately find their own interpretation and meaning. For me the anchor or rather the porphyry stone represents the hope that God has in mankind, of following the path of righteousness. And is this not the ultimate aim of Freemasonry to demonstrate this in our everyday life. For was not the building of the ark a result of God's anger toward the misbehavior of the Antediluvian's. "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is

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<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster Dictionary

filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth”<sup>2</sup>. And immediately afterwards starts the new beginning of mankind with Noah setting anchor on Mt. Ararat and God’s hope for righteousness to spread across the earth through Noah’s descendants.

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#### **Post Discussion:**

The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Alberta’s website requested a most experienced Companion, Bro. Reverend Dr. Neville Leopold Smith to comment on Bro. Matt Webb’s paper. The following is his response.

*I would not suggest any changes to the above paper. It is the author’s take on the symbols mentioned in the Freemason’s Craft Lodge ( First and third degrees) and in Royal Arch Masonry. He rightly notes that the interpretation of the symbols may differ among Masons in terms of what they mean. What I would suggest that after his articles, he may add a paragraph or so entitled: "IN CONTEXT." He may use the following or change it, as he deems fit, taking into account the RATIONALE of what is mentioned in the following.*

Suggested addition:

#### **IN CONTEXT**

Craft Masonry uses allegories and symbols in the basic degrees ( Blue Lodge) and in other degrees. Religions and others use allegories and symbols that also have meaning for them. In the context of the symbols used in this article, a fundamental question may well be: What was the intention and meaning of the allegories and symbols for Masons, who first passed these on? Are there several “layers” in Masonry?

The Craft indicates that they are open to all religions and others and promote two basic principles:

- (1) A Supreme Being (Grand Geometrician of the Universe /Great Architect of the Universe and,
- (2) Life after death ( Immortality of the Soul). If Masonry is not a religion, symbols may have different meanings or connecting universal principles.

So, an article like this can be a way of trying to understand what is the original meaning and interpretations of the allegories and or symbols of the particular degrees mentioned in Masonry.

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<sup>2</sup> Holy Bible Old Testament King James Version - Genesis Chapter 6 Verse 13





## Example Porphyry

Each year the Bingham Canyon Mine, located in Utah and owned by Rio Tinto and in production since 1906, produces approximately:

- 300,000 tons of copper
- 400,000 oz gold
- 4 million oz silver
- 30 million lbs molybdenum

The value of the resources extracted to date from the Bingham Canyon Mine is greater than the Comstock Lode, Klondike, and California gold rush mining regions combined.



[Porphyry-Copper.jpg \(1080×9203\) \(911metallurgist.com\)](#)

First Degree Tracing Board



Third Degree - Anchor and Ark

