Virtual Christmas Observance

The Grand Commandery of Idaho will be hosting a virtual Christmas Observance on December 11, 2021, at 7:30pm (Mountain Time).

Christmas Observance: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82376266228?pwd=eFVYbUNGS0t2bXlsbFRxUnJSOUZ4dz09

Meeting ID: 823 7626 6228

Passcode: 122521

An Unusual Templar Seal

By Barry E. Newell

Last month, I discussed one of the most prominent symbols and seals of Templary. This month I thought I'd discuss one of the most unusual and least known of Templar symbols that was also used as a seal.

When reading through the *Knights Templar Encyclopedia* by Karen Ralls, I came upon the entry of "Abraxas" which just had a quick note for the reader to go to the section on Symbols. As I perused that section it talked about that the symbol of Abraxas is displayed on "Templar Grand Master's seal in the Archives Nationales in Paris, which was used in a French charter in 1214." The seal displays a figure that is Chimera-like and portrays the body of a male warrior with a rooster's head, human arms, and snakes as legs, who carries a shield and a whip; and bears the words "Secretum Templi". It is interesting to note that this seal was not used for particularly significant Templar documents, but can be found on ordinary, seemingly unimpressive, historical records like those dating from 1214.

Abraxas is a god written about in Gnostic texts. Carl Jung in his writings on the Seven Sermons to the Dead stated that Abraxas was considered by some to be a god higher than Jehovah. He is said to be the

father of all things, "the power above all and the First Principle," and the ruler of 365 heavens. It is said that Abraxas created Nuos and Logos which led to Providence, Virtue, and Wisdom which gave rise to Principalities and Powers, and from "from these infinite productions and emissions of angels." It is these angels who govern the 365 heavens which were said to include the Judeo-Christian God, Jehovah, which followers of Basilides denied of being a god, but rather an angel. This obviously was not a very popular belief in the 2nd century and Basilides is considered a heretic and damned by many historical Roman Catholic figures.

Some have speculated that the imagery of Abraxas represents emanations of this being which are as follows: "The human body is displayed as it is written that God created man in his own image. The snakes represent the two great supports of man given by God, Nous (mind, intellect) and Logos (reason and judgment). The cock (rooster), being the creature who traditionally greets the golden dawn, is an emblem of foresight and vigilance. He carries the shield of wisdom, and the whip or flail is said to be the 'whip of Helios' (Abraxas is associated with the Sun) which represents dynamism or strength/power."

No one knows the origins of Abraxas and the relics associated with him. Some believe that it originated with a man named Basilides (an Alexandrian mystic) in the 2nd Century AD, but even then, it cannot be proven and is also hypothesized that it was transmitted to him from another source, yet unknown to us in modern times. Many have attempted to guess as to the reason the Templars would use such an image, but without proper records and evidence, it all falls into the realm of speculation. Historical writings and modern scholars have drawn parallels between Abraxas and Mithras of Persia as well as beliefs found in Hinduism. It is possible that the Templars were introduced to Abraxas through their time in the Middle East, but again, without hard evidence, we can only imagine. Although it is an interesting symbol, the use of this seal does not mean that the Templar Order was a Gnostic one.

Upcoming 2021 Events:

Day of Prayer ....Nov. 11

Idaho Chivalric Orders......................Nov. 13

Virtual Christmas Observance ....Dec. 11

Editor's Note

If anyone would like to submit an article for the supplement, please email me your article using Microsoft Word. Keep it between 1 page and 1.5 pages.