



Skull and Bones: Overview of Symbol Meaning and History

The skull and bones symbol is a secret symbol in which a human skull is featured with two crossed bones beneath it. The origins of this emblem are not clear. However, it is known that the symbol is an ancient one, as the icon appears as a funerary symbol in ancient Christian catacombs. The symbol is also found in the entrances of cemeteries found in Spain, a fact that established its association with death.

During the medieval period, the skull and bones emblem was a common decoration used on tombstones. The icon was also featured on many memento mori, objects, often in the form of iconic illustrations, which served as reminders of humans' mortality.

The symbol of the skull and bones was furthermore also featured on one of the many flags used in battle by pirates, known as the jolie rouge, a use adopted from its original employment by the French Templars. It is also significant in Templar traditions, as it is used in burial traditions of the Knights Templar.

In addition, the symbol of the skull and bones is also featured in some depictions of the crucifix. It is also found in the Sedlec ossuary in the Czech Republic, where human bones have been fashioned into this emblem for aesthetic and religious purposes.

The emblem is also found in the kabbalistic tradition, in which it represents the sephirah, death, on the Tree of Life, the symbolic gateway to an enhanced understanding that can occur only through spiritual death and rebirth. The Freemasons also include this symbol among their emblematic traditions; in the Freemason tradition, the skull and crossed bones represents overcoming the material world. The symbol is used in initiation rituals in order to represent rebirth.

Extracted from: http://www.jesusfamilytomb.com/back_to_basics/alternative/secret/skull.html