

PILLARS AND GLOBES, COLUMNS AND CANDLESTICKS

In the QC Lodge summons, dated 22 December 1961, there was a brief note relating to the Wardens' Columns which attracted considerable attention and comment. As author of the note, and Secretary of the Lodge, I had to answer a number of letters on that subject and on several other topics closely allied to it. During the course of this work it became obvious that there is much confusion on the subject of Pillars, Globes, Columns and Candlesticks, on the dates and stages of their introduction into Craft usage, and most of all, perhaps, on the curious way in which some of these items (which originally had places in the ritual, or furnishings, in their own right) are now made to serve a dual purpose, thereby adding to the confusion as to their origins.

There are, apparently, two main reasons for these difficulties. First, we have grown so accustomed to seeing our present-day Lodges all more or less uniformly furnished that we accept the furnishings and their symbolism without question. Secondly, the Lectures on the tracing Boards are given rarely nowadays so that Brethren are unfamiliar with the subject, or with the problems that are involved.

This essay was compiled, therefore, not with the intention of answering all the questions that arise, if indeed that were possible, but in order to separate the various threads which are now so badly entangled.

As these various items appear in our modern procedure, there is an extraordinary mixture of ritual-references with odd items of furniture, some of which had a purely practical origin, while others were purely symbolical. I have tried to deal with each of these features separately, showing, as far as possible, their first introduction into the Craft, and tracing the various stages through which they passed into our present usage.

THE PILLARS

Extract from the Lecture on the Second Tracing Board:

... the two great pillars which were placed in the porchway entrance on the south side ... they were formed hollow, the better to serve as archives to Freemasonry, for therein were deposited the constitutional Rolls ... These pillars were adorned with two chapiters ... (and) ... with two spheres on which were delineated maps of the celestial and terrestrial globes, pointing our 'Masonry universal'

THE FIRST TWO PILLARS IN CRAFT TRADITION

The two earliest pillars in the literature of the Craft are those described in the legendary history which forms part of the Cooke MS c1410, and many later versions of the Old Charges. The story goes that they were made by the four children of Lamech, in readiness for the feared destruction of the world by fire or flood. One of the pillars was made of marble, the other of lacerus (ie lateres or burnt brick) because the first 'would not burn', and the other 'would not drown'. They were intended as a means of preserving 'all the sciences that they had found', which they had carved or engraved on the two pillars.

This legend dates back to the early apocryphal writings, and in the course of centuries a number of variations arose in which the story of the indestructible pillars remained fairly constant, although their erection was attributed to different heroes. Thus, Josephus ascribed them to Seth, while another apocryphal version says they were built by Enoch⁽¹⁾.

For some reason, not readily explained, the early MC Constitutions favour the children of Lamech as the principals in this ancient legend, which was embodied in the texts to show how all the then-known sciences were preserved for mankind by this early piece of practical mason work.

The Old Charges were designed primarily to display the antiquity and high importance of the Craft, and it is highly significant that Solomon's two pillars do not appear in the early versions. David and Solomon are named among a long list of biblical and historical characters who '... loved masons well ...' and gave or confirmed 'their charges', but Solomon's Temple receives only a casual mention, and the pillars are not mentioned at all. It seems fairly certain, therefore, that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Solomon's two pillars had no special significance for the mason craft.

SOLOMON'S PILLARS IN THE RITUAL

The first appearance of Solomon's pillars in the Craft ritual is in the Edinburgh Register House MS, 1696, in a catechism associated with the 'Mason Word' ceremonies.

The earliest-known reference to the 'Mason Word' appears in 1637, in a diary-entry made by the Earl of Rothes, and although no kind of ceremony is described in that record, it is reasonable to assume that the 'Mason Word' ceremonies were already known and practised at that date. The Edinburgh Register House MS is the oldest surviving document which describes the actual procedure of the ceremonies. The text is in two parts. One section, headed 'The Forme of Giving the Mason Word', describes the rather rough and ready procedure for the admission of an entered apprentice, including ceremonies to frighten the candidate, an oath, a form of 'greeting', and certain verbal and physical modes of recognition. There is also a separate and similar procedure for the 'master mason or fellow craft'. (Only two degrees were known at that time.)

The second part of this text is a catechism of some seventeen questions and answers, fifteen for the EA and a further two for the master or FC. It is probable that these questions, with the obligation, entrusting and greeting, represent the whole of the 'spoken-work' of the ceremonies at that time.

The questions are of two kinds:

- a) Test questions for the purpose of recognition.
- b) Informative questions for the purpose of instruction and explanation.

Among these we find the first faint hints of the beginning of Masonic symbolism. A question in the catechism of 1696, and in six of the texts that followed soon after, runs:

Q: Where was the first lodge?

A: In the porch of Solomon's Temple.

Now, the Edinburgh Register House MS is a complete text; no part of it has been lost or obliterated during the 290 years or so since it was written, in 1696. In fact, there are several related texts belonging to the next twenty years, which amply demonstrate its completeness. It is therefore noteworthy that in this whole group of texts the two earlier pillars, built by the children of Lamech, have virtually disappeared. Barely a hint of them remains in any of the ritual documents from 1696 onwards.

The Dumfries No. 4 MS c1710, is a version of the Old Charges which has been greatly enlarged by a collection of ritual questions and answers, with many items of religious interpretation. In its first part, it has the expected reference to the four children of Lamech and their two pillars, but towards the end of the catechism the pillars are mentioned again:

Q: Where (was) the noble art or science found when it was lost?

A: It was found in two pillars of stone the one would not sink the other would not burn.

This is followed by a long passage of religious interpretations saying that Solomon named his own two pillars in reference to 'ye two churches of ye Jews & gentiles ...' That need not concern us here, but Solomon's pillars are not normally mentioned in the Old Charges, and the appearance of both sets of pillars in the two parts of the

Dumfries MS, suggests that when the ceremonies were shaped to contain Solomon's J and B, the earlier 'indestructible' pair were abandoned.

There is, in fact, no evidence that they had ever formed any part of the admission ceremonies, but we know very little about the ceremonies in their earliest forms. It seems fairly certain, however, that Solomon's pillars had achieved a really important place in the Craft ritual in the early 1600s.

Soon after their first mention in the early ritual-texts these two pillars became a regular part of the 'furnishings' of the lodge, and it is possible to trace them from their earliest introduction up to their present place in the lodge-room, as follows:

- 1) Their first appearance as part of a question in the catechism, with much additional evidence that they had some esoteric significance. The early catechisms are particularly interesting in this respect, because they indicate that both of Solomon's Pillar-names belonged at one time to the EA ceremony.
- 2) They were drawn on the floor of the lodge in chalk and charcoal, forming part of the earliest versions of our modern 'Tracing Boards'. In December, 1733, the minutes of the Old King's Arms Lodge No. 28, record the first step towards the purchase of a 'Floor Cloth'. (AQC, vol lxii, p 236. 'Drawings' on the floor of the lodge are recorded in the minutes of the Old Dundee Lodge, No. 18, from 1748 onwards. The Herault Letter of 1737 describes the 'Drawing', and the later French exposures, from 1744 onwards, contain excellent engravings showing both pillars (marked J and B) on the combined EA and FC floor-drawing.
- 3) Between c1760 and 1765 several English exposures of the period indicate that the Wardens each had a column representing one of the Pillars, as part of his personal equipment in the lodge. The following extract is typical:

'The Senior and Junior Wardens have each of them a Column in their Hand, about Twenty Inches long, which represents the two Columns of the Porch at Solomon's Temple, Boaz and Jachin.

The Senior is Boaz, or Strength.

The Junior is Jachin, or to establish.'

(From Three Distinct Knocks, 1760)

- 4) Finally, the two pillars appear as handsome pieces of furniture, perhaps four to eight feet high, standing usually at the western end of the lodge room. The earliest descriptions of the lay-out of the lodge in the 1700s show both Wardens in the west, facing the Master. The two pillars were generally placed near them, forming a kind of portal, so that the candidates passed between them on their admission, a custom which exists in many lodges to this day.

This was perhaps the last development of all, though some of the wealthier lodges may have possessed such pillars at a comparatively early date. When we consider how many lodge rooms (especially in the provinces) still use pairs of large pillars, it is surprising that the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century inventories make no mention of them. Probably, this was because they were part of the equipment of Masonic Halls, so that they belonged to the landlords and not to the various lodges that used the rooms.

So we trace the two pillars from their first appearance as part of a question in the ritual through various stages of development until they became a prominent feature of lodge furniture.

But modern practices are not uniform in regard to the pillars; in London, for example, there are very few lodges which have the tall pillars, but they are always depicted on the second T.B., and they appear in miniature on the Wardens' pedestals.

CHAPTERS, GLOBES AND BOWLS

The biblical descriptions of Solomon's pillars give rise to many problems, especially as regards their dimensions and ornamentation. For us, the chapters, bowls or globes which surmounted them are of particular interest, because of ritual developments and expansions during the eighteenth century.

In this particular problem a great deal depends on the interpretation of the original Hebrew text. The chapters appear in I Kings, VII, 16: '... and he made two chapters...'

The word is Ko-thor-oth = chapters, capitals or crowns. Later, in verse 41, without mention of any further works, the text speaks of the two pillars and the two bowls of the chapters...' The Hebrew reads Gooloth Ha-ko-thor-oth, and the word Gooloth is a problem. Goolah (singular) means a ball or globe; also, a bowl or vessel, and various forms of the same root are used quite loosely to describe something round or spherical.

Our regular contacts with modern lodge Tracing-Boards and furnishings have accustomed us to the idea that Solomon's two pillars were surmounted by chapters or capitals, with a globe resting on each, but that is not proven. The early translators and illustrators of the Bible were by no means unanimous on this point, and the various terms they used to describe the chapters, etc., show that they were not at all certain as to the appearance of the pillars. To take one example, the Geneva Bible, of 1560, a very handsome and popular illustrated Bible, which provided the interpretation for some of the proper names and seems to have been much used by the men who framed the Masonic ritual.

At I Kings, VII, v. 16, '...and he made two chapters...', there is a marginal note, Or pommels', ie globular features. At this stage the Geneva Bible clearly indicates that the chapters were globes or spheres, and not the crown-shaped heads to the pillars that we would understand them to be.

Among the illustrations to this chapter in the Geneva Bible there are several interesting engravings of the Temple and its equipment, including a sketch of a pillar, surmounted by a shallow capital, with an ornamental globe poised on top. A marginal note to this illustration speaks of The height of the chapter or round bal vpon the pillar of five cubites hight...' (My italics.) So the chapter was a round ball.

At II Chron., IV, v. 12, the same Bible gives a new interpretation, '...two pillars, and the bowies, and the chapters on the top of the two pillars...' Here it is evident that the 'bowies' and the chapters were two separate features.

Whether we incline to bowls or globes, there is yet another interpretation which would exclude both. The accounts in both Kings and Chronicles refer to the pomegranate decoration which was attached to the 'bowies' or bellies of the chapters (I Kings, VII, v. 41, 42, and II Chron., IV, V. 12, 13), and from these passages it is a perfectly proper inference that the chapters were themselves bowl-shaped', and that there were neither bowls nor globes above them.

Although the globes were finally adopted in Masonic furniture and decoration as head-pieces to Solomon's Pillars, they came in very slowly, and during a large part of the eighteenth century there was no uniformity of practice on this point. The Trahi, one of the early French exposures, contains several engravings purporting to be 'Plans' of a Loge de Reception; in effect they are Tracing Boards for the 1st and 2nd combined, and another for the 3rd degree. The Apprentice Plan contains illustrations of the two pillars, marked J and B, both conventional Corinthian pillars, with flat tops. There is also, among a huge collection of symbols, a sketch which is described in the Index as a 'sphere', a kind of lattice-work globe (actually an armillary sphere) used in astronomy to demonstrate the courses of the stars and planets.

The Lodge of Probity, No. 61, Halifax (founded in 1738), was in serious decline in 1829, and an inventory of its possessions was taken at that time. One item reads: 'Box with Globes and Stands'.

The Phoenix Lodge, No. 94, Sunderland (founded in 1755), has a pair of eighteenth-century globes, each mounted on three legs, standing left and right of the Master's pedestal. All Souls' Lodge, No. 170 (founded in 1767), had until 1888 a handsome pair of globes, each mounted on a tripod base, clearly of eighteenth-century style, similarly placed left and right of the WM. The Lodge of Peace and Unity, No. 314, Preston (founded in

1797), in a recent sketch of its lodge-room, shows a pair of globes on low, three-legged stands, placed on the floor of the lodge, left and right, a yard or two in front of the SW.

Among the unique collection of lodge equipment known as the 'Bath Furniture' is a pair of globes, 'celestial and terrestrial', on low four-legged stands, and the minutes show that they were presented to the Royal Cumberland Lodge in 1805. It is interesting to observe that the equipment also includes a handsome pair of brass pillars, each about 5 ft. 9 in. in height, standing as usual in the west, and each of them surmounted with a large brass bowl. These date from the late eighteenth century.

In this case especially, as in all the cases cited above, there is no evidence of globes on top of the BJ pillars; the globes formed a part of the lodge equipment entirely in their own right.

The frontispiece to Noorthouck's Constitutions of 1784 is a symbolical drawing in which the architectural portion represents the interior of the then Free Mason's Hall. At the foot of the picture, in the foreground, is a long table bearing several Masonic tools and symbols, with two globes on tripod stands, and the description of the picture refers to '...the Globes and other Masonic Furniture and Implements of the Lodge'.

All this suggests that the globes were beginning to play some part in the lodge, or in the ritual, although they were not yet associated with the pillars. But even after the globes or bowls had begun to appear on the pillars, there was still considerable doubt as to what was correct. This is particularly noticeable in early Tracing Boards and decorated aprons, some showing 'bowls', and other 'globes'. (See illustrations, pp 140-41 in AQC, vol. lxxiv, for pillars with bowls, and *ibid*, p. 52, where the pillars are surmounted by profuse foliage, growing presumably from bowls.)

To summarize:

In the period of our earliest ritual documents, 1669 to 1730, there is no evidence that the globes formed any part of the catechism or ritual, and it is reasonably certain that they were unknown as 'designs' or as furnishings in the lodges.

Around 1745 it is probable that the sphere or globe had been introduced as one of the symbols in the 'floor drawings' or Tracing Boards. There is no evidence to show that it appeared in the catechism. There are several highly-detailed catechisms belonging to this period, 1744 and later, but globes are not mentioned in any of them. The appearance of the sphere in the 1745 exposure is the only evidence suggesting that it played some part in the more or less impromptu explanations of lodge symbolism which probably came into practice about this time, or shortly afterwards.

In the 1760s and 1770s, Solomon's Pillars with globes appear frequently in illustrations of lodge equipment and on aprons, but there is no uniformity of practice. In some lodges (as we have seen and shall see below) the globes were already a recognized part of the lodge furniture; elsewhere they surmounted the pillars, and were probably being 'explained' in 'lectures'. In other places the globes were virtually unknown.

MASONRY UNIVERSAL

The tradition that the globes on Solomon's Pillars were covered with celestial and terrestrial maps is certainly post-biblical, and appears to be a piece of eighteenth-century embroidery to the ritual. We may wonder how this interest in earthly and heavenly maps arose, and there seems to be no sure answer. The early catechisms, c1700 to 1730, all indicate a growing interest in the subject, eg:

Q. How high is your lodge?

A. ...it reaches to heaven⁽²⁾.

...the material heavens and the starry firmament⁽³⁾.

Q. How deep⁽⁴⁾?

A. ...to the centre of the Earth⁽⁴⁾.

There are also the more frequent questions relating to the Sun, Moon and Master Mason, with subsequent variations and expansions. These questions may well be the first pointers towards the subsequent interest in maps, and the armillary sphere of 1745, noted above, carries the subject a stage further.

The Lodge Summons of the Old Dundee Lodge, dated c1750, showed three pillars, two of them surmounted by globes depicting maps of the world and the firmament. A certificate issued by the Lodge of Antiquity in 1777 displayed, inter alia, a similar pair of maps. The 1768 edition of J. and B. has an engraved frontispiece surmounted by globes—one with rather vague map markings, and the other clearly marked with stars. The various sets of geographical globes in pairs; described above (not 'pillar-globes'), all indicate a deep Masonic interest in the celestial and terrestrial globes during the eighteenth century.

Preston, in his *Illustrations of Masonry*, 1775 edition, in the section dealing with the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, dwelt at some length on the globes and on the importance of astronomy and, of course, on the spiritual and moral lesson to be learned from them.

All this seems to imply that the maps were beginning to appear at this time, in the verbal portions of the ritual. The introduction of maps, 'celestial and terrestrial', led to a further development which eventually gave the Craft a phrase that has become a kind of hall-mark of Freemasonry everywhere. The first hint of that expression appeared in *l'Ordre des Francs'Maçons Trahi*, 1745, which added a new question to those passages in the catechism:

Q. And its depth?

A. From the Surface of the Earth to the Centre.

Q. Why do you answer thus?

A. To indicate, that Free-Masons are spread all over the Earth, and all together they form nevertheless only one Lodge.

In 1760, *Three Distinct Knocks* (Antient's ritual) altered the final answer very effectively:

Q. Why is your Lodge said to be from the Surface to the Centre of the earth?

A. Because that Masonry is Universal.

In 1762, *J. & B. (Moderns' Ritual)* gave the same answer, word for word. That is how we acquired the catchphrase 'Masonry Universal'.

THE PILLARS AS ARCHIVES

The biblical accounts of the casting of the pillars make no mention of their being cast hollow, although this may be inferred from the fact that, if they had been solid, their removal from Zeradatha and their final erection at Jerusalem would have been a quite exceptional feat of engineering. Jeremiah, Iii, v. 21, states that they were formed hollow, the metal being cast to a thickness of 'four-fingers', but there is no suggestion that this was done so that the pillars might serve as 'armories'; or containers of any kind, or that Solomon used them for 'storing the constitutional Rolls'.

Here again is a curious piece of eighteenth-century 'Masonic embroidery', and it seems possible that this was an attempt to link the pillars of Solomon with the two earlier pillars upon which 'all the sciences' had been preserved. The earliest Masonic note I have been able to find on the subject is extremely vague. In 1769, Wellins Calcott wrote in his *Candid Disquisition*, p 66:

...neither are the reasons why they were made hollow known to any but those who are acquainted with the arcana of the society...

This was undoubtedly intended to suggest that the hollow pillars were designed to serve some peculiarly Masonic purpose, but Calcott says nothing more on the subject, and I have been unable to trace any such reason for hollow pillars in eighteenth-century Masonic ritual.

THREE LIGHTS: THREE PILLARS: THREE CANDLESTICKS:

Seventeen Masonic documents have survived, dated from 1696 to 1730, and they provide the foundation for our study of the evolution of the ritual. The earliest of them is the Edinburgh Register House MS (ERH), dated 1696, with a valuable description of the two-degree system of those days. The last of that series is Samuel Prichard's *Masonry Dissected* (MD), which contains the oldest ritual of the three degrees, and the earliest version of the Hiram legend. In all these early texts the ritual was mainly in the form of catechism, and we get some idea of its development during those thirty-five years when we compare these two documents. The first contains fifteen questions and answers for the EA, and two for the 'master or fellow-craft'. *Masonry Dissected* has 155 Q and A in all, ie ninety-two for the EA; thirty-three for the FC; thirty for the MM.

THREE LIGHTS

Twelve of the oldest rituals contain a question on the 'lights of the lodge';

Are there any lights in your lodge?

yes three...

(ERH, 1696)

The lights soon acquire a symbolic character, but originally they were probably candles or windows, with particular positions allocated to them, eg 'NE, SW, and eastern passage', or SE, S. and SW', etc., until we reach MD in 1730, which says the lights are three windows in the E, S and W and their purpose is 'To light the Men to, at, and from their work'. MD distinguishes between symbolic lights and 'fix'd lights', explaining that the latter are 'large Candles placed on high Candlesticks'.

Symbolically, several texts say that the lights represent the Master, Warden and Fellow-craft. Four versions say 'Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Three others say twelve lights, 'Father, Son, Holy Ghost, Sun, Moon, Master-Mason, Square, Rule, Plum, Line, Mell, Chizzel'. All these are of the period c1724-26.

MD says 'Sun, Moon and Master-Mason' and after the question 'Why so?' he answers 'Sun to rule the Day, Moon the Night, and Master-Mason his Lodge'. So we trace the lights from their first appearance in our ritual up to the point where they acquire their modern symbolism.

THREE PILLARS

Extracts from the modern Lecture on the First Tracing Board:

Our Lodges are supported by three great pillars. They are called Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. Wisdom to contrive, Strength to support, and Beauty to adorn...but as we have no noble orders in architecture known by the names of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, we refer them to the three most celebrated, which are, the Ionic, Doric and Corinthian.

The problems relating to the furnishings of the lodge do not end with Solomon's two pillars. As early as 1710 an entirely different set of three pillars makes its appearance in the catechisms. and exposures. They appear for the first time in the Dumfries No. 4 MS, which is dated about 1710:

Q. How many pillars is in your lodge?

A. Three.

Q. What are these?

A. Ye square the compass & ye Bible.

The three pillars do not appear again in the eleven versions of the catechisms between 1710 and 1730, but the question arises, with a new answer, in Prichard's *Masonry Dissected*:

Q. What supports a Lodge?

A. Three great Pillars.

Q. What are they called?

A. Wisdom, Strength and Beauty.

Q. Why so?

A. Wisdom to contrive, Strength to support, and Beauty to adorn.

Almost identical questions appeared in the Wilkinson MS c1727, and in a whole series of English and European exposures throughout the eighteenth century, invariably with the same answer, 'Three. Wisdom to contrive. Strength to support, and Beauty to adorn'. But the descriptions of actual lodge furnishings in the early 1700s do not mention any sets of three, and it seems evident that these questions belong to a period long before there was any idea of turning them into actual pieces of furniture in the lodge-room.

Early lodge inventories are too scarce to enable us to draw definite conclusions from the absence of references to any particular items of lodge furnishings or equipment. While it is fairly certain, therefore, that the early operative lodges were only sparsely furnished, it is evident, from surviving eighteenth-century records, that in the 1750s there were already a number of lodges reasonably well equipped. A set of three pillars was mentioned in the records of the Nelson Lodge in 1757, and the Lodge of Relief, Bury, purchased a set of three pillars, for WM, SW and JW, in 1761. To this day, the ancient Lodge of Edinburgh (Mary's Chapel), No. 1, now nearly 400 years old, uses a set of three pillars, each about three feet tall. The Master's pillar stands on the Altar, almost in the centre of the Lodge; the other two stand on the floor at the right of the SW and JW respectively. (The three principal officers, there, do not have pedestals.)

Masonry Dissected remained the principal stabilizing influence on English ritual until 1760, when a whole new series of English exposures began to appear, all displaying substantial expansion in the floor-work of the ceremonies, and in their speculative interpretation. Three Distinct Knocks appeared in 1760, and J. & B. in 1762, claiming to expose respectively the rituals of the rival Grand Lodges, 'Antients' and 'Moderns'. Both of them now included several new questions and answers on the 'Three great Pillars' agreeing that 'they represent...The Master in the East...The Senior Warden in the West...(and) The Junior Warden in the South'. with identical explanations of their individual duties in those positions.

It seems likely that these questions were originally intended only to mark the geographical positions of the pillars, but in that period of speculative development the explanations were almost inevitable.

THREE CANDLESTICKS

Apart from Prichard's note in the 1730s on 'large Candles placed on high Candlesticks', the first evidence of a combination of these two sets of equipment (that I have been able to trace) is in the records of the Lodge of Felicity, No. 58, founded in 1737, when the Lodge ordered Three Candlesticks to be made according to the following orders Vizr. 1 Dorrick, 1 Ionick, 1 Corinthian and of Mahogany...'. In the Lodge inventory for Insurance in 1812 they had multiplied and were listed as 'Six Large Candlesticks. Mahogany with brass mountings and nossils, caned of the three orders'. In 1739, the Old Dundee Lodge ordered a similar set, still in use today.

The connection is perhaps not immediately obvious, but these were the architectural styles associated with the attributes of the three pillars belonging to the Master and Wardens, 'Wisdom, Strength and Beauty'. The Masonic symbolism of the three pillars had been explained by Prichard in 1730, and it is almost certain that these two Lodges were putting his words into practical shape when they had their candlesticks made up in those three styles.

These two early examples may serve as a pointer to what was happening, but it was not yet general practice, and early evidence of their combined use is scarce. But we can trace the sets of three pillars from their first appearance in the ritual as a purely symbolical question, in which they support the Lodge, and are called 'Wisdom, Strength and Beauty'. Later, they represent the three principal Officers, in the East, South, and West. From the time when they were being explained in this fashion, c1730 to 1760, it is fairly safe to assume that they were beginning to appear in the 'Drawings', Floor-Cloths or tracing Boards. We know, of course, that they

appeared regularly in the later versions, but the general pattern of their evolution seems to indicate that they were almost certainly included in many of the early designs that have not survived.

In the 1750s, and the 1760s, we have definite evidence (meagre indeed), that sets of three pillars were already in use as furniture in several lodges, and this adds strong support to the view that they had formerly appeared in the Tracing Boards. When, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the lodge rooms and Masonic Halls were being furnished for frequent or continuous use, the three pillars became a regular part of the furnishings, occasionally in their own right, but more often as the ornamental bases for the three 'lesser lights', thus combining the two separate features into the one so frequently seen today.

THE GROWTH OF MASONIC SYMBOLISM

The growth of the number of symbols, as illustrated in the French exposures of the 1740s, and in the English version of the 1760s, deserves some comment. In the Grand Lodge Museum there is a collection of painted metal templates, belonging apparently to several different sets. There are pillars with globes, a set of two small pillars without globes, and a separate set of three pillars. There is also a set of templates of 'Chapters and Globes', ie, headpieces only, clearly designed for adding the globes on to normal flat-topped pillars. All these, with many other symbols, were used in drawing the 'designs' on the floor of the lodge. As early as 1737, when the 'floor-drawing' showed only 'steps' and two pillars, it was a part of the Master's duty to explain the 'designs' to the candidate, immediately after he had taken the obligation⁽⁵⁾. There appears to have been no set ritual for this purpose, and the explanations were doubtless given impromptu. From 1742 onwards there is substantial evidence that the number of symbols had vastly increased⁽⁶⁾, and this would seem to indicate a real expansion in the 'explanations', implying some sort of dissertation akin to the later 'Lectures on the Tracing Boards'.

Many of these old symbols, which appear frequently on the later eighteenth-century Tracing Boards and in contemporary engravings, etc., have now disappeared from our modern workings, among them the Trowel, Beehive, the Hour-glass, etc., and it is interesting to notice that in the USA, where much of our late eighteenth-century ritual has been preserved, these symbols, with many others, appear regularly on the Tracing Boards.

In this brief essay, I have confined myself only to a few symbolized items of our present-day furnishings whose origins are liable to be clouded because of standardization, but there is a whole world of interest to be found in the remaining symbology of the Craft.

⁽¹⁾For an excellent survey of pre-Christian and other early versions and variations of this legend, see Knoop, Jones and Hamer. *The Two Earliest Masonic MSS*, pp 39-44 and 162-63

⁽²⁾Sloane MS, c1700; Knoop, Jones and Hamer, *The Early Masonic Catechisms*, (E.M.C.). 2nd edn., 1963. p 48.

⁽³⁾Dumfries No. 4 MC. c1710, *ibid.*, p 62.

⁽⁴⁾Pritchard's *Masonry Dissected*, 1730, *ibid.*, p 162.

⁽⁵⁾The *Herault Letter*, 1737. See translation in *Leics. L. of Research Reprints*, No. xiv.

⁽⁶⁾*Le Catechisms des Francs-maçons*, 1742, and *O'Ordre des Francs-maçons Trahi*, 1745, and in the Frontispiece of a whole stream of English exposures that began to make their appearance from 1762 onwards. All three texts are reproduced in English translation in *The Early French Exposures*, published by the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2076.