



BOOKS OF WISDOM · TWELFTH NOTEBOOK

Masonic Symbols

What they really mean

BLUSABOOKS



Masonic Symbols

THE SQUARE, THE EYE, THE PILLARS, THE ACACIA AND OTHER
SIGNS — WHAT THEY REALLY MEAN

Every chapter — four parts

WHAT THE SYMBOL TELLS

*the sign as the brotherhood itself explains
it, and its history*

IN PLAIN WORDS

the same, short and clear

TERMS

the chapter's terms and what they mean

MYTHS AND FACTS

*the most popular stories and what the
documents show*

This book explains symbols — it neither praises nor accuses. Judge for yourself.

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FOREWORD

You have seen them, even if you have never given them a thought. A square and compasses on the façade of an old building. An eye in a triangle on a dollar bill. A black-and-white checkered floor in a film where something secret is happening behind closed doors. Online, these signs are presented as evidence: here is hidden power, there a satanic code, over there the signature of the rulers of the world. But what do they mean to the people who have actually been using them for three centuries?

This notebook is about Masonic symbols — what they are used to teach in the lodges, where they come from, and what is said about them outside the lodge doors. It is neither an advertisement for the brotherhood nor an indictment. It is a dictionary of symbols, with stories: about medieval stonemasons and their guilds, about Solomon's Temple in the Bible, about the four London lodges that met in a tavern on Midsummer Day (St John's Day) 1717, and about Master Hiram, whose death is the central legend of Freemasonry.

Each chapter has four parts. In the first — "What the symbol tells" — the sign is explained the way the brotherhood itself explains it in its rituals and lectures, along with where it historically came from. In the second, the same is said briefly and in plain words. The third lists the terms, which are later gathered in a glossary at the end of the book. The fourth — "Myths and facts" — looks at the most popular stories about the symbol: the Illuminati, Satanism, the dollar, secret power. And next to them — what the documents, the dates and the published rituals themselves show.

Symbols are like a language. If you know the dictionary, you can read; if you don't, you can only guess — and guesses tend to be scarier than the truth. The aim of this notebook is to give you the dictionary, so that you can judge for yourself what you are looking at.

At the end of the book there are printable pages with drawings of the main symbols and their meanings, which you can use as a reminder in a museum, in an old town, or while watching yet another video about secret signs.

CHAPTER I

THE SQUARE, THE COMPASSES AND THE LETTER G

WHAT THE SYMBOL TELLS

If Freemasonry had to choose a single image, it would be this one: the square and compasses, laid across each other, often with the letter G in the middle. It is the brotherhood's calling card — on lodge buildings, rings, book covers and gravestones. And it is not an invented sign. Both tools come from a real workshop — from the medieval stonemasons' guilds that built cathedrals and castles.

For a stonemason, the square was a matter of life and death. It was used to check whether the corner of a stone was exactly true; if it was not, the wall would lean. The compasses served the architect: with them, arcs, vaults and rose windows were drawn on boards and floors. Masons gathered in lodges — work huts beside the building site — and they had their own rules, written in the so-called Old Charges. The oldest known of them is a poem dated to around 1390. It tells that the mason's craft is geometry, and that geometry is given by God.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, lodges began to admit people who had never cut a stone — noblemen, scholars, merchants. The English antiquary Elias Ashmole wrote in his diary that he was made a Mason in a lodge in 1646. In Scotland, the King's Master of Works William Schaw issued statutes for the lodges in 1598 and 1599, and it is in Scotland that the oldest lodge minutes have survived — with names, dates and even the masons' personal marks, which each of them carved into his stones. In this way, a craft fraternity gradually grew into a society of thinkers in which the tools no longer shaped stone, but people. **On 24 June 1717 — St John's Day, Midsummer — four London lodges joined together**

in the first **Grand Lodge**, and in 1723 the clergyman James Anderson published its Constitutions.

What do the tools teach in the lodge? The lectures put it simply: **the square is morality — with it you true up your conduct**, so that it is "square" towards all people. The compasses are measure — with them you draw a circle around your desires and passions, so that they stay within due bounds. Together with the Volume of the Sacred Law, which lies open on the altar, they are the three "great lights" without which a lodge cannot work. The Book governs your relationship with God, the square — with other people, the compasses — with yourself.

The way the tools are placed has a special meaning. Freemasonry has three basic degrees, and in each one they lie differently:

- in the Apprentice degree, both points of the compasses are beneath the square;
- in the Fellowcraft degree, one point is raised above it;
- in the Master degree, both points are above the square.

The meaning is clear: at first, matter, habits and passions still rule over the spirit; with time, the spirit gradually rises. **The position of the tools is a map of the spiritual path**, in which each degree is a step upward.

And the letter G. It already appears in 18th-century lodge rituals, and it is explained in two ways. First, it stands for Geometry — the first and noblest of the sciences, on which the craft rests. Second, it stands for God, whom Freemasons call the Great Architect of the Universe. The name is deliberately broad: it allows people of different denominations to stand at one altar, because the brotherhood requires belief in a Supreme Being but does not ask in which church you pray. The G between the square and the compasses means: everything you measure and draw, you do before His eyes.



FIGURE 1

The square and compasses — stonemasons' tools that became signs of morality and measure in the lodge.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The square and compasses are real stonemasons' tools. In Freemasonry they became moral signs: the square teaches you to act honestly, the compasses to keep your desires within bounds. Their position shows how far a person has come on the path — from apprentice to master. The letter G in the middle stands for Geometry and for God, whom the brotherhood calls the Great Architect of the Universe.

TERMS

Freemasonry (literally "the craft of free masons") — a brotherhood that grew out of the medieval stonemasons' lodges and uses builders' tools as moral symbols.

Lodge (originally "hut, dwelling") — the basic unit of Freemasonry, both as a group of people and as the room in which it meets.

Speculative Masonry (Lat. *speculari* "to observe, to contemplate") — Freemasonry in which the tools are symbols of thought and morality, as opposed to operative masonry — actual stonework.

Old Charges — medieval and early modern masons' manuscripts containing the history of the craft and rules of conduct.

Grand Lodge — a union of several lodges with a common leadership and rules in one country or region.

Great Architect of the Universe — a name for God used in Freemasonry that allows people of different faiths to unite.

● MYTHS AND FACTS

The most popular story about this sign is that another god hides behind it. The G, it is said, stands not for "God" but is a secret hint at gnosis or the "generative force", and the brothers of the higher degrees supposedly worship Lucifer. This accusation has been repeated for more than a hundred years, and it has a very specific source. At the end of the 19th century, the French journalist Léo Taxil published a whole series of books on "Masonic Satanism" — complete with devil-worship rituals, secret orders and eyewitnesses. They were bought, translated and quoted. In 1897, Taxil called a press conference in Paris and announced that he had made the whole thing up. Yet some of his "revelations" live on to this day — with no mention that the author himself retracted them.

A second myth says: the symbol is secret, so it must have something to hide. In fact, it is one of the most public symbols in the world — on buildings, memorial plaques and gravestones — and lodge rituals have been in print