

The Rough Ashlar is described as a stone, rough and unhewn, as taken from the quarry, and as the entered apprentice requires a chisel and Mason's maul to render the Rough Ashlar fit for the intended structure, these implements are shown as necessary accessories to the Rough Ashlar. The Perfect Ashlar is described as a stone of true die or square, fit only to be tried by the square and compasses. The square is already shown in front of the Volume of the Sacred Law, so the compasses alone are shown as a necessary accessory to the Perfect Ashlar, required to test its trueness.

Until comparatively recently the left hand space between the Pillars states in English that the Brother named had been regularly initiated, passed and raised, and a translation into Latin appeared in the right hand space, but the declaration is now made only in English. The year of initiation is, however, shown as A.L., that is Anno Lucis, or the year in the era of Masonic Light which precedes the Christian era by four thousand years.

The seal of Grand Lodge has been impressed, and the certificate is signed by the Grand Secretary.

Your certificate is a sort of passport to regular Freemasonry, and as you may be asked to produce it when visiting a Lodge in a foreign constitution recognised by Grand Lodge, or even a Lodge in this country or other Lodges under the English Constitution where you are not known, it is advisable to keep it handy with your regalia. It should not, therefore, be framed and hung in your office or even at home. The certificate itself does not entitle you to admission of a Lodge without further checks being made.

You were then required to complete your certificate by appending your usual signature at the Secretary's table.

Before you visit a Lodge in another country please make sure, through the Lodge Secretary or the District Grand Secretary, that the foreign constitution is recognised by Grand Lodge.

Produced by the District of Cyprus Mentoring Team - August 2012
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District of Cyprus Mentoring Programme

A series of Fact Sheets for a Master Mason

MM 06 Your Grand Lodge Certificate



Making a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge

Your Grand Lodge Certificate

As a Master Mason you are entitled to receive from Grand Lodge a certificate stating that you have been regularly initiated, passed and raised.

There is no formal ritual for the presentation of a Grand Lodge Certificate but it is customary to give an explanation. The following is comprehensive and is used extensively.

The certificate is headed with the Arms of the Grand Master, an item which naturally changes with the change of a Grand Master, but the rest of the design of the certificate depicting various Masonic emblems has remained unaltered since first introduced in 1819. These emblems represent ornaments, furniture or appointments in a Lodge of Freemasons and taken together may be regarded as a pictorial representation of a Lodge. Apart from one item these emblems are all described in the Lecture on the First Degree and so appear with others on the First Degree Tracing Board, which was devised to illustrate the First Lecture, so that the certificate may be regarded as a simplified First Degree Tracing Board.

The outstanding feature on the certificate is the representation of the three great pillars. These pillars are said to support a Freemason's Lodge; that in the centre is of the Ionic Order, that on the left of the Doric Order and that on the right of the Corinthian Order. In Masonry they are called Wisdom, Strength and Beauty and represent Solomon, King of Israel, for his Wisdom in building, completing and dedicating the Temple at Jerusalem to God's service, Hiram, King of Tyre for his Strength in supporting him with men and materials, and Hiram Abif for his curious and masterly workmanship in beautifying and adorning the same. These pillars are physically represented in the Lodge by the candlesticks supporting the three lesser lights, that by the Master being of the Ionic Order denoting Wisdom, that by the Senior Warden is of the Doric Order denoting Strength, and that by the Junior Warden of the Corinthian Order denoting Beauty.

These pillars rest on the Black and White pavement of the Lodge representing the light and darkness, the joys and sorrows of our chequered existence on this earth. On the Mosaic pavement are seen the Celestial and Terrestrial Globes, pointing out Masonry universal. This is the item not described in the First Lecture and so does not appear on the First Degree Tracing Board. The Globes were originally a regular feature in a Lodge, but have now largely disappeared as normal furniture. They are sometimes seen on the tops of pillars in the West of a Lodge, and small representations are frequently seen on the tops of the Wardens' columns.

There is also depicted what in the Lecture is called the furniture of the Lodge, viz. The Volume of the Sacred Law, the Square and the Compasses, also referred to as the three great, though emblematical Lights. The three great Lights displayed on the Master's pedestal are usually depicted together, but here the compasses are shown elsewhere.

There are further what are described as Jewels, three moveable and three immoveable. The Moveable Jewels are the square, level and plumb-rule. They are called jewels on account of their moral tendency, as the square teaches morality, the level equality and the plumb-rule justness and uprightness of life and actions. They are called Moveable Jewels because they are worn by the Master and his Wardens and are transferable to their successors on nights of Installation. The Immoveable Jewels are the Tracing Board, and the Rough and Perfect Ashlars. They are called Immoveable Jewels because they lie open and immoveable in the Lodge for the Brethren to moralise on.

The Tracing Board is for the Master to lay lines and draw designs on, the Rough Ashlar for the entered apprentice to work, mark and indent on, and the Perfect Ashlar for the experienced craftsman to try and adjust his jewels on. The Tracing Board depicted here, and on the First Degree Tracing Board, is a true tracing, draughtsman's or drawing board, and as a draughtsman requires a ruler and pencil to assist him to lay lines and draw designs, a ruler and pencil are shown as necessary accessories to the Tracing Board