

A MASONIC MINUTE

Pillars and Columns

“And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz.”

1 Kings 7: 21

When the original framers of our Masonic Rites and Ceremonies chose the Temple of Solomon as described in the VOSL as a backdrop for the degrees, it naturally followed that the two great pillars that stood at the porchway or entrance would play a prominent part. Many of the magnificent gothic cathedrals and abbeys built by our operative forebears paid homage to this tradition, and twin towers were built to adorn the great west entrance.



Today, our lodges are oriented ‘east and west’ with the entrance in the ‘west.’ Following the evolution from operative to speculative, large models representing the two pillars were situated in the west, and their symbolism incorporated into the ritual of the EA and FC degrees.

In the early days, the Wardens were both seated in the West, the Junior Warden in the south-west and the Senior Warden in the north-west. Thus they became associated with the two pillars placed there on either side of the entrance: *Boaz* in the south-west and *Jachin* in the north-west. This arrangement is replicated in the Table Lodge, where the Junior Warden is seated at the foot of the south column and the Senior Warden sits at the foot of the north column.

When the present configuration of the lodge was settled and the Wardens’ stations relocated – the Junior Warden to the south and the Senior Warden to a central position in the west – miniature reproductions of the pillars were given to them as their badges of office. These are the ‘*columns*’ that rest on their pedestals. In some older jurisdictions, whenever the Wardens move about the lodge, they carry their columns with them just as the Deacons carry their wands. For this reason, there is no such ornament on the Master’s pedestal, as his badge of office is the gavel.

The question arises about the position of the Wardens’ columns – upright or supine – when the lodge is open and reversed when the lodge is closed. The Work gives specific directions regarding this. For this tradition we go to the duties of the two

Wardens stated at the time of their investiture. The Senior Warden closes the lodge by command of the Worshipful Master and may, under specified circumstances, rule the lodge in the absence of the Master. The Junior Warden supervises the Brethren during the hours of refreshment after the lodge is closed. It is yet another example of the rich symbolism found in our lodges.

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