

When a Star is not a Star

A good question, and a good point — up to 12 of them

By Charles (Chuck) Bukin

There are a number of Masonic symbols on the Masonic flasks listed in the book *American Bottles & Flasks and Their Ancestry*, by Helen McKearin and Kenneth M. Wilson, published in 1978. I believe that mistakes were made on identifying some symbols on some of the Masonic flasks.

One of the most important Masonic symbols used in Freemasonry is not listed in the book. It's the Sprig of Acacia, an evergreen that grows in abundance in the vicinity of Jerusalem. The tabernacle and its furniture, with the Ark of the Covenant, was made of it, and it was consecrated from among the other trees of the forest for sacred purposes.

Looking at the leaves of the acacia bush or tree, they have very unique patterns and are almost like snowflakes, with many unusual patterns.

This Masonic symbol is used in the Third Degree or the Master Degree of Freemasonry. The majority of the Masonic flasks in the book by McKearin and Wilson have the main Masonic symbols on one side of the flask, and have an eagle and an oval frame below and are surrounded by a bead on the other side. This oval frame is sometimes beaded and sometimes is smooth. I do not know what the oval bead represents; it could be a rope or reef of laurel flowers.

But the symbols within the oval frame are acacia leaves and not stars. I have never seen stars shaped like those on the flasks.

The Masonic symbols as described in McKearin and Wilson (*shown on page 32*):

GI-84 - Large 12 Pointed Star

GIV-5 - Large 8 Pointed Star

GIV-6 - Large 8 Pointed Star

GIV-7 - Large 8 Pointed Star

GIV-7a - Large 8 Pointed Star

GIV-8 - Large 8 Pointed Star

GIV-8a - Large 8 Pointed Star

GIV-9 - Large 8 Pointed Star

GIV-10 - Elongated 8 Pointed Star

GIV-10a - Elongated 8 Pointed Star

GIV-11 - Crudely Formed Leaf

GIV-12 - Small circle with concave center

GIV-13 - Large 8 Pointed Star

GIV-13a - Elongated 7 Pointed Star

GIV-14 - Large 8 Pointed Star

These symbols are the stars that are not stars. They are leaves of a sprig of Acacia bush or tree.

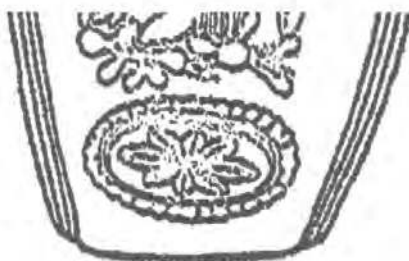
REFERENCES:

1. *American Bottles & Flasks and Their Ancestry*, Helen McKearin and Kenneth M. Wilson, 1978 Crown Publishers, New York, page 591.

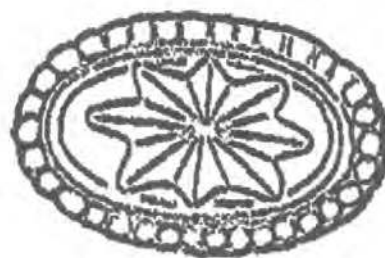
2. *Monitor and Ceremonies, Ancient, Free and Accepted Mason*, Nebraska 1902, revised 1962, page 55.



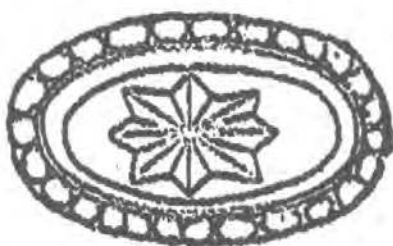
GIV-5 - 6



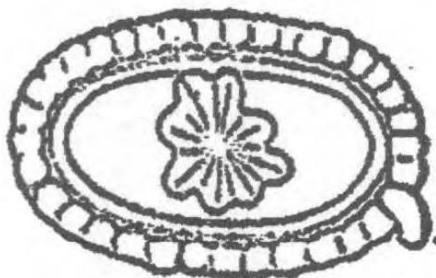
GIV-7 - 7a



GIV-8 - 8a



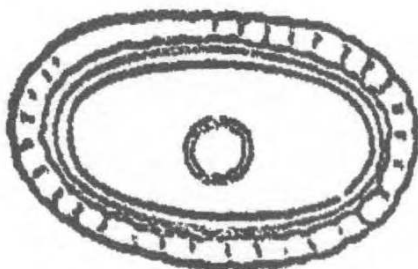
GIV-9



GIV-10- 10a



GIV-11



GIV-12



GIV-13-13a



GIV-14



Reverse of
the GIV-5
Masonic flask.



Teal blue
GIV-5
Masonic Flask



LEFT: Close-up of oval
frame with acacia leaf on
reverse of GIV-5 mold.

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and Wilson.