

THE ZELATOR CERTIFICATE
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Given at a Metropolitan Study Group Meeting

In this brief discussion I want to examine what is for me quite the richest and most beautiful Certificate to be found in Freemasonry or any associated body; that is, the Zelator Certificate of the S.R.I.A. In doing this, I am proposing to deal with its major features in the same order as did Fra. Woodman in the first Clavicula, that is from its top downwards. In the process of examining the symbolism of this most elaborate Certificate, we will discover that it conveys the idea of Perfection in Creation, an idea which is central to understanding the essence of the Malkuth. Malkuth is of course the Sephirah which is the particular concern of the Zelator Grade, since it is into Malkuth that the new Initiate is symbolically inducted, and to which most of the teachings of the Zelator Grade refer.

For the purposes of clarity and easy reference I have included the text of the first Clavicula in italics immediately prior to discussing the part of the Certificate to which the text refers. Hopefully this will make the task of relating my own observations to the Clavicula more convenient.

The Order is essentially a Christian Order, and its members are selected from among those who have already entered the Masonic Brotherhood, and who have learned the true meaning of squares, levels and perpendiculars; to such, a few brief words will suffice to explain the points in the Rosicrucian Certificate which may not be self-evident.

The Seven Stars represent the seven lower Sephiroth from Chesed to Malkuth inclusive, and these are also equivalent to the seven planets and the seven angels governing them. Cassiel, Sachiel, Zamael, Michael, Anael, Raphael, and Gabriel, representing Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, and Luna.

The first feature encountered on the Certificate is an arc of seven stars stretched across its top, above the Crown. According to the Clavicula, these represent the seven lower Sephiroth of the Tree of Life from Chesed to Malkuth inclusive. The notes at the end of the Clavicula declare that the stars also refer (reasonably enough) to the seven Angels governing the planets which are attributed to the Sephiroth. It is interesting that he uses the Angelic rather than the Archangelic Names which would have been more familiar, and he has included Cassiel, a figure attributed to Saturn which refers to Dinah, and which is not included among the seven Sephiroth represented. Conversely, Malkuth has been included even though it is not represented by a planet in the structure of the Tree of Life, rather referring to Assiah in general. This suggests a special relationship between Binah and Malkuth, which will be referred to again later.

Fra. Woodman's choice of names is instructive; he lists the Angels Cassiel, Sachiel, Zamael, Michael, Anael, Raphael and Gabriel as representing the Planets and their related Sephiroth rather than the major Archangelic forms of Tzaphkiel, Tzadkiel, Kamael; Raphael, Hanael, Michael and Gabriel which would have been more usual. In fact the names he gives are most commonly attributed to one particular aspect of the Sephiroth; one more associated with their Assiatic aspects than are the Archangels which have a particular function in the world of Briah. The fact that he has chosen to list the Angelic rather than the Archangelic names clearly indicates that he intended to suggest this Assiatic aspect, which symbolises Angelic influences in Nature. For those who are familiar with the symbols, his choice represents the systemic perfection of the heptagram, rather than the essential equilibrium of the hexagram, which would have been the more obvious interpretation of the Planets as the symbol is given. As a final observation, it is worth noting that the seven stars on the certificate each have eight rays. This clearly suggests Hod, the eighth Sephirah, wherein are conceived the beginnings of shape and form, and this again conveys the idea of perfection in Nature (that is, perfection of form). On balance I am sure this is what Fra. Woodman was trying to convey.

The Crown of Glory is emblematic of the 1st Sephira the Crown (Kether) which represents the highest Trinity of the Sephiroth, Macroprosopus the Father. This Trinity added to the preceding seven stars is ten, the number of the Sephiroth; but inasmuch as this Supernal Trinity is above all things, so it is partly concealed and partly manifest, and therefore, is given under the symbol of the Crown. On the band is the word "Resurgam".

The Crown represents Kether, the most sublime of the Sephiroth, from which all the others issue. It bears the word 'Resurgam' which conveys the idea of revival and renewal, again a very necessary adjunct to the central concept of perfection in Nature, since the natural tendency of all Creation to entropy means that perfection of differentiated form is dependant upon its being constantly refreshed and revitalised.

Emanating from the Crown are eleven rays, on which I will dwell for a moment. The number 11 is of particular interest since it is often regarded as an inauspicious number among Kabbalists (one of its correspondences is the Klippoth), Indeed, in the 'Numbers' lecture in the closing stages of the Zelator Grade Ceremony, it is described as "The evil number, the number of defeat or death" . It may seem strange therefore that it is here associated with Kether, the very Highest Sephirah, however it should be noted that the number eleven also represents an important duality in Nature, and that this is essential, indispensable even, for the functions of Creation to take place. To understand why this is so, it is necessary to understand the role of duality in manifestation, and this subject has some important lessons for the Initiate. The number eleven is also the number of the Initiate, and the Crown therefore maybe seen to have a special significance for the Zelator, himself a new Initiate. A careful examination of the Crown reveals that it has sixteen points. This refers to the various forms of Creation found in Hod ($2 \times 8 = 16$ reflecting the duality of manifestation). Above all, however, as Fra. Woodman points out, the Crown represents Kether, the highest of the three Sephiroth which collectively represent the Supernal Triad or Macroprosopus (Fratres will recall that Kether itself represents the head of Macroprosopus). also of course Arik Anpin the Greater Countenance.

I.N.R.I. are the English equivalents of the Hebrew initials of the words Yammim, Noar, Ruach, Yevaishauh which mean Water, Fire, Air and Dry Land or Earth , in addition to their well-known meanings-

*Jesus Nazareus Rex Judaeorum,
Igne Nitrum Roris Invenitur,
Igne Natura Renovanda Integral,
Igne Natura Renovatur Integra.*

Between the Crown and the large blazing star, which is emblematic of Creation itself, are the letters of the Grand Word of the Zelator Grade, I.N.R.I. It will come as no surprise for Fratres to notice that this word (which represents Christ the Redeemer), is placed between the Crown and the Star, thus affirming the idea that the Son of Man is the intermediary between the Most High and his creatures. He is the Saviour, represented in our illustrious Society by Christian Rosenkreutz, who interposes on behalf of mankind to the Father above, and by whom alone Man may come into the Kingdom of Heaven. In a sense he is the Initiator in to the Mysteries, the preparer of the way, Osiris in a particular aspect.

As a footnote to this section, an interesting coincidence of symbolism is found in the relative placements of the letters I.N.R.I. on the certificate and on the placard above the head of the crucified Christ. Whether this was intentional when the certificate was designed or is indeed merely an interesting coincidence is a possible subject for later debate. Of course, the association of I.N.R.I. specifically with the Christian faith sounds a touch sectarian, but in fact nothing could be further from the truth since the symbolism holds true in an absolute sense, one which transcends merely religious considerations. The Crown symbolises Kether the Father. and I.N.R.I. symbolises Tiphareth, the Son of the Father; the Bridegroom. By means of the Son (Tiphareth)

and his symbolic marriage to Kalah the Bride (representing Malkuth-see also Malkah , the Queen), Man may come to know the Father. This mythology is echoed in the Rosicrucian source text 'The Hermetic Romance of the Alchymical Wedding', a copy of which is before me as I write, and which I would thoroughly recommend to all Fratres as a subject for the most careful study. In the meantime, a quick look at the relative positions of these Sephiroth upon the Tree of Life will be sufficient to confirm the correctness of the above interpretation; clearly the symbolism is universal and far above any merely sectarian meaning.

Fra. Woodman gives several examples of the sort of expansion that has been derived from the word I.N.R.I. over the centuries. Each is an example of the Kabbalistic technique *notarikon* which involves taking each letter in turn of a given word and using it as the first letter of a new word, with the expectation that the generated phrase might represent some additional depth of meaning of the original word. Thus the new phrase is regarded as being a direct derivative or expansion of the original word. In the literature of the Kabbalah there are many ingenious applications of this technique, the following are a few expansions of the word I.N.R.I. It is useful in this exercise to give the transliterations of the Latin phrases derived since they do not appear on the Certificate or in the *Clavicula* which accompanies it, and also to recall that there is no distinction in the Hebrew language between the letters 'I', 'J' and 'Y'. Similarly, Latin makes no distinction between the letters 'I' and 'J'. This will explain why some of the following spellings may appear a little odd at first glance.

1. Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum This is probably the best known of the expansions. This is the direct context of the letters written on a placard and placed above Christ's head at the crucifixion. It transliterates as 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews'.

2. Igne Nilrum Roris Invenitur This is a mediaeval alchemical expansion capable of several interpretations. Probably the closest to the original meaning given the context of alchemy, appears to be 'Fire reveals (brings forth) salt from the dew'. Interestingly, the Latin word 'Ros' meaning 'dew' has been suggested as possible source basis for the word 'Rosicrucian' (refer Frances Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*) and given the symbolism of dew being the condensed water of distillation, this seems possible if in my view not entirely probable. Salt is a correspondence of the Sephirah Binah, the force of litigation and compression, and a kind of condensation or crystallisation is therefore implied in the expression.

3. Igne Natura Renovanda Integrat Another expression emanating from mediaeval alchemy, this appears to lead naturally to the next in order. It expands in context to 'By means of fire, Nature is made whole'.

4. Igne Natura Renovatur Integra The third of the obviously alchemical expansions, this follows on from and complements the previous one. It transliterates as 'Nature, having been renewed is kept whole by Fire'.

It should be noted that the above interpretations of the Latin clauses are still fruitful subjects for debate, and are not necessarily definitive.

The Cross in the Lozenge is the jewel of the Order and contains a word in which you have already been instructed. It is to be noted that the lozenge is a figure formed of two equilateral triangles, and the Cross represents the equated force of the elements; Macroprosopus and Microprosopus; the four Cherubim; the Zodiacal Signs, Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, Aquarius, and conceals the name Tetragrammaton which refers to the Son Microprosopus; its meaning as traced below the Crown but at the head of the symbol of Malkuth, Created Nature, signifies "such as is the Father so also is the Son", "that which is below is like that which is above". "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." -Luke x., 22, and Mark xi., 27

"I am in the Father and the Father is in me." -John xiv., 9. Microprosopus is the reflection of Macroprosopus as is evident from a reference to the quotes above. See also Heb. 1., 3.

The Certificate is dominated in the centre by a circle surmounted by the lozenge jewel of the Society. The lozenge is a curious figure, and our jewel is made the more so since it is in the form of a curved shield rather than a simple flat surface. The lozenge as a shape has its origin in the Vesica Pisces, itself a curious symbol produced by a particular arrangement of two intersecting circles, which implies a certain germination in darkness and silence. In the design of our jewel, an additional dimension has been added by the use of spheres rather than circles, and this results in the curvature of the shield. The geometry of the figure created in this way is of great symbolic interest; for one thing it produces the tetrahedron, one of the Platonic solids which are present in the Holy Royal Arch Chapter. The tetrahedron represents a particular form of Fire and it should be noted that its two dimensional translation is the equilateral triangle (as mentioned above), which is symbolic of the Supernal Triad, the Holy Trinity of the Christian and other faiths.

The jewel itself is well described in the Zelator Ritual, but is regrettably not so well explained. It consists, as all Fratres will be aware, of a white lozenge shaped shield (the curved geometry has already been referred to), which refers to the Vesica Pisces and to a particular non-interlaced derivation of the Hexagram formed by two equilateral triangles. In a sense, this figure provides the link between the numbers Five and Six (the Pentagram and the Hexagram, also Man and the Redeemer) which together make the number of Initiation as referred to above. Fratres will recall that the Hexagram represents the triangles of Spiritual Fire and Spiritual Water as well as the Beauty and Equilibrium of Tiphareth and the Kabbalistic world of Yetzirah. When the triangles are interlaced, the inner angles of the Hexagram nurture Spiritual Air which represents the essence of Tiphareth and the Middle Pillar of the Otz Chiim as a whole.

The white colour of the shield refers to Kether and the gold border again to Tiphareth (and is therefore symbolic of I.N.R.I. and Christian Rosenkreutz). The red cross in the centre refers in one sense to Malkuth since it depicts the four Kerubim which are themselves a reflection of the Holy Living Creatures of the Merkabah of Ezekiel Chai'oth-ha-Qadoschv. Thus a link between Malkuth and Kether is established, and the Middle Pillar of the Tree of Life is completely represented, as also (therefore) is the path of the Flight of the Soul in Kabbalistic theology. This path (sometimes called the flight of the arrow), stretches from its mortal veil (Malkuth) to its ultimate destiny of being reunited with the Father (Kether) by way of the Son and Redeemer (Tiphareth). The gold border around the central red cross indicates that manifested matter is impregnated with and lent Divinity by the redemptive current of the Messiah, and is therefore a part of Divine Creation (it is written: *There is no part of me which is not of the Gods*).

The Cross itself is the four armed cross of the Elements, illustrating the Elements acting in harmony, and equilibrium. It is coloured red to suggest the pervading influence of Spiritual Fire represented in the Kabbalah by Shin (see also the reference to the Tetrahedron above), and in Alchemy by the Aesch Metzareph or Purifying Fire. This influence ensures that the action of the Elements never decays into chaos or becomes blind elemental force which, if left ungoverned by Spirit would quickly become unbalanced, destructive and evil. A similar idea is expressed by the Pentagram within a square in the centre of the Cross. This also suggests the ancient philosophical problem of 'squaring the circle' since the Pentagram contains within itself the secret of the relationship of the circumference of a circle to its centre. It also illustrates the presence of the four Elements acting under the influence of Spirit within the square of matter, which it both sustains and uses to clothe itself with form.

The 72 striations visible in the arms of the Cross (18 in each arm-4 x 18 = 72) are referred to in the Zelator Ritual as the 72 rungs or rounds of Jacobs Ladder. While thus expressed in simple Masonic terms, the idea also conceals the more complex Mystery of the Schemhamphoresch, or the 72 lettered name of God. This peculiar word is derived from a particular arrangement of one

verse in the Book of Exodus, and each letter is the first in the name of an Angel (refer to the technique of notariqon described above). Each of the Angels of the Schemhamphoresch is attributed to a quinary (division of 5 degrees) in the Zodiacal wheel which is described below, and which itself has important elemental attributes. The links between the jewel of the Society and the Rose of Creation are therefore established both in the terms of the Four elements and in the terms of the Schemhamphoresch.

The Zodiacal Signs, with the Sun in the centre, are emblems of the Seasons and the great source of light and life to the system of planets to which our Earth belongs, the sun being the representative of the Great Omnipotent giving life, and light, and power, and heat, and motion to everything within its influence.

Circling around it is a word of Power—a word of power in four languages —Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek and Latin.

These signs and words with the Life giving Sun in the centre, are contained in a circle, within which are four greater circles, which by their intersections form a number of lesser triangles.

The four triangles interlaced and crossing each other whose union gives twelve, are the four elements:— Fire, Air, Earth and Water, each with the Triune form operating there in .

The twenty-four flames, wave and salient alternately, typify the equilibrium of positive and negative, the twenty-four Elders who surround the Throne. These are called in the Kabbalah the twenty-four Thrones of wisdom, on this matter, Solomon says (fragment of one of his Clavicules):— "Number, weight and measure determine all things; substance is one, and God createth it eternally".

"Happy is he who understandeth Letters and Numbers. ..

"The Letters are from the Numbers, and the Numbers are from the Ideas, and the Ideas from the Forces, and the Forces from the Elohim. The synthesis of the Elohim is the Shema (the Tetragrammaton YHWH)."

The Shema is one, its columns are two, its Power is three, its form is four, its reflection gives eight (YHWH-ADNI) which multiplied by three giveth you twenty—four thrones of wisdom. "

"Upon each throne reposeth a crown with three rays, each ray beareth a name, each name is an absolute idea. There are seventy-two names upon the twenty-four crowns of the Shema. "

And seventy-two is A B, the secret name of the highest world, that, namely, of Atziloth, or Archetypal Form.

The Sun in the centre is the Quinta Essentia of the Universe, and the Lion ARIAH of the Alchemists.

The circle beneath the lozenge is the Rose of Creation itself in one of its forms. It represents the circle of the Zodiac divided into its 12 Houses, each of which is governed by one of the Zodiacal signs from Ariesto Pisces, all being transitted by the central Sun in its path around the ecliptic. Each House is also governed by 6 of the Schemhamphoresch. The central Sun is referred to by Fra. Woodman as ARIAH, and is the link between Alchemy, Sol and the Zodiacal sign of Leo. This link is a recurrent theme in occult symbolism.

As shown on the Certificate, the cusp of Pisces and Aries is situated as the mid-heaven (12 o'clock) rather than at the more customary Eastern Horizon. This places the Lozenge symbol at the point of the Vernal Equinox, the symbolic sunrise and dawn of enlightenment.

The triangles forming the pattern of the Rose itself are those which define the Triplicities of the Zodiacal Signs. Thus each sign is linked with and has an affinity with the others corresponding to the same one of the Four Elements. Fire is attributed to Aries, Leo and Sagittarius, and the triangle of the Fire triplicity therefore links the cusps of these three signs. Water is attributed to Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces; Air to Gemini, Libra and Aquarius; and Earth to Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn. In each triplicity is one Cardinal Sign, one Fixed (or Kerubic) sign and one Mutable Sign. The Fixed or Kerubic Sign is the one in each triplicity which has a direct link with the Kerubim and the Holy Living Creatures, the Chaioth-ho-Qadosch referred to above. In addition to the attribution of the Elements to each of the Signs, Fire is also attributed to the four Cardinal Signs, Water to the Fixed Signs and Air to the Mutable Signs. No attribution is made for Earth in this case. It is possible therefore to describe the Zodiacal Signs not only in terms of their principal Elemental attribution, but also in terms of their sub-elemental attribution. Thus Aries, being the Cardinal Fire Sign is attributed to Fire of Fire, Leo being the Fixed Fire Sign is attributed to Water of Fire, and Sagittarius being the Mutable Fire sign is attributed Air of Fire etc. These attributions are found to be illustrated in the full symbolic representations of the Signs, and are important since they establish a link between the Zodiacal Circle with its divisions and signs, and the Lozenge with its Cross of the Elements. The Schemhamphoresch, it will be noted, are common to both in this particular symbol set.

The 24 Flames around the outside of the circle are described in the Clavicula as representing the 24 Elders surrounding the Throne (vide the Book of Revelations). The alternately waved and salient flames symbolise the dual action of the Zodiacal Signs in their positive and negative aspects, a concept which is important for the student of the Mysteries to consider (see the reference to duality above).

The final subjects in our consideration of the Rose of Creation are the letters which appear in the re-entrant angles of the triangles, within the circle. They form the words LVX(Latin), AUR (Hebrew), SOPh (Greek), and ATH (Sanskrit). These Words of Power all refer to a single idea, that of Light, and they assert in the language of the scriptures the immanent presence of the Godhead throughout Creation.

Between the symbol of the Rose of Creation and the area of the Certificate which is dominated by the three obelisks, is the name of the Society. This forms the lower half of a circle, the upper half of which is formed by the word I.N.R.I. An important implication of this juxtaposition is that the Society can be seen to be a manifestation of the redemptive current of I.N.R.I. This may seem a somewhat arrogant interpretation, grandiose even, but please consider that it is entirely consistent with the symbolism of Christian Rosencreutz and the Rosicrucian legends in general. One could usefully reflect upon the responsibility it places upon each one of us as Initiates of the Society.

At this point in his explanation of the Zelator Certificate, Fra, Woodman digresses a little into some of the more poetic ideas of elementary Kabbalah. He quotes from one of the *Claviculae Salomonis* (Keys of Solomon), and appears to make the common error among authors of the time, of attributing these to the historical King Solomon, whereas they are almost certainly of more recent, probably mediaeval origin. The Keys of Solomon are an interesting subject for discussion in their own right; alas not one that can be usefully discussed here, but it is worth noting that they are works of Kabbalistic Magic, a subject that was clearly on the study agenda of our founding fathers.

Fra. Woodman goes on to give some rather cryptic references to the relationship between Elohim, Shema (which is another term for Tetragrammaton or IHVH) and the Schemhamphoresch. These names have been referred to above, and I shall not delve further into them at this time. Suffice it to say that the references to the Shema and the derivations of the word IHVH-ADNI would be of particular interest and value to students of the Kabbalah.

We now arrive at the business portion of the Certificate in English and Latin containing the name of the admitted Zelator with the date of his entrance.

Three Egyptian obelisks bound and divide the two spaces thus inscribed, and at their bases bear respectively the three letters of a Hebrew word, the first emanation from the Omnipotent at the Creation; there are also on the obelisks certain letters or characters referring to the same, and also to Life, Death, Resurrection and Immortality.

These obelisks represent the three Pillars of the Sephiroth, viz., the right, the Pillar of Mercy, the left, the Pillar of Justice, fwd the middle, the Pillar of Mildness, where on the nine Sephiroth, Kether being excepted, are placed in the form known as OTZ-HA-CHAIIM or Tree of Life. On the right Pillar are NETZACH, CHESED and CHOCKMA H, the 2nd, 4th and 7th Sephiroth, On the left Pillar are HOD, GEBURAH and BINAH, the 3rd, 5th and 8th, and on the middle Pillar are MALKUTH, YESOD and TIPHARETH, the 6th, 9th and 10th.

The three obelisks stand on a pavement consisting of seventy-two blocks of white marble which represent the names of the seventy-two angels bearing the names of God. These seventy-two angels are the reflection of the seventy-two names on the triple rayed Crowns above referred to.

The Border round the edge consisting of Roses and Lilies entwined has reference to Christ the Redeemer, the Beauty of whose life and character has been compared to the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley, emblems of the Son and the Bride, Microprosopus and MALKUTH.

In our consideration of the Certificate, the remainder of the symbolism is reasonably straight forward with the exception of the Great Seal of the Society. This I will deal with last since it is a most fertile and specifically Rosicrucian symbol; we shall see that some symbols we have already considered and analysed will reappear in different contexts, and can therefore be readily dealt with again. In the meantime however there are some further points of note, and some new symbols to explore.

The three obelisks, between which is inscribed the certification of the Zelator in both English and Latin, represent the three pillars on the Tree of Life or Otz Chiim, which are called the Pillars of Mercy, Severity or Justice, and Mildness. A consideration of why these Pillars are so named will need to be left for another time since there are some paradoxes which need to be fully discussed, and which would divert us from our main task, however Fra. Woodman makes a point of stating that as they appear on the Certificate, they only refer to the lowest ninth Sephiroth. This is reasonable enough since the Pillars are shown to be of equal height whereas the Middle Pillar on the Tree of Life is significantly taller than the other two. The justification for this representation is that Kether is symbolised by the Crown at the top of the Certificate and should not be represented again since that would imply division or duality, and thus trespass against the unity and sanctity of the symbol. The letters placed upon the bases of the obelisks form the Hebrew word AUR or Light, and are also found in the angles of the Rose of Creation (see above). Light is the first emanation from the Omnipotent at the moment of Creation (Lux Fiat), and is again referred to by the letters LVX on the pyramid shaped capitals of the Pillars. The words represented by the remaining letters on the Pillars are not given and I have not been able to decipher their meaning. I do not feel I should speculate as to the possibilities since it is unlikely I would be able to determine their significance. Perhaps the meanings will become known to me later.

The Pillars themselves stand upon a three-tiered platform comprised of 72 white marble blocks. The colour is reasonably predictable; it implies purity and suggests the indwelling presence of Kether in Malkuth (it is written: 'Malkuth is in Kether as Kether is in Malkuth'). The three tiers themselves refer to the Trinity and Supernal Triad thus placing the whole edifice upon, as it were, a foundation of Holiness, and the number of the blocks (72) refers to the Schemhamphoresch mentioned above.

The body of the Certificate is bordered with intertwined lilies and roses. This particularly lovely symbolism refers to Christ the Redeemer and invokes the phrase 'The Rose of Sharon and the Lily

of the Valley' which is found in the Song of Solomon. In addition to the explanation given by Fra. Woodman, these symbols bear some interesting fruit in again illustrating the relationship discussed previously, between the numbers 5 and 6. There is also an interesting Kabbalistic exegesis which is worthy of note here, and which concerns the discovery by the Initiate of his Higher Self (symbolised by the name ADNI), and its Microcosmic and Macrocosmic implications. In this regard, the Initiate should also refer to the idea of transubstantiation which forms a part of the dogma and ritual of the sacrament.

We now come to the Seal on which much care was bestowed, and in which I was assisted materially by Frater Hughan, the past S.S.M., a veritable adept in these matters. He considers it the most perfect symbolical Seal in masonry. The form is that of the Vesica Piscis, which represents the matrix or womb of Nature MLKVT (Malkuth) the Bride. The inscription, the name of the Society and the motto of the Supreme Magus, "Sit Lux et Lux Fuit". The All-Seeing Eye at the upper part, irradiated, alludes to the Omniscience of the Deity, and being single represents the Eye of the Father, Macroprosopus. Beneath this the Cross and Crown, the triumph over Death and Sin, the emblem of Father and Son, Macroprosopus and Microprosopus conjoined. At the bottom of the Seal the Star of Bethlehem shedding its rays on the Three Wise Men who came from the East to worship the infant Christ. The Three Magi being represented by the figure LX in a triangle. In the body of the Seal a circle surrounding a triangle, and around it the four points of the compass. Within the triangle, the Mercy Seat with the Cherubim with wings extended over it, and the Shekinah, or the visible Glory of Jehovah, with the point in the centre representing Deity Itself, the perfect equilibrium of Counter-balanced Power; the Alpha and the Omega (A, Ω), the Beginning and the Ending, the First and the Last, the great Centre of all created things, the Prime Ruler of all the Universe, the Omnipotent Jehovah. Beneath the Cherubim are the ten crowns (divided into a triad and a heptad) symbolising the ten Sephiroth.

Of all the symbols appearing on the Zelator Certificate, the Great Seal is perhaps the most sublime, it is certainly as complex and illuminating as any other. Fra. Woodman refers to the opinion of Fra. Hughan, that it is the most perfect symbolical Seal found in Masonry. For what my opinion is worth I agree; certainly it seems to me to be several orders of magnitude higher in spiritual import than any other I have seen.

In examining the Seal, we again see the Vesica Pisces, representing the womb of Nature according to Fra. Woodman. In fact, although his statement is quite correct, this particular symbol conceals much more besides (see the remarks above).

We need not go very far into the words inscribed around the periphery of the Seal, since they are largely self explanatory, however the All-Seeing Eye is worthy of particular note since it represents the Eye of Horus, from which symbol it originally sprang. It also symbolises the Eye of Shiva, the opening of which heralds the close of one phase of manifestation and the consequent destruction of Creation, a cycle known as the Days and Nights of the Gods. I am not certain I agree that its being single means that it represents Macroprosopus since it is only ever seen in single form, but I acknowledge that the interpretation is satisfactory even if the reason is not.

The Crown and Cross refer to the Sephiroth Kether and Tiphareth respectively, their relationship clearly illustrating the proposition that the possibility and promise of redemption, though represented in Tiphareth as the vehicle, stem ultimately from Kether. To further illustrate this, recall that one classic arrangement of the Tree of Life as it manifests in the four Kabbalistic Worlds, shows four Trees in descending positions with the Tiphareth of the higher and the Kether of the lower being superimposed, providing as it were a matrix for the transmission of the Divine Light from one level of manifestation to the next. Of course there are other schemata which illustrate the same idea in other ways, but the links between the Crown and the Cross are clear enough to enable us to validate the symbolism of their position on the Seal. In this regard, the explanation given by Fra. Woodman in the Clavicula is unlikely to be bettered.

I am less certain however about the interpretation of the Romanised IXth Grade enclosed in a triangle, which according to Fra. Woodman represents the three Magi come to adore the infant Jesus. Neither am I entirely comfortable with the reference to the Pentagram above as being the Star over Bethlehem. There may be some insight in this which is denied me at present, but I cannot readily see the value of such imagery (unless of course there is some link between the IXth Grade and the three Magi, which would have a more Rosicrucian than Kabbalistic significance). Certainly there is no doubt that the symbol of the IXth Grade enclosed within a circle represents the office of Supreme Magus, but on balance, I feel that the Star more appropriately represents a benediction and bestowal of Spiritual and Magical power upon that high office.

By way of contrast to the last symbol set, the import of the dominant symbol at the centre of the Seal is reasonably clear, although to explain its significance is not nearly so easy, since it requires some knowledge of the design of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and that most elusive Kabbalistic idea, the Shekinah. Essentially, the ideas behind the central circle and the figures it contains spring from the Sephirah Binah. The circle and the triangle themselves are clearly direct references to Binah, the third Sephirah to which are referred both the triangle and the Vesica Pisces (see previous comments). In addition, the Ninth Grade of our Society has very specific links with Binah, which is also the source of the idea of Shekinah or Grace, the concept which so excites the mystic and scholar alike, and which is hinted at in the symbol of the Holy Ghost. The Shekinah is one factor in the particular relationship that exists between Binah and Malkuth, and which I have referred to previously. In the present context the presence of its symbols establishes beyond doubt the very lofty principles which are woven into the very fabric of our Society. It is most unfortunate (though an indisputable fact), that most of the Fratres who will pass through the Grades of this Society will never be aware of the profound mysteries to be found here, although they are there for all to see.

Around the circle are the letters 'N, S, E and W' which signify the four cardinal points of the compass. This reinforces the idea that the Divine Currents represented by the circle and all that it contains, which we have already identified with Binah, are also manifest throughout Creation, thereby affirming the essential Divinity of all created things. This conclusion which appears perfectly obvious to the experienced Kabbalist may yet escape the grasp of the less experienced Frater, who may well have to take my word for it for the time being. The key to the interpretation lies in the understanding that Binah exists beyond the level at which there is any distinction between directions; beyond even the realms in which there is any distinction between anyone thing and any other, these two statements being linked in the astonishing relationship between space, time and Creation. Whilst this understanding and the ideas which underlay it may be somewhat elusive, never-the-less it will be clear that the introduction of spatial symbols into the schema implies a level of operation more in keeping with manifestation than the more conceptual realms with which Binah is more generally associated.

At the very centre of the Seal is to be found the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant, The Archangelic forms seen on either side are referred to as the Cherubim and are in fact the Great Archangels Metatron (attributed to Kether) and Sandalphon (attributed to Malkuth). The quotation made above 'Malkuth is in Kether as Kether is in Malkuth' is again brought to mind.

The point referred to by MW Fra. Woodman in the Clavicula, becomes the point within the circle which is familiar to all Fratres from their Craft work (see the First Degree tracing board). It is possible however that some may not really have appreciated its truly great significance. It represents the relationship between the circumference of a circle and its centre (see also the relationship between the Pentagram and Hexagram mentioned above). It therefore implies the relationship between the Creator and His Creation. Those who have a knowledge of these matters will understand that this relationship is mathematically described in one of the Divine Names attributed to Binah. In other words, it is described within one of the Names of God.

The last dozen or so lines of the Clavicula are given over to a retrospective view of the numeric structure of the Certificate, a form of Gematria, which is another technique of the literal Kabbalah. I frankly doubt the value of this sort of analysis since all too often the exercise is too subjective, and the benefits too tenuous to be of value. Too many people have manipulated this process in outrageous ways for it to be very highly regarded. That is not to say it is incorrect or never useful, merely that any assessment of its ultimate value must be carefully made. After some years of study, the student will come to the view that exercises of this sort can often be done in such a way as to support whatever argument is being proposed. For this reason I shall make no further comment on this section of the Clavicula.

Conclusion. The depth of symbolism in the Zelator Grade Certificate is remarkable and must be quite bewildering for the new Rosicrucian who may have limited resources with which to develop his understanding of the ideas involved. Many of the ideas represented on the Certificate will be quite new to the Zelator, however a recurring theme will, I hope, be evident from the few notes I have jotted down here. That theme is that there is a Divine indwelling through out Creation which constantly renews and regenerates it. This idea is summed up in some of the expansions of the word of I.N.R.I. which I have explained previously in this paper, and is the real lesson to be learned by the Zelator.

It is implied in the numbers lecture given during the Zelator Grade, that everything, no matter how mundane, has Divine qualities and Divine significance. The Zelator is told during the ceremony of Initiation exactly what the Divine Currents are that form the basis of Creation. Further, he has the idea of direction in space which are governed by these Currents demonstrated for him when he is shown the Seven Steps of Wisdom, and he acknowledges his emergence from a state of Darkness to the realms of the Light immediately thereafter. The Zelator cannot fail to conclude that the Light existed previous to his discovery of it, and that he was simply unaware of that existence. In the same way, the presence of the Divine all around us in the forms of Nature must be recognised and acknowledged by the Initiate, even though for the time being it is not immediately apprehended. For this purpose, the Zelator Certificate and its accompanying Clavicula provide a valuable instruction. It is said elsewhere 'The Truths which by material science we investigate are but special examples of the all-pervading Laws of the Universe'. It is the task of the Zelator, who himself has a special relationship with the Sephirah Malkuth, to endeavour to understand these Laws, and to leave no stone unturned and no other Frater unpetitioned in his search for this understanding. If in the end he still cannot achieve this objective, and his understanding still needs the time for gentle fermentation, then it behoves him to simply accept that they exist despite his inability to comprehend them. In this acceptance of what cannot at the time be understood lies a recognition of the fact that the learning experience of life which he may have thought to be some way completed, has in fact only just begun.