

The “Golden Fleece” and The Star and Garter

In the E.A. ritual, the W.M. gives a lambskin, or white leather apron to the candidate, saying it is “more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter...” What is a Golden Fleece and Star and Garter?

A fleece is a coat of wool covering a wool-bearing animal like a sheep. This would explain the link between a fleece and our apron being white leather. Golden fleece appears in the Greek tradition, where Aries (Latin for ram) was the winged ram of the Golden Fleece. There was also a fleece placed by the King of Colchis in a dragon-guarded grove and which was recovered by the Argonauts. It is also interesting to note that the Order of the Golden Fleece, introduced by Philip III (a.k.a. Philip the Good), Duke of Burgundy in 1429, was the highest order of knighthood, especially as wool was an important part of his domain at the time.

The Star and Garter was more difficult to research. There is an order, called the Order of the Garter, which is the most illustrious order of British knighthood. It was instituted by King Edward III in 1348. The order consists of the sovereign and 25 companions, of which the Prince of Wales is always a member. It therefore signifies how important the order is, and also, more interestingly perhaps, the period from which our ritual possibly originated (12th century).



Order of the Garter