

Thoughts on the Early History of the Royal Arch in England

Bro. Christopher Powell

NO PAPER ON THE ROYAL ARCH SHOULD BEGIN WITHOUT PAYING TRIBUTE to Bernard Edward Jones (1879–1965), a Past Master of Quatuor Coronati Lodge (Q.C.), and his *Freemasons' Book of the Royal Arch*. If ever anyone 'stood on the shoulders of giants' it is the author of this paper whose work stands on the foundations laid in 1957 by Bernard Jones in his classic text.

In 1958 Bro. Norman Rogers wrote in the pages of *AQC* 'We are all well aware that the origin of the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch is wrapped in mystery. . .' It is the aim of this paper to clarify the events leading to the creation of the Excellent, Grand and Royal Chapter on 22 July 1766 and to cast some light on the early history of the Order. The paper is subdivided into separate sections in order to make the path easier for the reader to follow.

¹Norman Rogers, 'The Two Oldest Royal Arch Chapters' *AQC* 71 (1958), 56.

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In a paper entitled ‘Some news from the “Russian Archives” about the early history of the high degrees: the Scottish Order in Berlin from 1742 to 1752’ Pierre Mollier begins by stating that

The appearance of high degrees, along with their origins, role, and purpose prior to the 1760s, remains one of the most obscure issues in Masonic history. There is little information before 1745, and what does exist is often allusive and always difficult to interpret.²

He is quite correct. This paper endeavours to provide a pathway through the sources that are extant from the earliest mention of the Order we now call the Royal Arch to the situation in England after the *Charter of Compact* was signed in 1766 and the first chapters granted warrants in 1769.

When one is discussing any subject it is important to define one’s terms clearly and this is especially true in the case of the history of Masonic degrees. Degrees with different titles can have similar rituals, and degrees with the same title can have completely different rituals. Often the term ‘Master’ is confused meaning either a Mason who has been raised to the third degree or a Mason who is or has been the Master of a Masonic lodge. Such confusions are especially true in the history of the Royal Arch.

In order to define one’s terms one has to focus on a unique feature of a degree and only a unique feature will do. For instance, one cannot define the third degree by the raising on the Five Points of Fellowship since before 1720 the F.P.O.F. was worked in the degree of Fellow Craft. One can only define the third degree by the presence of the Hiram legend, since that is its unique feature. In the Royal Arch there are two unusual features: the story of the discovery of the Lost Word in a cave under Solomon’s Temple and the arrangement of the chapter with its unique layout and officers, especially its three co-equal Masters or Principals. As will become clear during the course of this paper, between 1730 and 1760 rituals with the title ‘Royal Arch’ fulfilled one but not both of these defining characteristics, and a degree with a different name altogether ‘Scots Master’ also fulfilled one of them. In order to help the reader I should add that of the two defining characteristics of the Royal Arch the story came first, being used in a Masonic degree from around 1730, and the layout of the chapter with its three co-equal Principals came much later, around 1760. Everything was, however, fully in place by the time the *Charter of Compact* was signed in 1766 which set up what we now call Supreme Grand Chapter.

In *AQC* 134 (2021) the author of this paper discussed ‘The Hiram legend and the creation of the Third degree’. In the *Transactions of the Manchester Association for Masonic Research* 109 (2019) he published his ‘Thoughts on the early history of the Royal Order of Scotland’ and in *Corona Gladiorum* 21 (2023–24), the *Transactions of the Bristol Masonic Society*, he outlined his understanding of ‘The Early History of the Order of Masonic

² *Ritual, Secrecy, and Civil Society* Volume 1, Number 1, Spring 2013, 22–27.

Knights Templar in England'. This paper is a companion to those three earlier papers and deals with the early history of the Order we now call the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch. It is a difficult history to unravel not least because the sources are few and scattered among the Minutes of lodges and chapters in several countries. Moreover, the matter is confused by the Royal Arch changing its name in the 1740s and its form around 1760.

Freemasonry in England changed dramatically in the twenty-five years following the re-founding of the Premier Grand Lodge in London in 1717. Two new rituals were created and the rituals of the two old degrees of the Operative masons – Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft – were changed to accommodate the new tri-gradal Craft structure. The raising on the Five Points of Fellowship was moved to the new Master Mason ceremony and the giving of the Mason Word, 'the genuine secret of a Master Mason', ended up in the Order we now call the Royal Arch, leaving the second degree rather thin in content. However, it is clear that from the start the two new ceremonies were in fact one degree in two parts and not, as is so often wrongly stated, two degrees. This is why the current *Book of Constitutions* is entirely correct in calling the Royal Arch a part of the third degree and not a separate fourth degree and using the word 'Order' to distinguish it:

... pure Ancient Freemasonry consists of three degrees, and no more; viz. those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch.³

According to Anderson's first book of *Constitutions* published in 1723, to qualify for the Chair of a lodge Masters were required to be Fellow Crafts in Masonic rank, but by the time his second edition was published in 1738 they had to be Master Masons. This shows the rapid progress and acceptance of the new third degree.

Most of the changes that occurred in the period after 1717 were probably the work of Dr John Theophilus Desaguliers, the third Grand Master of the Premier Grand Lodge. As well as devising both parts of the third degree, Desaguliers revised the layout of a lodge as illustrated in *A Dialogue between Simon and Philip*.⁴ He also created the office of Grand Steward with its colourful red apron. He formed what we now call the Masonic Charitable Foundation. As the son of a Huguenot minister who at one point in his life had to rely on charity to support his family, Desaguliers had first-hand knowledge of the need for Masons to support one another financially.

Being an ordained minister, it is not surprising that Desaguliers' new third degree was very Christian in character and message. The two Saints John – St John the Baptist and, especially, St John the Divine (also known as St John the Evangelist) – became central to the new Speculative Freemasonry of 1717 onwards. Indeed, Masonic degrees became

³ Exact quotation from the 'Articles of Union' of 1 December 1813, p.2.

⁴ See D. Knoop and G. P. Jones in *AQC* 57 (1944), 3–21.

more and more Christian in content throughout the eighteenth century. Neither saint is mentioned in the 'Old Charges' where the patrons of Masonry are the Four Crowned Martyrs, the *Quatuor Coronati*. The focus on the two saints John was a new feature of Speculative Masonry. There are a number of references in the new third degree taken from the Gospel of John and the Revelation of St John the Divine. Moreover, the first seal of the Premier Grand Lodge featured the opening words of St John's Gospel in Greek: *En arche en ho logos*. Lodge Installations took place on the patronal festivals of the two saints: 24th June and 27th December respectively from 1717 onwards and throughout the eighteenth century.⁵ The focus on the two saints John by the new Speculative Masons probably originated in the Mason Word of the Operative Masons being associated with the opening of St John's Gospel and the fact that all Masonic obligations were taken with the Mason's hand being placed on the first page of St John's Gospel until the nineteenth century.

As was argued in the author's paper on the origins of the third degree, it would appear that the starting point for both that degree and for the Order we now call the Royal Arch was Dr Desaguliers' discovery of the fifth-century account by Philostorgius in Samuel Lee's *Orbis Miraculum*.⁶

The Original Story

The story of the discovery of the Word in the hidden vault that forms the basis of the Royal Arch exaltation ceremony evolved from a fifth-century account that appeared between 425 and 433CE by a Greek writer called Philostorgius in his *Εκκλησιαστική ιστορία* ['Ecclesiastical History'].⁷ It tells of the discovery of a cave under the Temple of Solomon when labourers employed by the Roman Emperor Julian were preparing the ground to build the famous temple for the third time. In the cave they discover a copy of St John's Gospel placed on the top of a pillar. Although usually referred to as a legend, it is perfectly possible that Philostorgius was reporting historical fact and the workers had discovered an early Christian secret place of worship. The original is lost, but the ninth-century historian Photius found a copy in a library in Constantinople and wrote an epitome of it:

BOOK VII, CHAP. 14. When Julian bade the city of Jerusalem to be rebuilt in order to refute openly the predictions of our Lord concerning it, he brought about exactly the opposite of what he intended. For his work was checked by many other prodigies from heaven; and especially, during the preparation of the foundations, one of the stones which was placed at the lowest part of the base, suddenly started from its

⁵ In the nineteenth century the Duke of Sussex in his attempt to lessen the Christian elements in the rituals, replaced the two saints John with Moses and Solomon as the two Grand Parallels of Freemasonry.

⁶ A copy signed by Desaguliers was sold on eBay in February, 2013.

⁷ E. Walford (trans.) *Epitome of the Ecclesiastical History of Philostorgius, compiled by Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1855), Chapter VII, Book 14.

place and opened the door of a certain cave hollowed out in the rock. Owing to its depth, it was difficult to see what was within this cave; so persons were appointed to investigate the matter, who, being anxious to find out the truth, let down one of their workmen by means of a rope. On being lowered down he found stagnant water reaching up to his knees; and, having gone round the place and felt the walls on every side, he found the cave to be a perfect square. Then, in his return, as he stood near about the middle, he struck his foot against a column which stood rising slightly above the water. As soon as he touched this pillar, he found lying upon it a book wrapped up in a very fine and thin linen cloth; and as soon as he had lifted it up just as he had found it, he gave a signal to his companions to draw him up again. As soon as he regained the light, he showed them the book, which struck them all with astonishment, especially because it appeared so new and fresh, considering the place where it had been found. This book, which appeared such a mighty prodigy in the eyes of both heathens and Jews, as soon as it was opened showed the following words in large letters: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' In fact, the volume contained that entire Gospel which had been declared by the divine tongue of the (beloved) disciple and the Virgin.⁸

The story was published in Greek and Latin throughout the Middle Ages. It appeared twice in translation during the seventeenth century – the century before the degree we now call the Royal Arch was devised – once in English and once in French.

The English version appeared in a work by Samuel Lee entitled *Orbis Miraculum or The Temple of Solomon pourtrayed by Scripture-light* which was published in London in 1659. It is known that Dr Desaguliers owned a copy of this book and it was doubtless what inspired him not only to create the degree of Scots Master but the third degree as well – Scots Master being the name given to the degree from which the Royal Arch evolved. After all, in order to find something – the Mason Word or 'the genuine secret of a Master Mason' – one first has to account for its loss, which is what the Hiram legend is all about as well, as being an exemplification of the words from the Revelation of St John 2:10: 'Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.' As it says in Prichard's *Masonry Dissected* (1730):

- Q. 'You're an heroick Fellow; from whence came you?
 A. From the East.
 Q. Where are you going?
 A. To the West.
 Q. What are you going to do there?
 A. To seek for that which was lost and is now found.
 Q. What was that which was lost and is now found?

⁸ Ibid.

A. The Master-Mason's Word.

Q. How was it lost?

A. By Three Great Knocks, or the Death of our Master *Hiram*.⁹

Samuel Lee's English version of Philostorgius' story is found near the end of his *Orbis Miraculum*:

When the foundations [*of the Temple at Jerusalem*] were a laying, as I have said, there was a stone among the rest, to which the bottom of the foundation was fastened, that slipt from its place, and discovered the mouth of a cave which had been cut in the rock. Now when they could not see to the bottom by reason of its depth; the Overseers of the building being desirous to have a certain knowledge of the place, tied a long rope to one of the Labourers, and let him down: He being come to the bottom, found water in it, that took him up to the mid-ancles, and searching every part of that hollow place, he found it to be four square, as far as he could conjecture by feeling. Then returning toward the mouth of it, he hit upon a certain little pillar, not much higher then (*sic.*) the water, and lighting with his hand upon it, found a book lying there wrapped up in a piece of thin and clean linnen. Having taken it into his hands, he signified by the rope that they should draw him up. When he was pulled up, he shews the book, which struck them with admiration, especially seeming so fresh and untoucht as it did, being found in so dark and obscure a hole. The Book being unfolded, did amaze not onely the Jews, but the Grecians also, holding forth even at the beginning of it in great Letters (*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*) To speak plainly, that Scripture did manifestly contain the whole gospel, which the Divine tongue of the Virgin-Disciple had declared.⁹

Royal Arch Masons will note from their knowledge of what the Principal Sojourner recounts in the traditional exaltation ceremony that very little has changed over a period of three hundred years. Indeed, very little apart from the language has changed from Philostorgius' original fifth-century account. The cave has become a man-made vault, the labourers are called Sojourners and the Gospel Book has become a scroll of vellum or parchment, but otherwise it is much the same story. In the eighteenth century the scroll contained the opening of *St John's Gospel* as in the original account, but with the removal of the more obvious Christian elements from the Masonic rituals when the Duke of Sussex was Grand Master, that quotation was replaced by the opening words of the *Book of Genesis* on which the opening of *St John's Gospel* was based.

⁹ Samuel Lee, *Orbis Miraculum, or, The temple of Solomon pourtrayed by Scripture-light: wherein all its famous buildings, the pompous worship of the Jewes, with its attending rites and ceremonies, the severall officers employed in that work, with their ample revenues, and the spiritual mysteries of the Gospel railed under all, are treated of at large* (London, 1659), 370.

The Degree of Scots Master

Before the Order took the name Royal Arch in the 1740s, it was called the degree of Scots Master. It had nothing to do with Scotland nor with Scotsmen and was first worked in London. (Likewise the degree now known as the Royal Order of Scotland which originated in London in the late 1730s had nothing to do with Scotland nor with Scotsmen either.) It is a fourth ceremony, but its contents clearly relate to the third degree, for it is in the ceremony of exaltation that the candidate receives ‘the genuine secrets of a *Master Mason* (my italics)’, having left the third degree with only substituted secrets ‘until time or circumstances should restore the genuine.’ Since it was and still is the completion of the third degree, every Mason who was made a Scots Master in the 1730s was already a Master Mason or, as the early Minutes sometimes state, an English Master. According to the evidence John Coustos gave to the Holy Inquisition in Lisbon in March 1743, it was where the old Mason Word was revealed to a candidate just as it is now.¹⁰ In his own words: ‘when the destruction of the famous Temple of Solomon took place there was found below the first stone a Tablet of bronze upon which was engraved the following word, Jehova, which means God.’ Coustos himself was not a Scots Master, but told his inquisitors that he had heard about it whilst he was a Freemason in London. Coustos lived in the capital between 1730 and 1735. He was a member of the lodge at the Rainbow Coffee House, York Buildings and a founder in 1732 of the Union French Lodge at Prince Eugene’s Head Coffee House in St Alban’s Street.¹¹ Coustos’s evidence is important, since it confirms two things: first that the degree of Scots Master was being worked in London in the first half of the 1730s, and secondly that the ritual of the Scots Master degree contained the story printed in Samuel Lee’s *Orbis Miraculum*, the same story that forms part of the Royal Arch now.

Andrew Michael Ramsay and his *Discours* (1736)

Andrew Michael Ramsay, often called Chevalier Ramsay, was a Scottish Jacobite and Catholic who spent most of his life in France. In 1728 he returned to Britain to promote the sales of his newly-translated two-volume historical novel *The Travels of Cyrus*. It was published in French in 1727 and the English version appeared later in the same year. It was based on Archbishop Fénelon’s didactic novel *Les aventures de Télémaque* published anonymously in 1699. In his younger days Fénelon (1651–1715) had been the tutor to Louis XIV’s grandson and Ramsay had been part of Fénelon’s household from 1710 until his death in 1715. Ramsay then wrote a biography of Fénelon entitled *Histoire de la vie de*

¹⁰ See the evidence Jean Coustos gave on 26 March 1743 quoted in Dr S. Vacher, ‘John Coustos and the Portuguese Inquisition’ *AQC* 81 (1968), 9–87.

¹¹ *QCA* X, 183 and 193.

Messr. François de Salignac de la Motte-Fénelon archevesque Duc de Cambray published at the Hague in 1723.

Based on his biography of Fénelon and his successful novel, while he was in London Ramsay was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, made a member of the the Spalding Gentleman's Society and received the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law from the University of Oxford – the first Roman Catholic to receive the honour since the Reformation. He also became a Freemason. On 9 March 1730 Ramsay was initiated in the Horn Tavern Lodge, Westminster, the most distinguished lodge at the time whose members were the most influential Masons in the Premier Grand Lodge.

Although there is no record of Andrew Michael Ramsay becoming a Master Mason or a Scots Master after his initiation into Freemasonry in 1730, he clearly knew the Hiram legend of the Master Mason degree and the Philostorgius story of the Scots Master degree, since he refers to them both in his *Discours* of 1736.¹²

Ramsay returned to France late in 1730 and never returned to Britain again. He died at St Germain-en-Laye in 1743. The only way he could have learnt about the Hiram legend and the Scots Master story was through his contacts in London who were members of the Horn Tavern Lodge such as Dr Desaguliers. The members of the Horn Tavern Lodge held two meetings in Paris, one in 1734 and one in 1735, which Ramsay may have attended, although there is no evidence of that. Whatever is the case, Ramsay's knowledge of the two stories can only have come from his brethren in the Horn Tavern Lodge, Westminster after his initiation in March 1730.

The original story on which the Scots Master degree was based describes the discovery of a copy of the Gospel of John in a cave under the ruins of Solomon's Temple. It is clear it cannot have been placed there by King Solomon since the Gospel dates from around 90 CE and King Solomon is alleged to have reigned between 970 and 931 BCE. Realising this inconsistency, Ramsay replaced the Gospel of John in the original Royal Arch story with a so-called Book of Solomon, '*et ce livre antique est le Code originel de notre ordre*' [and this antique book is the original Code of our order], allegedly written by King Solomon.

After his death, King Solomon wrote our statutes, maxims and mysteries in hieroglyphic figures, and this ancient book is the original code of our order. After the destruction of the first temple and the captivity of the favourite nation, the anointed of the Lord, the great Cyrus who was initiated in all our mysteries constituted Zorobabel Grand Master of the Lodge of Jerusalem, and ordered him to lay the foundations of the second Temple where the mysterious Book of Solomon was deposited.¹³

¹² *Discours de M[onsieu]r le Ch[evali]er de Ramsay Prononcé à la Loge de St Jean le 26 xiii 1736*, Médiathèque d'Épernay MS.124.

¹³ Ramsay, *Discours* 1736, trans. C.P.

It is possible this was what he had been told by his London brethren, but given the importance of the Gospel of John to eighteenth-century Freemasons and the Premier Grand Lodge in particular, it is highly unlikely and was probably Ramsay's own invention. Coustos's account is probably closer to the Scots Master workings of the 1730s in London.

Ramsay's *Discours* of 1736 is best known as the primary source of the order of Masonic Knights Templar. It is clear from Ramsay's Oration that the 'mother' of the degree of Knight Templar was the degree of Scots Master, which evolved into the Royal Arch. The two orders have been closely linked ever since. In the last decade of the eighteenth century Thomas Dunckerley was the first Grand Master of the newly-formed Grand Encampment in 1791, and in the same year as he was the First Grand Principal of the Moderns' Grand Chapter. Even today a candidate for knighthood enters the K.T. Preceptory as a Royal Arch Companion.

Ramsay glossed the original Royal Arch story by stating that the cave found under the ruins of the Temple of Solomon had been discovered by the Templars during the Crusades and, as was noted above, he further changed the original story of the discovery of the Gospel of John in the cave into the discovery of a book in which King Solomon had written down all the ancient statutes of Freemasonry.

The Early Scots Masters' Lodges

The first reference to a Scots Masters' lodge is on a list of lodges dated 1733.¹⁴ It notes a 'Scotch Masons Lodge' was meeting at the Devil Tavern, Temple Bar.¹⁵ A further early reference is contained in the Minutes of the Old King's Arms Lodge for October 1733 which state: '... three brethren made it their joynt Request to the Lodge that they would be pleased, in regard the Master Lodge was just opening, that they might have the favour of being admitted to that dignity', afterwards referred to as 'this High Order of Masonry'.¹⁶

A year later, in November 1734, the same Minutes note that the new Masters' lodge had issued an invitation 'to the Masters of the Constituted Lodge' to become members. These references from 1733 and 1734 make it clear that the degree of Scots Master was being worked in London at that date and that it was considered a 'higher' degree, i.e. a degree taken after that of Master Mason. Three other Masters' lodges are listed in 1733, including the one referred to in the previously quoted Minute. They were held at the Bear and Harrow, Butcher Row, London; the King's Arms, Strand, London; and at Oate's Coffee House, Great Wild Street, London. It is often debated whether these Masters' lodges worked the third degree or a higher degree. Since most lodges in the 1730s worked the third degree and, according to Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1738, all Masters of lodges

¹⁴ Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, MSS. Rawl. C. 136.

¹⁵ The words 'Scots' and 'Scotch' are used interchangeably.

¹⁶ B. E. Jones, 'Masters' Lodges and their place in pre-Union History', *AQC* 67 (1954), 16–17.

had to be Master Masons before they could be elected into the Chair of a lodge, it is most likely these Masters' lodges were working the degree of Scots Master. By the end of the decade there were sixteen such lodges in London. There are only rarely records of Masters' lodges held in the Provinces, but there are records of the degree of Scots Master being worked outside London in Masters' lodges attached to regular lodges. No Masters' lodges were ever held on a regular lodge night.

Extant Minutes prove that the degree of Scots Master was also being worked in the following lodges after 1733:

1. 1735 Lodge held at The Bear, Bath at which ten candidates were raised (further entries in 1746, 1754, 1756 and 1758);
2. 1740 Lodge held at the Queens Arms, London;
3. 1740 Lodge held at the Rummer Tavern, Bristol;
4. 1746 Sarum Lodge held at Salisbury, Wiltshire.¹⁷

The Minutes of Sarum Lodge, Salisbury for 19 October, 1746 read: 'At this Lodge *were made Scots Masons*, five brethren of the Lodge' which included the Worshipful Master John Staples.¹⁸ It is important to emphasise five points:

1. the earliest record of the degree of Scots Master is dated 1733 and in London;
2. the degree had spread to the Provinces within two years;
3. all those made Scots Masters were already Master Masons;
4. the degree was worked in a traditional lodge with a Scots Master, a Scots Senior Warden and a Scots Junior Warden; and
5. the current design of a Royal Arch chapter with an arch-shaped layout, three Principals and two Scribes is a much later development.

The link between the degree of Scots Master and the Royal Arch is the story upon which both are based and the fact that the latter evolved out of the former. As Knoop observed in 1940: 'It therefore seems not impossible that the work done in the Scots Mason's Lodge, and the degree of Scots Master Mason conferred on Masons at Bath and in London, were the Royal Arch in a rudimentary form.'¹⁹

The word 'Chapter'

At this point it may be useful to clarify the early use of the word 'chapter'. Anderson in his 1723 *Book of Constitutions* uses the word 'chapter' as follows: he gives the Master of a lodge the right 'and authority of congregating the members of his Lodge into a Chapter

¹⁷ It is clear that the mention by William Waples of a Scots Masters' lodge being held in Durham in 1743 is a confusion with Scottish brethren meeting to celebrate St Andrew's Day in the city.

¹⁸ F. G. Goldney, *History of Freemasonry in Wiltshire* (London, 1880), 101.

¹⁹ D. Knoop, 'Pure Antient Masonry', *AQC* 53 (1940), 31.

at pleasure. . . While this has sometimes been taken to be an early reference to the Royal Arch, it probably meant no more than his using the word 'lodge' to refer to the members and the word 'chapter' to refer to the meeting. Regulation II in *The Book M* published in 1736 and written for the use of lodges helps to clarify Anderson's meaning. It is clearly based on Anderson's 1723 *Constitutions* and reads: 'The Master of a particular Lodge has the Right and Authority of congregating the Members of his Lodge into a Chapter at pleasure, upon any Emergency or Occurance.'²⁰ The final phrase makes it clear that the word 'chapter' has nothing to do with its later use in the context of the Royal Arch, but simply refers to the meeting of the members of the lodge.

A far more interesting and much-quoted use of the word 'chapter' occurs in a letter sent from Michael Broughton (a non-Mason) to the 2nd Duke of Richmond on New Year's Day, 1735. In it Broughton describes a house party that he had attended whilst staying with the Duke of Montagu: '... Hollis and Desaguliers . . . have been super-excellent in their different ways . . . On Sunday night at a Lodge in the Library, St. John, Albemarle and Russell made chapters; and Bob [*Webber*] Admitted Apprentice . . .'²¹ Since the degree of Scots Master had certainly been worked in London since 1733 and Dr Desaguliers was probably the man responsible for it, this may, perhaps, be the first use of the word 'chapter' in the context of what we now call the Royal Arch. It is also noteworthy that the adjective 'super-excellent' is used in the same context since it too is a word later associated with the Royal Arch to describe Royal Arch Companions. However, the word 'chapter' dropped out of use in the 1730s and was not revived until the mid-1760s.

The *Ecossais* degrees in France

Freemasonry in France was imported from England in the late 1720s and 1730s. Many of the senior English Masons at that time spoke French fluently, and it was the language of the English court since few ministers spoke German. Meetings of King George I's Cabinet were held in French, and the one person who did not speak French, Earl Cowper the Lord High Chancellor, took his wife Mary along to meetings to translate for him. (She was Lady of the Bedchamber to Caroline, Princess of Wales, the wife of the future George II.) Cowper's nephew was William Cowper, the first Secretary of Grand Lodge and a member of the influential Horn Tavern Lodge. Meetings of that lodge were held in Paris in the 1730s and the lodge's Master, the 2nd Duke of Richmond, a fluent French speaker, also formed a lodge at his mother's country estate at Aubigny-sur-Nère in 1734 which within a year had more than twenty members.²²

²⁰ W. Smith, *The Book M: or Masonry Triumphant* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1736).

²¹ Charles Henry Gordon-Lennox, Earl of March, *A Duke and his Friends* (London: Hutchinson, 1911) Vol.1, 295–6.

²² 1735 is often given erroneously as the date of the founding of this lodge.

The first evidence of what in France were called *Ecoissais* (or ‘Scottish’) degrees was in Paris in December 1743, when the *Grande Loge de France* in Article 20 of its *Ordonances Générales* warns brethren about Scots Masters: ‘. . . lately some brothers announce themselves as Scots Masters (*maîtres Ecoissois*) claiming prerogatives in private Lodges and asserting privileges of which no traces can be found in the ancient archives and usages of the Lodges spread over the globe . . .’²³ Various French Masonic books of the period such as *Le Parfait Maçon* (1744), *La Franc-maçonne* (1744), and *L’Ordre des Francs-maçons trahis* (1745), all refer to the ‘secret of Scottish Masons . . . which is starting to become known in France.’²⁴ In *Le Parfait Maçon* (1744) we are told: ‘Those Masons calling themselves Scotch Masters affirm that they form a fourth degree.’²⁵ Of much greater importance in *Le Parfait Maçon* is a section which describes the degree and proves there was a clear link between the ritual of the Scots Master (*Maître Ecoissais*) and themes we recognize today in the Royal Arch:

Instead of weeping over the ruins of the Temple of Solomon, as their brethren do, the *Ecoissais* are concerned with rebuilding it . . . Everyone knows that after seventy years of captivity in Babylon, the Great Cyrus permitted the Israelites to rebuild the Temple & the City of Jerusalem; that Zerubbabel, of the House of David, was appointed by him [*Cyrus*] the Chief & Leader of that People for their return to the Holy City; that the first stone of the Temple was laid during the reign of Cyrus, but that it was not completed until the sixth year of that of Darius, King of the Persians. It is from this great event that the *Ecoissais* derive the epoch of their institution . . .²⁶

From this version of the Scots Master Degree described in *Le Parfait Maçon* (1744) in a section entitled ‘Secret of the Ecoissais Masons’ it is clear that the ritual included the description of the Jews being given permission by Cyrus to leave Babylon and return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple under Zerubbabel. Since this degree was imported from England, it is clear that the degree of Scots Master included both the biblical account of the return of the Jews under Zerubbabel and the fifth-century account from Philostorgius. These two elements form the basis of the Royal Arch even today and, in a real sense, define the Royal Arch.

The author of *L’Ordre des Francs-maçons trahis* (1745) states: ‘I do not overlook the vague rumour which is abroad amongst the Free Masons concerning a certain Order which they call *Ecoissais*, superior so they claim to the ordinary Free Masons and having their own ceremonies and secrets quite apart.’

²³ A. Bernheim, *Travaux Villard de Honnecourt* tome x (1974).

²⁴ *Le Parfait Maçon* (Paris, 1744). ‘Scottish’ in this context refers to the Scots Master degree and not to Scotland.

²⁵ H. Carr (ed.), *The Early French Exposures* (London: Quatuor Coronati Lodge, 1971), 197.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Lastly, in 1745 in the *Statutes drawn up by the R.L. St. Jean de Jérusalem* there is a clear statement that: 'Ordinary Masters will meet with the Irish and Perfect Masters three months after St-John's Day; Elect Masters six months after; Scottish Masters nine months after; and those holding higher degrees when they deem it necessary'²⁷ All these sources relate to the degrees of Master Mason and Scots Master as they were being worked in England in the 1730s.

Recently an important document has emerged from Russia: the first Minute Book of *The Most Respectable Society of Scottish Masters of the Worshipfull and Most Respectable Union Lodge since its creation on the thirteenth of November, 1742*. It is a green hardback volume, 21cm x 35cm in size and 140 pages long. It is in perfect condition and is now in the Library of the Grand Orient of France. Its contents are discussed by Pierre Mollier in the article entitled 'Some news from the "Russian Archives" about the early history of the high degrees: the Scottish Order in Berlin from 1742 to 1752' referred to above²⁸ It takes the history of the degree of Scots Master on the Continent to its next stage, where it becomes a quite different degree from that worked in England.

The Scottish Union Lodge was founded on St Andrew's Day 1742 by eight brothers in Berlin, the capital of the Prussian Empire. (It is significant that the Emperor, Frederick II, known as Frederick the Great, became a Freemason in 1738 just before he became Emperor, and that Dr Desaguliers was supposed to have conducted the ceremony but had to withdraw through illness.) The connection with London was the painter Jacopo Fabris who had been a member of the French Union Lodge in London. Initially there was one degree in Berlin, but from 1743 two degrees were worked. The first may have been the English Scots Master degree brought from London by Fabris, but the second was certainly nothing like anything that was worked in England. It was a chivalric degree, one of the first to emerge on the Continent in the 1740s and the members were referred to as Knights of the Scottish Order. The Scottish Union Lodge in Berlin set itself up as a Grand Lodge and started giving warrants to lodges in other cities. Scottish lodges were set up in Leipzig in 1743, Hamburg in 1744, Halle and Frankfurt in 1745. The development of chivalric degrees in France and Prussia beginning with the degree of Knight Templar and followed by the Scottish Knights is another story and has nothing to do with the subject of this paper. The chivalric degrees originated with Andrew Michael Ramsay in France around 1736 and his (false) notion that the Freemasons were the descendants of the medieval Knights Templar.²⁹

As is well known, the French during the eighteenth century superimposed on the imported English degrees a whole series of Masonic degrees, each one more colourful and

²⁷ Paris : *Bibliothèque Nationale Française* MSS FM2 362.

²⁸ *Ritual, Secrecy, and Civil Society* Vol. 1, No. 1, (Spring 2013), 22–27.

²⁹ For a full discussion of this matter see the author's paper 'The Early History of the Order of Masonic Knights Templar in England' in *Corona Gladiorum* 21 (2023–24), 217–229.

splendid than its predecessor. Dr Thomas Manningham, Deputy Grand Master of the Moderns from 1752 to 1756, in a letter dated 12 July 1757 to Brother Sauer at The Hague, makes it quite clear that no-one he knew, including former Grand Master George Payne who had only just died, had any knowledge of the chivalric degrees then being worked in France: ‘The only Orders that we know are Three: Masters, Fellow-Crafts & Apprentices, & none of them ever arrive at the Honour of Knighthood by Masonry.’³⁰ By the end of the century some of those French degrees were firmly embedded back in England, most especially the degrees of Knight Templar and Rose Croix, having been imported in the 1770s and 1780s by French Masons such as Pierre Lambert de Lintot (1726–1798) and members of the military lodges who had acquired those new degrees on their travels.

From Scots Master to Royal Arch

The degree of Scots Master seems to disappear in England in the 1740s, and it has been assumed that it had died out. This was not the case. All that occurred was that the title was changed from Scots Master to Royal Arch. The Jacobite Rebellion in 1745 probably caused the loyal Masons to abandon titles associated with Scotland. The term ‘Eccossais’ continued to be used on the Continent which again suggests that the change occurred because of events in the UK. The ritual concerning the discovery below Solomon’s Temple continued but under the new name. However, the new name did not mean there was any change in the ritual. The degree was worked until at least the 1760s in a traditional lodge with a Master and two Wardens and the ritual included the story originating with Philostorgius.

If the title ‘Scots Master’ perhaps owed something to James Anderson, a Scot from Aberdeen and a close friend of Dr Desaguliers, the name ‘Royal Arch’ may well have originated with Anderson’s *Constitutions* of 1723, in which he describes the Fraternity as a well-built arch:

... with several worthy *particular* Lodges, that have a quarterly *Communication*, and an annual *grand Assembly*, wherein the *Forms* and *Usages* of the most ancient and worshipful Fraternity are wisely propagated, and the *Royal Art* duly cultivated, and the *Cement* of the Brotherhood preserv’d; so that the whole *Body* resembles a well built *Arch* . . .³¹

Arches also featured prominently on the frontispiece of Anderson’s *Constitutions* of 1723: one under which the main characters are meeting and the other with a very clearly marked keystone that is right at the centre of the engraving.

It is also worth noting that in a very early catechism, that pre-dates Prichard’s *Masonry Dissected*, the candidate is asked: ‘Whence comes the Pattern of an Arch?’ to which he

³⁰ R. F. Gould, ‘Masonic Celebrities No.4 – Thomas Manningham, MD, Deputy Grand Master, 1752–56’, *AQC* 5 (1892), 110.

³¹ J. Anderson, *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons* (London, 1723), 48.

replies 'From the Rainbow.'³² The rainbow is a symbol of God's covenant with Noah and of His divine protection. It was closely related to the contents of the early English Masonic workings. An arch is a universal natural symbolic image which supports itself by a balance of opposing strains, thus standing for that stability in tension by which the whole universe is maintained. Its significance is the same in all languages and in all circumstances and may be applied to physical or spiritual experience. It is also worth recalling that in Pennell's Irish *Constitutions* of 1730 is the phrase: 'And let the *Cement* of the *Brotherhood* be so well preserv'd, that the whole *Body* may remain as a *well-built Arch*.'³³

The fundamental change of turning a Scots Master or Royal Arch *lodge* with a Master and two Wardens, into a Royal Arch *chapter* with three Principals (or Masters as they were originally termed) and two Scribes (initially called Pillars) occurred around 1765 in London, and is associated with a Freemason called John Maclean. This fundamental new element in the Royal Arch may possibly have originated in Ireland and been imported into England by the members of the Antients Grand Lodge. This does not appear very likely, since all the evidence points to the Royal Arch before 1765 in England and in Ireland being worked in a Craft lodge layout with a Master and two Wardens. Although the ritual concerning the discovery in the cave below the Temple of Solomon continued, the layout changed completely. The Master and two Wardens were replaced by the three co-equal Principals, Zerubbabel, Haggai, and Joshua, who represent the three Keystones of an arch. The two Scribes formed its two pillars which were their original names before they were changed to Scribe Ezra and Scribe Nehemiah. All five officers still sit in their 'arch' positions to this day. It may well be it was to these changes that Thomas Manningham, Deputy Grand Master, was referring when he wrote to the Provincial Grand Lodge of Holland in 1756, which was seeking permission to hold Scotch lodges: 'Of late some fertile Genius's here, have attempted considerable Innovations, & their manner of working in Lodge, they term sometimes Irish, another Scotch Masonry, why, or wherefore they themselves best know; . . .'³⁴

Nevertheless, in spite of its importance as the completion of the third degree, the Royal Arch did not become very popular in English Freemasonry until the 1760s, when hundreds of Freemasons both Antients and Moderns took the fourth step, initially within their Craft lodges.

³² The Mystery of Free-Masonry quoted in D. Knoop, G.P. Jones & D. Hamer *Early Masonic Catechisms* 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963) 155.

³³ Page 39.

³⁴ Letter dated 3 December 1756, quoted in R. F. Gould, 'Masonic Celebrities No. 4 – Thomas Manningham, MD, Deputy Grand Master, 1752–56', *AQC* 5 (1892), 108.

The Royal Arch in Ireland

Faulkner's Dublin Journal of 10–14 January 1743–4 describes a procession of Freemasons in Youghal, County Cork, on the previous St John's Day (27 December 1743):

St. John's Day, celebrated by the Lodge in Youghal [*sic.*], No.21.³⁵

Imprimis, The first Salutation on the Quay of Youghal, upon their coming out of their Lodge Chamber, was, the Ships firing their Guns with their Colours flying.

Secondly, The first Appearance, was, a Concert of Musick with two proper Centinels [Sentries] with their Swords drawn.

Thirdly, Two Apprentices, bare-headed, one with twenty four Inch Ga[u]ge, the other a common Gavel.

Fourthly, The Royal Arch carried by two excellent Masons.

Fifthly, The Master, with all his proper Implements, his Rod gilt with Gold; his Deputy on his left, with the Square and Compass.

Sixthly, The two Wardens with their Truncheons gilt in like manner.

Seventhly, The two Deacons, with their Rods gilt after the same manner.

Eighthly, Two excellent Masons, one bearing a Level, and the other a Plum[b] Rule.

Nin[e]thly, Then appeared all the rest most gallantly dressed, following by Couples, each of them having a Square handing about his Neck to a blue Ribbon. From the Quay, they took the whole Length of the Town, the Streets being well lined, the Gentlemen and Ladies out of their Windows constantly saluting them, until they went to Church.³⁶ The two Centinels [Sentries] stood at the Pues [Pews], holding the Doors open, until the Whole went in. And after Divine Service, came in the same Order, to their House of Entertainment, where, at the Approach of Evening, the Windows were illuminated with Candles, and the Street with Bonfires. They were greatly applauded, and allowed to be the finest and most magnificent Sight that ever was seen in this Country.³⁷

The statement concerning 'The Royal Arch' is ambiguous at best but is, nevertheless, the first use of the phrase in a Masonic context. Clearly it was a physical object the Masons were carrying in the procession. Whilst it is perfectly clear that the reference in *Faulkner's Dublin Journal* to the Masons of Youghal carrying the 'Royal Arch' in their procession on 27 December 1743 had nothing to do with a Masonic ritual or degree, it is equally clear that it must have been an important symbol and part of their lodge furniture at that time. It may even have been a banner with an arch displayed upon it.

³⁵ The correct lodge number was probably 19, which was founded on 10 October 1733 at Youghal. No records of a Lodge No. 21 exist.

³⁶ Probably to St Mary's Collegiate Church a large Anglican church in Youghal. The Warden of St Mary's College at the time was George Berkeley, the philosopher Bishop of Cloyne and a founder of the Foundling Hospital in London, which was supported by many senior London Freemasons.

³⁷ National Library of Ireland, Dublin- catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtl5000827805. I have transcribed the entry in full since it has been mis-transcribed on earlier occasions in the pages of *AQC*.

Relatively little is known about the early history of Freemasonry in Ireland due to the loss of all the official records in 1760 and of the early Minutes before 1780. As a consequence, Fifield Dassigny's *Serious and Impartial Enquiry into the Cause of the present decay of Free-Masonry in the Kingdom of Ireland*, (1744) has assumed greater importance than, perhaps, it deserves. There is certainly little else extant to verify or refute its contents. It is good historical practice to study the historian before you read his history and it is clear that Dassigny (1707–1745) was little more than a quack doctor: the medical qualification MD that he claimed on the title page of his pamphlet he did not, in fact, possess. But then, his father Samuel was a bogus priest who dressed in clerical garb and whose orders were never established and whose degree of DD was also self-conferred. This does not mean that what Dassigny wrote was untrue, but it does suggest that it should be treated with great caution. In his *Enquiry* Dassigny describes the Royal Arch as '... an organis'd body of men who have passed the chair. . .' ³⁸

It is a statement that was repeated by Laurence Dermott in *Ahiman Rezon*, published in 1756: 'This is the Case of all those who think themselves Royal Arch Masons, without passing the Chair in regular Form, according to the ancient Custom of the Craft . . .' ³⁹ Unfortunately, Dassigny, and later Dermott, confused the requirement for all Scots Masters to have been Master Masons with Masons who had been Masters of lodges. It was a confusion that later in the century was to lead to the Antients' degree of 'Passing the Chair'. In England in Moderns lodges and chapters the original rule was that in order to be exalted one had to be a Master Mason. This was still the situation when the first chapters were warranted in 1769, as is clear from the ritual of the Excellent Grand and Royal Chapter quoted in *Sheffield MS No.1*.⁴⁰ Gradually the Moderns adopted the Antients' rule that, in order to be exalted, a Mason had to have 'passed the Chair' and in the year 1788 the Moderns' Grand Chapter formally adopted the Irish and Antient Grand Lodge rule that candidates had to be a Past Master of a Lodge.⁴¹

Dassigny also wrote in a footnote: 'I am informed in that city [York] is held an assembly of Master Masons under the title of Royal Arch Masons, who as their qualification and excellencies are superior to others they receive a larger pay than working Masons; but of this more hereafter.'⁴² He further noted that an impostor had been making Royal Arch Masons in York, which was only discovered when one of his candidates arrived in London.⁴³ This, again, has the ring of truth, since the degree of Scots Master originated

³⁸ F. Dassigny, *A Serious and Impartial Enquiry into the Cause of the present Decay of Free-Masonry in the Kingdom of Ireland* (Dublin, 1744), 32.

³⁹ Laurence Dermott, *Ahiman Rezon* (London, 1756), 48.

⁴⁰ C. Powell 'The Sheffield Manuscript – Royal Arch (c.1780)', *AQC* 126 (2013), 203–222.

⁴¹ This rule remained until 1822.

⁴² Dassigny op.cit., 16.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 32.

in London and anything false would have been recognized there. Throughout, Dassigny seems to be talking about operative, not speculative Masons, which is odd since both the third degree and the degree of Scots Master were new, Speculative degrees. Since Dassigny was a Freemason in Dublin and had never left Ireland, his information about York and London is clearly just hearsay. There is no evidence of the Royal Arch in York in 1744 and various authorities have dismissed Dassigny's claim⁴⁴ The earliest record of the Royal Arch in York is dated 1762. Another of Dassigny's complaints was about the large number of 'persons of low life introduced amongst us (some of whom can neither read or write). . .'⁴⁵ A somewhat ironic complaint from a bogus doctor.

Dassigny was a zealous Freemason and seems to have played an important part in early Irish Freemasonry, but his background was well known in Dublin. He died of oedema (then called Dropsy) at the age of thirty-six on 10 January 1745. For all his faults, his funeral procession on 13 January with representatives of the Freemasons and of the army speaks of the respect in which he was held⁴⁶

There is an interesting entry in the minutes of Vernon Masonic Lodge No. 123, Coleraine, Co. Derry (warranted 1741) and dated 16 April 1752, which reads: 'at this Lodge Bro[the]r Tho[ma]s Blair proposed Samson Moon, a Master & Royal Arch Mason to be admitted a member of our Lodge'. There is a further entry in the Minutes of the same lodge, dated 8 June 1767, which lists the dates on which the Royal Arch degree was conferred on eighteen members of the lodge, thirteen of whom are stated to have received the degree in the years 1745 and 1746.⁴⁷ It seems that the degree was new to the lodge in 1745 and rapidly became a popular fourth step. The entry further suggests that the degree was in fact the degree of Scots Master, since it was being worked in a Craft lodge but under its new name of 'Royal Arch', which had made its way from London to Coleraine around 1745, which ties in with the date of Dassigny's comments noted above.

Although Ireland now works a different Royal Arch story from England, in the eighteenth century this was not the case, and both countries worked the Zerubbabel story. Although Antient Masons were re-obligated when they joined Modern lodges in the eighteenth century, they were not re-obligated in the Royal Arch for reasons explained later in this paper. Ireland changed to the Josiah story officially in 1864. A ritual commission was held between 1859 and 1861 and its findings approved in 1864.

⁴⁴ H. Carr, 'The Relationship between the Craft and the Royal Arch', *AQC* 88 (1973), 46.

⁴⁵ Dassigny, *op.cit.* 34-5.

⁴⁶ W. J. Chetwoode Crawley, *Caementaria Hibernica* Vol. 2 (Dublin: 1896), 10.

⁴⁷ Facsimile published between pages 106 and 107 in J. H. Lepper & P. Crossle, *History of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ireland* Vol. 1 (Dublin: Lodge of Research, 1925).



Worshipful Master (reverse)



Fig. 1. Officers' jewels belonging to Vernon Lodge No. 123 Coleraine, Co. Londonderry.

Early Irish Royal Arch Artefacts

Of great interest and significance are various Irish Masonic artefacts dating from the late 1740s alluding to the Royal Arch. There are three officers' jewels belonging to Vernon Lodge No. 123, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry, gifted to the lodge by its first Master Dominick Heyland. They each bear Craft symbols on the obverse and Royal Arch symbols on the reverse. They are all dated 1747. They show that the senior officers of the lodge are both Master Masons and Royal Arch Masons – in other words they hold both parts of the third degree.

As these interesting Irish artefacts show, although called the Royal Arch the ritual was still being worked in a Craft lodge arrangement with a Master, a Senior and a Junior

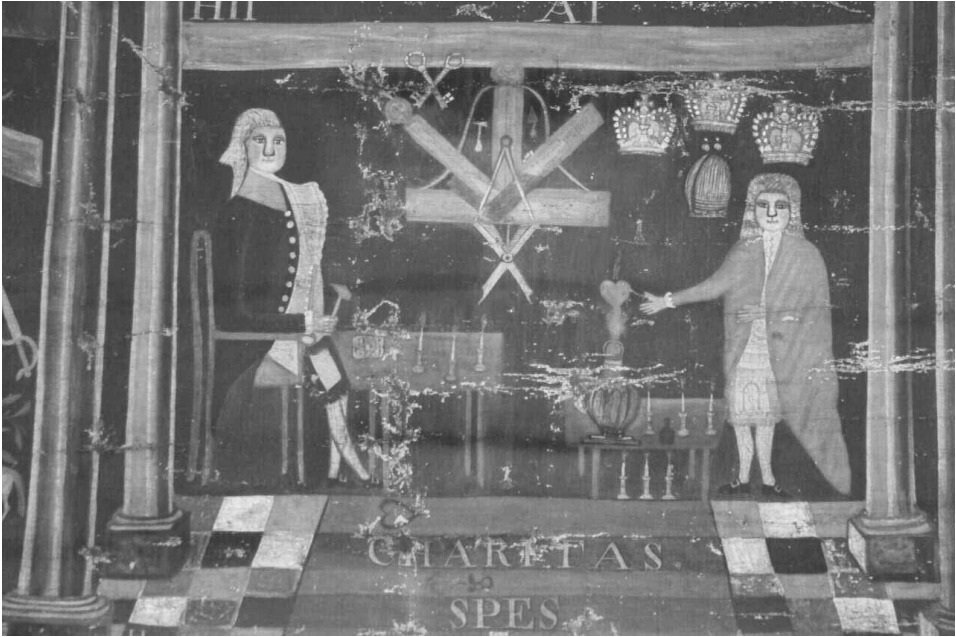


Fig. 2. Detail of Floor-cloth, Lodge No. 205 Enniskillen.

Warden and not with the three co-equal Principals and two Scribes, as emerged in the 1760s. In other words this was the same degree as the Scots Master but under the new title.

Another interesting Irish Masonic artefact is the Enniskillen floor-cloth. It is a small (39x31½ inches), painted, canvas floor-cloth – the predecessor of our tracing boards – that carries the date 7 February, 1749,⁴⁸ and belongs to Lodge No. 205 Enniskillen, which was originally attached to the 35th Regiment of Foot based at Charlemont Fort just south of the town of Moy in County Tyrone. The cloth was lost for many years, but was discovered and restored in 1916. It was framed and now hangs behind the Senior Warden's Chair in Enniskillen Masonic Hall, County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland.

On the left it shows a Craft Master in a blue frock coat. On the right is a Royal Arch Mason wearing a red frock coat and an apron quite similar to those belonging to the Chapter of the First Miracle No. 116 in East Lancashire, although it is much smaller and later in date. Instead of being a whole lambskin it is a rectangle of leather edged in red

⁴⁸ 1750 NS.



Fig. 3. The Dromore Medallion

ribbon. Like the Cana aprons it has an arch painted in red upon it but with the letter G in the centre rather than circles and a triangle. Above the Royal Arch Mason's head are three crowns and a mitre. The three crowns symbolise Solomon King of Israel, Hiram King of Tyre, and Hiram Abif, and the mitre symbolises a High Priest.

However, as with several well-known Irish Masonic artefacts (the Baal's Bridge Square, the Trinity College manuscript and the Bog Oak medallion), the date on the floor-cloth is not consistent with its contents, not least the word in three languages that is also painted on it. The explanation is simple: the date on the floor-cloth is not the date when it was painted as has often been stated, but the date on which Lodge No. 205 was constituted and for which it was painted. From the symbols on it, the floor-cloth was probably painted in the late 1760s. (A very similar floor-cloth was painted for Irish Lodge No. 465 which was constituted in 1769.) It is not, however, the date of the floor-cloth that is important, it is the fact that it is Irish.

As has been noted above, there was a huge innovation in Royal Arch Masonry around 1760 when the usual lodge arrangement of a Master and two Wardens was replaced by three co-equal Principals (originally called Masters) and two Scribes (originally called Pillars), all five sitting in an arch shape with the three Principals representing the three keystones of the arch and the two Scribes its pillars. It is possible that this new chapter arrangement that emerged in London in the 1760s originated in Ireland and was introduced by the members of the Antients Grand Lodge. It is clear from the Minutes of lodges in Halifax and Wakefield that by 1766 in the Provinces, although the Royal Arch was still worked in a 'lodge', there were three Masters and two Scribes.

Another interesting Royal Arch artefact from Ireland is a hand-carved bog-oak medallion found in 1921 in the ruins of an old cottage just outside the village of Dromore in County Tyrone. As with many other eighteenth-century Irish Masonic artefacts, the

obverse has Craft symbols and the reverse Royal Arch symbols. The obverse has a later, bogus date of 1517 scratched on it, but it is, nevertheless an interesting artefact. The reverse shows three squares followed by the letters WP. Squares were the original jewels worn by the three Principals (who were originally called Masters) and the letters WP doubtless stand for Worshipful Principals. The monogram has H over T in contrast to the more usual T over H. The letters I, H and Z are also carved on the medallion for the three Principals Joshua, Haggai, and Zerubbabel. The symbols on the medallion suggest it was also carved in the mid-1760s.

Laurence Dermott and *Ahiman Rezon* (1756)

Laurence Dermott (1720–1791) was one of the most important Freemasons of the eighteenth century. He was born in 1720 and was a journeyman painter by trade. He was initiated into Freemasonry in January 1741 in Lodge No. 26 in Dublin becoming, according to his own statement, Master of the Lodge in 1746. He was exalted into the Royal Arch in the same year. He moved to London in 1748.

In his book of constitutions, entitled *Ahiman Rezon*, written for the Antients Grand Lodge and published in London in 1756, Laurence Dermott, who was the Grand Secretary of the Antients Grand Lodge in London from 1752 to 1771, published a prayer specifically for a Royal Arch chapter. The prayer focuses on the importance of the names of God in the Royal Arch. This shows that by the time *Ahiman Rezon* was published in 1756 the focus of the Royal Arch ceremony in Ireland and among the Antient lodges in England was on the names of God just as it is today. This was clearly an addition to the Scots Master ritual that focused on the discovery in the cave below Solomon's ruined Temple and the giving of the Mason Word. It also suggests that this aspect – the focus on the various names of God in the Old Testament – of the Royal Arch ritual probably originated in Ireland:

AHABATH OLAM

A Prayer repeated in the Royal Arch Lodge at Jerusalem

Thou has loved us, O Lord our God, with eternal Love; thou has spared us with great and exceeding patience, our Father and our King, for thy great NAME'S sake, and for our Father's sake who trusted in thee, to whom thou didst teach the statutes of life, that they might do after the statutes of thy good pleasure with a perfect heart: So be thou merciful unto us, O our Father, merciful Father, that sheweth mercy, have mercy upon us we beseech thee, and put understanding into our hearts, that we may understand, be wise, hear, learn, teach, keep, do and perform all the words of the doctrine of thy law in love, and enlighten our eyes in thy commandments, and cause our hearts to cleave to thy law, and unite them in the love and fear of thy NAME; we will not be ashamed, nor confounded, nor stumble, for ever and ever.

BECAUSE we have trusted in thy HOLY, GREAT, MIGHTY and TERRIBLE NAME, we will rejoice and be glad in thy salvation, and in thy mercies, O Lord our God; and the multitude of thy mercies, shall not forsake us for ever: Selah.⁴⁹ And now make haste and bring upon us a blessing, and peace from the four corners of the earth: for thou art a God that workest salvation, and has chosen us out of every people and language; and thou, our King, has caused us to cleave to thy GREAT NAME, in love to praise thee and to be united to thee, and to love thy name: blessed art thou, O Lord God, who has chosen thy People *Israel* in love.⁵⁰

In the Old Testament the nature of God is gradually revealed to His prophets by different names: from the original Hebrew *Elohim* which appears at the beginning of Genesis ‘In the beginning God (*Elohim*) created the Heaven and the Earth. . .’ through to the name given to Abraham *El Shaddai* (usually translated into English as Almighty God or God Omnipotent) until Moses received the name from God himself in the burning bush known by the four letters *YHWH* or as the Tetragrammaton. From the opening prayer in today’s Royal Arch exaltation ceremony which ends with the phrase ‘. . . Thy holy name’ until the First Principal receives the sign, token, and word of an Installed First Principal at his installation, the various names of God from the Old Testament are gradually revealed to the Royal Arch Mason.

It is important to note that when Antient Craft Masons joined a Moderns lodge and *vice versa* they were re-obligated, but the same was not true in the Royal Arch. One of the chief objections of the Antients Grand Lodge to the Moderns was the changes the Premier Grand Lodge made to the traditional working of the first and second degrees in 1730, including reversing the words of recognition.⁵¹ The Irish Grand Lodge never made the changes. These changes were reversed in 1810 by the Moderns Grand Lodge to accommodate the Antients working before the Union of the Grand Lodges in 1813.⁵² Since English Freemasonry travelled to the continent in the 1730s, even to this day European lodges retain the 1730 changes. However, the working of the Royal Arch was consistent between the two Grand Lodges in the eighteenth century, so re-obligation was not necessary.

The Royal Arch in Scotland

Claims have been made that the Royal Arch was first worked in Scotland at Stirling in 1743, but no evidence exists for this. Bro. Hughan made a thorough search in 1892 and

⁴⁹ This word occurs seventy-four times in the Hebrew bible but its precise meaning is unknown. Dermot probably used it here because it occurs frequently in the *Book of Psalms*.

⁵⁰ L. Dermott, *Abiman Rezon* 2nd edn (London: 1764), 45–6.

⁵¹ See Desaguliers’ remarks in Grand Lodge on 28 August 1730, *QCA* X, 128.

⁵² The proposal of the Lodge of Promulgation was approved by Grand Lodge in 1810.

Decemb^r. 22^d 1753 Which Night the Lodge being assembled was present
 Right Worshipfull Simon Frazier G.M.
 L^d. - - - John Neilson } Warden of Royall Arch Lodge
 L^d. - - - Robert Armistead } Ju^r Ward
 Transactions of the night
 Daniel Campbell } Raised to the Degree of Royall Arch Mason
 Robert Thaherston }
 Alex^r. Woodrow }

Fig. 4. Facsimile of the Minute of the lodge at Fredericksburg, Virginia

no Minute books have since been found.⁵³ An early Minute is alleged to have stated: 'Mungo Nichol, shoemaker and brother James McEwan, Student of Divinity at Stirling, and being found qualified, they were admitted Royal Arch Masons.' Nevertheless, the By-laws of the lodge at Stirling are extant; they are dated 14 May 1745, and they list the degrees being worked in the lodge. These degrees include those of 'Excellent and Super Excellent', which are placed after the three Craft degrees and before the Knight of Malta. The By-laws state the fee for 'Exalting Excellent and super Excellent, five shillings sterling.' Given a similar phrase being used concerning the degree of Scots Master in London in 1735 (see above), it is very possible that the Stirling lodge was working the degree of Scots Master in 1743, but under its new name of Royal Arch.

It is worth noting that in Scotland all Royal Arch Masons have to be both Mark Master Masons and Excellent Masters before they can be exalted. Although this is no longer the case in England, in the latter part of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century the Mark degree and the Excellent Master degree preceded the Royal Arch. This ceased officially after the Union of the Grand Lodges in 1813, although it continued unofficially, especially in the north of England, until the middle of the nineteenth century. It is, however, important to realise that the ritual of the Mark degree in the eighteenth century was nothing like its ritual is today, which dates from the middle of the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century the Mark degree ritual was concerned with salvation and the mark referred to in the title of the degree was the mark placed on the forehead of those who were to be saved as is described in the Book of Ezekiel which was quoted in the eighteenth-century Mark ritual.⁵⁴ It was not the mark carved as a signature on stone.

⁵³ W. J. Hughan, *Introductory Sketch on Royal Arch Masonry 1743-1893* (Leeds: 1893), 13-14.

⁵⁴ For further details see the author's 'Late 18th-century English Degree Workings - New Evidence from the Sheffield No. 2 MS, AQC 127 (2014), 261-280.

The Royal Arch in Virginia USA

An entry in the Minute Book of the old lodge at Fredericksburg, Virginia, USA states that a ‘Royall Arch Lodge’ was held on 22 December 1753, when three brethren were ‘Raised to the Degree of Royall Arch Mason.’⁵⁵ ‘Raised’ was the term frequently used prior to the late 1760s when the term ‘exalted’ begins to appear in chapter Minutes. For instance, Lodge No. 220 in Bristol ‘raised’ Masons to the degree of Royal Arch in 1758.⁵⁶ Likewise the term ‘lodge’ was also used until the mid-1760s.

Although called a Royal Arch lodge, it is clear that the ritual worked was that of the degree of Scots Master with the discovery in the cave below Solomon’s Temple and the giving of the Mason Word to complete the third degree, since the ceremony was conducted in a traditional lodge with a Scots Master and two Scots Wardens. It is important to note that after the Royal Arch lodge had been closed, completely different officers opened the subsequent Entered Apprentice lodge. In 1758, and some time previously, a Royal Arch lodge was working in Philadelphia.⁵⁷

The Cana Royal Arch Tracing Board, Aprons and Robes

The earliest English Royal Arch Tracing Board is that owned by the Chapter of the First Miracle No. 116 at Colne in Lancashire, one of the earliest warranted Royal Arch chapters, now known as Cana Chapter.

It shows the Tetragrammaton enclosed in a triangle surrounded by William Tyndale’s English equivalent word, Jehovah, enclosed within a circle.⁵⁸ This predates the ‘name in three languages’, which originated in France and entered English Royal Arch Masonry formally as part of the unfortunate changes that occurred in 1834, which included the misconceived Triple Tau and the frankly ludicrous lecture that explains it. The Cana Board includes the correct monogram: the letter T over the letter H for *Templum Hierosolymae* meaning ‘the Temple at Jerusalem’, where the events described in the story associated with the Royal Arch take place. The board certainly dates from before 1765 as do the aprons owned by the chapter. The aprons match the one shown on the Enniskillen floor cloth.

In the late eighteenth century the three Principals wore headdresses suitable to their roles. The second of the By-Laws of the Excellent, Grand and Royal Chapter dated 12 June 1765 states: ‘That the E[xcellent] G[rand]s be clothed in proper Robes, Caps on their Heads, and adorned with proper Jewels. – No Aprons.’ In Cana Chapter Zerubbabel

⁵⁵ A facsimile of this minute appeared in *AQC* 4 (1891) opposite page 223.

⁵⁶ C. Powell, ‘Three of Bristol’s Early Masonic Lodges: No. 24(A), No. 25(A) and No. 220’, *Corona Gladiorum* 20 (2022–2023), 259.

⁵⁷ J. Curtis, *Centennial Celebration and History of Harmony Chapter, No. 52 Royal Arch Masons* (Philadelphia: Dunlap Printing, 1894), 10.

⁵⁸ The Hebrew was mis-transcribed when the board was refurbished, although it is clear it is the Tetragrammaton יהוה that is intended to be within the triangle.

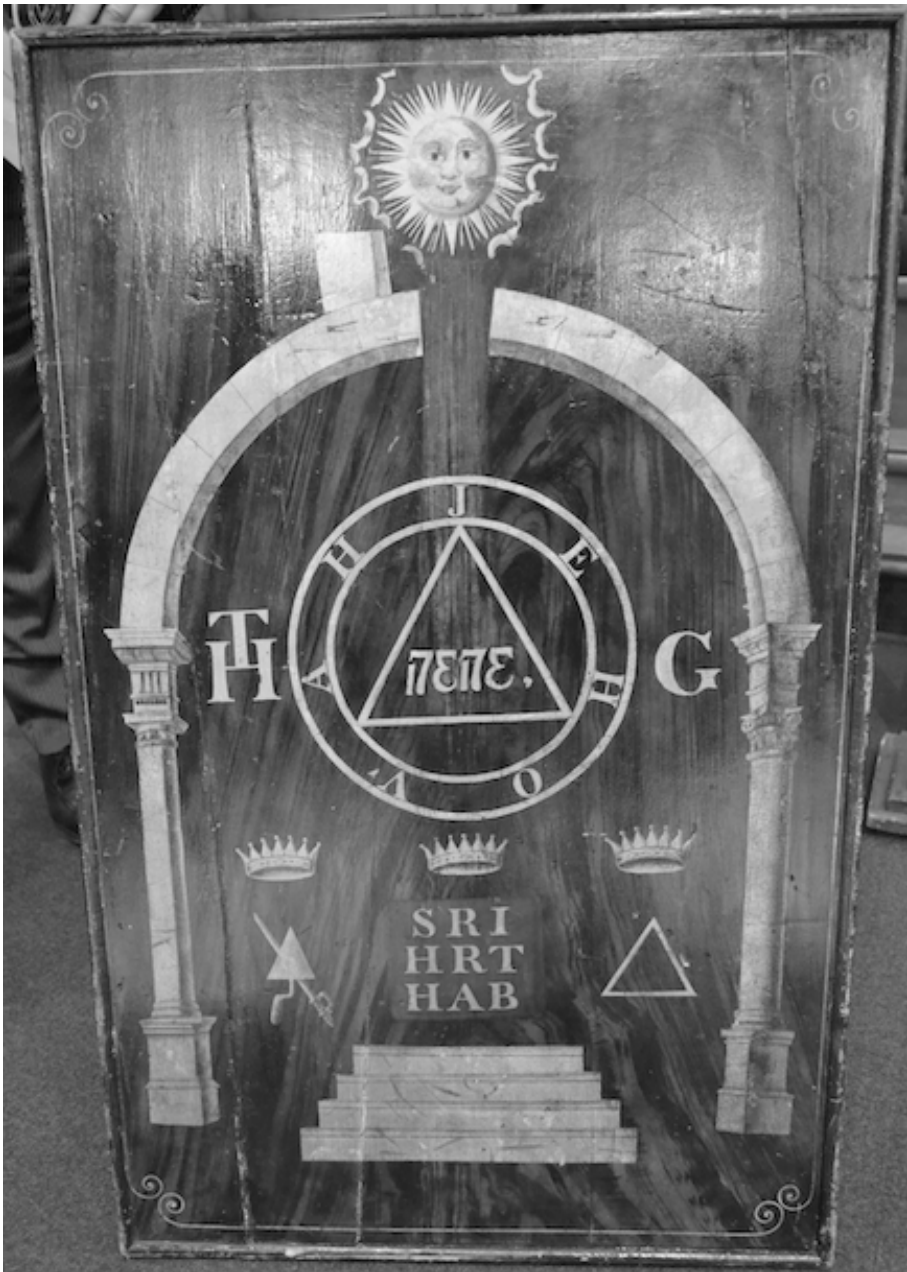


Fig. 5. Royal Arch Tracing Board, Cana Chapter of the First Miracle No.116.



Fig. 6. Cana Chapter Principals' Robes, incorrect sashes and (much earlier) aprons.

wore a crown, since Haggai prophesied he would be a King; Joshua wore a mitre, being a priest; and Haggai himself wore a turban with a crescent moon on it, symbolizing a prophet. These very early and particularly well-preserved examples of Principals' robes and headdresses are now displayed in a glass case at the Masonic Hall, Bridge Street, Manchester. It should be noted that the aprons and sashes on the mannequins were not originally worn with the robes. The sashes belong to the degree of Knight Templar and the aprons are much earlier than the robes and from the pre-1765 period.⁵⁹ Until 1814 Royal Arch candidates in Cana Chapter were 'initiated'; the term 'raised' was then used for a while, but the word 'exalted' was not used until 1828, which shows how long it took for the London terminology of 1765 to become normal in the provinces.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ For a full discussion of the Cana robes see the author's paper 'A close look at the Cana Chapter Aprons and Robes displayed at Bridge Street Masonic Hall, Manchester and what they tell us about the early history of the Royal Arch in England', *Transactions of the Manchester Association for Masonic Research* (2024).

⁶⁰ Cana Chapter Minutes, 24 August 1828: 'Exalted to the Sublime Degree of a Royal Arch Companion.'

In some early chapters in the late eighteenth century Principal Joshua wore a breastplate. A number of these are still extant. Even today all the Third Principals in Bristol Chapters wear a breastplate, as do some in Yorkshire chapters. The breastplate worn by the high priest is described in detail in the Book of Exodus chapter 28.

The Cana robes probably date from around 1785. The Minutes of the Chapter of Charity No. 187 in Bristol, one of the earliest warranted chapters, note that Principals' robes were ordered from London in 1785, which is probably about the time they began to be worn in provincial chapters. The Bristol Minute dated 2 December 1785 reads: 'The Robes for the three Principals was introduced and first worne'.⁶¹ As was noted above, the Principals in London wore robes in 1765 and surplices were ordered for the Sojourners by Grand Chapter in 1766, but the provinces were slower to catch up.

It is likely the designs on the Cana board and aprons originated in Ireland and were imported through the Antients Grand Lodge. A similar design is found on the Antients Royal Arch Jewel and on the Enniskillen floor-cloth. The Hebrew text within the triangle has been mis-transcribed and should be the tetragrammaton.

The Royal Arch worked in Antient and Modern Lodges

It is frequently stated that Antient lodges worked degrees beyond the Craft, most especially the Mark Degree and the Royal Arch, whilst Modern lodges worked only the three Craft degrees. It is true that the Moderns set up separate bodies to rule the Royal Arch (1766) and Knights Templar (1791), but again, if one looks at the primary sources, especially lodge Minutes, it is perfectly clear that, long before the Moderns *Charter of Compact* created what is now called Supreme Grand Chapter, Moderns lodges were working the Royal Arch in their Craft lodges just like their Antient Lodge counterparts.

The *Charter of Compact*, which brought about the creation of the body now known as Supreme Grand Chapter in 1766, was, in many ways, a catching up exercise. For more than a decade Moderns lodges had been working the Royal Arch, sometimes still in the form of the degree of Scots Master, just as their Antient counterparts were. An Antient lodge warrant permitted a lodge to work *all* Masonic degrees, whereas a Moderns warrant was strictly-speaking restricted to just the Craft degrees, although this was widely ignored especially in lodges in the north of England. Whether in Lodge No. 61 in Halifax (later called Lodge of Probity No. 61), or Lodge No. 340 in Sheffield (later called Britannia Lodge No. 139), the majority of the members in the 1760s were taking the fourth step and becoming Royal Arch Masons in their Moderns lodge.

There is no doubt the Royal Arch really took off in Modern lodges from the late 1750s onwards, especially in the north of England. The most obvious reason for its popularity is the influence of the Antients Grand lodge and its Craft lodges. Nor can one forget in

⁶¹ Minute Book the Chapter of Charity No. 187, Bristol. Bristol Archives.

this context Laurence Dermott's famous description of the Royal Arch in 1756 as the very 'Root, Heart, and Marrow of Free-Masonry.'⁶²

The 'Crown' Lodge No. 220 founded in Bristol in 1757 worked the Royal Arch from its foundation, and seems to have been set up for that purpose. The Minutes of the Craft lodge meeting held on Monday, 7 August 1758 include the sentence: 'Brother Gordon, proposed to be Raised to the degree of a Royal Arch, and accepted.'⁶³ Bro. Gordon was thus proposed and accepted in a Moderns Craft lodge meeting. The following Sunday, 13 August 1758 at a 'Lodge of Immergency' Bro. William Gordon and another brother, John Thompson, were duly 'Raised to the degree of Royal Arch Masons.'⁶⁴ Incidentally, Royal Arch meetings were usually held on Sundays and the Installation meeting on Trinity Sunday, which is very interesting. The Royal Arch in the eighteenth century and indeed to this day is Christian and Trinitarian, if one studies the ritual carefully.

On at least four occasions in the Bristol Royal Arch meetings held between 1758 and 1759 the Master of Lodge No. 220, Bro. Jacob Rogers, or his Senior Warden, Bro. James Barnes, gave a 'Royal Arch Lecture.'⁶⁵ The lecture was given even if there had been a ceremony on the same night. How fascinating it would be to have a copy of those lectures now, which might reveal much of what we do not know about the development of the Royal Arch in England in the middle of the eighteenth century.

It is also interesting to note that, before the word 'exalt' was used in the context of the Royal Arch, the words one finds in early lodge Minutes are 'raise' and 'advance', the former now associated with the third degree and the latter with the Mark degree. It is also interesting to read that before the two scribes were so named, they were called 'pillars', a reference to the arch-like shape made by the arrangement of the three Principals and the two scribes in a Royal Arch chapter. The two scribes still sit in those 'pillar' positions in the chapter room today.⁶⁶

Because it was so popular in the 1760s, the Royal Arch spread rapidly and it is interesting to note how Modern Master Masons from one town would visit a Craft lodge – note a Craft lodge – in another town in order to be exalted into the Royal Arch, and then return home and exalt others. It is probable the Royal Arch Masons who met in York in 1762 had obtained the secrets of the Royal Arch from the King's Head Lodge No. 267 at

⁶² L. Dermott, *Ahiman Rezon*, (London: 1756), 47.

⁶³ Bristol Archives Ref. 44250/Pre/1/1 – Old Minute Book Lodge 220.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Bro. Jacob Rogers was a Vinegar Maker and Master of Lodge No. 220 at Bristol. He also joined the Union Lodge, Bristol on 23 April 1766, but declined on 29 September 1767. Bro. James Barnes was a member of Antients Lodge No. 25 in Bristol, warranted 17 October 1753, vacant 5 December 1759, as well as being a member of Lodge No. 220.

⁶⁶ At the closing of a Bristol chapter all the Companions come out onto the floor of the chapter and take up positions in the form of an Arch with the two Scribes in the positions of the capitals of the two supporting pillars.

Kingston-upon-Hull.⁶⁷ Similarly, three Leeds Masons, Bros Thomas Atkinson, Thomas Wallbank, and William Perigo, were exalted in Halifax on 30 October 1765.⁶⁸ And on the following 30 July 1766 three Wakefield Masons, Bros William Parker, Josiah Armitage, and Stephen White, were also exalted in Halifax.⁶⁹ Now known as Sincerity Chapter No. 61, at the time it was formed on 7 January 1765 it was created within the Lodge of Probity No. 61, a Moderns lodge, as a Royal Arch lodge, and was called the Royal Arch lodge held at the 'Rose and Crown'.⁷⁰ (Sincerity Chapter No. 73, now No. 61, in Halifax was not warranted by Supreme Grand Chapter until November 1790, holding its first meeting on 13 February 1791.) Since only Leeds Masons were exalted in the October meeting in 1766 and only Wakefield Masons in the July meeting, it is clear that the meetings were arranged especially so that Royal Arch lodges could be set up in those other northern cities. There are many similar examples. For instance, on 31 December 1767 members of the Anchor and Hope Lodge No. 37 at Bolton journeyed to Warrington to make 'three arch masons, viz. Tho[ma]s Ridgeway, Barlow and Rhodes.'⁷¹ It is thus perfectly clear that long before the Union degrees beyond the Craft were being worked in Moderns Craft lodges just as they were in Antients Craft lodges.

In the north of England, working the Royal Arch within a Moderns Craft lodge continued well into the nineteenth century. For instance, the Lodge of Prince George No. 308 at Haworth, which was founded in 1796, started working the Royal Arch in 1803, four years before the Chapter of Affability No. 308 was warranted. The three Principals at Haworth were installed on 14 March 1803 by those of the neighbouring regular Chapter of the First Miracle at Colne, which received its warrant in 1769. So a regular Moderns' chapter was still installing 'irregular' Royal Arch Masons in 1803, and probably much later, according to a pattern that had existed for at least forty years. Although Modern Masons, they were adopting the Antient practice of a lodge or chapter having to have worked for at least a year before it could apply for a warrant which, again, shows that the differences between Antient and Modern Masons were much less in the provinces than in London.

The Separation of the Royal Arch from the Craft

It is well known that in 1759 the then Grand Secretary of the Moderns Grand Lodge, Samuel Spencer, wrote that 'Our Society is neither Arch, Royal Arch or Ancient,'⁷² in marked contrast to the Grand Secretary of the Antients Grand Lodge, Laurence Dermott's

⁶⁷ G. Y. Johnson, 'The York Grand Chapter', *AQC* 57 (1947), 198.

⁶⁸ G. Hanson, *The Early Minutes of Sincerity Chapter of Royal Arch Masons No. 61 Halifax from A.D. 1765 to A.D. 1866* (Halifax: Manuscript, 1950), 6.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷¹ N. Rogers, 'The Lodge of Elias Ashmole, 1646', *AQC* 65 (1952), 36.

⁷² Reported by Dermott in the Antients Grand Lodge Minutes, 5 December 1759.

equally famous description of the Royal Arch in 1756 as the ‘Root, Heart, and Marrow of Free-Masonry’. The view of the Moderns was confirmed when they decided to set up a separate body to rule the Royal Arch with the *Charter of Compact* in 1766. This separation has continued to this day.

As was stated above, by 1766 Antient and Modern Masons were regularly working the Royal Arch in their Craft lodges so the decision to keep them separate by the Moderns Grand Lodge and later by the United Grand Lodge was clearly a policy decision. Even though UGLE made it quite clear that the Royal Arch was part of the third degree, it nonetheless kept it quite separate. The reason was probably because the placing of the very Christian and Trinitarian Royal Arch close to the third degree, as part two of that degree, as it had been originally devised, would have emphasized the Christian elements at the end of the third degree from the raising onwards, especially the quotation from the Book of Revelation in the passage where the Master instructs the candidate to ‘Lift up your eyes . . . etc.’ At the end of the eighteenth century the Royal Arch was even more Christian than it is now and included a section entitled *The Mystical Knowledge of the Temple*, which developed the idea of Solomon’s Temple as a type of Jesus Christ and his Church. Jewish brethren were finding these elements difficult. The Duke of Sussex’s friendship with the Chief Rabbi, Solomon Hershel, who was a stern critic of the requirement for Jewish soldiers conscripted to fight in the Napoleonic Wars being required to take their oath of allegiance on the Christian Bible, and in an Anglican Church, led to that being changed and the overtly Christian elements in the Royal Arch being deleted in the revisions of 1834.

Nevertheless, in spite of Samuel Spencer’s statement, the most senior members of the Moderns Grand Lodge in the 1760s became Royal Arch Companions. It was not just Lord Blayney who joined the Order; Grand Secretaries Samuel Spencer, Thomas French, and James Heseltine did so too, as did Rowland Berkeley, the Grand Treasurer.

The Excellent, Grand and Royal Chapter

The Minutes of the meetings held in 1765 which preceded the signing of the *Charter of Compact* in 1766 contain a Manifesto, which begins with the following phrase: ‘WE THE COMPANIONS OF THE E[*xcellent*] G[*rand*] & R[*oyal*] C[*hapter*] commonly called the Royal Arch, being this Twelfth Day of June in full Chapter assembled . . .’⁷³ This gives us the original name of the body we now know as Supreme Grand Chapter, and the fact that the members of the Royal Arch were at least in London called Companions rather than Brothers. It was, however, a long time before the new Royal Arch terminology took hold in the provinces. Indeed, it was not until the nineteenth century in many places in

⁷³ J. R. Dashwood, ‘Notes on the First Minute Book of the Excellent Grand and Royal Chapter’ in *AQC* 62 (1949), 166.

the north of England that the new Royal Arch terms ‘companion’, ‘chapter’, ‘principal’ and ‘exalt’ replaced the old Craft terms of ‘brother’, ‘lodge’, ‘master’ and ‘raise’.

In *AQC* 64 (1951) 136–7 in a note entitled ‘The Falsification of the Royal Arch Charter of Compact’, Bro. J. R. Dashwood clarified the correct date of the *Charter of Compact* as being 1766, and not 1767 as is written on it now – the final signature on the *Charter* dating from around the middle of March 1767. In his paper entitled ‘Notes on the First Minute Book of the Excellent Grand and Royal Chapter’ in *AQC* 62 (1949), 74 the same author described the very important background to the *Charter* to which the reader is directed for more detailed information than is given here. The Minutes cover the period from 22 March 1765 to 11 December 1767 and were written by Bro. Francis Flower, the first Scribe E of the Grand Chapter.

These important Minutes make clear that by 1765 the Royal Arch story was no longer being worked in a lodge with its traditional Master and two Wardens, but in a Royal Arch chapter whose officers included three Principals named Zerubbabel, Haggai, and Joshua, two Scribes named Ezra and Nehemiah, and three Sojourners, one of whom was the Principal Sojourner. The word Tyler is crossed out in the Minutes and the word Janitor inserted – another change of officer’s name from that used in the Craft. Everything as described in the Minutes and Bylaws of 1765 is almost as it is now, over two hundred and fifty years later. The regalia are described and, again, are almost the same as are worn nowadays, except that the 1765 apron lacked the two tassels that were added to Royal Arch and Craft Aprons around 1840. The regalia of the Companions is described as follows:

That all the Companions wear Aprons, (except those appointed to wear Robes) and the Aprons shall be all of one sort or fashion. Viz. White Leather Indented round with Crimson Ribbon and strings of the same, with a T H in Gold properly displayed on the Bibb. [of the Apron] & Purple Garters Indented with Pink.

The Sojourners were to ‘appear with the emblems of their employment.’ As was noted earlier, the three Principals wore robes, caps, and jewels, but no aprons. In 1766 Grand Chapter ordered three white surplices for the three Sojourners to wear as they still do today.

The letter T over the letter H is used in the Minutes and gradually became the monogram of a Royal Arch companion. It was widely used in lodge Minutes throughout England against the names of those Craftsmen who were also Royal Arch Masons. For example, the Minutes of Britannia Lodge No. 139 in Sheffield, the monogram shows that sixteen of its twenty-seven Master Masons in 1767 were also Royal Arch Companions. The words *Templum Hierosolymae* [the Temple at Jerusalem] are also used in full in the Minutes to explain the meaning of the monogram.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 165–185.

It is not known who was responsible for the major change to the layout of a Royal Arch chapter, combining the elements from the degree of Scots Master with the aspects that probably originated in Ireland, but the most likely person is John Maclean who was the first to sign the Manifesto and was First Grand Principal in 1765, in which office he was succeeded by Lord Blayney in 1766, then the Grand Master of the Craft. The Minutes of the Anniversary Feast held on 26 December 1766 pay a particular tribute to Maclean, describing him as the 'Father and Promoter' of the Order. They also note that he was awarded a special gold plate to wear for his services which was inscribed with appropriate phrases: 'G. D. in E. [*Gloria in Excelsis Deo* – Glory to God in the Highest]; In P. erat V. [*In Principio erat Verbum* – In the Beginning was the Word]; and *Eurekamen* [We have found].⁷⁵ Sadly, we know very little about John Maclean. What is known about him is found in a separate section below.

The obverse of the Royal Arch Jewel as it is known today is illustrated three times in the left-hand margin of the *Charter of Compact*.⁷⁵ The earliest extant example of the Jewel is that which belonged to Dr John James Rouby. It is displayed in the Museum of Freemasonry and is dated 1766. Dr John James Rouby was exalted in April 1765, so it is odd that his jewel is dated for the following year.

The fundamental change from the Scots Master being worked in a traditional lodge layout to the Royal Arch being worked in a chapter layout with three co-equal Principals seems to have occurred around 1760, even though some lodges had changed the name of the degree from Scots Master to Royal Arch two decades earlier, probably as a consequence of the 1745 Jacobite rebellion. Even if the Royal Arch in London was following the current layout with the current officers, it was often many years, even decades, before provincial lodges, especially northern Moderns lodges, adopted the changes. In Wakefield, for instance, it seems the Royal Arch Masons there were still working the Scots Master version of the Royal Arch in a traditional lodge with a Master and two Wardens which they had acquired in Halifax in 1766, until 1799.⁷⁶

The change was fundamental in making the Royal Arch an even more Christian Order. The three Principals are co-equal because they represent the three Offices of Jesus Christ: Christ our Prophet, Christ our Priest, and Christ our King. It is a theology familiar to Catholics as well as Protestants, especially Calvinists: as a priest Christ sanctifies, as a prophet He embodies divine truth, and as a King He leads us on the right path. One might say that as a priest He is the Life, as a prophet He is the Truth and as a king He is the Way. There is no doubt this was the intended symbolism of the creator of this part of the Royal Arch ritual, as Knights Templar will know when they recall the opening of

⁷⁵ For a detailed account of the Royal Arch Jewel see the author's Norman B. Spencer Prize Essay 'The Royal Arch Jewel – an Explanation', in *AQC* 123 (2010), 49–76.

⁷⁶ J. R. Rylands, 'Early Freemasonry in Wakefield', *AQC* 65 (1943), 266–7.

their Preceptories, a Masonic degree that was being developed at the same time as the changes to the Royal Arch. It is interesting to note that a great promoter of both degrees, Thomas Dunckerley, was in 1791 both First Grand Principal in the Royal Arch and Grand Master of the newly-formed Grand Encampment of Knights Templar. He also created a monogram for the Order of the Temple developed from the TH of the Royal Arch to THE for KT standing for *Templum Hierosolymae Eques* (a Knight of the Temple of Jerusalem). Thomas Dunckerley was one of the first recorded exaltees in a Moderns lodge, having been one of three Master Masons exalted on 16 August 1754 at the lodge held at the Three Tuns Inn No. 31 at Portsmouth.⁷⁷

Initially, the only requirement to be made a Royal Arch Mason according to the *Principia* of 1769 (the Grand Chapter By-laws) was that the candidate had been initiated, passed, and raised to the third degree, thus conforming to the practice dating back to the degree of Scots Master in the 1730s. However, in 1788 the Moderns' Grand Chapter ruled 'That none shall be admitted to this Exalted Degree except those who are proved to have been regularly apprenticed, and presided as Masters, to be justly entitled to, and have received the Past Master's token and password', thus bringing the Moderns into line with Antient practice originating in Ireland in the 1740s from a confusion over the meaning of the word 'Master', as noted above. In 1822 Grand Chapter changed this rule, allowing Master Masons of twelve months standing to be exalted, but still restricted the Principals' chairs to Past Masters of Lodges.

John Maclean, Father and Promoter

The Minutes of the Excellent, Grand and Royal Chapter for 26 November 1766, reporting on their Anniversary Feast, note that

The thanks of the Chapter were given by Z. [Lord Blayney] in an Address to Bro. John Maclean as Father and Promoter, who for his Instructions and careful Attendance was requested to accept a Gold Plate with the following device . . . which the Chapter desired he would wear as a mark of their respect & regard, as also a Robe peculiar to the past M.E.Z.

There is no doubt that John Maclean, the first Zerubabel of the Excellent, Grand and Royal Chapter in 1765, was a key early member of the Order. Sadly, little is known about him. He was born in 1719 and initiated into Freemasonry on the Feast of St John the Divine, 27 December 1740 at the age of twenty-one years. Apart for his work for the Royal Arch, he joined Lodge of Concord No. 172 on 23 December 1771.

⁷⁷ J. Hamill, 'Thomas Dunckerley's Exaltation', *AQC* 97 (1984), 229.

Fig. 7. John Maclean's signature 1783

Maclean was an upholsterer and cabinet-maker by trade.⁷⁸ One of his pieces or perhaps that of his son or grandson, a 'Pouch Table or Table with a Bag' (Pl.85A), used by ladies for sewing, is described in Thomas Sheraton's *Cabinet Dictionary* in 1803: 'The design on the left hand was taken from one executed by Mr. McLean in Mary-le-bone street, near Tottenham court road, who finishes these small articles in the neatest manner'⁷⁹.

Upholsterers at that time were called Upholders and they were usually also cabinet-makers. In the *Westminster Poll Book* of 1749 he is listed as 'John Maclean, upholsterer in Whitehall'. He advertised himself on his trade card as a 'Cabinet, Chair Maker and Upholder'. Like most cabinet-makers at the time he was also probably an undertaker. By 1760, he was living at Marylebone Street, Westminster. In October, 1766, Grand Chapter 'ordered that Bro[the]r Maclean provide a Stool, and Bench 6½ foot long, stuffed and covered with Crimson Moreen,⁸⁰ & Brass Nails'. If he did so, they must have been presented to the Grand Chapter *gratis*, for neither of these items appear in the accounts.

The gold plate John Maclean was presented with and encouraged to wear in chapter by Lord Blayney in 1766, which is sadly no longer extant, was inscribed as follows according to the Minutes of Grand Chapter:

Joannes Maclean, H. Templum Hierosolima, or the true Royal Arch Mason's Mark
or Badge of Honour:

P.S. Pater Societatis, the Father of the Society:

Ex. Dono, By the Gift, S.S.A.R. Sociorum Societatis Arcus Regalis, of the Companions of the Society of the Royal Arch:

Que Appellatur – Stiled G. et R.C.H., Grande et Regale Caput Hierosolima, the Grand and Royal Chapter of Jerusalem, London A.L. 5770.

G.D. in E. Gloria Deo in Excelsis – Glory to God in the Highest.

In P. erat V. In Principio erat Verbum – In the Beginning was the Word.

Eurekamen Invenimus – We have found.

⁷⁸ See S. Redburn, 'John McLean and Son' *Furniture History* 14 (1978), 31–7. The John McLean described in the article is probably the son or grandson of the Freemason.

⁷⁹ T. Sheraton, *The Cabinet Dictionary* (London: 1803), 292.

⁸⁰ A sturdy wool fabric used in upholstery, often with an embossed finish.

It is clear John Maclean must have played a very important part in the creation of the Excellent, Grand and Royal Chapter of Jerusalem in the 1760s to be described as its 'Father and Promoter' by Lord Blayney, and to be given such a splendid gold jewel. Maclean was clearly very proud of the honour conferred upon him, and later referring to himself as the *Pater Societas* [Father of the Society] and using the abbreviation 'P: & P: of the E.G. & R.C.' for 'Pater [Father] and Promoter' when he signed Dispensations.⁸¹

The First Warranted Chapters in England

No chapters were warranted by the Excellent, Grand and Royal Chapter until three years after the *Charter of Compact* was signed. The earliest chapter warrants all date from 1769 and are, in chronological order, as follows:

- 1 Euphrates Lodge or Chapter of the Garden of Eden (at Manchester) 12/05/69
- 2 = Restauration Lodge or Chapter of the Rock Fountain Shilo (at Bro. Brooks' House, London) 14/07/69
- 2 = *Bethlehem Lodge or Chapter of the Nativity (Burnley, Lancs) 14/07/69
- 2 = *Cana Lodge or the Chapter of the First Miracle (Colne, Lancs) 14/07/69.
- 5 *Lodge of Tranquillity or Chapter of Friendship (Portsmouth) 11/08/69
- 6 Most Sacred Lodge or Chapter of Universality (London) 13/10/69
- 7 *Lodge of Intercourse or Chapter of Unanimity (Bury, Lancs) 10/11/69
- 8 *Lodge of Hospitality or Chapter of Charity (Bristol) 08/12/69

* Chapters still extant and working.

The chapters were approved by meetings of the Grand Chapter in a slightly different order. Each chapter was given a double title: a name as a lodge and a different name as a chapter. Since it is suggested that the lodge associated with the chapter in Bristol was named the Lodge of Hospitality, it is possible that the other lodge names were also in use at that time, although officially in London the lodges were still referred to by the places where they met. Of the original eight chapters five are still extant, and have recently (2019) celebrated their two hundred and fiftieth anniversaries. Four of the chapters were in Lancashire, and the County Palatine remained a stronghold of Royal Arch Masonry for the next fifty years with more warranted chapters than any other province including London. Even in 1823 there were thirty-eight chapters in Lancashire and only seventeen in London.

It seems odd that the Grand Chapter waited until 1769 to issue warrants, but as has been pointed out earlier in this paper the Moderns as well as the Antients were exalting Royal Arch Masons in their Craft lodges, albeit in discrete ceremonies. Indeed, it is interesting to note that many of the Moderns lodges that were exalting Royal Arch

⁸¹ R. A. Wells, 'The Premier Grand Lodge and the Delayed Recognition of the Royal Arch', *AQC* 82 (1969), 80.

Masons before the *Charter of Compact* was signed continued exalting brethren in their lodges, and often did not bother to apply for a separate chapter warrant for over twenty years. Such was the case with the Lodge of Probity No. 61 at Halifax, which applied for a warrant for its Chapter of Sincerity No. 61 in 1790; likewise the Freemasons in Sheffield waited until 1795 before they applied for a warrant for the Chapter of Loyalty No. 296.

One cannot help noticing that four of the nine earliest warranted chapters were in East Lancashire: at Manchester, Bury, Bolton, and Colne. The latter three are still working today. It is clear it was the influence of Bro. John Allen, a London barrister from Bury who played a major part in this early development in Lancashire. He was exalted on 13 November 1765 and signed the Charter of Compact in 1766, where he was listed as Scribe N. He became Z of the Grand Chapter in 1772. He was a member of the Old Horn Lodge No. 4 and of the Lodge of Friendship No. 6. He was Provincial Grand Master and Provincial Grand Superintendent of the County Palatine from 1769 until his death in 1806.

The Royal Arch Ritual in England, *Sheffield Manuscript No. 1*

The earliest extant Royal Arch Ritual in English is contained in *Sheffield MS No. 1*. For a full account of this manuscript the reader is referred to the author's paper 'The Sheffield Manuscript – Royal Arch (c.1780)' in *AQC* 126 (2013) and to his recent booklet published in 2019 entitled *The Earliest English Royal Arch and Knight Templar Rituals – the Sheffield Manuscripts*. The second section of this manuscript is almost certainly the ritual used by the first warranted lodges, and by the Excellent, Grand and Royal Chapter itself. Indeed, its second section is thus titled.

A comparison between the ritual contained in the *Sheffield MS No. 1* and the story contained in Samuel Lee's *Orbis Miraculum* upon which it is based gives the reader a good idea of what the ritual was like between the years 1733 and 1769. This is especially true since the story outlined by the Principal Sojourner in the ritual even today is remarkably close to that quoted in Lee's book. There can, therefore, have been very few changes to the English ritual between its creation and that worked in the Excellent, Grand and Royal Chapter created by the *Charter of Compact* in 1766. The major problem in the history of the degree comes from the confusion created by the change of name from Scots Master to Royal Arch in England and the various French versions of the degree with very similar names but a completely different ritual. The 'Royal Arch of Enoch' is an obvious example. If one sticks to English sources the story is consistent and clear.

The first part of the Sheffield manuscript is probably later than the second, since it refers to the candidate being a Past Master which the second part does not. The third part of the Sheffield manuscript, entitled 'The Mystical Knowledge of the Temple', is derived from the fourth part of the *Dumfries No. 4 MS* entitled 'Questions concerning the Temple.' The date given to the *Dumfries No. 4 MS* by John Lane in *AQC* 6 (1893) is 1730–40,

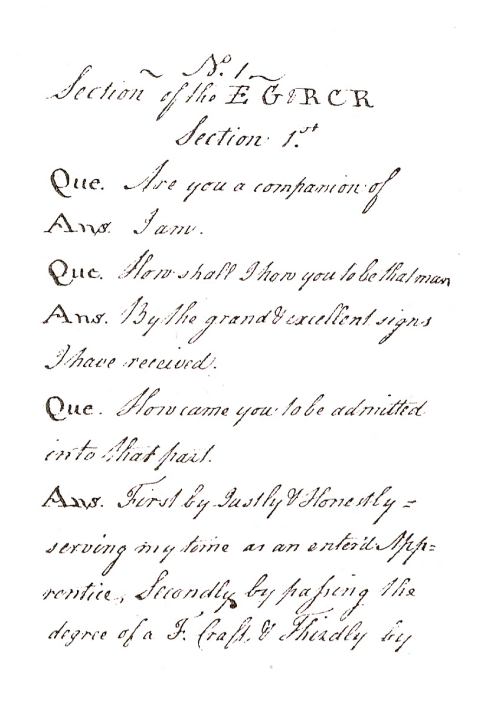


Fig. 8. The opening of the Excellent, Grand and Royal Chapter Ritual (Sheffield Ms No. 1.)

but Knoop *et al.* in *Early Masonic Catechisms* put it much earlier, giving a suggested date of c.1710. Internal evidence confirms that Lane was much closer to the truth, and the manuscript cannot have been written much before 1730. Nevertheless, it shows that at least one of the *Sheffield MS No. 1*'s three parts is linked to early eighteenth-century Scottish Masonic traditions and workings. Given the stated aim of the new Premier Grand Lodge in 1721 to seek out old Masonic manuscripts, it is possible that this section in *Sheffield MS No. 1* was originally part of the degree of Scots Master and is the reason Scotland was included in its name. This section was deleted from the degree in 1835 due to its explicitly Christian content.

It is interesting to note that in the ritual the three Principals open the chapter by themselves. This continued until 1902, when Supreme Grand Chapter resolved that 'It is expedient that all R. A. Masons be permitted to be present at the Opening Ceremony in private chapters.'⁸² It is also known that from 1788 until 1822 in Moderns' chapters all candidates had to have passed the Chair which, as was noted earlier, was a confusion originating in Ireland in the 1740s with Dassigny and promulgated by Laurence Dermott and the Antients' Grand Lodge.

⁸² Supreme Grand Chapter Minutes, 7 May 1902.

Another indication of the Royal Arch ritual at the time the first chapters were warranted comes from an unusual source. The Minutes of the Royal Arch meeting of the Lodge of Unanimity in Wakefield for 22 February 1769 list thirteen ‘toasts or sentiments.’⁸³ These hint at the ritual and understanding of the Royal Arch at that time:

All that’s gone thro’ ye seven
 To him that grop’d in ye Dark
 The first Man that enter’d ye Arch
 To him that first shak’d his Cable
 May the Crown of Glory, ye Scepter of Righteousness and the Staff of comfort attend
 true Masons
 To the Memory of him that first moved his stones in the Dark
 Harmony among all those who have rec’d the Cord of Love
 To the happy Messengers that carried the News to King Cyrus
 The Roy[al] Arch Word
 May the true beam of intelligence Enlighten Every Royal Arch Mason
 May we be all adorn’d with a true internal robe at the last Day
 May we live to see our posterity to follow this Example
 As the Jewish High Priests put off their shoes when they enter’d the Sanctum Sanc-
 torum, so may every Mason divest himself of every vice when he enters this Lodge.

It is important to note that the early version of the Royal Arch ritual given in the fourth part of the *Tunnah Manuscript* from East Lancashire – an Antient not a Modern text – is a later, expanded version of the ceremony from around 1795, which includes the word in three languages.

Early Royal Arch Jewels

The Royal Arch Companion’s jewel is the most interesting jewel in English Freemasonry. It was designed around 1765 and is illustrated on the *Charter of Compact* of 1766. The earliest extant example is Dr Rouby’s jewel in the Museum of Freemasonry. It is dated 1766. The jewel is also described in the Minutes of the meetings which preceded the signing of the *Charter* referred to above. For full details of the jewel the reader is referred to the author’s paper on the jewel in *AQC* 123 (2010), his Norman B. Spencer Prize Essay.

After I had written the essay, Bro. Alan Owen kindly drew my attention to an important early source for the design of the jewel, which I will take the opportunity to include here since it has never been printed in *AQC* before. This was an engraving from 1625.

The engraving formed the frontispiece to a collection of six German philosophical treatises with hermetic engravings by the German engraver Lucas Jennis (1590–1630)

⁸³J. R. Rylands, *The Wakefield Chapter of Royal Arch Masons No. 495 1849–1949* (Wakefield: Private circulation, 1949), 13.



Fig. 9. Dr Rouby's R.A. Jewel, 1766. Museum of Freemasonry, London.

entitled *Dyas Chymica Tripartita, Das ist: Sechs herzliche Deutsche Philosophische tractätlein*, published at Frankfurt am Main in 1625. The work was translated into Latin and published in 1678, again in Frankfurt, under the title *Museum Hermeticum* the name by which it is better known today. A third edition appeared, once more in Latin, in 1749, also published in Germany. All three printings had the same frontispiece.

The engraving by Jennis shows three figures seated beneath trees: the one on the left holds an upright triangle, that on the right an inverted triangle, and the one in the centre the two triangles superimposed, just as they appear in the centre of the Royal Arch Jewel. It is a mistake to confuse the superimposed triangles with Solomon's Seal, since the early



Fig. 10. The frontispiece to Lucas Jennis's *Museum Hermeticum*

jewels such as Dr Rouby's Jewel – and the early tracing boards by colouring the triangles differently – make it abundantly clear there are two separate triangles and not a single hexagram.

Below the engraving appears a verse in Latin written by Daniel Meisner (1585–1625), a Bohemian poet who was one of the Poets Laureate of the Holy Roman Empire – hence the letters P. L. C. (*Poeta Laureatus Caesareus*) after his initials. The verse reads:

*Quae sunt in superis, hæc inferioribus insunt:
Quod monstrat cælum, id terra frequenter habet.
Ignis, Aqua et fluitans duo sunt contraria: felix,
Talia si jungis: sit tibi scire satis!*

Royal Arch companions will immediately recognize the last line of Meisner's verse as being the one engraved on the front of the Royal Arch Jewel. The combination of the words and the two superimposed triangles being found on the front of the jewel leaves little room for doubt that the 1625 engraving was a major source for the jewel's design.

Not surprisingly, a knowledge of the additional lines of the verse and the engraving is of considerable help in unravelling the meaning of the jewel and the reason the line *Talia si jungis: sit tibi scire satis* is engraved on the front of the jewel. When translated, the four lines of Meisner's verse read as follows:

The things from above are like those from below,
What heaven shows is often found on earth,
Fire and water, flowing, are opposites: happy,
If you can unite them, you know all you need to know!

The engraving shows the four elements (earth, air, fire, and water) in its four corners. The sun, moon, and five planets (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn) are shown above and below, illustrating the verse's first line. Above sit the three figures holding two individual triangles and the two triangles superimposed. In a cave-like grotto below sit six of the nine muses with Apollo in the centre identified by his harp. One assumes that the three figures above, together with the six below, are intended to represent the nine muses of Greek legend (Calliope, Clio, Euterpe, Melpomene, Terpsichore, Erato, Polyhymnia, Urania, and Thalia). It is also possible that all seven figures below represent the seven liberal arts and sciences (Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy), which were inspired by the nine Greek muses, and as such, represent on earth (below) the nine Greek muses in heaven (above). The well in the foreground represents the source of wisdom. Meisner's verse accords with the suggestions I made in 2010 about the meaning of the jewel, especially in regard to the interpretation of the triangle pointing upwards and the triangle pointing downwards, rather than it being seen as a six-pointed star.



Fig. 11. Antients' Royal Arch Jewel



Fig. 12. The gravestone of John Barraclough, clockmaker, at Haworth

How the designer of the jewel came across the engraving in the first place is a mystery, particularly since the illustration was only published in Frankfurt and the designer almost certainly lived in London. Nevertheless, he clearly saw the triangles and the associated verse by Meisner as a suitable way of representing the link between heaven and earth with the Royal Arch as the final stage along the Masonic path, linking the lodge below to the Grand Lodge Above. The wearer of the jewel is clearly being encouraged to reflect on how the workings in the lodge and chapter below prepare him for entry into the Grand Lodge Above.

When John Harris came to design his first degree tracing board in 1825, he adopted Jacob's Ladder as a way of showing the link between the Lodge below and the Grand Lodge Above, with the three figures on the ladder, Faith, Hope, and Charity indicating the pathway between the two. Harris's design has a biblical origin and is thus, perhaps, more appropriate than the hermetical design on the Royal Arch Jewel, as far as pure, ancient Freemasonry is concerned.

Until the uniting of the Antients and Moderns Grand Lodges, the Antients Grand Lodge had a different Royal Arch Jewel, which is very similar in design to the apron shown on the Enniskillen floor-cloth, and to the design on the very early Cana Chapter aprons. It relates to the Royal Arch story, and is much less complex than the Moderns Royal Arch Jewel, showing an arch with the keystone removed above a pedestal on which are placed the Three Great Lights of Freemasonry – yet another link to the third degree.

The symbol of an Installed First Principal in the Royal Arch, at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, has sadly almost disappeared. Nowadays it only appears on the jewels of the three Grand Principals. It is the triple interlaced triangle. It is sometimes seen carved on the gravestones of Freemasons



Fig. 13. The Belzoni Jewel. Museum of Freemasonry, London.

who were Installed First Principals. A particularly fine example is carved on the tombstone in Haworth cemetery of John Barraclough the clockmaker.⁸⁴

Another excellent example is the so-called Belzoni jewel in the Museum of Freemasonry, although it was neither made for, nor worn by Belzoni (1778–1823) himself, yet he may have owned it. It dates from the very beginning of the nineteenth century and Belzoni, who was exalted in 1720, was never more than a Companion.

⁸⁴ Now in a sadly derelict condition.

The Gap of Thirty Years

Much has been made by many Masonic historians of the gap of thirty years in information concerning the Royal Arch, in short, between the creation of the degree of Scots Master in the 1730s in London and the appearance of the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch, very similar to that of today, in London in 1765. It is significant that the degree and the Grand Chapter were both created in London. It is certain the degree of Scots Master was also worked in Bristol, Bath, and Salisbury, as well as in Scotland and Ireland in the 1740s and 1750s, but the major developments centred on London. The changes that occurred to the degree, which were French in origin, such as the word in three languages, came into the ritual much later, at the end of the eighteenth century.

The reason for the apparent gap in information is more to do with names than anything else. It is clear that the degree of Scots Master changed its name following the 1745 Jacobite uprising but that does not mean it changed its ritual. Although the name 'Royal Arch' began to be used in the 1740s and continued to be used in the 1750s, it is clear that the working was that of the degree of Scots Master. The clearest indication that this is the case is that the degree was worked in a traditional lodge with a Master and two Wardens, and not in the completely different layout of a chapter with its arch shape, three co-equal Principals and two Scribes, as is described in the Minutes of the meetings in 1765 that led to the *Charter of Compact* as noted above.

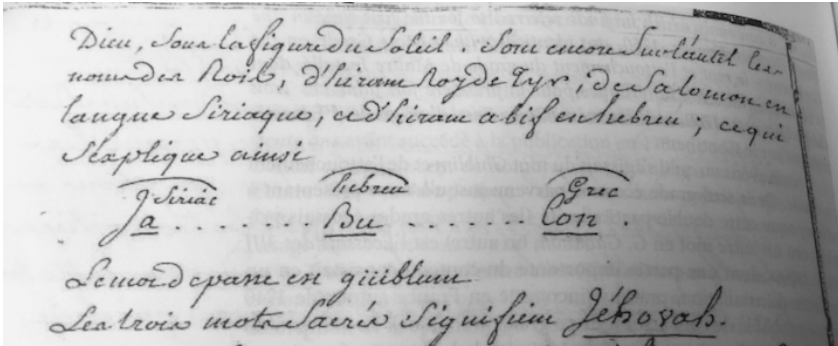


Fig. 14. Clermont Manuscript *Grand, ou Royal Arche* (1768).
Bibliothèque Nationale Française, Paris.

The Word in Three Languages

One of the most controversial changes to the Royal Arch Ritual occurred in 1989, when the Supreme Grand Chapter decreed the removal of the so-called 'Word in Three Languages' (Jabulon), and its replacement by the original Mason Word.

The earliest reference I can find to the ‘Word in Three Languages’ is in a French manuscript entitled *Grand, ou Royal Arche* from 1768. This is the Clermont ritual manuscript in the *Bibliothèque Nationale Française* (BnF FM4 85 f.41v).

*Sont encore Sur l'autel les noms des Rois, d'hirame Roy de Tyr, de Salomon en langue Siri-
aque, et d'hiram abif en hebreu ; ce qui s'explique ainsi :*

Syriac	hebreu	Grec
<u>Ja</u>	<u>Bu</u>	<u>Lon</u>

Le mot de passe est guiblum.

Les trois mots Saerés Signifient Jéhovah.

[There are also on the altar the names of the Kings, Hiram King of Tyre, Solomon in the Syriac language, and Hiram abif in Hebrew; these are explained thus:

Syriac	Hebrew	Greek
<u>Ja</u>	<u>Bu</u>	<u>Lon</u>

The password is Guiblum.

The three Mason words mean Jehovah.]

Here the three languages are said to represent the three Grands whose names are on the pedestal: Solomon King of Israel, Hiram King of Tyre and Hiram Abif: Syriac for Solomon King of Israel, Greek for Hiram King of Tyre and Hebrew for Hiram Abif. Of course, none of the three elements actually comes from the language from which it purports to originate, but at least this clarifies the original thinking behind this made-up and wholly spurious Royal Arch Word. Until 1989, the Bristol Royal Arch ritual included an explanation that was on the same lines but different from the French original:

In the centre is the Grand and most sacred Word, being the name of God in the Chaldee, Syriac and Hebrew languages, the two former being those of the nations by which the Israelites were surrounded. It was needful to write in a language intelligible to those willing to quit their idolatry and offer sacrifices on the altar of Zion.

It is important to note that the French source makes it clear that ‘Jabulon’ is intended to signify ‘Jehovah’ which is, of course, the original and correct Mason Word. ‘Jabulon’ is one of the many French inventions that crept into English Masonry at the end of the eighteenth century through the influence of people such as Pierre Lambert de Lintot (1726–1798). The seemingly endless so-called explanations of the infamous ‘Word in the Three Languages’ over the last two centuries illustrates the sort of pseudo-historical writing that Quatuor Coronati Lodge was established to refute.

Conclusions

The fifth-century account of the discovery in a cave below the ruins of the Temple of Solomon is common to both the degree of Scots Master and to the ritual of the Supreme

Order of the Holy Royal Arch. The name of the degree Scots Master was changed to Royal Arch in the mid-1740s, probably in response to the Jacobite rebellion in Scotland, but the contents of the degree appear to have remained the same until around 1760, with the degree still being worked in a traditional Masonic lodge with the senior officers being a Master and his two Wardens. In the 1740s the requirement to be a Master Mason was confused initially in Ireland and then in the Antients Grand Lodge with the office of Master of a lodge, which led to the creation of the degree of 'Passing the Chair'. This requirement was copied by the Moderns in 1788. The Irish and then the Antients Grand Lodge also mistakenly regarded the Royal Arch as a fourth degree rather than, as it was originally intended to be and still is, the completion of the third degree. Around 1760, and certainly before 1765, the new and unique arrangement of the chapter appeared, possibly from Ireland, which became the norm in the Royal Arch: the layout of the chapter with its officers sitting in the shape of an arch and with its senior officers being three co-equal Masters or Principals, Zerubbabel, Haggai, and Joshua, and two Pillars or Scribes, Ezra and Nehemiah. The story and the part played by the Sojourners remained the same in both versions.

Philostorgius's account is what links the Royal Arch to the original degree of Scots Master and to the third degree, by providing both a description of the recovery of the Word, the loss of which is played out in the Hiram legend of the third degree, and by being the ceremony in which the Master Mason gains the genuine secrets of a Master. Even today a Master Mason who has not been exalted into the Royal Arch has not completed his third degree, and is in possession of only substituted secrets. The Mason Word is now given in the Royal Arch, which was, and still is the completion of the third degree.

