

Ireland – the Royal Arch a more remote antiquity

In a "historical" introduction he quotes Dr. W. J. Chetwode Crawley, of Dublin, who, addressing the Grand Lodge of Ireland, claimed for the Royal Arch a more remote antiquity than was hitherto accorded to it in that country.

"The reminder will not come amiss that we Irish Freemasons have an historical right to be heard on the authority of the Warrant, and the institution of the Royal Arch degree. The Grand Lodge of Ireland was the first Grand Lodge in the world to furnish its Ledges with Charters as evidence of their legal constitution. This momentous step was taken just one hundred and seventy-five years ago. Twelve years later, the earliest mention of Royal Arch Masonry — nay, the very first collocation of the words ' Royal Arch ' — occur in the chronicle of an Irish Lodge."

Is it not also on record that the words "Royal Arch" were not recognized by the Grand Lodge of Ireland, which followed the lead of the original Grand Lodge of England, and that a certain nobleman holding the position of Grand Master was nearly being deposed for suggesting that it should receive official countenance?

Another interesting feature of the paper are some quotations from the late Bro. Bromwell's "Restorations of Masonic Geometry and Symbolry," in which it is claimed that the title Royal Arch had its origin with the "chest or coffer of the Tabernacle" and its proper pronunciation is "ark" "But when we use the word we think of some arched structure or vault, instead of the real object, the sacred coffer."

"The word arch is only a different form of spelling ark; and we show this clearly in our pronunciation of compound and derivative words in which arch appears, for in almost every instance when arch is followed by a consonant, as in archbishop , we sound the ch as in the word church, but when a vowel follows we pronounce the ch as k, as in architect, archangel, etc."

Sources:

Proceedings of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada at the annual convocation, 1908 report on Foreign Correspondence – OHIO