

Whence come ye?

"The researches of Robert Freke Gould, Wm. James Hughan Dr. W. J. Chetwode Crawley, and other eminent Masonic historians and scholars, show that the existence of the Royal Arch degree was known as early as 1740, if not prior thereto, and as the reorganization of Freemasonry, in 1723, was but a few years earlier, it is evident that the grade was almost if not really coexistent with that reorganization. That in the Ancient Constitutions published by Anderson in 1723, there is much that now only refers to Capitular Masonry justifies the inference that the "Masters part," if a separate Grade was not in existence, must have contained much that is now only known in the Royal Arch Degree."

"The American system of Capitular Masonry was doubtless a combination of the English, Irish, and Scotch systems, and with perhaps the Scottish Rite Capitular degrees, all of them differing in many particulars. Whether it was the genius of Webb that introduced the changes in the American arrangement of the degrees and changes in the ritual, or that it was derived from other sources, will doubtless remain a mystery. The mistake, however, of making Zerubbabel the Prince and ruler of Israel, subservient to the High Priest, is an unaccountable change, the Grand Z. of Grand Jurisdictions other than in the United States being more appropriate and much more correct historically."

Under Illinois, he discusses Comp. Warvelle's "whence come ye?"

"With some of his deductions, your committee would, however, express non-concurrence, one of which is that the Royal Arch was originally merely a "chair degree" and that "it consisted of little or nothing more than the communication of the true Master's word. This circumstance, in all probability, was seized upon by Dermott, and by him expanded into a new liturgy, to which was given the high-sounding title, 'Holy Royal Arch.' "

"Although Dermott repeatedly mentions the degree, that is no proof whatever that he was its author. It is also well to bear in mind that the "Antients" was the popular body in England, recognized by the Irish and Scottish Masons, and at the union the United Grand Lodge recognized all of its claims, especially of the Royal Arch. The meagreness in esoteric ritualism is also but an inference derived mostly from the inimical publications of that period."

"It is true that "at first the degree was invariably conferred in the lodges, and it was not until comparatively late in the eighteenth century that Chapters were established under the superintendence of special officers," but it should also be borne in mind that it was done under Grand Lodge auspices, as is in evidence in the diplomas of that century."

**Sources:**

Proceedings of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada at the annual convocation, 1907, report on Foreign Correspondence - OHIO