

2006/1501

ROBES:

In Ireland they do not wear Robes in the Royal Arch. In Scotland they are optional, but when worn follow those of the English Chapters. Many theories have been advanced to explain the choice of colours, but nothing more definite can be said than that, in general, the colours agree with those given in the book of Exodus. There have been questions raised as to 'Z' having a scarlet robe, but once again we turn to the bible and I quote.

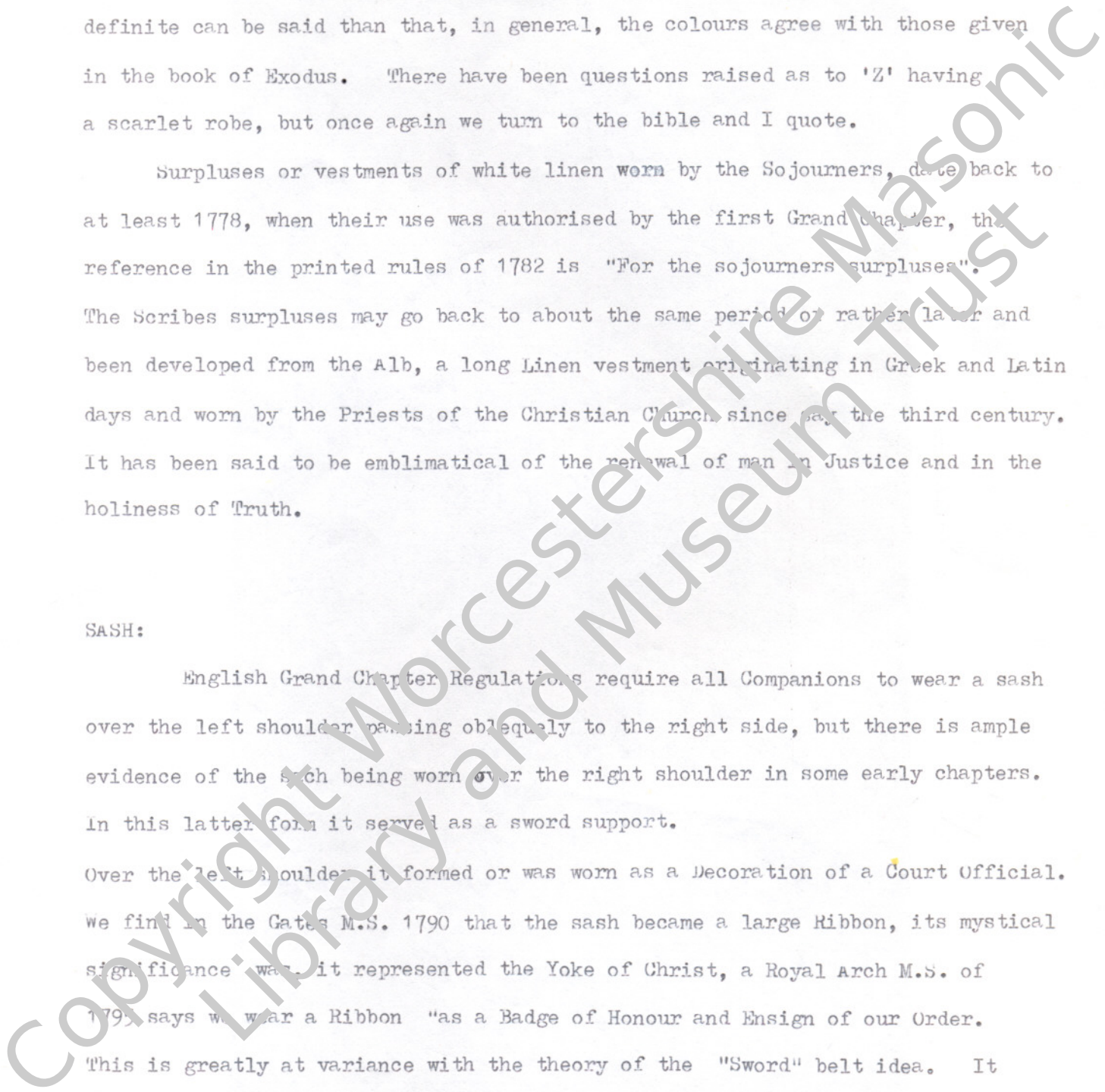
Surpluses or vestments of white linen worn by the Sojourners, date back to at least 1778, when their use was authorised by the first Grand Chapter, the reference in the printed rules of 1782 is "For the sojourners surpluses". The Scribes surpluses may go back to about the same period or rather later and been developed from the Alb, a long Linen vestment originating in Greek and Latin days and worn by the Priests of the Christian Church since the third century. It has been said to be emblematical of the renewal of man in Justice and in the holiness of Truth.

SASH:

English Grand Chapter Regulations require all Companions to wear a sash over the left shoulder passing obliquely to the right side, but there is ample evidence of the sash being worn over the right shoulder in some early chapters. In this latter form it served as a sword support.

Over the left shoulder it formed or was worn as a Decoration of a Court Official. We find in the Gates M.S. 1790 that the sash became a large Ribbon, its mystical significance was it represented the Yoke of Christ, a Royal Arch M.S. of 1795 says we wear a Ribbon "as a Badge of Honour and Ensign of our Order.

This is greatly at variance with the theory of the "Sword" belt idea. It is worth bearing in mind Companions, that from time immemorial it has been understood that English Masons should assemble without carrying any offensive or defensive weapon, and that up to 1813 notices for the Grand Festival (of English Grand Lodge) invariably contained an injunction that Brethren appeared unarmed. J. Heron Lepper has stated that the sword and trowel are displayed in Chapter as



Most E. Grand Superintendent, E. Comp8s and Companions,

Although little is known of the early history of Royal Arch Masonry, I felt that we might have a look back and see what we can find, and with the help of several items which have come to light in Worcester we may be able to make up our own minds independently as to what may have gone on. There has been no printed ritual found, not even an irregular one, earlier than the 1820s (there are however earlier ones in M.S. form), and it is obvious that, as the Royal as a working degree was at least sixty years old by the year mentioned, many variations and curious additions had come about as a result of the handing down of the by no means simple ritual mostly by word of mouth. It is known that the rite practised by the Grand and Royal Arch Chapter in 1766 resembled the present ceremony in little more than the essentials. Our present ceremonies and the Lectures of the Three Principals date from approx. 1835. We are fortunate in Worcester that the Worcester Lodge No. 349 now 280 worked Royal Arch in the "doge" from 1808 for a number of years. Though we have no idea what form the Ceremony took, it was no doubt based on the building of the Three Temples and of some form of discovery in the vault. I feel that the ceremony was based on the scriptures, whether by biblical story telling or by illustration as I will show you, unfortunately, not all of the furniture etc. was recovered as it was found going under the Auctioneers hammer many years ago. Slides etc and show those items not on slides.