



Provincial Grand Chapter of Warwickshire

The Principal Banners

Q. Is there a special order for the arrangement of the four Principal Banners?

A. The order in which they are placed in Supreme Grand Chapter and, to the best of my knowledge in most private Chapters is, ox, man, lion and eagle. This is as viewed facing east and starting from the standard above the Second Principal's chair. We have evidence for the use of banners in this order from 1834, when a Royal Arch tracing board was painted by Harris.

As a matter of interest I have compared the order just given with that found in other sources where these figures are mentioned or displayed; all differ from the order we use.

First, the Biblical references where the order given is:

in Numbers 2: 2: Lion, man, ox, eagle.

in Ezekiel 1; 10: Man, lion, ox, eagle.

in Revelation 4; 7: Lion, ox, man, eagle.

Now in armorial bearings, the order given being that of the four quarters of the shield:

the arms of Rabbi Leon: Lion, ox, man, eagle.

the arms of United Grand Lodge: Lion, ox, man, eagle.

Finally, the Graham Sutherland tapestry in Coventry Cathedral, again given quarterly:

Man, eagle, ox, lion.

I do not think there is any special significance in the order in which we place the Principal Banners; I believe it was quite arbitrary, although it could be argued that the way they are placed in Grand Chapter follows the order shown in Ezekiel radiating outwards right, left alternately, namely: Ox (3) Man (1) Lion (2) Eagle (4).

E. Comp. Harry Mendoza