

Old Myth and New Insights - Frederick the Great and the Scottish Rite

by A. Huebler

In the oldest documents with a reference to the AASR, the Prussian King Frederick II, "the Great," appears in several passages both in rituals by Francken and in the constitutional texts of 1762 and 1786 for legitimation. While in the 19th century the role of Frederick II as founder of the Order was still taken seriously, especially in the Scottish Rite itself, in the meantime the view has prevailed that there was no connection between Frederick II and the AASR and that the statements in this regard were invented at the time. On the one hand, no valid evidence has been presented so far, and on the other hand, the *Große National-Mutterloge zu den drei Weltkugeln* (GL 3WK, Grand National Mother Lodge to the Three Globes) in Berlin has repeatedly stated in response to inquiries from America that there is nothing in their archives to indicate any such connection between Frederick II and the AASR.

Now recently in Germany information has been gathered which relativizes these views. Indeed, in the time when the Scottish Rite began to form in first outlines, the contacts of Frederick II with the mother lodge 3WK, initiated by him in 1740, had largely broken off. However, there were other, partly close relations to masonic persons and organizations (especially the *Afrikanische Bauherren* / African Builders), which are obviously not depicted in the archives of the GL 3WK and which have hardly been the subject of research in Germany until today. These contacts are interwoven with the political ambitions of Frederick II after the end of the Seven Years' War and point first indirectly via Bordeaux, later via Paris and then directly to the (Masonic) representatives of the American independence movement. Admittedly, there is nothing to suggest that Frederick II himself actively contributed anything to the founding of the AASR. But that confidants from his closest environment and with his knowledge were active in the beginnings of the Scottish Rite also with – supposed or actual – royal legitimacy, can be shown in the meantime.

The presentation is to give an overview of the today known, new circumstantial evidence in this only at the beginning standing question.