

Templar Daggers

by **Sir Knight Michael S. Franck**

My eyes did a double take while thumbing through the May 2010 issue of Knight Templar. For history and regalia buffs including myself, the Templar dagger article written by Dr. Richard Van Doren is well researched and very informative. Templar daggers from the late 1800s and early 1900s are rare indeed. They're seldom seen and known to our present-day knights. Back then, these daggers were an optional part of a Knight's uniform. Originally, the dagger shown in the right-bottom corner of page 22 of the May 2010 issue was available from the manufacturer, Ames Sword Company, with a scabbard that hooked to the knight's belt. Due to its weight and size, this type of dagger was worn as a short sword that hung from the belt in a vertical position. Even rarer, is the dagger shown on page 25 of that issue. This dagger was worn in a diagonal position that adorned the uniform's baldric. If you look closely at the photo of the Sir Knight on this page (engagement above), the dagger's scabbard has either a hidden clip, or as shown is partially tucked behind the belt to help hold it in place.

Several years ago I purchased two daggers from an auction house on the East coast. The ivory handle dagger is typical like the one shown on page 22 of the May issue. This particular item came from M.C. Lilley and Company in Columbus, Ohio, which dates it from 1923 to 1925. Its blade, like most daggers and swords, was manufactured in Solingen, Germany. The other dagger has a shark-skin handle wrapped in braided brass wire and includes a triangle on the hand guard that matches the black and silver baldric that accompanied its purchase. After studying this dagger in some detail, I question if it was an actual accessory that came from a regalia manufacturer. To date, I have not seen another dagger like it within the regalia realm of that period. If anyone has any information regarding its authenticity, please write to me. The other baldric shown with gold trim includes a four inch dagger that hangs to the side, just below the knight's waistline. Both of these baldrics, including dagger, sword, and Templar aprons are prized by collectors today.

As a side note, older uniforms like the one shown are now coming out of storage and being worn by our recent knights at Detroit Commandery No 1. While worn in the commandery's asylum during ritual, their presence highlights a nostalgic interest in the Masonic Knights Templar from an era gone by.

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