



Othello Lodge

No 5670 E. C.

FAMAGUSTA - CYPRUS

Consecrated

17th February 1938

W. Bro. Rev. T. S. MEVILL

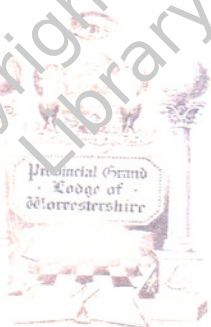
P.A.D. CHAP.

Hoping you enjoyed your
short visit to our
ancient temple and
surroundings

K. Brown

W.M.

14/5/63



A
SHORT
HISTORY
OF
THE
TWIN CHURCHES OF
KNIGHTS TEMPLARS
(AD. 1300)
&
KNIGHTS HOSPITALLERS
(AD. 1450)
and of
OTHELLO LODGE 5670, E.C.

1963.



View of the Churches at western end from Kishla Street.



Master's Chair in 'E' of HOSPITALERS CHURCH.



View Inside Templars Church looking West.

Brief History of the Orders of the TEMPLARS & HOSPITALLERS

Long before the first Crusade was launched there had been an organisation of Christian volunteers who looked after Pilgrims coming from the West to worship at the shrines of the Holy Land, and particularly at the Holy Sepulchre. They organised Guest-houses and Hospitals as centres for the wounded and where the sick could be healed.

Shortly after the capture of Jerusalem (1099) these volunteers began to take more regular form. Their work increased as also did their revenue which led to them organising themselves as a regular Order, the KNIGHTS HOSPITALLERS, with regular rules; they also took the three vows of Monks - poverty, chastity and obedience; and they therefore became celibate and had the advantage of wielding their capital in mass as a whole. They wore a distinctive dress or habit as Monks and this was worn over their armour, a black coat of arms to cover the mail and a white cross sewn thereon.

The individual members of this corporation had no private fortune as all was placed in one central fund to devote to pilgrims, to rid the roads of robbers, and to help where necessary side by side with the mounted nobility and the footmen in the fighting.

Later another body branched out from the original 'HOSPITALLERS' and within a quarter of a century of the capture of Jerusalem, they had also obtained regular status and an endowment was granted them by the king of Jerusalem of the Temple enclosure for their special quarters.

This Order from thence became known as the KNIGHTS TEMPLARS, and from the outset being combatant, they acquired a higher prestige than the parent

body of the HOSPITALLERS, from whom they sprang. Their surcoat was white with a red cross thereon.

They arranged for the disembarkation at the ports of the great numbers who came to the Holy Land and made arrangements for their return. They continually handled money apart from the large income from the feudal dues or their lands. The power and endowments of both Orders rapidly increased: large endowments were left to them by will or given to them during the lifetime of the donors and they rapidly acquired great wealth.

Their independence of any feudal or Ecclesiastical superior, except the Papacy, their undying incorporate existence and the spirit and traditions of discipline, together with their singular isolation gave them great strength and a power and permanence unparalleled in the Holy Land, and enabled them to survive for generations the age of the Crusades and to inspire successors in the defence of Christendom against Islam, in Cyprus, Rhodes and finally in Malta.

THE TEMPLARS.

In the year 1190 soon after King Richard Coeur de Lion had wrested the Island of Cyprus from its last Byzantine ruler, Isaac Comnenus, Richard realising how troublesome and difficult it would be for him to keep and rule his new possessions which lay so far from his European dominions, deciding upon an offer which had been made to him by the now wealthy KNIGHTS TEMPLARS sold the Island to them for 100,000 Be-sants.

The TEMPLARS by their heavy exactions whereby they sought to recoup themselves of the purchase money, and the harshness of an alien rule generally, soon made the native population of Cyprus revolt against them.

A rising was planned for Easter Sunday 1191, but the Knights being informed of the people's avenging plans, which aimed at their complete elimination from the country, shut themselves up in their Castle at Nicosia where they were besieged by the insurgents.

To avoid death from famine they offered to come to terms with the besiegers on condition that their lives be spared and they should be allowed to retire to Syria. On this offer being rejected they decided to sally forth from the Castle to die with sword in hand rather than become the victims of hunger and plague.

Accordingly one morning at daybreak, after having confessed and taken communion, they came out to attack their foes, who being unaware of the sally, and becoming panic-stricken, were unable to collect themselves and offer any resistance.

The insurgents' defeat was complete and the few remaining survivors of the first slaughter took to flight to save themselves. The Orthodox Churches of the town became their places of refuge but they were pursued even thither by the infuriated Knights who sprinkled the altars of these sanctuaries with the blood of their victims regardless of age or sex.

The TEMPLARS, now realising how troublesome a possession they had acquired, approached King Richard who agreed to take back the Island and refund the purchase money to the TEMPLARS, though the latter retained several properties (Commandaries) in the Island. Nearly eighty years elapsed before the Order of the KNIGHTS TEMPLARS again set foot in the Island although it had not become dispossessed of its former possessions during this period.

When King HUGH III succeeded to the throne of Cyprus in 1267, the Order again came to the fore, but being opposed from the outset to the King's rule they gave support to the claims of the King's Aunt MARIE, the daughter of BOEMOND IV, Prince of Antioch, who

on failing to enlist the sympathy of the court of Rome to her cause, transferred her rights to Charles of Anjou for a fixed monetary annuity. Another demonstration of the disrespect of the Knights for HUGH was the purchase of a fief from one of his vassals, which at once became the cause of HUGH returning from Acre to Cyprus. The Grand Master of the TEMPLARS taking advantage of the absence of the King from Acre and having come to an understanding with King Charles, who thought the time had come for him to assert his rights, let the Neapolitan King's Sicilian Commander into the Citadel. Charles was in this way proclaimed King of Jerusalem.

HUGH on hearing the news went to Tyre with the intention of regaining possession of Acre but was opposed by the Grand Master and returned to Cyprus. To avenge himself for the conduct of the Order he destroyed their fortified establishments at Gasteria, Limassol and Paphos, and all their property throughout the Island was confiscated and retained until the year 1282.

A reconciliation between the TEMPLARS and the reigning family in Cyprus was brought about by King HENRY in 1286, the year after the death of Charles, and when Acre fell in 1291 the fraternity was allowed once again to settle in Cyprus at Limassol.

Although the Cypriot King had granted asylum to the TEMPLARS he never ceased to keep a vigilant eye on them and his mistrust grew as their power and wealth increased. In order to prevent them becoming too powerful and independent the King decreed that no landed property should be acquired by them without his prior sanction. This, together with a resolution by the King to provide funds for the defence of the realm by the imposition of a tax on all residents, displeased both the Clergy and the members of the Order.

The intervention of the Pope, to whom an appeal

had been made against the new measures, proved in the end to be ineffective.

Soon afterwards the Order had its revenge for in the struggle between Henry and his brother AMAURY, Prince of Tyre and Constable of Jerusalem, Jacques de MOLAY, Grand Master of the TEMPLARS gave his support to the latter. Henry was defeated and Amaury was proclaimed Regent ; one of the signatories to the deed of Regency was de MOLAY himself.

Famagusta now became the richest port in Christendom. Here the Order owned vast possessions and it was here they built in the 13th century their Church of Saint Anthony.

The growing power and ambition of the Order led to friction with the King and in 1308 the order was dissolved and its property handed over to the rival Order of the HOSPITALLERS, and many members of its ranks joined those of the latter order.

It is said that the ill will which the Grand Master bore Henry was actuated by the desire to seize the Island and restore it to the Order. More than one version as to the reasons for the dissolution and complete suppression of the Order has been handed down by mediaeval chroniclers. The Cypriot Macheras, who wrote his chronicles in the vernacular of his time, attributes its extermination to the licentiousness of the members who offended against the Christian code of morality.

Others have a different story to tell and place the cause to the tactlessness and inconsiderate conduct of de Molay who not only refused to accede to the request of the King of France and the Pope, Clement V, to pardon the Treasurer of the Order for certain breaches of trust committed by him, but greatly offended the latter by throwing into the fire a written appeal addressed to him on the matter.

De Molay was arrested in Paris in 1307 and the next year the Pope sent a letter to Amaury directing the

immediate arrest of the Knights and the preparation of an inventory of their property in the Island.

Amaury to gain favour in the eyes of the Holy See obeyed the Papal order and sent BALIAN d'Ibelin, the Prince of Galilee to Limassol to request the Knights to deliver their horses and arms and proceed to Nicosia.

Hemo d'Usellet, the Marshal of the Order, despite the threat that force would be employed in bringing about obedience to the Regent's orders, asked for an opportunity to discuss the matter before coming to a decision. The result of the conference was a flat refusal to deliver their arms and horses. He offered however to hold their estates and revenues at the disposal of the Pope and went to the extent of condescending to affix his seal to the treasury provided it would not be taken out of their possession, and that they were ready to reside in appointed villages under his Knights' surveillance till they had a reply to the petition they intended to address to His Holiness the Pope. They protested their true faith in the Catholic Church and appealed to the memory of their past services to the King, but to no avail for Amaury was determined to see that the orders of the Pope were fully carried out.

On Balian d'Ibelin reporting their conditional refusal to surrender their horses and arms, he issued a proclamation prohibiting, under forfeiture of life and property, the acceptance of service under the Order and the raising of troops on its behalf. He also sent a canon of St. Sophia in Nicosia to Limassol urging them to obey the order.

The TEMPLARS again refused and sent back word to say they would present themselves to Amaury later and that in any case ambassadors should be sent to Rome to ascertain the Pope's wishes in the matter. But the Regent still dissatisfied with their evasive reply sent another emissary, a canon from the Chapter of St. Nicholas at Famagusta charged with the same mission.

Meanwhile a conference took place at the village of Nisou, about 11 miles from Nicosia, between certain high officials representing the Regent and emissaries of the TEMPLARS, at which it was agreed they would be admitted to Amaury's presence.

They thereupon proceeded to Nicosia and entered the Royal Palace where a very distinguished assembly of church and state dignitaries and officials gathered to receive them. Their Marshal, as his first act, delivered a written declaration setting out the true faith professed by the fraternity and proceeded to take an oath affirming its contents.

While this was going on at Nicosia, secret orders were given to the troops to occupy Limassol. At the same time the Viscount of Nicosia acting on behalf of Amaury together with the Prior of the HOSPITALERS and representatives of the Franciscan and Dominican Orders proceeded to take an inventory of the property possessed by the fraternity in the capital, but although the inquisition was thorough, even their chapel being searched, vestments and books entered in the lists, nothing much was found as everything of value had been removed to Limassol.

Similar inventories were taken of their property at Paphos and Famagusta, as well as in villages owned by them, and over the revenue of which official receivers were appointed by the Regent.

On the completion of the Nicosia inventory the commission of enquiry left for Limassol, whither had gone also those members of the fraternity who had taken part in the conference with Amaury at Nicosia.

The troops who had been sent to occupy Limassol blockaded the town, thus preventing the escape of any of the Knights, who then retreated to their strongholds in the town, and all attempts by the Knights to engage the forces of the Regent in battle failed.

On the eve of June 1, the soldiers of the King of

Tyre encircled the fortress. Seeing that all resistance would in the long run prove ineffective they delivered their arms and horses to the Royal Troops, who also took possession of all their belongings.

They were then divided into two parties ; the one being taken to Khirokitia and the other to Yermasoyia but certain of the chiefs, for reasons of greater safety were later taken to Lefkara where they were kept in custody under a strong guard. They were subsequently transferred to Khirokitia and from thence were taken to their convent at Famagusta, for on the assassination of Amaury it was feared by Henry II's partisans that the Constable of Cyprus might attempt to set them free and add their numbers to those of his supporters.

The Marshal of the Order having become involved in the conspiracy against the King was imprisoned at Kyrenia where he died after five years of captivity, and was buried in St. Antonio's Church which lay on the outskirts of the town.

The same fate befell many other members of the Order while some entered the ranks of the rival Order of the HOSPITALLERS of St. John. By a Papal Bill the latter Order acquired in the Island over fifty villages, bailiwicks and manors which had previously been the property of the TEMPLARS.

THE HOSPITALLERS

The order appears on the scene in Cyprus for the first time during the reign of Amaury, the brother and successor of the founder of the Lusignan dynasty in the country.

Amaury was absent in Palestine fighting the Saracens, and the Emperor of Constantinople, Alexious III, was preparing to wrest the Island from the Latins, when Pope Innocent III formed an alliance of Frankish

Princes ruling in the neighbourhood, in which the HOSPITALLERS participated. The Master of the Hospital, Geoffrey Lerat, sent troops to garrison the fortresses in the Island, which they retained till Amaury's death.

After the fall of Acre they were given Limassol to share with the TEMPLARS, and which they held in joint occupation with them till 1310, the year of the occupation of Rhodes.

The reasons for their departure from Cyprus and their establishment in the neighbouring Island are many and varied. The enmity between the Master of the Hospital and Amaury, who after ousting his brother and usurping the Island's Regency, tried to make him his tool, was certainly one of the principal causes.

But even after their departure they continued to concern themselves with affairs of Cyprus. Thus in the year 1343 they joined the League that had been formed for the defence of Cyprus by Henry IV with Clement VI, the Republic of Venice, and the Seigneur of Milo.

This alliance which was continually renewed, rendered valuable assistance to the Kings of Cyprus in their strenuous efforts to guard their Kingdom against attacks of the surrounding enemies of the Cross.

The Order took a prominent part in the siege of Alexandria and its capture by King Peter I, and its influence made itself manifest in the political life throughout the Island.

The Order was next involved in the unhappy struggle between Queen Charlotte and her half brother Jacques. Their support of Charlotte brought them against the Republic of Venice and in order to avoid conflict with this great sea-power of the times, after the commencement of the Venetian domination of Cyprus, they refrained from taking any active part in its political or other affairs.

Since the establishment of a Frankish Kingdom in Cyprus, and the appearance of the Order on the scene, the fraternity received at different times many favours from the occupants of the Throne of Cyprus ; they were allowed to own landed property, to export their produce to Syria or elsewhere free of duty, to mill their corn free of charge at the Royal mills of Kythrea, etc. HUGH as a demonstration of the high esteem in which he held the religion, willed that his remains be interred in the Church of their convent in Nicosia where the body of his Royal consort was also laid to rest.

On the dissolution of the Order of the Knights **TEMPLARS** the whole of their property was transferred to the **HOSPITALLERS**. From the lists compiled about the end of the XVth century they appeared to be in possession of fortyseven villages. But the number must have been greater as the names of those villages they acquired from the **TEMPLARS** are omitted. These villages were principally situated in the district of the Viscount of Limassol, Evdhymou, Kilani and Paphos.

They were divided into three Commanderies over each of which was placed one of the brethren with the title of Commander. (a) The Grand Commandery, (b) The Little Commandery, and (c) The Commandery of Phinika.

The Grand Commandery had its headquarters at Kolossi, where the Knights built a tower adorned with armorial bearings of various Grand Masters or Grand Commanders. It comprised the villages of Mera, Chieghliachia, Achiera, Clonari, Mavrovounos, Lanida or Sanida Messorini, Armenorchori, San Constantino, Acurzios, Apsios, Iratovi Gerasia, Nostra Dona de Legorna, Geramasoyia, San Zorri, Vigla, Micero, Agriodada, Sanszache, Monagrulli, Ville, Laturi, Rucopa, Colossa, Paramali, Erimi, Angastiana, Eptagona, Agropia, Glossa, Kato Moni, Vassa.

Lagora Cheirochitia, San Paulo, Igna, Mathikoloni, Asomatos, Moranemos.

The little Commandery or Commandery of Templos comprised Andruclioti, Camares, Chira, Dierona, Gastria, Kato Deftera, Livichi, Mallurena, Paleochori, Pardi, Psimolofo, San Roy, Sikopetra and Trachoni.

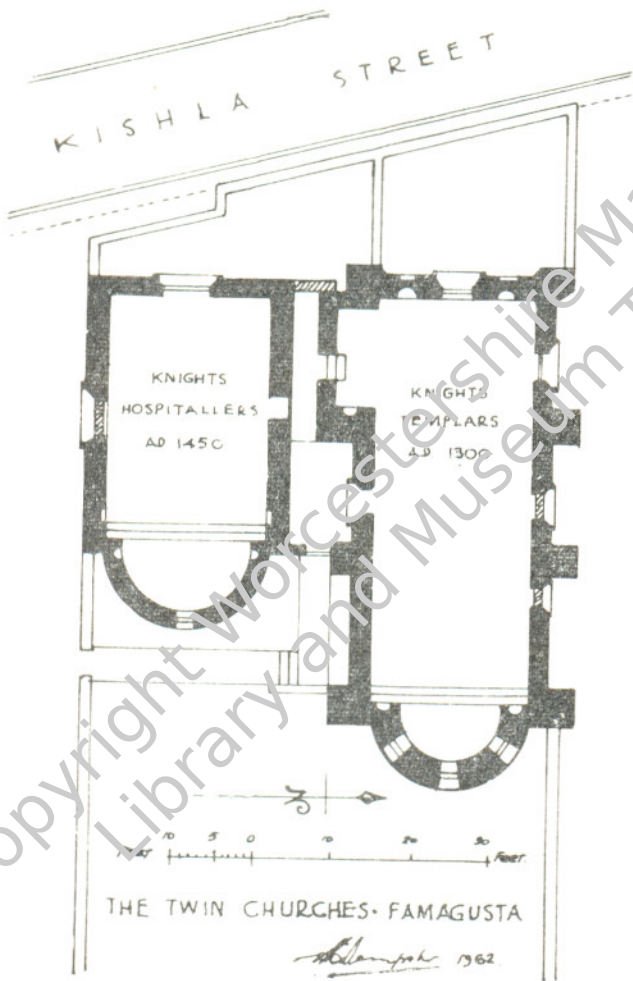
The Commandaria of Phinika consisted of the villages of Phinika, Santo Erini, Anaira, Platanisso and Caloianacchia.

The sojourn of the HOSPITALLERS in Cyprus lasted only until 1310 when they migrated to Rhodes but they retained their properties in the Island, including their headquarters at Kolossi, whose Castle with its massive keep stands to this day

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THE TWIN CHURCHES

As has already been recorded there had been an organisation of Christian volunteers in the Holy Land, which after the capture of Jerusalem in 1099 became a regular Order to be known as the Knights HOSPITALERS.

At the same time also another body branched from the HOSPITALERS, and having obtained regular status and the endowment of the Temple enclosure as their special quarters, by the King of Jerusalem, this body or Order became known as the Knights TEMPLARS and as combatants they acquired a higher prestige than the parent Order of the HOSPITALERS.

On the fall of Acre, the Crusaders' last stronghold in the Holy Land in 1291, the Order of the TEMPLARS moved to Limassol near which was its Commandery at Kolossi. Famagusta had now become the richest port in Christendom. Here the Order owned vast possessions and here in the 13th century they built their Church of Saint Anthony.

The growing power and ambition of this Order which led to friction with the King, resulted in the Order being dissolved in 1308 and their property handed over to the rival Order of the HOSPITALERS.

They like the TEMPLARS acquired many privileges and possessions and in the year 1450 in Famagusta, the HOSPITALERS Church, smaller but higher in roof and floor level, was built close alongside that erected by the TEMPLARS not so long before.

These two Churches, at one point only one metre apart are known as the "TWIN CHURCHES".

In the early 16th century Kolossi, which had been the centre of the **TEMPLARS** and **HOSPITALLERS** passed to the Cornaro family and the Turkish conquest of 1570 began a period of desolation. The **TWIN CHURCHES** are believed to have been used occasionally as praying places but for many years past they had been used as store rooms. All doors and windows except one door in the west of each building were closed. In the course of time the ground outside became raised from 3 to 7 feet above its former level. The floors were raised accordingly but not to the same extent, and barriers were built at the west doors to keep out flood water. Meanwhile, hovels had been built on the adjoining land to the east right against the Apses of the Churches.

Of the **TWIN CHURCHES** the following extract from page 23 of the **CHURCHES OF THE TEMPLE AND THE HOSPITAL - "CYPRUS MONUMENTS, HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL BUILDINGS"** by G. Jeffery, O.B.E., F.S.A., is of some interest:

The Churches of the Temple and the Hospital, Famagusta.

Enlart ('L'Art Gothique en Chypre', 1899) devotes considerable space to these two little churches, and defines their dates as c. 1300 for the Temple Church and c. 1450 for the later building. In 1308 all the properties of the Order of the Temple were transferred to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and this accounts for the Hospitallers' Church having been built on the Templar property — the older church having apparently been turned into a storehouse called 'VOLTA TEMPLI'. De Simoni, Actes Genoïis 1884.

The method of construction of the two buildings also defines their respective dates; the volta templi is

TOWER) had stimulated these activities. The members of OTHELLO LODGE and the promoters of the Preceptory between them raised a sum of £65 as a subscription towards the Department's work. With this sum the original windows were re-opened and their tracery reconstructed or copied afresh on the model of surviving windows. Ambries (or recesses) in the east were opened up, the floor excavated and lowered to its original level bringing to view the true proportions of the building and the opposed doorways—in the south of the TEMPLARS and the north of the HOSPITALLERS' churches - were opened up to form a communication between the two, hidden from the road on the west and from the yard on the east by screen walls.

The main doorway in the north of the TEMPLARS' Church was also reopened and reconstructed and a modern wall blocking a western gable demolished as well as a modern reconstruction of an Altar in the HOSPITALLERS' Church.

Government had estimated that it would cost £1,000 to make complete re-conditioning of the two churches. It was hoped that Grand Priory might see its way clear to giving or advancing this sum to recover these unique buildings for the order which originally erected them, and for Masonry in general—the last being quite a distinct matter from the formation of a Preceptory.

The terms of an agreement to use the churches under licence of the Antiquities Department of Government were drawn up and approved, and OTHELLO LODGE agreed to pay rent if the buildings were made available to them. Grand Priory was unable to accede to proposals put to them and the question of a general appeal—possibly to American Masons—was considered.

Meanwhile the Antiquities Department continue to work with such sums as become available to them from time to time.



ENTRANCE TO OTHELLO'S TOWER

[Signature]
1962

OTHELLO LODGE 5670 E.C.

OTHELLO LODGE 5670, E.C., on the register of the United Grand Lodge of England was consecrated on Thursday, 17th day of February, AL 5938, AD.1938, by the Most Worshipful, The Right Honourable the Earl of HAREWOOD, K.G., G.C.V.O., D.S.O., Pro Grand Master, who was assisted by Wor Bro. Major C.W. COWELL, P.A.G. Supt.Wks., O.R., Wor Bro. B.S.SUMMER, P.A.G.D.C., Wor Bro. The Revd. J.F. ANDERSON, P.Dist. G. Chaplain (Egypt & Sudan), V. Wor Bro. C.R.NICHOLLS, G.D.C., Wor Bro. A. ELDON-SCOTT, P.D.G.W., Bro. GW. HOLLINGS and Wor.Bro. J. CHRISTOFIDES.

Also present were 19 Founder Members of the Lodge, The Grand Marshal of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, The Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Greece, The Grand Inspector of the Grand Lodge of Greece, two Officers of District Grand Rank, 23 Past Masters of various private lodges, and 67 Brethren of various private lodges, making a total of 123 Members of the Craft.

The Lodge was consecrated in the Grand Hall of OTHELLO'S TOWER within the walls of the old town of Famagusta, which had been given by permission under licence of the Government and the Antiquities Department.

Fourteen well known Brethren donated useful gifts to the Lodge among which were a Master's Gavel from the Pro Grand Master, the Earl of HAREWOOD, K.G., etc., a set of Ashlars of which the following is recorded in the Minutes of the consecration ceremony:-

ASHLARS
FROM
THE ROYAL QUARRIES OF SOLOMON.

Presented by
W Bro C. W. COWELL, P.A.G Supt WKS, (Eng.).
to

OTHELLO LODGE No. 5670, FAMAGUSTA.

These Ashlars are from the vast underground quarries which lie below the walled city of Jerusalem and are adjacent to the Temple Area.

2. The stone is a crystalline limestone known as "Mizzi-hilu" and when dressed, frequently reveals many traces of sea shells and fossils. It takes an excellent polish and the general effect might well have inspired Josephus to describe the Holy Temple as "glistening in the sun like a mound of snow".

3. The "Sakhras", the threshing floor bought by King David, formed the actual summit of the holy Mount Moriah, and was the great stone altar at which King Solomon led Israel in praise at the wonderful dedication of God's House. The "Sakhras" is still venerated alike by Jew, Christian and Moslem and is of the same calcareous formation.

4. Some of the caverns are capable of holding 500 persons. The floors are 15 feet deep in lime-stone chippings, reminders of the labours of countless craftsmen of by-gone days; and all around are seen remains of their work — huge half-hewn blocks 10 ft. x 6 ft. x 4 ft.; inches for the earthenware lamps, even hewn water cisterns, the scattered remains of vessels, pottery, and the like. The stones after being hewn, squared, polished, marked by skilful craftsmen and watchful overseers, were hauled down the Tyropean Valley, thence to be hoisted up to the proper places in the in-

tended structure—that great edifice which King Solomon built to the glory of the G.A.O.T.U.

5. These stones were hewn under the supervision of the members of the Lodge of King Solomon's Temple No. 4611, consecrated at Jerusalem by the Grand Secretary, R W Bro. Sir Colville Smith, C.V.O., the first English lodge in the Holy Land ; W Bro Cowell, being the first Master.

6. On the occasion of the dedication of the Grand Temple on July 19 1933, this lodge had the privilege of presenting to the Grand Lodge of England a similar pair of Ashlars, rough and smooth, for each of the sixteen lodge rooms in the new Grand Temple in London.

17th February, AD,1938, AL.5938.

Wor Bro. W H A. PHILLIPS, the first Master of OTHELLO LODGE held his first meeting (an emergency meeting) on the 25th day of February, AL.5938, (AD.1938), when the first initiation ceremony in Othello Lodge was performed.

The question of moving the venue of the Lodge from OTHELLO'S Tower to the 'Twin Churches' appears to have been raised soon afterwards for at a Lodge Meeting held on 1st September, 1938 the following is recorded in the minutes :- "That consideration of the lease of the 'Twin Churches' be given — to which the W.M. replied that as several members of the Lodge were at present in England, one or two of whom were in touch with Grand Lodge regarding the question of removal of the Lodge premises to the 'Twin Churches' this matter would be left in abeyance until such time as these members returned to Cyprus."

In the meantime a fund had been started for the purpose of this move and in the minutes of a meeting of 15th January, 1939 the Lodge approved a motion to pay £25 per annum rent if the 'Twin Churches' were made available. On 1st February, 1940 the W.M.

raised the question of the progress of work on the 'Twin Churches'; and at a meeting on 7th March 1940 a sum of money was approved 'to provide a screen and shelving for the Regalia of the Lodge.

At a meeting on 7th September, 1939 information had been received from Grand Lodge of England of the formation of a Cyprus Group of Lodges and that the Grand Master had been pleased to appoint Wor Bro Canon NEWHAM, P.A.G.C., O.R., as the first Grand Inspector of Cyprus Lodges,

The first meeting of OTHELLO LODGE in the 'Twin Churches' took place on 5th September, 1940, when a special dispensation given by the Grand Inspector was read authorising the move to the 'Twin Churches' — "as OTHELLO'S TOWER had been taken over by the Military Authorities."

In late 1941 the Lodge again had to move owing to repairs which were being carried out in the Twin Churches and meetings from September, 1941 to March, 1942 were held in the 'MOSQUE OF THE TANNERS' nearby. Meetings were happily resumed in April, 1942 in the Twin Churches when the business of the evening was the installation ceremony of the new Master for the year 1942/1943.

Meetings have continued regularly in the Twin Churches since that date, apart from one occasion in 1959 and one in 1960 when flood waters again entered the 'TEMPLARS' Church to a height of about 3 feet in 1959 and in 1960 much higher, the floor on this occasion being some 5 feet to 6 feet under mud and water for a considerable time. This latter occasion caused much distress and some loss of Regalia and equipment. For a period of two months the premises were untenable and the meetings of the Lodge were held in the Masonic Rooms in Nicosia.

The two Churches have been adapted to the needs of the Lodge by using the Church of the TEMPLARS

as an Assembly Hall, and for festive occasions, while the smaller Church of the HOSPITALLERS is used as the Temple.

The entrance to the Lodge is from Kishla Street on the west, thence by a narrow street or alley along the South wall of the HOSPITALLERS' Church, through a gate in a low wall at the east end and then through the south door of the Church of the TEMPLARS (see plan p. 15)

A temporary wooden screen which was erected across and below the steps to the apse of the TEMPLARS' Church, near the entrance serves the needs of the Lodge in the preparation of meals for the Festive Board without interrupting the use of the main part of the Hall for general use or assembly. Temporary wooden screens have also been erected across the inside of the west doors in each church and in two of the doors in the north wall of the TEMPLARS' Church, though these doors are permanently closed on the outside with stone.

Plain whitewood trestle tables of the Refectory type and backless white wooden benches are the simple but appropriate furniture for the festive board. There are also a few benches of the pew type in the Temple.

The addition of electric lighting of course was a necessity but in no way spoils the beauty of these delightful buildings, even though it is of a temporary nature.

During the year 1956 there was a move to form a new Lodge, principally by Brethren of the Military Fraternity, some of whom had joined OTHELLO LODGE and some who were frequent visitors, the idea being that OTHELLO LODGE be the 'Mother' Lodge for the purpose; the matter was however dropped after a short while. This resulted in a marked increase in the membership of OTHELLO LODGE as some 30 Masons joined, when the proposals to form a new Lodge were withdrawn.

The present membership of OTHELLO LODGE (October, 1962) is 132 members, of which there are 73 members resident in Cyprus, and 46 living overseas. There are also 4 Honorary Members of the Lodge in addition to the above.

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PROPOSAL FOR A.K.T. PRECEPTORY IN CYPRUS.

A report on proposals for the foundation of a K.T. Preceptory in Cyprus reads as follows :-

In 1937 certain resident members of the Order conceived the project of founding a Preceptory in Cyprus, to serve not only the Island, but the whole of the Near East.

Originally it was contemplated that it should be in OTHELLO'S TOWER in Famagusta—soon afterwards adapted for use by the OTHELLO LODGE of Freemasons. When however the Pro Grand Master and other Grand Lodge Officers visited Famagusta to consecrate OTHELLO LODGE in 1938, they were of the opinion that the building was unsuitable for Masonic Purposes,—tying and preparation of candidates being the main difficulty—and a search was made for more suitable premises and this led to the discovery of the delightful 'TWIN CHURCHES', one built by the Knights TEMPLARS in 1300 and the other by the Knights HOSPITALLERS in 1450, and both dedicated to Saint Anthony.

Concurrently the proposal for the Preceptory went forward. The names of Em.Kt. C C GARBETT and Canon NEWHAM were added to the original list of seven founder members. After a discussion of various alternatives, the name 'KOLOSSI' was agreed upon, the Petition submitted and the fees paid.

It had been hoped that the Preceptory might be consecrated in the spring of 1940 by a deputation from Grand Priory—the Preceptory meeting in Nicosia, pending the question and a decision of the 'TWIN CHURCHES', or occasionally at Kolossi Castle. The state of the buildings, however, was found to preclude any alterations and all action in regard to the Preceptory forced into abeyance owing to the War. It would appear it was never revived.

The compiler of this monograph wishes to acknowledge the assistance received from various Brethren who have helped in producing this book.

January 1963

(V.A.E. Dempster, P.M.)

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