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How secret was the Templar admission ceremony?
Evidence from the proceedings in Britain and Ireland ¹

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The eighty-eight charges against the Templars which were used as the basis of interrogations in the proceedings against the Templars in Britain and Ireland, 1309-11, included the charge that admissions into the Order were secret, and that only brothers of the order were present.

Item xxxvj' quod recepciones fratrum suorum clamdestine fiebant.

Item xxxvij' quod nullis presentibus nisi fratribus dicti ordinis.²

Outside these islands, there is some evidence that outsiders could attend Templar admission ceremonies. Often cited is the example of the German Templar arrested and interrogated within France, who stated that in Germany honest, respectable outsiders could attend.³ However, all the Templars within Britain and Ireland testified that only Templars attended *receptiones*, although some qualified their statements. But was this true? The evidence actually given by the Templars and non-Templars suggests that some of them had attended admission ceremonies before becoming full members of the Order.

¹ This paper is based on the introduction to the English translation of my edition *The Proceedings against the Templars in the British Isles*, vol. 2 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. xxi–xxii, li–liii.

² Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 454, fol. 8r, printed in *The Proceedings against the Templars in the British Isles*, ed. Helen J. Nicholson, vol. 1 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 13.

³ Malcolm Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 70, citing Hans Prutz, *Entwicklung und Untergang des Tempelherrenordens* (Berlin: G. Grote'sche, 1888), p. 327; also mentioned by Jonathan Riley-Smith, 'Were the Templars Guilty?', in *The Medieval Crusade*, ed. Susan J. Ridyard (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), pp. 107-24, here p. 115.

I have argued in my introduction to the proceedings against the Templars in Britain and Ireland that we cannot take at face value any of the evidence given by the Templars during the proceedings against them. The evidence I shall set out in this article may simply reinforce this conclusion. However, it will also indicate that if the Templars' testimonies are factual in this respect the Templars' admission ceremonies probably were not secret: even though the brothers in Britain and Ireland claimed that they were.

Let us first consider those few testimonies which indicate that non-Templars could be present at part of the admissions ceremony. Brother William Raven, in his initial testimony, given without being put on oath, stated that when he was received into the Order at dawn in the chapel of Temple Combe around five years previously, around 100 secular persons had been present:

presentibusque circiter Centum personis secularium, circa horam prime, in capella loci eiusdem

but that when he made the vows, only brothers of the Order were present:

*Dixit eciam quod istud iuramentum factum fuit in capella predicta presentibus dumtaxat fratribus de ordine et uno presbitero dicti ordinis.*⁴

However, when he was interrogated on oath he did not mention the outsiders and agreed that the charges were true:

*Item interrogatus super xxx^{to}vj qui sic incipit, Item quod recepciones, et xx^oxvij^o articulis: respondit vera esse que in articulis continentur.*⁵

⁴ MS Bodl. 454, fols 11v–12r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 20-21.

⁵ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 22r–v; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 39-40.

Brother Hugh of Tadcaster explained that brothers were received into the Order with only other Templars present, with doors open but guarded by a Templar so that secular persons could not enter:

*Item interrogatus super xxxvj¹⁰ qui sic incipit, Item quod recepciones, et xxxvij⁰ articulis: Respondit quod recipiuntur fratribus ordinis tantum presentibus et de die, ostiis apertis, tamen per fratrem ordinis custoditis ne seculares ingrediantur.*⁶

Brothers William of Chalesey and John of Newent confirmed that the doors were kept open:

Item interrogatus super xxxvj qui sic incipit, Item quod recepciones, et xxx⁰vij articulis, confitetur quod nullis presentibus nisi fratribus nec ostio clause;

*Item interrogatus super xxxvj et xxxvij articulis; contenta in dictis articulis confitetur; et dixit quod ostia fuerunt aperta.*⁷

If this were the case, outsiders would have been able to watch proceedings from outside the open doors. Clearly, in this context the interpretation of ‘*presentibus*’ was very narrow and applied only to those actually in the chapel – not those who could hear or see what was happening from outside. To judge from William Raven’s statement, it also applied only to a specific part of the ceremony, the taking of the vows.

A friar, Brother Richard of Bokingham, testified that around five years previously he had been at the Templars’ commandery of Faxfleet in Yorkshire at the time of an admission ceremony. He and his comrade waited with many other people (*multis alijs*) in the hall outside the chapel while the Templars held a chapter meeting and the admission ceremony in the chapel. After the meeting, Brother Richard entered the chapel and celebrated mass.⁸ It is possible, but was not recorded, that the others present were the family

⁶ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 25v; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 45.

⁷ MS Bodl. 454, fols 29r, 51r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 52, 97.

⁸ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 97r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, p. 200.

and friends of the candidate for admission, while Brother Richard had been invited specifically in order to celebrate mass after the ceremony. Geoffrey of Nafferton, a parish priest, also reported that he had celebrated mass for the Templars in connection with an admission ceremony, but in this case he celebrated mass at the beginning of proceedings, then left the chapel and waited in the hall outside while the admission took place.⁹

I have suggested elsewhere that a Templar admission ceremony took place in two stages, the first in a public space, such as the commandery hall, with family and friends of the applicant for admission present; then the Templars and the applicant proceeded into the chapel for the second part of the ceremony, with the door left open or closed and a Templar standing at the door to prevent non-Templars entering the chapel during the ceremony.¹⁰ In this way, William Raven could have had 100 guests at his admission to the Order, yet had none but Templars actually in the room when he made his vows. However, we should note that this suggestion is based on the evidence of only four Templars (out of 108 who gave evidence) and one friar (out of 179 non-Templars who gave evidence), so it is hardly conclusive.

It is interesting that none of the Templars in Britain and Ireland offered any reasoned explanation of why outsiders should have been excluded from admission ceremonies. The only suggestions they made were that it was required by the founders of the Order or by the Rule (which was false), or that it was because admission ceremonies formed part of chapter meetings, from which outsiders were excluded.¹¹ However, some Templars in the province of Canterbury knew that in fact admissions were not covered by the ban on discussing the proceedings of Chapter meetings.¹² This lack of reasoned explanation would suggest that the Templars had never questioned a ruling which – to judge from the non-Templar testimonies – would have caused considerable annoyance to their friends and relations. As the

⁹ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 99r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 205.

¹⁰ *Proceedings*, vol. 2, pp. xxi–xxii.

¹¹ MS Bodl. 454, fols 13r, 14v–15r, 17r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 22, 25, 29.

¹² John of Stoke or Sutton, MS Bodl. 454, fol. 43v; John of Stoke, priest, fol. 55r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 81, 104.

domicelli or young noblemen said during the proceedings in Scotland, the Templars' private admission ceremonies would have contrasted badly with the hospitable practices of other religious Orders:

*maxime cum viderint certos religiosos publice recipi ac + iam profiteri + in suis receptionibus + professionibus amicos, parentes + vicinos vocari + magnas solempnitates + convivia celebrari.*¹³

However, although the Templars insisted that chapter meetings were for Templars only, the non-Templar testimonies during the proceedings in England indicate that sometimes outsiders were present for at least part of the meeting.

Robert of Gowaardeby, a Templar corrodary,¹⁴ had worked as an agent for the Templars. He stated that he had twice attended the Templars' chapter meeting at Paris in connection with the accounting for the Templars' revenues, had seen Grand Master Jacques de Molay hold an assembly in England some eighteen years previously, had seen the Visitor, Hugh Peraud, when he came to England, and had seen him convene a chapter meeting; and he knew how instructions from the Grand Master and Convent on Cyprus regarding the transmission of money and other things to the East were conveyed to Templars in the West.¹⁵

Hugh of Ayesbury or Aylesbury knew how often the Grand Commander of England went to chapter meetings in France, had seen Brother Brian le Jay, Grand Commander of England 1296-8, go to a Chapter meeting in Poitou, and knew that the grand commanders brought back instructions from these chapters to the English brothers. He had also seen Hugh de Peraud, now Visitor of the Order, holding a chapter meeting at Dinsley after

¹³ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 158v; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 346.

¹⁴ 'Corrodia petita de domibus Templariorum, annis Io & Ilo Edwardi II', in *Documents Illustrative of English History in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries, selected from the Records of the Department of the Queen's Remembrancer of the Exchequer*, ed. Henry Cole (London: George E. Eyre and Andrew Spottiswoode, 1844), pp. 139-230 (edition of Kew: The National Archives: Public Record Office E 142/9), pp. 151, 152, 170.

¹⁵ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 94v; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 192.

Brian le Jay's death in 1298.¹⁶ Like Robert, Hugh held corrodies from the Templars, at their commanderies of Dinsley and Rothley.¹⁷

William le Dorturer, notary public of London, gave evidence about the timing of the Templars' chapter meetings, the secrecy of their admission ceremonies, and the Templars' punishments and absolutions of their servants, which suggests that he had witnessed such punishments.¹⁸ This was probably the same man as the William le Dorturer of Selborne, notary public, who worked at the New Temple, London, in 1303; and the same as the William le Dorturer who in 1306 had been granted a corrody by the Templars' annual chapter meeting in return for the faithful work he had for a long time done for the House.¹⁹

All of this evidence suggests that outsiders did attend Templar chapter meetings, even if only for part of the meeting, but that such attendance was limited to those who were highly trusted by the Templars and had a close relationship with the Order.

The Templars' own testimonies suggest that some of them had been present at admission ceremonies before they were themselves admitted as members of the order. John of Wergrave claimed that Thomas of Walkington had been present when he was admitted at Dinsley, in 1290 (twenty years before 31 March 1310) – although Thomas gave the date of his own admission as six years later.²⁰ Thomas did not mention that he had seen John of Wergrave admitted, instead claiming to have seen John of Wirkeley received, but that John did not mention him.²¹ Given the long periods of time in question, it would not be surprising if a Templar could not remember exactly who had been present at his admission, or which brothers he had seen received. Nevertheless, this raises the possibility that

¹⁶ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 94v; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 192.

¹⁷ 'Corrodia petita', ed. Cole, pp. 141, 145-6.

¹⁸ MS Bodl. 454, fols 60r, 98r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 113, 202.

¹⁹ C.R. Cheney, *Notaries Public in England in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 46, 127-8; 'Corrodia petita', ed. Cole, pp. 220-21; see also *Calendar of the Close Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office, prepared under the superintendence of the Deputy Keeper of the Records* (London: HMSO, 1892-1963), 1307-1313, p. 498a.

²⁰ MS Bodl. 454, fols 105r, 111v-112r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 219, 229.

²¹ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 119v; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, p. 247.

Thomas of Walkington could have been present at a Templar's admission before he himself was received into the Order.

One other Templar mentioned being present at an admission ceremony, or performing any other service, before joining the Order: Hugh of Tadcaster remarked that he had been *claviger* (manager of the house: literally 'keyholder') before being admitted as a brother of the Order, and that he had asked the master – presumably he meant the grand commander of England – to admit him as a brother: *dicit quod erat claviger in templo dum erat secularis et requisivit Magistrum ut eum reciperet in fratrem*.²² Non-Templar witnesses claimed that the *claviger* was responsible for locking the doors of the chapel at the start of a chapter meeting or of an admission ceremony, and then unlocking them at the end.²³ But how could the chapter meetings and admission ceremony have been kept secret, if the *claviger* were not a member of the Order? The Templar William of the Ford, and some of the non-Templar witnesses, stated that the *claviger* absolved lay servants of the Order from the sin of perjury (*peccato perjurii*), which was canonically unacceptable, as the *claviger* was not a priest – but would have been even more irregular if he were not even a member of the Order.²⁴ Admittedly, Hugh of Tadcaster did not tell the inquisitors what specific functions he performed for the Order of the Temple while he held the office of *claviger* but had not yet joined the Order. Perhaps he did not open and close the doors of the Chapter meeting. However, Richard of Newent, who had joined the Order 22 years before his interrogation at the start of April 1310, told the inquisitors that he had held the office of *claviger* in London and elsewhere for almost thirty years, and that he had absolved servants of the Order from transgressions against the house, using the words 'in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, say the Lord's prayer'.²⁵ This implies, although Richard did not actually state, that

²² MS Bodl. 454, fol. 12v; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, p. 21.

²³ MS Bodl. 454, fols 98r, 99r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 202-3, 205.

²⁴ MS Bodl. 454, fols 71r, 96v-98r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 135, 199, 201, 202.

²⁵ *Aliquando famulus domus transgreditur precepta domus prosternitur coram Clavigero et Claviger absolvit eum ab illa transgressione, dicendo 'in nomine Patris,' + cetera, 'Dicas pater noster'. Et hoc dicit se scire quia fuit Claviger fere*

he was carrying out this procedure before his formal admission to the Order.²⁶

There are also other examples. Alexander of Bulbeke entered the Order of the Temple sometime before November 1279.²⁷ Brother John of Coningston said that Alexander was present at his reception in 1273 (according to one manuscript),²⁸ or 1283 (according to the other).²⁹ In this case, the second date was presumably the correct one.

John of Eyglas (also called Eycle, Aykle and Eagle), was admitted to the Order before March 1290.³⁰ Robert of Cavill said that John was present at his admission in 1289.³¹ John may have slightly underestimated the length of time he had been in the Order, but as he had formerly held the office of *claviger* he could have attended Robert's admission in that capacity.³²

John of Walpole was admitted before April 1292. Richard of Casuyt said that John had been at his admission in spring 1291.³³ So, again, John probably underestimated his time in the Order by a year.

John of Wirkeley (also called Wirlee, Wirele, Werkelee, Wakeley and Wakerley), was admitted two years before the arrests: so, in December/January 1305-6.³⁴ William of Burton said that John was present at his admission four years before his interrogation in October 1309: so, October 1305.³⁵ So, John was a little inaccurate in how long he had been in

per xxxta annos, et ita ipse idem London' + alibi in diversis locis fecit (MS Bodl. 454, fol. 123v; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, p. 256).

²⁶ MS Bodl. 454, fols 107v (date of admission), 123v (acting as *claviger*); printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 223, 256.

²⁷ MS Bodl. 454, fols 52v–53r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, p. 100.

²⁸ MS Bodl 454, fol. 49r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, p. 93.

²⁹ London, British Library Cotton MS Julius B xii, fol. 79r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, p. 93.

³⁰ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 104r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 217.

³¹ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 130r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 274.

³² MS Bodl. 454, fol. 124v; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 259.

³³ MS Bodl. 454, fols 129r, 127r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 272, 267.

³⁴ MS Bodl 454, fol. 106v (*Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 222); see fol. 118v (p. 244) for Stephen of Burgundy and *Der Untergang des Templerordens mit urkundlichen und kritischen Beiträgen*, ed. Konrad Schottmüller, vol. 2 (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler & Sohn, 1887), p. 178, for his reception.

³⁵ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 27r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, p. 48.

the Order. But John himself said that he had seen no one admitted except for Stephen the Burgundian: he did not mention William.³⁶

Richard of Herdwick or Hardwick was admitted in 1289 or 1283.³⁷ William of Sautre, who was present, was admitted in 1284 or 1285.³⁸ So again the one of the scribes made a mistake, or William was present at an admission ceremony before he entered the Order.

Richard of Upleadon was admitted on 15 August 1280 or 1279. Among those present was William of Welles, who stated that he joined the Order in 1283; or, in one manuscript, 1293 – in either case, some years *after* he was present at this admission ceremony.³⁹

William of the Fenne was admitted at Shipley, 15 years before the date of his interrogation: so, 1295. However, Henry of Kerby said that William was present when he was admitted, 15 years before the arrests, so in winter 1292-3.⁴⁰

What can be deduced from these inconsistencies? It would certainly be unreasonable to assume that all the Templars had accurate memories over a period of over twenty years. Most of the discrepancies involve brothers who had been in the Order for a long time. There are other dates which must be incorrect because the receiving officer was not in England at the time, or did not hold office. For example, William of Cesterton said he was admitted in 1277 in England by Guy of Forest.⁴¹ Jochen Burgtorf has pointed out that this date is impossible, because in 1277 Guy of Forest was in the Holy Land as marshal of the Temple.⁴²

Alternatively, it is possible that some Templars were deliberately giving inaccurate information to the Inquisitors. In his confession on 1 July 1311,

³⁶ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 118v; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 244.

³⁷ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 30v; BL Cotton MS Julius B xii, fol. 72r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, p. 55.

³⁸ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 26r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, p. 46.

³⁹ MS Bodl. 454, fols 146r, 53v; BL Cotton MS Julius B xii, fol. 81v; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 315, 102.

⁴⁰ MS Bodl. 454, fols 125v, 126r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 262, 264.

⁴¹ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 52r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, p. 99.

⁴² Jochen Burgtorf, *The Central Convent of Hospitallers and Templars: History, Organization and Personnel (1099/1120-1310)* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 553; for other examples see *Proceedings*, vol. 2, p.li.

John of Stoke stated that Johannes de Sancto Georgio was present as a brother of the Temple at a ceremony in England in November 1293. But Johannes de Sancto Georgio, giving evidence in Cyprus, stated that he was admitted into the Order in 1300 – seven years after John of Stoke said he was a Templar in England.⁴³ John's testimonies were particularly unreliable.⁴⁴ I suggest that he simply lied, relying on the inquisitors not having the information to check his account. But in general the English Templars at least may have gone to some lengths to give a consistent account of themselves. According to the friar W. of Sinpringho', the Templar Roger le Norreis, commander of Temple Cressing, had shown him a letter from William de la More, grand commander of England, in which the grand commander gave instructions about the answers he should give under interrogation, and said that all the other Templars had been similarly instructed.⁴⁵ This evidence is not intrinsically unlikely, as the Templars in England knew that the French Templars had been tortured,⁴⁶ and must have known that they were likely to suffer in a similar way. It would have been reasonable to make some plans in advance of interrogation so that the Templars could present a reasonably consistent case. If the friar's story were true, it might help to explain why the Templars in the province of Canterbury were better informed about the Order's procedures than those at York and in Scotland and Ireland, realising (for instance) that admission ceremonies did not have to be kept secret.

It is also very likely that many Templars, who would have been under considerable stress during their interrogations – even though only three of them can be stated to have been physically tortured – gave incorrect

⁴³ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 164r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, p. 358; *Der Untergang des Templer-Ordens*, vol. 2, p. 205; Anne Gilmour-Bryson, *The Trial of the Templars in Cyprus: A Complete English Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), p. 135. The discrepancy was noted by Riley-Smith, 'Were the Templars Guilty?', p. 117. For the date of the hearings in Cyprus, see Gilmour-Bryson, *Trial of the Templars in Cyprus*, pp. 24-5; Peter W. Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades, 1191-1374* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 125 n. 94.

⁴⁴ *Proceedings*, vol. 2, p. lvi.

⁴⁵ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 92v; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, p. 187.

⁴⁶ MS Bodl. 454, fols 73v, 112v, 126v, 129r (twice), 131r, 133r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 140, 230, 265, 271, 272, 278, 283.

information, and certainly there are mistakes in the scribal record, because the two surviving manuscripts of the Templars' testimonies from the province of Canterbury do not always agree. However, when we have made allowances for inaccurate memories and scribal errors (and if we are going to assume that *some* of this evidence has the *possibility* of being accurate) we are left with too many discrepancies for all to be simply dismissed as obvious mistakes. Is it possible that non-Templars who were intending to join the Order would have been allowed to attend the Order's meetings?

Jochen Schenk has noted that 'the Templars had a habit of employing lay associates as the administrators of their estates' and gives the example of a layman, William Michael de la Roche, the nephew of a Templar, who was holding the keys of a Templar dependency in 1308.⁴⁷ However, as this man was living alone, the fact that he had not taken full vows (Schenk suggests that he may have been a Templar donat) would not compromise the security of Templar meetings, or impinge on Templar disciplinary procedures. Schenk has argued that Templar donats 'were expected to play a more central role in the community of Templar houses than other *confratres*', and 'the act of becoming a donat of the Temple was regarded by some as the first step before full admission into the Order'.⁴⁸ We might speculate that if donats were regarded as almost certain to enter the Order as full brothers, under some circumstances they might have been treated as full brothers. So, if Thomas of Walkington had been a donat of the Order of the Temple, there is a possibility that he might legitimately have attended a reception ceremony before he was a full brother. Regrettably, none of the Templars in Britain and Ireland except Hugh of Tadcaster stated specifically whether

⁴⁷ Jochen Schenk, 'Forms of Lay Association with the Order of the Temple', *Journal of Medieval History*, 34 (2008), 79-103, here 98; Jochen Schenk, *Templar Families: Landowning Families and the Order of the Temple in France, c. 1120-1307* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 68.

⁴⁸ Jochen Schenk, 'Forms of Lay Association', 99; Jochen Schenk, *Templar Families*, p. 68. On forms of affiliation see also Damien Carraz, 'L'affiliation des laïcs aux commanderies templières et hospitalières de la basse vallée du Rhône (XIIe-XIIIe siècles)', in *Religiones militares: Contributi alla storia degli Ordini religioso-militari nel medioevo*, ed. Anthony Luttrell and Francesco Tommasi (Città di Castello: Selecta, 2008), pp. 171-90.

they had been formally associated with the Order before they were received as full brothers.

More obviously, priest-brothers might have provided priestly services for the Templars before becoming brothers of the Order. Randolph of Evesham, priest-brother, mentioned that he had seen the grand master, Jacques de Molay, and the visitor, Hugh Peraud, when they were in England and held chapter meetings (the former from late 1293 to early 1294, the latter sometime in the period 1298-1300 and again in 1304),⁴⁹ but that he had been a *secularis* at that time.⁵⁰ As he had joined the Order in 1305, clearly he meant that he had not been a member of the Order at that time, but presumably he had been employed as a chaplain by the Templars.

Overall, the discrepancies in the Templars' own testimonies mean that they cannot be used to draw any firm conclusions regarding procedures among the Templars in Britain and Ireland. However, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that in practice the Order may not have been as strict in keeping non-members out of the admission ceremony as the Templars' testimonies implied. Clearly, individuals who had a close relationship with the Order, who were donats or servants of the Order or who were employed as notaries or financial officers, could be present – whether actually in the room, or just outside the open door – for at least part of meetings which were closed to the general public. Such people could receive some reward from the Order, either being admitted as members (as was Hugh of Tadcaster) or being granted corrodies (as were the individuals who had been present at chapter meetings).

Nevertheless, if this were the case it raises the question: why did the Templars under interrogation not simply state that outsiders could observe part of their admission ceremonies and attend part of their chapter meetings? Why did they insist under interrogation that secrecy had been maintained? To have acknowledged that outsiders did sometimes attend would have undermined the charges against them. Were they themselves uncertain as to exactly when a person became a member of the Order, so

⁴⁹ Alain Demurger, *Jacques de Molay: le crépuscule des templiers* (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 2002), p. 364; MS Bodl. 454, fols 69r, 94v; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, pp. 130, 192.

⁵⁰ MS Bodl. 454, fol. 121r; printed in *Proceedings*, vol. 1, p. 252, 19th charge.

that a *claviger* who had not yet taken the three vows was allowed to play the same role as a fully-professed brother? Were they uncertain as to what constituted presence at an admission ceremony, so that even though the doors were open so that outsiders could see in and hear what was going on, they still claimed that admission ceremonies were *clandestine* – done secretly? Or perhaps their spoken testimonies did make this clear, but the scribes who recorded the proceedings omitted this information as not being relevant to the charges.

It is also possible that the inquisitors' definitions of '*presens*' and '*clandestine*' differed from ours. Carole Avignon has pointed out that in ecclesiastical courts in the diocese of Rouen in the fifteenth century, a '*clandestine*' marriage was not a secret marriage, but one that had not been correctly publicised through the issuing of banns and submission of documentation to the bishop.⁵¹ The Templars' admission ceremonies were not correctly publicised insofar that although their original Latin rule had established a probation period for new recruits, by the early fourteenth century brothers were admitted to full membership in a single admission ceremony. This meant that rather than the two-stage admission procedure practised by the majority of religious orders, which provided due warning to all interested parties of a postulant's intention to join the Order and a '*cooling-off*' period for would-be members, Templars were immediately committed to their Order and could not leave.⁵² Although arguably the status of donat would have replaced the Templars' novitiate to some degree and becoming a donat also required some kind of ceremony, it was not the formalised procedure followed by the contemplative religious orders, and donats would not necessarily receive the religious training that a formal postulant would have received.⁵³ In this respect the Templars' admission

⁵¹ Carole Avignon, 'Marché matrimonial clandestin et officines de clandestinité à la fin du Moyen Âge: l'exemple du diocèse de Rouen', *Revue historique*, 655 (2010), 515-49. I am indebted to Ruth Mazo Karras for drawing Dr Avignon's work to my attention.

⁵² Alan Forey, 'Novitiate and Instruction in the Military Orders during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', *Speculum*, 61 (1986), 1-17, at 1-9.

⁵³ Jochen Schenk, *Templar Families: Landowning Families and the Order of the Temple in France, c. 1120-1307* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 62-70.

ceremonies were ‘clandestine’ not because they were secret but because they were not correctly constituted in accordance with papal decrees.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ See, for example, *Corpus Iuris Canonici, Pars Secunda: Decretalium Collectiones. Decretales Gregorii P. IX. Liber Sextus Decretalium*, ed. Emil Ludwig Richter and Emil Friedberg, 2nd edn (Graz: Akademische Druck - U. Verlagsanstalt, 1959), Liber III, Titulus XXXI: de Regularibus and Transeuntibus ad religionem, cap. xvi, pp. 574-5.