

Bibliothèque municipale d'Avranches, 210: Cartulary of Mont Saint Michel

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In a perceptive study of the origin and functions of cartularies, in the context of 'Archival memory and the destruction of the past', Patrick Geary wrote: "Traditionally, diplomatists have given low priority to the study of cartularies as such, using them primarily to reconstruct texts of lost originals with little regard to the nature, function and history of this genre. Examination of their contents focuses on the identification of genuine, forged, or interpolated texts which, properly categorized by the techniques of diplomatics, can then be exploited as though they were originals. When editing cartularies, most nineteenth- and twentieth-century editors have ignored the organization of the cartularies themselves, attempting instead to present all the charters and documents of a given institution in a chronological order, regardless of provenance and organization in the cartularies or tradition books themselves. In other words, most scholarly attention has focused on eliminating the cartulary itself in order to provide transparent windows into the original archives of an institution. This process was considered legitimate because each cartulary was considered a self-evident attempt to preserve the contents of the institution's archives."¹ Of course, such elimination of the cartulary is indefensible, being nothing less than the destruction of a unique written work, analagous to setting fire to the autograph of Orderic's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. To the maker of a cartulary or a *Traditionsbuch* the value of his archive material was its import for his institution at the time of writing; the diplomatic was of no account in itself, though it could receive detailed attention and transformation as the cartularist accomplished his task. For even in the case of genuine cartularies, where the deeds were all copied from originals and not turned into the third-person *reportages* of the *Traditionsbuch*, or massaged into the formats required by the *cartulaire-chronique*, the *Urtext* of the original could be modified to bring it in line with the practices of the cartularist's own time.

A manuscript cartulary which comes into being at a specific moment in time in an institution's history, is both a unique written text - behind which will lie a specific purpose - and a unique artefact. It can only be understood through a dual study of the text of the written work - which will consist of a series of separate texts arranged to form a whole - and the study of the manuscript as artefact.

The work contained in MS. 210 of the Bibliothèque municipale d'Avranches is now known simply as the Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel, because it is the only one of at least two cartularies of the abbey to remain extant.² It is one of the most celebrated manuscripts of the Middle Ages, chiefly on account of an illuminated drawing of the Archangel Michael appearing in a vision to the abbey's founder, Bishop Aubert of Avranches, at a date early in the eighth century.³ Nonetheless, this marvellous manuscript has received some of the shoddiest treatment ever meted out to medieval manuscripts by modern historians. No competent documentary historian has ever published an account of a serious codicological examination of the manuscript, but a long series of art historians has seen fit to pronounce on all manner of issues on the basis of a total of four drawings, one of them the famous illumination of the Vision of Saint Aubert.⁴ The contents of the manuscript have for the most part been published in bits and pieces in various guises; discussion of the items contained in the manuscript have received equally piecemeal treatment.⁵ In such circumstances genuine understanding of this manuscript is

¹ Patrick J. Geary, *Problems of Remembrance. Memory and Oblivion at the end of the First Millenium*, Princeton 1994, 83. I wish to thank members of the Battle Conference for the very helpful discussion which followed the delivery of this paper. I have tried in this version to address all the issues raised in the debate. Particular thanks are due to Maylis Baylé, Marjorie Chibnall, David Dumville, Christopher Holdsworth, Lawrence Keen, Graham Loud, David Roffe and Ian Short. Thanks are due also to Professor Hubert Guillotel with whom I made the codicological examination of the cartulary, and to M. Jean-Luc Leservoisier and his assistant David Nicholas for their assistance during my visits to the Bibliothèque municipale in Avranches. All opinions expressed, and any errors remaining, are mine. The Cartulary texts are cited here according to the numbers I have assigned to them in my forthcoming edition, followed by a folia reference to the manuscript.

² For a basic description see Henri Omont, *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibilothèques publique de la France* t. x, 1-125, manuscrits de la bibliothèque d'Avranches, Paris 1889, following the account of Mont manuscripts in *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques des départements*, 7 vols, Paris 1849-85, t. iv, 427-562.

³ Abbé Lelagard, 'Saint Aubert', in *Millénaire monastique du Mont-Saint-Michel*, 2 vols, Paris 1967-93 [hereafter *Mill. mon.*], t. i, 29-52.

⁴ See references in notes 18, 20 and 35 below. Cf. François Avril, 'La décoration des manuscrits du Mont-Saint-Michel, xi-xii siècles', *Mill. mon.*, ii, 203-238.

⁵ See the excellent *Bibliographie générale* in Dom Jacques Dubois, 'Les dépendances de l'abbaye du Mont Saint-Michel et la vie monastique dans les prieurés', *Mill. mon.* i, note 1 on pp. 620-624.

currently impossible.

It has been stated several times in various notices of Avranches 210 that it contains one complete work, the Cartulary proper, on folio 5r to folio 112r. On folio 112v through to folio 118, there is a register of acta produced in the first five years of the abbacy of Robert de Torigny, from 1155-9. This register was published as an appendix to Delisle's edition of Robert of Torigny's Chronicle.⁶ It is followed by further additions of documentary material from Robert's abbatiage, as well as later documents, mostly of the thirteenth century but also of the fourteenth. In my forthcoming edition of the cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel all this additional material will be excluded as an undesirable distraction. It is crucially important to focus upon the Cartulary as a unique written work produced before 1155. Study of the codicology of the manuscript underlines this point. Attention to the history of the abbey around the time the cartulary was produced and later, and to the history of its archives, brings further useful understanding to Avranches 210.

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At one time numbered 80, Avranches 210 acquired its present form when it was rebound by the Congregation of Saint-Maur, established at the Mont in 1622. The numbers 80 and then 210 were assigned at the library at Avranches to which the manuscript went at the time of the French Revolution. An earlier pressmark, 'M^{ne} C', is written in ink in the top left of the paste-down on the Maurist binding. It was described, without a pressmark, in an inventory of 1639 by the monk Dom Le Michel as *cartular[ium] niger*, a junior partner of a now lost *major cartular[ium] albus*.⁷ It contains 11 leaves and 138 folia; folia 5-134 average 361 x 255 millimetres in size. The folia are written on membrane, doubtless parchment. The quality is variable, and nowhere is it especially high. Signs of frequent handling are visible in the bottom and outer margins. None of the annotations made by readers predates the late Middle Ages. There are two sets of foliation in the manuscript's main body of 138 folia; the first, in Roman numerals, belongs to the fourteenth, or possibly fifteenth, century, the second is modern, probably of the nineteenth century. The original manuscript of the cartulary begins on the folio numbered 5r in the modern foliation and 1r in the late medieval foliation. It is preceded by a flyleaf and seven folia of paper numbered in Roman numerals, containing two tables of contents for the codex. The first of these is a gathering of four folia written and pasted into the codex in the nineteenth century; the second contents table, on folia vi-vii, is written in a seventeenth-century hand, perhaps belonging to one of the Maurist historians of the abbey, such as Dom Thomas Le Roy; the latter is headed 'Table des matieres contenues en ce livre'.⁸ These are followed by a binion, two folia of membrane which at one time were flyleaves to the codex; the first recto is blank except for a large capital V at the top, the word *Veritas* in the bottom left and the phrase *Veni creator spiritus* halfway down the right side, all of which is written in green ink.⁹ The first verso and second recto contain fourteenth-century acts in several different hands.¹⁰ There follows a second binion, also composed of two folia of membrane; the first of these, numbered 3r, contains documentary texts of the second half of the thirteenth century. On folia 3v and 4r there is a fragment of a

⁶ *Torigny*, ii, 237-260.

⁷ Printed as an appendix to G. Nortier, 'La bibliothèque du Mont Saint-Michel', cited in note 20 below, 163-68. The references to the lost cartulary and to Avranches 210 read: *Major cartular. albus. Item alter niger*, indicating that *cartular.*, presumably an abbreviation for *cartularium*, is not being used as a neuter noun, as would be usual.

⁸ Eugène de Robillard de Beaurepaire, *Les curieuses recherches du Mont Saint-Saint par Dom Thomas Le Roy*, Caen 1878.

⁹ Perhaps this is the origin of the otherwise inexplicable description of Avranches 210 as *livre vert*, a title used in the catalogue descriptions of Delisle and Omont (note 2 above). Possibly this manuscript was confused with the *Livre vert* of the bishopric of Avranches, now Bib. mun. Avranches 206 (*Chartularium ecclesiae Abrincensis*) (cf. Omont, *Catalogue*).

¹⁰ Fol. 1 r: L'an de grace mil troycent lxxii le jour de la feste S. Nichol de Mei les Angleis vindrent a Tombe Heleinie./ Mention que la chartre (*sic*) de Cauge est a lxxii en nombre. Item carta de Bouceyo est a iiii xx xiii en nombre./ Fol. 2r: Anno domini millesimo trecentesimo lxxii die lune in festum Beati Georgii item arripuit Johannes de Squ'tot [...] famulus bailliui die hanc sequenti dictum festum./ Item eodem anno in festo translationis Beati Nicolai uenerunt Anglici apud Tumbam Helenam causa ibi morandi./ Anno millesimo clv Henricus Rex Anglorum et dux Normannorum confirmauit dona possessiones alia pertinentiis abbatie de Sauigneyo et dicte abbatie et hominibus tenentibus ab ipsam donauit et concessit priuilegia franchisia et libertates quas habent [4 words here, reading uncertain]./ In isto caterio continetur ista primo Reuelatio Sancti Micaelis postea foundationem istius ecclesie in pagina ii, iii, iv, v, vi, et vii. De ducibus Normannie viii, ix et x Qualiter monachi ibi sunt constituti et priuilegijs ducum Normannie regemque Francie Domini Pape archiepiscopi Rothomagensis et episcopi Abrincensis omnibus predictis consentientibus ut patet x, xi, xii, xiii, xiiii, xv. Carta de Sancto Paterno/ Ancien livre. The back-slash is used to indicate a change of hand in the manuscript.

Translatio Sancti Maglorii, written in a thirteenth century hand on membrane ruled in dry point below top line, which would normally indicate a date before before 1220.¹¹ At the bottom of 4 recto is written 'Bastien Ernault Religieux en ceste abbaye'. Dom Huynes identifies him as the prior, Sebastien Ernault, who died in 1570.¹²

On folio 4 verso, now forming the frontispiece to the Cartulary, is the celebrated drawing of the Vision of St Aubert. There are a number of tenth and eleventh century parallels in manuscripts of the Mont for a frontispiece.¹³ All of them are found on what is now the first verso of the first quire, suggesting that the recto was intended as a blank guard. There is no doubt that the Vision relates to the first text in the cartulary, the so-called *Revelatio*, which describes the place of St Aubert's vision in the founding of the monastery. The fact that details in the drawing are left unfinished further links it to the cartulary text, as will be seen, so we may assume that it was designed as the original frontispiece. It is unlikely, nonetheless, that the use of gold-leaf to paint part of the Vision is coeval with the production of the cartulary since a thirteenth-century copyist, using a good black ink and a firm ductus, completed his fragment of the *Translatio* on the back of the Vision (folio 4r). It is clear that this binion was intended as a guard to the original codex; folio 3, the original flyleaf, is of poor quality, scarred, membrane. Whether anything else was intended for what must have been two blank rectos and one blank verso of a binion separate from the first written quire, we cannot know. The arrangement can be compared to a late twelfth-century Mont manuscript, now BN lat. 14832, in which a binion (now folia A-B) precedes the regular eight-leaved quires of the codex. In this case the principal original scribe also wrote the first of three contents tables for the manuscript on folia A verso and B recto.¹⁴

With folio 5r we come to the original codex, which consists of 14 regular eight-leaved quires, ruled in lead-point and rubricated throughout. One leaf was cut out between fol. 39v and 40r.¹⁵ The work of one scribe writing in a protogothic *littera textualis media-formata* script of the first half of the twelfth century, it contains two-, three- and five-line decorated initials in alternating patterns in red and blue, as well as fifteen-line major initials. Some of the major initials are unfinished, with decorative flourishes having been drawn in ink but left unpainted; e.g. on folio 110v a four-line initial H would have become seven-line if the detail on an ink-sketched descender had been painted. There are three major drawings in ink on folia 19 verso, 23 verso and 25 verso. Space has been left for six other drawings up to folia 46r. Much of 48 recto is blank, all of 48 verso and two thirds of 49 recto. The size of this gap suggests that it was intended to be filled at least in part with text, as well as one or more drawings. All of this indicates that the layout of the cartulary was carefully thought out in advance. None of the quires of the original codex seem ever to have been signed. But on the verso of first folio in the seventh and eight quires, were later added a letter 'c' and 'ab' respectively in the left of the lower margin. The dimensions of the written space are fairly regular, typically (as on folio 13) 19 lines of text in an area 245mm by 156mm. There are top and bottom margins, 27 and 26 mm respectively; outer and inner margins are 8mm wide. The fourteenth quire, on folia 108r-115r, is the last 8-leaved quire of the original codex. The final original writing was an unfinished act on fol. 112 recto. The fifteenth quire, also eight-leaved, on folia 116 to 123, is a later addition, on poor quality membrane. Folia 124-9 are a later addition, apparently forming a trinion. Folia 130-134 are additional leaves intercalated with the trinion. There is a break in format after fol. 134v, with the addition of four further leaves which are rather smaller than the other folia. Some of the added folia from 124-134 have suffered small losses of text in upper and outer margins (eg. fol. 128v and 129r).

Given the presence of medieval foliation from the fourteenth or fifteenth century continuous from modern folios 5 to 138, and the addition on each flank of the original codex of documentary material relating to the fourteenth century, it is likely that the manuscript was bound in or around that century. In fact, there is clear evidence of one and perhaps two bindings earlier than the present seventeenth-century one; the first was in or shortly before 1372, as indicated by notes on fol. 1v and 2r relating to the English presence on Tombelaine in that year (quoted in note 10 above). The present binion fol. 1-2 was evidently once used as flyleaves and there are clear traces of paste on folio 1 recto. This is mirrored on folio 134 verso, which also shows the outline of a former pasting-down. Revealing also is the deep wrinkle on the lower half of folia 3 and 4, the binion of the original manuscript, which postdates the drawing of the Vision on fol 4v. The wrinkle is matched by one on fol. 129v, which contains a number of texts, mostly of c. 1360. When the codex was bound c. 1372 it is unlikely that

¹¹ On the *Translatio Sancti Maglorii* see Hubert Guillotel, 'L'exode du clergé breton devant les invasions scandinaves', *MSHAB* lix, 1982, 301-316.

¹² Dom Jean Huynes, *Histoire générale de l'abbaye du Mont Saint-Michel au péril de la mer*, publié par Eugène de Robillard de Beaurepaire, 2 vols, Rouen 1872-3, ii, 232.

¹³ Bib. mun. Avranches MSS 50, 59, 75, 76, 115.

¹⁴ BN MS. lat. 14832, a manuscript produced at and for Mont-Saint-Michel before c. 1220, some time after which it went to Saint-Victor in Paris, was discussed by M. F. Columbaluzier, 'Le Pontifical dit d'Avranches', *Mill. mon.* i, 383-398, who showed that Delisle's account of this manuscript is erroneous.

¹⁵ There is no indication that the loss is textually significant and it was probably due to damage to the parchment.

either binion now forming modern folia 1-4 had previously been formally bound with the fourteen regular eight-leaved quires of Avranches 210, because the late medieval foliation started at 1 recto with the original cartulary text on folio 5 recto, i.e. the first recto of the first regular quire. Since the late-medieval foliation was applied to all of folia 116-138 (112-134 in the late-medieval foliation), it becomes apparent that an earlier binding of the leaves up to folio 134 was replaced by one that incorporated the four intercalated leaves, fol. 135-8. At any rate, a binding of c. 1372 was apparently modified so as to permit the addition of folia 135-8. This modification was accompanied by the late-medieval foliation. None of the texts thus assembled is later than the fourteenth century. Possibly, therefore, the modification or rebinding was done during the abbacy of Pierre Le Roy (1384-1411), who famously reorganized the abbey's archives and ordered the production of another cartulary, the now lost *Maior cartular[ium] Albus* (*sic*, see note 7), c. 1400.¹⁶ According to a life of the abbot written at Mont-Saint-Michel, Abbot Le Roy went through the archives personally, so he would certainly have known what he was doing if it was indeed him who put Avranches 210 together. The illumination of the Vision on folio 4v perhaps belongs to the same date.

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The nineteenth-century table of contents is headed *Table des Matières contenues dans le grand cartulaire du Mont-Saint-Michel, rédigé par Robert du Mont, abbé au 12e siècle*. Note that with the loss of the Pierre Le Roy's *maior cartularium albus* or *Livre Blanc*, Avranches 210 has become 'le grand cartulaire'. This heading is the sole documentary basis for the assumption of all modern commentators, without exception, that the cartulary owes its existence to Robert of Torigny.¹⁷ The importance of the cartulary as a unique written document is such that the attribution of its 'authorship' is a matter of some consequence, demanding detailed consideration. We should be clear at the outset that the cartulary, written by and for a community of monks, was a corporate enterprise. I shall refer to their collective decisions about the content of their cartulary as being those of 'the cartularist'. In seeking to identify the commissioning abbot the personal identity of the abbot will matter less than the circumstances of his abbatiæ.

Let us return again for a moment to the famous drawings in the cartulary. The most recent commentator is Monique Dosdat who observes that the cartulary was the work of a single scribe, but that the drawings were the work of two separate artists, possibly laymen.¹⁸ In her view, this indicates that the abbot wanted the work done quickly and to that end he spared no expense. For her it goes without saying that the abbot is Robert of Torigny. She states as fact, as others have done, that the Cartulary results from one of the earliest decisions taken by Robert as abbot. In fact, the cartulary contains more empty space for drawings that were never even sketched than it does for completed drawings. The cartulary was not only hastily executed, it was abandoned. The scribe of the cartulary completed his work to the foot of folio 112 recto, in the middle of the fourteenth quire, ending with an apparently incomplete quitclaim by William Goion dating to a period between 1100 and 1131. The act lacks any validation clauses as it stands and hence lacks legal force. At the top of folio 112 verso a scholar's hand begins a record of the acts of Robert of Torigny with the words: 'In the year 1155, in the second year of the reign of Henry II of England and the year in which Robert was called to direct the monastery of St Michael, the said abbot purchased the land of Rualend, provost of Genêts.'¹⁹ This lapidary statement introduces a register of the abbot's acts relating to abbey property. The register is a set of administrative annals. It gives not the slightest hint of any concern whatever with or for the abbey's archives. Geneviève Nortier's study of the manuscripts of the abbey led her to observe that there was a tendency under Robert of Torigny for the monks to use blank folia in their mss to copy acts or important documents, of which she cites Avranches 82 as an example; another is Avranches 128.²⁰ Clearly, Avranches 210 is yet another. Finally, Nortier repeats Boinet's observation that

¹⁶ Michel Reulos, 'L'organisation et l'administration de l'abbaye à partir de l'Abbé Pierre Le Roi jusqu'à l'application du Concordat', *Mill. mon.* i, 191-209.

¹⁷ For example, André Dufief, 'Vie monastique au Mont pendant le XIIe siècle', *Mill. mon.* i, 121; M. Bourgeois-Lechartier, 'A la recherche du *Scriptorium* de l'abbaye du Mont Saint-Michel', *ib.* ii, 171-200; Avril, 'La décoration des manuscrits', *ib.*, ii, 203-238. J. J. G. Alexander, *Norman Illumination at Mont-Saint-Michel, 966-1100*, Oxford 1970.

¹⁸ Monique Dosdat, *L'enluminure romane au Mont Saint-Michel x^e-xii^e siècles*, Rennes/Avranches 1991, discusses the cartulary on pp. 72-81.

¹⁹ *Anno ab Incarnatione Domini MCLV Regni uero secundi Henrici regis Anglorum. Primo eodem etiam anno quo Robertus abbas uocatus est ad regimen monasterii Sancti Michaelis, idem abbas emit terram Rualendi prepositi de Genes*, Avranches 210, fol. 112v, printed in *Torigny*, ii, 237.

²⁰ G. Nortier, 'La bibliothèque du Mont Saint-Michel', in *id.*, *Les bibliothèques médiévales des abbayes bénédictines de Normandie. Fécamp, Le Bec, Le Mont Saint-Michel, Saint-Evroul, Lyre, Jumièges, Saint-Wandrille, Saint-Ouen*, Caen 1966 (reprinted from *Revue Mabillon* 1953, 135-171, with same pagination), here p. 144 note 56.

Avranches 210 is exceptional among Torigny manuscripts for being decorated.²¹ All this points to a single conclusion: great abbot though Robert de Torigny undoubtedly was, the production of the first cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel was not among the achievements of his abbatiade.

The clearly unfinished state of the original cartulary, combined with the subsequent use of its unfinished final quire for an annalistic register of Robert's early years as abbot, is in itself an eloquent statement that the Cartulary predates his abbatiade. The abrupt abandonment of what was obviously intended as a very fine manuscript, which was to have contained several more full-scale drawings than the three that were actually accomplished, suggests either that the monks tired of their project or that the work was interrupted by external events. The scale of the original intention, betrayed principally by the provision made for illustrations, excludes the former possibility and leads directly to the conclusion that the work was abandoned when the abbey suffered some trauma. The years leading up to Robert's election in 1154 were indeed notoriously traumatic for the abbey. In 1138 the abbey was attacked and burnt by men from the Avranchin loyal to King Stephen. Since 1131 the abbey had been led by Abbot Bernard, a former monk of Bec and friend of Henry I, whose daughter Matilda he supported at the old king's death in 1135. Bernard was one of the Mont's great abbots, condemned unfairly by modern historians to live permanently in the shadow of his historian successor Robert.²² He had energetically worked to have restored to the abbey, lands usurped from it by local laymen. He reorganized some of the abbey's holdings into new priories at Brion, Tombelaine and St Michael's Mount. He was the first abbot seriously to exploit the relics of the founder St Aubert and, of course, as a former monk of Bec, he was an important influence on the growing intellectual reputation of an abbey that had had an active scriptorium since the late tenth century. The fire of 1138 was a blow to the very great achievements of Bernard, who had reversed the fortunes of a semi-derelict and almost bankrupt institution since his accession seven years before. But Bernard's work continued notwithstanding and it was a financially sound and well-administered house that he abandoned at his death on the night of 8 May 1149. It was a blow for which the monks were probably well-prepared. The very next day they elected Bernard's successor, Geoffrey, from one of their own number. Geoffrey very probably had been closely associated with Bernard before his death. He was possibly the monk called *Gaufridus Episcopus* - Geoffrey L'Eveque - who attested two of Abbot Bernard's charters as found in the cartulary. Later documents in the material added to the Cartulary after 1155 show that the L'Eveque family came from a region between Coutances and Avranches.²³

Geoffrey's election was a highly significant event for the abbey. The monks had exercised their right as Benedictines freely to elect their own abbot, but they did so in the teeth of established Norman ducal opposition to such free elections. The result was a fine so punitive that much of Abbot Bernard's work in restoring abbey finances was undone overnight.²⁴ To the monks, it was a price worth paying. Abbot Geoffrey eventually sought and obtained a papal bull from Eugenius III that confirmed the abbey's possessions, extended to it the protection of St Peter, and, most importantly, confirmed the Benedictine right of free election of its abbot. This great triumph occurred on 15 December 1150. Fifteen days later Abbot Geoffrey was dead. His death was a catastrophe that could have led to a far greater one. The monks waited over a year before proceeding to a second election of one of their own number, this time Richard de La Mouche, a kinsman of Bishop Richard of Avranches, by whom he was consecrated as abbot. Ironically, as *Ricardus de Musca*, he occurs as a witness for Abbot Bernard in one of the two Cartulary charters also attested by Geoffrey L'Eveque. Henry of Normandy was furious. He insisted upon a second election, which produced an abbot from Fécamp in Robert Hardy. Eugenius III intervened and, in a writ of 7 July 1152, insisted in his turn that Richard de Musca be restored. On 17 July 1153 both abbots and the bishop were summoned to Rome, and Henry - now married to Eleanor of Aquitaine - was threatened with excommunication and interdict. All round disaster was averted by the death of both rival abbots and the bishop in Rome, towards the end of 1153, and by the subsequent election, on 27 May 1154, of Robert of Torigny as an abbot acceptable to monks and Henry alike.

Clearly, then, there was drama a-plenty to account both for the abandonment of the Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel at the time of writing, and for why it was never subsequently finished in more stable times. It remains to determine precisely which part of all this drama underlies the Cartulary and hence which of Robert's predecessors was responsible for commissioning it. This is a question that must be answered with

²¹ Nortier, 143.

²² André Dufief, 'Vie monastique', 92-101.

²³ Cartulary, no. 68 (fol. 81), re Esquay, Abbot Bernard and monks, including *Richard de Musca* and *Gaufredus Episcopus*, and ib., no. 85 (fol. 91). On folio 113 of the Cartulary, published in *Torigny*, ii p. 239, there is an item referring to '*Ricardus archidiaconus Constanciensis, qui cognominatur Episcopus, qui habebat ad feudi firmam terram de Estreis*'. A later document refers to an accord concerning rents made between the abbey and Jordan Bertin fitz Bertin Leuesque de Goi, MS. Avranches 211, fol. 123v, relating to the priory of Saint-Germain-sur-Ay.

²⁴ Dom Huynes, *Histoire*, i, 171, says the monks were obliged to borrow money to pay the fine. See Appendix below.

reference to the contents of the Cartulary, because they will clarify what, if anything, was its specific purpose and hence why and when it is most likely to have been commissioned.

The Cartulary contains a total of 119 items, of which 117 are individual acts. Of that 117, two are duplicates, so that there are really 115 separate acts relating to abbey property recorded in the Cartulary. One item is a record of property lost to the abbey during the eleventh century. The first 11 documentary items relate primarily to members of the eleventh-century Norman ducal family, including the English king, Edward the Confessor.²⁵ A handful of later charters by lesser Normans follows, after which the items occur in a rather crude order which, broadly speaking, presents the foundation of each of the priories in turn with a roughly chronological presentation of key charters. Geographically, the charters range over Normandy, Brittany, Maine and the Touraine, all in north-west France. There are six genuine acts of the late tenth century, and 62 from the eleventh century.²⁶ The bulk of the material from item 71 onward relates to the twelfth century; of 46 charters from the twelfth century, 29 belong to the period of Bernard's abbacy, i.e. 1131-1149. The bulk of the material antedates Bernard's death on 8 May 1149; none of it dates before the death of Abbot Geoffrey - who is never mentioned - on 29 or 30 December 1150. Few of the Bernard charters are precisely dated, but most can be roughly divided into two groups according to whether the attesting prior was Peter or his successor Hugh, who first occurs in a charter dated 1142.

The first item, which occupies folia 5 to 16, is a version of the *Historia*, a celebrated compilation which purports to record the abbey's history. The various parts of this so-called 'official history' are well-known and have more than once been published. The first and earliest text is the *Revelatio*, a hagiographical product of the mid-ninth century dealing with the abbey's foundation by Bishop Aubert, c. 708-715, after the Archangel Michael had appeared to him in dreams. To this text were added in the mid-eleventh century a series of related pieces written, as the author attests, shortly after the death of Abbot Ralph de Beaumont c. 1054. The author is nowadays assumed to have been Ralph's successor Ranulf de Bayeux, elected by the monks from their own number in 1060.

Amongst these eleventh-century texts is the so-called *Introductio*, which allegedly describes the arrival of reforming Benedictine monks at the abbey in the mid-tenth century. The value of this material was discussed in masterly fashion some years ago by Dom Hourlier in the first volume of the *Millénaire monastique du Mont Saint-Michel*.²⁷ Subsequent important clarifications to Montois history by Guillotel - some of it still unpublished - have resulted in a near complete loss of faith in the monk's account of their history.²⁸ Brittany rather than Normandy is now seen as the controlling influence over the abbey until 1009 and it is impossible to accept that the introduction of Benedictine monks to the Mont in the mid-tenth century - which certainly is fact - owed anything at all to the Norman ruler. Many controversial issues remain. One of them is the authenticity of the diploma of the French monarch Lothar, which incorporates a recognizably forged bull of John XIII whilst purporting to confirm the refoundation of the abbey by Richard I of Normandy. Generally accepted as genuine, the diploma has been condemned as the work of the mid-eleventh century forgers at the abbey by Hubert Guillotel.²⁹ Another recent commentator, Cassandra Potts, has proved reluctant to accept the Lothar act at face value, but rather than condemn it outright she supposes that it was originally solicited for the monks not by

²⁵ See S. Keynes, 'The Aethelings in Normandy', *ANS* xiii, 1991, 190-94, shows that the charter is genuine, despite its apparent improbabilities, and identifies the places mentioned.

²⁶ On abbey property see Dom Jacques Dubois, cited above note 5, and André Dupont, *Essai d'un catalogue critique des églises et chapelles dont le patronage appartenant à l'abbaye du Mont Saint-Michel*, Saint-Lô 1979.

²⁷ Dom Jacques Hourlier, 'Le Mont Saint-Michel avant 966', *Mill. mon.* i, 13-28; id., 'Les sources écrites de l'histoire montoise antérieure à 966', *ib.*, ii, 121-132; cf. J. Laporte, 'L'abbaye du Mont Saint-Michel aux Xe et XIe siècles', *ib.*, i, 53-80.

²⁸ See H. Guillotel, 'Les temps des rois VIII^e - X^e siècle', in A. Chédeville and H. Guillotel, *La Bretagne des saints et des rois V^e - X^e siècle*, Ouest-France 1984, 336-7; id., 'L'action de Charles le Chauve vis-à-vis la Bretagne de 843 à 852', *MSHAB* lii, 1975-6, 5-32. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, 'Two studies in North French prosopography: 1. Ivo fitz Fulcoïn, the counts of Maine, the lords of Bellême and the foundation of L'Abbayette', *JMH* 20, 1994, 3-25; id., 'Un vassal sans histoire'? Count Hugh II (fl. 955-992) and the Origins of Angevin Overlordship in Maine', in id. ed., *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics: British and French Prosopography from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century*, Woodbridge 1997, 189-210. The view is shared by Cassandra Potts - who is unaware of either Guillotel's work or mine -, *Monastic Revival and Regional Identity in Early Normandy*, Woodbridge, 1997, 81-104.

²⁹ *Recueil des actes de Lothaire et de Louis V, rois de France (954-987)*, ed. Louis Halphen and Ferdinand Lot, Paris 1908, no. 24. The editors's commentary on this diploma principally concerns the interpolation of the forged papal bull within it. Their verdict on it: 'Abstraction faite de cette interpolation, l'acte semble bon', was a cautious rather than resounding endorsement.

Richard I but by Abbot Mainard. A thorny question that cannot be dealt with fully here, one must nonetheless here reject outright the Lothar act as a forgery of the mid-eleventh century by monks who no longer understood the tenth-century genesis of their Benedictine community; monks, moreover, so firmly in the grip of the Normans that they could not have afforded to acknowledge any truth other than the one they fabricated.³⁰ The process of fabrication began with Dudo de Saint-Quentin, whose propagandistic account of Norman-Breton relations in the tenth century is the basis of much of the *Introductio*. Nonetheless, Benedictine monks were doubtless established at the Mont by 966. The earliest authentic act in the Cartulary is a grant of vines at Mortier in the Touraine by Abbot Maiol of Cluny (d.994) at the request of Abbot Mainard I (d.991). Maiol's consent was pointedly tied to the proviso that the Montois community remained Benedictine.³¹ The charter's date in the forty-first year - *anno xli* - of King Lothar (954-86) is clearly erroneous. It should be read as *anno xii*, the twelfth year, which, significantly, yields the date 966.³² The use of an 'l' form as a long 'i' occurs elsewhere in the cartulary, normally within personal names such as Haimo.³³ Two of the five early eleventh-century charters of the Norman dukes, forming items 2-6 in the cartulary, were interpolated around 1060. Lemarignier showed that such activity related not to the monk's desire to protect their property in seeking restitutions but in claiming exemptions.³⁴

When Boinet first discussed the Cartulary in 1909 he remarked that the 'cartulary properly speaking begins on folio 17'.³⁵ By this he meant that part of the cartulary which records the texts of the abbey's charters. But he failed completely to understand that the earlier, pseudo-historical, material was essential to the Cartulary because it announces the programme and the purpose of the cartularist. The *Revelatio* emphasises the celestial origins of both the abbey and its patron, Archangel Michael. Neither can submit to a terrestrial authority. These points are subsequently emphasized in the three finished drawings each of which, as Nortier pointed out, show members of the Norman ducal family in positions firmly subordinate to the Mont's celestial masters. The *Introductio* emphasizes that the community is Benedictine, hence subject to the Rule of St Benedict, which provides in its sixty-fourth chapter that an abbot should be elected by the community he is to rule. Richard I of Normandy is alleged to have been so keen to respect Chapter 64 of the Rule that he sought explicit confirmation of it from the king, Lothar, and the pope. With the forgery of the bull of John XIII, St Michael's monks dotted the 'i' on their their determination to defend the Benedictine right of abbatial election, which they had spelled out in the unlikely name of Richard I of Normandy. The confection of the bull some time around 1055-60 is easy to understand, coming as it did at the end of a long period of turmoil, from 1009 to 1048, in the history of the Mont's abbots, who had tended to be hired and fired in rapid succession by the Norman dukes. The use of all this material - including the lament for the recently dead abbot Ralph which comes between the bull of John XIII and diploma of Lothar - as a preface to the twelfth-century Cartulary is an unambiguous statement that the author of this material and the later cartularist shared a common purpose. The Cartulary is concerned with the abbey's archives, with its founders, benefactors and its properties. But the specific purpose of the abbey community in creating the cartulary was to defend its right to elect its own abbot.³⁶

It was clear to me from very early on that the cartulary cannot have been commissioned by Robert of Torigny. It seemed likely that the commissioning abbot could have been Bernard of Bec, whose tireless work restoring the abbey's fortunes could well have accommodated a project such as the cartulary. Bernard not only restored the abbey's temporal possessions, but also enhanced the terrestrial appeal of its spiritual possessions. It is he who is credited with the mounting in gold and silver of the skull of St Aubert and it was certainly he who instituted the practice of having lay benefactors make their grants *per brachium Sancti Auberti*, a phrase which occurs for the first time in charters of his abbacy. If his successor Geoffrey was his close associate, perhaps the monk Geoffrey L'Eveque, then that could explain why work on the cartulary continued even after Bernard's death, which certainly occurred before the cartulary was finally abandoned. One of several indications of his death is the unmistakable phrase *Bernardus venerabilis memorie abbas*.³⁷ Dom Jean Huynes, a Maurist monk

³⁰ The Benedictine monks were doubtless established at the Mont by 966. Abbot Maiol's charter is no. 32 in my edition of the Cartulary (fol. 55). For the long 'i' see no. 44, fol. 66.

³¹ Cartulary, no. 32, fo. 55.

³² The date has occasioned some difficulty. Cf. Dubois, 'Dépendances', *Mill. mon.* i, 640-1.

³³ As shown clearly by Cartulary, no. 44 (fo. 66).

³⁴ J.F. Lemarignier, *Etude sur les privilèges d'exemption et de juridiction ecclésiastique des abbayes normandes depuis les origines jusqu'en 1140*, Paris 1937, 156-160, 264-66.

³⁵ A. Boinet, 'L'illustration du cartulaire du Mont-Saint-Michel', *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole de Chartes* t. lxx, 1909, 335-4, 337.

³⁶ Several names corresponding with the founders and benefactors recorded in the Cartulary are found in the principal Obituary of the abbey, Bib. mun. Avranches 214, pp. 109-99. On this important source see Dom Jean Laporte, 'Les obituaires du Mont Saint-Michel', *Mill. mon.* i, 725-41.

³⁷ No. 78, fol. 85-6; also no. 83, fol. 89v, *contigit autem in tempore Bernardi abbatis*, and no. 98, fol. 100v,

of the abbey who wrote its history in 1640, described Avranches 210 as: 'a book written in the time of Abbot Bernard'.³⁸ The intellectual circumstances of Bernard's abbatiade, combined with the crisis of 1138, very probably produced the background to the idea of a cartulary. Nonetheless, it is Abbot Geoffrey, an otherwise entirely shadowy figure whom even the monks largely forgot to remember, who most clearly emerges as the cartulary's probable originator.

Geoffrey's election by his monks provoked a clash with ducal authority, which demanded a high fiscal price that the monks were willing to pay. To emphasize this legitimacy of electoral right, Abbot Geoffrey sought and obtained the first genuine papal bull ever granted to the abbey. The circumstances were fortuitous. Bernard was appointed to the abbacy by Henry I (who had removed his three predecessors at the monks' request) but he was probably committed to the defence of Chapter 64 of the Rule. The speed with which his monks, who certainly held him in high regard, elected his successor strongly suggests that he had encouraged them to proceed to a swift Benedictine election after his death. The mid-twelfth century papacy was committed to the support of Benedictine privileges against lay abuse. In Eugenius III the monks found a true champion, albeit one who took grave risks with the abbey's future prosperity in challenging Henry of Normandy. In his bull for Mont-Saint-Michel, Eugenius explicitly acknowledges Geoffrey as abbot. Citing from chapter 64 of the Rule of St Benedict, he orders that when Geoffrey dies his successor: 'should be appointed whom the whole community, or the wisest part of it, chooses in the fear of God'.³⁹ Geoffrey's reign was brief, lasting only eighteen months. But given the haste of execution - of which one indication is the duplication of two of the acts - and its unfinished state, the Cartulary could easily have been produced during Geoffrey's abbatiade. My as yet unpublished edition fills a mere 81 A4 pages. It is inconceivable that, had the work been completed, the bull of Eugenius III would not have been included. That it was abandoned before the bull was copied suggests that the reason for the abandonment was Abbot Geoffrey's death a mere fortnight after Eugenius issued the bull, perhaps before a copy of it reached the abbey. Geoffrey's is the forgotten abbatiade of Mont-Saint-Michel. It is not unlikely that the achievements of his brief administration were simply the continuation of a programme already set in motion by his predecessor Abbot Bernard. Even so, the issue of abbatial election burned in Geoffrey's time as never before and it was he who successfully sought the pope's intervention for the first time in the abbey's history. It is surely time now to restore to Abbot Geoffrey the honour of having commissioned one of the most important manuscripts to survive from medieval France.

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Further understanding of Avranches 210 as codex and as cartulary can come from examining its text in relation to other archival material produced at Mont-Saint-Michel. I have already emphasized the importance of treating the Cartulary text as a single unique written work, which must not therefore be submitted to any form of editorial correction. It is nonetheless important to compare the cartulary texts with the texts of surviving originals in order better to understand the nature and purpose of the Cartulary. As is well-known, the better part of the abbey's archive was at Saint-Lô on the fateful night of 16 June 1944 when Allied bombing destroyed it. Only a handful of originals survive in scattered collections. To this can be added a handful of facsimiles that were published before 1944, as well as a few copies of the originals made by scholars such as Dom Denys Briant, Lechaudé d'Anisy and, in the twentieth century, de Beausse and Geneviève Beauchêne. Of the 115 acts in the cartulary, three membranes or fragments thereof survive from eleventh-century Normandy, containing a total of four Norman ducal acts; none of these are genuine originals in our modern sense. Two of them, one an interpolated act of Robert I, are written on the same membrane. One part of a cyrograph of 1121-4 survives in the British Library in London, and a Norman charter of 1131-42 survives in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. A single charter, given by a Norman benefactor in 1054, survives as an original at Saint-Lô. To this meagre total can be added the facsimile publication of an additional 7 items, and the post-medieval copying from the abbey's charters of a further 31 items, making a total of 45 items out of the 115 in the cartulary, of which 4 items were

florebat eo tempore in hac ecclesia Bernardus abbas vir sapientissimus et disertissimus et nimie eloquentie.

³⁸ Huynes, *Histoire générale*, ii, 232. Boinet, note on p. 33, wrote: 'Pertz, (*Archiv*, t. viii, p. 381) pensait que le cartulaire avait été composé entre 1150 et 1154, c'est-à-dire sous l'abbatiade de Bernard le Vénérable (1131-1154), mais cette opinion ne semble pas acceptable.'. Quite so!

³⁹ "...obeunte vero te nunc ejusdem loci abbate vel tuorum quolibet successorum nullus in predicta ecclesia qualibet surreptionis astutia seu violentia preponatur nisi quem fratres communi consensu vel pars fratrum consilii sanioris secundum dei timorem et beati Benedicti regulam previderint eligendum."; occurs as: *ut hic constituitur, quem sibi omnis concors congregatio secundum timorem dei, siue etiam pars quamuis parua congregationis, saniore consilio, elegerit* in a copy of the Rule of St Benedict, cap. 24, in Bib. mun. Avranches 214, p.65. The Bull of Eugenius III, dated 15 December 1150, was edited from a vidimus of Jehan d'Anneville, lieutenant général du bailli du Cotentin, dated 28 December 1523, in *Cartulaire du Jersey. Recueil de documents concernant l'histoire de l'île conservés aux archives de la Manche. Edition Société Jersiaise* (vol. 23), Jersey 1918-20, no. 9, 13-15, and J. Ramackers, *Papsturkunden in Frankreich* 2te Band, *Normandie*, Göttingen 1937, no. 60, 135-7. The abbey's possessions are listed without reference to diocese.

copied from eleventh-century pseudo-originals.⁴⁰ Whilst not an impressive total, the range throughout the chronological and geographical reach of the Cartulary provides a more than adequate means of comparison between the charters themselves and the cartularist's account of them. Examination reveals only minor divergences, arising out of changing orthographical conventions and simple haste on the part of the scribe. The cartularist clearly set out faithfully to record his originals. The programme announced in the initial *Historia*, the abbey's claim to its spiritual privileges, was followed by an authentic record of its archives, arranged, albeit loosely, around individual priories and their founders and benefactors. A constant theme is lay usurpation and the attempts by the abbots to recover such losses. Bernard figures prominently as an abbot who recovered land, but the emphasis of such items is always upon the use of the arm of Saint Aubert in the ceremony of restitution rather than upon the restitution itself.

The Cartulary is not a complete record of the abbey's archives at the time it was undertaken, in 1149-50. It may never have been intended to be a complete record, but at least one omission must have been due to force of circumstance rather than deliberate choice. Since the work begins with a forged papal bull confirming the right of the monks to elect their abbot, the cartularist would certainly have wanted to include the authentic bull of Eugenius III confirming the same privilege in the words of St Benedict himself. Whatever else might be said of the quasi-legendary *Historia* that prefaces the Cartulary, it was at least in part a manifestation of the community's genuine interest in its history, which can be traced throughout the whole period of its existence. One of several annals written in the abbey is thought to have been written by a monk under Abbot Bernard, though it continues after the abbot's death up to 1154.⁴¹ The *Historia* was also a reflexion of the community's enduring commitment to the Benedictine rights of election. A quire in Avranches 211 contains Annals of Mont-Saint-Michel which were written first in the early twelfth century and later continued down to 1292. One of the entries memorably betrays the *idée fixe* of the community: *Eodem anno Rannulfus abbas et monachus huius loci pie memorie [obiit]. Huic successit Rogerius Cadomensis non electione monachorum sed vi terrene potestatis* (fol. 75v). Within a few years of the death of Abbot Bernard a monk of the Mont, William de Saint-Pair, wrote a three-part verse history in Norman French of the abbey, of which parts one and two were based upon the *Revelatio* and *Introductio*. This verse history, the *Roman du Mont-Saint-Michel*, requires brief consideration for the light it can shed upon the Cartulary itself.⁴²

William de Saint-Pair (*de Sancto Paterno*) first occurs in a Mont document of 1155. His last dated attestation was in 1172. In the prologue to his *Roman du Mont-Saint-Michel* he described himself as a young man working under Robert de Torigny, perhaps indicating that the work belonged to a period early in Robert's abbacy, when the memory of the events that led to the undertaking and abrupt abandonment of the cartulary were still fresh.⁴³ The avowed aim of the work, according to the Prologue (vv. 9-17), is to make accessible to a lay audience the salient facts about the monastery. A particularly striking feature of the *Roman* is a lengthy passage occurring in the so-called *Liber secundus* (vv. 2189-2355). Here William discusses at length the abbey's charter of privileges granted by Richard I of Normandy and confirmed by King Lothar and Pope John XIII. Richard is said to have had two further copies made (2204-6). Quotations are made from all three charters, all of which are said to have been 'presented on the altar' (2325-8). William repeatedly stresses that the monks have the absolute right to elect their own abbot. The passage ends (2328-55) with a warning that St Michael has always ensured that any abbot appointed by authorities external to the Abbey (*de main laie*, 2333) has been forced to resign and has been lucky to escape with his life. The fact that William could write this in the time of Robert de Torigny - elected by the monks with the approval of Henry of Normandy - probably indicates that the community as a whole backed the fight for the Benedictine right of election in 1149/50, though the warning about alien abbots might be a jibe at those monks who had broken ranks to support Robert Hardy in 1152. William's remarks contained a kernel of truth. Seven of the eleven abbots of the Mont between 1028 and 1152 were ducal appointments. Only one of them, Bernard of Bec, died, still in office, in his bed at the abbey. According to William (2346-7), even the allegedly lamented Abbot Ralph de Beaumont had died on pilgrimage

⁴⁰ For the surviving originals and facsimiles see Alexander, *Illumination*, 41-2.

⁴¹ Hourlier, 'Les sources écrites', *Mill. mon.* i, 267ff, describes the Annals for 506-1154, published in *Torigni*, ii, 230-35, as: 'élaborées sans doute au Mont sous Bernard du Bec'.

⁴² *Li romanz del Munt Saint-Michiel par Guillaume de Saint-Pair*, ed. Francisque-Michel, Caen 1856 (*Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie*, t. xx), includes étude sur l'auteur par M. Eugène de Beaurepaire; also edited by Paul Redlich, *Le Roman du Mont Saint-Michel*, Marburg 1894, and by Graham Birrell in an unpublished doctoral thesis, Aberdeen 1978. On the text see G. Birrell, *Romania* 100, 1978, 260-70; R. Herval, 'Un moine jongleur au Mont Saint-Michel: Guillaume de Saint-Pair', *Mill. mon.* ii, 383-96. I am greatly indebted to Professor Ian Short in this discussion of William's *Roman*. References to the text given below are to Redlich's edition.

⁴³ *Guillelme a non de Seint Paier/Cen vei escrit en cest quaier/El tens Robeirt de Torignie*, vv 17-19.

in the Holy Land whilst under suspicion of simony.⁴⁴

The most important of the two surviving manuscripts of the *Roman* was certainly produced at the Mont and was still there in the fifteenth century.⁴⁵ A third manuscript, now lost, was also produced at the Mont and seen there in 1739 by Montfaucon.⁴⁶ Clearly, as the Prologue claimed, the *Roman* was produced for the benefit of lay persons, specifically those who came to the abbey as pilgrims and for whom the Latin texts of the *Revelatio* and *Introductio* were closed books. William also included material added to the *Miracula* section of the *Introductio* during the twelfth century, though not present in the Cartulary version, and a text by Baudry de Bourgeuil, *De scuto et gladio*.⁴⁷ The *Roman* highlights the fact that texts produced in monasteries by monks had very specific and restricted audiences in mind. The pilgrims who heard or read the *Roman* may well have taken its message away with them, but the primary purpose of the work for the monks was to enable them to communicate with their pilgrims and perhaps also with the lay congregations of their priories. Souvenir or guide books continued to be produced at the Mont: one such was written by the sixteenth-century prior Sebastien Ernault whose name was written on folio 4r of Avranches 210, which obviously was one of his sources.⁴⁸ The Cartulary, on the other hand, was a production of and for the community of monks. Evidently designed as a beautiful book and beginning with a lectionary for the Feast of St Michael (the *Revelatio*), the ceremonial function of the Cartulary both as artefact and as a collection of texts seems evident. Surely this was an altar-book, designed for use by the monks in their abbey church. As such the cartulary belongs to a group of eleventh and twelfth century, as well as later, manuscripts produced for ceremonial use by monastic communities. While each is unique, all draw from a common pool of characteristics relating to their histories, their saints or founders, their royal and papal privileges; they may also contain overtly liturgical texts such as the Gospels. A particularly fine parallel is afforded by the Sherborne Cartulary, a late twelfth-century English manuscript which contains the four Gospels each adorned with a beautiful illuminated portrait of its Evangelist. The earliest quires contain historical texts relating to the abbey and its English past, written in Anglo-Saxon. In addition to royal and papal confirmations, it also contains a copy of the abbey's entries in Domesday Book.⁴⁹

If Avranches 210 is now the only surviving cartulary of the abbey, it was not the only one that was

⁴⁴ Apart from Almodis, Ranulf de Bayeux, Geoffrey and Richard de Musca, all the abbots from 1028 were appointed by the rulers of Normandy. Most had troubled careers. Cf. the eleventh-century abbots Thierry and Suppo, and, from the twelfth century, Roger I (resigned 1106), Roger II (deposed by Henry I in 1123) and Richard de Méré (deposed c. 1128). Dom Jean Laporte, 'Les séries abbatiale et priorale du Mont Saint-Michel', *Mill. mon.* i, 267-81.

⁴⁵ BL MS. Add. 10289, discussed by Tony Hunt in an article in *Medioevo Romanzo* 13, 1988, 25-37. The other is BL MS. Add. 26876. Redlich's edition is based on both manuscripts, Michel's only on Add. 10289, which is lacunary.

⁴⁶ *Roman*, ed. Redlich, p. viii.

⁴⁷ Cf. Hourlier, 'Les sources écrites', 122. Texts of the *Miracula* and parts of the *Historia* are found in the first part of Bib. mun. Avranches 211, fol. 1-66.

⁴⁸ Huynes, *Histoire*, ii, 232. Cf. Dom Laporte, 'L'Épée et le Bouclier dits de "Saint-Michel"', *Mill. mon.* ii, 397-410.

⁴⁹ BL MS. Add. 46487, discussed by Francis Wormald, 'The Sherborne "Cartulary"', in *Fritz Saxl Memorial Essays*, ed. D. J. Gordon, London 1955. One may mention also the celebrated mid-twelfth century *Liber Landavensis*, Aberystwyth, NLW., Gwysaney I, discussed by John Davies elsewhere in this volume and by E. D. Jones, 'The book of Llandaff', *National Library of Wales Journal* iv (1945-6), 123-57, and D. Haws, ib. (1987), the superb thirteenth-century Chertsey Cartulary, BL MS. Cotton Vit. A 13, and a thirteenth-century illustrated history of Crowland Abbey, BL MS. Harley Y 6. BL MS. Cotton Nero D vii is a late-fourteenth century *Catalogus Benefactorum* for St Albans, with painted portraits of the benefactors. There are important observations by J.-P. Genet in *Les cartulaires. Actes de la table ronde (Paris, décembre 1991)*, ed. O. Guyotjeannin, L. Morelle et M. Parris, Paris, Ecole des Chartes, 1993. I know of no comparable example of the same period to have survived from Normandy. In terms of the quality of materials and execution, possible French parallels from the first half of the twelfth century are furnished by the *Livre Noir* of Saint-Florent de Saumur and the Cartulary of Saint-Quentin de Beauvais (BN MSS. lat. nov. acq. 1930 and 1921), neither of which is illustrated. I owe to Graham Loud the following references to two striking examples from Italy. The Cartulary of St Sophia, Benevento, Cod. Vat. Lat. 4939, also known as the *Chronicon Sanctae Sophiae*, written in 1119, has been discussed by J.-M. Martin, 'Quelques reflexions en vue de l'édition du *Chronicon Sanctae Sophiae*', *Bulletino dell'istituto storico italiano per il medio evo* xvix, 1993, 301-17; cf. G. Loud, 'A Lombard abbey in a Norman world: St Sophia, Benevento, 1050-1200', *ANS* xix, 1997, 273-306; the *Chronicon Vulturense*, a 'cartulaire-chronique' completed c. 1120, has been edited by V. Federici (3 vols, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia*, 1924-38), and discussed by H. Hoffmann in *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* xix, 1966.

produced. The later cartulary known as *Major cartular[ium] albus* has been lost since the eighteenth century, but it had been seen by several scholars who made copies of part of its contents, including Dom Denys Briant, historian of Brittany whose work survives in MS. fr. 22325 of the Bibliothèque Nationale. This manuscript is priceless for its report of the state of the abbey's archives at that time. In a section headed *Cartulaire du Mont Saint-Michel*, Briant begins with a description of the *Livre Blanc* (described simply as *Le cartulaire*) which he dates to the fifteenth century, the latest items in it belonging to the year 1413. I translate: 'Before the acts - *titres originaux* - copied in the cartulary there are several chapters of historical material which can also be read in a compilation of the monastery's history written in the same century, as well as in an older cartulary, perhaps of the thirteenth or fourteenth century. After a long eulogy of the early Norman rulers, there follow charters of King Lothar, Pope John, Duke Richard...etc.'⁵⁰ He goes on to say that the early ducal items were followed by a bull of Alexander III of January 1179, which appears to have been the most detailed and comprehensive confirmation of its possessions that the abbey ever received from a pope.⁵¹

There are several points of interest in this account. First it is clear that the now lost cartulary commissioned by Abbot Pierre Le Roy - the *Livre Blanc* - had essentially the same format as the abbey's earliest cartulary, Avranches 210. Both began with the so-called official history, the *Revelatio, Introductio* and related texts. Where in Avranches 210 the forged and interpolated papal, royal and ducal confirmations relating to the tenth-century stand in the place of authentic material, Le Roy's cartulary was able to follow copies of these confections with genuine papal, royal and ducal confirmations. The founders and benefactors material found in Avranches 210 was also in the *Livre Blanc*. Although the purpose of the *Livre Blanc*, according to remarks in a fifteenth-century *Gesta* of the abbot later elaborated by Dom Huynes, was to preserve a complete copy of the charter archive as it then stood, its model was undoubtedly Avranches 210, with its rather different purpose.⁵²

An earlier cartulary, 'perhaps of the thirteenth or fourteenth century' had also been mentioned. Briant goes on to describe this older cartulary, in a passage headed *Ex antiquiori cartulari*, noting that before the cartulary proper several acts occur. From the extracts he then gives of these acts it is clear beyond all doubt that he is describing acts of the fourteenth and the thirteenth century copied on folia 2 and 3 respectively of Avranches 210. This is reconfirmed by the subsequent description of the *Revelatio*, and of the note on fol. 113r referring to...*anno quo Robertus abbas vocatus est*.⁵³

A third item was mentioned besides the two cartularies, namely a fifteenth-century compilation of historical material relating to the abbey. This manuscript can also be identified and is extant as ms Avranches 211. Avranches 211 is a manuscript almost as remarkable and as fascinating as Avranches 210, but the two are quite different. It has been described in detail by Léopold Delisle in his appendix to Torigny's chronicle.⁵⁴ Known as *Chronicon majus Sancti Michaelis de Monte*, it is a compilation of six separate parts bound together

⁵⁰ BN fr. 22325, p. 695: '*Extrait de cartulaire du Mont Saint-Michel*. Le cartulaire est écrit dans le 15^e siècle. Il y a des actes de 1413. Avant les titres originaux qui y sont copiés, il y a quelques chapitres d'histoire qui se lisent encore dans une compilation d'histoire du monastère écrite dans le même siècle. Et même dans un autre plus ancien cartulaire comme du 13^e ou 14^e siècle. Après un grand éloge de La Normandie et les Normans [*in the margin: 'ibi de Angelus, Campania..Calabris a Normannis possessis (marque que l'auteur n'est past fort ancien)*'] il rapporte que St Aubert ev. d'Avranches au temps du Roy Childebert (etc.) [there follows extensive citations from the *Introductio*, with a comment on the origin of some of it in Dudo] whole of cap. De adventu Rollonis in Francia and De Willelmo Rollonis filio]...' (p. 696) 'suivent les chartes du Roy Lothaire, du Pape Jean et du Duc Richard pour Saint-Paterne et pour Versun, puis du Duc Robert.'. He then cites a charter of Richard's wife Gunnor and follows this with extracts from bulls of popes Alexander III and Adrian IV.

⁵¹ The bull of Alexander III survives as a damaged original in BN lat. 9215, no. 60 (Mont Saint-Michel no. 4); edited from a vidimus of Jehan d'Anneville, 28 December 1523, in *Cartulaire de Jersey*, no. 11, p. 19-22). There is an excellent edition in Delisle, *Torigny* ii, 313-21.

⁵² Huynes, i, 192: '... le grand desordre que estoit dans le chastrier, il se resolut luy mesme de feuilleter tous les papiers et de les mettre d'ordre... Et afin que tous les originaux depuis la fondation de ce monastere jusques à son temps demeurassent toujours sains et entiers il les fit tous transcrire dans un gros livre de parchemin qu'on nomme livre blanc'. He notes *ibid.* that: '*les bulles et lestres sont en ce monastere et au cartulaire B* [i.e. the *Livre Blanc*], fol. 15, 17 (*bis*), 132, 317, 20, 30'.

⁵³ *Ib.*, p. 697: '*Ex antiquiori cartulari*. Avant le cartulaire même y est écrit ce qui suit: Anno dni 1372. In festo translationis B. Nicolai venerunt Anglici apud Tumbam Helene causa inibi morandi... Cooperunt itaque Dani superficiem terre sicut locuste (S Magloire) [= first lines of fol. 2 recto - quoted in note 10 above - and 3 verso of Avranches 210, where capital 'c' of cooperunt is missing]; then, p. 699: Anno dni 1251 men. Maii die Martis [= fol. 3 recto of Avranches 210]... (*ib.*): commencement dudit cartulaire. *Incipit revelatio ecc. S. Michaelis in monte*... (p. 703), ad finem supradici cartularii AD 1155...*anno quo Robertus abbas vocatus est* [= Avranches 210, fol. 113r].

⁵⁴ *Torigny* ii, 209-214.

in the seventeenth century. The third part, folia 78-83, is a *Gesta* of Abbot Pierre Le Roy, who assembled the material for histories of the Mont found in MSS Avranches 212, 213, 214 and the first part of 211.⁵⁵ The sixth part of Avranches 211 is the earliest surviving copy of the ninth-century *Revelatio*, which is here arranged as a lectionary of seven lessons for the feast of St Michael. The script is in a late-tenth-century hand that carefully imitates a much earlier exemplar. All subsequent versions of the *Revelatio* derive from this copy, including Avranches 210, which is a modification of the text probably produced when the pseudo-historical *Introductio* and the forgeries were produced, c. 1055-60.⁵⁶

The fourth part of Avranches 211 is a two-part compilation dating respectively to 1308 and 1326. The first part, on folia 84 to 113 is a register of mainly thirteenth and fourteenth century acts relating to the abbey. The second part, from folio 113 verso to folio 155, contains an inventory of the abbey's archives. The arrangement is very methodical, suggesting that Pierre Le Roy's task in restructuring the abbey's archives after 1384 was not exactly Herculean. It begins with ducal, royal and papal confirmations, including the 1150 bull of Eugenius III, and then presents each charter according to the priory to which it relates. This material can be compared to the surviving Cartulary, and to the contents of the lost *cartularium albus* as described by the eighteenth-century scholars who copied extracts from both the lost cartulary and the abbey's charter deeds. Such reports can also be supplemented from the works of the great Maurist historians of the early seventeenth century, Dom Huynes and Dom Le Roy. Comparison shows that the charters copied into the Cartulary were common to all three manuscripts. Avranches 210 emerges very much as a book of founders and benefactors, as well as a thematic enterprise concerned with abbatial elections. The format of Abbot Le Roy's *Livre Blanc* continued the blend of programmatic defence of spiritual privileges, embedded in quasi-historical texts, with the copying of charters of founders, benefactors and others. Interestingly, according to the copies made by G. de Beausse and deposited in the archives at Caen in 1929, there were copies of material from the *Livre Blanc* in the *Série H* of the *Archives départementales de la Manche* at Saint-Lô until 1944. One was a 'modern copy' of a charter of 1066 given by Gerbert de Poterel made from *Livre Blanc*, folio 176r (*ex libro albo pagina 176 recto*). Another was copy of a charter by Niel the priest of Sainte-Columbe which Beausse made from 'une feuille en parch[emin d'un] cart[ulaire du] xv^e s.' i.e. a leaf detached from the fifteenth-century cartulary, which measured 0^m.219 high x 0^m.140 width.⁵⁷

There is fragmentary evidence from the second half of the twelfth century for an attempt to go beyond Avranches 210 - probably its base text - in strengthening the part of the *Historia* that deals with the right of Benedictines to elect their abbot, i.e. the forged acts of Lothar and John XIII. This is revealed in some very pointed additions, taken from the writings of Gregory the Great, to the *Perpendant igitur* passages that introduce the forged bull of John XIII.⁵⁸ Whether there was a larger purpose to this work is now unknown, since it survives as part of a quire bound with a Pontifical produced at the Mont, probably at a similar date in the second half of the twelfth century. The binding together was probably done at the Mont before the manuscript went to Saint-Victor in Paris at an unknown date after c.1220, since between c.1200 and 1220 another hand copied onto blank pages in this quire the text of a remarkable agreement made in 1061 between Bishop John of Avranches (d. 1077) and Abbot Ranulf.⁵⁹

From all these different types of evidence it is clear that the abbey took great care to preserve and maintain its archives from at least the mid-eleventh century onward. The community of the 'City of Books' was much less successful in preserving intact its collection of manuscript codices, which starting haemorrhaging long before the seventeenth century. What remained of the abbey's manuscript collection was sent at the time of the French Revolution to the library at Avranches. By an irony too appalling to dwell upon, it was to be the manuscript collection that would survive until our time and not the carefully cherished charter collection. The charters were not, however, obliterated completely in 1944 in that most of them had been copied more than once, both by monks into manuscripts of Mont-Saint-Michel and by scholars whose copies are now in archives such as the Bibliothèque Nationale.⁶⁰ In fact, one could - and no doubt someone should - publish a weighty *cartulaire factice* for Mont-Saint-Michel. The *charrier* of the abbey to the early fifteenth century is probably quite fully preserved in extant Mont manuscripts, especially Avranches 210 and 211. The survival also of several copies of the *Historia* and the *Miracula* means that is unlikely that much if any of the contents of the lost *Livre Blanc* is wholly inextant. A sizeable amount of charter and other material survives for later periods in a more scattered fashion within Mont manuscripts and the various copies of post-mediaeval scholars. So long as manuscripts

⁵⁵ Published as an appendix to Reulos, 'L'organisation et l'administration', 202-9.

⁵⁶ Dom Hourlier, 'Les sources écrites', 120-128.

⁵⁷ Archives départementales de Calvados, F 5276. The charters are items 70 and 43 in the Cartulary (fos 81, 65). Cf. Fauroux, no. 132.

⁵⁸ See Columbaluzier, 'Le Pontifical', 396-7.

⁵⁹ Cf. Lemarignier, *Etudes sur les privilèges*, 158-60.

⁶⁰ Cf. Dubois, cited note 5 above.

Avranches 210 to 215 survive, the carefully recorded, indeed, cultivated, history of the abbey will survive for exploitation by historians. Avranches 210 and 211 are especially precious; Avranches 210 partly because of what it can tell us about the most controversial period of the abbey's history, the tenth-century. But these manuscripts can only be used once they are understood as artefacts and as texts. Overdue since the fifteenth century, that process has now begun for Avranches 210.

Appendix. Dom Huynes's account of Abbot Geoffrey, *Histoire*, i, 171.

Chapitre douziesme. De Geoffroy, quatorziesme abbé

L'abbé Bernard n'estoit encore ensevely que les religieux desireux d'avoir un abbé selon leur choix esleurent Geoffroy, religieux de ce mont, lequel tout après fut beny à Saint Georges de Bauceville par Hugues archevesque de Rouen. Et ce afin d'empescher par cette hastiveté le duc de Normandie de leur en donner un autre, mais cela ne leur servit de gueres, car ce duc pour les affliger les contrignit de luy bailler une grande somme de deniers qu'on fut contrainct d'emprunter pour luy satisfaire. Et la morta sembla favoriser l'abbé Geoffroy, qui estoit fort marry de ces troubles lors que l'an mil cent cinquante le quatriesme de janvier elle le vint enlever de ce monde. Son corps fut inhumé au bas de la nef de cette eglise aupres de son predecesseur.

Keats-Rohan ANS XXI Extra Abbreviation

Mill. mon. := *Millénaire monastique du Mont-Saint-Michel*, 2 vols, Paris 1967-93