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► **To cite this version:**

Sébastien Barret. Chapter 8 : Shaping Cluniac Memory. Scott G. Bruce; Steven Vanderputten. A Companion to the Abbey of Cluny in the Middle Ages, Brill, pp.173-185, 2021, 978-90-04-47013-2. 10.1163/9789004499232_010 . hal-03463586

HAL Id: hal-03463586

<https://hal.science/hal-03463586>

Submitted on 2 Dec 2021

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CHAPTER 8:

Shaping Cluniac Memory

Sébastien Barret

In the 1770s, a lawyer from Autun named Louis-Henri Lambert de Barive set out to work in the archives of the monastery of Cluny.¹ His task was to transcribe historical charters for the royal *Cabinet des chartes*, a colossal project undertaken by the French monarchy with the aim to collect copies of all documents relevant to its historical and juridical rights. Barive spent two decades on this undertaking until he was interrupted by the French Revolution. While his motivations were not devoid of financial or personal interests, the length of Barive's activity at Cluny and the impressive number of accurate copies he left behind represented a fitting tribute to the Cluniacs' archives, which had been visited and admired by great historians and scholars throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.² Cluny's great past still vouched for its relevance to the French absolutist monarchy and to Benedictine church scholars of the charters and cartularies that were kept in its archives – in what the monks

¹ Barret, "Un avocat au service du Cabinet des chartes".

² For example, Jean Mabillon visited the abbey in 1682, as did Edmond Martène and Ursin Durand in 1709. See Stratford, "Mabillon à Cluny"; and Bruce, "The Relics of Cluny," in this volume.

themselves called a “treasure”. The venerable abbey, despite having lost much of its prestige in the course of centuries, still possessed enough greatness in the eighteenth century to be treated with reverence. This enduring relevance was the direct result of the industry of the medieval monks, who curated the memories of their institution with great care throughout the centuries.

That the medieval Cluniacs themselves were more than apt and willing to build instruments of all sorts in order to curate their own memory is illustrated by a sumptuous illuminated manuscript: MS Paris, BNF Latin 17716.³ This book presents a version of Cluniac identity and history that emphasizes the abbacies of Hugh the Great (1049-1109) and Peter the Venerable (1122-1156), the identification of Cluny with Rome, and Cluny’s freedom from secular and episcopal control.⁴ Compiled shortly after 1200, it contains liturgical pieces, excerpts from Peter the Venerable’s *De miraculis*, hagiographical and narrative texts related to Hugh the Great, as well as a detailed compilation of documents on Cluniac liberty. Taken together, it expresses a Cluniac identity, in which history, music, and monastic rights merge in a coherent ensemble. The care that the monks had for their own memory was appropriately mirrored by modern celebrations held on the anniversaries of Cluny’s foundation in 1910 and 2010. The 1910 celebrations were influenced markedly by the conservative Catholic milieu,

³ On this manuscript, see most recently Boynton, “Music and the Cluniac Vision of History”; and also her contribution to this volume.

⁴ On the subject of Cluny’s relationship with the papacy, see Constable, “Cluny and Rome”.

in which they took place.⁵ The anniversary in 2010 resulted in numerous events and publications highlighting Cluniac memory – and some questioning it.⁶

The importance of memorial constructions in medieval societies in general, and in monastic contexts in particular, has been the object of numerous studies.⁷ Memory can be understood as the individual faculty to remember and extended to the techniques used to memorize and to their influence on individual and collective culture or on related artefacts like books.⁸ Memory has also been studied as a broad social and anthropological phenomenon, often under its Latin name of *memoria*. In this case, it refers to the social uses of the remembrance of the dead and to the role of the presence of the deceased in structuring groups and identities.⁹ In a monastic context, this is closely linked to liturgy for the dead, but also to hagiography and historiography. These have also been the subject of studies aimed at understanding how the past was used to shape the identity of communities.¹⁰ Memory can

⁵ *Millénaire de Cluny*. For the context, see Iogna-Prat, “Cluny, 910-1910”.

⁶ *Cluny 910-2010*; and *Cluny: Les moines et la société*, pp. 7-8. See also *Cluny après Cluny*.

⁷ *Medieval Memory*, p. ix; and also the “historiographical outline” on *memoria* in Blennemann, “Ascetic Prayer”, pp. 279-81.

⁸ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*.

⁹ On the concept of *memoria* as an important social phenomenon of the Middle Ages, see Schmid and Wollasch, *Memoria*; and Geuenich and Oexle, *Memoria*.

¹⁰ See, for example, Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past*.

also be understood, generally speaking, as the management of what should be remembered, like persons and facts, but also possessions and rights, including deeds and charters.¹¹

While different avenues of research focus on different aspects of medieval memory, these sources must be understood as being interconnected. This insight led Dominique Iogna-Prat to group under the expression “lieux de mémoire” a wide array of Cluniac documentation.¹² It is important to remember that memory is not simply accumulated and transmitted, but also shaped, particularly at the communal level. As Patrick Geary showed, this implies choices, not only about what should be remembered, but also about what should be forgotten, and these choices have deep, structural implications in the way a community will look upon itself and upon others.¹³ With this in mind, the present chapter will focus mainly on three aspects of the many ways that the Cluniacs shaped their own memories: the cult of the dead; the writing of saints’ lives and history; and archival structures.

Memory of the dead

The most common Cluniac memorial activity was the care of the memory of the dead.¹⁴ An essential part of Cluny’s liturgical practice involved prayers of intercession for the deceased

¹¹ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Records*, esp. pp. 174-79, 296-300.

¹² Iogna-Prat, “Les lieux de mémoire”.

¹³ Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, esp. pp. 81-114 on archival sources.

¹⁴ See Susan Boynton’s contribution in this volume; and, for the broader monastic context, Blennemann, “Ascetic Prayer”.

monks and friends of the monastery. This generated not only alms donated by laymen and women as gifts on behalf of prayers for their souls (*donationes pro anima*) and as gifts for burial with the monks (*donationes ad sepulturam*), which integrated the donors with the monastic community, but it also generated a wealth of manuscript sources.¹⁵ In addition to the production of charters, the brethren compiled books in which the names of the people whose deaths had to be remembered and for whom the monks had to pray were written down. These necrologies were called “books of life” (*libri vitae*) in reference to the Book of Revelations or “memorial books” (*libri memoriales*).¹⁶ This practice was, of course, in no way specific to Cluny or its congregation; *memoria* and its conservation were a central occupation in the social and cultural life of most medieval religious institutions and elites. But the Cluniacs gave a special importance to this aspect of their monastic activities, which became an intimate part of their religious personality and image. The cult of the dead was first fostered under Abbot Maiolus (954-994), and soon thereafter Abbot Odilo (994-1049) established the Feast of All Souls at Cluny on 2 November in the 1030s.¹⁷ This is perhaps the most symbolic element of the specific importance of the care for the deceased and their souls at Cluny.¹⁸ As was the case with other liturgical practices, the celebration of the Feast of All Souls was prescribed for

¹⁵ See Susan Boynton’s contribution in this volume; and Rosé, “Interactions between Monks and the Lay Nobility”, pp. 586-588.

¹⁶ See *Libri vitae*; and Huyghebaert, *Les documents nécrologiques*. On the “book of life” in the Bible, see Ps. 69:28, Phil. 4:3, and Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12; 20:15, and 21:27.

¹⁷ See *The Relatio Metrica*, ed. Jones and Bruce, pp. 3-9; and Longo, “Riti e agiografia.”

¹⁸ Iogna-Prat, “The Dead in the Celestial Bookkeeping of the Cluniac Monks”; and the contribution of Susan Boynton to this volume.

all Cluniac houses, ensuring its dissemination and its later adoption throughout the whole of Christendom.

Donors to Cluny sought to benefit from the proximity of the congregation or even to be part of the congregation itself by taking part in a complex interplay of land exchange, social relations, and religious practice.¹⁹ Accordingly, the monks preserved their memory with their own, merging everyone into a common remembrance in the *libri vitae*. The result went far beyond the simple association of laymen or brothers in religion to the monks of Cluny. The corresponding charters are witnesses to this, in their number as well as in their formulations.²⁰ Biblical allusions were frequently used to stress the spiritual foundation of the gifts: “Water quencheth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sins” (Sirach 3:33); “Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity that when you shall fall, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings” (Luke 16:9); and “Give alms, and behold, all things are clean unto you” (Luke 11:41). The fact that a donation was made for the salvation of one’s soul was explicitly mentioned in most cases, as well as any acquired right to be buried in the monastery. The very purpose of these deeds gave particular resonance to the *sanctiones*, the final clauses of a charter prescribing punishment for anyone who went against it.²¹ Many of them were of a spiritual nature, some of which explicitly stated that the delinquent’s name should be erased from the *Liber vitae*.²²

¹⁹ Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter*; and the contribution of Constance Bouchard to this volume.

²⁰ Iogna-Prat, “The Dead in the Celestial Bookkeeping of the Cluniac Monks”.

²¹ Little, *Benedictine Maledictions*; and Jaser, *Ecclesia maledicens*.

²² See, for example, BB, vol. 1, p. 339 (n. 360: a donation made in 928): “Auferatque Deus partem illius de terra viventium, et deleat nomen ejus de libro vite, nisi cito resipuerit, fiatque pars illius cum his qui dixerunt Domino Deo: ‘Recede a nobis’ et cum Dathan et Abiron.”

This formidable warning applied possibly to the Cluniac book of life and more generally to the one mentioned in the Book of Revelations. This was in accordance with the strength of the ties that bound donors and benefactors. Peter Damian, who visited Cluny in 1063 as a papal legate to intervene in a conflict between the monks and the bishop of Mâcon, provides testimony of this in one of his letters, which he sent to the abbot of Cluny to remind him of his promise to have Peter inscribed in the Cluniac *liber vitae* and to feed and clothe a poor person in his name. For the compensation of his labour, he wrote, he had requested the anniversary of his death to be remembered through the vicissitudes of time so that prayers would commend him to the formidable Judge and he expected that his name would be written down at Cluny and other Cluniac houses.²³

Liturgical celebration is perhaps the most prominent characteristic of Cluniac monasticism in the Middle Ages.²⁴ Peter Damian made profuse compliments to the Cluniacs about how they saved the souls of the faithful through their continuous prayers and elaborate liturgy. In a letter sent to the monks in 1063, he wrote:

Moreover, while I recall the order in the liturgy, so strict and dense, of your holy way of life, I reckon that it is not the work of human invention, but the authority of the Holy Spirit. In fact, such was the duration of uninterrupted continuity in the observance of your liturgy, such thoroughness was put forward, above all, in the church offices, that even in the months of July and August, when the days are longer, there remained

²³ *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, vol. 3, n. 103, pp. 138-141, at pp. 139-140.

²⁴ See the contribution of Susan Boynton to this volume.

hardly half an hour once in the whole day for the brothers to speak to one another in the cloister.²⁵

While Peter's opinion is obviously positive, harsh judgements were also passed on the subject, some of which have undoubtedly influenced later historians. Written in the twelfth century, Idung of Prüfening's *Dialogus duorum monachorum* presented a Cluniac and a Cistercian debating their respective views of religious life and the *Rule of Benedict*.²⁶ As a representative of traditional Benedictine monasticism, the Cluniac was accused, among other things, of wasting his time with hollow rituals and false prayers:

These shrill and emasculated voices, which you call gracious and are in the habit of sharpening with liquorice juice and costly elixirs, what are they but entertainment for your ears, in spite of the *Rule's* interdiction [...] You make use of such voices together with new and lascivious melodies in these new and usurped celebrations of yours in spite of the venerable decrees of the canons [...] The feast of the Transfiguration and the feast of the Holy Trinity, which should not be marked by any special celebration, because we sing everyday "Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit", as we

²⁵ *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, vol. 3, n. 100, pp. 101-15, at p. 105 : "Porro autem dum tam districtum tamque frequentem sanctae vestrae conversationis ordinem recolo, non adinventionis humanae studium, sed sancti Spiritus magisterium inesse perpendo. Nam tanta erat in servandi ordinis continua iugitate prolixitas, tanta praesertim in aeccelestiasticis officiis protelatur instantia, ut in ipso cancri sive leonis estu cum longiores sunt dies, vix per totum diem unius saltim vacaret horae dimidium, quo fratribus in claustris licuisset miscere colloquium."

²⁶ Idung of Prüfening, *Dialogus duorum monachorum*.

worship and praise the Holy Trinity in the hymns, the psalms, the responses, and the offices of the Mass [...] ²⁷

Not only did the Cluniac insistence on the liturgical memory of the dead permit benefactors and friends to join the brethren of Cluny in monastic remembrance, but it also allowed the monks to shape their memorial image proactively by associating their congregation to those they saw fit. This was, of course, not a simple dynamic, but it certainly worked. Cluny could thus present itself a community of pure men, leading the powerful and less powerful of their world alike towards the heavenly Jerusalem. ²⁸ Here the social interconnectedness of the Cluniacs with European aristocracies found one of its numerous levels of expression. Other connections existed beyond familial ties. For example, Odilo wrote an epitaph for Empress Adelaide, thus contributing to the establishment of the memorial image of close association between the Cluniacs and the Ottonian royal family. ²⁹ This is consistent with the image given,

²⁷ Idung of Prüfening, *Dialogus duorum monachorum*, I, 550-574, pp. 107-08: “[...] Illae tinnulae et eviratae voces, quas vos graciles vocatis et suco liquericii et sumptuosis electuariis acuire soletis, quid sunt nisi oblectamenta aurium, contra Regulae interdictum [...] Talibus vocibus cum novis et lascivis melodiis in novis et usurpatis festis vestris utimini contra veneranda canonum decreta [...] Festum Transfigurationis et festum sanctae Trinitatis, quae nullum speciale festum debet habere, cum in ymnis, in psalmis, in responsoriis et in missalibus officiis sanctam Trinitatem venerantes et laudantes, cottidie cantemus: ‘Gloria Patri et Filio et spiritui sancto’ [...]” On the identification of the Cluniacs in this text as representative of traditional Benedictine monasticism more generally, see Wollasch, *Mönchtum des Mittelalters*, pp. 182-83.

²⁸ Logna-Prat, *Agni Immaculati*; idem, *Order and Exclusion*, pp. 26-96; and Rosé, “Interactions between Monks and the Lay Nobility”, pp. 594-97.

²⁹ Odilo, *Epitaphium domine Adelheide*. Further on this text, see the contribution of Eliana Magnani in this volume.

for instance, by the twelfth-century Cluniac poem *Relatio metrica de duobus ducibus* which through the person of Maiolus emphasizes the benefits of monastic suffrages for the dead for the aristocracy.³⁰

Hagiography and Historiography: The Lives of the Abbots

Abbatial *vitae*, which provide accounts of the lives and miracles of the abbots, were a key element in defining Cluniac memory.³¹ Not only were they repositories of narratives about the past, but they were also sources for the liturgy, notably for the feast days on which the sanctified abbots were celebrated. Cluniac hagiography expresses specific aspects of the identity of the monks, for instance, the insistence on Cluny being an exceptional place where holy men laboured for the salvation of all, both in the cloister but also in a perfect relationship with the world and its greatest nobility, or the image of the monastery as a second Rome with a special affinity to the Eternal City.³² These shared aspects should not hide the fact that the texts were in no way written without short- or middle-term objectives that shaped their content. In particular, they developed evolving patterns of abbatial sanctity and models for the modalities of the Cluniacs' role in the world. For all that these hagiographical works had

³⁰ *The Relatio Metrica*, ed. Jones and Bruce.

³¹ For a detailed treatment of this topic, see Vanderputten's "Imagining Early Cluny in Abbatial Biographies" in the present volume. On the broader subject of saints' lives and their importance as a source for the history and identity of medieval monks, see Bruce, "Sources for the History of Monasticism", pp. 390-394; and Mancía, "Sources for Monasticism", pp. 672-675.

³² Vanderputten, "Imagining Early Cluny in Abbatial Biographies".

in common, the precise history of their formation shows that individual texts, textual ensembles, and concerted actions of writing and rewriting had their own formative goals. Historical anecdotes and miracle stories inherited from the past, both in writing and through oral traditions, became active instruments of memory-shaping for the brethren of Cluny.

It is actually difficult to define precisely what should be understood as “Cluniac” hagiography. Strictly speaking, it refers to saints’ lives produced at Cluny, but considering texts composed by other actors linked to the monastery directly or indirectly is also worthwhile. The first *vita* to have been written about an abbot of Cluny is John of Salerno’s *Life of Odo* (926-42), which bears some similarities to Odo’s *Life of Gérard of Aurillac*, neither of which is strictly “Cluniac,” even though they were produced in a Cluniac context.³³ John’s work was rewritten several times in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, due to the idiosyncrasies of the original telling, which combined a personal and didactic view of the path to holiness with a narrative background that was also rooted in literary commonplaces.³⁴

Hagiography specific to Cluny seems to have appeared relatively late under Abbot Odilo (994-1049) with special attention to the life of Maiolus (954-994) as a great abbatial figure.³⁵ Following on the *Vita sancti Maioli* written by the Cluniac monk Syrus, Odilo authored another version of his life for liturgical use and played a role in fostering the *Miracula sancti*

³³ See Vanderputten, “Imagining Early Cluny in Abbatial Biographies,” in this volume. John of Salerno was Odo’s disciple, but he was not a monk of Cluny. See Iogna-Prat, “Panorama de l’hagiographie clunisienne”, p. 38.

³⁴ Rosé, *Construire une société seigneuriale*, pp. 27-32.

³⁵ Riche, “Cluny au miroir de Cluny”, pp. 187-89; and Vanderputten, “Imagining Early Cluny in Abbatial Biographies” in this volume.

Maioli at Souvigny.³⁶ This first surge of Cluniac hagiography was part of a more general movement initiated by Odilo in the early eleventh century around the defence of the monastery's rights and possessions. This was the first time that the Cluniacs took an active interest in hagiographical projects, and they focussed on the personality of the recently deceased Maiolus as a founding figure, which also represented the choice not to dwell on the earliest history of Cluny.³⁷

In the late eleventh century under Hugh the Great (1049-1109), hagiographical works were part of a vast overhaul and reassessment of Cluniac rights and properties. This was a moment in time when the close link between all the textual components of Cluniac memory was most evident. Accounts of the life and miracles of Abbot Odilo were the work of individuals closely associated to the Cluniacs, but not monks of Cluny themselves: Abbot Iotsald of Saint-Claude, a disciple of Odilo's; and Peter Damian, who wrote a text that competed seriously with Iotsald's *vita* in Cluniac remembrance.³⁸ In addition to hagiography, the history of the monastery was also expressed in three cartularies, that is, books compiled from the charters documenting the abbey's possessions. Their compilation was the result of in-depth work done in the archives of the cloister.³⁹ Odilo inspired this project, but Hugh the

³⁶ Iogna-Prat, "Panorama de l'hagiographie clunisienne", pp. 44-46; and Vanderputten, "Imagining Early Cluny in Abbatial Biographies" in this volume.

³⁷ As happened with Odo, the hagiography of Maiolus was reworked in the twelfth century. See Iogna-Prat, "Panorama de l'hagiographie clunisienne", pp. 47-51.

³⁸ Iogna-Prat, "Panorama de l'hagiographie clunisienne", pp. 46-51; and Vanderputten, "Imagining Early Cluny in Abbatial Biographies" in this volume.

³⁹ On the Cluniac cartularies, see Hillebrandt, "Les cartulaires"; and Barret, *La mémoire et l'écrit*, pp. 45-57, 107-21, and 247-87.

Great was responsible for its implementation in two phases, around 1065-80 and 1095-96.⁴⁰ These eleventh-century cartularies also contained narrative passages that resonated on the one hand with the juridical texts they contained and on the other hand with the hagiography about Odo and Maiolus.⁴¹ For the first time in their history, we see the Cluniacs extending their interests to the earliest periods of their existence.

The establishment of a hagiographical tradition concerning Hugh of Semur was deeply influenced by the events concerning his canonization and the division of Cluny's community into two factions in the 1120s. Hugh's successor, Pontius of Melgueil (1109-1122), faced internal opposition and an antagonistic relationship with the papacy, which forced his resignation in 1122. Afterwards, however, he continued to present himself as the legitimate abbot of Cluny, even after the election of Hugh II – who was abbot for a few months in 1122 – and Peter the Venerable (1122-1156), thus causing a string of hardships for the community until his death in 1126.⁴² One of the consequences of this turmoil was the production of a complex group of hagiographical texts concerning Hugh the Great, as factions loyal to Pontius competed with Cluniac loyalists for control of the memory of Cluny's last great charismatic leader.⁴³

⁴⁰ Atsma and Vezin, "Gestion de la mémoire", esp. pp. 19-21; and Chastang, "Le premier Cluny", pp. 96-97.

⁴¹ Vanderputten, "Imagining Early Cluny in Abbatial Biographies" in this volume.

⁴² See Marc Saurette, "Challenges of the Twelfth Century", in this volume.

⁴³ Iogna-Prat, "Panorama de l'hagiographie clunisienne", pp. 52-58; and Vanderputten, "Imagining Early Cluny in Abbatial Biographies".

Another period of intense hagiographical rewriting occurred during Peter the Venerable's abbacy when a monk named Nalgod recast the *vitae* of Odo and Maiolus to express contemporary concerns.⁴⁴ In addition to updating the texts to provide more fitting profiles of Peter's predecessors, Nalgod also tailored them to serve his abbot's agenda in current conflicts, most notably his concern with the challenges presented by Islam.⁴⁵ Peter himself contributed saintly portraits of some of his predecessors in his *De miraculis* and in his *Rythmus de sancto Hugone abbate*, but his main contribution to Cluniac expression lay elsewhere.⁴⁶ Very little is actually known about this kind of production at Cluny, be it hagiographical or historiographical, for the later Middle Ages, apart from a few examples like the contents of MS Paris BNF Latin 17716 or the chronicle of François of Rivo, which dates from shortly before 1500.⁴⁷ This text celebrated Cluny's glorious past by means of portraits of the achievements of its long and distinguished line of abbots. While François dutifully listed the abbots of Cluny down to the present day, he provided much lengthier entries for the abbey's earliest leaders from its founding abbot Berno to Peter the Venerable, the latter he considered to be the most prestigious figure in Cluny's history. By the end of the Middle Ages, the brethren had already begun to construct the period between 910 and 1156 as the golden

⁴⁴ Vanderputten, "Imagining Early Cluny in Abbatial Biographies" in this volume.

⁴⁵ Bruce, *Cluny and the Muslims*, pp. 119-29.

⁴⁶ See Saurette, "Challenges of the Twelfth Century" in this volume.

⁴⁷ Riche, "Un témoin de l'historiographie clunisienne".

age of Cluny, when its abbots engaged in direct dialogue with kings and emperors and played a role in shaping European politics.⁴⁸

Archival Organization and Memory

The memory of the Cluniacs was shaped not only by their prayers for the dead and their evocation of the past in hagiographical and historical writings. A discrete yet essential component of Cluny's memorial structures can be found in its archives.⁴⁹ This aspect of memory-keeping wedded day-to-day affairs to highly symbolic, intellectual constructions; they were not mutually exclusive. Documents of practice played an important role in expressing identity and preserving memory, but this should not hide the fact that the reasons for keeping these documents had the mundane motive of asserting and protecting the abbey's rights in the world. The treatment of archival documents at Cluny is, in itself, revealing. Another point of interest is to be found in the compilations that were made out of these documents, the cartularies, which were often produced in periods when the abbey's interests were in jeopardy or otherwise called into question.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ On Cluny's relationship to the Ottonians, see Barret, "Cluny et les Ottoniens". Abbot Hugh the Great's relationship with his godson Emperor Henry IV has been well studied. See Lynch, "Hugh the Great's Sponsorship of Henry IV," and Kohnle, *Abt Hugo*, pp. 74 and 110-16.

⁴⁹ For a thorough treatment of this topic, see Barret, *La mémoire et l'écrit*.

⁵⁰ Charters and administrative documents in general have been used by historians for a variety of studies. See Bruce, "Sources for the History of Monasticism", pp. 383-386; Mancía, "Sources of Monasticism", 668-670; and Caby, "Sources of Late Medieval Monasticism", pp. 949-951.

Cluniac monks kept records from early on, accumulating charters that sometimes predated the foundation of their community and entered its collections when it acquired the corresponding lands and goods.⁵¹ While the brethren of Cluny were interested in preserving documents of practice, the community did not have a special room or set of rooms set aside for this, at least, not until the thirteenth century. No reference is made to the location of the archives prior to 1403, when the charters were stored in the “Tower of the Privileges” (*turris privilegiorum*). The word “privilege” implies royal, imperial or papal charters that granted rights and privileges to the abbey and in this case refers to charters in general. The north tower of the basilica that hosted the archives until the end of the eighteenth century seems to have been built in the early thirteenth century, and it is tempting to think that the archives were installed in the tower around this time. Although the monks made changes to the content of their charter collection and its classification over the centuries, the continuity of one archival room for more than five centuries suggests a kind of fundamental conservatism in their keeping and thus represents one of many firm anchors for the Cluniacs’ collective memory.

Normative sources from Cluny, like the customaries, say nothing about the organisation of the archive before the fourteenth century and even then they provide only sparse and indirect allusions. The word “archive” (*archivum*) itself appears only in 1375. There was an archival practice at play, but there was no archival theory and no real prescriptions about the matter. Cluny certainly began by adopting extant archival practices before it developed its own.⁵² As early as the late tenth century, the monks began writing short

⁵¹ See Innes, “On the Material Culture of Legal Documents”.

⁵² Innes, “On the Material Culture of Legal Documents”, pp. 300-13, esp. p. 312.

summaries on the backs of charters as reference aids. A first layer of shelf marks appears on the verso of some charters around 1100, identifying the geographical orientation of the property in question, often in combination with allusions to the author of the charter. This was a common practice in medieval religious archives, which tended to organise their collections by the criteria of geography and authorship. While the Cluniacs actively curated their charter collection from early on, for most of the Middle Ages, we must attribute these actions to a kind of “Cluniac collective,” because there is no evidence for the individuals linked to archival practices.⁵³ Abbots must have played an important role in the process, especially regarding the decision to compile cartularies, but the day-to-day record-keeping at Cluny is only evident through the results it yielded: the documents themselves.

Information provided by a partial inventory from 1512 as well as a brief description of the archives from the end of the fifteenth century and the cartularies themselves allow us to make some inferences about the organization of the documents, some of the features of which may date back to the eleventh century.⁵⁴ For example, charters concerning England and Spain were set apart, while royal, imperial, and above all papal documents formed categories of their own. Moreover, the precision of documentary description varied according to the perceived distance between the cloister and the subjects of the charters. The more the documentation moved away from Cluny, the more imprecise and global the description categories became. This is true not only from a spatial point of view, but also from an institutional and cultural one. The most precisely described documents in the two inventories

⁵³ Chastang, “Le premier Cluny et l’écrit pratique”.

⁵⁴ MS Paris, BNF, Latin 13873, fols. 19-158; and MS Paris, BNF, Latin 5458, fols. 3r-3v and 284r.

are the papal ones and the clearest geographical divisions are made for the region surrounding the monastery.

Five medieval manuscripts constitute the core of the Cluniac cartularies, which are traditionally designated by the letters A to E. The first two volumes, Cartularies A and B, contributed to the construction of the Cluniac narrative about the origins of the cloister, together with numerous other texts.⁵⁵ They were compiled in two phases during the second half of the eleventh century (1065-80 and 1095-96) as a part of the memorial overhaul mentioned earlier in this chapter.⁵⁶ As far as charters are concerned, they contain mainly (but not exclusively) “private” donations grouped under the relevant abbots arranged in chronological order. The third volume, Cartulary C, belonged to the same project and contained mainly papal, imperial, royal, and comital documents, forming a kind of gallery of great authorities, while also expressing an understanding of Cluny’s place in the world vis-à-vis the popes and their secular counterparts.⁵⁷ Taken as a unit, this first wave of compilations distinguishes between not only papal, royal, and imperial documents, but also “Spanish” and “Italian” charters. The same can be said of Cartularies D and E, which were created in the thirteenth century (around 1247-60 and 1292-1300 respectively).⁵⁸ They also reflect shifts in the self-perception of the monastery with a more definitive nod towards the king of France

⁵⁵ MS Paris, BNF, NAL 1497 and 1498, with Iogna-Prat, “La geste des origines”.

⁵⁶ For their imbrication in hagiographic discourses, see Vanderputten, “Imagining Early Cluny in Abbatial Biographies”, in this volume.

⁵⁷ MS Paris, BNF, NAL 2262, with Rosenwein, “Cluny’s Immunities”.

⁵⁸ MS Paris, BNF, Latin 5458; and MS Paris, BNF, NAL 766.

reflected in the grouping of royal documents as a distinct ensemble in Cartulary D and a clear confirmation of the Cluniac affinity for the papacy in the fact that papal documents form a separate unit in the cartulary E.⁵⁹ That the Cluniacs would organise their archival memory in the way that best suited their juridical and memorial interests is shown by a passage in Cartulary D, in which a distinct quire contains a collection of fidelity oaths that the heads of Cluniac priories had to take at the request of the abbot of Cluny in 1245-46 at a time when the order was subject to grave conflicts.⁶⁰ Taken together, these cartularies reflect the self-representation of an institution that drew legitimacy from the papacy, communicated with political elites, and organized itself in a strict hierarchy under their abbot and then, more and more, under the authority of the General Chapter.⁶¹

By the year 1700, the Cluniac archives had been reorganised and inventoried. In the late eighteenth century, Louis-Henri Lambert de Barive made thorough descriptions of the documents that interested him and his employers, with an emphasis on the “Treasure of Archives (*trésor des archives*) situated in the very room that had been dedicated to Cluny’s archives since the thirteenth century.⁶² This eighteenth-century “treasure” seems to have preserved above all documents from the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries, as these were

⁵⁹ On Cluny and the kings of France in this period, see Melville, “Cluny und das französische Königtum”. On the problem of the localisation of papal documents in cartularies, see Müller, “Überlieferungsformen franko-römanischer Kontakte”.

⁶⁰ MS Paris, BNF, NAL 766, fol. 100-107; and Cygler, “L’ordre de Cluny et les *rebelliones*”.

⁶¹ Cygler, *Das Generalkapitel im hohen Mittelalter*, pp. 315-470.

⁶² Barret, “Un avocat au service du Cabinet des chartes”.

the privileged objects of Cluniac historical studies in this period.⁶³ In addition to providing the templates for Barive's copies, the "Treasury" was also the repository from which most of Cluny's original charters to survive the French Revolution came from, whether they were stolen from the archives or moved by the communal administration of Cluny before being forcibly annexed to the Bibliothèque nationale in 1881.

Conclusion

Throughout their long history, the Cluniacs were active curators of the memory of their institution and its relationship with secular society. They expressed the terms of these memories through liturgical commemoration, particularly the cult of the dead, through the composition of the lives of their saintly abbots and histories of their community, and through the preservation of documents of practice in their abbey's archive. As Cluniac monasticism developed over the course of the Middle Ages and into the early modern period, the early centuries of the abbey's history emerged as a focal point for monastic memory-keepers, which may account for the attention of modern historians to this period, despite the wealth of information available for Cluny's later history. At Cluny, the process of memory keeping was piecemeal, but taken together the sources through which the Cluniacs fashioned their identity expressed with consistency what they considered to be the most important characteristics of their institution: the abbey's close connection with the papacy; its active role in secular politics through its enduring relationships with kings and emperors; and the primary purpose of the brethren as prayful intercessors for the souls of the faithful departed.

⁶³ Hurel, "La représentation de Cluny", pp. 119 and 127-28. See also Saurette, "Excavating and Renovating Ancient Texts".