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**Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies**

**Title**

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**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9d61d05k>

**Journal**

Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 12(1)

**ISSN**

0069-6412

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**Publication Date**

1981-10-01

Peer reviewed

## RESEARCH FACILITIES IN NORMANDY AND PARIS: A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS OF MEDIEVAL NORMAN HISTORY

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The purpose of this guide is to acquaint students, especially those from the United States who are not generally familiar with European research facilities, with the libraries and archives of France.<sup>1</sup> French libraries, which have different underlying goals and objectives from their American counterparts, may at first confuse the U.S. researcher. Knowing in advance what differences exist and what problems arise will lessen unnecessary misunderstandings which might mar an otherwise enjoyable visit.

It should be noted that although this guide is written specifically for students of Norman history to 1204, many of the books and catalogues suggested will be of use to those working in English history during the same period as well as to historians working in later centuries of Norman history, and it is hoped that the general information and observations can benefit an audience with diverse research interests.

The American researcher should expect to find major differences between one's own university library—equipped with open shelves for easy browsing, accessible photocopy machines, and a vigorous inter-library loan system—and French libraries and archives. There are fundamental differences in attitude which can be devastating to the uninitiated. For example a seemingly straightforward phrase like "open Saturday" can be misconstrued. In most French institutions "open Saturday" means that the facility is open but not fully staffed. "Not fully staffed" is in turn a euphemism for "the researcher is to have ordered his documents ahead of time and they may be consulted on Saturday. No new requests will be met." The general difference which this

<sup>1</sup>The author would like to thank Alliance Française de New York and the Regents of the University of California for their help and support of his research. All times, dates, and prices cited in the article are subject to change without notice.

example illustrates is that French libraries are open substantially fewer hours per week than their American counterparts. Libraries are often closed three days a week. They also close during the lunch hour. The Bibliothèque Municipale of Rouen, serving a population of at least a quarter of a million, closes every day between noon and 2:00. Thus, the American researcher should expect fewer hours available to him or her each day.<sup>2</sup>

A second difference is the use of and reliance on the photocopy machine. They exist in France, but they are neither readily accessible nor inexpensive. At one major public library the only photocopy machine sat unplugged (because of service contract difficulties) from mid-November to mid-February. At the archives of Seine-Maritime a single copy costs at least 35¢ (an oversized copy can cost \$1.75) compared to the going rate in the United States of 5 or 10¢.

A third difference is the absence of open stacks, which eliminates general browsing and means that each book must be requested individually, usually in duplicate. Often there are limits to the number of requests allowed to a patron per day, and there can be the aggravation of waiting for ordered books which are unexpectedly delayed. An order can be met in as little as fifteen minutes, or take as long as several hours.

These things, along with the more obvious difficulty of having to communicate about highly complex matters in other than one's native language, all tend to militate against quick, efficient, and effortless research visits. Yet if these differences are anticipated, it is possible to make research in France easier. One soon discovers that it is wise and prudent to ask immediately upon arrival for the hours of the institution, operating procedures, and any services offered such as photocopying and microfilming, as well as the costs for those services.

One finds, however, that although the working hours and services will jolt the U.S. researcher, the rich holdings of original manuscripts and numerous rare books will be a great pleasure. At both the departmental archives and the municipal libraries one can expect to find impressive holdings of local and regional periodicals, as well as a large number of standard reference works. It is therefore more helpful for one's paleographic difficulties to carry

<sup>2</sup>One might add here, as well, that French holidays—when most institutions, including research facilities, are closed—are sometimes different from our own. They are New Year's Day (Jan. 1), Easter Sunday and Monday, Labor Day (May 1), Whitsunday and Whitmonday, Bastille Day (July 14), Assumption Day (Aug. 15), All Saints Day (Nov. 1), Armistice Day (Nov. 11), and Christmas Day (Dec. 25).

a magnifying glass than a copy of Cappelli's *Dizionario di abbreviature latine ed italiane*, which is easily found. A Latin grammar or dictionary will also be useful, since the French counterparts are obviously not geared to English readers. Most major French source collections (Migne, Bouquet, *Gallia Christiana*, etc.) are readily accessible; works written in English, however, no matter how well-known or essential, are only inconsistently available. Thus some but not all libraries will have volumes of the *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066-1154*.

Nor is it difficult for an American researcher to gain access to the archives and libraries of France. One needs only some form of identification (usually a passport) and a letter of introduction (in French) written on university stationery and stating the student's specific topic of research. One should carry several letters since some institutions keep them on file. At some of the larger facilities one needs to provide photographs of oneself and pay a small user's fee. It should be noted that the *carte de lecteur* obtained from the Archives Nationales conveniently entitles the bearer to make use of any of France's departmental archives.

Two books especially are recommended as valuable introductions to French research institutions: Erwin K. Welsch, ed., *Libraries and Archives in France: a Handbook*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1979); and L. M. Newman, *Libraries in Paris: A Student's Guide* (n.p. [London?], 1971), which includes a glossary of words commonly encountered in libraries. Both books contain good bibliographies and sound information. For a basic introduction to French archival history and organization, see Jean Favier's *Les Archives, Que sais-je?*, No. 805 (Paris, 1959). The most complete guide is the *Répertoire des bibliothèques et organismes de documentation* (Paris, 1971), along with its 1973 supplement, which lists by town the address, hours, and holdings of every research facility in France.

American researchers, often forced to spend only a few days or weeks at any one library or archives, will also want to know of the existence of *syndicates d'initiatives*, which are very like tourist information bureaus. There is one found in nearly every French town, and it can be a great aid to the foreigner. The staff is invariably friendly, speaks English, will give free maps and brochures, and—best—will help find a hotel.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>The address of the *syndicat d'initiative* for all of the cities discussed in the text is provided here. *Rouen*: Place de la cathédrale, facing the west facade of the cathedral. *Caen*: Place Saint-Pierre, in the center of the city. *Alençon*: 48, grande rue, directly across from l'église Notre Dame. *Évreux*:

It is also important for the American researcher to understand that medieval documents (both published and unpublished) are likely to be found in two different sorts of research facilities: archives and libraries. Both of them guard manuscripts, have books, periodicals, card catalogues, and reading rooms, and both can be consulted by researchers. The difference is that archives, as legal depositories of governmental documents, have a much more modest collection of books and periodicals than have libraries. Further, libraries are more fully equipped to deal with large numbers of readers. Generally speaking, one cannot predict in which kind of repository a particular kind of source material will be found, since documents from religious institutions were widely and haphazardly dispersed at the time of the French Revolution. Thus, for example, Rouen cathedral's thirteenth-century cartulary is found today in the Rouen Bibliothèque Municipale, whereas its original charters and related manuscripts are in the departmental archives of Seine-Maritime.

France is divided into ninety-five administrative divisions, known as departments, each with its own depository for governmental records, known as archives. (There is a national archives as well, discussed separately below.) The holdings for most of these archives date from the Middle Ages. All of the departmental archives use the same system of classification, dividing their holdings into various series. Materials from the period before 1789 are all found in nine series, each of which is represented by a letter of the alphabet from A through I. Students of Norman history, indeed most medievalists, will be interested primarily in two groups of documents: the G series and the H series. The *série G* comprises documents dealing with the secular clergy to 1789. This includes episcopal charters of confirmation, royal and baronial grants, and papal confirmations, etc., issued in favor of the cathedral churches. The *série H* deals with the regular clergy to 1789 and includes the same sorts of documents drawn up on behalf of the monasteries. The bulk of the material from the ducal period is found in the G and H series. It may be of interest, however, to check the remaining series—A (*actes du pouvoir souverain*), B (*cours et juridictions*), C (*administrations provinciales*), D (*instruction publique*), E (*féodalité*), and F (*extraordinaire*)—although they contain little from before the thirteenth century. The *série I* (*protestants*) will obviously not have records of direct relevance to medievalists.

Although all of the departmental archives follow the same series design-

nations, each has catalogues of its own collection of documents. These catalogues, called *Inventaires-sommaires*, are book-form inventories, often running several volumes, and most of them were compiled by the departmental archivists around the turn of the last century. Since these catalogues all follow the same general format (although they may vary considerably in the fullness of detail provided), it will be helpful to look at a sample entry from an *Inventaire-sommaire*:

G.3625. (Liasse.)—5 pièces, parchemin; 3 fragments de sceaux. *XII<sup>e</sup> siècle-1426*—Règlements pour le service divin en la cathédrale.—Règlement de l'archevêque Rotrou, portant que, pour avoir part à la distribution des revenus d'Angleterre et aux oblations qui se faisaient le jour de la Pentecôte, il fallait avoir assisté 8 mois aux offices de la cathédrale.—Peines portées par Pierre de Colmieu, archevêque de Rouen, du consentement du chapitre, contre les chanoines qui manquaient à l'office de la messe, 1240.—Règlement de Geoffroi, doyen, et du chapitre de Rouen, concernant l'office divin; le lendemain de l'Assomption, 1245; ledit règlement approuvé par Pierre de Colmieu, archevêque.—Ordonnance du chapitre interdisant, sous peine de parjure, de révéler les délibérations et actes secrets du chapitre, 1426.—Fragments du sceau de Pierre Colmieu et des sceaux de 2 chanoines.

This particular example is taken from the catalogue for the *série G* at the archives of Seine-Maritime. It first gives the document number (here G.3625), then explains that this is a packet (*liasse*) with five pieces of parchment and three broken seals. The entry gives the dating limits (twelfth century to 1426) and describes in some detail the contents of those five pieces of parchment, all of which deal with rules for conducting the divine service at Rouen cathedral. One might add that, as in this example, it is quite common for several documents to be grouped together in the same folder, and that consequently different deeds or charters can all bear the same number. Each of the five documents listed above is therefore identified as G.3625, and should the researcher wish to examine any or all of them, they must be requested by that number.

Normandy has five departmental archives which are of interest to the medieval historian. Their resources and facilities are discussed individually below.

## LES ARCHIVES DE LA SEINE-MARITIME (formerly SEINE-INFÉRIEURE)

*Location:* Cours Clémenceau, Rouen (postal code 76000). The archives adjoins the prefecture of police and is easily recognized by its tower (it is called the *tour des archives*), which is the tallest structure on the *rive gauche*.

*Hours:* Monday through Saturday, 9:00-18:00. One should note, however, that on Saturdays the archives is closed from 12:00 to 13:00 and only books and documents ordered in advance are available for consultation. Annual closing: July 1-15.

*Facilities:* The *tour des archives* was constructed shortly after World War II and consequently offers modern research conditions. There is ample desk space and comfortable chairs, and the reading room, located on the second floor, has a fine collection of books on Norman history.

Both photocopy and microfilm services are available. It is possible to order photocopies from journals, rare books, and even parchment charters. The cost is considerably more than in the United States, especially the "large format" which costs \$1.75 per copy. Microfilm, too, is expensive, and because of a sliding price scale it is generally only worth the cost when entire books or cartularies are needed. It is sensible to inquire about the costs in advance.

*Comments:* The Seine-Maritime holdings are the largest and most extensive of all the Norman departmental archives. The facility is well staffed, except at lunch hour. One can order a maximum of four documents at a time, and there is a limit of twenty requests per day.

*Catalogues:* There is no introductory guide to the archives. Paul Chevreux and Jules Vernier, *Les Archives de Normandie et de la Seine-Inférieure: État général des fonds* (Rouen, 1911), in spite of its title, is not an introduction to archival organization or holdings, although it is a valuable collection of facsimilies and transcriptions of several important and previously unpublished charters. For the G series see the *Inventaire-sommaire . . . Seine-Inférieure, série G*, ed. Charles de Beaurepaire, 7 vols. (Paris, 1868-1912). There is also an accompanying seven-volume *Table des noms d'hommes* and a seven-volume *Table des noms de lieu*.

Not all the documents for the H series have been catalogued. In fact, of the nearly 100 religious houses represented at the archives, documents from only fourteen have been classified. For those fourteen see *Répertoire numérique des archives départementales . . . série H*, ed. J. Vernier, 4 vols. (Rouen, 1921 ff.). For the remainder of the H series one must ask to see the typed manuscript *Série H. Régulier avant 1790*. This guide is fundamental and is indeed the key to the entire H series at Seine-Maritime. Many of the earliest and most important monastic documents in this *série H, non-classé* are to be found in large cartons. Thus, if the researcher is interested in, say,

twelfth-century baronial grants made on behalf of Notre-Dame de Bondeville, it will be necessary to ask for permission to see the cartons for 52-H, *non-classé*, and then to look through them charter by charter. Typed supplements for the G, H, and other series can be found in the numerous black binders located near the author card catalogue.

#### LES ARCHIVES DU CALVADOS

*Location:* 61, route de Lion-sur-Mer, Caen (postal code 14000). The archives is located on the far north side of the town, about a half-hour walk from the city center.

*Hours:* Monday through Friday, 8:30-18:30, although documents are delivered only in the hours 9:00-11:00 and 14:00-17:00. Closed weekends and holidays. Summer hours are 9:00-12:00 and 14:00-17:00. Annual closing: July 1-15.

*Facilities:* The archives of Calvados is housed in a modern building on the outskirts of Caen. It has a large reading room (on the second floor), a fine collection of regional periodicals and books relating to regional history, and a large holding in medieval manuscripts. There is a photocopy machine.

*Comments:* The staff is very congenial—which helps offset the frustration of being limited to one request at a time. The foreign researcher might ask the conservateur for special permission to request more than one document per order. Several issues of the *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie*, such as Marie Fauroux's *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie, (911-1066)* (Caen, 1961); and Lucien Musset's *Les Actes de Guillaume le Conquérant et de la reine Mathilde pour les abbayes caennaises* (Caen, 1967) are on sale at a very reasonable price from the renseignement desk.

*Catalogues:* There is an excellent introduction to the Calvados archives and its holdings: Gildas Bernard, *Guide des archives départementales du Calvados* (Caen, 1978). For the H series see *Répertoire numérique . . . Calvados, série H, articles 1-6082*, ed. A. Bénét and R. N. Sauvage, and *Répertoire numérique de la série H (H-6083 to H-7743)*, ed. R. N. Sauvage. A far more detailed inventory of articles H-1 through H-1807 is found in the *Inventaire-sommaire . . . abbaye d'Ardennes*, the *Inventaire-sommaire . . . abbaye d'Aunay*, and the *Inventaire-sommaire . . . abbaye Notre-Dame de Barbery*, all three edited by A. Bénét. Part of the H series—that relating to the women's abbeys—is uncatalogued at Calvados. See the *Guide des archives départementales du Calvados* for a list of the women's foundations represented, and ask to see the cartons for relevant houses. A useful survey of many of the uncatalogued documents for this period is found in Léchaudé d'Anisy, *Extrait des chartes, et autres actes normands ou anglo-normands, qui se trouvent dans les Archives du Calvados*, 2 vols. (Caen, 1834-35).



With one exception there is little of interest in the G series from before 1204. For the exception, the cathedral of Bayeux, see *Chapitre de Bayeux, supplément (mss. 321 à 1755)* and *Série G. Chapitre de Bayeux* by M.-J. Le Cacheux. Unfortunately, even with these two catalogues there remains a cloud of confusion surrounding the documents from Bayeux cathedral. Formerly they were stored at the cathedral library there; now many have been transferred to the archives of Calvados. From the list of Bayeux's holdings found in volume 10 of the *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France*, pp. 271-399, only the following remain in Bayeux: numbers 1-5, 10-15, 29-38, 40-41, 44, 46-50, 52, 55, 61-117, 119-121, 123-134, 138-141, 143, and 306. Of the rest, now in the Calvados archives, several have dual call numbers. For example, the cartulary of Notre Dame de Longues is listed both as H-6295 and as Bayeux manuscript 163. It is in fact found under the latter. Thus, it is best to rely on the Bayeux call numbers.

#### LES ARCHIVES DE L'ORNE

*Location:* 6-10, avenue de Basingstoke, Alençon (postal code 61000). The archives is located on the far northeast side of Alençon, a fifteen-minute walk from either the train station or the town center.

*Hours:* Monday through Friday, 9:00-12:00 and 13:30-17:30; Wednesday, 8:30-18:30. Closed weekends and holidays. Annual closing: July 1-15.

*Facilities:* L'Orne's archives, like those in a Seine-Maritime and Calvados, is housed in a modern structure. The reading room, on the fourteenth floor, commands a magnificent view of the surrounding region. There is a small but good collection of reference works, regional histories, and local periodicals. Photocopying is available.

*Comments:* The archives of l'Orne is not exceptionally rich in materials from the twelfth century or earlier. In nearby Sées there is a diocesan library at 13, rue cordelier, which houses the thirteenth-century cartulary of Sées cathedral.

*Catalogues:* There is nothing from the high Middle Ages in the G series at l'Orne. For the H series see the *Inventaire-sommaire . . . série H*, ed. L. Duval, 5 vols. (Alençon, 1891-1910).

#### LES ARCHIVES DE L'EURE

*Location:* 2, rue de Verdun, Évreux (postal code 27000). The archives is located about halfway between the cathedral and the abbey of St. Taurin.

*Hours:* Monday through Friday, 9:00-12:00 and 14:00-18:00; Saturday, 9:00-12:00 and 14:00-17:00. Closed Sunday and holidays. Annual closing: July 1-15.

*Facilities:* The archives of l'Eure is housed in facilities more outdated than any of the other Norman archives. The reading room is shared by both the readers and the typing staff. There are no reference works readily accessible. The nearest photocopy machine is next door in the Palais de Justice, severely limiting the effectiveness of that service. Microfilm is made by sending the documents to the archives of Seine-Maritime at Rouen, which likewise diminishes or alters the sort and numbers of documents which can be photographed.

*Comments:* The rather antiquated conditions of the archives can actually work to the researcher's advantage. The staff is very amiable and less tied to formalities than at many of the other archives. There was, for example, no limit set on the number of requests made per order or even per day. Although officially closed, it was possible to get permission to remain in the reading room during the lunch hour.

*Catalogues:* Marcel Baudot, *Les Sources de l'histoire du département de l'Eure, état sommaire des documents conservés aux archives du département de l'Eure* (Évreux, 1939), provides general descriptions of the archival holdings at l'Eure. See especially information on series G and H. The *État des instruments de recherche, archives de l'Eure*, (Évreux, 1974), lists additional catalogues compiled for all series since 1939.

For the G series see *Inventaire-sommaire . . . l'Eure . . . série G*, (Évreux, 1886) for numbers 1-1880. The supplementary volume by Michel Le Pesant, *Répertoire numérique dactylographié de la série G, supplément (1950-1960)* for numbers 1881-2515, offers no documents from the Middle Ages.

For the H series see *Inventaire-sommaire . . . l'Eure . . . série H*, (Évreux, 1893) for articles 1-1730. The sequel, *Répertoire numérique dactylographié de la série H, supplément*, for articles 1731-1820 offers a moderate number of fragments of grants and cartularies from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

See also the *Répertoire numérique dactylographié de la série F et FF* for diverse and previously uncatalogued materials.

#### LES ARCHIVES DE LA MANCHE

*Location:* 103, rue de Bayeux, St. Lô (postal code 50000).

*Hours:* Monday through Friday, 8:30-12:00 and 13:30-19:00; Saturday, 8:30-12:00 and 13:30-18:00.

*Comments:* The archives of la Manche, both the building and its holdings, was destroyed during the fighting of June 6, 1944. The destruction was so complete that all surviving documents can be listed on one typed page. The single article from the G series which survives is an eleventh-century Evangelary of the College of Mortain. From the H series, articles 114, 153, 205, and 415 (relating to the abbey of Blanchelande) still exist, as does one packet

relating to Mont Saint Michel which includes a charter of William the Bastard (edited by Marie Fauroux, *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie, (911-1066)* [Caen, 1967], no. 133).

*Catalogues:* Since none of the documents themselves remain, the catalogues loom much larger in importance. Copies of the *Inventaire-sommaire* for both the G and H series can still be found in other cities (G at the archives of l'Orne, and H at the archives of Seine-Maritime); however the student of medieval Norman history will find little or nothing of interest in the G series. The *Répertoire des bibliothèques et archives de la Manche*, published by the Société d'archéologie et d'histoire de la Manche (St. Lô), being an extract from the *Revue du département de la Manche* 4, fasc. 16 (October, 1962), is highly recommended as a guide to the hours, addresses, and holdings of the libraries and archives of the Manche region. The work is rich in bibliographic information.

#### LES ARCHIVES NATIONALES

*Location:* 60, rue des Francs-Bourgeois, Paris (postal code 75141). The nearest metro stop in Rambuteau.

*Hours:* Monday through Saturday, 9:30-18:00. Annual closing: July 1-15.

*Facilities:* The spacious grounds and august atmosphere tend to overawe. This can be diminished to some degree by first purchasing the *Guide du lecteur* (Paris, 1978) in the bookshop (the *boutique des Archives Nationales*). Next visit the information desk (*bureau des renseignements*), presenting there a letter of introduction and two photographs. Down the hall there is the *salle des inventaires* where all the catalogues and guides are found. The principal reading room for medievalists is the *salle Clisson*, reached by following the left exterior wall of the main building (as one faces it) about fifty yards, entering the doorway on the left, and climbing to the third floor. Photocopy and microfilm services are available.

*Comments:* The Archives Nationales serves as a depository for documents emanating from the French national government. It has its own system of classification, different from that in the departmental archives. See the *Guide du lecteur* for a concise listing.

Ordering manuscripts is at first confusing owing to the numerous different-colored request forms; this, too, is explained in the *Guide du lecteur*. It should also be pointed out that once ordered, it may take several hours for the documents to arrive.

*Catalogues:* The best place to begin is with the *Guide du lecteur*. See also Welsch's *Libraries and Archives in France* (cited above). The newly revised *État général des fonds* (Paris, 1978), (volume 1 for the Ancien Régime) is essential. Numerous specific catalogues are found in the *salle des inventaires*.

U. S. researchers will find that French libraries, like French archives, are far more likely to possess rare books and manuscripts than their American counterparts. Even small town libraries may have numerous and important manuscripts. Researchers should also note holdings of books and local periodicals not easily obtainable in the U.S. Nearly all French libraries' manuscript holdings can be found in the multi-volume *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France* (Paris, 1885 ff.) and its supplements, arranged by city. Volume 4, for example, lists the holdings of the Bibliothèque Municipale of Avranches; volume 2 includes Fécamp, Alençon, Évreux, and other Norman towns. Access to French libraries, like archives is gained with a letter of introduction, identification, and several photographs.

#### BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE DE ROUEN

*Location:* 3, rue Jacques Villon, Rouen (postal code 76000). The library shares the same roof with the Museum of Beaux-Arts, while its entrance is across the street from the Secq des Tournelles Museum.

*Hours:* Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00-12:00 and 14:00-19:00. Closed Sundays, Mondays, and holidays. Annual closing: August 1-31.

*Facilities:* The Rouen public library has impressive manuscript holdings (especially monastic documents for St. Ouen, St. Georges de Boscherville, Jumièges, St. Wandrille, and Fécamp), reference works, books on Norman history, and local periodicals. There is a photocopy machine, and microfilm reproduction is available.

*Comments:* The library is a first-rate facility for research in Norman history. The staff is very helpful, and numerous reference works line the walls of the reading room (located on the second floor). The card catalogue is difficult to use since there are two systems of classification: those books acquired before 1951, and those acquired after. In general the publication date will give the correct category—but not always, since some books published in the nineteenth century have only recently been added to the collection.

*Catalogues:* It is best to begin with volumes 1 and 2 of the *Catalogue général des manuscrits . . .*, ed. H. Omont (Paris, 1886-88) and supplements found in volume 43, ed. H. Loriguet (Paris, 1903) and volume 48, ed. H. Labrosse (Paris, 1927). The *Catalogue général* supplies universally recognized call numbers for all Rouen's manuscripts. For example, the thirteenth-century cartulary of Rouen cathedral is catalogued at the Rouen library as ms. Y 44, but the number assigned to it in the *Catalogue général des manuscrits . . .* is ms. 1193. At the Rouen library either number can be used to request the manuscript; at times, indeed, the numbers are combined and it is referred to as Rouen ms. Y 44 (1193).

An extremely valuable survey of the library's medieval holdings is François de Beaurepaire and M. Nortier, "Les Sources de l'histoire du moyen âge à la bibliothèque de la ville de Rouen," *Cahiers Léopold Delisle* 13, fasc. 2 (1964), pp. 1-80, esp. 1-18. See also the separate catalogues for the Leber collection and for the U series, both of which include books on medieval Norman history and which at times are not found in the general card catalogue.

#### BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE D'ÉVREUX

*Location:* 9, rue de l'horloge (postal code 27000).

*Hours:* Tuesday and Thursday, 15:00-19:00; Wednesday and Saturday, 10:00-12:00 and 13:30-17:30; Friday, 13:30-17:30. Closed Sundays, Mondays, and holidays.

*Comments:* The Évreux public library, although neither as large nor as impressive as the Rouen library, nonetheless has a considerable number of manuscripts from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

*Catalogues:* See volume 2 of the *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France*.

#### BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE D'ALENÇON

*Location:* 38, rue de college (postal code 61000).

*Hours:* Tuesday through Saturday, 14:00-18:00. Closed Sundays, Mondays, and holidays.

*Comments:* Like the Bibliothèque Municipale d'Évreux, Alençon's holdings are smaller than those of Rouen, but the library still has a significant number of twelfth and thirteenth century manuscripts.

#### BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE

*Location:* 58, rue de Richelieu, Paris (postal code 75084). The nearest metro stops are Palais royal, Pyramides, and Bourse.

*Hours:* Monday through Saturday, 9:00-17:00. Closed Sundays and holidays. Annual closing: the second and third weeks after Easter.

*Facilities:* The Bibliothèque Nationale is actually a group of several libraries. The Normanist will be interested only in the main library at 58, rue de Richelieu, which houses, among other things, the main reading room (*salle de travail*), the periodical room (both on the first floor), and the department of manuscripts (on the second floor). The *BN* has, needless to say, the most impressive holdings of any library in France.

*Comments:* All researchers must first visit the *service d'accueil* found at the main entrance. One is then sent to the bureau of *cartes de lecteurs*, also near the main entrance, to receive a reader's card. There one presents a letter of introduction and photographs, and pays a fee. If the researcher is making a

brief visit to the *BN*, it is practical to get the *carte pour 12 entrées* entitling the holder to a maximum of twelve visits. If one anticipates extended research at the *BN*, inquire about the *carte régulière*.

Procedures for using the *salle de travail* are at first complex; see the works by Newman and Welsch (cited above) for a detailed explanation. The reading room fills up very quickly; one should arrive by 9:30 to ensure obtaining a place.

The department of manuscripts is less crowded and generally has vacant chairs throughout the day. Upon entering the manuscript room, the researcher receives a plastic card with a seat number on it. After finding the correct seat, one can order up to three manuscripts at a time by placing the official request forms in the little box at the far end of the hall. Once received, the manuscripts can be set on hold for up to a week, although to see them again it is necessary to submit new request forms. There is a limit of ten requests per day (five on Saturday), and these include, surprisingly, any manuscripts already on hold for the reader. To leave the room briefly, for lunch for example, one simply leaves all manuscripts and materials at one's desk, and exits. If, however, one wants to leave *with* a briefcase, it is necessary to obtain a *laissez-passer* from the information desk at the center of the room and present it to the guard at the entrance.

*Catalogues*: For work in the manuscripts department see the *Catalogue alphabétique des livres imprimés mis à la disposition des lecteurs dans la salle de travail suivi de la liste des catalogues usuels du département des manuscrits* (Paris, 1973) and *Les Catalogues du département des manuscrits, manuscrits occidentaux* (Paris, 1974). Henri Stein's *Bibliographie général des cartulaires français ou relatifs à l'histoire de France* (Paris, 1907) will be useful since many of the cartularies listed are found at the *BN*. Normanists will find especially helpful Michael Nortier's *Les Sources de l'histoire de Normandie au département des manuscrits de la bibliothèque nationale: Le fonds des nouvelles acquisitions latines* (Nogent-sur-Marne, 1959).

For work in the *salle de travail* see *A Brief Guide to the Collection of Catalogues and Bibliographies*, found at the *service d'accueil*. It is also essential to make use of the enormous *salle des catalogues*, located directly below the main reading room.

Students of Norman history may also find it necessary to visit research facilities other than the principal ones discussed in this guide. The key in every case is to begin with the relevant *Inventaire-sommaire* at each archives and *Catalogue général des manuscrits* . . . at each library, and then to inquire about supplementary catalogues, additional guides or manuals, and any special collections. It is important to ask as well about the hours of operation,

procedures for requesting documents, and copy facilities. The researcher quickly develops a *modus operandi*, and will discover that the more institutions he or she visits, the easier and more pleasant the task becomes.

Indeed, it is appropriate in this regard to end with a passage from the American medievalist Charles Homer Haskins, who more than fifty years ago paved the way for all students of the history of Normandy. In his seminal work, *Norman Institutions*, he mused: "And as the work comes to a close, the memories which it recalls are not so much of dusty *fonds d'archives* or weary journeys on the Ouest-État, as of quiet days of study in provincial collections, [and] long evenings of reflection by the Orne or the Vire or in the garden of some cathedral city. . . ."

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