

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910460080403321
Autore	Smith Jay M. <1961->
Titolo	Monsters of the Gevaudan [[electronic resource]] : the making of a beast // Jay M. Smith
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Cambridge, Mass., : Harvard University Press, 2011
ISBN	0-674-06132-2
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (392 p.)
Disciplina	599.7730944/81
Soggetti	Popular culture - France - Gevaudan - History - 18th century Beast of Gevaudan - History Wolf attacks - France - Gevaudan - History - 18th century Wolves - France - Gevaudan Monsters - France - Gevaudan Narration (Rhetoric) - Social aspects - France - History Discourse analysis, Narrative Electronic books. Gevaudan (France) Social life and customs 18th century
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Introduction: The beast and its world -- Sounding the alarm -- Monsters real and imagined -- Digesting defeat -- A star is born -- The perils of publicity -- Heroes and skeptics -- Exaggerated expectations and extraordinary endings -- Narrative echoes past and present -- Conclusion: The beast in history -- Note on place names.
Sommario/riassunto	In a brilliant, original rendition, Monsters of the Gévaudan revisits a spellbinding French tale that has captivated imaginations for over two hundred years, and offers the definitive explanation of the strange events that underlie this timeless story. In 1764 a peasant girl was killed and partially eaten while tending a flock of sheep. Eventually, over a hundred victims fell prey to a mysterious creature, or creatures, whose cunning and deadly efficiency terrorized the region and mesmerized Europe. The fearsome aggressor quickly took on mythic status, and the beast of the Gévaudan passed into French folklore. What species was this killer, why did it decapitate so many of its

victims, and why did it prefer the flesh of women and children? Why did contemporaries assume that the beast was anything but a wolf, or a pack of wolves, as authorities eventually claimed, and why is the tale so often ignored in histories of the ancient régime? Smith finds the answer to these last two questions in an accident of timing. The beast was bound to be perceived as strange and anomalous because its ravages coincided with the emergence of modernity itself. Expertly situated within the social, intellectual, cultural, and political currents of French life in the 1760's, *Monsters of the Gévaudan* will engage a wide range of readers with both its recasting of the beast narrative and its compelling insights into the allure of the monstrous in historical memory.
