

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910798208703321
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Titolo	Mary in early christian faith and devotion // Stephen J. Shoemaker
Pubbl/distr/stampa	New Haven, Connecticut : , : Yale University Press, , [2016] Â©2016
ISBN	0-300-21953-9
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource
Disciplina	232.9109
Soggetti	Church history - Primitive and early church, ca. 30-600
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- CONTENTS -- Preface and Acknowledgments -- Introduction. Mapping a New Approach to Early Marian Piety -- Chapter One. A Virgin Unspotted: Devotion to Mary in the First Two Centuries -- Chapter Two. Mother of God and Mother of Mysteries: The Third Century -- Chapter Three. Mother of the Great Cherub of Light: The Book of Mary's Repose -- Chapter Four. A Cult Following: The Six Books Dormition Apocryphon -- Chapter Five. The Memory of Mary: The Fourth and Early Fifth Centuries -- Chapter Six. The Scepter of Orthodoxy: The Cult of the Virgin and the Council of Ephesus -- Conclusions -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	Here, a historian of Christianity explores the full story of the emergence and development of the Marian cult in the early Christian centuries. The means by which Mary, mother of Jesus, came to prominence have long remained strangely overlooked despite, or perhaps because of, her centrality in Christian devotion. Gathering together fresh information from often neglected sources, including early liturgical texts and Dormition and Assumption apocrypha, Stephen Shoemaker reveals that Marian devotion played a far more vital role in the development of early Christian belief and practice than has been previously recognized, finding evidence that dates back to the latter half of the second century.