

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910818403703321
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Titolo	Rewriting saints and ancestors : memory and forgetting in France, 500-1200 // Constance Brittain Bouchard
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania : , : University of Pennsylvania Press, , 2014 ©2014
ISBN	0-8122-9008-9
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (379 p.)
Collana	Middle Ages Series
Disciplina	944/.01072
Soggetti	Historiography - France - History - To 1500 France History To 987 Historiography France History Medieval period, 987-1515 Historiography France History To 987 Sources France History Medieval period, 987-1515 Sources
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	Front matter -- Contents -- Illustrations -- Preface -- Notes on Terminology -- Introduction -- 1. Cartularies: Remembering the Documentary Past -- 2. The Composition and Purpose of Cartularies -- 3. Twelfth-Century Narratives of the Past -- 4. Polyptyques: Twelfth-Century Monks Face the Ninth Century -- 5. An Age of Forgery -- 6. Remembering the Carolingians -- 7. Creation of a Carolingian Dynasty -- 8. Western Monasteries and the Carolingians -- 9. Eighth-Century Transitions: The Evidence from Burgundy -- 10. Great Noble Families in the Early Middle Ages -- 11. Early Frankish Monasticism -- 12. Remembering Martyrs and Relics in Sixth-Century Gaul -- Conclusion -- Appendix I. Monasteries in Burgundy and Southern Champagne -- Appendix II. Churches in Auxerre -- List of Abbreviations -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index -- Acknowledgments
Sommario/riassunto	Thinkers in medieval France constantly reconceptualized what had come before, interpreting past events to give validity to the present and help control the future. The long-dead saints who presided over churches and the ancestors of established dynasties were an especially crucial part of creative memory, Constance Brittain Bouchard contends.

In *Rewriting Saints and Ancestors* she examines how such ex post facto accounts are less an impediment to the writing of accurate history than a crucial tool for understanding the Middle Ages. Working backward through time, Bouchard discusses twelfth-century scribes contemplating the ninth-century documents they copied into cartularies or reworked into narratives of disaster and triumph, ninth-century churchmen deliberately forging supposedly late antique documents as weapons against both kings and other churchmen, and sixth- and seventh-century Gallic writers coming to terms with an early Christianity that had neither the saints nor the monasteries that would become fundamental to religious practice. As they met with political change and social upheaval, each generation decided which events of the past were worth remembering and which were to be reinterpreted or quietly forgotten. By considering memory as an analytic tool, Bouchard not only reveals the ways early medieval writers constructed a useful past but also provides new insights into the nature of record keeping, the changing ways dynasties were conceptualized, the relationships of the Merovingian and Carolingian kings to the church, and the discovery (or invention) of Gaul's earliest martyrs.
