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In having afforded me a unique array of professional opportunities, my experience as a Chateaubriand Fellow has been pivotal in my development as an early career scholar. The opportunity to spend a year working with original documents in over a dozen municipal, departmental, and national archives in France has enabled me to rethink my doctoral research in a variety of innovative ways. Before undertaking my archival work, I had been pursuing a more traditional approach of understanding the twelfth century emergence of the medieval French state, itself the precursor to the modern bureaucratic state, as predominantly the function of princes attempting to recreate the administrative frameworks of rulership that ostensibly characterized the Carolingian and, previously, Roman state. Direct, sustained engagement with unpublished archival materials, however, has expanded my awareness of the instrumental roles played by the ideological pressures of the crusading environment, the increasingly extensive participation of elite women in the political sphere, and cross-cultural influences from the Islamic World. A more substantial consideration of these factors transforms our understanding of how and why ideas concerning power and authority in Europe experienced a profound conceptual shift during the earlier twelfth century, a shift that would engender the paradigms necessary for the later emergence of the modern, bureaucratic state. The reframing of my research along such lines would not have been possible, were it not for the year of extended archival work provided by the Bourse Chateaubriand. Additionally, the year of affiliation with C.E.S.C.M.—Centre d'Études Supérieures de Civilisation Médiévale—in Poitiers has granted me the opportunity to develop lasting, professional relationships with numerous French scholars. Through colloquia and conferences in various cities across France, I have been able to benefit from the most recent intellectual currents in French scholarly circles as well as to offer, in return, the American scholarly perspective. This synergy not only has proven generative for our immediate research but has also laid the groundwork for further collaborations at future conferences and in upcoming publications. Indeed, the Bourse Chateaubriand is a tremendous honor and an invaluable resource, important toward both the development of young scholars and the cultivation of professional and personal ties between the peoples of France and the US.