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# Questions of Gender in Byzantine Society

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Gender was a key social indicator in Byzantine society, as in many others. While studies of gender in the western medieval period have appeared regularly in the past decade, similar studies of Byzantium have lagged behind. Masculine and feminine roles were not always as clearly defined as in the West, while eunuchs made up a 'third gender' in the imperial court. The present collection of essays uncovers gender roles in the imperial family, in monastic institutions of both genders, in the Orthodox church, and in the nascent cult of Mary in the east. It puts the spotlight on flashpoints over a millennium of Byzantine rule, from Constantine the Great to Irene and the Palaiologoi, and covers a wide geographical range, from Byzantine Italy to Syria.

**Contents:** An introduction to questions of gender in Byzantium, *Bronwen Neil*; Perceptions of Byzantine virtus in southern Italy, from the 8th to 11th centuries, *Paul Brown*; 'Till death do us part': family life in Byzantine monasteries, *Lynda Garland*; Psalmody and Socrates: female literacy in the Byzantine empire, *Amelia R. Brown*; Changing conceptions of Mary in 6th-century Byzantium: the Kontakia of Romanos the Melodist, *Sarah Cador-Whyte*; Ghosts in the machine: the lives and deaths of Constantinian imperial women, *Liz James*; Regarding women on the throne: representations of Empress Irene, *Bronwen Neil*; The brides of 1420: men looking at women's bodies, *Diana Gilliland Wright*; Bearding Byzantium: masculinity, eunuchs and the Byzantine life course, *Shaun Tougher*; The spiritual valency of gender in Byzantine society, *Damien Casey*; Bibliography; Index.

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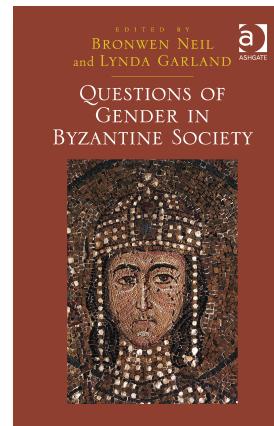
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