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INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Η γυναίκα στη μέση βυζαντινή εποχή

Κοινωνικά πρότυπα και καθημερινός βίος
στα αγιολογικά κείμενα

(1st reprint)

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ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ
ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ
ΤΟΜΕΑΣ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ

ΜΟΝΟΓΡΑΦΙΕΣ 6

Κατερίνα Νικολάου

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The subject matter of the study is the Middle Byzantine woman, with a focus on women in urban centers and rural societies. The book researches the various role of the female individual in the family, the wider social milieu and the economy. The author examines the Byzantine woman's actions and sketches her presence within the family nucleus as a daughter, sister and, after her own marriage, as a wife and mother. The work also looks into the social or legal requirements that safeguarded and controlled her private life, the amount of direct influence she was allowed to exercise in social and political affairs, as well as the extent of her participation in the economy.

Contemporary works of hagiography prove to be an invaluable – though generally controversial – source, providing a treasure-trove of useful evidence that helps draw a picture of the Byzantine woman. A cross-examination of the legal frameworks of State and Church in effect at the time (civil and canon law, respectively) allows a glimpse of social reality as opposed to the ideal models being enforced.

Hagiographical texts (and other works besides) taught the Byzantine woman how to live her life and regulate her family and social relations according to the principles emanating from Church doctrine, but they also reveal to the modern historian what The Life of a Byzantine Woman was expected to be and what it actually was.