

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910953988803321
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Titolo	The perfect servant : eunuchs and the social construction of gender in Byzantium / / Kathryn M. Ringrose
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Chicago, : University of Chicago Press, c2003
ISBN	9786611126025 9781281126023 1281126020 9780226720166 0226720160
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (309 p.)
Disciplina	305.3/09495
Soggetti	Eunuchs - Byzantine Empire Sex role - Byzantine Empire Byzantine Empire Civilization
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. 257-285) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Illustrations -- Spelling Conventions for Greek Names -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction: Eunuchs of Byzantium: Context and Definition -- Part I. Gender as Social Construct -- Part II. Becoming Protagonists -- Appendix: Spelling Equivalents, Traditional and Reformed -- Frequently Used Abbreviations -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	The Perfect Servant reevaluates the place of eunuchs in Byzantium. Kathryn Ringrose uses the modern concept of gender as a social construct to identify eunuchs as a distinct gender and to illustrate how gender was defined in the Byzantine world. At the same time she explores the changing role of the eunuch in Byzantium from 600 to 1100. Accepted for generations as a legitimate and functional part of Byzantine civilization, eunuchs were prominent in both the imperial court and the church. They were distinctive in physical appearance, dress, and manner and were considered uniquely suited for important roles in Byzantine life. Transcending conventional notions of male and female, eunuchs lived outside of normal patterns of procreation and

inheritance and were assigned a unique capacity for mediating across social and spiritual boundaries. This allowed them to perform tasks from which prominent men and women were constrained, making them, in essence, perfect servants. Written with precision and meticulously researched, *The Perfect Servant* will immediately take its place as a major study on Byzantium and the history of gender.
