***Coming of Age in Byzantium: Adolescence and Society*, ed. by Despoina Ariantzi. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018. 306 pp. ISBN: 978-3-11-057646-7.**

This book seeks to offer insights into the concept of adolescence in Byzantium. Recent years have seen the rise of works dedicated to the study of children and childhood in Byzantium, such as *The Byzantine Child: Children and Childhood in Byzantium*, eds A. Papaconstantinou and A. M. Talbot (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2009) and C. Hennessy. *Images of Children in Byzantium* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008). To these, one must add numerous studies on family and education. However, despite this growing interest in childhood, adolescence remains a problematic and rather neglected topic in Byzantine studies. This collection of twelve essays seeks to remedy this deficiency and to offer an all-rounded study of various aspects of Byzantine adolescence. Ultimately, it addresses an often overlooked topic in Byzantine studies. The essays collected in the volume focus chiefly on the sixth to fifteenth centuries, and span a broad array of topics and methodologies, from history, legal history, and art history to modern psychological theories and adolescence in the medieval West. As such, this volume may appeal to a wide group of scholars with many differing interests and specialities.

As noted by the editor of the volume, Despoina Ariantzi, the definition of adolescence remains a contested issue. By relying on historical evidence and recent studies, she argues that since Antiquity, adolescence was perceived as a distinct stage of biological and psychological development in all societies, Byzantium being no exception. All of the contributors adhere to this understanding and some even rely on modern theories of sociology and psychology. On the whole, they are mostly careful in their analyses, looking for case studies and patterns rather than rashly generalizing their conclusions. Similarly, the majority of the authors acknowledge the limitations of the available source material and refrain from placing an undue emphasis on modern theories. Overall, the studies and their conclusions are balanced.

The volume starts with an introduction by the editor, whose interest in adolescence stems from her doctoral dissertation on this topic. She sets the background for the essays by reviewing the previous and related scholarship, as well as discussing studies of adolescence in several fields, such as Western medieval history, anthropology and sociology. Ariantzi points out that one cannot actually reach the 'social reality' of Byzantine adolescence because of the limitations of the available source material. She then proposes that by studying the ideas put forth by Byzantine authors, legal practices, medical doctrines on age and especially hagiographical works, scholars can discern patterns, concepts and ideals pertaining to Byzantine adolescence. As examples for possible avenues

of research, she refers to the literary representations of adolescents, such as their beauty and facial hair, legal status of the adolescents, passage rites, gender and family relations. All of these are amply addressed by the following essays.

Caseau studies the threshold of accountability for Byzantine adolescents. She finds that fifteen appears in the sources as the age at which a person was held accountable for their decisions and deeds. However, she also points out that this age threshold could fluctuate between fourteen and seventeen. For instance, at fourteen, adolescents could write a will, yet could not manage their properties until seventeen. Similarly, Basil the Great stipulated that the age of monastic consent should be sixteen or seventeen. Caseau finally studies marriage patterns for Byzantine adolescents, arguing that in many cases, early marriages deprived girls of their adolescence. For the boys, she argues that the stereotypical privileged, misbehaving boys of hagiographical account probably came close to typical adolescent boys. The lengthy essay by Prinzing offers an extensive study of adolescence in legal sources between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. He focuses on the corpuses of Chomatenos and Apokaukos, as well as those of the Patriarchal court. All in all, he studies forty-nine cases and provides helpful tables that summarize the basics of each case. Prinzing concludes that adolescents appear in legal sources mostly concerning issues of inheritance and property, with several cases also pertaining to careers. On many occasions, relatives of the adolescent heirs, attempt to usurp their rights over their properties. One case concerns homicide, dealing with the murder of an adolescent boy. The cases and their legal aspects are meticulously analysed throughout the essay. This study is one of the strongest contributions in the volume. It constitutes an invaluable reference for scholars who are interested in issues of adolescence, youth, family and inheritance.

Talbot focuses on adolescents within a monastic context by chiefly relying on hagiographical sources and argues that attitudes to adolescents were divergent in monastic circles. She studies the appearance of facial hair and its perception as diminishing the sexual temptation posed by adolescent boys, loose behaviour of the monastic novices and various tasks assigned to them. Concerning this last point, she concludes that novices were often entrusted with menial and unpleasant duties to harden their spirits. Like Talbot, Kiousopoulou's main sources are hagiographical accounts, but she also incorporates some legal documents and a satirical text. She examines the representation of adolescence in these Late Byzantine texts, focusing on the rites of passages, social expectations and the difference between urban and rural settings. Melichar opts for a gender-specific study and examines the lives of adolescent women. She analyses the differences between adolescent women and men regarding social norms and expectations,

concluding that the goals of women pertained more to familial relationships. To achieve their goals, women also operated within a more limited sphere of action than men, and often had to resort to irregular paths.

Brubaker and Hennessy study adolescence within an art-historical context. Both of these essays are solid contributions to the volume. Brubaker finds that adolescence was represented as a distinct stage of life in Byzantine images. She pays special attention to representations of imperial adolescents on coins. She convincingly argues that the depictions of adolescent emperors and empresses could be manipulated according to political goals. For instance, the changes in their bodily size, facial hair and features could point to their gradual maturation. The depictions on coins could also extend or shorten the youthful appearance of the imperial figures depending on the political context. For imperial women, it was not their age, but marital status that altered their depictions. Hennessy's essay examines the notions of beauty and youth in Byzantine art. She argues that many instances reveal a visual appreciation of youth. However, beauty and youth could also signify sexual temptation. Hennessy demonstrates that artists distinctly portrayed the bodily size, skin and facial features of adolescents. Like Brubaker, she concludes that adolescence was represented as a distinct life stage in art. Both essays are accompanied by good-quality colour images.

Galatariotou approaches adolescence from an anthropological point of view and examines the rites of passages in twelfth-century Constantinopolitan literature. She focuses on the cases of Digenis Akrites and romances, arguing that one can trace rites of passages in these literary works. Ariantzi analyses the building of social identity among adolescents between sixth to twelfth centuries, focusing on peer groups. She points out the limitations posed by the ideal saint figures in attempting to study adolescents. Ariantzi examines the differences between the social identity and daily activities of imperial, aristocratic, and lower class adolescents. She concludes that the wild, sporting and irresponsible adolescent figures in hagiography were actually representative of 'normal' or 'typical' adolescent boys. The essay by Pratsch looks into the illnesses of adolescents. By relying especially on healing narratives, Pratsch argues that cases of women mostly pertain to injuries and illnesses that could prevent marriage, and that healing was achieved by divergent methods, such as medical doctors and the practice of sleeping in holy places. Finally, the essays by Sirch and Goetz do not have Byzantine themes. However, they complement the volume by offering insights from different disciplines. Sirch discusses the concept of 'Emerging Adulthood', a recent theory in psychology, while Goetz carries out a study of adolescents in Western medieval texts. He highlights the varied use of the term of *adolescens* and discusses the divergent notions ascribed to it.

All in all, this volume brings together a broad array of topics and methodologies, and may appeal to a wide group of scholars interested in adolescence, youth or family structures. In some instances, the reader may find that hagiographical sources dominate the discussions. This is partially due to the nature of the available source material. Yet, sources could have been more varied. For instance, histories or literary/rhetorical texts like poetry and orations hardly make an appearance. Likewise, it should be pointed out that some authors merely 'extract' information from their hagiographical sources as opposed to analysing them. The length of the essays also varies greatly; some are only two or three pages long. However, on the whole, this volume addresses a void in scholarship and offers many insights into various aspects of adolescence in Byzantium.

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***Saints of North-East England, 600–1500*, ed by Margaret Coombe, Anne Mouron, and Christiania Whitehead. Turnhout: Brepols, 2017. xviii + 363 pp. €100. ISBN: 978-2-503-56715-0.**

The production of this volume is the result of a conference held at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, in 2015 which brought together scholars whose work covers topics relating to the North of England. It incorporates contributions both from well-established medievalists and more recent entrants into the field, and its essays span the entire medieval period and indeed beyond it. While St Cuthbert appears frequently throughout the book (he is the subject of four of its fourteen essays, and is discussed in conjunction with other saints in a further six), it also contains a welcome selection of work introducing somewhat lesser-known characters such as St Godric of Finchale and the bishop-saints of Hexham. The essays are grouped into three sections, with the first concentrating on Anglo-Saxon Northumbria, the second entitled 'The Long Twelfth Century', and the third discussing visual and material culture.

The scene is comprehensively set in the introduction, with an appraisal of the establishment of Northumbria's regional identity centred initially on Bede's home institution of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow and subsequently through Cuthbert's cult at Durham, followed by a summary of the scholarship preceding this collection of essays. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the conclusion is that more needed to be done, and this volume is a very good example of the type of work that has been needed to fill the twenty-year gap since the production of the last major set of studies concentrating on the region. While a number of analyses of