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It has been underlined in many quarters how biblical and patristic texts have contributed to the construction of new female models, in particular in the broad chronological span that goes from the 3rd to the 4th century AD. The role of aristocrats in the Christianization process has been explored in several studies. In this volume, starting from the examination of Gerolamo's letters to Paola, we try to analyze a peculiar aspect of married life in the Christian era, that relating to the choice and conduct of life as a widow. With the examination of the letters to Paola we try, albeit limited, to highlight how thanks to this woman we are faced, in the 4th century, with a variety of situations that are still unclear to us in relation to the choices made by aristocrats in the period examined. The role played by belonging to the aristocratic environment acts as a fundamental element in this extraordinary conversion. By adopting the monastic habit Paola, and all the women who followed her example, went against all traditional rules, obviously questioning first of all the marital statute and rejecting all the dogmas dear to the senatorial elite. Paola's departure for the East, following the scandal caused by the death of Blesilla, weakened by harsh fasting, and Eustochio's equally extreme choice almost simultaneously call into question everything that the nobility actually expected from these female representatives of a noble house.

*Introduzione*

- *Capitolo I. Paola, moglie e madre*
  - I.1. Paola, cristiana e vedova
  - I.2. Vedove e diaconesse: un clero femminile?
  - I.3. Paola e Gerolamo: la pressione sociale
  - I.4. Non solo contro Paola. Gerolamo mendax
  - I.5. La questione delle seconde nozze
  - I.6. La Conversione dell'aristocrazia senatoria: un inizio al femminile?
  - I.7. Paola modello di cultus
- *Capitolo II. Modelli di donne a confronto*
  - II.1. Paola, Lea e Fabia Aconia Paolina
  - II.2. Fabia Aconia Paolina
  - II.3. L'epitaffio di Pretestato
- *Capitolo III. Paola, le figlie, la scelta definitiva*
  - III.1. Il matrimonio e la verginità
  - III.2. La lettera 22 a Eustochio
  - III.3. Paola, una buona madre?
- *Capitolo IV. Caratteri di un'intellettuale cristiana*
  - IV.1. L'ingenium di Paola
  - IV.2. La cultura e le "donnette"
  - IV.3. La lettera 46: Paola e Eustochio a Marcella
- *Capitolo V. Le scelte più estreme: povertà assoluta e monachesimo*
  - V.1. Paola, la monaca cristiana
  - V.2. La vita della monaca
- *Capitolo VI. Lasciare tutto: pellegrinaggio e vita monastica*
  - VI.1. L'ultimo passo verso la vita perfetta: il monastero
  - VI.2. L'Epitaffio di Paola VI.3. Paola e Gerolamo
- *Capitolo VII. Conclusioni*
- *Appendice*
  - L'epistolario di Gerolamo a Paola
- *Indice delle fonti antiche*
- *Bibliografia*