



# **Transgressive Typologies: Constructions of Gender and Power in Early Tang China (Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series)**

*Rebecca Doran*

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The exceptionally powerful Chinese women leaders of the late seventh and early eighth centuries—including Wu Zhao, the Taiping and Anle princesses, Empress Wei, and Shangguan Wan'er—though quite prominent in the Chinese cultural tradition, remain elusive and often misunderstood or essentialized throughout history. *Transgressive Typologies* utilizes a new, multidisciplinary approach to understand how these figures' historical identities are constructed in the mainstream secular literary-historical tradition and to analyze the points of view that inform these constructions.

Using close readings and rereadings of primary texts written in medieval China through later imperial times, this study elucidates narrative typologies and motifs associated with these women to explore how their power is rhetorically framed, gendered, and ultimately deemed transgressive. Rebecca Doran offers a new understanding of major female figures of the Tang era within their literary-historical contexts, and delves into critical questions about the relationship between Chinese historiography, reception-history, and the process of image-making and cultural construction.

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