

Managing Emotion: Passions, Emotions, Affects, and Imaginings in Byzantium

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Byzantinists were early into the field of the study of emotion with Henry Maguire's ground-breaking article on sorrow, published in 1977. But since then classicists and western medievalists have developed new ways of understanding how emotional communities work and where the ancients' concepts of emotion differ from our own. It is time perhaps to celebrate Maguire's work, but also to look at what is distinctive about Byzantine emotion. We should like to encourage speakers to focus on a single emotion and to use it as a vantage point to investigate central aspects of the Byzantine worldview. We want to look at emotions as both cognitive and relational processes. Our focus is not only the construction of emotions with respect to perception and cognition; we are also interested in how emotions were communicated and exchanged across broad (multi)linguistic, political and social boundaries. We expect to receive comment from classics, western medieval studies, philosophy, and psychology. The comparative stance will help us disclose what is peculiar to the Byzantine 'emotional constellation.' Priorities are twofold: to arrive at an understanding of what the Byzantines thought of as emotions and to comprehend how theory shaped their appraisal of reality.

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