

ABSTRACTS

Emotions and philosophical writing: the case of charmolype

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The Nicaean emperor Theodore II Laskaris, a man with literary flair and talent, spoke often about his bitter joy, *charmolype*. The paper will begin by looking closely at the contexts, all secular, in which the author employed this concept and will proceed to discuss the representation of laughter and tears in his letters, orations, essays and satirical pieces. What can one learn about the historically specific milieu of the Byzantine court in Nicaean exile—for instance, about humor and lament as public display and performance? And what can be gleaned about the author's personality, agendas and daily life through his jokes and lamentations? The literary context will not be ignored. When Theodore Laskaris poured his heart out in philosophical essays and letters after the sudden passing of his wife Elena (1252), he approached old themes of religious compunction (*katanyxis*) and lament. The satire of his head tutor shows grotesque humour worthy of the twelfth century. Yet Theodore Laskaris arrived at mixtures and interpretations that were distinctly his own. The paper will examine some of the immensely rich vocabulary and metaphors of emotion. Specific examples will demonstrate his particular bittersweet sense of humour, which is pervasive in his letters. Finally, the paper will assess the social poignancy of his jokes and his conviction that humour itself can be philosophical.

Poetry in emotion: the case of anger

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After a long period of neglect, the historical study of emotions is now gaining momentum. For the case of anger, this has resulted in some collective volumes and monographs, dealing with anger in Classical Antiquity and the Western Middle Ages. These studies offer several (often conflicting) methodologies and raise issues that are important when we set out to investigate the emotion of anger in Byzantium. Few scholars today would still favor an approach that considers emotions as universal psychobiological realities that are directly reflected in textual records. Rather, texts offer us representations of the expression of anger; moreover, of anger as it was publicly performed, not privately felt. But by doing this, texts may tell us something about the expectations and normative frameworks in Byzantium regarding anger. Moreover, we may make a useful distinction between “justified” or even “righteous” anger, and anger seen as a vice. We should also pay attention to the lexical labels that a language (in this case, Byzantine Greek) uses for something that is in English referred to with the term “anger”. For literary texts, we need to ask the question whether *topoi* regarding anger are merely fossilized phrases or perhaps point to underlying cultural assumptions or enduring conceptualizations of anger.

In this paper, I will have a look at invective or vituperative poetry (for several reasons, the term “satire”, although often used for this kind of poetry, is not entirely satisfactory). In this poetry, anger, being expressed by the person speaking, or (more often) imputed to the person attacked, plays an important role. I will propose two approaches which I believe are compatible despite the fact that the first leans more towards “universalism” and the latter towards constructivism. First, the cognitive approach maintains that, as physical beings in a

physical world, we have fixed and recognizable ways in which we conceptualize the world and our emotions. Therefore, in the wake of the works of Kövecses, I will discuss the relationship between the representation of anger in these poems and the cognitive models by which humans generally perceive and express anger in their speech, through metaphor and metonymy. Second, I will make use of the concept of “emotional communities”, proposed by Barbara Rosenwein, to describe the normative frameworks and social motivations which caused a coherent group of people to represent and value emotions in a certain way. Thus, it will interest me how the description (the “emotion-terms”) and valuation of anger in invective poetry can be an indication of social relationships, more particularly the desire to confirm or to contest social hierarchy.

The ascetic construction and performance of emotions: *lype* and *akedia*

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The expression and management of sadness were controversial in the early Christian centuries. While St. Paul allowed that *lype* could prove integral to Christian self-fashioning, he was well aware of the fatal danger of the passion (2 Cor. 7:10). Yet Paul was a notable exception among pre-Constantinian Christians, who in general envisaged a pious existence from which sadness (*lype*) should be eliminated: the Christian should embody that “joy made complete” (John 16:24, 15:11, 17:13) that Christ proclaimed to his followers. Hermas (ca. 150), for example, counted *lype* as the worst passion of all and most dangerous to the Christian (*Mand.* 10.2). The dominant early Christian suspicion or outright hostility toward the display of sadness is an interesting counterpoint to the prevalence of pious sorrow in later periods, such as Middle Byzantine visual culture, which H. Maguire has characterized as depicting sorrow more than any other emotion, not to mention the spirituality of the western European Middle Ages, an era “saturated with tears,” in the words of E.M. Cioran. How do we get from a Christianity in which sorrow is at best paradoxical and at worst a grievous sin, to a Christianity that embraces sadness as a valued mode of piety?

I shall examine a turning point in Christian attitudes toward defining and managing sadness and depression. It is in the emergence of Christian ascetic thought and practice in the early Byzantine period that we see a sustained debate emerge about the meaning and utility of the painful emotions of sadness and depression in the process of spiritual self-fashioning. I will focus on the influential psychology of the passions of Evagrius Pontikos (345-399) and others writing on ascetic emotions in the early Byzantine period. Evagrius wrote extensively about *lype* and about the related (and rather new) passion *akedia* (translated variously as listlessness, dejection, depression, or sloth). Evagrius’s construction of these emotions as two of his “eight evil thoughts” would have a long influence in Byzantine ascetic thought as well as in the religious (and even secular) psychology of western Europe through modernity. I will explore important differences between the two passions delineated by Evagrius, his contemporaries, and those later influenced by this tradition. Evagrius and others saw these passions as demonic and dangerous to the ascetic, but also as necessary obstacles for the authentic spiritual progress of the ascetic. At the same time Evagrius and others embraced the Pauline ambiguity of *lype* as a passion that also leads to repentance and spiritual renewal. Given the perennial interest in *akedia* and *lype* as components and problems of spiritual and ascetic practice (cf. K. Norris’s widely reviewed memoir of depression, *Akedia and Me*) I will focus on exploring what is distinctive about early Byzantine approaches to *lype* and *akedia*, and what light these early Byzantine authors shed on the changing approaches toward

sadness and depression in ascetic practice and care of the self in Byzantine culture. They construct *lype* and *akedia* as distinct though related phenomena that speak to the socially bound concerns and needs of their “emotional communities.” The construction and regulation of emotional pain within such ascetic communities sets the early Byzantine period apart from both pre-Constantinian Christian “emotionology” and the later elision of *lype* and *akedia* that would have a long-lasting influence on Christianity spirituality.

Emotional communities and the loss of the individual: the case of grief

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Penthos – grief or mourning – is one of the best-explored emotions in the realm of Byzantine studies. Beginning with Irénée Hausherr, *penthos* and its practical instantiations in weeping, sorrow, and acts of contrition have been located squarely at the center of Christian practices of repentance and compunction for humanity’s sin. This “joyful grief” appears as a central element in the path towards the individual’s spiritual transformation, so much so that contemporary scholars have occasionally argued that this alone constituted true grief in the Christian imagination.

Yet Byzantines did not reserve their grief for wholly spiritual matters; a separate but equally significant tradition of *penthos* surrounds a more this-worldly manifestation thereof, namely that of grief over the loss of a loved one. Such was the case particularly when a death was perceived as “untimely,” as in the case of children who failed to outlive their parents. Byzantine writers wrestled with the question whether grief at another’s death was indeed justified – an appropriate emotion, or the expression of a dangerous passion – even in instances where the departed had fallen far short of her ideal lifespan, frustrating the hopes of her family and community.

In the process, Byzantine authors drew upon biblical exemplars of grieving parents, or indeed ascribed grief to parents not obviously so depicted, to model appropriate responses to death and bereavement for families as well as churches at large. By calling on Sarah and Abraham, Jephthah and his household, Eve and Adam, David, Job, and their respective female counterparts, Byzantine writers crafted an affective tapestry of mourning and consolation in the face of infant- and childhood mortality.

The place of pity in early Byzantine rhetoric

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When is it appropriate to move one’s audience to pity? And when is it immoral to do so? For centuries, teachers of rhetoric recognized the power --as well as the dangers--of emotion in the delivery of speeches. Students of rhetoric were expected to know what emotions are and how they work –physically, socially, and cognitively. Pity (*eleos, oiktos*) was particularly complicated. When stirred in others, it could deepen the bonds of lamentation and offer consolation. But, as critics pointed out, pity could just as easily warp reasoning. Moreover, however much pity forged a bond between the pitier and the pitied, it also imposed a distance and otherness that undercut the potential for genuine compassion. Thus, pity’s

power to create both proximity and separation remained a paradox that alarmed many critics of pity. To pity anyone entailed running the risk of confronting one's own sense of vulnerability or at least clouding judgment.

This paper explores the cognitive, social, psychological, and rhetorical effects of pity, as described in the rhetorical handbooks of antiquity, some of which remained part of early Byzantine education. I shall focus on two types of rhetorical exercises: *prosopopeiia* (speech-in-character) and *ekphrasis* (description). *Prosopopeiia* involved the creation of imagined speeches for historical or imagined figures. *Ekphrasis* relied on the technique of *enargeia* (vividness) to choose words that bring what was being described before the eyes. When outlining these exercises, teachers of rhetoric recognized the power of both to stir the audience's pity. The final section of this paper considers the implications of these analyses for the study of early Byzantine homilies and the relation they created between the preacher and the audience.

Passions from the classical Greek world to the modern Greek world: the case of phthonos and zelotypia

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In my paper I shall give an overview of the meanings the word *phthonos* has in Byzantine texts, using both a lexicological approach as well as a 'scripts' approach (fruitfully applied to the study of ancient emotions by R. Kaster and, more recently, E. Sanders, based on the assumption that an emotion can also be defined as a short narrative episode). I would like to discuss how useful such an approach is in order to grasp the full semantics of a certain emotional term of the past as well as which aspects of an emotion we should and can investigate. Furthermore, I shall pose the question whether or not one should speak about Byzantine envy or Byzantine *phthonos*, (the latter emphasizing the specific Byzantine character of the emotion) and if sexual jealousy existed in Byzantium (the Greek term supposed to correspond with modern sexual jealousy being *zelotypia*). The interpretation of Byzantine *phthonos* and *zelotypia* will be diachronically linked to ancient *phthonos/zelotypia* as well as to early modern and modern Greek *phthonos/zelotypia*. Interpretations of diachronical differences between various forms of Greek *phthonos/zelotypia* will be proposed. I shall argue that a specific Byzantine form of *phthonos* developed under the influence of, and was supported by, social institutions and religious ideology. A specific Byzantine mythology of *phthonos* made a positive evaluation of the concept, still possible in Antiquity, unacceptable. At the end, I shall briefly touch on the thorny question of Byzantine classicizing *phthonos* terminology and try to shed some light on the Byzantine interpretation of ancient *phthonos*.

Fear in Byzantium

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Fear is one of the basic emotions; scholarly literature analyzing it, both from a psychological and sociological viewpoint, is vast. It is also not uncommon to do research on the historical aspects of the phenomenon. Yet, as applies to the Middle Ages, fear is treated relatively rarely, while fear in Byzantium remains a virtually uncharted territory. Characteristically, Alexander Kazhdan in his article "Fear" (ODB, II, 780-81) does not cite a single publication.

Since the language of the Byzantines was not much different from that of Ancient Greeks, we shall use the results delivered by Classicists. Yet, we should always bear in mind that the cultural status of fear in the society where God was known to have feared death and asked for pity, could not be the same as in the society of Homeric laughter; the culture of tears and compunction has not much in common with the culture of pride and suicide.

Emotions are reflected in words, and our first problem will be verbal: according to John of Damascus, fear falls into six elements; at least three of them have nothing to do with fear by modern standards: *oknos*, *aidos* and *aischyne*. To tell the truth, the other three, *ekplexis*, *kataplexis* and *agonia*, although compatible with fear, are hardly the first ones to come to mind of today's Hellenist. What about other terms which appear to be more to the point but are omitted by John: *tromos*, *deimos*, *paniko deima*, *deos*, *deilia*, *orrhodia*, *phrike*, *tarbos* etc.? There is an abundance of words in the Old Greek language and it is often extremely difficult for us to distinguish the nuances of their meanings.

My analysis will be lexicological, first and foremost: I will try to find out in what situations the Byzantines preferred to use this or that word denoting fear, even though these words appear to be absolute synonyms to us. The second task will be to trace the developments of meaning of the "fear words" as compared to Antiquity. The third goal will be to test, on the Byzantine material, several scholarly hypotheses. For instance, Jean Delumeau states that, although fear was omnipresent in the Medieval society, the latter did not know anxiety. Was this true in Byzantium? Or another example: according to David Constan, in Ancient Greece it was not shameful to fear the enemy if he was obviously superior; it was the miscalculation of his strength that was a shame. Was this state of mind, unthinkable for a medieval European knight, present in Byzantium? And, last but not least: in Kazhdan's opinion, a Byzantine lived in constant fear; the beloved example was Kekaumenos –afraid of everyone and everything; allegedly this was typical of the whole of Byzantine society. Was Kazhdan right?

The emotions in Byzantine art

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In Byzantine art emotions were expressed through a number of signs (mainly gestures and facial expressions), some conventional and others more "realistic". These signs were organized by a grammar that structured, inflected, and deepened their meanings. Most of the signs were derived by Byzantine artists from the received repertoire of ancient art, but the grammar was largely a Byzantine development.

In broad terms, the showing of emotion in Byzantine art can be divided between the depictions of public display and of interior feeling. To some extent these two categories correspond to the distinction between *ekphrasis* and *ethopoeia* in Byzantine rhetoric. The relationship between art and literature with respect to the portrayal of emotion can be described as interactive: either the imagination and desire of the viewer, encouraged by texts that had been incorporated into the liturgy, provoked a response from artists, or it was the artists who provoked a response from the viewer, as expressed, for example, by epigrams describing icons featuring weeping angels.

The depiction of grief was a special area of contention. On the one hand the doctrine of the incarnation validated the expression of grief (“Jesus wept”); on the other hand a too vehement display of mourning implied a disbelief in the resurrection. In general, the church favored interiority over public display, especially in New Testament contexts. However, the official stances of the church came under increasing pressure, with the result that Late Byzantine religious art showed much more license in the depiction of emotion than had been possible previously. At every stage of this evolution, Byzantine painters anticipated artists of the West, proving that the artistic language of the emotions was cross-cultural. Even though the western artists were in dialogue with completely different texts, their chosen means of portraying emotion were the essentially the same as those deployed by the Byzantines.

The Eyes of the Virgin: Gendered Emotion and the Case of *Storge*

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Is *storge* an emotion that may be termed as mainly ‘female’ and what do we mean by female emotions? In the present paper I shall look into the association of emotions with gender from the point of view of recent research in neuroscience but also through the lament of the Virgin. How is emotion related to gender? Does it make sense to talk about female emotion? Modern research in neuroscience shows that male and female brains differ not only morphologically but also in the way they function. However, does this difference account for the association of specific emotions with men or women respectively? There is definitely a base as due to physiology, ‘men are more keen to emotions such as anger or competitive attitudes whereas women are more at ease with language and hence with the expression of emotion through words. How is this related to the tenderness that is associated with the figure of the Virgin and with the feeling encountered in Byzantine sources under the word *storge*?

The Christian understanding of love and especially of the love of the Virgin for her Son and God permeates all literary and visual sources. Her lament interwoven with the *storge* of the mother towards her Son leaves its imprint in the eyes of the Virgin which in the post-Iconoclastic era acquire a distinctively sad expression that would become a main characteristic of her iconography in the centuries to come. The Marian lament is a topic that encapsulates approaches to grief and *storge* as well as to ritual expressions of ancient societies. Looking into Byzantine sources we observe that ritual expressions of emotion, and especially of grief, are voiced by women. The fact is attested in literary and artistic sources alike. The ritual lament has its roots in the ancient Greek and Roman tradition and this tradition continues in the Byzantine era where the lament of the Virgin encompasses elements of the ritual lament adapted accordingly in the framework of the Christian perception of the world.

What is of special interest, is the fact that what is conventionally understood as female emotion was recorded and performed exclusively by men. This is true both in ancient Greece -where some of the most renowned tragedies, such as Aeschylus’ *Seven against Thebes* or the Euripidean *Hecuba* and *Trojan Women*, among many others- as well as in Byzantium, where the Lament of the Virgin is found recorded in the apocryphal literature, the *kontakia* of Romanos the Melode, the *stavrotheotokia* and the homilies of the Iconoclastic and post-Iconoclastic era. Special attention shall be given to the context of the liturgy, i.e. the sacred

performance, within which the lament was delivered. Just like laments in ancient Greek tragedies, the lament of the Virgin is written and performed by men. I suggest that this crossing of boundaries shows that female emotion –whether grief or storge- is not all that ‘female’ and that in fact it expresses a feeling of the community which ancient societies ascribed to women.