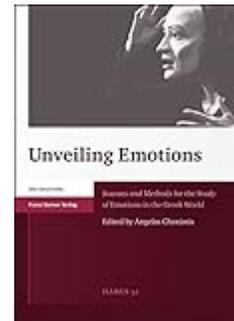


Angelos Chaniotis. *Unveiling Emotions: Sources and Methods for the Study of Emotions in the Greek World.* Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012. 490 pp. \$110.00 (paper), ISBN 978-3-515-10226-1.



Reviewed by Fayah Haussker (Tel Aviv University)

Published on H-Emotions (July, 2017)

Commissioned by Ashley M. Mays (Western Governors University)

The book under review presents preliminary results of the research project “The Social and Cultural Construction of Emotions: The Greek Paradigm,” conducted in Oxford and funded by the European Research Council. The collection presents fourteen essays clustered in four sections, plus an editor’s introduction, supplementary linguistic essay, and index.

The core focus of the project, eschewing cultural constructionism, explores the sociocultural parameters determining representation and perception of emotions in the Greek-speaking regions over three continents from the archaic to Byzantine periods. The volume examines well-chosen generic and socially diverse source materials, overlooked in the study of emotions until now, and accordingly suggests new methodological pivots. The collection constitutes an exemplary study in the history of emotions in Greek antiquity, rising to the challenge of pioneering scholarly work in a variety of under-researched contexts (e.g., forensic oratory, art, religion, politics) and media (such as dedications, narratives of miracles, petitions and condolence letters, images, and architecture), in both public and private spheres. The discussions are supported by a broad selection of texts and an impressive list of secondary literature.

Angelos Chaniotis’s introduction outlines the essentiality of emotions to historical research which enhances contextual comprehension of the evidence and emphasizes the need to broaden the documentary investigation beyond canonized literary and philosophical sources, heavily favored in research in last three decades. Hence, the spectrum of available source materials (literary, archaeological, papyrological, and epigraphical) is preliminarily discussed in essays of the first section (“Sources”), presenting their singularities and methodological difficulties.

Chaniotis also refers to the challenges facing research of emotions in historical societies due to the absence of direct media communications and the limitative nature of the research materials, which allow only mediated and strained access to emotions. However, access to the extrinsic “stimuli which created emotions” and knowledge of cultural and social “parameters that influence the manifestations of emotions in texts and images” (p. 16) enable us to understand the emotional profile of the sources and construct a solid foundation for advanced research. For this purpose and in order to illustrate differentiated, context-dependent manifestations of emotions, another focus of the volume, three different communicative frameworks for the investigation of emotions are

presented in next three sections (“Emotions in the Interaction between Mortals and Gods”; “Emotions in the Public Sphere”; and “Emotions in Interpersonal Communication”), composed of selected, topically connected case studies. The preamble is indeed comprehensive and focused, and invites engagement with the oft-blurred distinction between emotions and feelings.

Part 1 begins with Chrysi Kotsifou’s discussion on the sociocultural parameters of emotions’ representation in papyri, from the Hellenistic period to late antiquity in rural and urban Egypt. The tremendous variety of genres explored (wills, petitions, personal letters, divorce documents, oracular records) reveals voices rarely heard, analyzing how emotional expressions shed light on the individuals who composed the documents, and pointing to the sociocultural factors responsible for shifts in the articulation of emotions (such as genre, gender, ethnicity, kinship, status, education, and social mores). Kotsifou concludes by drawing attention to limitations in the the papyrological corpus for researching emotions, though occasionally bypasses clear distinction among emotions, feelings, and concepts (e.g., characterization of “unjust” and “beyond reason” as emotional words [p. 58] needs clarification). Kotsifou’s two additional essays in the volume supplement the investigation of papyrological documentation. One focuses on a single legal document as a case study of persuasive narrative techniques (section 3), and the second highlights the social and cultural functions filled by condolence letters (section 4).

In the next chapter, which opens with C. P. Cavafy’s moving poem “In the Month of Athyr” (1917), Chaniotis introduces a systematic study of emotional language in epigraphic material, providing broad geographical, chronological, and social range. The author presents an overview of sources, with reference to the difficulties in locating the emotional expression in a correct sociocultural context, which cannot always be reconstructed due, *inter alia*, to the absence of various data, which “makes it difficult to distinguish between genuine expression of feeling and conventions” (p. 120). Arguing for emotions as an important medium of public communication, Chaniotis demonstrates a tight link between genres of the epigraphic text and particular strategies (linguistic and rhetorical) of articulating and stimulating emotions, and touches on the interrelationship of individual and collective emotional norms which result in the formation and consolidation of “emotional communities,” a theoretical concept minted by the medievalist Barbara Rosenwein and widely used in this volume.[1]

Jane Massaglia’s distinguished study clarifies the significance of emotions to archaeological research and the contribution of physical matters to research of emotions. She presents three comparative methodological approaches to rescue and reconstruct emotions from archaeological evidence (historical, archaeological and archaehistorical, anthropological and psychological). The investigation, accompanied by two case studies (the island of Rheneia and the Macedonian quiver), first identifies the emotional communities, then considers the kinds of emotional response, and finally inspects the retrieved information in context. The discussion includes noting the metaphorical significance of archaeological material and its contribution to theoretical considerations.

Ed Sanders closes this section with a survey of literary genres (fictive literature, historical writings, anthology, scholia, and moral and educative literature), from the archaic to the Roman period, which have not yet been systematically explored. He poses relevant historical questions from within emotional episodes in literary texts, asking, for example, how certain genres actually reflect emotions of ordinary Greeks, why specific emotions are processed to deification in certain places and periods, and why specific emotions appear in a distinct periodic space.

Part 2 focuses on emotions in the interactions between mortals and gods. Paraskevi Martzavou explores the construction and manifestation of hopes for cure through miraculous healing procedures, experienced by dreaming, referring in parallel to the anxiety connected with communication with gods and uncertainty concerning the prospect of a dream. The essay excels in intertwining textual analysis with the physical location of the material, though the examples from the New Testament would be relevant only if accompanied by a thorough comparative discussion.

In the next essay Chaniotis scrutinizes the way in which cult regulations and “confession inscriptions” from sanctuaries in Greece and Asia Minor (Hellenistic-Roman periods) were used as promotive media in sacred space to construct fear of the gods. The author, while acknowledging the universality of fear as a key emotion in communication between human and immortals, claims that “its manifestations in space and time are determined by specific cultural parameters” (p. 207). The chapter, clearly structured and well documented, suggests reconstruction of emotional contexts, elucidating the interdependence of text, space, image, and performance and according such inscriptions their particular significance in

inspiring fear of the gods and its material consequences.

Prayers for divine justice are the core of the presentation by Irene Salvo. She examines emotional attitude, tone, and constructions of feelings in pleas for the intervention of the gods to bring justice to both victim and offender, primarily in cases of death, theft, abuse, economic damage, slander, and false accusation. The evidence explored appeared in texts on tablets, stone inscriptions, ostraka, and papyri dated from the fourth century BCE to late antiquity. Although linking contemporary social models to ancient practices requires greater caution than evinced here, the author's argument that the texts served as a vehicle to maintain social order, by tranquilizing the inflamed emotions surrounding revenge, seems a plausible assessment of the social function of such prayers.

The section ends with Martzavou's essay investigating the textual sources related to the hymnic cults (*aretalogies*) of Isis. The author reasonably points out that these documents, based on private and collective emotional responses to cultic experience (mainly admiration, fear, and hope) were instrumental in the construction of emotions intimately related to a specific perception of the divine and in the self-construction of the initiated individuals.

The third part opens with Christina Kuhn's refreshing survey, which focuses on the political functions of secular acclamations which appeared chiefly within the documents recorded on stones and displayed in public arenas, predominantly addressed to local and imperial authorities. Kuhn suggests that the number of such acclamations in inscriptions increased in the second and third centuries CE due to "the marked trend toward the emotionalization of political communication" (p. 301). The author argues that these acclamations express collective emotional response to emotional public circumstances and mediate communication between subject and ruler and between the elite and the masses, concurrently attesting to the vitality of political life in the Greek polis.

Massaglia closes the section compellingly with consideration of the contribution of archaeological objects and spaces in the study of emotions in "geographically-defined community" (p. 329). Using evidences from Ephesus as exempla she presents an innovative study of how processes of construction, destruction, and adaptation express changes in the emotional mindset of the particular community.

The last part begins with an erudite study by Ed Sanders, who examines how a jury's hostility (anger, re-

sentment, and hatred) is stimulated towards opponents in Attic forensic oratory in the classical period. The essay includes profound philological analysis illustrating the challenge in matching emotional labels between different languages (using resentment [*phthonos*] as an example, pp. 374-375).

This part also incorporates a daring effort by Massaglia to reconstruct the emotional effects aroused in the ancient viewer "as a social whole, rather than as individuals" (p. 424) by the sculpture *Drunken Old Woman*, which probably served a votive function. Examination of cultural background and contemporary values, alongside observation of constituent parts and gestures of the image, while using comparative literate and material evidence, leads Massaglia to argue the image's emotional multiplicity: happiness and pleasure alongside anxiety and shame; disgust with humor and enjoyment.

The envoi to the collection, by Maria Theodoropoulou, in a modernized twist of the traditional conclusion, effects a linguistic approach by reviewing the inseparable affinity between emotional experience and language, particularly the crucial role that language plays in interweaving the biological and socio-cultural aspects of emotions, attesting to importance of metaphor and metonymy. Though not bearing directly on the material of the collection, this chapter illuminates the essential role of language in the study of emotions in historical societies, and that is its great contribution.

Overall, *Unveiling Emotions* is quite a valuable publication, decisively corroborating Lucien Febvre's 1938 statement that without emotions "there will be no real history possible."^[2] Excluding some recurring nebulousity between feelings and emotions, the volume is characterized by concise and clearly organized discussions, which enable both investigation and understanding of patterns of emotional behaviors and environments in Greek antiquity. With the diversity of previously unexamined sources and unresearched themes, the collection broadens the scope of fields, communicative contexts, and methodological approaches to be considered and thus constitutes a worthy springboard for further investigation from manifold perspectives.

Notes

[1]. Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (2002): 821-845; 842n76.

[2]. Lucien Febvre, "Sensibility and History: How to

Reconstitute the Emotional Life of the Past,” in *A New Kind of History: From the Writings of Febvre*, ed. P. Burke and trans. K. Folca (London: Harper and Row, 1973), 12-26; 24 (italics in the original).

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

<https://networks.h-net.org/h-emotions>

Citation: Fayah Haussker. Review of Chaniotis, Angelos, *Unveiling Emotions: Sources and Methods for the Study of Emotions in the Greek World*. H-Emotions, H-Net Reviews. July, 2017.

URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=49143>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License.