

# Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval World

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uses a range of terms for love not to distinguish types but to assimilate them into a general category of righteous love directed at God. Unlike ancient philosophers who condemn emotions for their bodily origin, Augustine claims the body as good in origin and vitiated by sin only when the will is misdirected. Clark's nuanced analysis of *voluntas*, understood as a combination of choice and desire, concludes with the idea that a properly aligned will generates positive emotions, including apparently 'negative' ones such as sadness and fear, because their objects are oriented by God.

The volume ends with M. Nussbaum's examination of mercy in Mozart's opera *La Clemenza di Tito* in light of Stoic views of *clementia*. As the title suggests, the opera's central theme is Titus' heroic act of clemency: the Roman emperor pardons his best friend for making a failed attempt at his life. Why? To answer this question, Nussbaum distinguishes the 'monarchical mercy' of the Judeo-Christian tradition, which is bestowed as a gift from on high, from the 'egalitarian mercy' of the classical tradition, which proceeds from an understanding that both judge and culprit share a common humanity and vulnerability to error. Formative of this latter view is the mitigating attitude of the Stoics towards punishment and culpability. Seneca's work on mercy and anger in particular shows us how a sympathetic imagination can lead to the triumph of love and forgiveness over destructive vengeance, a position borne out by the opera's stirring finale.

This book's focus on positive emotions clears fertile ground for new developments in the study of ancient emotions, offering a fitting tribute to Konstan's own groundbreaking work. One would have liked to see a greater distribution of subjects; Latin poetry and Hellenistic philosophy are disproportionately represented, while history is scarcely represented at all. The consistently high quality of the contributions, however, compensates for the uneven distribution. There is a missed opportunity, in this author's view, for offering an alternative to cognitivism in scholarly approaches to emotion – one that takes its bearings from Plato rather than Aristotle and the Stoics – but that leaves more for future studies to pursue in the wake of this important book.

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## LATE INSCRIPTIONS AS VISUALS

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What looks like a volume of epigraphy is really not one. The articles collected here are explicitly not concerned with the words that constitute inscriptions, but rather everything non-verbal and non-textual that is both accompaniment to and context for the words. Although some contributions consider inscriptions as art, calligraphy as such is not treated, but instead the way inscriptions function 'as constituents of wider visual environments' (p. 2). That is, inscriptions are not to be treated as disembodied words, their verbal content detached from context. They must rather be taken as a whole, particularly in societies where advanced literacy was a rarity and where for many functionally (or instrumentally) literate individuals, the experience of an inscription was more one of viewing than of reading. Most of the contributions to the volume are squarely medieval or even later in their

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