Lamentation, History, and Female Authorship in Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*

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ONE OF THE MOST commonly read and widely available Byzantine histories is the *Alexiad*, a history of the emperor Alexios Komnenos, who ruled 1081–1118, by his daughter Anna Komnene (1083–1153). Anna's first-hand descriptions of the passage of the First Crusade are frequently excerpted as expressing a paradigmatic 'Byzantine view' of the crusades. Although it is perhaps the most frequently read medieval Byzantine text, it is far from typical of Byzantine histories. Anna's work is invariably called a history and she describes herself explicitly as writing a history. Yet in its title, *Alexiad*, and frequent Homeric vocabulary and imagery, it brings the archaic epics to mind.[1] The characterization of Alexios as a wily sea captain steering the empire through constant storms with guile and courage strongly recalls Odysseus.[2] Both in its epic cast and in other factors discussed below, Anna did not adhere strictly to the rules of writing history and rather seems to have played with the boundaries of the genre. The

[1] A. Dyck, "*Iliad* and *Alexiad*: Anna Comnena's Homeric Reminiscences," *GRBS* 27 (1985) 113–120. Anna's husband, Nikephoros Bryennios, wrote a history of the rise of Alexios Komnenos in which Alexios ends up seeming less heroic than his political enemy Nikephoros Bryennios the elder (the author's grandfather). At the point where Alexios has defeated Bryennios the elder, Nikephoros says that "another *Iliad* would be needed" to tell the deeds of his grandfather properly. Anna, writing ostensibly to complete her husband's history, can be seen as taking up this challenge to write a second *Iliad*, but one that extols Alexios rather than Bryennios the elder.

[2] R. Macrides, "The Pen and the Sword: Who Wrote the *Alexiad*?" in T. Gouma-Peterson (ed.), *Anna Komnene and her Times* (New York 2000) 68–69.

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Alexiad is hence an unusual work that defies the expectations of readers who anticipate another volume in the tradition of classicizing Greek prose historiography. This genre did well in the middle Byzantine period,[3] and both medieval and modern readers could easily develop a sense of what was normal for a history in that era. Unsurprisingly therefore, not all readers have liked the *Alexiad.* Its uneasy fit with its genre can cause discomfort when Anna's departures from normative style are perceived as 'mistakes'.

The twelfth century was a time of considerable literary experimentation in which the boundaries of genres were sometimes blurred, if not deliberately crossed. Constantine Manasses' verse chronicle of world history is a case in point.[4] Homer and classical authors were the subject of intensified study as more kinds of classical literature came to be more widely read.[5] As interest in classical forms grew, new texts were written that masqueraded as ancient novels while offering commentary on twelfth-century rituals and culture.[6] Satire enjoyed a revival and mock-epic poked fun at the pretensions of this

[3] See bibliography in R. Macrides (ed.), *History as Literature in Byzantium* (Farnham 2010).

[4] I. Nilsson, "Discovering Literariness in the Past: Literature vs. History in the *Synopsis Chronike* of Konstantinos Manasses," in P. Odorico et al. (eds.), *L'écriture de la mémoire. La littérarité de l'historiographie* (Paris 2006) 15–31, and "Narrating Images in Byzantine Literature: The Ekphraseis of Konstantinos Manasses," *JÖByz* 55 (2005) 121–146.

[5] A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge 2007) 225–316; R. Beaton, *From Byzantium to Modern Greece : Medieval Texts and their Modern Reception* (Aldershot 2008); M. Mullett, *Letters, Literacy and Literature in Byzantium* (Aldershot 2007).

[6] E. Jeffreys, *Four Byzantine Novels* (Liverpool 2012); P. Roilos, *Amphoteroglossia: A Poetics of the Twelfth-Century Medieval Greek Novel* (Washington 2005); R. Beaton, *The Medieval Greek Romance* (London 1996); S. MacAlister, *Dreams and Suicides: The Greek Novel from Antiquity to the Byzantine Empire* (London 1996).

Homer-venerating society.[7] Despite its composition in this era of literary experimentation, the *Alexiad* has been overwhelmingly approached as a straightforward work of history, in part because its richly detailed narrations of past events provide a wealth of information for historians. Since nearly all of the *Alexiad* consists in ostensibly accurate descriptions of events—and since those events are of particular interest to historians—it has been natural to read the *Alexiad* as a history, albeit an odd history. Examining aspects of the *Alexiad* that seem uncharacteristic of most Greek history writing can help situate the text more firmly within its cultural context.

Perceptions and discussions of Anna's departures from the mannerisms and norms of historical writing are connected to perceptions of her gender. Anna's work is the only Greek text written by a woman in her era.[8] Had she written a history that was indistinguishable in style from those of her male colleagues, Anna's status as a woman would be less interesting. Since she wrote a highly idiosyncratic history, the question is open whether her history is different because she was a woman writer. Are her departures from normative style further examples of the sort of literary experimentation of her male contemporaries, or did her 'woman's voice' affect her writing?

[7] H. Hunger, *Der byzantinische Katz-Mäuse-Krieg. Theodore Prodromus, Katomyomachia* (Graz 1968); B. Baldwin, *Timarion* (Detroit 1984); M. Alexiou, "Literary Subversion and the Aristocracy in Twelfth-Century Byzantium: A Stylistic Analysis of the *Timarion*," *BMGS* 8 (1982) 29–45.

[8] Anna also wrote the preface to her will, preserved among the writings of Michael Italikos: S. Papaioannou, "Anna Komnene's Will," in D. Sullivan et al. (eds.), *Byzantine Religious Culture: Studies in Honor of Alice-Mary Talbot* (Leiden 2012) 99–121. There were four Byzantine female hymnographers, three in the ninth century and one in the fourteenth: M. Mavroudi, "Learned Women of Byzantium and the Surviving Record," in *Byzantine Religious Culture* 64–65; E. Catafygiotou-Topping, "Women Hymnographers in Byzantium," *Diptycha* 3 (1982) 98–111; A. Silvas, "Kassia the Nun c.810–c.865: An Appreciation," in L. Garland (ed.), *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience, 800–1200* (Aldershot 2006) 17–39. On medieval women writing in Latin see J. Nelson, *The Frankish World, 750–900* (London 1996) 183–197.

Anna's gender has been an oblique factor in some analyses of the *Alexiad* but has rarely been an overt part of the conversation about her work.[9] When her gender has been invoked it often has allowed modern commentators' assumptions about what female history writing would be like to play into their analyses. For Edward Gibbon female authorship was sufficient explanation for what he perceived as bad style:[10]

> Yet, instead of the simplicity of style and narrative which wins our belief, an elaborate affectation of rhetoric and science betrays on every page the vanity of a female author.

For the feminist historian Barbara Hill, Anna's gender justified reading her history as a call to female empowerment.[11] For James Howard-Johnston, Anna's natural female interests and capabilities meant that she must have gotten her military material from another author.[12] In each of these cases modern readers have begun with an idea of what female authorship entailed and used that idea as an interpretive tool. Both Hill and Howard-Johnston have come under criticism for importing modern preconceptions into their work.[13]

[9] Some exceptions: D. Reinsch, "Women's Literature in Byzantium? The Case of Anna Komnene," in *Anna Komnene and her Times* 83–105; T. Gouma-Peterson, "Gender and Power: Passage to the Maternal in Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*," in *Anna Komnene and her Times* 107–124, and "Engendered Category or Recognizable Life: Anna Komnene and her *Alexiad*," *ByzF* 23 (1996) 25–34.

[10] *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1788) ch. 48.

[11] B. Hill, "Actions Speak Louder than Words: Anna Komnene's Attempted Usurpation," in *Anna Komnene and her Times* 45–62, and "A Vindication of the Rights of Women to Power by Anna Komnene," *ByzF* 23 (1996) 45–53.

[12] J. Howard-Johnston, "Anna Komnene and the *Alexiad*," in M. Mullett and D. Smythe (eds.), *Alexios I Komnenos* (Belfast 1996) 260–302.

[13] Criticism of Hill has been informal and largely taken the form of lack of enthusiasm for her ideas among other historians. Howard-Johnston's theory has been more robustly criticized in Macrides, in *Anna Komnene and her Times* 63–81; Reinsch, in *Anna Komnene and her Times* 83–105; Leonora Neville, *Heroes and Romans in Twelfth-Century Byzantium: The* Material for

I too begin with an assumption: that Anna knew she was unusual and developed her own ideas about what a history written by a woman should look like. She knew that history was written by men, and she can be counted on to have thought through how her history might be different. The places where Anna differs from the norms of the genre of historiography may be places where she was consciously stepping out of the role of the male historiographer. This essay seeks to explore Anna's gendered authorial voice in the *Alexiad* with a view to understanding how Anna sought to negotiate her novel participation in the male tradition of Greek history writing.

One area where Anna departed markedly from the conventions of the genre is in her self-reflective expressions of personal sadness. This emotionalism is a peculiarity of Anna's writing that has been irksome to many readers. In the course of her history Anna punctuates her story with bursts of anguish at the mention of the deaths of her husband Nikephoros Bryennios, her betrothed Constantine Doukas, her brother Andronikos, her mother, and her father. Although her expressions of personal emotion take up only an extremely small portion of her total text, they dominate both the beginning and ending of her story.

Anna's spates of self-centered expressive emotion are jarring departures from dispassionate history. These bursts of feeling have been distrusted as insincere by some readers and leave others wondering why she got so worked up. Georgina Buckler, in her book about Anna published in 1929, includes a subchapter on "Her Self-Pity" in which the British historian tries to figure out what had happened to make Anna so melancholic. In Buckler's view some traumatic event in Anna's life must have been behind such extravagant expressions of grief. After surveying the known details of Anna's life, Buckler is unable to find anything that, in her view, would warrant the sentiments. In answering her question of what caused Anna's

History *of Nikephoros Bryennios* (Cambridge 2012) 182–193.

trauma she concludes that "after eight centuries we cannot tell … and we cannot gauge the depth of feeling beneath her hysterical bombast."[14] Many readers since Buckler have doubted how Anna's emotions could really have run so high when she was discussing people who had died decades previously. Peter Frankopan considered Anna's expression of grief over the death of her betrothed Constantine Doukas as sufficiently odd to merit an explanatory note. Yet he is not able to come up with a satisfying reason for Anna's emotionalism based on either natural affection or politics:[15]

> her anguish is confusing, since she did marry someone else … Constantine had been implicated in a plot against Alexios—which makes her comments about him here … all the more difficult to interpret.

Here and elsewhere Anna's grief is seen as unreasonably disproportionate to the problem. Her most extravagant emotional display is reserved for her description of the deaths of her parents, who both died of natural causes in old age.

One strand of thought, aiming perhaps to redeem Anna from the charge of being hysterical and unreasonable, has seized on the evidence for political dissention at the accession of Anna's brother to create a political narrative of Anna as deeply disappointed and embittered by defeat. Hints in various later sources are commonly woven together to create a story of 'Anna's failed coup' in which she masterminded an effort to seize power in the name of her husband Nikephoros Bryennios in 1118 and suffered confinement to a monastery for the rest of her life when the coup failed through Nikephoros' lack of nerve. While we can assume that Anna would have liked to be

[14] G. Buckler, *Anna Comnena, a Study* (London 1929) 45–46. On Buckler see C. Roueché, "Georgina Buckler: The Making of a British Byzantinist," in R. Beaton and C. Roueché (eds.), *The Making of Byzantine History* (Aldershot 1993) 174–196.

[15] *The Alexiad*, transl. E. R. A. Sewter, revised and annotated P. Frankopan (London 2004) 485.

empress (an assumption safe for just about every woman in the empire), the surviving sources for John's accession in 1118 do not focus their attention on Anna's ambition.[16] It is the need to explain Anna's distressed state of mind in the *Alexiad* that provides the chief impetus to seeing her as politically embittered. This has led to unnecessarily political readings of her text.[17] She did live in a lavishly endowed Constantinopolitan monastery before her death, but we do not know when she entered the monastery. Anna patronized and actively engaged a vibrant community of male intellectuals throughout her life and was tonsured as she was dying.[18] She portrays herself at the end of the *Alexiad* as suffering because she lives on in mourning, after her loved ones have died, not because of political defeat.[19]

[16] Niketas Choniates' thirteenth-century history, the key source suggesting that Anna's ambition outstripped that of her husband, uses the inversion and transgression of traditional gender and familial roles in Alexios' household to ground the opening of his history of Roman decline in a grotesque locus of moral perversion. It is great writing, but hardly helpful for understanding actual palace politics. See Neville, *Heroes and Romans* 16–24.

[17] Sewter and Frankopan's translation of the final lines of the *Alexiad* (15.11.23) alludes to problems emanating from the palace, which I cannot see in the Greek text: "To endure such suffering and to be treated in an abominable way by people in the palace is more wretched than the troubles of Niobe," ἐπέπρω]το δὲ τοσαῦτα ὑπενεγκεῖν δεινὰ καὶ εἰσ[έτι καὶ ν]ῦν ἄλλά τα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἐπεγείρεσθαί μοι ἀφόρητα, [ὅπερ πολλῷ] δυστυχέστερον καὶ τῶν τῆς Νιόβης κακῶν. For my translation see 207 below. Throughout I have accepted the textual emendations of D. Reinsch and A. Kambylis, *Alexiad* (Berlin 2001). On the reconstruction of the end of Book 15 see A. Kambylis, "Zu Anna Komnenes Alexias Buch XV 11, 5(82)–24(60) Reinsch-Kambylis," *BZ* 96 (2003) 169–192.

[18] R. Browning, "An Unpublished Funeral Oration on Anna Comnena," *PCPS* 8 (1962) 5–10.

[19] 15.11.24, ἤρκει ἂν ἐπ' ἀμφοῖν τοῖν βασι[λέοιν καὶ ἡ] τοῦ καίσαρος συμφορὰ καὶ τὰ ἐκείνων [π]αθήματα εἰς ἐκτριβὴν ἡμετέραν καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς [καὶ] τοῦ [σώματος·] νῦν δὲ ὥσπερ ποταμοί τινες ἐξ ὑψηλῶν ὀρῶν καταρρέοντες μο[ρ]μ[ύρ]ουσί τε τὰ τῶν δυστυχημάτων ῥεύματα κ[α]ὶ ὡς εἰς μίαν χαράδραν συγκατακλύζο[υσι] τὴν ἐμὴν οἰκίαν. τέλος γοῦν ὁ λόγος ἐχ[έ]τ[ω], μὴ καὶ ἀναγράφοντες τὰ λυπηρὰ πλ[έον] ἐμπικραινοίμεθα, "The death of my Caesar and both of the rulers [Alexios and Eirene] and the

Rather than continue the search for some causal event behind Anna's emotionalism, we should accept the prima facie explanation that it was affected and rather ask why Anna would fake it. Buckler's perhaps unconsciously gendered critique of Anna's "hysterical bombast" points to the feminine nature of the discourse of lamentation. Looked at closely, Anna's expressions of grief are not random, but carefully align her behavior with classical traditions of lamentation. The substance of her "hysterical bombast" is lament, which classical scholars have called "the female genre par excellence."[20] The simple suggestion made here is that Anna is deliberately performing one of the key rhetorical and ritual roles for Greek women in lamenting the dead. This essay explores the extent to which Anna's personal intrusions into her history constitute participation in traditions of female lamentation. If this is so, then we can observe Anna performing within her history a traditional Greek conception of female gender, and can answer affirmatively that some of the unique qualities of her history derive from her self-conception as a woman writer.[21]

grief over these events was enough for the destruction of my soul and body. Now, just as some rivers rushing down from high mountains roar, so the streams of misfortunes overwhelm the single riverbed, my house. The story must have an end, lest writing about such painful things we may become more bitter."

[20] A. Suter, "Lament in Euripides' *Trojan Women*," *Mnemosyne* 56 (2003) 18.

[21] Another set of cultural constraints may have also influenced Anna's decision to adopt a tragic voice. At both the opening and the closing of her work she presents herself as miserable and beset by countless troubles (prol. 4.1, 15.11.23–24). These sections frame the history with Anna's autobiographical and authorial self-presentation as a suffering, tragic figure. G. W. Most "The Stranger's Stratagem. Self-disclosure and Self-sufficiency in Greek Culture," *JHS* 109 (1989) 114–133, makes a persuasive and compelling case that discussing one's own life details with people outside one's family in anything other than a tale of woe was distasteful and potentially dangerous in Greek culture. Concern not to appear boastful or to excite resentment among the audience significantly constrained autobiographical discourse and rendered the tale of woe the only acceptable form of self-

Wailing women giving vent to grief through ritualized gestures of irrationality constitute one of the most continuous tropes in Mediterranean culture from the archaic period through the twentieth century.[22] In Anna's reading of Homer and Attic tragedy, this is what she saw good women doing.[23] Mortal women in the classical literary tradition spend a disproportionate amount of their time in lamentation. Lamentation was associated with women in the classical world as an aspect of emotion: "the lament gave vent to uncontrollable, because essentially feminine, emotion … weeping was, in the classical period, the prerogative of women."[24] The efforts of Athenian men to legislate against excesses of lamentation have been interpreted as at least in part an effort to limit women's influence in the public sphere, which in turn testifies to the power of

disclosure. Plutarch taught that self-praise is tolerable only when defending oneself against a false accusation, when one has been insulted, or when one has been unfortunate (*Mor*. 539). On this reasoning, Anna opened and closed her work with a description of her own piteous state in order to be able to talk freely about her own life. Most emphasizes that "to put anyone into the position of listener was to some extent to exercise power over him," which established "a tense and complex discursive power struggle: if the speaker praised himself, he aggravated his imposition upon the listener; the former's lament could make the latter feel stronger and thus restore a fragile balance" (131). Anna's adoption of a posture of extreme piteousness may have been a strategy for rendering more palatable the autobiographical discourse of a woman of extreme privilege. I explore this possibility in detail in a chapter in *Byzantine Authorship* edited by Aglae Pizzone (forthcoming). I thank Henry Maguire for bringing Most's work to my attention.

[22] J. Amelang, "Mourning Becomes Eclectic: Ritual Lament and the Problem of Continuity," *P&P* 187 (2005) 3–32; M. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge 1974).

[23] "As much recent work on the subject has convincingly shown, the predominant, although not exclusive, speech genre assigned to female characters in both archaic and classical literature is lamentation": L. McClure, *Spoken like a Woman: Speech and Gender in Athenian Drama* (Princeton 1999) 40.

[24] N. Loraux, *The Invention of Athens: The Funeral Oration in the Classical City* (Cambridge 1986) 45.

lamentation to motivate and disrupt.[25]

While Anna's engagement with Homer and at least some Attic tragedy cannot be doubted, her discourse of lamentation owes much to later traditions as well. Her expressions of grieving display the influence of Second Sophistic prose traditions of monody composition and Christian traditions of monody. Her association of women with mourning reflect eleventh- and twelfth-century cultural practices as well. Our distinctions between classical, Second Sophistic, and Christian literature may not be helpful for understanding twelfth-century Greek authors whose culture interacted seamlessly with all these traditions. Classical characters were prominent in medieval rhetorical training. Rhetorical exercises called on students to compose character sketches using classical figures, such as Niobe, as models.[26] Menander Rhetor's guidelines, including instructions on how to write a monody, were highly influential in Byzantine culture; he claims that his teaching on monody is modeled on that of Homer.[27] Gregory of Nyssa's sermon on the widow of

[25] The bibliography is large and nuanced: see N. Loraux, *Mothers in Mourning* (Ithaca 1998), and *The Mourning Voice: An Essay on Greek Tragedy* (Ithaca 2002); H. P. Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton 2001) 21–55, and "The Politics of Tragic Lamentation," in A. Sommerstein et al. (eds.), *Tragedy, Comedy and the Polis* (Bari 1993) 101–143; L. Swift, *The Hidden Chorus: Echoes of Genre in Tragic Lyric* (Oxford 2010) 299–366; K. Stears, "Death Becomes Her: Gender and Athenian Death Ritual," in S. Blundell and M. Williamson (eds.), *The Sacred and the Feminine in Ancient Greece* (London 1998) 113–127; K. Hame, "Female Control of Funeral Rites in Greek Tragedy: Klytaimestra, Medea, and Antigone," *CP* 103 (2008) 1–15; Suter, *Mnemosyne* 56 (2003) 1–28; C. Sourvinou-Inwood, "Gendering the Athenian Funeral: Ritual Reality and Tragic Manipulations," in D. Yatromanolakis and P. Roilos (eds.), *Greek Ritual Poetics* (Cambridge 2004) 161–188; McClure, *Spoken like a Woman*.

[26] Hugo Rabe, *Aphthonii Progymnasmata* (Leipzig 1926) 35–37; G. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta 2003) 116–117; A. Pignani, *Niceforo Basilace. Progimnasmi e Monodie* (Naples 1983) no. 41.

[27] D. A. Russell and N. G. Wilson, *Menander Rhetor* (Oxford 1981) 200–203.

Nain, whose grief moved Jesus to bring her son back to life, adheres closely to Menander's rules for a monody.[28] Gregory's writing was much admired in the medieval period and was studied and quoted by preachers of the twelfth century.[29] Christian liturgical poems in which the Virgin laments the death of her son Jesus "derived both their organization and their images from the classical tradition."[30] Tenth-century laments of the Virgin employ the temporal contrasts, antitheses, and short rapid sentences that are recommended in the Second Sophistic handbooks on character study.[31]

Anna may well have read Menander's advice herself, but the influence of the school he represented was so pervasive that she would not have needed to. She may have picked up his ideas about how to write lament by reading other authors influenced by Menander. The audiences for the sermons modeled on Gregory of Nyssa's would have absorbed what was important about a monody from appreciation of Gregory, without any need to check his work against Menander's instructions. The Christian lamentation tradition was the form in which all those who attended church services on Good Friday would have encountered the rhetorical tropes of the late classical lamentation tradition. Images of female saints painted in contexts associated with burial in Byzantine churches provided a visual confirmation of the continued association between women and mourning.[32] Anna knew the tradition of Christian lamentation

[28] Luke 7:11–17; Gregory Nys. *PG* 44.220–221. Cf. H. Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton 1994) 95–96; Russell and Wilson, *Menander Rhetor* 200–207.

[29] Maguire, *Art and Eloquence* 96.

[30] Maguire, *Art and Eloquence* 91. On the liturgical contexts of the laments of the Virgin see N. P. Ševčenko, "The Service of the Virgin's Lament Revisited," in L. Brubaker and M. Cunningham (eds.), *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium* (Farnham 2011) 247–262.

[31] Maguire, *Art and Eloquence* 96–101.

[32] "Just as painted bishops perpetually celebrated the eucharistic liturgy in the church sanctuary, female saints such as Paraskeve, Kyriake, and Thekla, painted on the walls of the narthex or in other funerary contexts, eternally

and presumably would have recognized the continuities between this tradition and the classical texts she appears to have read as well. She may not have acknowledged much of a distinction between her culture and that of classical antiquity.

Although women and mourning were linked in twelfth-century culture, Anna explicitly links her lamentation to classical imagery of mourning women. She alludes to Euripides' *Hecuba*, in saying she too had a "double share of tears as the tragedian says."[33] At the death of her brother she expresses a longing for the ancient days when grief could turn one into a stone or bird or tree, alluding to the stories of Niobe, Philomela, Procne, and Daphne (15.5.4). She describes her mother's grief at the approaching death of Alexios in terms reminiscent of Sophocles.[34] At the very end of the history, when grieving for her parents and husband, Anna wonders how she did not die of grief and invokes Electra's words at the opening of Euripides' *Orestes* that there is "no suffering or God-sent affliction" that she cannot bear.[35] Contemplating the deaths of her parents and husband she again wishes that she could turn to stone like Niobe (15.11.23). Anna overtly characterizes her emotionalism with the terminology of mourning and lamentation. Remembering Alexios is a *threnos* (prol. 4.3), she sings a monody for Andronikos (15.5.4). At the point of Alexios' death Anna describes

watched over the bodies buried at their feet": S. Gerstel, "Painted Sources for Female Piety in Medieval Byzantium," *DOP* 52 (1998) 89–111, at 102. See also H. Maguire, "The Depiction of Sorrow in Middle Byzantine Art," *DOP* 31 (1977) 123–174.

[33] Prol. 4.3, διπλᾶ κατὰ τὴν τραγῳδίαν κερδαίνουσα δάκρυα. Compare Eur. *Hec.*518, διπλᾶ με χρῄζεις δάκρυα κερδᾶναι, γύναι.

[34] 15.11.12, καί τοι ἀστακτὶ ταύτης κατέρρει τὸ δάκρυον. Compare Soph. *OC* 1250–1251, ἀνδρῶν γε μοῦνος, ὦ πάτερ, δι' ὄμματος ἀστακτὶ λείβων δάκρυον ὧδ' ὁδοιπορεῖ.

[35] 15.11.21, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστιν ἄρα, κατὰ τὴν τραγῳ[δίαν], πάθος καὶ ξυμφορὰ θεήλατος, ἧς οὐκ ἂν ἄχθος [ἀρ]οίμην ἐγώ. Compare Eur. *Or.* 1–3, οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν δεινὸν ὧδ' εἰπεῖν ἔπος οὐδὲ πάθος οὐδὲ ξυμφορὰ θεήλατος, ἧς οὐκ ἂν ἄραιτ' ἄχθος ἀνθρώπου φύσις.

herself, her mother, and sisters as keening, wailing, and tearing at themselves, unambiguously setting their response within ancient traditions of Greek female lamentation.[36] Anna's references to classical characters and explicit vocabulary of lamentation signal her intention to align her discourse with archaic and classical traditions of tragedy and specifically female lamentation.

Anna seems to imitate the emotional patterns and extremes of classical texts most when describing her own grief; she adheres more to the tradition represented by Menander when writing about the dead. Menander advised the writer of a monody on a young person to "base the lament on his age, on his nature (he was gifted, the hopes he raised were great)."[37] He recommended drawing on contrasts between past and present and describing the former appearance of the youth in life: "What beauty he has lost—the bloom of his cheeks—the tongue now silent! The soft beard wilted! The locks of hair no longer to be gazed at!"[38] These elements can be seen in Anna's laments for Constantine, Nikephoros, and Andronikos where she describes their appearance. Her initial lament for her husband dwells on his positive qualities and former beauty:[39]

[36] 15.11.17, γο[ερῶς κατῆρχε τῆς] θρηνῳδίας. συνεπεκώκυον δὲ καὶ αὐτὴ π[άντων τῶν ἄλλων] καταφρονήσασα, καὶ συνεπένθουν καὶ [αἱ ἐμαὶ ἀδελφαὶ] καὶ ἐσπάραττον ἑαυτὰς γοερὸν ἀνοιμώζουσ[αι, "wailing [Eirene] started the lamentation. Distaining everything, I also lamented with her. Also my sisters mourned together and rent themselves, wailing the shriek aloud." 15.11.19, ἡ δὲ συνεῖσα τοῦ πράγματος καὶ τοῖς ὅλο[ις] ἀπαγορεύσασα ἐκώκυσέ τε ἀθρόον μέγα κ[αὶ] διωλύγιον, "understanding the situation and utterly worn out, Eirene shrieked a great continuous and piercing wail." On wailing and disordering clothing as part of the ritual gestures of archaic lamentation see Sourvinou-Inwood, in *Greek Ritual Poetics* 167–169.

[37] Russell and Wilson, *Menander Rhetor* 203.

[38] Russell and Wilson, *Menander Rhetor* 204–207.

[39] Prol. 4.1, ὦ οἷον ἡ Ῥωμαίων ἀπόλωλε βούλευμα· ὦ πείρας μὲν ἀκριβεστάτης περὶ τὰ πράγματα καὶ ὅσην ἐκεῖνος συνείλοχε, λόγων δὲ ἐπιστήμης, ποικίλης δὲ σοφίας, λέγω δὴ τῆς θυραίας καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας αὐλῆς· ὦ καὶ χάριτος ἐπιτρεχούσης τοῖς μέλεσι καὶ εἴδους οὐκ ἀξίου

> Oh! What a councilor is lost to the Romans! His accurate experiences of matters that he gathered himself; his knowledge of words, of varieties of wisdom, I say both private and public! Grace spread throughout his limbs and his appearance was not worthy of tyranny, as some say, but even more divine and better.

In her monody for her betrothed Constantine Doukas, Anna brings up his youthful beauty to heighten the contrast with his early death:[40]

> this youth was a work of art of nature and, so to speak, the pride of God's hands. If one only looked at him one would say he flowed from the golden mythic race of Hellenes, so extraordinary was his beauty.

In the description of the former beauty and greatness of the deceased, Anna's descriptions set up this contrast between former happiness and current mourning. Her lament for her younger brother Andronikos, who died in battle at a relatively young age, also draws attention to his youthful graciousness:[41]

> He was coming into the most gracious time of life; daring yet wise, and in war he had both physical skills and excellent judgment. Before his time he departed and, as no one expected, he left us and sank down. Oh! Youth, and flower of body! How did you then plummet down from nimble leaps on horses?

The lament over Andronikos displays a number of characteristics common in both classical and more modern lamentation traditions: contrast of past and present, imagery of light,

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τυραννίδος, ὥς τινες λέγουσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ θειοτέρας καὶ κρείττονος.

[40] 1.12.3, ὡς ἄγαλμα φύσεως ἦν ὁ νεανίας ἐκεῖνος καὶ Θεοῦ χειρῶν, ὡς οὕτως εἰπεῖν, φιλοτίμημα· εἰ γὰρ καὶ μόνον ἐθεάσατό τις αὐτόν, εἶπεν ἄν, ὡς τοῦ παρ' Ἕλλησι μυθευομένου χρυσοῦ γένους ἀπορροή, οὕτως ἀμήχανον εἶχε τὸ κάλλος.

[41] 15.5.4, ὃς εἰς τὸ χαριέστατον αὐτὸ τῆς ἡλικίας ἐληλυθώς, τόλμαν δὲ συνετὴν καὶ χεῖρα δεξιὰν καὶ φρόνησιν περιττὴν ἐν πολέμοις ἔχων πρὸ καιροῦ ᾤχετο καί, ὡς οὐκ ἄν τις ἤλπισεν, ἐξ ἡμῶν ἀπῆλθε καὶ κατέδυ. ὦ νεότης καὶ ἀκμὴ σώματος καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἵππων ἅλματα κοῦφα ποῦ ποτε κατερρεύσατε;

antithetical imagery of high and low.[42] In the lament for Andronikos Anna also voices regret at the unexpectedness of death and employs a direct second-person address to the dead, a feature of ancient and modern laments that emphasizes the contrast between the mourner and the dead.[43]

The tendency to talk about herself, her deeply piteous and miserable state, and her unbearable grief align Anna's expressions of grieving with the classical traditions of female lamentation.[44] Sophocles' Electra turns attention to her own grief in her first line "Ah me, wretched me!" (ἰώ μοί μοι δύστηνος, *El.* 77). Andromache bewails how Hector has left her a widow (*Il.* 24.725–745). Anna describes distant memories of her loved ones as driving her to weeping and intense grief in the present. At the memory of her husband: "I become filled in my soul with vertigo and I wet my eyes with streams of tears."[45] Regarding her betrothed: "at the memory of this youth I am suffering in soul and my reasoning becomes confused … And I am filled with tears remembering this youth after so many years."[46] At the end of the monody for Andronikos Anna turns attention from Andronikos to herself:[47]

[42] Alexiou, *Ritual Lament*: past and present 165, light 187–189, antithetical imagery 151–160.

[43] Alexiou, *Ritual Lament* 171–177.

[44] S. Murnaghan, "The Survivors' Song: The Drama of Mourning in Euripides' *Alcestis*," *ICS* 24 (1999) 107–116, interprets classical Athenian drama as more about the experience of surviving death than about death itself; cf. Alexiou, *Ritual Lament* 182–184.

[45] Prol. 4.1, ἐγὼ δ' ἐνταῦθα γενομένη σκοτοδίνης ἐμπίπλαμαι τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ῥείθροις δακρύων περιτέγγω τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς.

[46] 1.12.3, πάλιν δὲ μεμνημένη τοῦ νεανίσκου τούτου παθαίνομαι τήν τε ψυχὴν καὶ τοὺς λογισμοὺς συγχέομαι … ἐγὼ δὲ μετὰ τοσούτους ἐνιαυτοὺς μεμνημένη τοῦ νεανίου τούτου δακρύων ἐμπίπλαμαι.

[47] 15.5.4, θαυμάζειν δὲ ἔστι πῶς οὐ γίνεταί τις καὶ νῦν καθάπερ καὶ πάλαι, φησίν, ἢ λίθος ἢ ὄρνις ἢ δένδρον ἤ τι τῶν ἀψύχων ὑπὸ μεγάλων κακῶν εἰς τὰ τοιαῦτα τὴν φύσιν ἀμείβων, εἴτε μῦθος τοῦτό ἐστιν εἴτε λόγος ἀληθής. καὶ τάχα κρεῖττον ἂν εἴη πρὸς τὰ μηδὲν αἰσθανόμενα μεταμείβειν τὴν φύσιν ἢ τοσαύτην αἴσθησιν δέχεσθαι τοῦ κακοῦ. εἰ γὰρ τοῦτ' ἦν, τάχ'

> But it is to marvel how one does not become a stone or bird or tree or something else without a soul, just as they say happened of old, changing nature in these ways in response to great evils (whether it is a myth or some true story). And perhaps it would be better to transform my nature into something without feeling than to accept the feeling of so much evil. For if this were so, then quickly these horrible things would render me a stone.

The focus of pity becomes Anna in her grief rather than her dead kinsmen. Anna's establishment of herself as the key object of pity aligns her work with elements of the lamentation tradition that stand outside Menander's advice for prose composition. Menander was training men to compose speeches that would be appropriate for delivery at a funeral. Anna clearly drew on his advice, but also centralized her own emotional state in a way that conforms to traditions of female lamentation in which the mourner focuses on her own pain.[48]

Similarly Anna expresses negative wishes for herself that reflect the lamentation tradition in which the mourner wishes she had not been born or had died earlier.[49] At the end of her story Anna regrets being still alive: "I am displeased only that my soul remains in my body. And if I may not, as it seems, be something adamantine or some other wondrous form and be estranged from myself, may I be destroyed immediately."[50] The imagery of Niobe returns after describing the death of her parents:[51]

ἄν με λίθον ἀπέδειξε τὰ συμπεσόντα δεινά.

[48] "It seems conventional, then, that the dead man is mourned for his loss as a social figure, and for the role he played in the lives of his female relatives. In order to express the importance of the loss, the women focus on the consequences of death, and the suffering they experience as a result": Swift, *The Hidden Chorus* 308–309.

[49] Alexiou, *Ritual Lament* 180–181.

[50] 15.11.22, ἠγανάκτουν τοῦτο μόνον ὅτι καὶ ἡ ψυχή μου [πα]ρῆν ἐν τῷ σώματι. καὶ εἰ μή, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀδα[μαντ]ίνη τίς ἦν ἢ ἄλλης τινὸς φύσεως διάπλασις [ἐν ἐμοὶ θαυμ]ᾰστὴ καὶ ξενίζουσα, κἂν ἀπωλόμην εὐ[θύς.

[51] 15.11.23, Νιόβην [μὲν οὖν παρ]ά τινων τερατευομένην ἀκούομεν [τὴν μορφὴν εἰ]ς λίθον μεταβαλοῦσαν διὰ πένθος [τῶν παίδων καὶ δῆ]τα καὶ

> From some we hear the fabulous story of Niobe, changed into a stone from mourning for her children, but then even after the transformation to soulless stone the suffering accompanied her immortal being, insensible by nature. It appears that I am yet more wretched than she, since even after these greatest and ultimate calamities, I have remained thus having feeling. It would have been better for me, it seems, to have been changed into a soulless stone streaming rivers of tears. But still I remain, not insensate to misfortunes. I must endure so many horrors and now men may stir up yet other unbearable things which are more unfortunate than even the ills of Niobe. For her terrible suffering had an end after it came to this point.

Anna echoes the extreme cases in which the mourner claims to be more unfortunate than the deceased: "Living I have died a thousand deaths."[52] She wonders why she is still alive after describing the death of Alexios:[53]

> For why has he perished from the living and I am reckoned and numbered among them? Why am I not cast down and yet have my soul? Or why did he breathe his last and I did not breathe

μετὰ τὴν ἀμοιβὴν τὴν εἰς [ἄψυχον λίθον] παραπέμπουσαν τὸ πάθος ἀθά[νατον οὖσαν ἄτ]ε φύσιν ἀναίσθητον. ἐγώ δ' ἄρα καὶ [ἔτι τληπα]θεστέρα ἐκείνης, ὅτι καὶ μετὰ τὰς μεγίστας [καὶ ἐσχάτας] τῶν συμφορῶν μεμένηκα οὕτως αἴσθη[σιν ἔχουσα]. κάλλιον ἦν ἄρα πρὸς πέτραν ἄψυχον ἀμει[φθεῖσάν] με ποταμοὺς ἀπορ<ρ>έειν δακρύων, ἔμενον [δὲ ὅμως οὐχ'] οὕτως ἀναισθήτως ἔχουσα πρὸς τὰς συμ[φοράς. ἐπέπρω]το δὲ τοσαῦτα ὑπενεγκεῖν δεινὰ καὶ εἰσ[έτι καὶ ν]ῦν ἄλλά τα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἐπεγείρεσθαί μοι ἀφόρητα, [ὅπερ πολλῷ] δυστυχέστερον καὶ τῶν τῆς Νιόβης κακῶν. [ἐκείνῃ] μὲν μέχρι τοῦδε φθάσαντα τὰ δεινὰ τῆς [φ]ύσεως ἔληξεν.

[52] 15.11. 23, ζῶσα δὲ] μυρίους θανάτους ἀπέθανον.

[53] 15.11.21, πῶς γὰρ ἀπορρυέντος ἐκ[είνου] τοῖς βιοῦσιν ἐγὼ συντάττομαι καὶ συν[αριθμοῦμαι] ζῶσιν ἢ πῶς οὐ συνεπαφῆκα καὶ αὐ[τὴ τὴν ἐμὴν] ψυχήν, ἢ εὐθὺς ἐκπνεύσαντι συνεξέπν[ευσα] καὶ ἀναίσθητος ἀπωλόμην; εἰ δὲ μὴ το[ῦ]τ[ο ἐπε]πόνθειν, πῶς οὐκ ἀπό τινων ὑψηλῶν καὶ [μετε]ώρων αὐτὴν ὤθησα ἢ κατὰ κυμάτων ἐν[έρριψα] ποντίων; συμφοραῖς μεγάλαις τὴν ζωὴν [περι]έγραψα. ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστιν ἄρα, κατὰ τὴν τραγῳ[δίαν], πάθος καὶ ξυμφορὰ θεήλατος, ἧς οὐκ ἂν ἄχθος [ἀρ]οίμην ἐγώ. οὕτω γάρ με ὁ Θεὸς συμφορῶν μεγάλων [πε]ποίηκε καταγώγιον. ἀπεβάλομεν τοσοῦτον [φ]ωστῆρα τῆς οἰκουμένης, τὸν μέγαν Ἀλέξιον· καὶ μὴν ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ ταλαιπώρου ἐπετρόπευε σώματος.

> my last along with him and insensibly be destroyed? If I was not to have this, why did I not fall violently from some high mountain or hurl myself into the waves of the sea? My life is defined by the greatest misfortunes. As the tragedian says "there is no suffering or god-sent affliction" which I cannot bear. Thus God has made me the residence of great troubles. I have lost the light of the world, the great Alexios, and yet my miserable soul guards my body.

Anna even entertains denying that the death of Alexios took place, wondering if she is dreaming it all.[54] These negative wishes for self and the focus on the piteous state of the woman left in mourning fit the emotional patterns of mourning women in tragedy.

Other imagery may derive more directly from Anna's reading of Homer. In lamenting the memory of her husband, she uses a metaphor of a funeral pyre that burns continuously but does not consume her although it chars her bones and soul:[55]

[54] 15.11.21, ἐγὼ μὲ[ν οὖν ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἀ]πιστῶ ἐμαυτῇ, εἴπερ ζῶ τε καὶ γ[ράφω καὶ μνη]μονεύω θανάτου τοῦ αὐτοκράτο[ρος, καὶ θαμὰ] ἐπαφῶμαι τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ, μήποτ' ἄ[ρα οὐχ' ὕπαρ, ἀλλ' ὅ]ναρ ἐστὶ τὰ νῦν ὑφ' ἡμῶν ὑπαγορευό[μενα, ἢ] δέ γε καὶ μὴ ὄναρ ἐστὶν ἀλλ' ἔκστασίς [τις] καὶ παρακοπὴ καὶ πάθος περὶ ἐμὲ θα[υμαστὸν] καὶ ἀλλόκοτον, "In fact I right now do not believe in my own perception: whether I live and write and remember the death of the emperor. I rub my eyes in wonder, as if perhaps this is not real but these things are suggested by some dream, or perhaps not even a dream but some strange and portentous entrancement, delirium, or experience of my own.

[55] Prol. 4.2, τὸ μέντοι πάθος τὸ περὶ τὸν καίσαρα καὶ ὁ κατ' αὐτὸν ἀνέλπιστος θάνατος αὐτῆς μου καθίκετο τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ ἐς βάθος τὸ τραῦμα εἰργάσατο. καὶ ἡγοῦμαι τὰς προειληφυίας συμφορὰς πρὸς ταύτην τὴν ἄπληστον συμφορὰν ψεκάδα ὡς ὄντως πρὸς ὅλον Ἀτλαντικὸν Πέλαγος ἢ τοῦ Ἀδριαντικοῦ Πελάγους τὰ κύματα. μᾶλλον δέ, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἦσαν ἐκεῖνα τούτων προοίμια καί με προκατελάμβανεν ὁ καπνὸς τοῦ καμινιαίου τούτου πυρὸς καὶ ὁ καύσων ἐκεῖνος τῆς ἀρρήτου ταύτης φλογώσεως καὶ τὰ καθ' ἡμέραν πυρσὰ τῆς ἀφάτου πυρκαϊᾶς. ὧ πυρὸς ἄνευ ὕλης ἀποτεφροῦντος, πυρὸς ἐν ἀπορρήτοις δᾳδουχουμένου καὶ καίοντος μέν, μὴ καταφλέγοντος δέ, καὶ τὴν καρδίαν μὲν περιφρύγοντος, δόξαν δὲ παρέχοντος, ὅτι οὐ συνεφρύγημεν, καίτοι μέχρις ὀστέων καὶ μυελῶν καὶ μερισμοῦ ψυχῆς τὰς πυρακτώσεις δεξάμενοι.

> The suffering about the unexpected death of the Caesar [Nikephoros] reached to my soul and wrought to the depth of pain. I hold all the misfortunes coming before this terrible misfortune as but a drop of rain falling into the whole of the Atlantic or the waves of the Adriatic. Rather it seems they were the prelude, and the smoke from the furnace of this fire overwhelmed me, that scorching heat of this unspeakable burning and the continuous flames of the unutterable funeral pyre. Oh, fire that turns to ash without matter! Fire illuminating the unspeakable! Burning, but yet not consuming. Parching the heart, yet appearing that we are not also burned, even though we receive fire-wounds until the division of bones and marrow from the soul.

The burning of bones was not part of the medieval funerary tradition. There is no unambiguous intertext, but the most likely and memorable place a twelfth-century Constantinopolitan would have encountered the word *purakaia*, funeral pyre, is in the description of Hector's funeral at the end of the *Iliad*, which is a powerful piece of writing (to understate it). The use of short antithetical images in the description of the fire lends this passage something of the flavor of verse lamentations.

In her focus on her own misery and negative wishes for herself, Anna's lamentations conform to the sentiment, if not the precise style, of the mourning women of Attic tragedy and the *Iliad*. Where her lamentations seem to owe more to Second Sophistic conventions of prose monody composition, they reflect the pervasive influence of those conventions on medieval Byzantine culture. Given Anna's direct references to classical figures such as Niobe and Hecuba, it seems that she intended her lamentations to be seen as participating in the classical tradition of lamentation.[56]

Lamentation is not expected in Greek histories. One reason Anna's expressions of grieving are distrusted and perceived as disturbing may be that they are jarring departures from the traditions of Greek history writing. The tradition of female

[56] How well she succeeded in this goal is not of particular relevance to our investigation.

lamentation has precious little overlap with the tradition of dispassionate history writing. Thucydides and Xenophon's manner of 'objectively' writing about their own actions in a detached third-person established a tradition of emotional distance between the writer of history and his subject. The distancing narrative voice of the historian is one of the key characteristics that distinguish history from tragedy.[57] Authors like Polybius may appear in their histories to comment on the direction of the argument, and may even indicate their opinions regarding the course of events and the lessons to be drawn from history, but they do not emote, let alone weep.

On a simple reading of Polybius' attacks on his rivals, 'tragic history' was taken for much of the twentieth century as a particular kind of poorly-written history. This reading of Polybius was dismissed by his closest reader in 1960[58] and recently the call has gone out that "the assumption that only bad historians 'go tragic' needs to be firmly dismissed"; rather "tragic history is not a self-standing genre or a phase in a genre's development: it is more like a particular color in an artist's palette, used in specific places for a particular effect."[59] This particular color of tragic history is of a different substance from Anna's spates of grieving. Elsewhere Anna may try to draw the audience into the pitch of her story and work to elicit emotion from the audience. In the passages discussed above however she does not aim to get the audience to grieve so much as to grieve herself. Anna's lamentations cannot be ex-

[57] Historians present themselves as removed from the action: "in summary, tragedy engages the emotions of the audience by direct enactment; history sometimes does this, but the episodes in which this happens are framed by the stabilizing narrative voice of the historian, who guides the reader and suggests evaluations and explanations much more frequently and explicitly than is possible in drama": R. Rutherford, "Tragedy and History," in J. Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (Malden 2007) 508.

[58] F. W. Walbank, "History and Tragedy," *Historia* 9 (1960) 216–234.

[59] Rutherford, in *Companion* 514.

plained as an attempt at the sort of pathos-inducing narration that has been discussed as 'tragic history'. They are rather ahistorical moments in which action is suspended to focus attention on the emotional response to death.[60]

Readers who have internalized the standards of practice of the Greek historiographical tradition would naturally feel a sense of disjuncture or impropriety at Anna's outbursts of grieving. In that modern history also has aimed at dispassionate objectivity, we instinctively register a discord when Anna's weeping intrudes on the historical narrative.

Anna had read enough classical history for us to conclude that she must have known that including overt personal grief in a history was breaking the rules of the genre. And when we look carefully, indeed, she says as much. In describing the death of her younger brother Nikephoros she says: "suffering forces me to sing a monody for him, but the law of history pulls me back immediately."[61] At the mention of her betrothed Constantine Doukas: "I hold back the tear and store it up 'for the proper place' [Dem. 18.27], lest mixing my monodies with historical narration, I confuse the history."[62] In another scene, after describing Alexios' narrow escape from capture after being defeated by Robert Guiscard, Anna explains in a digression that she would like to weep at the misfortunes of her father. She recognizes however the impropriety of that response:[63]

[60] Suter highlights the ahistorical nature of lamentation: *Mnemosyne* 56 (2003) 18.

[61] 15.5.4, μονῳδεῖν με τὸ ἐπὶ τούτῳ πάθος ἐκβιάζεται, ἀλλ' ὁ τῆς ἱστορίας νόμος ἐκεῖθεν αὖθις ἀπείργει.

[62] 1.12.3, πάλιν δὲ μεμνημένη τοῦ νεανίσκου τούτου παθαίνομαι τήν τε ψυχὴν καὶ τοὺς λογισμοὺς συγχέομαι, ἀνακόπτομαι δὲ τὴν ἀμφὶ τοῦτον διήγησιν φυλάττουσα πάντα καιρῷ τῷ προσήκοντι.

[63] 4.8.1, ἀλλ' ἵνα μὴ ῥητορεία κομψή τις ᾖ κατὰ τὸ μέρος ἐκεῖνο τῆς ἱστορίας, ὥσπέρ τις ἀπαθὴς ἀδάμας καὶ λίθος παρατρέχω τὰς τοῦ πατρὸς ξυμφοράς, ἅσπερ ἔδει κἀμὲ καθάπερ ἐκεῖνον τὸν ὁμηρικὸν νεανίσκον εἰς ὅρκον προφέρειν· οὐδὲ γάρ εἰμι χείρων ἐκείνου τοῦ λέγοντος "οὐ μὰ Ζῆν', Ἀγέλαε, καὶ ἄλγεα πατρὸς ἐμοῖο" πρὸς τὸ εἶναι καὶ λέγεσθαι φιλοπάτωρ.

> But since elaborate rhetoric has no place in this part of the history, I summarize the suffering of my father like an unfeeling and unbreakable stone … the sufferings of the father must be left to me alone to honor and lament, while the history must continue.

In each of these cases Anna both begins a lament and then protests that she must stop lamenting in order proceed with writing history. Thus she calls attention precisely to how lamentation transgresses the rules of historiography. Anna was fully cognizant that history has its 'law', *nomos* (15.5.4), and that those laws forbade the expression of emotion.

So if she accepted that expressing emotion made for bad history, why did she do it? One purpose of Anna's participation in the tradition of lamentation is that it was a discourse appropriate and becoming for good women. When caught in the act of the male gendered activity of history writing, her enactment of female lamentation shows that indeed she was not an aberrant woman. As Euripides' Medea said, "women by nature are given to weeping" (928). In weeping Anna did natural womanly things and fulfilled culturally normative expectations for her gender. The first explanation for her lamentations is that they allowed her to conform to gender ideals for a good Greek woman, wife, and daughter. In singing a dirge she was behaving properly. In exercising the female role of lamentation, Anna inhabits an acceptable and approved female part. She has been accused of allowing 'histrionic' emotionalism to mar the objectivity of her history by scholars who missed how her expressive lamentations were the moments in which she was properly playing her gender.

The models provided by Homer, Attic tragedy, and the liturgical laments of the Virgin were certainly sufficient to

ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν πάθος τὸ πατρικὸν ἐμοὶ μόνῃ καταλελείφθω καὶ θαυμάζειν καὶ ὀλοφύρεσθαι, τὰ δὲ τῆς ἱστορίας ἐχέσθω. In full this passage supports the conjecture (n.21 above) that Anna is concerned about being perceived as boastful by her audience and deploys the discourse of personal misfortune to guard against that outcome.

impress on Anna that lamentation was the form of speech most appropriate to women. The medieval Greek tradition concurred with the classical on this point. For both Mary and Hecuba lamentation was a characteristically female activity and the most appropriate discourse for a woman. Those in Anna's audience who had also read ancient tragedy would have appreciated Anna's efforts to write classical lamentations. Those many however who knew only the Christian tradition of Marian lamentation would still have appreciated Anna's lamentations as the times in which she was behaving properly.

In modeling her behavior on that of Hecuba, Niobe, or the Widow of Nain, Anna was constrained to imitate them as they had been portrayed by Euripides, Gregory of Nyssa, and the other male writers of the Greek tradition. Since all of Anna's authorial models were men, her literary examples of women in mourning were images of women's voices as portrayed by male writers. In the absence of alternatives, these remained Anna's models for describing female behavior. We have no indications that she conceived of her literary models of female grieving as somehow inauthentic because they had been written by men. Rather, the examples of these male writers rhetorically performing female voices, and to some extent thus enacting femininity, may have helped Anna conceive of writing as an activity in which it was possible to cross gender boundaries. Michael Psellos constructed a rhetorical gender for himself that drew on concepts of femininity. In a letter describing his reaction to the birth of his grandson he calls himself female by nature.[64] Anna knew Psellos' work well and may have read the letter in which he presents himself as female, which had been written to her maternal great-grandfather. Psellos' ability to play with the rhetorical construction of gender may have provided a model for Anna's own artfully-constructed self-presentation.

Once Anna's lamentations are understood as the occasions

[64] S. Papaioannou, "Michael Psellos' Rhetorical Gender," *BMGS* 24 (2000) 133–146, at 137.

when she was enacting proper female behavior, the maleness of her rhetorical gender in other places becomes clearer. Anna draws sharp and purposeful contrasts between her discourse of lamentation and her discourse of history. The logic of history contrasts with the irrationality of grief. Anna presents grief as a natural, reflexive, response to death whereas history is a matter of intellectual deliberation. She emphasizes how lamentation stands outside of rational discourse by declaring grief to be unutterable. In the image of the undying fire of her mourning for Nikephoros, she uses vocabulary that emphasizes that grief and rational spoken discourse are incompatible. The funeral pyre of her grief is an "unspeakable burning" and an "unutterable pyre," a fire "illuminating the inexpressible."[65] Later, at the memory of her betrothed Constantine, Anna's "reasoning is confused."[66] Grief is again a marker of irrationality at the death of Alexios as Anna recalls that in her anguish she became disdainful of reason and philosophy; she says she had become mad.[67] In these cases Anna's historical discourse is interrupted by lamentation that cannot be expressed through words. It cannot be part of a *logos* because it is unspeakable, unutterable, inexpressible, and destructive of reason.

While Anna associates grief with irrationality, she considers history as discourse requiring reason. With the exception of the final pages of the *Alexiad*, every time Anna engages in lamentation she makes an explicit statement of her need or ability to stop lamenting in order to return to history. After the opening image of the funeral pyre of her grief for her husband, she makes an explicit turn away from lamentation. Having acknowledged her particular grief, she asserts that she will dry her eyes to take up her task, and promises to pursue a "clearer and

[65] Prol. 4.2, τῆς ἀρρήτου ταύτης φλογώσεως … τῆς ἀφάτου πυρκαϊᾶς … πυρὸς ἐν ἀπορρήτοις δᾳδουχουμένου.

[66] 1.12.3, τοὺς λογισμοὺς συγχέομαι.

[67] 15.11.15, φιλοσοφίας καὶ λόγου καταφρονήσασα;15.11.16, καὶ τότε δὴ ᾐσθόμην ἔκφρονος ἐμαυ[τῆς γεγον]υίας.

more historical discourse" henceforth.[68] This act of drying her eyes and controlling her emotion to return to clear history is repeated in her laments for Constantine and Andronikos. Regarding Constantine, Anna both mourns and elaborates on her ability to curtail her mourning:[69]

> I hold back the narrative about him, guarding everything for a fitting place … And I am filled with tears remembering this youth after so many years. However I hold back the tear and store it up 'for the proper place', lest mixing my monodies with historical narration, I confuse the history.

Again Anna is forced by her pain to sing a monody for her brother but is pulled back by the "law of history" (15.5.4). Here she explicitly balances her need to express mourning with the need to write historically.

Anna thus indicates that the heightened emotionalism of a classical lamentation is something she can both start and stop. The explicit drying of eyes should perhaps be seen as standing testament to her control over her emotions. When Anna holds back her tears, she exercises strength and self-control, both paradigmatically masculine virtues. In presenting history as requiring a rational and dispassionate voice, Anna implicitly argues that history requires a masculine voice. In repeatedly emphasizing her ability to dry her eyes and put her natural emotions aside, she makes the case for her own ability to write in a masculine fashion. When saying that she will hold back her tears for Constantine "for the appropriate time," she uses a line from Demosthenes about doing everything in due course (τοὺς ἐπικαίρους τῶν τόπων, 18.27). Demosthenes' tag may have been proverbial by the twelfth century, but it may yet be sig-

[68] Prol. 4.3, ἀποψήσασα οὖν τὸ δάκρυον τῶν ὀμμάτων … ἄμεινον δὲ ὅθεν σαφέστερός τε καὶ ἱστορικώτερος ὁ λόγος γενήσεται.

[69] 1.12.3, ἀνακόπτομαι δὲ τὴν ἀμφὶ τοῦτον διήγησιν φυλάττουσα πάντα καιρῷ τῷ προσήκοντι … ἐγὼ δὲ μετὰ τοσούτους ἐνιαυτοὺς μεμνημένη τοῦ νεανίου τούτου δακρύων ἐμπίπλαμαι, ἐπέχω δὲ ὅμως τὸ δάκρυον καὶ ταμιεύω πρὸς τοὺς ἐπικαίρους τῶν τόπων, ἵνα μὴ τὰς μονῳδίας τῶν ἐμῶν ἀναμιγνῦσα ταῖς ἱστορικαῖς διηγήσεσι τὴν ἱστορίαν συγχέοιμι.

nificant that after the monody, Anna associates her actions with those of a male public actor. Her self-description as drying her eyes to take the straight road of history calls attention to her ability to write dispassionate historical narration. Just as by weeping Anna displays her proper performance of female gender, by overtly and explicitly stopping her lamentations she performs masculine self-control, dispassion, and rationality.

The one scene where Anna does not pull herself back from lamentation is the final chapter of the *Alexiad* dealing with Alexios' death. She opens the chapter by remarking that henceforth, since she needs to write about the death of the emperor, she has a new "double task: to do history and tragedy at the same time." She must "on the one hand tell a history of his agony, on the other sing a monody on what has wrung the heart." Anna goes on to say that her father often told her not to write a history of his deeds but to sing threnodies and lamentations.[70] Alexios, she reveals at the end of her long history, never wanted a history about himself, but rather a monody. In the pages that follow, history and tragedy are mixed unapologetically. She goes "outside the bounds of history" again to talk in detail about Alexios' medical condition, using precise and detailed medical vocabulary.[71] As the final chapter progresses, Anna, her two sisters, and her mother become increasingly emotional as Alexios reaches his end, and the history becomes a description of lamenting women. Here Anna does not restrain lamentation to stay on the historical path but allows history to give way entirely. The final paragraphs are pure tragedy as she sings her father the monody he asked for. Like

[70] 15.11.1, διττόν μοι τὸν ἀγῶνα τοῦ λόγου τῆς προκειμένης ὑπαγορευούσης ὑποθέσεως, ἱστορεῖν ἅμα καὶ τραγῳδεῖν τὰ ξυμπεσόντα τῷ αὐτοκράτορι, ἱστορεῖν μὲν τοὺς ἀγῶνας, εἰς μονῳδίαν δὲ ἄγειν ὁπόσα τὴν καρδίαν διεμασσήσατο … ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἀναμέμνημαι καὶ λόγων τινῶν πατρικῶν τῆς μὲν ἱστορίας ἀπαγόντων, εἰς δὲ τοὺς θρήνους καὶ τὰς ὀλοφύρσεις παρακαλούντων.

[71] 15.11.2.34–35, θεσμοὺς ἱστορίας ὑπερεκπίπτειν ἔρχομαι διηγησομένη, ὅπερ οὐ πάνυ τι βούλομαι, τὴν τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος τελευτήν.

the *Iliad*, the *Alexiad* ends in lamentation.

In portraying herself as a writer for whom lamentation was a natural, but controllable, impulse, I see Anna as asserting a particularly female historical voice. As a woman—a natural, good, non-transgressive woman—Anna grieved acutely and participated in millennial traditions of female lamentation. Yet as a capable woman-historian, she displayed her ability to recognize the irrationality of grief and get it under control. Anna marks the boundaries between the two discourses so carefully in order to show us that she was in control of her emotions. We can trust her when she writes historically because we witness her drying her eyes to take up the masculine task of history writing. The final, fully tragic, paragraphs of the *Alexiad* naturally come across to us as self-pitying, yet the intention was not to write self-pitying history but to sing a funeral lament in which extravagant expressions of despair are required. It is sadly ironic that a rhetorical strategy designed to gain our trust has done so much to make Anna seem disingenuous.[72]

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