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Epilogue

When it comes to the things that are central to our self-understanding, it is most challenging to get a grip on the rules and concepts that we simply assume in our everyday life. In matters interpersonal it is not unusual to talk in terms of costs and benefits. But we also feel that all the money in the world cannot buy us real friends, for love is not for sale and “money can’t buy me love”. And in some situations we may also be hesitant to express our commitments in terms of assets and liabilities, because we do not want to come across as cynical. At the end of the day, much of this talk can be safely dismissed as “only metaphor” and we may not be seriously disturbed by their seeming to be contradictory. On the other hand, as I have tried to demonstrate for the case of Classical Athenian conceptions of friendships, some of these contradictions do reflect frictions or even paradoxes that emerge when people attempt to define and analyze their own social behavior.

The metaphors of an era may also reveal something about the preoccupations of the period, the questions of the day. Several texts from the classical period question whether the use of monetary terminology in talk about social relationships is only a matter of figurative speech. Some sources dismiss money talk as an analogy that fails to capture the whole truth. Some sources hold that the monetary way of seeing the world reflects a deeper truth about human relations and life at large. Some sources are anxious to control the boundaries between what they see as impersonal commerce and the personal realm that is normatively free from calculation and self-interest. To the Greeks of the Classical Period, these were not solely academic questions. The definition of friendship, the articulation of the social realm in relation to the economic realm, were issues that involved serious social, moral and political stakes such as the meaning of sexual encounters, the quality and value of education and poetry, the legitimacy of power. In and through these issues there was a
persistent conceptual discussion, negotiation and reconsideration of the meaning of reciprocal exchange in relationships. To some extent it is true that reciprocal exchange is always potentially ambiguous and changing in meaning: meanings depend on perceptions and perceptions are revealed in reactions that may retrospectively change meanings. However, in a society that is rapidly transforming in its repertory of exchanges, ambivalences and indeterminacies emerge more acutely and starkly visible; reflections about reciprocity come to be a prominent part of any moral or political agenda that seeks to understand the nature of the ties that bind us.

In various situations we have seen a perceived isomorphism between φιλία-exchanges and market transactions. Sometimes this isomorphism, the “give and take”-structure that both types of exchange seem to have in common, is acknowledged as an ultimate truth in reductionist approaches (friendship really is commerce and friends can be bought); sometimes it is granted only a partial truth (friendship involves exchange but adds an extra moral or immaterial quality to it); sometimes the isomorphism is rejected as a misguided and shortsighted truth (friendship looks like commerce, but in reality involves different objects, principles or subjective experiences).

The precise formulation and motivation for each of these constructions depends on larger social and moral commitments. Most authors choose to embed their ideas about reciprocity in the larger reality of a pre-existing order: the economy of χάρις is a reality that citizens are born into as they begin their life with the irredeemable debt to their parents and the gods. This embedding of morality in the existing long-term order entails reproducing this order; hence, the economy of gifts and χάρις has a tendency to be conservative towards power-relations. Conversely, authors or characters who voice social criticism, as for instance the slave Carion, refuse to recognize the moral meanings and social consequences of reciprocity and are keen to reveal “the more fundamental truth” of reductionism.

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1 Cf. Bourdieu (1977), 5: “[A]ny really objective analysis of the exchange of gifts, words, challenges, or even women must allow for the fact that each of these inaugural acts may misfire, and that it receives its meaning, in any case, from the response it triggers off, even if the response is a failure to reply that retrospectively removes its intended meaning.”
In the cultural context of Classical Athens, the distinct modes of exchange are not solidified constructions yet. Hence, in our sources we see a perceived need to disambiguate between various modes of reciprocity. The philosophers’ insistence on intentions, on the priority of capacity over desert in reciprocating a good turn, on not expecting a return, on other-regarding orientation, on incommensurability of virtue and utility, as well as the representation of transgression by comic characters or flawed personalities, serve to construct and affirm an economy of friendship and virtue that is distinct from the economy of investment, credit, buying and selling: they reveal a perceived need to forge a boundary between the two coexisting truths of exchange, i.e. to articulate a realm of the personal as opposed to the formal. As money proves to be a powerful tool for quantification, objectification and reductionism, attempts to make the personal realm immune against this impersonal and mechanical formalization appeal to subjective criteria such as character, intention and emotion. It becomes a cultural norm that anything “personal” is a matter of a subjective definition of a situation.

This suggests, as has been stated in Part One, that the scholarly debate on the nature of φιλία in the Classical Period is in an important sense misguided in its use of analytical distinctions, such as between objective duties and subjective obligations, between instrumental relations and elective affinities, between self-interest and other-regarding behavior. If we aim to understand the Greeks’ understandings of personal relationships, these oppositions are not suited as objective tools for descriptive purposes; rather, they are themselves objects of inquiry, as they can be studied as social strategies and cultural constructs, arising from specific contextual conditions, such as the need to demarcate relationship types, to morally privilege one type over the other or to legitimize certain conduct and existing relations.

Among the implications of this approach that are described and analyzed in this book there are two issues that I wish to single out below because their significance may extend beyond the study of ancient ideas about reciprocity and friendship: the study of emic conceptions of the ancient economy\(^2\) and the

\(^2\) See Introduction n.217 for my use of the etic/emic-distinction.
discourse of emotions and subjectivity. I briefly outline some potential implications.

I. “It Works Both Ways”: Constructions of the Market

In the 1950s and 1960s economic anthropology developed a set of conceptual tools that became influential for the comparative study of economies. One defining distinction was made by Karl Polanyi in an article where he reflected upon the “two root meanings of “economic””:

(Polanyi 1957, 243)

The substantive meaning of economic derives from man’s dependence for his living upon nature and his fellows. It refers to the interchange with his natural and social environment, in so far as this results in supplying him with the means of material want satisfaction. The formal meaning of economic derives from the logical character of the means-ends relationship, as apparent in such words as “economical” or “economizing”. It refers to a definite situation of choice, namely, that between the different uses of means induced by an insufficiency of those means.

The formal meaning, implying a set of rules “referring to choice between the alternative uses of insufficient means”, is ultimately based on a principle of scarcity and rational action. As such, the formal meaning is only applicable to an economy of a specific type, i.e. a system of price-making markets, where all goods and services (including the “fictive commodities” land, labor and capital) are purchasable and from which all income is derived. Only (Western) market capitalist economies that are primarily integrated through exchange on price-setting markets can be analyzed by formal economics. Other economies, where economic activities are “embedded” in social processes, can only be described in terms of substantive economics.

3 Polanyi (1957).

4 Firth (1970) and followers consider the postulates of marginalist economics of universal application. In the 1970s the formalist/substantivist-debate witnessed a second wave including formalist anthropologists working with formal decision-making models, and substantivist anthropologists working with the concept of “mode of production”, the articulation of different modes of production and issues of “transition” to capitalist economies. (Godelier (1977)).
The anthropological formalism/substantivism-distinction has been taken up in the study of the ancient economy where formalists approach the ancient economy as a functionally segregated and independent sphere of activity (with a profit-maximizing, want-satisfying logic), whereas substantivists maintain that the ancient economy was socially embedded and insist that the Greek οἰκονομία means “household management” and is conceptually unrelated to the modern sense of “economy” that implies a disembedded realm with its own distinct logic and rationality.

It is granted that it is misguided to imagine that ancient markets ever reached the level of disembeddedness of modern capitalist market economy in industrialized societies. It is equally misguided to understand developments in economic history in terms of a unidirectional movement along a scale from embeddedness towards disembeddedness. Moreover, as anthropologists point out, “pure” disembedded economic relations have seldom been observed in any culture; everywhere access to land, labor, energy and knowledge expresses political and social relations. Within the confines of these limiting conditions and qualifications, the substantivism/formalism-discussion is an extremely complex discussion on many levels and the outcomes depend to a large extent on what exactly is being studied: performance or structure, reality or representation.

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7 Substantivist approaches traditionally attribute a limited role of money in the ancient Greek economy (e.g. FINLEY (1985), (1965), (1970), who insists on the “cellular self-sufficiency” of the ancient household), and tend to downplay the impact of monetization on the disembedding of the economy. E.g. VON REDEN (1995)’s argument that the Athenian money-economy was an “embedded money economy”. Cf. DAVIES (1998), 240: “[I]n direct conflict with modern economists’ commodity-oriented systems, no models for antiquity (or, I dare say, for contemporary societies either) can be satisfactory which do not admit, as flows which are in some sense commensurable with monetary, commodity, or other resource flows, both ‘non-monetary’ returns (such as ‘negative reciprocity’ or charis) and exchange-patterns which are managed or are in a Polanyian sense ‘embedded’.”
8 See BOHANNAN & DALTON (1962), 1-20 for an argument that the principle of market exchange is to be distinguished from the market place.
10 E.g. NAROTZKY (2001), 4070.
11 NORTH (1981), 3, defines “performance” as the “typical concerns of economists”, i.e.
This book suggests an extra consideration on the issue of representation. Market exchange in ancient Athens was, in reality, guided by and embedded in social and political values and norms: in practice, instead of balanced prices, social proximity or distance remained determining factors in pricing. On a market too, φίλοι tend to get a better deal than total strangers, because friendship reduces the dangers of deceit, excessive pricing and violence (i.e. friendship reduces “transaction costs”). Nevertheless, ancient sources tend to treat retail sellers and shopkeepers as men acting outside the norms of φιλία, with a distinct mentality—especially so in situations of isomorphism.

The conceptual construction and representation of the market and commerce that we find in some of our sources, as being detached from social relations, seems to emerge specifically in contexts of isomorphism, in contexts where sophists are compared to philosophers, prostitutes to courtesans, mercenaries to faithful servants. It is in these contexts in which commercial transactions are compared to socially stronger ties such as φιλία that moral and political dichotomies come into play. As we have seen, these contexts provoke a construction of φιλία as a morally privileged subjective other-regarding bond where goods circulate as priceless and invaluable gifts of self-negation. The construction works both ways. As contexts of isomorphism provoke a demarcation of φιλία-reciprocities from commercial transactions, the market in quantitative accounts of production, distribution of costs and benefits, the stability of production etc.; “structure” is those characteristics of a society which are believed to be the basic determinants of performance, such as political and economic institutions, technology, demography and ideology. MORRIS, SALLER & HOPKINS (2008) note a tendency for historians of Greek economy to focus more on structure than on performance whereas historians of Roman economy have shifted their attention to performance the last few decades.

E.g. KURKE (1999), (2002) for an argument that elitist tradition represses the political dimension of coinage by misrepresenting coinage and the agora as only an economic instrument and an economic space, i.e. by conceiving of the public sphere as the domain of only disembedded economics. See however the criticism of FIGUEIRA (2000), who objects that Kurke uses the terminology too impressionistically by practically conflating “embedded” with “socialized” and “disembedded” with “individualistic” or “deracinated”.


The term “transaction cost” was originally coined by COASE (1988 [1937]). Cost-free transactions are imaginary: market transactions always cost something in terms of time and effort to find and evaluate the relevant information and to effectuate the deal. These costs can efficiently be lowered by bringing transactions into a rule-bounded system where participants can trust on procedures. Cf. ÖBER (2008) for an application of the concept to institutions and procedures in democratic Athens.
turn is constructed as typically disembedded and a-social, featuring socially disengaged character such as mercenaries, prostitutes, sophists and petty retail traders.

“Embedding” and “disembedding” are discursive processes. This means that when it comes to understanding the reality of both φιλία and the market, situations of isomorphism generate the least interesting or subtle accounts of modes of exchange that in reality may be far less antagonistic and far more complex and flexible. On the level of cultural discourse and intellectual history, however, situations of isomorphism are valuable as circumstances that prompt historical actors to become aware of their presuppositions and to articulate the rules they think they live by.

II. Emotion Management

As we have seen, both χάρις and φιλία cover semantic fields that have an unmistakable relational component (φιλία refers to a relationship type, χάρις refers to relational behavior): both have a dimension with objectifiable structures that can be described in functional terms. In situations of isomorphism we also find another side articulated and emphasized: an experiential side with subjective features that shield off objectification. In the direct context of exchanges that are referred to in terms of φιλία and χάρις, we often find emotionally charged terms that express the joyful quality of the encounter (e.g. χαίρειν, ἡδονή), the personal valuation of the other (ἀγάπη), or a disposition of trust (πίστις). As has been argued, neither φιλία nor χάρις refers exclusively and specifically to emotions, affects or a valuation of a φίλος as the unique person that he is. However, especially in situations of isomorphism, these subjective features function as techniques of misrecognition: recognizing and thematizing emotions serves as a means of immunizing φιλία and χάρις against wholesale reduction to a Debtor Paradigm of Obligation. A well-functioning social bond is believed to produce certain positive emotions. Moreover, because discourse about emotions helps to misrecognize both the balance in supposedly equal relationships and the imbalance in asymmetrical relations, talk about intimacy, subjectivity and
emotions has the capacity to hide the workings of power from view and make them unmentionable.

The role of discourse about emotions in situations of isomorphism is in part explained by the discrepancy it allows between the way things look from an external perspective and the way participants experience them. In line with Martha Nussbaum’s Neo-Stoic approach, emotions can be viewed as cognitive acts that involve judgment, a way of perceiving an object X, an instance of “seeing X as Y.” We could say that gratitude (χάριν εἰδέναι, knowing χάρις) entails seeing an exchange as a χάρις-exchange, i.e. as taking place within the context of a long-term relation. The Grumbler’s failure to react cheerfully to a favor and to properly experience gratitude makes him a problematic social partner, not only because a person who does not experience gratitude is unlikely to reciprocate in action, but also because this person betrays a wrong perception of the exchange act, a misinterpretation of a friendly exchange as a commercial one.

The idea that emotions are produced by, shaped in and interpreted in terms of relations rather than the other way around (relations emerging out of emotions that somehow pre-exist) ties in with the observation that the emotions that are prominent in Classical Athenian discourse are predominantly those emotions that relate to other people and that concern relationships with other people, such as anger, envy, gratitude and hatred. Moreover, a relational understanding of emotions may fit in a line of developments in the social science that approach emotions not primarily and principally as expressions of inner processes but as modes of communication within relationships and interdependencies.

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15 Nussbaum (2001), 27-8: “Emotions are not about their objects merely in the sense of being pointed at them and let go (...) Their aboutness is more internal, and embodies a way of seeing. (...) [E]motions embody not simply ways of seeing an object, but beliefs—often very complex—about the object.” In psychology emotions are defined as higher-order mental organizations formed around certain core elements (e.g. pleasure and pain, approach and avoidance). E.g. Kitayama (2001), 3135.
17 Jackson (1993) for an understanding of emotion as produced in relationships and constructed in language. Cf. Rosaldo (1984), 143: “Feelings are not substances to be discovered in our blood, but social practices organized by stories that we both enact and tell. They are structured by our forms of understanding.” Cf. Geigen (1994), 222.
It is important to get clear at what level of analysis this observation applies; it may be helpful to distinguish between (1) the experience of emotions, (2) the expression of emotions (both physically, e.g. blushing or crying, and verbally, e.g. “I am ashamed”, “I feel sad”) and (3) discourse and folk theory about emotions (Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* II on the πάθη, but also self-conscious statements such as “I couldn’t control myself because I was so angry”). The precise relation between these three levels remains subject to debate in the social sciences and it may be argued that a systematic distinction between (1) and (2) is not universally useful as it is typically a product of cultures that are preoccupied with sincerity.\(^{18}\)

Whatever the precise relation between (1) and (2) may be, as for emotions in antiquity, though it may be stating the obvious, it is instructive to realize that we have hardly any direct access to (1) and (2). Of course, our sources offer us *representations* of emotions experienced and expressed (a crying Achilles), but these representations are mediated through (3), self-conscious discourse about emotions: Achilles is represented crying in the *Iliad*, because the audience understands that crying signifies anger and that anger arises out of a particular social situation, e.g. a breach of co-operation.\(^{19}\) This book has mainly focused on level (3) and has mainly implications for the question under what circumstances people feel it is relevant to name and mention emotions such as gratitude, joy and appreciation. In as far as emotions are concerned, they are discussed in

\(^{18}\) There is a tendency in sociology to move away from the “two layers” approach that presupposes a distinction between inner process and outer expressions or a general dichotomy between natural, bodily and pre-cultural emotion on the one hand and cognitive, cultural sentiment or second-order emotion on the other hand. *Lutz & White* (1986); *Burkitt* (1997). See however *Craib* (1995), 155 for a modified version of the two layer-approach: emotional work consists in two activities, i.e. “the “internal” work of coping with contradiction, conflict and ambivalence and the “external work of reconciling what goes on inside with what one is supposed or allowed to feel.” Psychologists mostly adhere to a two layer-approach in one way or another by distinguishing a fragmentary physiological component and a higher-order mentally organized aspect to emotion. E.g. *Kitayama* (2001). See *Geertz* (1973) for a critique on an emphasis on the distinction between “genuine” and “conventional” as emerging from local concerns with sincerity. Cf. *Silver* (2003) on the Renaissance preoccupation with sincerity in friendship; *Van Alphen, Bal & Smith* (2009) on the economy of “sincerity”. Moreover, some approaches in the social sciences do acknowledge “two layers” but question the direction of causality. E.g. *Levenson* (1992).

\(^{19}\) *Cairns* (2004), 16.
light of the question how emotions are part of a theory of the world, of a theory of action and justification, or as part of a demarcation strategy.

A case in point is gratitude. The formula “thank you” can be interpreted as an expression of an experienced emotion of gratitude (or, if one objects against a dogmatic distinction between (1) and (2) as a sign, a means of communication in a network of social relations). Communicating the emotion of gratitude serves as a commitment device: being known to experience certain emotions enables individuals to make commitments that would otherwise not be credible. The Grumbler is the negative example: he fails to react cheerfully (ἱλαρός) to an eranos loan collected by his friends and hence not a suitable recipient for favors.

This all works on the level of expression of emotion and may be a matter of emotional competence, i.e. of implicit knowledge of the emotion rules in a particular society. But our observations of the Grumbler, Achilles and others are mediated by a theory of emotions—a theory that may be very implicit, i.e. a folk theory of emotions, as also underlies the representations of emotion in tragedy, but may also be more explicit as is the case in Socrates’ remark to Aristarchus that ill-functioning reciprocity gives people a nasty feeling about their relationship. It is on the level of a folk theory of emotions, i.e. on a meta-level, a

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BARKITT (1997), 45, following ELIAS (1987), 355-6: “[The function of emotional expression] is one of communication between people, rather than the expression of a hidden “inner” world. Expressions are not, then, the “outer” signal of “inner” feelings, but are signs in the network of social relations and interdependencies.”

FRANK (1988). It has been observed that in some cultures verbal expressions of gratitude (a “thank you” that reciprocates a gift on the spot) are regarded as shallow substitutes for a deeper sense of obligation to reciprocate with a real gift or favor. APPADURAI (1985), 236-7: “Although Tamil language and culture are rich in forms that express great delicacies of sentiment and complexities of etiquette, it is nevertheless difficult to say “thank you” in a direct way in Tamil. The difficulty is not because there is no lexeme in modern Tamil for “thanks” (…), but there is no easy grammatical way to place this noun in a syntactic form of the sort “I thank you for such-and-such.” Doubtless some contorted, and grammatically acceptable, way could be found but it would reflect very little of the realities of ordinary speech.” Cf. PITT-RIVERS (1992), 218, 244n.3; MALINOWSKI (1922), 190, 270-3; VAN WEES (1998), 26. The observation that in Classical Greek expressions such as χάριν εἰδέναι or χάριν ἔχειν are rarely used as responsive formulae in Greek conversation is of a different kind. Although neither the expression appropriate for grateful acceptance nor the formulae for grateful refusal contain the noun χάρις, there is a range of expressions that are used as responsive formulae: αἰνῶ (positive acceptance), ἐπαινῶ, καλῶς ἔχει, κάλλιστα ἔχει μοι (grateful refusal). See QUINCEY (1966). There is no ban on the verbal expression of gratitude in ancient Athens.
“hypercognized” level,\textsuperscript{22} that introspective phenomena such as χάρις and trust, but also intentions and expectations, feature prominently.\textsuperscript{23} Future research may address the role of the representation of emotion signaling in situations of potential isomorphism: is the Grumbler’s reaction represented as problematic because he fails to feel what he is supposed to feel or because his defective emotional competence is read as a sign that may predict something about his actual performance in his obligations towards others?

Future research may also address the question under what circumstances emotion-talk becomes an actual part of an affective economy in which emotional resources circulate,\textsuperscript{24} i.e. when emotion language becomes a mode of discourse with which friends relate to one another.\textsuperscript{25} Whereas philosophers seek to downplay importance of material reciprocity in φιλία-relations and to define genuine φιλία as subjective affinities, involving introspective qualities pertaining to morality and emotions, it remains to be seen how this discourse about emotions (level 3) relates to real interactions within friendships (levels 1 and 2). Is there a lot of love talk going on in representations of interactions

\textsuperscript{22} LEVY (1984) introduces the terminology “hypocognized” and “hypercognized” with respect to tendencies of cultures to mute or elaborate conscious recognition of particular emotions: “Hypercognition involves a kind of shaping, simplifying, selecting, and standardizing, a familiar function of cultural symbols and forms. It involves a kind of making “ordinary” of private understandings. Hypocognition forces the (first order) understanding into some private mode. Hypocognition is related to such ideas as covert culture and tacit knowledge and to psychodynamic ideas of unconscious and preconscious processes.” Cf. D’ANDRADE (1986) for the observation that in the American “folk model of the mind” feelings link perceptions and beliefs with desires and intentions in a causal chain of reasoning. A contrastive example is offered by OCHS (1986) on the folk theory of emotions in Samao where there is little talk about feelings as origins of behavior and causes of action.

\textsuperscript{23} Emotions can be related to social structure in several ways: emotion can be defined as being “about” social relations; i.e. emotional meanings systems reflect, interpret and structure relations. When defined as a mode of action, emotion is presented as an active constitutor of social structures. LUTZ & WHITE (1986). Cf. APPADURAI (1985): the particular forms that gratitude takes in South India help to support caste hierarchy and the explicit code of nonmarket reciprocity. ABU-LUGHOD (1986): Egyptian Bedouin individuals assert their acceptance or defiance of the system of social hierarchy through discourses on emotion that are linked to the ideology of honor and modesty.

\textsuperscript{24} Cf. FOXHALL (1998), 66 for affection as both a lubricant that “smooths and soothes” φιλία-bonds, and as a quality which evolves with the relationship itself.

\textsuperscript{25} BURKITT (1997) approaches emotions as a type of Bakhtinian “speech genre”, i.e. a type of discourse that “individuals actively use (…) to orient themselves in their relationships and interactions.” (41). One of his examples are the declarations of love between two lovers. Cf. BAKHTIN (1986), 61.
between friends in Classical Greece? Or does that presuppose an articulation of personhood and a conception of intimacy that is alien to the practice of friendship in the classical period?

To a large extent, these questions are still open as there are many more approaches to ancient conceptions of relationality still to be explored. This book has aimed to offer a richer understanding of one of the issues that get to the heart of friendship in Classical Athens: the nature of reciprocity in φιλία-bonds. It has sought to accommodate for a tension that emerges from our sources, between objectifying definitions of φιλία and approaches that attempt to preserve and emphasize subjective elements. This tension is not a contradiction. It represents two sides of the same coin.