

Abstract De Haas

Shame in Peripatetic psychology and ethics

Shame is a complex emotion which has received very different treatments in ancient Greek philosophy and culture, and often comes out as something quite different from what we think about shame.

In this paper I take my cue from a short treatise on shame that originated in the school of the Aristotelian Alexander of Aphrodisias (c 200 CE). It discusses, and solves, a contradiction between two passages in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* on shame: is shame, an unpleasant feeling, somehow a choiceworthy emotion or not? And is there a difference between the ethical significance of shame in young as opposed to older people?

The treatise shows how Aristotle and the Aristotelians sought to provide emotions with a general structure in terms of extremes and a middle, and include emotions in a conceptual framework of potentialities, states, and activities. In addition, the treatise shows the originality of Alexander's school in addressing Stoic concerns unknown to Aristotle himself.