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The Classical Ideals of Friendship

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Friendship is one of the most pervasive themes in the writings that have come down to us from the ancient Greeks. Friendship often drives the plot in Greek epic poetry (for example, Achilles and Patroclus) and in tragedy (for example, Euripides' Philoctetes). Greek oratory involves appeals to friendship, and writers such as Hesiod and Theognis were full of advice about the importance of friendship. However, what we find particularly striking is the fact that the Greek philosophers of the Classical and Hellenistic periods took up friendship as a *philosophical topic* and that their various theories of the nature of friendship were normative – indicating clearly what friendship *should* be like and the role it *should* play in the political life of their communities. While *depictions* of friendship in ancient Greek writing doubtless had an impact on subsequent Western thought, philosophical theories of the *ideals* of friendship were far more influential. Indeed, these ancient Greek ideals of friendship dominate self-reflective writing on the topic of friendship until the eighteenth century. As a consequence, this chapter will concentrate less on the practices of friendship in the ancient world or the literary depiction of friendships and more on the normative ideals of friendship offered by the philosophers.[1]

One thing to note at the outset is that the Greek word translated as friendship – *philia* – takes in a much wider range of relationships than those described by the word 'friendship' in contemporary English. Indeed, as we will see throughout this book, the use of 'friendship' or related terms to refer exclusively to close companion friends is a relatively recent innovation. *Philia* for the ancient Greeks took in family members and people we would describe as acquaintances, not friends. So philosophical theories of *philia* cover much more ground than one might initially expect.

Though philia encompasses many relationships, our evidence from the ancient Greek philosophers looks at it from fewer viewpoints than one might like. As with nearly every other document from antiquity, the theorising about friendship takes place entirely in a masculine voice. Sometimes the male philosophers of ancient Greece did discuss cross-gender friendship, but we know of no writings on the topic of friendship from female philosophers. (The works attributed to women of the Pythagorean school are forgeries of a later era whose authorship must remain uncertain.) We must recognise that these philosophical discussions of friendship are situated against the backdrop of very different social and political structures. (We will discuss in more detail the contrast between the relatively independent Greek city-states of the Classical period and the kingdoms that dominated the landscape after the death of Alexander the Great.) However different these political settings were from one another, they were even more different from our modern view of the liberal state. This is especially true when we consider the question of what the state is for. The Greek philosophers were nearly unanimous that the state exists in order to make the citizens *better men* and – to the extent that this was thought possible – to make the women in it better women. This is true not only of city-states like Sparta, but of the democratic city-state of Athens that we tend to think of as more akin to our modern way of thinking about such matters. We need to factor in this difference if we are to understand what ancient Greek philosophy has to say to us.

This notion of 'better men' (or women) brings out another point of contrast with much of modern liberalism. Greek philosophers felt free to provide normative theories of what friendship *should* be like because their shared ethical framework was *eudaimonistic*. *Eudaimonia* is the ancient Greek word most frequently translated as 'happiness' but it is more accurately translated as 'human flourishing' or 'well-being'. Though this sounds somewhat less natural, it has the advantage of cancelling the implication that *eudaimonia* was some sort of transient state of subjective contentment. *Eudaimonia* was more than this, and reflected the way that the point of living, for the Greeks, was not merely to be content, but to live well and thus to achieve repute and lasting fame.

Aristotle defined *eudaimonia* as a life in which one's activity manifests *aretê* – a term often translated as 'virtue' but perhaps better captured by 'excellence'. Virtues or excellences are those qualities that make a thing a good thing of its kind. As such, they are not confined to human beings. One can speak of the virtues of a good racehorse and mean the qualities that make it good at winning races. Human virtues, then, will be those qualities – in particular, deep-seated character traits – that make a man good at 'performing the human function', that is, fulfilling human nature.

Virtue or excellence was intimately connected to flourishing. A person who possessed the virtues and acted from them acted well. It was an analytic truth for the Greeks that to act *kat' aretên* (in conformity with virtue) was to act finely, nobly, beautifully and well. (Terms like 'finely', 'nobly' and 'well' are all shades of meaning taken by the adjection *kalon*.) Surely the person who thus acted finely, nobly, beautifully and well – and did so consistently – achieved *at least an important part* of living well. (Whether there was more to happiness than living in conformity with virtue was a matter of disagreement among the philosophers.) Given the connection between flourishing and living well, most philosophers agreed that virtue was at least a necessary condition for flourishing.

Finally, it is important to note that the happiness of a person, and the place of excellences in securing it, are matters for public consumption, as well as inner satisfaction. Dover notes that pervasive tendency for Greek writers to say things like 'I wanted to be seen to be just' where we might simply say, 'I wanted to be just'. It is not, he thinks, that *only* the appearance matters. Rather, 'goodness divorced from the reputation for goodness was of little interest' to the Greeks of the fifth to fourth centuries BCE.[2] This is because actions that embody virtue ought to be recognised by the members of one's community and should translate into good reputation and fame.

These related notions of well-being and virtue thus provide the background within which the ancient Greeks considered the importance of friendship. Friendship was able to form a substantial piece in the puzzle of how one lived a good life because the extension of the term *philia* was far wider than that of the English word 'friendship'. Thus reasoning about

the importance of *philia* in a good life involves a great deal more than our consideration of the place of what we call 'companion friendship' in a happy life. Moreover, what held the various relations subsumed under *philia* together was the principle that one should seek to benefit friends and harm enemies. This was *the* overarching principle that governed all *philia* relationships. We find it in Hesiod: 'be friends with those who are friendly' (i.e. those who are disposed to do you a good turn), and in Pindar: 'Let me be a friend to my friend; but I will be an enemy to my enemy, and pounce on him like a wolf, treading every crooked path'. It was not confined to poetic texts, but appeared as a basic axiom of moral action in Lysias' forensic defence of a soldier: 'I considered it ordained [*tetachthai*] that one should harm one's enemies and serve one's friends'. Most famously, Plato turns the saying of Simonides 'to render to each that which is his due' into a commonsense definition of justice articulated by Polemarchus – justice is benefiting one's friends and harming one's enemies'.[3]

As a result of this principle, it seems that a Greek's world was divided into three camps: those inside one's circle of friends, those outside and those who were neither one's friend's nor one's enemies. As even those in this latter group were seen as potential friends or potential enemies,[4] the distinction between friends and enemies was nearly exhaustive in practice. But we should remember that, though friendships were seen as having instrumental utility, the value of friendship was not exhausted by this aspect. Mary Blundell notes that some writers (for example, Democritus, Demosthenes, Aristotle) warned that we ought not to have friends solely for the sake of benefit.[5] Instead we ought to form friendships that provide the best kind of good – that which is good in itself *as well as* good in terms of its consequences.

Naturally, these relations of friendship and enmity between individuals within the city-state itself presented a challenge to collective action. In response to this tension a notion of 'civic friendship' – characterised as 'like-mindedness' or *homonoia* – emerged as a political commonplace.[6] Friendship thus has a political dimension as well.

We are now in a good position to understand why the ancient Greeks approached friendship as a worthy subject of normative theorising. All our actions are aimed at achieving

a *eudaimon* life. This was a matter not merely of subjective contentment but of objective human flourishing. Virtues or excellences were the qualities – whatever qualities they might turn out to be – that enabled us to achieve human flourishing. They did this by enabling us to perform fine and noble actions. Friends were required (on pain of doing what was ignoble and shameful) to assist their friends in achieving goals. So, the variety of *philia* relations thus provided both *objects* (my friends) upon whom I could bestow benefits (thus performing fine and noble actions) and also *assistance* in the achievement of my ends. In order to understand how to live well and achieve well-being, we should reflect upon the nature of friendship and what this relationship ought to be like.

If this is right, then it provides a matrix for thinking about the various ancient Greek ideals of friendship. There are *various* ancient Greek ideals of friendship because, though all the philosophers who attempt to theorise about it may accept the framework sketched in the last paragraph, they understand slightly different things by them. Aristotle and Epicurus would agree, for example, that all our actions aim at *eudaimonia* but they would disagree sharply about what *eudaimonia* was. Accordingly, they arrived at different conceptions of what friendship was ideally like.

We will now survey the range and variety of social relations that fall under the term *philia* in the Classical period – that is, the period of the fifth to fourth centuries BCE. We will also consider in somewhat more detail the common assumption that one should help one's friends and harm one's enemies. We will then look at the similarities and differences between competing theoretical ideals of friendship, primarily derived from the writings of Greek philosophers in the Classical period. The most influential of these writers was Aristotle and we will give his account of friendship the fullest treatment before considering both the practice and the theory of friendship in the Hellenistic and Imperial periods (third to first centuries BCE). We will conclude with a brief examination of the Pythagorean tradition of friendship and its role in the Neoplatonist philosophy of late antiquity – that is, up to the closure of Plato's Academy by the Christians in 529 CE.

Varieties of *philia* relations

Guest-friendship

Among the plurality of relations that fall under *philia*, perhaps the least familiar to us is that of guest-friendship or *xenia*. This was a conception of friendship rooted in Homeric times and exemplified in the exchange between Diomedes and Glaucus in *Iliad* VI. About to do battle, they discover that the one's father entertained the other's father while the latter was a traveller. The institution of guest-friendship was a reciprocal relationship of benefit between host and traveller. One who provided hospitality could have the expectation of reciprocity, not merely for himself, but for his descendants. This relationship of guest-friendship was sanctioned by Zeus who was its particular protector. It typically involved not only hospitality but also the exchange of gifts. Thus it was that Diomedes and Glaucus not only elected not to fight one another but they exchanged armour. Failure to observe the strictures that governed guest-friendship, both on the part of the host and on the part of the guest, could lead to disaster. The Trojans were doomed to lose the war with the Acheans because Zeus was against them, and arguably Menelaus was right to say that he was against them because of Paris' actions with respect to his host's wife.[7]

From these Homeric origins, the institution of guest-friendship endured into the Classical period – despite the availability of paid accommodation. The reciprocal relations of hospitality between families sometimes passed down through generations and guest-friends sometimes found that their hosts could assist them in a variety of ways. . For example, a guest-friend in Delphi could secure an audience with the Pythia in a more timely fashion than the visitor could without such local assistance.[8]

It is important to note that ancient Greek political leaders used the institution of *xenia* as a way of entering relations with their non-Greek counterparts, thereby establishing a friendship between their respective states. Overall, such relations were a failure. Non-Greeks failed to understand the institution of *xenia*, its egalitarian nature and its duties and commitments.[9]

Collaborators in common projects

It is easy to see how the relation of *xenia* could become relatively formalised because of the benefits that derived from it, both for individuals and for groups in which its strictures were observed. Other forms of friendship directly linked to mutual benefit included the friendship of fellow travellers, soldiers engaged in a common cause, business associates, people who belonged to social clubs, or who co-operated in the maintenance of a religious site.[10] (The friendships of political clubs deserve a treatment all of their own.) We might prefer to speak of people who stand in these relations as *acquaintances* rather than friends. Ancient Greek did not mark such a distinction – at least linguistically: all were *philoi*. Aristotle was still presumably responsive to common sense when he remarked that these relations of friendship had their origins in association and the degree of friendship was proportional to the extent of the association.[11] In his taxonomy of forms of friendship, Aristotle categorised these as friendships of utility. Though not as long-lasting as the other categories of friendship – friendship for the sake of mutual enjoyment or friendship grounded in mutual virtue – friendships for utility were still friendships.

The fact of mutual advantage was the glue the held together this disparate collection of friendship relations. The ancient Greeks not only characterised people who co-operated in mutually beneficial ways over a period of time as friends, they also supposed that the conferring of benefits on another meant that the pair should now be described as friends. This comes across clearly in Pericles' funeral oration in Thucydides:

> Again we [Athenians] are opposite to most men in matters of virtue: we win our friends by doing them favours, rather than by accepting favours from them. A person who does a good turn is a more faithful friend: his goodwill toward the recipient preserves his feeling that he should do more; but the friendship of the person who has to return a good deed is dull and flat, because he knows that he will merely be paying a

> debt – rather than doing a favour – when he shows his virtue in return.[12]

Correspondingly, to act to another person's detriment makes you his enemy. Dover noted the following two examples. In Aristophanes' *Frogs*, the character of Dionysius was hesitant to cast a vote for either Aeschylus or Euripides to win in a contest. Both were *philoi* to him, and voting for one over the other would make him an enemy. In the more serious context of a trial, an adulterer became an enemy to his former lover when he broke off the affair. In so acting to her disadvantage, he inflicted what she regarded as a wrong or injustice and this was sufficient for him to now become an enemy.[13]

What these reflections show is that the help friends/harm enemies principle was not one that governed actions toward different groups whose identity was antecedently fixed. People sometimes came to count as friends – people *you should help* – precisely because *they had helped you*, or because you had already helped them. Similarly, people could come to count as enemies to whom you owed ill will by what they had done to you – or indeed, by what they had done to your friends or ancestors. Relations of enmity, like relations of guest-friendship, could be inherited.[14]

Kinsmen

The issue of mutual aid raises the question of kinship and friendship. Those persons who stand in kinship relations were regularly described by the adjective *philoi*. We could say, then, that they were 'friends' or, perhaps more modestly, that they were 'dear to one another'.[15] This, of course, marks the ancient category of friends as different from the modern one. We moderns *may be* friends with our parents but we are not friends merely by virtue of the fact that they are our parents and we are their children. We should not suppose that ancient Greek family life was so much better than our own that every Greek child regarded his parents as we moderns regard the people we call friends. Rather, the fact that the same term was used across these relationships suggests that the core notion of *philia* was that of duties of mutual assistance. Doubtless many *philia* relationships were warm and affectionate, as many of our

friendly relations are. But what marked them out as *philia* relations was not the feeling, but rather the idea that these were people one was obliged to help.

Even in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, there were people who regarded this assimilation of family to friends as undesirable. The objection was not on the ground that friends ought to be those with whom one shares an essential emotional intimacy. Demosthenes wrote: '[T]here is no natural family of friends and enemies, but deeds create these categories'. Demosthenes was thus objecting that family relations ought not automatically be characterised as friends for they may not have done what is essential for friends – benefiting one another. Francisco Gonzales has argued that Socrates and his followers also sought to undermine the notion of kinship-*philia*.[16]

These are the exceptions that prove the rule. If the ancient Greeks did not themselves take kinship and friendship to be one in kind, then these dissenting voices would be hard to explain. The typical Greek use of *philos* and *philia* tends to elide the differences between what we moderns call friendship and other relations, such as kinship and relations of mutual benefit. Because all the relations that fall under *philia* were governed by the imperative to help friends (dear ones) and harm enemies (hateful people), the ancient Greeks tended to regard companion-friendship, kinship, club membership and so on as positions along a continuum.

Politics and friendship

We know that for the Greeks the giving of receiving of services or favours (*charites*) was important for the maintenance of *philia* relationships.[17] But the place of friendship in the mutual project of politics deserves special consideration, for it is in this context that we find a particular form in which political friendship was manifested, the *hetaireia* or political club. One could not practice politics 'without friends and trusted followers'.[18] This has been taken by most scholars to be an accurate description of ancient Greek political reality. (The best evidence for this comes from Athens and the following discussion is restricted to that city.)

In the democratic city-state of Athens in the fifth century BCE, political power was centred in groups of friends (*philoi*).[19] These friendship groups were of various types: the *oikeia* or immediate family, the *genos* or kinship group, the *kedeia* or marriage alliance, the *hetaireia* or political club.[20] Since members of these groups were *philoi*, they were bound to each other by the principle of helping friends and harming enemies.[21] Thus a man who needed support in the law courts, the assembly, or the council would seek the help of his *oikeioi*, *gennaitai*, *kedestes* (in-laws) or *hetairoi*.[22] These were his *philoi*. They were bound to support him, and he was bound to repay them in appropriate ways for this support.

How widespread were these friendship groups? It seems that they played a role only in the lives of the rich and well-established citizens. It was they, and not citizens from lower segments of Athenian society, who participated in the political life of the city by means of the intimate and personal *philia* bonds of the friendship group.[23] Such groups, it seems, were elitist. What of the poorer citizens? Did friendship play a part in their political lives? Yes, but in a somewhat different way.

In the late sixth century BCE Cleisthenes sought power by making the people or the masses his friends (*ton dêmon prosetairizetai*).[24] Cleisthenes' successful technique was imitated by politicians such as Pericles and Cleon. They appealed directly to the people for support, and did so using the language of friendship, claiming to be the friends of the people.[25] It is important to note that, upon entering public life, Pericles and Cleon withdrew from their personal friendships. It seems that the point of such withdrawal was to give the appearance of impartiality and thus strengthen the claim of friendship with the people.[26]

Thus, alongside the elitist friendship groups there existed another type of political friendship in fifth-century Athens, one that bound the politician not to individual *philoi*, but to the *dêmos*.[27] This second type of friendship involved 'winning the good will [that is, political support] of the common run of citizens by timely acts of generosity [festivals, parks, public sacrifices, acts of philanthropy] and by sustained affability of manner. This was the politics of largess'.[28]

The Peloponnesian war (431–404 BCE) introduced changes to both of these forms of political friendship. One of the effects of the war on Athenian politics was to make status, wealth and good marriage unnecessary for a successful political career. New Athenian politicians of the fourth century 'did not belong to the established friendship networks of the wealthy and great families'.[29] Accordingly the *philia* ties of *oikeioi, gennaitai, kedestes* and *hetairoi* (at least in the fifth-century sense) had little place in the politics of fourth-century Athens. There were still friendship groups but they were much more fragmented and subject to shifting allegiances.[30]

Politicians of the fourth century apparently also continued to try to cultivate 'friendship with the people'.[31] But they were not as successful, perhaps because Athens' depleted wealth meant that they were less able to engage in the politics of largesse as successfully as Pericles and Cleon had.

The Peloponnesian war brought to the Greek world not only inter-city strife, but strife of the worst sort – intra-city strife or civil war (*stasis*). The situation on Corcyra, as described by Thucydides, was typical, as pro-Athenian (democratic) and pro-Spartan (oligarchic) factions brutalised each other:

> There was death in every shape and form . . . people went to every extreme and beyond it. There were fathers who killed their sons; men were dragged from the temples or butchered on the very altars; some were actually walled up in the temple of Dionysus and died there . . . Later, of course, practically the whole Hellenic world was convulsed, with rival parties in each state – democratic leaders trying to bring in the Athenians, and oligarchs trying to bring in the Spartans . . . So civil wars broke out in city after city.[32]

These civil wars did not cease with the end of the Peloponnesian War, but continued well into the fourth century.[33] M. M. Austin writes: 'It is no accident that it was precisely at the end of the fifth century that *homonoia* – concord – between citizens emerged as a political slogan . . .

to become a much used catchword of internal and external Greek politics in the fourth century'.[34] Xenophon, Demosthenes, Tacticus, Lysias, Isocrates, Plato, Aristotle all lauded such concord among citizens. What does this have to do with friendship? Aristotle told us that, among the Greeks, concord or *homonoia* 'is said to be' specifically *political* friendship, that is, friendship among fellow citizens. Such *homonoia* consisted in agreement about constitutional fundamentals: for example, who should rule and be ruled.[35] Using Aristotle as our guide, we can say that the demand by orators and philosophers that fellow citizens live in *homonoia* was a demand that fellow citizens become friends of a particular sort. Some[36] went even further and urged *homonoia*/friendship not only at the intra-city level, but also at the pan-Hellenic level. The demand for *homonoia* continued in the Hellenistic period, both at the level of political theory where the Stoics sometimes identified civic friendship with *homonoia*, and sometimes made *homonoia* the basis of friendship,[37] and at the level of political practice where 'the Macedonian kings persistently urged keeping the common peace, receiving back exiles and forsaking revolution'.[38]

Conclusion

The most salient difference between modern friendship and Greek *philia* is the extent of the latter relation. Though the ancient Greeks themselves could, and doubtless did, draw differentiations within the range of relationships encompassed under *philia* and its cognates, the fact that they brought them under a common genus is revealing. What tied this multitude of relations together was that they were unified under the action-guiding principle: 'help friends and harm enemies'. The application of this truism in particular cases was undoubtedly complicated, for friendship relations could overlap and intersect in ways that made it difficult to see how you could honour all your obligations. Nor were the obligations themselves all that clear: the asymmetries of power and relations of hierarchy in many friendships made it impractical to insist that equivalent benefit was owed by each party to the friendship. Even so, there was no apparent discomfort with the fact that there was an 'economy of friendship'. These were, and were seen to be, relations of mutual benefit. But they were, in addition to this,

clearly regarded as goods in themselves. This may seem odd to us moderns since we tend to regard things as exclusively divided into ends we value in themselves and mere *means* that we value *only* insofar as they help us to achieve our ends. But the Greek philosophers who attempted to theorise about the value of things operated with a tri-partition: things that are good both as a means to other good things as well as being valuable in themselves; things like idle enjoyments that are valued only for themselves; and things like medical care that are valued only in as much as they contribute to health. Friendship belongs to the first and most valuable class of things.

Philosophical ideals of friendship in the Classical period

Socrates (469–399 BCE), Plato (429–347 BCE) and Aristotle (384–322 BCE) were the philosophers of the *polis* or Greek city-state. Plato and Aristotle wrote about the ideal form that this political unit should take. Socrates' conversations were directed at the well-being of the *individuals* with whom he is speaking, and so were not as directly political, yet they have Athens as their essential backdrop. Faced with the choice between escape to another city-state and death, Socrates preferred death because he supposed that what he regarded as philosophy could not be carried on in a place that did not have Athenian law and custom. This shared presupposition about the superiority of the city-state to other political arrangements is a common link shared by the three philosophers, and a point of difference with the later philosophers of the Hellenistic period and of the Roman Empire.

The evidence we possess for the philosophical views of the three authors is problematic – though for different reasons in each case. Socrates himself wrote nothing. We are dependent upon the way in which other philosophers chose to depict him in order to make any guesses about his philosophy. It seems that the Socratic dialogue became an established genre in the years after Socrates' death. We have full examples from only two authors: Plato and Xenophon (*c*. 430 – *c*. 354 BCE). Their depictions of Socrates differ in various ways and it is not easy to know how much the genre of the Socratic dialogue demanded fidelity to the actual thought of Socrates. The early dialogues of Plato and Xenophon's *Memorabilia* contain

several sustained discussions of the nature of friendship and its value. Of particular importance are the Platonic *Lysis* and *Alcibiades* I,[39] as well as Xenophon's *Mem*. II.6.

Plato makes use of other characters in his dialogues apart from Socrates – particularly in those dialogues written later in his life. Yet Plato himself makes no appearance. Nor does Plato ever provide a 'user's manual' for the dialogue form. We are hard pressed to know how much of what one of Plato's lead characters – whether it be Socrates, Timaeus or the Stranger from Elea – says should be taken to indicate Plato's view on any subject. In our attempt to isolate a Platonic contribution to ancient ideals of friendship, we shall concentrate on the *Republic*, *Laws*, *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*.

Aristotle's writings provide a different interpretive challenge. Mercifully, those that we possess are written as treatises, so there is not the gap between author and character that there is in Plato's dialogues. But, while we do have all the works that Plato wrote, we possess only a fraction of the works of Aristotle. All manuscripts trace back to the edition of Aristotle's works prepared by Andronicus of Rhodes in the first century BCE. We have no idea what editorial principles Andronicus used and the works in the surviving Aristotelian corpus are written in prose that is terse and dense. (This style, together with some references to diagrams and other things that suggest a lecture setting, has led to the speculation that these were Aristotle's notes.) The main source for Aristotle's views on friendship are books 8 and 9 of his *Nicomachean Ethics* and – at least relative to a work like the *Metaphysics* – this is relatively easy to comprehend.

We have very little evidence concerning the dissemination of these philosophical texts during their authors' lifetimes or in the couple of centuries after their deaths. Certainly Athenians could have stopped off in the public spaces occupied by Plato's Academy or Aristotle's Lyceum to see what was going on.[40] Yet the means by which one might have acquired a copy of a Platonic dialogue are not clear. Things are even less clear in the case of Aristotle's 'in-house;' or esoteric works. (Like Plato, Aristotle also wrote dialogues – the exoteric works – that survive only in fragmentary form.) Some scholars have been sceptical about the extent to which Aristotle's works were known even to philosophers in the period

after his death, right down to the edition of Andronicus.[41] This conclusion has not been generally accepted and it seems clear to most that subsequent *philosophers* knew the content of these works. Yet this tells us little about what the Greek in the street knew about philosophical writings on friendship. It is perhaps best not to assume that Socrates, Plato and Aristotle had an enormous impact on the practice of friendship in the Classical period. Rather, their works contain their reflections on those practices and the ideals to which they supposed friendship should aspire. Their importance for the history of friendship arguably comes later. Classical and later Hellenistic ideals of friendship provided the intellectual backdrop that dominated self-conscious thinking and writing about friendship down to the eighteenth century.

Socratic self-sufficiency

Two ideas that seem potentially at odds with one another emerge from Plato and Xenophon's Socratic dialogues. The first is that friendship is grounded in utility or usefulness. The second is that only those who are morally virtuous can be friends.

In the *Lysis*, Socrates is shown in conversation with two teenagers, Lysis and Menexenus. The scene is one that combines erotic undertones with peculiarly Socratic education, so thoughtful readers will be attuned to a gap between what Socrates says and what one might suppose he (or Plato) believes. He puts the following line of reasoning to young Lysis: happiness consists in doing whatever you desire. Even though you are his son, your father forbids you to do some things that you would like to do, while at the same time he permits his household slaves to do these very things (for example, to drive the racing chariots). Those things that you are permitted to do are just those things in which you have understanding or knowledge. So, a person is trusted and empowered to do those things in respect of which he has knowledge. The knowledgeable person is thus able to derive benefit from what he possesses and also benefits others. Socrates then links this potential to benefit others to the possibility of friendship

> Well therefore will we be friends (*philoi*) with anyone in respect of those matters in which we are of no benefit (*anôpheleis*) to them? Or will we be endeared (*philêsei*) to anyone [in these matters]? Surely not, said Lysis. So now, you see, your father does not cherish you, nor does anyone cherish anyone else, so far as one is useless. Apparently not, he said. Then if you can become wise, my boy, everybody will be your friend, every one will be akin (*oikeion*) to you, since you will be useful and good. If not, no one at all – not your father, nor your mother, nor your kinfolk – will be your friends.[42]

Socrates does not say so explicitly, but Lysis ought to apply this reasoning to the case of his own mother and father. They should be his *philoi* just to the extent that they are capable of benefiting him. And if wisdom is a necessary condition for deriving benefit from anything – another common Socratic theme – Lysis should count his family as friends just to the extent that they are wise. If friendship should be based on wisdom rather than on blood relations, then the ideal friendships will be those among people who are wise, or who are at least seeking after wisdom.

The most influential writer on Socrates of the last century, Gregory Vlastos, drew the inference from Plato's *Lysis* that Socratic friendship is defective in relation to Aristotle's conception of friendship. Aristotle insisted that we wish our friend's good *for his own sake*. Of course, Aristotle also insisted that we would find the best friendships inevitably beneficial to ourselves as well.[43] Vlastos, however, thought that Socratic notion of friendship cannot account for the fact that we cherish our friends as persons – not merely insofar as they are productive of benefit. We can also see from this passage that his line of reasoning would seem to undercut the idea that family members are *philoi* merely by the fact of blood relation. If utility forms the foundation of friendship, and if genuine utility presupposes wisdom, then there can only really be friendship among the wise.

The second striking feature of Socrates' conversations on friendship may be thought to counterbalance this seemingly distasteful focus on the utility of friends. In both Plato's early dialogues and in Xenophon, Socrates insists that *only morally virtuous people can be friends*. This comes across clearly when Socrates examines the Homeric adage that 'like is friend to like'.[44] But this cannot be so, since wicked people are alike, but are incapable of friendship with one another. The wicked commit injustices and those who commit injustice make enemies, not friends. Indeed, the wicked person is not even *like himself*, since he is so unsteady and capricious. If likeness is the basis of friendship, the wicked man is not even his own friend, let alone anyone else's. Xenophon's *Mem*. pursues the same theme.[45]

Socrates' remarks on the subject of friendship probably strike us moderns as odd (at least) – and perhaps slightly repugnant as well. The two claims considered here seem inhumanly cold and primly moralistic in turn. They would have struck his contemporaries the same way. But Socrates thought that his job was not to represent, or rather re-present, the wisdom of common sense. It was rather to build a logically consistent and irrefutable set of beliefs from what he took to be ordinary people's inconsistent musings on matters moral. With respect to the connection between friendship and benefit, the key insight is that benefit depends on knowledge or wisdom. Socrates was *philo-sophos* – a lover of wisdom – first and foremost. Such *phil-anthrôpeia* or love of humanity as he was capable of was only love of people in so far as they were sources of wisdom, or as a touchstone against which to test his own modest claims to knowledge.

The overriding value of knowledge in Socrates' ethics sheds light on his insistence that only the morally good could be friends. Socrates rejected part of the 'help friends/harm enemies' principle that governed ancient Greek friendship because he rejected retaliation. To harm another was to perform an injustice, even if it was in return for a harm unjustly done.[46] We have an overriding reason to avoid injustice because we have an overriding reason to seek knowledge, and Socrates equated moral virtues, such as justice, with knowledge. But if the overriding value of knowledge forbids us from retaliating, it none the less casts the original injustices perpetrated against us in a new light. My enemies may take my property or my life

but they cannot make me foolish or a morally wicked man – only *I* can inflict this greatest of harms upon myself. This restriction in the extent to which my enemies can harm me is matched by a corresponding restriction on the extent to which I can help my friends. If I lack the knowledge of good and evil with which Socrates equated moral virtue, then I am prevented from bestowing upon my friends the greatest of blessings.

If we really cared for one another as friends, then we should make common cause in the search for wisdom and subordinate all our other efforts to this end. Few of the partners that Plato or Xenophon showed Socrates in conversation with were worthy of this form of friendship. They get distracted or discouraged. They cared about appearing foolish in the admission of their ignorance. None were worthy friends for Socrates. Socrates did not chide them or belittle them for dropping out of the race for the greatest prize of all. But neither did he slow down or stop in order to encourage them to keep running. So in the end he was a man alone, but equally a man untroubled by this fact within his solitary self-sufficiency.

The ancient Greek philosophers' writings on happiness play out a dialectic between competing values of self-sufficiency (*autarcheia*) and relatedness to community. The latter value was often represented concretely by the place of friendship in the good life. Along the spectrum of views, Socratic ethics gave pride of place to self-sufficiency. There was a correspondingly austere sense of friendship – an austerity that we will encounter again in Stoicism.

Platonic politics, *erôs* and *philia*

Plato's middle and late period dialogues reflected on the political role of friendship in ways that the Socratic dialogues did not. Moreover, they explored the notion of *erôs* or erotic love in the context of Plato's metaphysics of immortal, incorporeal souls and abstract paradigmatic Forms. Whatever Plato's own intentions, these reflections on *erôs* were subsequently taken to present an ideal of friendship.

Let us turn first to the political dimensions of Plato's discussions of friendship. In the *Laws*, Plato gives us advice on how to keep our friends:

> As for friends and comrades, one will make them favourably disposed in the intermingling of life if one thinks more highly than they do of the worth and importance of their services to oneself, and assigns to one's own favours to friends less value than that assigned by the friends and comrades themselves.[47]

As we have mentioned the giving of receiving of services or favours (*charites*) was important for the maintenance of *philia* relationships. It is clear that Plato agreed. But what was the source of *philia* for Plato? To answer this question we need to turn to Plato's distinction (again in the *Laws*) between genuine and spurious friendship. The latter was a relationship 'between opposites'. Such friendship 'is terrible and savage, and is seldom mutual among us'. An example of such friendship is 'the needy in its relationship to the wealthy'. In contrast, genuine friendship is 'gentle and mutual throughout life' and binds parties in a relationship of 'harmonious assent'. Genuine friends commune 'in peace and with good will'. For genuine friendship is a relationship between 'equals' and 'similars in point of virtue'.[48]

What did Plato mean by 'equals'? Since Plato presented us with the relationship between the needy and wealthy as an example of spurious friendship, it seems plausible to say that by 'equals' Plato meant equality in social status. Why did genuine friendship require that parties be equal in status? Plato was convinced that wealth and poverty cultivated 'insolence,' 'injustice' 'jealousies' and 'ill-will'. Thus, rich and poor spend all their time 'plotting against each other'.[49]

Since Plato thought that genuine friendship required equal status, we could perhaps attribute to him the view that genuine friendship occurred between members of the same class, that is, between those who were poor and between those who were rich. But this form of likeness was not enough. Like Socrates, Plato suggested that friendship also required virtue but Plato thought that neither the rich nor the poor tended to be particularly virtuous.[50] Since rich and poor typically lacked the virtue that friendship required, it followed that friendship among the rich was unlikely, as was friendship between the poor. According to Plato, then, only one group of social equals was capable of true friendship – namely those who were

situated between poverty and wealth. We must not forget that, to be friends, members of this group also required likeness in virtue. Let us take a closer look at the sort of virtue that Plato thought was necessary for genuine friendship.

One of the virtues that parties had to share in order to be genuine friends was the virtue of moderation or *sôphrosunê*. This term is often translated as 'temperance' or 'self-control'. It was connected with being measured in one's appetites and actions and with steering clear of excess. That friendship demanded likeness in moderation for Plato comes out where he endorses the 'ancient saying: "like is dear to like, *if it is measured*"'.[51] Plato added: 'Things that lack measure are dear neither to one another nor to things that possess measure'. Plato says the same thing in the *Gorgias*. Here Plato has Socrates tell us that 'one man is a friend to another most of all when, as wise men of old say, like is friend to like'. Plato also has Socrates tell us that '[a man] should not allow his appetites to be intemperate . . . For no other man would be a friend to such a man'.[52] If we put the two passages together, then we get the idea that genuine friendship required likeness in moderation.

But why did genuine friendship require that parties be alike with respect to the virtue of moderation? At one point we are told that the intemperate man cannot restrain his desires. He wants more than his fair share,[53] a vice called *pleonexia* and one that is opposed to justice or *dikê*. In other words, the intemperate man cannot abide by the demands of justice. This was why genuine friendship required the virtue of moderation. Hence, friendship for Plato required the virtue of justice in addition to the virtue of moderation. Plato wrote that 'the ancient pronouncement is true that "equality produces friendship"'. By 'equality' Plato means geometrical or proportionate equality; and such equality is identified with justice.[54]

For, Plato, then, virtue (or character) is the source and basis of personal friendship. Seemingly for Plato, Smith is a friend to Blogs *qua* virtuous person. It is a short step from this to suppose that it is Blogs' character that Smith values as much, or more, than Blogs himself. This has led one scholar to make the following complaint:

> Friendships formed in the Platonic manner ultimately have character rather than the individual's possession of it as their basis. Hence if one loses a friend, it does not matter much as long as the desired character traits are still possessed by many.[55]

The same complaint has been raised about Aristotle.

Let us turn from Plato's discussion of the politics of friendship to the connections between *philia* and erotic love. Plato's *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* discussed erotic love between a man and a teenage boy. Both works suggested, or simply presupposed, that this was the highest form of erotic love. The power of these dialogues owes more to the striking images of the lovers than to any clear and compelling line of argument. Images also provide much more latitude for interpretation and thus adaptation by subsequent thinkers. We will concentrate on the *Phaedrus* since the connections between *erôs* and *philia* are more prominent in it than in the *Symposium*. Famously, Plato argued for the immortality of the soul and asserted that this immortal soul was reincarnated in various types of bodies, depending upon the character of its previous life.[56] The soul also existed in a disembodied state at some points in its career and it turns out that this fact is relevant to *erôs* and *philia*.

The *Phaedrus* introduces the famous image of the soul as a charioteer driving two winged horses, one good and noble, the other badly behaved.[57] In the soul's initial disembodied state it soared with the gods to the highest vault of heaven where it looked outside the universe at the Forms. The Forms correspond to properties such as justice, goodness, beauty and so on. They are eternal abstract objects grasped by the mind alone and paradigms that are deficiently imitated by the visible or tangible things that homonymously bear their names. The value possessed by the visible imitations of Beauty Itself or Justice Itself is eclipsed by their abstract paradigms. Hence in the *Phaedrus*, human souls prior to embodiment are said to be nourished by the mental vision of these Forms as the gods are on ambrosia.[58]

Our troubles begin when our badly behaved horse gets out of control and prevents us from feeding on this vision. Malnourished, the soul loses its wings and descends into a body. In our embodied condition, we forget much that we knew in our previous existence. The idea that what we call learning is actually the recollection of knowledge attained in a previous life is one explored in other dialogues.[59] In the *Phaedrus* it is given a new twist. The recollection of the Form of Beauty is especially easily aroused. When the lover who is worthy sees in the beloved a reflection of the Form of Beauty, the charioteer and the good horse are inclined to treat him with a kind of religious awe. The visual flow of beauty through the eyes stimulates the regrowth of the soul's wings, with an attendant itching and discomfort that drives the lover to a kind of madness. This process of regrowth is *erôs*.

The optimal situation is one in which this manic love is transformed into *philia*. The bad-natured horse in the pair is all for approaching the boy and proposing the pleasures of sex.[60] But the charioteer and the other horse should discipline him until he too comes to regard the beloved with a mixture of associated fear and religious awe.[61] It is only at this point in the narrative that the boy's attitudes and desires enter the picture. Since he receives all care and service from the lover, he comes to regard him as a friend. Indeed, the *Phaedrus* insists that it is a cosmic law that 'an evil person is never a friend to another evil person, nor does the good ever fail to be friendly to the good'.[62] Moreover, the beloved's own beauty, reflected in the eyes of his lover, will stimulate the growth of his own wings. Hence he too comes to be in love, for *erôs* just is the condition of regrowing one's wings. Yet he does not know this, and regards it instead as *philia*.[63] In this confused state, he will offer sexual intimacy to the lover.

> when they lie together, he would not refuse his lover any favour, if he asked it; but the other horse and the charioteer oppose all this with modesty and reason. If now the better elements of the mind, which lead to a well ordered life and to philosophy, prevail, they live a life of happiness and harmony here on earth, self-controlled and orderly, holding in subjection that which causes evil in the soul and giving

> freedom to that which makes for virtue; and when this life is ended they are light and winged, for they have conquered in one of the three truly Olympic contests.[64]

It is tempting to see in this a deep ambivalence about a specifically homosexual form of sexual intercourse but this may be unwarranted. A recurring theme in Plato's dialogues was the control of all forms of desire – and specifically of sexual desire – by reason. In any case, even if the lover and beloved were not up to the job of controlling sexual desire, they too wound up as friends.

> If however they live a life less noble and without philosophy, but yet ruled by the love of honour, probably, when they have been drinking, or in some other moment of carelessness, the two unruly horses, taking the souls off their guard, will bring them together and seize upon and accomplish that which is by the many accounted blissful; and when this has once been done, they continue the practice, but infrequently, since what they are doing is not approved by the whole mind. So these two pass through life as friends, though not such friends as the others.[65]

It would seem then that the friends that we moderns would also call lovers are not so much friends as those we would not call lovers. Paradoxically, the friends that we would not call lovers are more truly lovers than those in relation to whom we would not use this term.

The relationship between *erôs* and *philia* in the *Phaedrus* is complex – to say the least. The boy mistakenly supposed that he was merely a friend to the older man, yet he was actually in love since his wings were sprouting. The lover sought to make his beloved a friend, not a lover. If they were lovers, in our sense of the word, then even then they were friends. In any event, their relationship –whether we regard it as *erôs* or *philia* – was distinctly superior to the heterosexual form of love, since this inevitably involved the body and 'eagerness to make babies'.[66]

When later readers encountered this text – already confusing in its own right – and they wished to remove from their beloved Plato the stain of the 'unspeakable vice of the Greeks' there was ample room for manoeuvre. Plato's text is so rich in meaning that it is easy to find what one likes in it. But the most obvious themes involved the idea that masculine *erôs* or *philia* is superior to that which men may have with women; the notion that love and friendship have a spiritual dimension of mutual improvement toward a god-like state; and that the best interpersonal friendships involve a degree of intimacy that verges on the sexual.

Aristotle

Aristotle is full of praise for friendship, telling us that *eudaimonia* requires friendship, that friendship is a source of great pleasure, and that no one would choose to live without friends, even if he had all other goods .[67] But what does Aristotle mean by friendship?

Aristotle identifies three things that people pursue as objects of love: the useful (or advantageous), the pleasant, and the good (or virtuous). It is one of these qualities that we find lovable in another. On the basis of these three objects of love Aristotle distinguishes three major types of friendship: advantage-friendship, pleasure-friendship and virtue-friendship.

Advantage-friendship arises when we enter a relationship with another because we find him to be useful or advantageous to us. We love him as something useful. This is friendship for the sake of one's own advantage. Pleasure-friendship arises when we enter a relationship with another because of the pleasure he gives us. We love the other as something pleasant. This is friendship for the sake of one's own pleasure. Here we should note that Aristotle considers pleasure-friendships to be better than advantage-friendships. Advantage-friendships are more easily dissolved than pleasure-friendships and, unlike those who are friends for the sake of pleasure, those who are friends for the sake of advantage rarely take pleasure in each other's company.[68]

Virtue-friendship is the best form of friendship; Aristotle called it *teleia philia* (complete or perfect friendship). Such friendship arises when we love another as someone who is good or virtuous. his third type of friendship is possible only between the good, unlike

friendships for the sake of pleasure and utility, which are possible between bad people. While virtue friendship is both pleasant and advantageous for its participants , it has neither pleasure nor advantage as its object. Rather it is for the sake of the goodness of the other: 'Complete friendship is the friendship of good people similar in virtue; for they wish goods in the same way to each other insofar as they are good, and they are good in their own right'.[69]

Because virtue-friendship is possible only between the good it is rare and restricted to as few, unlike the other types of friendship:

> No one can have complete friendship for many people, just as no one can have erotic passion for many at the same time for [complete friendship, like erotic passion] is like an excess, and an excess is naturally directed at a single individual. And just as it is difficult for many people to please the same person intensely at the same time . . . [To find out whether someone is really good], one must both have experience of him and be on familiar terms with him, which is extremely difficult. If however the friendship is for utility or pleasure it is possible for many to please; for there are many people of the right sort, and the services take little time.[70]

Aristotle points to other differences between virtue-friendship, on the one hand, and pleasure- and advantage-friendships, on the other. Unlike the other types of friendship, virtue-friendship was 'enduring and immune to slander'. Further, virtue friends helped each other avoid error . They spent time with each other, made the same choices, and shares each other's joys and sorrow. This latter characteristic of perfect friendship indicates that, for Aristotle, such friendship was an intimate and affective relationship. This is also suggested when Aristotle spoke of the virtue friend as 'another himself'.[71]

While pleasure-, advantage- and virtue-friendships differ from each other in important ways, they do share a common core: all are relationships involving *goodwill* (wishing the other good) that is *reciprocated* and *recognised*.[72] It is in virtue of this common

core that the three types of friendship were in fact friendships but we should note that only in the case of virtue-friendship did one wish good for the other for the sake of the other. In advantage- and pleasure-friendships, one wished good for the other for one's own sake.[73] Yet this did not preclude virtue friendships being advantageous to oneself. Indeed, since the friend was, in this case, 'another self' I cared for my own good in caring for the other's good:

> And in loving a friend men love what is good for themselves; for the good man in becoming a friend becomes a good to his friend. Each, then, both loves what is good for himself, and makes an equal return in goodwill and pleasantness; for friendship is said to be equality, and both these are found most in the friendship of the good.[74]

Since pleasure-, advantage- and virtue-friendships involved reciprocity they were friendships between equals in some sense.[75] But Aristotle noted that not all friendships were between equals in every sense. Some friendships were between people of unequal status. His main examples of such friendships were those within the household, between father and son, husband and wife, mother and child, brother and brother. In these friendships, 'loving accords with the comparative worth of the friends' and the one who is better, more beneficial or in some other way superior (father, husband, mother, dominant brother) 'must be loved more than he loves'.[76] Family friendships could involve pleasure, utility and virtue. Friendship between parent and child included pleasure and utility. So could the friendship between husband and wife. Aristotle added that if husband and wife were decent then their friendship might be one of virtue.[77] It seems that friendship between parent and child could also be based on decency (and therefore virtue) , as could friendship between brothers.[78]

Aristotle's explicit remarks here seem to be potentially at odds with other, apparently inescapable, inferences from equally explicit claims. Virtue in the fullest sense presupposed practical wisdom or *phronêsis*.[79] Yet in the *Politics*, Aristotle claimed that in women the capacity for rational decision-making was not as authoritative as it was in men.[80] Since it was distinctive of the person who possessed practical wisdom to deliberate well, this appeared to

preclude women possessing it and so possessing full virtue. And this would seem to preclude them from virtue friendships, unless Aristotle supposed that virtue-friendship was still possible between persons who had different kinds of virtues. The *Politics* also claimed that the virtues of courage, justice and self-control were different in men and women. The virtues of children were also different.[81] It is difficult to see, then, how Aristotle could suppose that man and wife, or parents and children, could be in virtue friendships. Some interpreters have sought to credit Aristotle a sort of crypto-feminist viewpoint on the basis such apparently inconsistent remarks. He was signalling to the sufficiently careful reader that he did not share his contemporaries' views on women.[82] We think that it is far more likely that, as Richard Mulgan has argued, Aristotle's remarks on women were inconsistent because they were few and ill considered.[83] This would be unsurprising if Aristotle thought that there was nothing very interesting, philosophically, about women and their role in Greek society.

Earlier we noted Aristotle's view that virtue-friendship was more enduring than both pleasure-friendship and advantage-friendship, for both pleasure and advantage were temporary features of any relationship. Thus it was permissible to dissolve an advantage-friendship or a pleasure-friendship when it ceased to be advantageous or pleasant.[84] But was it ever permissible for virtue friends to dissolve their friendship? It was, Aristotle said, if one of the parties went bad.[85] But the virtuous party had be careful here, Aristotle added. He had to make sure that his friend had become 'incurably vicious'.

> If someone can be set right, we should try harder to rescue his character than his property, insofar as character is both better and more proper to friendship, Still, the friend who dissolves the friendship seems to be doing nothing absurd. For he was not the friend of a person of this sort; hence, if the friend has altered, and he cannot save him, he leaves him.[86]

Aristotle thought that this same idea held true in family friendships: '[I]t presumably seems that no one would ever withdraw from a son, except from one who was far gone in vice'.[87]

What Aristotle had to say about the dissolution of virtue-friendships was perfectly consistent with his view that such friendships were based on virtue. Yet scholars have wondered about the adequacy of Aristotle's perfect friendship, arguing that, since it was not founded on personal uniqueness or particularity, it made friends replaceable. We noted above in our discussion of Socratic friendship Vlastos' claim that it was directed not at the person, but at the *qualities* of the person. Aristotle's view was subtly different. We value our friends – that is, we wish them good for their own sake – but we value them *because of* their qualities. Hence even the highest form of friendship was conditional on the friend retaining the character that formed the basis of the friendship. This does seem to have the consequence that a virtue friend 'far gone in vice' could and should be replaced in one's affections with another without loss.

Aristotle's account of friendship is also perhaps mildly less normative than that of Socrates or Plato. He at least conceded that there was a relationship that we can call friendship that obtains between people with less than sterling moral character but he still insisted that the highest and best form of friendship required the best moral character among the friends. His ideals of friendship also conceded ground to the popular 'economy of friendship' – even the highest friendship was a source of utility, although this was not the *basis* of the best friendships. Aristotle's ethics conceded more to the commonsense belief that human happiness was vulnerable and in need of friendship. The virtuous man was the most self-sufficient of all men, but even he needed friends – as well as a modicum of health, wealth and external advantages[88] – in order to enjoy complete happiness. Aristotle's moral philosophy in general, and his account of friendship in particular, stands at some distance from the austere self-sufficiency of Socratic friendship.

Greek *philia* in the Hellenistic period: philosophical ideals and reality

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were the philosophical giants of the Classical period. The opening point of the Hellenistic era marked a transition in Greek politics from an era in which

the city-state was the centre of power to one in which Alexander's empire was divided into large swaths – the Macedonian, Selucid and Ptolemaic empires – ruled by kings. The end point marks the fall of the last of these three empires to the Roman general, Octavian. Roman political domination of Greece and Macedon proper, however, had come earlier in a series of wars in 214–205, 200–196, and 171–168 BCE. These changes, as well as the integration of Greek culture and learning into the burgeoning Roman empire, had implications at least for the political forms of friendship, as well as for philosophical *theorising* about friendship and the good life. In what follows we will not confine ourselves strictly to this time period, though we will concentrate on sources written in Greek. (Chapter 2 will discuss Roman practices and ideals of friendship.)

The practice of friendship in the Hellenistic period

As noted, the political context of the Hellenistic period was very different from the age of the city-state. Though Greek culture was now disseminated around the eastern part of the Mediterranean thanks to the conquests of Alexander, the political unit of the Greek city-state or *polis* was eclipsed by the various kingdoms into which Alexander's empire was divided. This changes the context for discussions of civic friendship or *philia politikê*. So let us begin this section with *philia* in the political realm, specifically with the Hellenistic courts, where the king's trusted courtiers were given the official title of 'Friends'. Frank Walbank observes that in all Hellenistic courts

> the king was surrounded by his Friends (*philoi*) whom he appointed to a position close to his own person, where they enjoyed an intimate relationship profitable to both parties, and he often rewarded them with gifts of land which established them among the propertied class, whose support was vital to the security of his rule.[89]

This contrasts rather sharply with the friendships within political clubs of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE discussed earlier. In those friendship groups, there was at least a notional

equality among members, even if real differences of wealth, reputation and influence meant that they were not in fact equals. The institution of kingship changed this considerably.

But this is not the only way in which friendship featured in the political world of Hellenistic Greece. A quick look through the documents collected by Stanley Burstein shows that the terms 'friend', 'friends' and 'friendship' were used frequently in the treaties and decrees of the time. Here friendship, which was sometimes associated with the term 'alliance,' usually involved the promise to respect territorial integrity and the promise to provide military assistance in times of need.[90] These same documents reveal more interesting information about the role and nature of friendship in the political world of the Hellenistic Greeks. For example, King Ptolemaios II told the Militians that he would 'repay' their 'friendship' 'by conferring benefits' upon them (*c*. 262 BCE).[91] In a political echo of ancestral guest-friendship, Attalos II provides money for the education of the children of Delphi because he is 'an ancestral friend' of the city (160/159 BCE).[92] The rise of Rome's power later in the Hellenistic period shows how these political friendships could cross cultural boundaries too. For example, Ptolemaios VIII Euergetes II declares (155 BCE):

> If anything happens to me, in accordance with human destiny,
> before successors are left [by me] for my kingdom, I
> bequeath to the Romans the kingdom belonging to me, for
> who from the beginning friendship and alliance have been
> preserved by me with all sincerity.[93]

This friendship between Greek rulers and the Romans was not an isolated example. We frequently find the term 'friendship' used in official documents to describe relations between Romans and Greeks. Here friendship usually involved Greeks granting the Romans power of control over their city. In return, the Greek city was permitted to govern itself according to its own laws.[94] Such friendship with the Romans was beneficial to the Greeks in other ways. For example, because of their 'friendship' with the Romans, the Ephesians are promised 'the establishment of theatrical and [gymnastic] games coming every fourth year' (98/97 or 94/93 BCE).[95] And because the people of Plarasa-Aphrodisias were 'good friends of

the people of Rome', Q. Oppius promises 'both in public and in private . . . to do for you whatever I can and for your public affairs to be of service and always of some good to be the author (for you)' (85/84 BCE).[96] Further, as a result of their service to Rome, three Greek naval captains are

> entered on the roll of friends, [and are] . . . permitted to set up on the Capitolium a bronze tablet of friendship and to perform a sacrifice there, and that gifts to them, according to official procedure, and lodging and board be contracted for and sent by the urban quaestor . . . and if concerning their own affairs they desire to send envoys to the senate or to come themselves, permission is to be granted to them, their children, and their descendents to come as envoys or to send them. (78BCE)[97]

The benefits of Roman friendship explain why, in 112/111 BCE, the people of the Greek city of Epidauros erected a statue in honour of their fellow citizen Archelochos son of Aristophantes. For it was as a result of his efforts that 'friendship and alliance with the Romans were concluded for the city of Epidauros'.[98] Such benefits also explain Plutarch's advice to Greek statesmen:

> not only should the statesman show himself and his native state blameless towards our rulers [the Romans], but he should also have always a friend among the men of high station who have the greatest power as a firm bulwark, so to speak, of his administration; for the Romans themselves are most eager to promote the political interests of their friends.[99]

(We shall say more about political friendship in Roman Greece later when we return to Plutarch.)

At this point we need to turn to personal friendship as it was actually practiced and experienced by Greeks of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Here we have more source

material to draw on than for the Classical period. While the political uses of *philia*-discourse might have shifted with the new political forms of the Hellenistic period, there was much continuity when it came to personal friendship and relations among blood relatives.

One source for information about such friendship is the documents preserved on papyrus. Katherine Evans has examined these documents for information about how the terms 'friend' and 'friendship' were used in real-life situations. She has discovered that it was common for a man to act as a proxy for his friend in business and official matters, and that a man would look after his friend's family while he was away. Also friends often performed services for each other, especially 'the borrowing, lending, collecting, and transporting of money'. Finally, Evans notes that women refer to men as friends in a number of documents.[100]

It is possible to assemble further evidence to add to Evans' findings. These show that other features of friendship from the Classical period endured. In a letter to the priests at Tebetunis, Poseidonios mentioned 'the hereditary friendship which you have towards me from old' (99 BCE). Poseidonios added, 'So, whatever you should need, instruct me and I will gladly oblige'.[101] This shows that inherited relations of friendship were still recognised and continued to form the basis of an obligation to act. In a fragmented letter (2 BCE), the author told the recipient 'you must assist him [Damas] because of our friendship'[102] indicating that the governing axiom of *philia* – 'help friends' – was still common wisdom and that there was a personal 'economy of friendship' parallel to the political one. In another letter, a penitent prodigal son asked his mother to forgive him. He wrote: 'it is just to pardon friends who stumble' (second century CE),[103] indicating that the vocabulary of *philia* still extended to familial relationships.

The evidence from these letters agrees with the contemporary historians of the period. That the 'help friends/harm enemies' principle still governed the *philia* relation is clearly illustrated by the historian Polybius (*c.* 200–118 BCE). He noted that – while a good man should love his friends and his country, and hate in common with his friends their enemies – the historian had to ignore this common convention. As a historian he might rather

unnaturally be required to speak well of his enemies and criticise his friends.[104] As we noted, political clubs ceased to have the same significance that they had had in the Classical period. But this did not mean that similar civic associations passed beyond the language of friendship. Polybius commented on how far things were gone in Boeotia in 192 BCE. Some men who died childless did not will their estates to their closest relatives, as had been the practice in times past, but instead left their money to their friendship groups for travel and dining. Even men with families left large portions of their estates to their dining clubs. So popular and well resourced were such clubs, Polybius said, that many Boeotians had more dinner dates than there were days in the month![105]

In addition to letters, we can perhaps also find information about personal friendship as it was actually practiced and experienced by the Hellenistic and Roman Greeks from the poetry of the time. Several of these poems portrayed personal friendship as an intimate and emotional attachment. For example, Theocritus (*c*. 308–240 BCE) wrote *Idyll* 28 to accompany a gift to a married female friend, Theugenis. Theocritus ended the poem:

> For seeing this [gift] someone will say, 'indeed great affection exists
> in a small gift; and all that comes from friends is precious'.

Whatever doubts philosophers might have voiced about the possibility of *philia* between men and women, Theocritus seems genuine in his affection for his married friend.

Kallimachos (*c*. 300–240 BCE) lamented the death of his friend in the following moving poem:

> Someone spoke of your death, Herakleitos. It brought me
> to tears, and I remembered how often together
> we ran the sun down with talk . . . somewhere
> you've long been dust, my Halikarnassian friend[106]

Perhaps Kallimachos also regretted that his friend was no longer in a position to benefit him, but the source of his grief was the absence of their talk together – the simple pleasure of companionship.

Finally, a poem by Palladas (fourth century CE) reveals, not only the intimacy of personal friendship (as displayed in the last line of the poem), but also the link between letter writing and personal friendship for the Greeks:

> Nature, pleased with the customs of friendship,
> invented tools so that those absent could be united:
> the reed-pen, paper, ink, a person's handwriting,
> tokens of the soul that grieves far away.107

The link between friendship and letter-writing can also be found in the epistolary novel *Chion of Heraclea* (first century CE; author unknown). Letter 9 is addressed to Chion's friend, Bion. Chion complained that Bion had not written to him. He told Bion that he should 'write often as one remembering [their] friendship to another remembering it also'. Commenting on this passage, Patricia A. Rosenmeyer writes:

> The letter is perceived, as in the epistolary theorists, as a sign of friendship [e.g., Cicero *Ep. ad Fam*. 2.1 ; Seneca *Ep. Mor*. 40]. The bond forged while together must be sustained while apart, and ignoring a friend by not writing implies a low opinion of friendship.[108]

Philosophical ideals of friendship

It is dangerous to make broad generalisations about the philosophy of different eras and to suppose that there is any particularly tight connection between the circumstances of philosophical composition and the content of philosophical reflection. None the less, some patterns seem to emerge from the philosophical writings of the Hellenistic period. First, while the political thought of Plato and Aristotle assumes the backdrop of the city-state as a given, the philosophers of the Hellenistic period look to either bigger or smaller notions of community. On the one hand, the Cynics and Stoics envision a community of all rational beings and coin the term *kosmopolitês* or 'citizen of the world'[109] On the other hand, Epicurus encouraged his followers to avoid political engagement with the wider affairs of the world

and to retreat within Epicurean communities. Second, the philosophical schools of the Hellenistic period address themselves to a wider audience. Plato imagined that there were few people who could engage in philosophy and Aristotle was similarly elitist about the matter. There was no point in any one hearing the lectures on ethics unless he had been raised properly as a gentleman to appreciate what was fine and noble. By contrast, Epicurus insisted that philosophy could be of benefit to every person.[110] Finally, the philosophers of the Hellenistic period were much more explicit about the soteriological character of philosophy. Philosophy was the pathway to salvation – an escape from the unhappiness that would otherwise befall a person. Moreover, this salvation is both personal and unconditional. The philosopher could be happy or *eudaimonos* even while being cooked alive in the bull of Phalaris.

It is easy to overstate the extent to which the uncertain character of the times influenced the content of Hellenistic philosophy. Zeller's magisterial 1883 *Grundriss der Geschichte der Griechischen Philosophie* put it this way:

> the Greek motherland, robbed of its independence and political activity, became an object of contention for foreigners and the scene of strife . . . Under these circumstances it was natural that the desire and power of a free and purely scientific view of the world should disappear; that practical problems should come to the fore and philosophy should find its chief value in providing a refuge from the miseries of life.[111]

Zeller's remarks evince his view that the Stoics and Epicureans were merely an unfortunate interlude between the glories of Plato and Aristotle and philosophy's rebirth in Plotinus. Even if we reject Zeller's judgement of the value of Hellenistic philosophy, we must recognise that there has been a subtle shift. The philosophical ideals of friendship articulated by the Stoics and the Epicureans were, respectively, more austere and more limited than the ideals of friendship that we find in the Classical period.

The Stoics

The Stoic school of philosophy takes its name from the customary meeting-place of the companions and students of Zeno of Citium (344–262 BCE) – the painted porch or stoa in Athens. The essential outlines of Zeno's philosophy were little modified by his successors, Cleanthes (d. 232 BCE) and Chrysippus (d. 206 BCE), though they were significantly refined and strengthened especially by Chrysippus. Our evidence for the Stoic school in the next two centuries is more fragmentary. Stoics of this period include Poseidonius and Panaeteus (discussed in Chapter 2 with Cicero's treatise, 'On Friendship'). We have an abundance of writings from Romans who adopted Stoicism, including Seneca (4 BCE – 65 CE), who wrote in Latin, as well as Epictetus (*c*. 55–135 CE) and Marcus Aurelius (121–180 CE), who wrote in Greek.

In order to appreciate the radical nature of the Stoic ideal of friendship, it is necessary to say a few things about their moral philosophy. Here there are two really salient facts. First, the Stoics embraced whole-heartedly one thesis that is often assigned to Socrates: that moral virtue was both necessary and sufficient for well-being or *eudaimonia*. Though it was natural and rational for humans to *prefer* health to sickness, or material sufficiency to grinding poverty, these things were strictly indifferent to the question of whether one was *eudaimonos* or not. These 'preferred indifferents' as they called them were merely the raw material for virtuous living. We are happy only if we pursue these indifferents virtuously. It was the *virtuous pursuit* of goals such as health, wealth and security that mattered – not their actual achievement. Since the Stoics equated moral virtues such as justice, self-control and courage with rational understanding or *epistêmê*, our happiness depends solely upon the perfection or full realisation of our rational nature.

The Stoics were also strict causal determinists. All events came about in accordance with the law of nature, which they identified with divine presence that interpenetrated all things and brought about all things in a single, supremely rational narrative. This story was so good that God plays it again and again. The cosmos was subject to periodic episodes in which all things were consumed in the fire that was Zeus. From the conflagration, the cycle began

again and played itself out exactly as it had before. In this doctrine of eternal recurrence, the next cycle will include someone indistinguishable from you who will read this very page in the same circumstances in which you now find yourself. Whatever your future holds, you may be certain that it is an essential part in the maximally rational and best narrative for a world history. The wise, and thus fully rational, person positively welcomed all aspects of his role in this narrative. His well-being or *eudaimonia* depended not on what happens to him, but on how he played the part that has been assigned to him. So he never wanted anything unless he was fated to have it. Likewise, he never resented anything, for it was always fated to befall him. As Epictetus said:

> Men are not troubled by things but rather by the [mistaken] beliefs that they form about things. Death, for instance, is not something [objectively] terrible, else it would have appeared so to Socrates [who was wise enough to know what was objectively terrible]. Rather, the terror consists in the belief that death is terrible.[112] (Handbook, 5)

This claim about what terror consists in takes us on to a second distinctive thesis of Stoic moral philosophy – their view about the *pathê.* A *pathos* was literally something that one underwent – what happened to you. It was contrasted with *praxis*, or what one did. It was from this origin that we get the rather old-fashioned term that includes emotions – 'the passions'. The Stoic catalogue of passions included many of the things that we call emotions, as well as some things that we might not. They included anger, fear, jealousy, pity and envy, but they also included intense sexual urges, confusion, annoyance and pleasure or delight (*hêdonê*). All these states shared two important properties according to the Stoics. First, they were all judgements of a certain sort. Second, they were *mistaken* judgements: the person in whom reason was fully developed made no mistakes, and hence suffered none of these passions. The fully wise person was thus *a-pathetikos*, but this does not mean that he was apathetic in the modern English sense. It simply meant that in all aspects of life, he was the actor, not the patient. Indeed, the wise Stoic was strongly motivated – indeed, he was *only motivated* – to do that which justice, courage, wisdom and self-restraint demanded. Confronted with government corruption, he would denounce it fearlessly. That is, he would

not merely master the fear of retribution and do what his conscience and reason told him was right, he would not experience any fear to master. To feel fear would be to mistakenly believe that something other than one's own moral integrity and rationality mattered to one's happiness – for instance, one's life or the lives of one's family. But this was simply false.

What becomes of friendship within a moral philosophy like this? The Stoics claimed that *real* friendship was actually *only* possible between such emotionless Stoic sages.[113] Moreover, this friendship was selfless and knew no boundaries. It was 'a certain sort of community that pertains to *all things* that bear on life in which one treats one's friend as you would yourself'.[114] It was possible only among sages because only they were of like mind (*homonoia*) about all these matters that had bearing on life.[115] It was also possible between such sages and the gods, who were equal in virtue to these extraordinary human beings.[116]

We can see that this will necessarily be a very austere ideal of friendship. The Stoics did not locate the basis of friendship in any human need. While other forms of association – affection for relatives and what the world calls 'friendship' – arise naturally in us because we have not yet perfected our rational natures, when we become all that we can be, real friendship fills no gap in our lives. This is not to say that friends did not benefit the Stoic sage. In fact, the Stoics insisted that every other wise person, whether known to him or not, benefited any particular sage in everything that he did.[117] Our sources do not explain the nature of this benefit, but it is not too difficult to speculate. The Stoic wise person unreservedly strove after only one thing: virtue and virtuous action. Because virtue was the perfection of our rational capacity, in another sense the wise person sought only to be rational and to make the world around him conform to the normative dictates of reason. The God who ordered the world so that it was intelligible to rational beings did this. The other Stoic sages who made their actions, and the human world in which they lived, proceed rationally did the same. In a sense, all Stoic sages were 'brothers in the Lord' – that is, in the all-pervasive reason of Zeus.[118] As such, their austere form of friendship with one another – a bond that consisted simply in their total dedication to an ethical goal – could form a model for other people who shared a similar overriding commitment to such a goal. It may be the austerity of

comrades working for the revolution, or of brothers in Christ who seek the triumph of God's kingdom. The core of the friendship was not warm feelings of affection, but like-mindedness or *homonoia* – commitment to the cause.

In spite of the fact that it holds up an ideal that seems unachievable, the Stoic theory of friendship hovered in the background of the most influential of ancient works on friendship, Cicero's *De amicitia*. Like the Stoics, Cicero defined friendship in terms of complete like-mindedness (but Latin *concordia* rather than Greek *homonoia*) about all things. Like the Stoics, he insisted that virtue produced friendship and sustained it and that friendship was not possible without it. Yet in his practical Roman manner, Cicero stressed that he meant 'virtue' in its ordinary sense – not in the high-flown sense of some philosophers – and he included among the class of the virtuous those who were commonly regarded as such.[119] Arguably, Cicero's ideal of friendship is 'Stoicism lite'.

Stoic ideas of political, as opposed to personal, friendship may have left their mark on Cicero as well. The founder of Stoicism, Zeno of Citium, wrote a work entitled the *Republic* – perhaps in opposition to Plato's work of the same name. The reports that we have of this now lost work make it difficult to determine with certainty just what was contained in it. One report that became well known, even if misleading, was that the Stoics agreed with Alexander the Great's ambition of establishing a world state.

> The Republic of Zeno which is the object of such amazement . . . is aimed at this one main point – that we should not dwell in city-states or our own particular neighbourhoods, each one delineated by its own particular laws and norms, but rather we should think of all people as our fellow-citizens and neighbours, and there should be a single way of life and order (*kosmos*), just like herd animal feeding together nourished by a common law (*nomos koinos*).[120]

It is difficult to square this apparent cosmopolitanism with another report that Zeno restricted the citizenship of his *Republic* to sages.

> Again, they criticise Zeno for setting up a city-state that has only the wise as friends, family members, and free people, so that it turns out that for the Stoics parents and children are enemies because they are not wise.[121]

While there have been various attempts to generate a consistent account of Zeno's political thought, it is the subsequent influence of the idea of such a world state that is important here.

In Zeno's cosmic city the herd of humanity was nurtured by a *common law*. This common law was the Stoic notion of correct reason, which was one and the same with Nature or the immanent presence of Zeus in everything. In *de Legibus*, Cicero identified the origin of justice in this natural law, defining it in Stoic terms. We all fall under the rule of this law and, as such, there is a community that includes every human being. Now, if all people were fully rational, we would all live in accordance with this natural law. But while the mere fact that something is forbidden by natural law prevents those who are good and rational from doing it, things are otherwise with the wicked and irrational.[122] What is to be done about those who are wicked and irrational within our universal community? We surmise that Cicero thought that our fellow world citizens needed to be brought to the light of reason by force if necessary. And what better, more noble force than that of Rome?

The sections of book 3 of Cicero's *Republic* subsequent to 3.33 are very fragmentary, but it appears as if this is building up to a justification of Rome's empire ('our people by defending their allies have gained dominion over the whole world').[123] Augustine's *Civ. Dei* seems to be a discussion of this very section of Cicero's text and Augustine characterises Cicero's argument in these terms: 'this situation [Rome's dominion] is just, on the ground that servitude is in the interest of such men as the provincials, and that it is established for their benefit'.[124] Because Rome acted in the interests of all those people who fell within its dominion, it was actually more accurately called a protectorate of the world than an empire.[125] . The ground for this generous attitude of benevolence toward the peoples that

Rome now ruled was one and the same as the basis of friendship. In *De amicitia*, Cicero observed that the basis of the highest and most proper form of friendship was likeness in virtue. It was wholly natural for those who were good to be attracted to those who were also good, and this was the font or source of friendship. But the general run of humanity was good. Hence the Romans, through their virtue, 'are concerned to protect the universal community (*populos universos*) and to plan the optimum measures for their well-being'.[126]

The question of a Stoic source for Cicero's justification of empire is a matter of dispute.[127] But it is entirely possible that some Roman intellectuals such as Cicero might have sought to justify Rome's empire on the basis of a Stoic account of political friendship. It is, of course, easy to be cynical about such justifications and to regard them as mere rationalisations – whether it be Roman *imperium* or the USA's recent friendly attempts to bring democracy to the Middle East. Some persons perhaps do sincerely believe that friendship for others may demand that we invade them. Right or wrong, this is a conception of friendship that has a long pedigree.

Epicureans and other hedonists

Apart from Stoicism, the other most significant philosophical school of thought in the Hellenistic period was Epicureanism. Epicurus was born on the island of Samos in 341 BCE to parents who were Athenian citizens. He learned philosophy from a teacher influenced by Democritus' ideas, and the philosophy that Epicurus later developed is akin to materialist Democritean atomism in many ways. After teaching on Lesbos and at Lampsacus, he moved to the city of philosophers, Athens, in 307. He purchased a plot of land and formed a community of like-minded friends called the Garden. Epicurus' ideas on friendship and the practices of friendship within the Garden present us with philosophical ideals of friendship between men and women – an idea that not encountered in the overwhelmingly masculinist writings of other Greek philosophers. It is no coincidence that this is so, since the central plank of Epicurean moral philosophy was hedonism – the claim that pleasure is the sole good – and pleasure had a distinctly feminine association in ancient Greek thought.

To appreciate the context for the various hedonistic moral philosophies of the Hellenistic period, it is necessary to note a certain ancient Greek prejudice against pleasure. It was commonly thought to have a weakening and feminising effect. Self-controlled men were able to resist the siren call of pleasures, while women were not.[128] While few would deny that pleasure is *a* good thing, it was a good thing thought to need careful watching, lest it undermine one's virtue, strength and rationality. Epicurus' specific form of hedonism was preceded by other variations on this theme whose philosophical fortunes well illustrate the problematic character of friendship.

The various anecdotes about Aristippus the Elder neatly illustrate the problems around hedonism and friendship – specifically cross-gender friendships. Aristippus was a wealthy bon vivant and companion of Socrates. Part of his fame in antiquity arose from his open association with courtesans (*hetairai*).[129] In this context, he seems to have attempted to challenge the idea that pleasure – and particularly sexual pleasure – was debilitating: 'I *have* Laïs (a well-known and beautiful *hetaira* from Corinth) but I am not *had by* her: it is better to conquer pleasure than to abstain from it, but to do so without being used'.[130] Aristippus' attitudes toward the offspring of these disciplined campaigns in gratification were equally challenging. In one anecdote he brutally denied paternity. In another, he responded to the claim that he has exposed one of his children with the rejoinder that we spit out phlegm, though it too is of our own making, since it is useless.[131]

Whether Aristippus' lifestyle was underwritten by a coherent philosophy is open to question. But attempts were made in the latter fourth and early third century BCE to provide one. The philosophers who undertook this project are known collectively as the Cyrenaics and they included Aristippus' grandson, Aristippus the Younger. The Cyrenaic school was distinctive in rejecting the idea that *eudaimonia* should be identified with the goal toward which all our efforts should be directed. This condition, you will recall, was not one of momentary enjoyment or satisfaction, but one of lifelong flourishing. The interesting philosophical question is, 'What is it specifically?' The Cyrenaics answered that it was sum total of individual pleasant episodes across a lifetime. But trying to plan so as to maximise

one's lifetime pleasure was too much work. So instead they advocated the pursuit of the goal or *telos* that they identified with particular pleasures easily at hand. Why should we take such a seemingly irrational attitude toward our long-term enjoyment of pleasure? The Cyrenaics seem to have been ethically 'short-sighted' because they were similarly epistemologically short-sighted: we don't really *know* anything apart from the way that things feel now, so we should make the most of the moment.

It is hard to know where friendship fits in this picture. One line of thought – probably that of Aristippus the Younger – was that we made friends for the sake of utility. Another Cyrenaic, Hegesias, argued that there simply was no such thing as gratitude, friendship or beneficence, since we did not choose to do things like this for their own sake, but only with an eye to our own utility.[132] The Cyrenaic philosopher Anniceris initially appears to cut the Gordian knot another way: by accounting something valuable other than pleasure. But, of course, if you are a hedonist, that's just giving the game away, philosophically speaking.

Unsurprisingly, the Cyrenaic school did not last long. It faded from view in the internal disagreements of Aristippus, Hegesias, Anniceris and Theodorus. But its existence provided an important impetus for other hedonists to refine their views so as to avoid the unpalatable conclusions of the Cyrenaics. One way to see the philosophy of Epicurus is to think of it as substantially altering the Cyrenaics' notion of what pleasure consisted in. For the Cyrenaics, pleasure was the *process* in which we got what we *wanted*. Epicurus posited that this sort of kinetic or process pleasure was subordinated to an even greater good: the *state* in which we *have* all that we really need. What do we really need? Certainly not all the things that we sometimes foolishly want. This was the basis for Epicurus' rejection of voluptuary character of Cyrenaic hedonism:

> For it is not drinking bouts and continuous partying and enjoying boys and women, or consuming fish or the other dainties an extravagant table, which produce the pleasant life, but sober calculation which searches out the reasons for every choice and act of avoidance and drives out the opinions

> which are the source of the greatest turmoil for men's souls.[133]

All we really need is the tranquillity that results from freedom from bodily pain (*aponia*) and freedom from mental distress (*ataraxia*). Freedom from bodily pain is easily enough understood. But Epicurus means something quite deep by freedom from mental disturbance or ataraxia. This condition arises when all that disturbs us has been expunged permanently. This requires us to rid ourselves of the fear of death, as well as fear of divine punishment. It also requires that we really learn and fully internalise the truth that 'more is not better' and that 'what is necessary is easy to find'. This is the Epicurean *tetrapharmakon* or 'four-fold cure'. It turns out that we get psychologically cured with a little help from our friends.

Friendship played a crucial role in securing freedom from pain and anxiety according to Epicurus. This was so along a variety of dimensions. First, friendship provided us with the sort of security that can prevent physical pains associated with hunger and lack of shelter. Equally important, however, was the confidence that we may have of such support, for this reduced mental anxiety. But perhaps most important was the relationship between philosophy and friendship.

It is philosophy that will cure us of the groundless fears that prevent us from achieving *ataraxia*. But *philosophising* and coming *to really absorb* the truth is a pursuit that we undertake among friends. After all, it is one thing to rehearse the arguments until one can quote them.[134] But it is quite another to make them second nature so that they banish fears, like the fear of death, that disturb our tranquillity.[135] Philosophical therapy – the internalisation of philosophical truth – requires 'frank speech' (*parrhêsia*) and this, in turn, presupposes friendship. The fragmentary remains of *On Frank Speech* by the Epicurean Philodemus (*c*. 110–35 BCE) are explicit about the therapeutic role of candour. But unlike the relation between therapist and patient in our day, Philodemus regarded this as a relation among friends.[136]

The Garden of Epicurus was such a community of friends, as were other Epicurean communities such as that at the villa of the papyri in Herculaneum.[137] The evidence is difficult but a consensus is emerging that the friendly relations – particularly between men and women with Epicurean communities – may have been very different from those in the surrounding social context. We should indeed think of them as deliberately separated from their surrounding cities. Epicurus advised a withdrawal from public life to the extent that this was possible. The maxim 'live unknown' was entirely counter-cultural for both the Greeks and the Romans who regarded the space of public life as the place where one found a real man.[138] It deliberate abandonment marked out Epicureans for abuse as 'girly men'.[139] Critics of Epicureanism claimed the presence of several *hetairai* among the first generation of Epicureans. While Diogenes Laertius treated this as a slander, he thinks the obvious intent is to show that the male Epicureans in the Garden kept these loose women around as their sexual play things. But the slander might have gone deeper, and this is revealed by some of those who engage in it. In Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods*, the sceptic's spokesman, Cotta, dismissed the Epicurean views of Leontion, calling her 'a little prostitute' (*meretricula*) who none the less wrote fine Attic prose. It is presumably the fact that she was writing philosophy *at all* that led him to add: 'such was the permissiveness (*licentiae*) that prevailed in Epicurus' household'.[140] Not only did Epicureans retreat from the public, masculine space of political life – in the privacy of their communities they permitted women to write philosophy!

Evidence such as Leonteon's compositions led Jane Snyder to a very optimistic assessment of class and gender relations in Epicurean communities.

> The members of the Garden included not only full Athenians citizens like Epicurus himself but also several women and slaves, who, within the context of Athenian society at large, enjoyed few legal rights or privileges. Within the enclosure of the Garden, however, all members of the group – male and

> female, slave and free – were entitled to the benefits and responsibilities of the Epicurean school.[141]

Snyder connects this real-life practice with a theoretical view in which neither wealth nor fame mattered with respect to the achievement of tranquillity. Indeed, one might add that Epicureanism regarded great wealth or repute as positive dangers to the realisation of their negative hedonic ideal.

The writings of Epicurus and other Epicureans were not preserved and studied by subsequent Christian culture in Europe, so the Epicurean ideals of friendship were not as obvious in the discourse of friendship as those of, say, Aristotle. Indeed, it might be thought that a specifically Christian culture would be least influenced by Epicureanism among all the Greek schools of philosophy. After all, the Epicureans utterly denied the possibility of an afterlife, as well as denying a personal god who exercised divine providence. And for this they came in for abuse in a text that eventually made its way into the canonical New Testament (*Acts* 17:32). But in fact there are striking parallels between early Christian communities and the community of the Epicurean Garden. First, both were communities that deliberately set themselves apart from the wider Graeco-Roman culture. Both were dismissive of the 'high culture' of the Greek tradition.[142] In each case the members of the community sought salvation through the imitation[143] of someone whom they regarded as both a man and a divinity – or perhaps in the case of the Epicureans a man who had been divinised.[144] Members of the community utilised the technique of frank speech among friends in order to help one another in emulation of their chosen sage.[145] And in general, Christians adopted many of the techniques of Epicurean therapeutic philosophy, though they gave them quite different content.[146] One final parallel is worth noting. In each case the question of whether women enjoyed a very different version of cross-gender friendship is a matter of current scholarly dispute.[147] The ideal of a community of friends built around the goal of achieving mental or spiritual health and committed to benefiting one another in their progress toward a kind of counter-cultural conception of salvation is one that occurs again and again in Western intellectual life. It is Epicurean, even if it doesn't have Epicurus' name attached to it.

Plutarch on friendship

We close out the Hellenistic era with a brief survey of the advice on philia found in the philosophical works of Plutarch of Chaeronia (45–120 CE). Plutarch offers us several things that we do not find in the literary remains of other philosophers. First, he considered friendship between husbands and wives in a fairly positive light. He also reflected on familial *philia* and, in particular, friendship between brothers. Here too, Plutarch gave the priority to familial relations over acquired companion friendships, and this set him at odds with many earlier philosophers. In addition, he dealt with some problems about friendship that were felt keenly in later writers. Was there a trade-off between the *number* of friends that one might have and the *quality* of the friendships? Even more importantly, how did one discern the difference between a friend and one who simply flattered you in order to curry favour?

In considering these questions, Plutarch felt free to draw on a number of different philosophical traditions, though he was himself a Platonist of sorts. As a result, he is interesting in the context of antiquity for his synthetic efforts. There is also the question of Plutarch's subsequent influence. He is not now regarded by philosophers as the original Platonist thinker that, say, Plotinus was. But the judgement of earlier centuries may have been quite different.

Few ancient authors, save perhaps Cicero, garnered as much attention and admiration as representatives of the glories of Classical learning. What secured Plutarch this fame was not his philosophical essays, but rather his biographical works. We have forty-four 'Parallel Lives' that compared the lives and moral characters of famous Greeks and Romans. These essays did not merely aim to record the important events in the lives of, say, Cicero and Demosthenes – though doubtless telling the stories of famous men was sufficient to attract the attention of many readers. Rather, Plutarch used these *Lives* as the basis for reflection on how one ought to live and on the importance of upbringing in determining the sorts of characters men had. Needless to say, friendship figures frequently in the *Lives*. While Plutarch's *Lives* dominated in translations into Latin and other modern languages in the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries, his moral essays or *Moralia* were edited by Erasmus in 1509. Erasmus also

translated a number of these essays, including a version of Plutarch's essay on friends and flatterers which he dedicated to Henry VIII in 1513. The influence of Plutarch's thoughts on friendship is, we think, a topic that would repay more careful study. The following summary only touches the high points.

Echoing the Xenophontic Socrates, Plutarch condemned 'the fashion nowadays, by which many get the name friend by drinking a single glass together, or by playing ball or gambling together, or by spending a night under the same roof, and so pick up a friendship from inn, gymnasium, or market-place'.[148] Friendship was morally serious business and Plutarch warned that we ought not to become friends with such 'chance acquaintances'. Rather, people should be adopted as friends 'only after spending a long time passing judgment upon them'. But what was it about a person that we ought to judge before we can make him a friend? The answer can be derived from Plutarch's characterisation of true friendship: 'True friendship seeks after three things above all else: virtue as a good thing, intimacy as a pleasant thing, and usefulness as a necessary thing'.[149] Thus, before accepting one as a friend we must judge that he is virtuous, and useful, and that intimacy with him is possible.

Intimacy, for Plutarch, was important because (as the above quote suggests) intimacy brought pleasure. And Plutarch emphasises\d the pleasure of friendship: 'friendship is the most pleasant thing in the world . . . nothing else gives greater delight' .[150] But, while pleasure was an important part of friendship, it was not the end (*telos*) of friendship. Thus, friendships are were always pleasant. It was the flatterer who always aimed at pleasure, not the friend. For a friend's task was to emend a friend's ways when necessary, preserving or restoring his moral health. Like a physician, then, at times one would have to hurt a friend. But 'one ought to hurt a friend only to help him; and ought not by hurting him to kill the friendship, but to use the stinging word as a medicine which restores and preserves [moral] health in that to which it is applied'. Thus 'the friend, by doing always what he ought to do, is often times agreeable and often times disagreeable'. Notice that in the above quote it was by means of 'the stinging words of medicine' that one achieved his end of emending a friend's ways. But

not just any words could act as medicine. The words had be frank. This is why Plutarch said that 'frankness of speech . . . is the language of friendship'.[151]

It was because a friend's task was to restore and to preserve a friend's moral health that Plutarch made friendship seek after virtue. For it was only a virtuous man who could recognise when a friend's moral health was in danger and what had be done to rescue the friend. In addition, this task was the main way in which friendship was useful for Plutarch. Thus, Plutarch called virtue the most important part of true friendship. But friends were useful for other reasons. They provided 'refuge and protection'. They helped each other 'in their counsels, their public life, their ambitions . . . their dispensing of hospitality'. Further one would 'join [a friend] . . . on a voyage to foreign parts . . . help him in defending a suit . . . sit with him as judge . . . help him in managing his buying and selling . . . help him to celebrate his wedding . . . mourn with him at a funeral'. Friendship involved sharing in a friend's 'anxieties, preoccupations, and troubles'.[152]

Plutarch stressed that services provided by a friend had to be repaid. This was why Plutarch thought that '*mutual* acts of kindness' held friendships together.[153] It was also the reason that Plutarch said that we should be friends 'only with those who are qualified to keep up the same participation, that is to say, those who are able, in a like manner, to love and participate'.[154] This was one more thing, then, that one had to look for when judging whether or not to make another a friend.

It is clear that friendship was hard work according to Plutarch – which is one reason that Plutarch thought that *poluphilia* or having many friends was impossible. Plutarch knew that friendship had its lighter moments: '[T]here are times when friends enjoy together jest and food and wine, and indeed even mirth and nonsense'. But, while Plutarch welcomed these lighter moments, he called them 'a sort of spice for the noble and serious' side of friendship.[155]

One of the consequences of friendship was enmity, 'for enmities follow upon close friendships, inasmuch as it is impossible for a friend not to share his friend's wrongs or disrepute or disfavour'. Another consequence of friendship was complete likeness:

'friendships seek to effect a thorough-going likeness in characters, feelings, language, pursuits, and dispositions'.[156] This was not the same as imitation: 'I have no use for a friend that shifts about just as I do and nods assent just as I do (for my shadow better performs that function)'. Imitation was characteristic of the flatterer. It was he who changed his likes and dislikes in order to endear himself to the object of his flattery. Thus 'the flatterer is nowhere constant'. By contrast, 'the true friend is neither an imitator of everything, nor ready to commend everything, but only the best things'.[157] It was by commending the best things that our friend preserved and restored our moral health.[158]

We began this section by noting that for Plutarch friendship had its origin in judgement. But we need to add that for Plutarch the friendships that depended on judgement were inferior to 'that first friendship which Nature has implanted in children towards parents and in brothers towards brothers'. All other, non-familial, friendships 'are in reality shadows and imitations and images' of this 'first friendship'.[159] So, while 'we must not grow to love those not of our blood and then judge them, but judge them first and love them later,'[160] this is not so in the case with those of our blood (in other words, family). Here, *philia* ought not to depend on judgement, but rather on the 'principle of love' (*archê tês philias*) that had been implanted by nature.[161]

The fact that familial *philia* was natural did not mean that for Plutarch this *philia* automatically and inevitable sprang up between members of a family. That this was so is clear from Plutarch's detailed discussion of one form of familial *philia*, namely that between brothers. *On Brotherly Love* is filled with advice on what brothers should do in order to ensure that *philia* was created and preserved between them. Such advice was necessary because 'brotherly love is as rare in our day as brotherly hatred was among the men of old . . . all men today, when they encounter brothers who are good to each other, wonder at them'.[162]

While Plutarch made friendship between brothers the focus of his attention – perhaps because 'through the concord of brothers family and household are sound and flourish'[163] and if the household were sound then the state would be sound[164] – we should not leave the topic of familial *philia* without noting what Plutarch had to say about marital *philia*:

> No greater pleasure comes from others, no more continuous services are due to others; no other friendship possesses so notable and enviable an element of esteem as when 'a man and woman dwell in their house together, united in mind' [*Odyssey* 6. 183].[165]

This *philia* between husband and wife, Plutarch said, was the result of sex, for sex

> is like a joint participation in some great holy ritual (*hierôn megalôn koinônêmata*). The pleasure itself is not important. It is the respect and grace and contentment with each other and the confidence that springs from this [that produces marital *philia*].[166]

This friendship between husband and wife for Plutarch did not seem to be one between equals, and it is possible that this fact reflects the way in which the Greeks and Romans took the sexual roles of men and women to be indicative of relations of subordination. Plutarch said that it was always 'the husband's leadership and preferences' that dominated in a marriage and 'a wife ought not to make friends of her own, but enjoy her husband's friends in common with him', for the things of friends were held in common,[167]

We have already noted Plutarch's advice in *Precepts of Statecraft* to Greek politicians living under Roman rule that they should be friends of the Romans. But it was not only the Romans with whom the Greek politician had to deal. He also had to deal with the inhabitants of his own city. In *Precepts of Statecraft* Plutarch gave politicians advice on this topic. In this context, the subject of friendship arose once more.

'Friends', Plutarch said, 'are the living and thinking tools of the statesman'.[168] (Note that Aristotle described slaves in just the same manner – they were automated tools.[169]) Thus a politician should not, like Cleon, renounce all his friendships. Rather, he should surround himself with friends 'who will aid him and share his enthusiasm for what is noble'. To do this the politician had to 'choose friends whose convictions are like his own,' namely, virtuous and noble. Plutarch added that it was perfectly permissible for a politician to do favours for

his friends. This did not mean that he should grant 'base and absurd requests' that outrage the general public. But there were 'favours [a politician can grant his friends] which arouse no ill-will, such as aiding a friend to gain office, putting into his hands some honourable administrative function or some friendly foreign mission'. A politician could also help a friend to acquire money without offending the public: 'Hand over to one friend a case at law which will bring in a good fee as advocate in a just cause, to another introduce a rich man who needs legal oversight and protection, and help another to get some profitable contract or lease'.[170] It would seem that then, as now, one could give political mates a position as ambassador to Ruritania or a lucrative consultancy.

Given his views on these political friendships, it is small wonder that Plutarch thought that friendships among family members were primary and natural. Plutarch stands out among the ancient Greek philosophers that we have considered thus far as something rather like an exponent of 'family values'. His attitudes toward women were – relative to his time and place – somewhat enlightened. (Plutarch was also the author of a short essay, *The Brave Deeds of Women*, as well as essays arguing for the rationality of animals and the moral wrongness of eating meat.[171]) If it is less clear what philosophical ideal of the good life his views on friendship were meant to promote, perhaps that is because his idea of happiness was as much a laundry list as our own.

Pythagorean and Neoplatonist friendship

We now turn to a discussion of Pythagorean views on friendship. Notionally, this takes us back in time, since Pythagoras (*c.* mid-6th century BCE) lived before Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. However, the actual Pythagoras and the community of friends around him is less important for the history of Western thought than the body of literature that was composed much later and attributed to him and his fellows. This includes not only the Pythagorean forgeries of the Hellenistic period but also the works on Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism by Neoplatonists such as Porphyry (*c.* 232–304 CE) and Iamblichus (*c.* 242–347 CE).[172] These Neoplatonist writers sought to portray Platonism as in agreement with their understanding of Pythagoreanism, as well as with their understanding of religious and magical traditions in

Orphism[173] and the Chaldean Oracles. The result was an attempt to synthesise the great works of ancient Greek culture into an integrated philosophical and religious system. The high point of this synthetic enterprise was the work of Proclus (411–85 CE), who was the brightest among the last heads of Plato's Academy before the school was closed in 529 by the Christians who regarded it as a hotbed of paganism.

What is important for our purposes was the notion of friendship based around initiation into this system, as well as the notion of friendship with the gods that resulted from a correct understanding of the truths of genuinely divine messengers like Plato, Pythagoras and Orpheus.

Pythagoreanism, and subsequently Neoplatonism, found deep cosmological and moral significance in mathematical facts. This tendency is well illustrated in the definition of friendship attributed to Pythagoras by Iamblichus and its connection with 'friendly numbers'. Two numbers are friends to one another when each is the sum of the proper divisors of the other. Thus 220 and 284 are friends to one another since the proper divisors of 220 are 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 20, 22, 44, 55 and 110. These numbers sum to 284. Similarly, the proper divisors of 284 (1, 2, 4, 71 and 142) sum to 220.[174] This mathematical fact was supposed to vindicate Pythagoras' response to the question, 'What is a friend?' – 'Another me'.[175] Since it is customary to call the factors of a number its 'parts', there is a certain sense in which 220 is another way of *being* 284 and vice versa.

Of course you need to know some mathematics to get the point! Much of the wisdom of Pythagoreanism was similarly encoded in gnomic sayings, called *akousmata* ('things heard') or *symbola* (symbols or passwords). It is said that the content of these sayings in the initial Pythagorean communities of the sixth and fifth centuries BCE were kept secret. Various admonitions purporting to be of Pythagorean origin found their way into Aristotle, so the secret was not too long in getting out. The *interpretation* of these symbols, however, was another matter.

The Pythagoreans proposed that there was a specific form of friendship – Pythagorean friendship – shared among those who understood the deep content of this philosophical tradition.

> It is said that even when they did not know one another, the Pythagoreans tried to do friendly deeds on behalf of those they had never seen before, whenever they received a *sure sign* that they shared the same doctrines.[176]

Iamblichus illustrated the extent of this Pythagorean friendship based on shared knowledge with the following story: a Pythagorean fell ill on a journey and took refuge in an inn along the road. The keeper of the inn took pity on him and gave him all that he needed, though the Pythagorean could not pay. Feeling that his end was near, the Pythagorean wrote a *symbolon* on a tablet and told the innkeeper that in the event of his death he was to hang the tablet by the road. Much later another Pythagorean travelling the road saw the *symbolon* and, upon recognising it, made enquiries about how it came to be there. The innkeeper received what was owed many times over. The story illustrates the familiar principle that one should help friends. But here the friendship was based *solely on membership in a group defined by a shared, esoteric knowledge*.

This was an elitist ideal of friendship that actually included the already elitist friendship of the virtuous to the virtuous. [177] The comprehension of Pythagorean teachings was supposed to travel hand in hand with moral virtue. The Neoplatonists, who assimilated much of the Pythagorean way of life into their philosophy, supposed that there were a variety of levels of moral virtue. The most basic were those virtues that permitted us to treat our fellows well.[178] The highest forms of virtue enabled us to become like gods. This was the goal of living, according to the Neoplatonists – to return to the divine from which all souls descended. Since it was proverbial that 'like is friend to like' the person who transformed his character and intellect to resemble the gods was a friend to the gods.[179]

In the Neoplatonic and neo-Pythagorean synthesis, the activity of making oneself like, and thus united to, the gods was not purely by study or meditation. Iamblichus argued that

theurgy played an important role in reuniting the soul of the philosopher with the divine. Theurgy was a form of worship that combined esoteric knowledge, some of it mathematical in character, with ritual magic. Its object was not that of ordinary magic – control of the weather or of one's lover or whatever – but rather the specific goal of uniting the practitioner with various divinities. The period of Constantine's reign (306–337 CE) was one in which there was a deep fear of the black arts, and correspondingly severe laws for sorcery. Christian authorities were probably not overly sensitive to distinctions between normal magic and theurgy. This meant that the display of 'sure signs of shared doctrine' that might initiate friendships among Neoplatonists was much more delicate. This may be illustrated by the events that initiated the lifelong friendship between Syrianus and Proclus.

When Proclus came to Athens to study at the Academy, he was met by a fellow countrymen from Lycia at the port – a paradigmatic example of *philia* among people based on their common origin. His friend took him to his initial meeting with Syrianus, who was then head of the Academy. As Proclus talked with Syrianus and his companion Lachares, the sun set and the moon appeared for the first time in its new cycle. The older men wanted to send their new acquaintance away in order that they might worship the moon as goddess by themselves. But when Proclus saw the moon he took off his sandals in front of these strangers and greeted the god. [180] Both were struck by Proclus' *parrhêsia* – his frankness of speech and action – in doing so. Proclus' willingness to openly display his pagan piety contrasts with their initial desire to rid themselves of the stranger so that they might worship in private. This devotion to the gods, plus Proclus' native philosophical talent, so endeared him to Syrianus that they became the closest *philoi* – so close that he lived in Syrianus' house, calling him 'father'. Upon his death, Proclus was buried in the same tomb as his 'father' Syrianus on the hill of Lycabettus.

Proclus' ideas on metaphysics, esoteric knowledge, love and friendship, and the ascent of the soul back to the divine had a dramatic impact on subsequent Christian mysticism, though not under Proclus' own name. First, a thinly veiled version of Proclus' philosophy was presented as the work of Dionysius the Aeropagite – the philosopher who Paul converted in

Acts 17. This attribution was widely accepted up through the late medieval period. The most influential translator and interpreter of ancient Platonism to the Italian Renaissance, Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), read Plato's works with Proclus' commentaries at his side.

Pythagorean and Neoplatonic traditions concerning friendship thus present us with an ancient Greek ideal of this relationship that had considerable significance for the world to come. It was universal in the sense that it was grounded in shared, esoteric teaching rather than in membership in a particular polis or other social setting. The display of the proper signs indicating that one shared in the esoteric teaching became a means of securing the benefits of friendship. These are features that still characterise friendship groups today – the secret handshake, the Rosacrucian symbol, whatever it might be.

Conclusion

The philosophers of ancient Greece left to subsequent European high culture a variety of ideals of friendship. These ideals governed not only what we moderns would call companion friendship, but also relations with blood relatives, fellow citizens and even God. They were ideals in the sense that they were explicitly normative: they say what friendships should be like, what they should be based on and who may genuinely be friends. These ideals were not plucked from thin air. Rather, they depended on competing philosophical theories about the nature of men and women, society and even the nature of the divine. These philosophical theories ran the gamut from a picture of human beings as pleasure-seeking, material and mortal conjuries of atoms (the Epicureans) to a picture of humanity as fallen souls temporarily and unfortunately lodged in bodies, hungering for a return to their native star above (the Neoplatonists). Each of these philosophical self-conceptions has been attractive to different people at different times, and they have carried along with them associated ideals of friendship.

The Greek philosophical ideals of friendship were ideal in another way too: they didn't concede much to human frailty and they didn't let concerns about practical implementation stand in the way of a consistent and intellectually attractive theory. As we

shall see in subsequent chapters, much of the intellectual discussion of friendship that followed was dominated by the desire to harvest from Greek philosophy a conception of friendship that worked – one that was an appropriate conception of friendship for the weak, fallible and self-interested people that we actually are most of the time.

We have situated this philosophical discourse on friendship in two different political contexts – the city-states of the Classical period and the Hellenistic kingdoms. The most important Roman philosophical voice on friendship spoke from a political context that was an odd mix of these two. Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BCE) saw the official demise of the Roman Republic, the death of Julius Caesar and the beginnings of the wars that gave Rome its succession of emperors. Even though the Roman Republic was no city-state but rather a mighty empire like the Hellenistic kingdoms, it was none the less one with the vestigial form of a limited democracy. Cicero was a man who was well versed in Greek philosophical writings but also a Roman with practical Roman sensibilities. It was his little essay on friendship, *Laelius de Amicitia*, that dominated learned Latinate discussions of friendship in Western Europe. In this treatise, Cicero began the task of making the Stoic ideals of friendship more down to earth. But Cicero was not only a theorist of the distinctively political form of friendship existed among men of the late Roman Republic, he was an active participant as well, as his collection of letters to his friends (*Epistulae ad familiares*) makes clear. Cicero's treatise and the rediscovery of his letters by Petrarch in the early fourteenth century provide the thematic boundaries for our next chapters.

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[2] K. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 226.

[3] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, p. 353; Pindar, *Pythian*, II.83–5; Lysias, IX.20; Plato, *Republic*, 332a-b.

[4] Lynnette Mitchell, *Greeks Bearing Gifts: The Public Use of Private Relationships in the Greek World, 435–323 BC* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 15.

[5] Blundell adds: 'This may be one of the points on which the moralizing ideal diverges furthest from ordinary practice': *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies: A Study in Sophocles and Greek Ethics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 35. As an illustration of Blundell's point consider the following from a distinctly non-moralising, forensic context: 'I therefore willingly resign your friendship, since, by Heaven, I cannot see what penalty I shall suffer by not associating with you; for neither did my association with you bring me benefit' (Lysias, Accusation of Calumny Against Fellow-Members of a Society, §18).

[6] Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* 1167b2.

[7] Homer, *Iliad* 13.625.

[8] Naturally guest friendships could evolve to become more like what we would call companion friendships, and the Greeks were well able to note these transitions:

> Thrasyllus, the father of the testor, had inherited nothing from his parents; but having become the guest-friend of Polemaenetus, the soothsayer, he became so intimate (*oikeiôs*) with him that Polemaenetus at his death left to him his books on divination and gave him a portion of the property which is now in question (Isocrates *Aegineticus*, §5)

[9] See Mitchell, *Greeks Bearing Gifts*, esp. pp. 131–3. According to Plato, friendship between Greeks and barbarians was impossible. The two are 'by nature enemies' (*Rep*. 470c) For Plato, barbarians were fit for nothing but slavery. However, there is evidence that Athenian citizens entered into relations of friendship with their slaves. See Lin Foxhall, 'The Politics of Affection: Emotional Attachments in Athenian Society' in Paul Cartledge, Paul Millett and Sitta von Reden (eds), *Kosmos*: *Essays in Order, Conflict and Community in Classical Athens*

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 52–67. This, Foxhall notes, suggests a 'disjunction' between the ideal and reality.

[10] cf. Aristotle, EN VIII.9, 1160a9, ff.

[11] Ibid., 1159b30.

[12] Thucydides, II. 40.4, trans. Woodruff.

[13] Greek Popular Morality, 181.

[14] Lysias, *Against Diogeiton*, 32.22

[15] David Konstan, 'Greek Friendship', *American Journal of Philology* 117 (1980), pp. 71–94, has argued that the ancient Greeks did distinguish linguistically between loving relationships and friendships. The adjective *philos* can modify an object or person and may then be read passively as 'dear so and so' or 'beloved uncle'. (It can also be read actively as in *philo-sophos* – loving wisdom.) The adjective is related to the noun *philein* – to love – and the abstract term *philia* is derived, in turn, from the adjective. Finally, the adjective with a definite article can be translated as the noun: *oi philoi* – the friends; *ho philos* – the friend. It can also appear without the definite article: *philoi* – friends. Konstan argues that Greek usage typically singled out the relationship we moderns call companion friendship with the use of the definite article, so the Greeks did not really see kinship and companion-friendship as relationships on a continuum and even had a linguistic means of conveniently distinguishing between them.

This is not the place to take up such a complex issue, but we are not convinced by Konstan's case. For the opposing view that the Greeks did regard kinship relations as on a par with other friendly relations see Blundell, *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies*, pp. 39–43, 46 and Foxhall, 'The Politics of Affection', p. 63.

[16] Demosthenes, 23.56; Francisco Gonzales, 'Socrates on Loving One's Own: A Traditional Conception of ΦΙΛΙΑ Radically Transformed', *Classical Philology* 95 (2000), pp. 379–98.

[17] Mitchell, *Greeks Bearing Gifts*, pp. 18-21.

[18] *Seventh Epistle*, 325c–d.

[19] Lynette G. Mitchell, 'New for Old: Friendship Networks in Athenian Politics', *Greece & Rome* 43 (1996), pp. 10-21 at p. 11. Also W. Robert Conner, *The New Politicians of Fifth-Century Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 41: 'Political groups in fifth century Athens were largely groups of *philoi*.'

[20] Conner, *New Politicians*, pp. 9–29.

[21] This principle was active, not only in daily life, but in political life too. See ibid., pp. 41–3.

[22] One could help a friend in litigation by appearing as a witness or an advocate on his behalf, by suppressing evidence, by bribing officials. See George Miller Calhoun, *Athenian Clubs in Politics and Litigation* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970, rpt), pp. 40–96. In the political realm,

> [friends] could supply a claque and the support needed to form a majority [in the Assembly]. They could heckle other speakers and sometimes provide a politician with a spokesman in the Council (the *boulê*) when he himself was not a member . . . Furthermore, a friend who was a politician could help a citizen gain office, put into his hands an administrative or military task that would bring him repute, [or] arrange some ambassadorial junket . . . The pattern is familiar enough today and was no less common in antiquity.

(Conner, *New Politicians*, p. 36.) Calhoun, *Athenian Clubs*, pp. 107–11) notes a further way that friends could be useful in the political realm – namely, by assassinating political opponents.

[23] Conner, *New Politicians*, p. 77: 'It is not likely that the most poor people were fully included in the system of friendship ties which . . . constituted the basic pattern of Athenian politics'. See also pp. 11–12, 29, 88, 134. Conner notes that the poor citizens of Athens 'constituted a group outside the centers of real power' (p. 88). Their 'influence . . . was disproportionately small' (p. 89) and it is very likely that they 'look[ed] upon existing friendship groups with some suspicion' (p. 88).

[24] Herodotus, 5.66

[25] Conner, *New Politcians*, pp. 87–136.

[26] Plutarch, *Pericles*, 7.5 and *Moralia*, 806F; ibid., pp. 91–4, 119–22.

[27] Connor, *New Politcians*, p. 135 tells us that the two types of political friendship 'represent systems of politics that actually existed and competed over a long period of time.'

[28] Ibid., p. 91; see also pp. 19-22. Mitchell (*Greeks Bearing Gifts*, p. 42) calls the same practice 'patronage' and adds: 'In Greece patronage belongs to the repertoire of *philia* relationships' (p. 42, n. 6). Conner, by contrast, denies the existence of patronage in Greece: *New Politicians*, p. 18

[29] Mitchell, 'New for Old', p. 15.

[30] Ibid., pp. 16–19.

[31] Cf. Isocrates, *On the Peace*, 121.

[32] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, III 81–2, trans. after Rex Warner with slight emendations.

[33] M. M. Austin, 'Economy and Society' in D. M. Lewis, J. Boardman, S. Hornblower, M. Ostwald (eds), *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. VI, *The Fourth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 2nd edn), pp. 527–64, at pp. 530–1. G. E. M. de Ste Croix, *Class Struggle in the Ancient World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 296: 'The most sanguinary of the many fourth-century outbreaks of *stasis* was the *skytalismos* at Argos in 370, when 1200–1500 of the upper class were said to have been massacred by the demos'.

[34] Austin, 'Economy and Society', p. 530.

[35] Aristotle, *NE*, 1167b2, 1167a22-b16.

[36] Plato, *Rep*. 469b-471c; Isocrates, *Antid*. 77, *Panath*. 13; Gorgias (Philostratus *VS* 1.493).

[37] Andrew Erskine, *The Hellenistic Stoa: Political Thought and Action* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 59.

[38] William C. West, 'Hellenic Homonoia and the New Decree from Plataea', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 18 (1977), pp. 307–19 at p. 317.

[39] It is a live question among scholars whether *Alcibiades* I is genuinely a work of Plato's. However, it was thought to be so by the Neoplatonists and thus has formed part of the

Platonic canon from very early on. Since our concern is with the reception of various Classical ideals of friendship, the question of the dialogue's authorship is not crucial: it is enough that it was long taken to be a work of Plato and a source for what Socrates thought.

[40] The nature of these 'schools' has been the subject of debate. For Plato's Academy the most recent work is John Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). For Aristotle's Lyceum, see J. Lynch, *The School of Aristotle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

[41] One story from antiquity (found in Strabo *Geog*. 13.1.54) says that on his death, Theophrastus inherited 'Aristotle's books'. They then passed to Theophrastus' nephew, Neleus, who hid the works in a cave in Scepsis in present-day Turkey. They were discovered two centuries later, greatly decayed. They were taken to Athens and then on to Rome where the peripatetic philosopher Andronicus prepared an edition.

[42] Plato, *Lysis*, 210c–d

[43] *EN* 1166a2–5, 1157b33–36: 'Moreover, in cherishing their friend, they cherish what is good for themselves; for when a good man becomes a friend, he becomes a good thing for this friend. Each of them cherishes what is good for himself, and repays in equal measure the wishes and enjoyments of his friend'.

[44] *Lysis*, 214b–d.

[45] II.6.19–20.

[46] *Crito*, 49b–e.

[47] *Laws*, trs. Pangle, 729d.

[48] Ibid., 837b, 837a, 837b, 837e, 640b, 837a.

[49] Ibid., 679b–c; *Rep*., 551d.

[50] *Laws*, 679b, 919b–c, cf. *Rep*. 421e–422a. *Laws*, 919b–c, sums up Plato's reasons very pithily: poverty and wealth corrupt the soul in different ways. Poverty, on account of the pain it brings, makes people shameless in their striving to overcome it. Wealth, by contrast, leaves the soul corrupted by licentiousness and softness.

[51] *Laws*, 716c.

[52] *Gorgias*, 510b, 507e.

[53] Ibid., 508a.

[54] *Laws*, 757a, 757c1–8. The relevant idea of equality is conveyed through statements of proportion, e.g. 2:4 :: 6:12. Though the number 6 is larger than the number 2, it represents the same part or proportion of 4 as 6 is of 12. Juxtaposed to a political context, a proportional assignment of benefits would give a greater amount to those who deserve it than those who are less deserving. Such an assignment may none the less preserve proportional equality. For an account of the political and ethical dimensions of various kinds of proportionality, see Hayden Ausland 'The Mathematics of Justice' in H. Tarrant and D. Baltzly (eds), *Reading Plato in Antiquity* (London: Duckworth, 2006).

[55] Julius Moravcsik, 'The perils of friendship and conceptions of the self,' in J. Dancy, J. Moravcsik, and C. W. W. Taylor (eds), *Human Agency*: *Language*, *Duty*, *and Value* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), pp. 132–51, at p. 135

[56] *Phaedo* 81d, ff; *Phaedrus* 248d ff; *Republic* 620a; *Timaeus* 41e ff.

[57] *Phdr*. 246a, trs. Fowler.

[58] Ibid., 247e.

[59] *Meno* 82b-85b; *Phaedo* 72e-77a.

[60] *Phdr*., 254a.

[61] Ibid., 254e.

[62] Ibid., 255b.

[63] Ibid., 255e

[64] Ibid., 256a–b.

[65] Ibid, 256b–c.

[66] Ibid., 250e, cf. *Symposium*, 208e.

[67] 1169b–1170b; e.g., 115713–24, 1158a1–10; 1155a5–6.

[68] 1162b, 1156a27.

[69] 1157b1–5; 1156b14–17; 1156b7–9.

[70] 1158a10–17. A parallel passage in Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics* forms – in a rather perverse way – the basis of Derrida's book, *The Politics of Friendship*, trans. G. Collins, (London and New York: Verso, 1997). Derrida's work is in many ways an extended meditation on a saying attributed to Aristotle by Montaigne: 'O friends, there is no friend'. Montaigne derives his authority for this attribution from Diogenes Laertius – or so he supposed. But a quick look at a modern edition of Diogenes Laertius reveals not that, but rather this: 'to the person for whom there are [many] friends there is no [one, true] friend' (V.21, cf. Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1245b20. The edition of Diogenes Laertius edited by Issaac Casaubon in 1616 'corrected' a dative to a vocative form, which gives the reading 'O friends, etc.' The correction was unnecessary and wrong. The text makes perfectly good sense as it stands. Giorgio Agemben (*Contremps* 5, 2004) asserts that he wrote to Derrida to point out this philological oddity and to suggest that it would be a mistake to base a reading of Aristotle on friendship around such a misattribution. Derrida did not see fit to acknowledge this, perhaps, as Agemben suggests because he – like Nietzsche – needed the incorrect manuscript reading to generate an internal tension in Aristotle's thought on friendship.

[71] 1158b9; 1159b6–7; 1166a6–8; 1166a31–32,

[72] 1155b28–1156a6.

[73] 1156b7–12; 1156a9–19.

[74] 1157b31–1158a2.

[75] 1158b1–5.

[76] 1158b27, 1158b25.

[77] 1162a7–9; 1162a24–25; 1162b25–26.

[78] 1158b21–23; 1162a9-11.

[79] 1144b30.

[80] *Politics*, 1260a11.

[81] Ibid., 1260a20–33.

[82] See, for example, H. L. Levy, 'Does Aristotle Exclude Women from Politics?', *Review of Politics* 52 (1990), pp. 397–416.

[83] 'Aristotle and the Political Role of Women', *History of Political Thought* 15 (1994), pp. 179–202.

[84] 1165b1–8.

[85] 1165b13–17

[86] 1165b17–23.

[87] 1163b 22–23.

[88] 1099a31–b9.

[89] 'Monarchies and Monarchic Ideals' in F. W. Walbank, A. E. Astin, M. W. Fredriksen and R. M. Ogilvie (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. VII (Part 1) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, 2nd edn), pp. 62–100, at p. 68. Walbank goes on to note (p. 70) that, as a result of Greco-Macedonian prejudice, Egyptians, Syrians, Persians and other non-Hellenes were excluded from becoming a King's Friend. For more on this type of Hellenistic political friendship, see Gabriel Herman, 'The 'Friends' of Early Hellenistic Rulers: Servants or Officials?', *Talanta* 12/13 (1980–81), pp. 103–49.

[90] For example, see the following documents in Stanley M. Burstein (ed. and trs.), *The Hellenistic Age from the battle of Ipsos to the death of Kleopatra VII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 'Treaty between Antiochos I or II and Lysimacheia' (281/early 260s BCE), p. 29; 'Decree of the Aitolian League recognizing the inviolability of Magnesia on the Maeander' (207/206 BCE), p. 40; 'Treaty ending a war between Miletos and Magnesia on the Maeander' (about 196 BCE), pp. 48–50; 'Treaty between King Pharnakes I of Pontus and the city of Chersonesos' (155 BCE), p. 101.

[91] Ibid., 'Letter of Ptolemaios II to Miletos', pp. 120–1.

[92] Ibid., 'Delphi honors Attalos II for establishing an educational endowment', p. 113.

[93] Ibid., 'Testament of Ptolemaios VIII Euergetes II, leaving his kingdom of Cyrene to the Romans', p. 135.

[94] See for example, 'Letter of L. Cornelius Scipio and his Brother to Herakleia in Karia (190BC)' in Robert K. Sherk (ed. and trs.), *Rome and the Greek East to the Death of Augustus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 13. While the term friendship does not occur in this letter, it is full of language associated with friendship.

[95] Ibid., 'Letter of Q. Maciuss Scaevola to Ephesus', p. 68.

[96] Ibid., 'Letter of Q. Oppius to Plarasa-Aphrodisias after the war against, pp. 71–2.

[97] Ibid., 'Decree of the Senate concerning three Greek naval captains', pp. 81–2.

[98] Ibid., 'Epidauros honors one of its prominent citizens', p. 55.

[99] Plutarch, *Precepts of Statecraft,* 814C.

[100] Katherine Evans, 'Friendship in Greek Documentary Papyri and Inscriptions: A Survey' in John T. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship*, (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1997), pp. 181–202, at pp. 189–90, 194, 198.

[101] John L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), p. 89.

[102] Ibid.,, pp. 110.

[103] ibid., p.181.

[104] Polybius, *Hist*. 1.14.4–5.

[105] Ibid., 20.6.5–7.

[106] Peter Jay (ed.), *The Greek Anthology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1982), p. 93.

[107] *Anth. Pal*. 9. 401

[108] Patricia A. Rosenmeyer, 'The Epistolary Novel' in J. R. Morgan and Richard Stoneman (eds), *Greek Fiction*: *The Greek Novel in Context*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 146–65, at p. 156.

[109] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 6.63.

[110] Cf. *Rep*. 496a–b; Aristotle, *EN*, 1095b3–10; Epicurus, *Ep. Men*. 122.

[111] *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy* trs. Palmer, (London: Thoemmes Press, 1955), p. 207. Compare Léon Robin, *La pensée greque et les origines de l'esprit scientifique* trs. M. R. Dobie (New York: Russell and Russell, 1967), p. 313:

> The political and social circumstances which immediately preceded and followed the death of Alexander had intensely aggravated urgent needs to which philosophy had to supply new answers. In the great centralised state of which he was now a subject, the citizen of the old small city asked himself what attitude he should take up; he felt lost. Then he turned upon himself, considered his inner salvation, asked to be told what was the object of life, to be given an ideal in pursuing which he would find his lost liberty, with a view to his own happiness. The ideal would be different in every school, but it would always be the ideal of the Wise Man, who belongs to no age or country.

[112] *Handbook*, 5.

[113] This is the view ascribed to them in Diogenes Laertius VII. 124 = SVF 3.631, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, ed. H. von Arnim, 4 vols (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1903–24). However, other sources credit them with forms of friendship that are not so exclusive, cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 2.483 (Potts) = SVF 3.723. The explanation for this apparent disagreement is probably the fact that friendship is spoken of in a variety of ways. These ways are catalogued in Stobaeus *Eclog.* II. 94.26 (Wacksmuth) = SVF 3.98. The friendship that can obtain only between the virtuous is probably the third of these, and friendship in the strictest sense.

[114] DL VII. 124

[115] Stobaeus, *Eclog.* II 108,5 (Wacksmuth) = SVF 3.360:

> The Stoics accept that there can only be friendship among the wise, since among them alone is there likeness of mind regarding the matters of life, since likeness of mind is the certain knowledge of the common good. For true friendship – not that which is falsely called friendship – cannot exist without faith (*pistis*) and security. But in the case of those who are lacking in virtue and worth, there is lack of faith

and insecurity, and so they do not have friendship but different ties and attachments come to be between them adventitiously through their opinions and from necessity.

[116] When one sage so much as extended a finger in a rational – and thus virtuous – way, every sage around the globe was benefited. Plutarch, *On Common Notions* 1076A = SVF 3.246.

[117] Plutarch, *On Common Notions* 1068F = SVF 3.627, cf. Stobaeus, *Eclog.* II 101, 21 = SVF 3.626

[118] This was meant literally. The Stoics regarded God as an immanent – not transcendent – source of order in the world. God was, in fact, a material breath or *pneuma* that interpenetrated all things. *Pneuma* came in gradations of tension ranging from mere tenor (the sort of God-stuff that interpenetrated inanimate objects), to soul (the God-stuff that animates living beings) to rationality (God-stuff at its highest degree of tension). God's providence consisted not in making the world free of pain or suffering, but simply in making it such that rational creatures were able, through the perfection of their reason, to see that pain and suffering simply didn't matter to their well-being. See D. Baltzly, 'Stoic pantheism', *Sophia* 34 (2003), pp. 3–33.

[119] Cicero, *Amic*. 6.

[120] Plutarch, *On the fortune of Alexander the Great*, 329A-B = SVF 1.262.

[121] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 7.33.

[122] Cicero, *Rep*., 3.33.

[123] Ibid., 3.35.

[124] Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, 19.21.

[125] Cicero, *Off*., 2.27.

[126] Cicero, *Amic*., 50.

[127] The case for a dirct Stoic influence was put by W. Capelle, 'Griechische Ethik und römischer Imperialismus', *Klio* 25 (1932). Capelle, however, was relying on the picture of a very innovative Panaetius and Posidonius found in A. Schmekel's *Die Philosophie der mittleren Stoa in ihrem geschichtlichen Zusammenhänge* (Hildesheim: Weidmann, 1892).

M. van Straaten's much more conservative estimate of the evidence concerning Panaetius (*Panétius, sa vie ses écrits et sa doctrine avec une édition des fragments* (Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1946)) discouraged such speculation about the way in which the middle Stoa altered the teaching of the early Stoa. Jean-Louis Ferrary, *Philhellénisme et impérialisme: aspects idéologiques de la conquête romaine du monde hellénistique, de la seconde guerre de Macédoine à la guerre contre Mithridate* (Rome: École française, 1988) urges reasons for agnosticism about the influence of Greek philosophical thought on Roman ideology. Capelle's case is taken up again by J. Barlow, 'The Moral and Political Philosophy of the Middle Stoa in its Historical Context' (MA thesis, Monash University 2001).

[128] Cf. Anaxandrides, a comic poet of the fourth century BCE: 'To make oneself the slave of pleasure – this is what randy women do, not men', Kock (ed.), *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta* vol. 2, fr. 60.

[129] Greek sources recognised a class distinction between a woman who was a *hetaira* and one who was a *pornê* that perhaps approximates the English language distinction between courtesan and whore. The former were sometimes influential, well-educated women such as Aspaius, the 'companion' of Pericles.

[130] DL, 2.75.

[131] Ibid., 2.81.

[132] Ibid., 2.93. Hegesias' pessimistic view of friendship is of a piece with his pessimistic view of life. On the whole, life presents more opportunities for suffering than enjoyment. Hence happiness – perhaps understood as a preponderance of pleasure over pain across a lifetime – is certainly impossible. So effective was Hegesias in communicating this message that he was given the nickname 'the death persuader'. Cicero tells us that King Ptolemy forbade him from lecturing on the theme that death removes us from bad things rather than taking away good things. Too many members of his audience committed suicide afterwards! (*Tusc*. 1.83)

[133] DL 10.132, trs. Inwood and Gerson.

[134] Epicurus advocated, DL 10.36, that philosophical recruits should memorise the key sayings .

[135] Epicurus was adamant that philosophy was to be judged by its therapeutic success: 'Empty is the argument by which no human illness is cured, for just as there is no benefit in medicine if it does not drive out the illnesses of the body, so too there is no benefit in philosophy if it does not drive out the illnesses of the soul', Porphyry, *Letter to Marcella* 31 = 221 Usener. Cf. Cicero's complaint on the terse and inefficacious quality of Stoic philosophical arguments in *On Goals*, 4.7.

[136] Cf. Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 134–7.

[137] Cf. Marcello Gigante, *Philodemus in Italy: the books from Herculaneum*, trans. Dirk Obbink (University of Michigan Press, 1995).

[138] The Platonist polemicist, Plutarch of Chaeronia, dedicated a whole work to attacking the Epicureans on this point (*Is 'Live Unknown' a Wise Precept?* – frequently referred to by its Latin title, *An recte dictum sit latenter esse vivendum*).

[139] Pamela Gordon argues that it was not only the abandonment of the political sphere, but also the rejection of high culture '*paideia*' that earned Epicurus the rebuke of *kinaidologos* from the Stoic Epictetus: 'Remembering the Garden: the trouble with women in the school of Epicurus' in J. Fitzgerald, D. Obbink and G. Holland (eds), *Philodemus and the New Testament World*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2004), p. 227

[140] Cicero, *On the Nature of Gods*, ND 1.93.

[141] *The Woman and the Lyre: Women Writers in Classical Greece and Rome* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), pp. 101–2.

[142] Compare *Vatican Sayings* 45; Diogenes Laertius 10.6 (Usener 163) and Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 13, 588ab (Usener 117) with Paul's views wisdom of the world (I *Cor*. 1:18 ss).

[143] To be sure, Paul in particular regards discipleship as more than an (inevitably doomed) *imitatio Christi*. But in the documents of the early Church, Paul's emphasis on Christ as

emancipator through God's grace is not universally shared. See, for example, Ignatius of Antioch, who urged his community to 'imitate Jesus as He imitated the Father' (Philad 7:2) or to live 'not in the human way, but in Jesus Christ's way' (Trall. 2:1).

[144] On the emulation of Epicurus, see Lucretius' proem to book III, lines 4–6. For his divinisation, cf. the proem to book V, where he is greater than Hercules. There is ample evidence that Epicureans possessed images of Epicurus – rings, cups, etc. We reject the hypothesis of Frischer, *The Sculpted Word* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) that these were fetishes, thinking it much more likely that they served to remind the initiate to conduct himself in the same tranquil manner as the sage whose calm visage is constantly present to him.

[145] Cf. B. Fiore, SJ, 'The Pastoral Epistles in the light of Philodemus' "On Frank Criticism"' in *Philodemus and the New Testament World*.

[146] See, for example, Richard Sorabji's treatment of the way in which various 'spiritual exercises' of the Stoics and Epicureans were adapted by Evagrius of Pontus in *Emotion and Peace of Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) or Tim Gaden, 'Looking to God for Healing: A Rereading of the *Second Letter of Clement* in the Light of Hellenistic Psychagogy', *Pacifica* 15 (2002), pp. 154–73.

[147] Cf. R. Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), ch. 10.

[148] *On Having Many Friends*, 94A; *De amicorum multitudine*, Plutarch *Moralia* vol. 2. (Loeb Classical Library).

[149] 94E; 94F; 94B.

[150] *How To Tell A Flatterer* 51B, *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur*, Plutarch, *Moralia* vol. 1 (Loeb Classical Library).

[151] 54D–55A; 55C–d; 55A; 51C. As noted above, frankness of speech was an important feature of Epicurean therapeutic friendships. But they were not unique among Hellenistic philosophers in this regard: Cf. Diogenes the Cynic: 'Other dogs bite their enemies, I my

friends – so that I may save them." (Stob. 3. 13. 44); Maximus of Tyre (*Or*. 14. 5), Themistius (*Or*. 22. 277) and the New Testament. It seems that the link between frankness and friendship can also be found in Isocrates Letter 4. See Konstan, 'Greek Friendship', pp. 93–5.

[152] Plutarch, *On Having Many Friends*, 94C, 94D, 95C, 95E.

[153] Ibid., 95A; emphasis added.

[154] Ibid., 96D.

[155] Plutarch, *How To Tell A Flatterer*, 54F.

[156] Plutarch, *On Having Many Friends*, 96A–B, 97A.

[157] Plutarch, *How To Tell a Flatterer*, 53B, 50A–B, 52F–53C, 53A, 53C.

[158] Others who dealt in detail with the question of how to distinguish a flatterer from a friend were Maximus of Tyre (*Or*. 14) and Themistius (*Or*. 22. 276 ff.).

[159] Plutarch, *De fraterno amore* [*On Brotherly Love*], *Moralia* vol. 6 (Loeb Classical Library), 479C–D.

[160] This is a piece of advice that Plutarch took from Theophrastus.

[161] *De fraterno amore*, 482B.

[162] Ibid., 478C.

[163] Ibid., 479A.

[164] *Political Advice*, 824D–825F.

[165] Plutarch, *Amatorius* [*On Love*], *Moralia* vol. 9 (Loeb Classical Library), 769F.

[166] Ibid., 769A.

[167] Plutarch, *Coniugalia praecepta* [*Advice to Bride and Groom*], *Moralia* vol. 2 (Loeb Classical Library), 139D, 140D.

[168] *Precepts of Statecraft*, 807D.

[169] *Politics*, 1253b28.

[170] Plutarch, *Precepts of Statecraft*, 806F, 807C, 808D, 808B, 809A.

[171] Plutarch, *Mulierum virtutes*, *Moralia*, vol .3; *Bruta animalia ratione uti, sive Gyrllus* and *De essu carnium orationes* ii, *Moralia*, vol. 12.

[172] On the incorporation of elements of Pythagoreanism into Neoplatonism, see O'Meara, 1989, p. 260.

[173] Like Pythagoreanism, Orphism had both pre-Platonic origins – origins that are similarly shrouded in mystery – as well as substantial post-Platonic additions. The Orphic poems may include elements as early as fifth century BCE. However, the bulk of the Orphic material stems from the period after the death of Aristotle. The Neoplatonists drew heavily on what is now called the 'Rhapsodic Theogony'. Thus it is unsurprising that they can find resonances of Platonism and Pythagoreanism in these 'ancient' Orphic works. Cf. M. L. West, *The Orphic Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

[174] These friendly numbers were the only ones known in antiquity, and this doubtless added much to the mystical significance that this fact was supposed to hold for friendship. A second pair was not discovered until 1636 when Fermat did so. Descartes added a third pair in 1638.

[175] Iamblichus, *Commentary on Nicomachus of Gerasa's Introduction to Arithmethic*, ed. H. Pistelli (Leipzig: Teubner, 1894), §35.

[176] Iamblichus, *VP* 33.237. Translations from Iamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorica* (*VP*) are by John Dillon and Jackson Hershbell, *Iamblichus: On the Pythagorean Way of Life* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991).

[177] This was so at least for the highest form of friendship which obtained only among those who manifest the highest gradation of intellectual virtue. To be fair, Pythagoras also taught 'friendship of all for all: of the divine to the human; of doctrine to doctrine; of soul to body; of the body to itself; of man to certain irrational animals and of human beings with each other' (*VP* 229).

[178] Iamblichus argues that 'our fellows' included even animals and other parts of nature. This kinship was based on the fact that the entire cosmos was a single, living being animated by a World Soul. The Pythagorean injunction to abstain from eating meat was based on this kinship among all living beings. His interpretation of the Pythagorean symbolon 'plant mallows' in your garden stressed the interconnectedness of all visible nature. The mallow

plant moved with the sun. This showed how all things in the visible realm were connected by links of sympathy and kinship.

[179] Iamblichus, *VP*, 33.229, in Dillon and Hershbell, *Iamblichus*.

[180] This could be interpreted as an act of worship toward Athena. However, it is equally possible that the goddess in question was Artemis and/or Hecate, both of whom are associated with the moon. If the latter interpretation is correct, then the action was doubly bold. Hecate was associated with the theurgy and magic. Even if Proclus' worship was directed instead to the 'tamer' Athena, it was still reasonably bold. An imperial decree in 391 CE notionally prohibited all pagan cults and closed their temples, though the enforcement of this law – like the enforcement of marijuana laws in our own times – depended a bit on how far the local authorities wanted to push matters.