

vised all Hasidim to endeavor to acquire a true friend to whom they could unburden their heart and disclose even their transgressions.

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## V. Christianity

- Greek and Latin Patristics and Orthodox Churches
- Medieval Times and Reformation Era ■ Modern Europe and America

### A. Greek and Latin Patristics and Orthodox Churches

**1. Introduction: Pagan Traditions.** In the ancient world, friendship (Gk. *φιλία*; Lat. *amicitia*) was a fundamental reciprocal relationship not necessarily involving emotional ties. Conceptions of friendship reflected differing values and expectations: whereas emotions gained greater importance in modern times, with the search for a unique individual as the basis of attraction, ancient friendship tended to emphasize characteristics of the "Good" (Gk. *ἀρετή*; Lat. *virtus*) in the ideal double. No generally recognized theory of friendship exists. The maxim that friends own everything in common serves to depict the early church in Jerusalem as a community of friends (see above "III. New Testament") quite similar to the Epicurean and Pythagorean friendship circles, as well as Qumran. In Rome and in Ptolemaic Egypt, *φιλία/amicitia* meant a reciprocal relationship in society, which distinguished between classes of friends (Suetonius, *Tib.* 46) and designated the social rank of imperial council members as *amicitia Caesaris* (Crook; Evans: 201).

**2. Latin Patristics.** Using terms like "brothers" or "fathers," distinct from the classical ideal of *amicitia* and *φιλία* (Konstan: 156–57), symbolic and spiritual kinship was constructed as a basis for the new Christian identity and lifestyle. Circa 197 CE, Tertullian (*Apol.* 39.8–9) explained "brothers" as meaning "God as a common father." But whereas the OT offered only peripheral teaching on friendship, the NT offered none at all, and the Christian discourse often followed classical patterns. Although Minucius Felix noted in the early 3rd century CE that friends shared a single soul (*Octavius* 1.3) and saw no impediment to *amicitia* in different faiths (4.3), Augustine (*Ep.* 258.1) quoted Cicero's famous definition of friendship (*Lael.* 20) "*Amicitia est rerum humanarum et divinarum cum benevolentia et caritate consensus*" ("friendship is the agreement on things human and divine, joined with kindness and love") and reinterpreted it: without agreement as to "Christian" faith, there could be no true friendship. The primacy of philosophical *virtus* was succeeded by the priority of Christian *recta fides*. Political con-

flicts between friends were replaced by religious conflicts, between Christians and pagans or between Christians of different persuasions. The rupture of the friendship between Rufinus and Jerome illustrates how theological differences could lead to estrangement (Jerome, *Ep.* 110; 116). In contrast, the pagan Symmachus promulgated a virtual handbook of the elites' codes of behavior emphasizing that differences in religion should be tolerated in the spirit of true friendship (Salzman).

At the same time, agreement over religion brought new depth and spirituality: the idea of friendship with God, independent of time and space, and associated with the omnipresence of the absent friend. Ambrose compared the *alter ego* with the unity of the Holy Trinity (*Spir.* 2.154), and concluded his Christianizing revision of Cicero's *De officiis* with admonitions on friendship (*Off.* 3.21). Seeking ties with God and humans, Paulinus of Nola fused classical and Christian friendship ideals. Writing letters to friends continues to be an *officium caritatis* (*Ep.* 13.2), but it is precisely the "love of Christ which forces us to write" (*Ep.* 4.1), alluding to 2 Cor 5:14 (see Gemeinhardt: 191–92). Augustine interprets friendship in the light of the commandment to love God and neighbor: obeying this God-given law will be the foundation of friendship between human beings and at the same time unite them with the Lord (*Ep.* 258.4). Paulinus, too, describes the love of Christ as bond between friends (*Ep.* 51.3, alluding to Phil 1:8; cf. *Ep.* 11.5; see Gemeinhardt: 194). The friendship between him (Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 11.23 = Aus. *Ep.* 30.23 Peiper) and Ausonius corresponded to *pietas* in the role-play father-son or teacher-pupil; he also transcendentalized *amicitia* into an eternal alliance (*foedus aeternum*, *Carm.* 11.42 = Aus. *Ep.* 30.42 Peiper), enduring beyond death, even in spite of doctrinal differences.

Whereas *caritas* was applied exclusively to the love in Christian relationships, *amicitia* might be used of either secular or Christian friendships (White: 158–59). St. Felix's double role as Paulinus' *comes* (*Carm.* 12.25) and *patronus* (21.6), expressed in the metaphors of friendship, enhanced his own standing as an ascetic and the holiness of Nola as a new monastic center (as reflected in Augustine, *Ep.* 78.3). Aside from Moses and Abraham, Cyprian of Carthage (*Ep.* 15.3; 21.3) and Arnobius (2.5) conferred the honorific "*amici* of the Lord" exclusively on martyrs (Brändli: 43–53). Cassian has the ascetic replacing the Stoic sage: in his *Conversation* (16) on friendship he conceives friendship as *perfecta amicitia*, possible only between *perfecti*.

**3. Greek Patristics.** In contrast to the Ciceronian paradigm in the Latin-speaking West, where the tradition remained concentrated on a single focus, the Greek-speaking East created numerous different constructions revolving around the concept of friendship. The hierarchy in which Clement of Al-

exandria (*Strom.* 2.19.101–2) ordered philosophical, human, and animal friendship, above which stood only the friend of God (Gk. φίλος θεῶ), reflects the Aristotelian tripartite division (*Eth. nic.* 8.3.1156a–b) founded on “the good” (Gk. ἀρετή), the useful (τὸ χρήσιμον), and on pleasure (ἡ ἡδονή).

“Friendship with God,” however, was rejected by Aristotle, in contrast to the Stoics: Christian intellectuals like Clement of Alexandria (*Paed.* 1.3.7.1), Gregory of Nyssa (*Vit. Mos.* 2.319–20), Origen (*Princ.* 1.6.4), and the Nestorian Martyrius (*Phil.* 1.9) laid claim to it only in the mystical context or for prophets, martyrs, and ascetics who stood out from the common run of believers. Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 10.9.1), Constantine’s court bishop, styled the emperor as ὁ τῷ θεῷ φίλος. Not until medieval times was the distance between God and man overcome, according to the Western theologian Thomas Aquinas (*Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 23, a. 1) by communication (Lat. *communicatio*) and love of God (Lat. *caritas*). Human friendships, epitomized in the exemplary youthful and student friendship between Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus, certainly existed, but the *φιλία* of the ancients took second place to the general commandment to love one another (Gk. ἀγάπη), likewise secular was second to spiritual friendship, when Basil made it serve the bishopric, condemned private friendships (*Serm. asc.* 2 [PG 31:884–85]), and broke off the oldest friendship (*Ep.* 128); or in John Chrysostom’s letters to women (*Ep. Olymp.* 8[2].5 [SC 13:178]). As in the Latin tradition, writing letters reveals friendship between individuals (Gregory of Nazianzus, *Ep.* 67.1; Basil of Caesarea, *Ep.* 154; 164.1; 165; John Chrysostom, *Ep.* 178; 232.1). Comparison with the ideal friendship pair might serve in lieu of human friendship, as in Gregory Thaumaturgus’ speech of thanks (45; 81) for his teacher, Origen. Gregory of Nazianzus referred freely to individual friendship as *φιλία* (Treu: 429–30), but in his eyes, too, “firm friendship” was possible only among Christians (*Ep.* 100).

**4. Global Networks.** In the historical Christian world, friendship ranged, as with Augustine, from fervent youthful friendships by way of local Christian-philosophical circles (Cassiciacum) to wider-ranging contacts with his fellow-bishops and with politicians. The old Greek “guest-friendship” (Gk. ξενία), with its Homeric code of conduct upheld even for enemies, was replaced by religiously or ethically motivated “hospitality” (Lat. *hospitium*). Spiritual unity (Lat. *unanimitas*) based on the mystical body of Christ and its members was constitutive for the monastic centers; the preferred medium for generating and demonstrating solidarity was the letter. Although reclusiveness had been enjoined, the leaders of the ascetic movement revived the conventional concepts of *amicitia* and *hospitium*, seeking recognition of their objectives. These concepts were

implemented through the exchange of letters, and in the 4th century CE they were developed to constitute a network which might be called a “World Wide Web” of Christian intellectuals, exemplified in the Latin-speaking West by the social and personal networking between Augustine, Paulinus, Jerome, Sulpicius Severus, and Rufinus (Mratschek 2001; 2002), and in the Greek East by that between the Cappadocians (Van Dam), cf. the networks of the Middle Ages (Grünbart). A résumé of pagan and Christian discourses on friendship was compiled by Isidore of Seville (*Sent.* 3.28–32).

**5. Orthodox Churches.** Generally speaking, the Byzantine church adhered to the concept of friendship of the Cappadocians, especially concerning epistolographical stereotypes like the complaint about the friend’s silence and others (see above). Writing letters to each other may appear as an office of friendship under divine guidance by Christ. Also the possibility of exchanging letters between persons with different gender and thus the creation of friendship between men and women (as “equal in Christ”) is characteristic for the later Greek tradition. In the 11th century, a debate arose whether friendship had to be counted among the Christian virtues. Not surprisingly, Symeon the New Theologian rejected this view strictly, while Michael Psellos, the champion of classical antiquity in Byzantium, regarded friendship as virtue (Tinnefeld).

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### B. Medieval Times and Reformation Era

Modern "friendship" and its equivalents in Romance and Germanic languages refer to a personal relationship that is often based on affection, but that can take on a formalized structure (Oschema 2006: 109–17). Medieval and early modern concepts of friendship were heavily influenced by ancient philosophy: Greek and Roman thinkers reflected on same-sex personal bonds and developed an idealized model of virtue-based friendship (e.g., Aristotle, *Eth. nic.*; Cicero, *Amic.*). Biblical texts contained less systematic material: Hebrew *rēa'* could be translated as φίλος or *amicus*, but it embraced friendship as well as other relations of personal proximity (Schrey: 592–93; Tadmor: 151–52).

Biblical passages on friendship continued to be cited by Christian writers, but they did not furnish the basis for a systematic discussion.

In spite of its problematic pagan background, in the Middle Ages friendship provided an important concept for social interaction, e.g., in epistolary exchanges, as well as for spiritual reflection (Ysebaert; Haseldine; Classen/Sandige). In political contexts, friendship took on the shape of a formalized relationship with clear-cut mutual obligations (Garnier; Althoff). In contrast to hierarchically structured concepts of social relations, friendship implied the idea of at least "virtual" equality of the partners (Alcuin; cf. Garnier: 10), thereby providing a means of non-hierarchical interaction (van Eickels: 333–41).

In the 12th century, monastic authors began to write systematic treatises on friendship: Based on Cicero, the Cistercian Aelred of Rievaulx reflected on "spiritual friendship" (McGuire: 296–338). He distinguished less valuable utilitarian and "carnal" forms from an ideal friendship of the souls with

the ultimate goal of a union in the love of Christ, culminating in the formula "Deus amicitia est" (Bray: 298). But Aelred and later authors (Pierre de Blois, Thomas Aquinas) mainly drew on pagan philosophy and early Christian writings while specific biblical references remained scarce, e.g., in Vincent of Beauvais' "Speculum doctrinale" (13th cent.; 5.82–89). They surfaced mostly in the form of prototypical pairs of friends, e.g., Jonathan and David (1 Sam 18–20; 2 Sam 1; cf. van Eickels: 363–65). This pair also constituted a model for forms of ritual interaction. It remained, however, less popular in monastic and courtly literature than rivaling narratives like "Amicus and Amelius" (Winst). Not only academic discussions concentrated on the interpretation of Aristotle (Sère), but even late medieval moralizing authors mentioned biblical texts, mostly in passing, e.g., Guillaume Fillastre (Oschema 2011).

Although Christian thinking stressed the unifying force of love, models of social organization preferred the motif of "brotherhood" with its implication of indiscriminate sympathy and equality, while friendship frequently contained the idea of an exclusive bond (Oschema 2006: 142–43; McGuire: 82–90). The Renaissance period witnessed a renewed valorization of individual friendship as an idealized form of perfect mutual love, e.g., in Montaigne's description of his friendship with Etienne de la Boetie. Humanists continued to use the vocabulary of friendship in epistolary exchanges.

Biblical references became important in Protestant exegesis, which effectuated a rapprochement of friendship with the concepts of proximity and neighborhood (Tadmor). They remained negligible, however, in the efforts to pacify the conflicts between the confessions in the French wars of religion of the 1560s and 1570s by means of friendship treaties (Foa). Theoretical reflections on friendship were popular with Renaissance authors, from Petrarch via Leon Battista Alberti (*Libro della Famiglia IV*) and Erasmus to Montaigne, who mainly referred to ancient authors and examples (Aristotle, Cicero, and Seneca). Even authors with an outspoken clerical background, e.g., Cipriano Giambelli in 16th-century Italy or the 17th-century Jesuit Francisco Macedo in his commentary on Aristotle, only scarcely referred to biblical models (David and Jonathan, Christ and St. John the Evangelist) when they discussed friendship (Rey: 164–68): biblical references tended to concentrate on the concept of mutual love and referred primarily to pertinent NT passages (Langer: 25, 98).

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