THE MARRIAGE OF TRUE MINDS

Of the Rise and Fall of the Idealized Conception of Friendship in the Renaissance

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ABSTRACT

(DEUTSCH)

Gegenstand der vorliegenden Untersuchung ist der Freundschaftsbegriff der Renaissance, der seinen Ursprung wesentlich in der antiken Philosophie hat, seine Darstellungsweisen in der europäischen (insbesondere der englischen und italienischen) Literatur des fünfzehnten und sechzehnten Jahrhunderts, und der Wandel, dem dieser beim Epochenwechsel zur Aufklärung im siebzehnten Jahrhundert unterworfen war.

Meine Arbeit vertritt die Hypothese, dass sich die Konzeptionen der verschiedenen Formen zwischenmenschlicher Beziehung die sich spätestens seit dem achtzehnten Jahrhundert etablieren konnten, auf die konzeptionellen Veränderungen des Freundschaftsbegriffs und insbesondere auf den Wandel des Begriffsverständnisses von Freundschaft und Liebe während der Renaissance und des sich anschließenden Epochenwechsels zurückführen lassen.

Um diese Hypothese zu verifizieren, habe ich daher nach einer kurzen Übersicht über die konzeptionellen Ursprünge des frühneuzeitlichen Freundschaftsbegriffs zunächst das Wesen der primär auf den philosophischen Idealen der antiken Denker beruhenden Freundschaftskonzeption der Renaissance analysiert. Hierbei ließ sich eine grundlegende Disparität zwischen den klassisch inspirierten Idealvorstellungen und deren realer Umsetzung in der frühen Neuzeit nachweisen, die sich im weiteren Verlauf als mit ursächlich für die weitere Entwicklung des Freundschaftsbegriffs herausstellen sollte. Anschließend habe ich die weiteren Faktoren untersucht, die zu eben jenem Transformationsprozess führten, dem der Werte- und Normenhorizont des humanistischen Freundschaftsbegriffs vom Anbeginn der Epoche bis hin zur Aufklärung unterlag, und der letztlich zu einer Aufspaltung der traditionellen Beziehungskonzeptionen und zu einer Abwertung des Freundschaftskonzeptes führte.

Diese Hypothese wird anhand ausführlicher Textanalysen repräsentativer Schriften zum Themenbereich untermauert. Neben Lyrik- und Dramentexten sind fiktionale Prosaschriften hierbei ebenso vertreten wie philosophische und theologische Abhandlungen oder die Korrespondenz herausragender Dichter der Epoche.

Da zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Liebesbegriffs bereits ausführliche Studien vorliegen, es bislang zur Evolution der Freundschaftsidee jedoch kaum Untersuchungen gibt, mag diese Arbeit zum Ausgleich des bestehenden Forschungsdefizits beitragen.

ABSTRACT

(ENGLISH)

The present study will focus on the concept of friendship in the Renaissance, which had its origins mainly in classical philosophy, the way in that it was represented in the European, and especially the English and Italian literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the conceptual change to which it was subjected in the course of the transition from the period of the Renaissance to the age of the Enlightenment in the seventeenth century.

The hypothesis on which my work is founded, assumes that the different conceptions of the various kinds of interpersonal relationship that have become established since the eighteenth century, could be related to the change of the conceptualization of friendship and love in the course of the Renaissance and the ensuing transition from this period to the next.

In order to verify this hypothesis, I have first provided a brief overview of the conceptual origins of the early modern notions of friendship before I have analysed the nature of the friendship conceptions of the Renaissance itself, which are indeed primarily based on the philosophical ideals established by the classical thinkers in their theories of the subject. This examination has revealed the clear disparity that there had been between these classically inspired idealized conceptions and their realization in the early modern period. We might therefore say that it was certainly this disparity and the impossibility of reconciliation that have been causally responsible for the further development of the concept of friendship. Moreover, from the examination of the additional factors that have led to the transformation to which the humanistic conception of friendship was subjected in the course of the time from the dawn of the period to its end in the seventeenth century, we might conclude that in this century there has been a definite process of diversification of the traditional relationship conceptions, and that this process has led not only to a new set of views on relationships but to a debasement of the concept of friendship in particular.

This hypothesis is verified by the extensive textual analysis of a number of representative contemporary sources dealing with the topic of friendship. Besides some fictional prose, there are also some pieces of poetry and drama, as well as various philosophical, theological, and even some epistolary texts included in this selection.

As there are already comprehensive studies of the history of the development of the concept of love, yet until now hardly any of the conceptual evolution of the idea of friendship in existence, this work might be able to contribute to the filling of this gap.

SCHLAGWORTE:

- **Freundschaft**
- **Renaissance**
- **Begriffswandel**

KEYWORDS:

- **friendship**
- **Renaissance**
- **conceptual change**

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Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 2.32.105

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION:

OF A CONCEPT WE HAVE LOST

In the year 1777, in the heyday of the European Enlightenment and about one and a half centuries after the end of the Renaissance, an English essayist by the name of Susannah Dobson finds it apparently necessary to introduce the preface to her philosophic treatise on the topic of friendship, her *Dialogue on Friendship and Society*, with the following excuse:

> To address the Public on Friendship, I am sensible requires an apology.—On so worn-out a subject, I cannot hope to present the world with any original sentiment; and it will be happy should I escape enthusiasm on the one hand or insipidity on the other.[1]

Now, from these words we can conclude that late eighteenth-century readers had already been well acquainted with the various conceptions of friendship when Dobson's book was published, and that there had thus formerly been an enthusiasm for the topic that was now, at Dobson's time, no longer considered an adequate attitude towards the matter. And indeed, there had been much more enthusiasm for the subject in the period preceding the Enlightenment, the Renaissance—and not only then.

When Dobson wrote her essay on friendship in the second half of the eighteenth century, she could look back on almost four millennia of literary treatment of the topic. Presumably the oldest texts that deal with friendship as one of their major themes are the Sumerian tales about the life and deeds of the legendary Mesopotamian king Gilgamesh (fl. 28th or 27th BC), of which the first written versions in cuneiform date back to the time between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries BC. These narratives were later (about 1200 BC) incorporated into a longer poem, nowadays known as *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.[2] It tells the story of this famous ancient king of Uruk, who considered

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[1] S[usannah] Dobson, *A Dialogue on Friendship and Society, by the Translator of the Life of Petrach* (London: Becket, 1777) iiv.

[2] The epic that was compiled from the various Sumerian stories survives in a number of versions in different Semitic and Indo-European languages, all written in cuneiform on clay or stone tablets, of which most yet only exist in fragments. The text that is today known as *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is primarily derived from an Akkadian cuneiform version of the poem, engraved on eleven stone tablets that were found in the ruins of the library of Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria (669-633 B.C.), at Nineveh. Although this is the fullest surviving version of the epic, it too only survives in fragments, since all of the eleven tablets are damaged, due to the library's destruction by the Persians in 612 BC. To these eleven tablets, modern scholars have then added another one whose text provides a suitable appendix to the original set. Thus consisting of a dozen tablets, the Epic is now usually divided into twelve parts, each relating to one of the twelve tablets. Additionally, each line on the tablets was numbered so that a

himself the most important and most powerful man on earth and who thus believed to be so self-sufficient that he would never be in need of the help or advice of anyone else. He was indeed so sure of himself that he even believed to be godlike. After a while, Gilgamesh's unduly egocentric attitude annoyed the real Gods in fact so much that they decided to provide him with a friend, with whom he should then spend his life as an equal partner. (The name of this friend was Enkidu, presumably in allusion to the Sumerian word *enki*, meaning 'creator' or 'God'.). Yet, after the two had made friends with each other and had even became what later eras were to describe as one another's 'other self' or 'one soul divided into two bodies' (or what Giuseppe Furlani in his influential essay on the friendship theme in the epic refers to as the "eterni prototipi degli amici fedeli"), the Gods soon regretted their decision as the two friends began to suffer from the same megalomania from which the Gods had wished to cure Gilgamesh by providing him with a friend.[3] Now, together, the friends developed such an exaggerated view of their own power that they even dared to rebel against the Gods themselves and finally even killed a divine animal, a heavenly bull. The Gods therefore decided to punish the friends by killing only one of them and letting the other one suffer from the grief over the loss of his friend.[4] So, they agreed on depriving Gilgamesh of his friend by letting Enkidu die. The sentence had indeed the expected effect, as Gilgamesh suffered bitterly from the loss:

> 'My friend, whom I loved deeply, who went through every hardship with me,
> Enkidu, whom I love deeply, who went through every hardship with me,
> the fate of mankind has overtaken him.
> Six days and seven nights I mourned over him
> and would not allow him to be buried
> until a maggot fell out of his nose.
> I was terrified *by his appearance* (?),
> I began to fear death, and so roam the wilderness.
> The issue of my friend oppresses me,
> so I have been roaming long trails through the wilderness.
> The issue of Enkidu, my friend, oppresses me,
> so I have been roaming long roads through the wilderness.

reference system could be established that makes it possible to refer to the different passages of the epic in quite the same way as we would refer to the passages of Greek, Latin, or English poems. Cf. Richard Hooker, "Mesopotamia: Gilgamesh," *World Civilizations*, ed. Richard Hooker, vers. June 1999, Washington State University, 18 Feb. 2000 <http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/meso/gilg.htm>.

[3] Giuseppe Furlani, "L'Epopea di Gilgames come inno all'amicizia," *Belfagor: Rassegna di varia umanità* 1 (1946): 589. – "[…] eternal prototypes of loyal friends." Trans. mine.

[4] Furlani explains the Gods' decision by remarking: "Tutto può conseguire l'amicizia tra due esseri umani, tranne vincere la morte, quest'ultima spezzando inesorabilmente i vincoli strettissimi che legano insieme amico ed amico." Furlani 579. – "Everything can be achieved by the friendship between two human beings, only death it cannot defeat, which relentlessly shatters even the closest bonds that bind two friends together." Trans. mine.

> How can I stay silent, how can I be still?
> My friend whom I love has turned to clay.'[5]

The loss of his beloved companion had in fact such a devastating effect on Gilgamesh that from then on he feared nothing more than his own death and the wish to live forever finally became an obsession with him. Needless to say, he did not succeed in the realisation of this wish.[6] Interestingly enough, however, it is exactly the opposite motif—i.e. not to see any reason for living any longer after the friend has died—that can be found in most of the literary representations of friendship dealing with the death of one of the friends dating from later times. That the loss of a close friend makes the other one fear his own death is indeed a motif that has only rarely been presented in the literary treatment of the topic since *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.[7]

About a thousand years after the Sumerian stories of Gilgamesh's friendship with Enkidu had been engraved for the first time, the Greeks as well, and later also the Romans, began to consider friendship a theme worthy for further contemplation. In fact, friendship now even became a topic that enjoyed an extraordinary popularity not only with the poets but also with the philosophers of the time. The ancient Greek and Latin writings, from the works of Homer to those of Seneca and Lucian, are indeed more often concerned with the philosophical and poetical treatment of the subject than those of any other period in history are.

In the following centuries, however, the enthusiasm for the topic dwindled away. One can, in fact, almost speak of a neglect of the subject in the Middle Ages, as the attitude towards the matter that the authors of medieval times show in their writings clearly reveals a decided lack of interest in friendship—at least when compared to the enthusiasm that the classics had shown for the topic. Of course, there are still a number of writings of theological and poetical concern dating from that time that deal with the subject, yet usually only in passing and in a way that has no longer anything to do with the idealization of friendship that is so characteristic of the classical treatments of the topic.

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[5] *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (10.58-71), ed. and trans. Maureen Gallery Kovacs, 2nd ed. (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1989) 85. As I assume that most of my readers share my difficulties in understanding ancient Akkadian texts, I hope I might here be excused for making use of Kovacs's scholarly translation instead of providing the cuneiform original. As mentioned before, the text of the epic only exists in fragments, and some parts of the above quoted passage have also unfortunately been lost. Words in italics are thus marking a restoration that has been "supplied by the obvious demands of context or by conjecture." (Kovacs xiv.) The question mark in parentheses following that part additionally indicates that it also contains an uncertain restoration of a word where the correct translation of the original would not make any sense in the given context.

[6] Cf. also Hartmut Schmökel, trans., introduction, *Das Gilgamesch Epos*, 8th ed. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992) 11-20; and Furlani 579-89.

[7] One of the few exceptions is Augustine's description of his friendship with an unnamed youth in his *Confessiones*. See Augustine, *Confessiones* 4.4.9 – 4.6.11.

However, after the period of the Middle Ages, the interest in this classical idealization of friendship was again revived by Renaissance humanism, and the treatment of friendship in literature became almost as frequent as it had been in classical times. So, when Dobson wrote her essay on the nature of friendship in the late Enlightenment, she truly had to see her work as a continuation of a very old tradition. Hence, she was clearly aware that she could hardly take a look at the subject from a completely new perspective, one from which it had never been seen before. It might have been this awareness that made her apologise so modestly for her undertaking.

Leaving Dobson and the year 1777 another 225 years behind and jumping into the present of the early twenty-first century, do we still have to regard writing about friendship as so worn-out a matter? Does this study too have to make an apology for its objective? Do we, like Dobson's contemporaries, still have a universally applicable, clearly defined, and commonly acknowledged conception in mind when we speak about friendship? Of course, we are quite familiar with the term *friendship* and even more with the term *friend*, as most of us use it nearly every day to describe our relationships with a number of people. We are thus instantly inclined to answer at least the last question, that of the commonly accepted conception of friendship, with a definite 'yes', but Ursula Nötzoldt-Linden might be right, when she remarks in her sociological study of the role that friendship plays in our lives today: "Die scheinbare Vertrautheit des Begriffes verführt zu der stillschweigenden Annahme darüber, daß jeder ihn mit derselben Plausibilität und ähnlichem Bedeutungshorizont verwendet."[8] That this, in fact, is not the case, becomes obvious when we try to formulate our notion of friendship, when we have to define the exact meaning of the concept and to decide which characteristics do belong to it and which do not. A task that is certainly for most people—even for those frequently using the term to denote their relationships with particular persons—not an easy one, much less one that could be spontaneously solved with satisfaction. What qualities, for instance, characterize our friends and what makes them different from all those other people we also deal with but whom we would not regard as our friends? Is a friend merely someone we find sympathetic and who also shares our interests? There are certainly quite a number of people who meet these conditions but does this automatically make them become our friends? If not, what is it that distinguishes them from those we would regard as our friends. Today, it is indeed not still that easy to define the terms *friend* and *friendship*. Contrary to Renaissance or even classical times, virtuousness is hardly a measure for someone's suitability as a friend anymore and the similarity of the friends' origin is usually also no longer considered a necessary prerequisite for their friendship. So, the question is, what exactly constitutes our conception of friendship, or rather, as Leroy S. Rouner puts it:

[8] Ursula Nötzoldt-Linden, *Freundschaft: Zur Thematisierung einer vernachlässigten soziologischen Kategorie* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994) 23. – "The apparent familiarity with the concept is tempting to take it for granted that everyone is referring to it with the same plausibility and with a similar idea of its semantic content in mind." Trans. mine.

"How has our understanding of friendship changed?"[9] The answer to this question, as he directly goes on to explain,

> is difficult to answer, because most talk of human relationships is now sexually charged. To say that two people have 'a relationship' implies that they are lovers. Nonsexual friendships are probably as important today as they ever were, but we understand them less well because there is little reflective talk about them. Sexuality dominates our talk about intimacy with one another.[10]

And in fact, we are certainly quite settled in our notion of love and the relations that are based on love, as most people would indeed agree on taking the facts that the partners have sex with one another exclusively, that they spend most of their time with each other, and that they often live together as the commonly accepted indicators of an erotic love relationship. Everything else is generally regarded as a free, open, or even morally questionable, but in every case unusual kind of sexual relationship. That we have such clear notions of what love is and of what does belong to a love relationship and what does not, is certainly also due to the clear conception we have of the institutionalized form of this kind of relationship, viz. marriage. Contrary to this clear idea of love, we have though no means by which we could classify our friendships; we do normally not sleep with our friends nor do we necessarily spend most of our time with them, and only very seldom do we share our home with them. Thus, it seems as if we are quite disorientated when it comes to the question what friendship is, and trying to define the nature of this very special relationship, we usually end up with some rather vague but nevertheless quite idealistic notion of the matter, just like Clive Staples Lewis, for example, when he gives the following suggestion: "This love, free from instinct, free from all duties but those which love has freely assumed, almost wholly free from jealousy, and free without qualification from the need to be needed, is eminently spiritual. It is the sort of love one can imagine between angels."[11] Now, looking for a clear definition of friendship, this is certainly not a very helpful proposition, but it hints at the dilemma in which we are today, when we try to find an exact definition of this relationship, a relationship that has to be located somewhere between the affectionate relations between lovers or the members of a family on the one hand and the purely functional and utilitarian business relationships of every day

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[9] Leroy S. Rouner, introduction, *The Changing Face of Friendship* (Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1994) 1.

[10] Rouner 1.

[11] Clive Staples Lewis, *The Four Loves* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1960) 91. When Lewis calls friendship a kind of love, he does so in accordance with the original meaning of the term 'friendship'. Not only in Latin in which the word for friendship, *amicitia*, is directly derived from the word for love, *amor*, but also in many Germanic languages, the term for friendship is etymologically closely connected with that for love. The English word 'friend', for example, is derived from the Middle English *frend* that comes from the Anglo-Saxon *freónd*, meaning 'loving'. The Icelandic *frændi* is derived from *frjá*, to love. And the Gothic *frijonds*, a friend, is also the present past of *frijon*, to love. Cf. Walter W. Skeat, ed., "Friend," *The Concise Dictionary of English Etymology* (Ware: Wordsworth, 1993).

life. The definition of the concept of friendship has indeed become a matter of individualism, as friendship itself has nowadays become an utterly individual affair, or, as Lillian B. Rubin puts it in her empirical study of contemporary attitudes towards friendship: "Friendship in our society is strictly a private affair. There are no social rituals, no public ceremonies to honour or celebrate friendship of any kind, from the closest to the most distant—not even a linguistic form that distinguishes the formal, impersonal relationship from the informal and personal one."[12]

However, even more difficult than the question what friendship is, seems to be the one what features and qualities a friend has or should have. The general disorientation concerning this matter is illustrated by the many different terms we use to characterize our relationships with others as precisely as possible. We are used to classifying others as colleagues, fellows, peers, mates, companions, associates, comrades, chums, confidants, partners, friends, close friends, and even best friends. This variety of terms to synonymize the term *friend*, or rather to describe the different meanings we associate with this term, already hints at the phenomenon: most people use the term *friend* not just to refer to persons with whom they are connected by a very intimate bond (who do yet not belong to their own family), but also to refer to people with whom they have a relationship different from one of the clearly classified ones like those of family bonds (like brothers or cousins), professional relations (like colleagues, clients, or superiors), or other strictly defined kinds of personal or professional relationship (like neighbours or comrades in arms).[13] But when asking ten persons for exact definitions of these terms, we would probably evoke ten different answers.

When Rubin, in the course of her empirical study, asked her interview partners whom of their acquaintances they would regard as 'close friends' or even 'best friends' she was quite astonished that, when she called on these friends and asked them exactly the same question, more than half of them (64%) did not even mention the persons who have just declared them to be their most intimate friends! Confronted with the statements of their supposed friends (the members of the first group), they were usually quite astonished themselves and explained that they had simply not regarded these people as friends, much less as close friends, and the relationships with them by no means as that significant. Only fourteen per cent of Rubin's interview partners of the second group agreed with the statement of their acquaintances of the first one and in turn also regarded them as belonging to the circle of their close or even best

[12] Lillian B. Rubin, *Just Friends: The Role of Friendship in Our Lives* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990) 4. Her statement that there is no linguistic form that distinguishes the formal from the informal relationship is though of course only true for languages like English in which merely the personal pronoun *you* exists—contrary to, for example, languages like German and French, in which the speaker can address the person he is talking to either with the informal personal pronoun *Du/tu* or with the formal one *Sie/vous*.

[13] For a sociological study of this phenomenon, see, for example, C. S. Fischer, "What Do We Mean by a 'Friend'?: An Inductive Study," *Social Network* 3 (1982): 287-306.

friends.[14] This surprising result of her study led her to the quite unsatisfying conclusion that "we have friends, and we have 'just' friends; we have good friends, and we have best friends. Yet such is the elusiveness of the idea of 'friend' that not even the people involved can always say which is which."[15]

This, however, instantly leads us back to the question: What qualities go to make a close friend? Concerning this, Rubin reports on the findings of her survey:

> 'What is a friend?'—a question I asked everyone I talked with. the answers I heard varied somewhat depending on class, gender and generational perspectives. But regardless of the experienced reality of their lives and relationships, most people presented some idealized definition of friendship. *Trust, honesty, respect, commitment, safety, support, generosity, loyalty, mutuality, constancy, understanding, acceptance.*[16]

So, there is apparently some sort of common notion of what friendship is about and consequently also one of the qualities a friend should have. But has this listing of the positive features of friendship anything to do with the friendships that the interviewees have in reality? According to Rubin, it has not: "Nothing wrong with the list, of course. It just doesn't match up with the friends they described late in our discussion."[17]

Yet, when the abstract idea of what friendship is or should be and the realities of friendship diverge so greatly from each other, what could be the reason for this? Is it indeed merely infantile wishful thinking, the fantasy of a true and perfect friendship denied to us in reality, that dominates our abstract notion of this kind of relationship, as Rubin believes?[18] Or is it rather the intellectual heritage of the age-long history of ideas of friendship, ideas that are directly or indirectly referred to and reflected upon in thousands of texts, the oldest of which dating back to ancient times, that constitute the source of our notions of the subject? In fact, the conscious or unconscious adoption of literary ideals would explain why the idealized definitions of friendship that most people produce when asked to describe the nature of this form of relationship usually consist of a real hotchpotch of ideas and views of friendship, all derived from different ages and different conceptions and theories of the subject. We would thus automatically and usually unconsciously employ adopted parts of traditional or historical theories and conceptions of friendship to describe our notion of its nature when we have to define this abstract concept—just as we make in everyday conversation unconsciously use of traditional proverbs, sayings, and idiomatic expressions to describe certain situations or circumstances because we know that they

[14] See Rubin 6-7.

[15] Rubin 7.

[16] Rubin 7.

[17] Rubin 7.

[18] See Rubin 7.

somehow apply to these, yet without really knowing where the expressions derive from or how and why they were originally coined.

So, it seems as if we have nowadays lost the knowledge of the norms and values that underlie a specific concept of friendship. And this means that we have lost the clear common notion of what friendship is itself, the universal, generally acknowledged conception of friendship that has formerly existed, something that was so naturally a part of common knowledge not only during the Renaissance but almost throughout the whole of history—something that was even in 1777 still something so ordinary that an author of that time considered it appropriate to apologise for discussing the matter in a treatise.

It is indeed difficult to say why we have lost this clear common notion of friendship, but a possible explanation for the disregard of the concept and thus for the ignorance of specific friendship conceptions today is given by David Bolotin when he says:

> Friendship does not seem to fit into any of the modern systems of thought. Our Individualism, for example, must distrust or disregard the natural society among friends. There is no room for the generosity of true friendship in those doctrines which begin from the premise that man is naturally selfish. And at the other pole of modern thought, our hopes for universal, or even national, brotherhood tend to make us lose sight of so private and exclusive a relationship.[19]

That it is indeed the specific nature of friendship that makes it so different from those kinds of relationship that tend to dominate our lives today, and especially from our family and love relations, is also supposed by Lewis when he remarks: "Friendship is—in a sense not at all derogatory to it—the least natural of loves; the least instinctive, organic, biological, gregarious and necessary. It has least commerce with our nerves; there is nothing throaty about it; nothing that quickens the pulse or turns you red and pale."[20] Friendship is thus, according to him, too different from the kinds of relationships we are so familiar with, and it cannot produce the feelings that we are used to and that we expect to experience when we have a close and intimate relationship with someone.

As to the question when exactly the clear common notion of what friendship is has vanished, we have to admit that no definite point in history can be determined with absolute certainty. Yet, when looking at the development of common attitudes towards friendship, or rather towards different ideas of friendship, throughout the centuries, we will find that there was a clearly noticeable change in the estimation of friendship and thus in the social significance of this kind of relationship with the turn from the period we usually refer to as the Renaissance to the one that is commonly called the

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[19] David Bolotin, *Plato's Dialogue on Friendship: An Interpretation of the* Lysis, *with a New Translation* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1979) 9.

[20] Lewis 70.

Enlightenment. Of course, the use of such periodizing terms as "Renaissance" and "Enlightenment" is not undisputed and often indeed problematic, for which modern historians tend to avoid this way of periodizing the period between 1400 to 1800 by simply referring to it as the early modern era. When examining the history of the idea of friendship, however, we will find it quite helpful to make use of these terms, as they can help to define the different phases of the conceptual change to which the idea of friendship was subjected in the course of the period. In fact, with the begin of the fifteenth century, and the advent of the intellectual movement of humanism, there is also the emergence of a certain enthusiasm for the idea of friendship to be noticed, and when the overwhelming influence of Renaissance humanism eventually decreased at the beginning of the seventeenth century due to the increasing importance of new modes of thinking, we can find another decisive change in the attitude towards the meaning of friendship. The view of friendship that we can then find from the late seventeenth century onwards, is indeed completely different from the one we have seen during Renaissance times, and much more similar to the general notion of what friendship could be that we can find today. The hypothesis that this study therefore wants to put forward, is that there was a decisive conceptual change in the view of friendship taking place in the first half of the seventeenth century, and thus exactly at the turning point from the period of the Renaissance to the early years of the age of the Enlightenment. Furthermore, it wants to hypothesize that this change was the inevitable consequence firstly of the incompatibility of the idealized view of friendship in the Renaissance with the socio-cultural development that took place during this age and secondly of the emergence of a new, much more positive attitude towards the concepts of love and marriage due to the common search for a universal kind of integrated relationship that unites both the sensual and the intellectual satisfaction of the partners. This change, as we will see, was then crucially determining the further development of the concept of friendship (as well as of that of love) and is thus in the end responsible for the difficulties we nowadays have in defining it.

To understand our difficulties in defining a definite and complete concept of friendship and to identify the origins of the fragmentary ideas of friendship that we have today, it is hence necessary to go back to the roots of these fragments, to rediscover and contextualize the old conceptions of friendship, and to analyse the reasons for their disappearance. It is therefore the aim of this study to examine the old conceptions and theories of this 'private and exclusive relationship', to recall the traditional notions of a concept that we seem to have lost. We will thus have to take first a brief and general look at the conceptualizations of friendship in antiquity—the mentor and the intellectual source of the Renaissance, as it were—before we will then deal with the influence that these inherited ideas had on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century literature and life in detail. Following this, we will then try to identify the reasons that led to the decline of the classically inspired conceptions of friendship in the early seventeenth century—the decline that is in the end also responsible for our

own ignorance of the matter—and to the redefinition and diversification of the traditional concepts of love and friendship.

Now, having just said that the aim of this study is to examine the old conceptions and theories in order to produce a suitable portrait as exact and authentic as possible of the conception that the educated people of the Renaissance had of friendship, we will though inevitably have to face the usual "sticky problems pertaining to the history of culture and of ideas," as David Konstan puts it in his study of the conceptions of friendship in ancient times.[21] The problem is, as he rightly explains, that "the idea of friendship is not uniform over various cultures or even within a single culture at any given moment […]; at any time, including today, sundry conceptions of friendship co-exist, and not all conform to the dominant fashion."[22] So, to maintain that by simply examining the literary representations of friendship dating from a particular time, we could tell exactly how the people of that time thought about the matter would be illusionary and extremely unscientific. However, as we cannot travel back in time in order to interview the contemporaries of the period directly, we have to rely on the written statements they have bequeathed to us. The problem with these writings, of course, is the fact that the way in which friendship is represented in the various kinds of text does not always reflect the authors' real attitudes towards the subject, but, on the contrary, does usually fulfil a certain function, according to the particular aims that the writers pursue with their representation of friendship. The reason for which friendship is represented on the stage, for example, is usually different from the one for which it is made the topic of a poem or for which it is made the subject of two friends' correspondence with each other. We will come to these different motivations for representing friendship in texts later on again, but for the moment it seems already necessary to hint at the problems that occur when one tries to set up a generally valid statement about the view of friendship at any particular time. In the end, we have indeed to agree with Nötzoldt-Linden, when she says in the introduction to her sociological study of the phenomenon of friendship: "Freundschaft [...] entzieht sich dem perfektionistischen Bemühen, alle Facetten des Phänomens auf einmal einzufangen."[23]

So, the aim of this study is therefore not to present an idea of the socio-historical realities of friendship in the Renaissance, much less to present a definite image of what friendships in the period really looked like. The aim is instead to examine the literary representations of the different conceptions of friendship at the time in question. This study is thus rather to be seen as a literary-historical or cultural-historical examination of the subject than as a socio-historical analysis. The primary objective is thus to find

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[21] David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997) 10.

[22] Konstan 1, 18.

[23] Nötzoldt-Linden 9. – "Friendship evades the perfectionist endeavour to capture all facets of the phenomenon at once." Trans. mine.

out how friendship was thought—not how it was actually lived. However, socio-historical conditions have of course a direct influence on the way in which friendship is represented in literature, as they clearly determine the way in which the idea of friendship is conceptualized. On the other hand, the representation of friendship in literature has certainly also an effect on the way in which this kind of relationship finds manifestation in reality. There cannot be any doubt that there is always some kind of interaction taking place. More generally speaking, this means, as Ulrich Seeber puts it in the preface to his history of English literature: "Indem Literatur den gesellschaftlichen und kulturellen Wandel abbildend, deutend und kommentierend begleitet, gestaltet sie ihn auch mit."[24] The aim of a study that deals with the representation of friendship in the literature of a particular time in the past must therefore also be to examine the connection between these representations and the cultural and social conditions at that time, in order to explain the change of friendship conceptions and friendship representations that took place at the transition from one period to another. In other words, to explain the transformation to which the concept of friendship was subjected in the early seventeenth century, at the end of the Renaissance and the dawn of the early Enlightenment, we will also have to take a look at the socio-historical developments that took place in this crucial period of transition.

So, in the examination of the nature, the origins, the development, and the change of Renaissance conceptions of friendship, this work will follow the interdisciplinary tradition of literary-historical and cultural-historical studies. To do so, it will have to take a look at the various forms of text that deal with the topic of friendship. Its argumentation will thus mainly be based on the analytic interpretation of several selected writings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—viz. fictional, theoretical, and epistolary ones. To give an authentic impression of the way in which the view of friendship was represented in the literature of the time, it will have the writers of the past speak for themselves as often as possible, and to a reasonable extent.

However, as mentioned above, it is not only the aim of this study to portray the origins, the nature, and the development of the conceptions of friendship in the Renaissance. Its main intention is, by doing this, to analyse the causes that led to the decline of these conceptions and to the emergence of new ones in the time following the Renaissance—causes that had their origin already in the fifteenth- and sixteenth centuries. It is furthermore the objective of this work to verify the hypothesis that the decay of the idealized conception of friendship in the early seventeenth century was due not only to one but to a number of reasons.

So, contrary to the opinion of scholars like Mario Scotti, who, although realizing that the social significance of and the common esteem for friendship has undergone a

[24] Hans Ulrich Seeber, ed., preface, *Englische Literaturgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1991) ix. – "By reflecting the societal and cultural change, by interpretatively and annotatively attending it, literature also takes part in its implementation." Trans. mine.

decisive decrease since the Renaissance, cannot see the reason for this decrease in the conceptualizations of friendship in the Renaissance itself, but still believe the Renaissance view of friendship to be the mere imitation of classical notions, this work is based on the conviction that the conceptions and representations of friendship in the Renaissance were much more than only reminiscences of classical philosophy.[25] This study will show that the revival of the classical enthusiasm for idealistic friendship conceptions at the beginning of the Renaissance came in fact at a time when modern ways of thinking were already beginning to gradually develop a mental attitude that led in the end not only to the decay of these traditional views on friendship, but to a new, a polarized view of relationships in general—a view that was to dominate the common notion of personal bonding throughout the following centuries. In fact, our own tendency to see any kind of relationship—consciously or unconsciously—in terms of either affection or utility has its origin in this early modern period. The highly idealistic view of friendship that is to be found in the classical philosophical theories, however, on which the early Renaissance writers drew intensely to develop their own understanding of the concept, appeared to be incompatible with this new mode of thinking. With their strong emphasis on the ethical aspect of friendship and especially on the moral duties attached to it, this view did not correspond to the mere distinction between relationships that are mainly based on utility and those that are predominantly founded on affection, passion, or love. Friendship in the classical sense is thus not simply a form of relationship between these extremes, as it indeed includes both affection and utility, but is also a kind of relationship that is founded on something that has become almost insignificant to modern views of the matter, as it is first and foremost based on virtue, honour and/or spirituality. This might explain why the revival of the classical notions of friendship had to struggle against the increasing influence of modern ideas almost from the very beginning of their appearance in the European Renaissance.

In the end, the disharmony between the idealized view of friendship, which was based on the revived classical ethical ideals, and the modern modes of thinking, which were slowly evolving at the same time, led to a profoundly inconsistent view of friendship in the Renaissance and to the attempt to adjust the old conceptions to the new attitudes towards relationships. In the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the notions and thus also the representations of friendship became increasingly ambiguous and contradictory, which finally led to a redefinition of the concept of friendship and to a diversification of relationship conceptions in general. In consequence of this process, friendship was, in addition to the old ideas, in the following mainly conceptualized as either a functional and useful relationship or as a

[25] Cf. Mario Scotti, "L'amicizia: natura e storia di un'idea (tra riflessione etica e rappresentazione estetica)," *Il concetto di amicizia nella storia della cultura europea*, ed. Luigi Cotteri, Atti del XXII convegno internazionale di studi italo-tedeschi, Merano, 9-11 maggio 1994, Accademia Di Studi Italo-Tedeschi (Meran: Hauger, 1995) 49-50.

highly emotional one. As an emotional relationship, it had to enter into competition with a new conception of marital love that resulted from the development of a new esteem for women in the Renaissance. This, however, was a competition that it could not win, and in the end, the classical concept of friendship was, for the most part, absorbed by a completely new set of relationship conceptions that emerged at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Affectionate friendship, now also conceivable as a non-sexual relationship between the sexes, was though now often directly associated with the concept of love, and closely connected especially with the idea of sensual love it was soon transformed into at least two new forms of intimate relationship: into a heterosexual love relationship that was defined by the concept of companionate marriage (the idealized concept of an integrated relationship that unites both sensual and intellectual love), and into a homosexual relationship that, although utterly sexual, was still disguised by the concept of platonic friendship. As a functional relationship, however, friendship had now been deprived of its affectionate and particularly of its specifically ethical and hence of its highly idealistic qualities and was thus subjected to an inevitable debasement.

To understand how it could come to this development it is of course necessary to examine the nature of the concept of friendship in the Renaissance in detail. Since fifteenth- and sixteenth-century notions of friendship were though almost entirely adopted from the classics, it seems to be adequate to obtain a brief and general overview of the characteristic features of the friendship conceptions in classical philosophy first.

Chronologically, however, there is of course a wide gap between the end of antiquity and the beginning of the Renaissance, a gap that is usually left blank when the sources of the conceptions of friendship in the Renaissance are dealt with. There is of course quite a good reason for this neglect of such a long period of time that covers almost a thousand years. In the period that fills the gap between classical and early modern times—usually referred to as the Middle Ages—the notions of friendship were predominantly determined by the Teutonic idealization of kin-relationship and by the commandments of Christian doctrine. This means that friendship was either considered an individualized form of Christian charity—as in the theological contemplation of Saint Aelred of Rievaulx and Thomas Aquinas—or conceptualised in the feudal-Teutonic terms of chivalry and brotherhood. In medieval times the conception of those relationships that the classical writers and those of the Renaissance would have regarded as friendships, was rather similar to that of family connections. And since, in the hierarchy of the feudal family, the relation between friends was best reflected by brothers who were almost equal to each other concerning their age and position, friendship came under the concept of brotherhood. However, as the medieval conceptions did not affect the Renaissance view of the matter to such an eminent extent, we might therefore be excused, if we will here rather neglect these medieval

notions, that do in fact deserve a detailed analysis on their own—which has though already been provided by a number of scholars who are much more into medieval studies than I am.[26]

In this study, we will therefore concentrate on the reassessment and the representation of the classical conceptual heritage in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century literature on friendship. We will see how the humanistic writers praised the ethical ideals of classical friendship as well as how they endeavoured to create a practical view of friendship on the basis of these inherited idealized conceptions.

Taking a look at the correspondences of Marsilio Ficino and Sir Philip Sidney, we will also see how some Renaissance writers tried to actually translate the classical ideals into their own friendships and how they thus tried to overcome the disparity between the ideality and the reality of friendship. It is in this part of the study that the ambiguous character of the representations of friendship conceptions in the Renaissance will be revealed most comprehensively.

After that, we will come to the conceptual change that the concept of friendship had to undergo in the late Renaissance. Here, we will first see how the increasingly mercantilistic attitude that characterizes the general mode of thinking at the beginning of the seventeenth century led to a disregard of the ethical ideals of friendship and thus to the debasement of the classically inspired concept of friendship itself.

We will furthermore examine the rivalry between the concepts of friendship and love that emerged at that time, we will see how the concepts of friendship and love were then redefined, how this redefinition led to a number of various new conceptualizations of love and friendship that overcame the traditional conventions that had formerly only recognized same sex friendships and love relationships between the sexes, how in the end the importance and the meaning of friendship gradually sank into oblivion, and how love has from then on determined the code of intimate relationships.

In the last two decades, and especially in recent years, the treatment of the concept of friendship has indeed become quite popular with writers of cultural, literary, art-historical, philosophical, sociological, or socio-historical studies. Interestingly enough, however, for some reason or another this does though not apply to the topic of friendship conceptions in the Renaissance. In fact, up to now, as Peter Burke puts it in his brief essay on *Humanism and Friendship in Sixteenth-Century Europe*, "compared to classicists, medievalists, and specialists on the nineteenth century, historians of the Early Modern period have had little to say about friendship."[27] Of the publications on

[26] See 23n31.

[27] Peter Burke, "Humanism and Friendship in Sixteenth-Century Europe," *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Julian Haseldine (Stroud: Sutton, 1999) 262.

friendship of most recent years, there is indeed, apart from Burke's short essay, only Ullrich Langer's analysis of the literary representations of friendship in some few selected works from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries that has to be mentioned when looking for studies of Renaissance conceptions of friendship.[28]

It seems, as if friendship is today mainly considered a subject for psychological or sociological examinations. There are in fact numerous works on the influence of friendship relations on either the individual psyche or the societal structures in general. Some of these studies are for example those of Steve Duck (1983), Graham A. Allan (1989), and Roy Porter and Sylvana Thomaselli (1989).[29]

As far as literary-historical or philosophico-historical studies are concerned, there are though indeed, as already indicated by Burke in his brief statement, also a number of works on the friendship conceptions of classical times, and particularly studies like those of Horst Hutter (1978), David Bolotin (1979), A. W. Price (1991), and especially David Konstan (1997) provide adequate approaches to the notions and theories of friendship put forward by the classical philosophers.[30] Besides these studies of the classical views of the topic, there are also a few works concerning the friendship conceptions of medieval times, such as those of Robert Edwards and Stephen Spector (1991), Carolinne White (1992), Reginald Hyatte (1994), and Verena Epp (1999).[31] Finally, there are also some studies of the specifically German phenomenon of the friendship cult in the eighteenth century. The most significant among these are certainly still those by Wolfdietrich Rasch (1936) and Albert Salomon (1979).[32] Yet, there are in fact only very few works on the friendship conceptions of the Renaissance. Of course, there are a handful of publications, mostly scholarly articles, on the representation of love and friendship in Shakespeare, and some other studies in which

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[28] See Ullrich Langer, *Perfect Friendship: Studies in Literature and Moral Philosophy from Boccaccio to Corneille* (Genève: Droz, 1994).

[29] See Steve Duck, *Friends, for Life: The Psychology of Close Relationships* (Brighton: Harvester, 1983); Graham A. Allan, *Friendship: Developing a Sociological Perspective* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989); and Roy Porter and Sylvana Tomaselli, eds., *The Dialectics of Friendship* (London: Routledge, 1989).

[30] See Horst Hutter, *Politics as Friendship: The Origins of Classical Notions of Politics in the Theory and Practice of Friendship* (Waterloo (Ont.): Wilfrid Laurier UP, 1978); David Bolotin, *Plato's Dialogue on Friendship: An Interpretation of the* Lysis *with a New Translation* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1979); A. W. Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); and David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997).

[31] See Robert R. Edwards and Stephen Spector, eds., *The Olde Daunce: Love, Friendship, Sex, and Marriage in the Medieval World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991); Carolinne White, *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992); Reginald Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship: The Idealization of Friendship in Medieval and early Renaissance Literature* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994); and Verena Epp, *Amicitia: Zur Geschichte personaler, sozialer, politischer und geistlicher Beziehungen im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1999).

[32] See Wolfdietrich Rasch, *Freundschaftskult und Freundschaftsdichtung im deutschen Schrifttum des 18. Jahrhunderts: Vom Ausgang des Barock bis zu Klopstock* (Halle/Saale: Niemeyer, 1936); and Albert Salomon, "Der Freundschaftskult des 18. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland: Versuch zur Soziologie einer Lebensform," *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 8 (1979): 279-308.

the subject is only mentioned in passing. But the only comprehensive work on Renaissance literary representations of friendship still remains Laurens J. Mills's *One Soul in Bodies Twain*, of 1937—and even this is merely about the literature of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England.[33] And the only comprehensive representations of the literary treatment of friendship in European history as such are Edward Carpenter's *Ioläus: An Anthology of Friendship* and Carl Friedrich Stäudlin's *Geschichte der Vorstellungen und Lehren von der Freundschaft*, which even date back to the years 1906 and 1826![34]

A comprehensive study of the origins, the nature, and the development of friendship conceptions in the Renaissance was thus still to be written, which might have also been due to the fact that the cultural- and literary-historical interpretation of friendship conceptions and representations in the last twenty years usually disappeared into the literary or historical examinations that came under the heading of gender studies. In such cases, Renaissance notions of friendship were merely considered in terms of gender roles and sexual identities. The works of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1985), Josef Pequigney (1985), and Lorna Hutson (1994) are, for example, of this kind.[35]

So, unfortunately, in most studies friendship only appears as a minor aspect of some other subject, and works that deal with friendship exclusively are indeed rather seldom. The studies mentioned above are though of course only some few examples of what has been written about friendship, especially in the last two and a half decades. However, more references to the various works dealing with the subject will be given in the course of this study where applicable, i.e. whenever we will come to certain aspects of this examination on which there are already excellent studies existing, these will be referred to. By this means, of course, only a selected bibliography of previous works on friendship can be provided. Yet, although there is no complete overview of the writings on friendship of the last one and a half decades, there is indeed a comprehensive overview of the writings on friendship before 1985. For this almost complete listing of works on friendship from the various scholarly disciplines published up to the mid-eighties, please see the annotated bibliography by Janet L. Barkas (1985).[36]

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[33] See Laurens J. Mills, *One Soul in Bodies Twain: Friendship in Tudor Literature and Stuart Drama* (Bloomington: Principia Press, 1937).

[34] See Edward Carpenter, *Ioläus: An Anthology of Friendship*, 2nd ed. (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1906); and Carl Friedrich Stäudlin, *Geschichte der Vorstellungen und Lehren von der Freundschaft* (Hannover: n.p., 1826).

[35] See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia UP, 1985); Josef Pequigney, *Such is my Love: A study of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985); and Lorna Hutson, *The usurer's daughter: male friendship and fictions of women in 16th century England* (London: Routledge, 1994).

[36] See Barkas, Janet L. *Friendship: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Garland, 1985.

1 THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS: THE CLASSICAL HERITAGE

For every study that is concerned with the literary or philosophic representation of a particular concept at a particular time in history, the first step towards the true understanding of the concept's appearance at that time and whether it came from a process of continuity or transformation, must necessarily be to identify the concept's roots. For every study that is concerned with the notion of friendship at any time in the last one and a half millennia, this means that it has to take at least a brief look at the friendship conceptions of antiquity, since it was then that the ideas were produced that determined the representation of friendship from the *Confessiones* of Augustine (AD 354-430) to the essays of Emerson (1803-82), and which still form an essential part of our twentieth-century view of the subject. Now, especially for the present study, which is concerned with the early modern notions of friendship, the knowledge of the fundamental ideas underlying the classical conceptions is of crucial importance, since the humanistic ideas of friendship in the Renaissance were indeed by no means original but were almost entirely founded on the views and theories that had already been formulated in classical times. In fact, what the Renaissance brought about in terms of literary friendship representation was hardly more than the interpretation, combination, and refinement of these inherited ideas on the subject.

However, this introductory chapter on the classical heritage of the Renaissance conceptions of friendship and of the enthusiasm of the writers of this time for idealized ethical views on the matter neither can nor shall provide a decent philosophical or a proper socio-historical representation or even an analytic classification of the various friendship conceptions that emerged in the course of Greek and Roman antiquity. The Renaissance, in fact, has adopted the various fragments of classical friendship ideology and philosophy almost indiscriminately, without examining the particular socio-historical contexts that led to the development of the different theories and conceptions of friendship in ancient times. For Renaissance writers and philosophers, merely the isolated statements on the matter, as they appear in the various classical theories, had been of interest—and this indeed almost exclusively, as the originators of these theories were for them only in the cases of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero of considerable significance—by no means, however, had there been any further interest the philosophical and socio-historical context in which these theories have to bee placed, i.e. the background of the time in which the different classical conceptions emerged and against which they have to be seen when properly analysed, remained completely insignificant for their treatment in early modern times. The fragments of classical

friendship conceptions that the Renaissance recycled for its own notions of the topic had thus merely been classified by the early modern writers according to the ideological point of view that they represent and at best also according to the authors of the sources in which they first appear, but there was no classification whatsoever in relation to the cultural circumstances that provoked the emergence of these inherited ideas in the first place.

As the intention of this study shall therefore not be to provide a comprehensive representation and analysis of the existing classical philosophical and lyrical texts on friendship—a work that has already been excellently done by various scholars of the respective disciplines[1]—I can and will here not focus on these conceptions to a much greater extent as is necessary to get at least a vague notion of the amount of classical ideas on friendship on which the Renaissance could base its own views on the matter. And as the socio-cultural background of the different ideas played absolutely no role in their reception by the Renaissance, it seems consequently more than acceptable to neglect it here as well.

The necessary overview of these classical ideas can thus only be relatively brief, of course, though it still has to cover, as Carolinne White puts it in a similar chapter introducing her study of the Christian view of friendship in the fourth century, "not only some of the philosophical theories and the changes in meaning or application of the terms involved […], but also the more popular views of the subject as they were handed down, often in the form of proverbs of unknown origin, [since] both these strands are evident in later thought."[2] We will therefore take a quick look at some of the classical commonplaces before we will take a more detailed one at the three independent theories that influenced the view on friendship in the Renaissance to the utmost extent—namely those of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero.[3]

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[1] For more detailed discussions of the conceptions of friendship in antiquity, see, for example, David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997); John T Fitzgerald, *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (Atlanta: Scholars P, 1997); Luigi Pizzolato, *L'idea di amicizia nel mondo antico classico e cristiano* (Torino: Einaudi, 1993); Horst Hutter, *Politics as Friendship: The Origins of Classical Notions of Politics in the Theory and Practice of Friendship* (Waterloo: Laurier UP, 1978); Jean Claude Fraisse, *Philia: La notion d'amitie dans la philosophie antique: Essai sur un probleme perdu et retrouve* (Paris: Vrin, 1974); and Ludovic Dugas, *L'amitié d'après les moeurs populaires et les theories des philosophes* (Paris: Alcan, 1894). For comprehensive analyses of the conceptualisations of friendship in medieval times, see, for instance, the essays in Julian Haseldine, ed., *Friendship in Medieval Europe* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999); Verena Epp, *Amicitia: Zur Geschichte personaler, sozialer, politischer und geistlicher Beziehungen im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1999); Reginald Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship: The Idealization of Friendship in Medieval and early Renaissance Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1994); and the contributions in Robert R. Edwards and Stephen Spector, eds., *The Olde Daunce: Love, Friendship, Sex, and Marriage in the Medieval World* (Albany: State U of New York P, 1991).

[2] Carolinne White, *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992) 13.

[3] Since the works of Plato, Aristotle, and especially Cicero were by far the most important sources from which the Renaissance drew its knowledge of ancient philosophy concerning the subject, this study also restricts its representation of the classical conceptions to these writers.

Having said that any examination of the representation of friendship in the last 1500 years needs to take a look at the classical conceptions does yet not mean that these had also been the earliest notions of friendship presented in literature. In fact, neither the Greeks nor the Romans were the first to consider friendship a subject for literary treatment. The relationship between two people that was neither based on the bonds of kinship nor motivated by libidinal drive, had already inspired writers of much earlier ages, as the example of the Akkadian *Epic of Gilgamesh* has shown.[4] But the classics were indeed the first to treat this phenomenon also on a philosophical level, and since then, due to their influence on later writers, the topic of friendship has always been an object of consideration not merely for poets but mainly for philosophers. In fact, the classical conception of friendship was primarily determined by the thought of the great Greek and Roman thinkers, whose theoretical approaches reached from the universal, as in the cosmology of Empedocles (*c.* 490-430 BC), to the specific or personal, as in the Greek friendship theories of Socrates (*c.* 470-399 BC), Plato (428-348 BC), and Aristotle (384-322 BC) and the Roman reconsiderations of these by Cicero (106-43 BC). Since this study is yet exclusively interested in the inter-human aspect of friendship we will thus consequently have to neglect Empedocles' cosmological theory and will rather concentrate on the classical conception of personal friendship.[5]

To speak of *the* conception of friendship in classical times, however, is not quite accurate. It is, in fact, more appropriate to speak of different conceptions rather than of one generally accepted idea of friendship. Of course, there were unanimously accepted commonplaces that indeed formed the general foundation of the different conceptions, but there was not just one single theory of amity in ancient times.

In fact, even if the ancients had agreed on a general theory, they would not have been able to express it, since the vocabulary of friendship in Greek is far from being equivalent to that in Latin.

According to David Konstan and other classical scholars, the Greek term usually translated as *friendship* is *philia* (φιλία) or, in its more poetic form, *philotēs* (φιλότης).[6] This translation, however, suggests a closer connection between the ancient Greek and the modern concept than there really is. In Greek, Konstan explains, *philia* has indeed a

[4] See 9. That the Greeks could already look back on a tradition of literary treatment of friendship becomes evident from the way in which they approached the topic.

[5] Empedocles believed that the stability of the universe and of everything that exists was due to the balance of two cosmological principles, that of friendship/love (*Philia*) on the one hand and that of strife (*Neikos*) on the other. In his theory, *Philia* represents the unifying force that brings the things together while *Neikos* represents the separating force that drives the things apart. Yet, for a thorough analysis of Empedocles' cosmology, see, for example, the excellent study of Denis O'Brien, *Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle: A Reconstruction from the Fragments and Secondary Sources* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969); or those of Peter Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995); and Romain Rolland, *Empédocle d'Agrigente et l'age de la haine* (Paris: La Maison Française, 1918).

[6] See Konstan 2-3 and 9.

much wider semantic range than the modern *friendship*, and although there is some dispute about the question whether the term *philos* (φίλος), from which *philia* and *philotēs* are derived, denotes more than just the meaning of the modern *friend*,[7] most scholars do agree upon the view that "the form *philia* does in fact cover relationships far wider than friendship, including the love between kin and the affection or solidarity between relatively distant associates such as members of the same fraternity or city."[8] Konstan therefore concludes that "it would indeed be true to say that there is no single Greek term quite equivalent to 'friendship,'" and that it is therefore "often misleading or simply wrong to translate it [*philia*] as 'friendship,' although the practice is quite general […]."[9] The ancient Greek usage of *philia*, because of this wide extension of the concept, has thus indeed the potential to cause confusion and misinterpretation, particularly with modern readers who are not acquainted with such a broad definition of "friendship." Even though not quite accurate, we will here nevertheless follow the general practise of which Konstan speaks, and read the Greek *philia* in the given texts as if it merely means "friendship." However, we might be excused for doing so—even though it seems in actual fact to be quite unscientific—not only because in the passages of the texts we will deal with in the following this seems to be indeed the most adequate translation but primarily because this was also exactly the way in which the Renaissance writers interpreted the term, and as it is first of all this early modern interpretation of the term in which this study is interested, and not the modern philological quest for the true meaning of the term in classical times, this method appears to be tenable.

The Latin vocabulary of friendship, on the other hand, makes it much easier for the modern reader to comprehend its meaning. The Romans subsumed their notions of friendship under the name *amicitia*, a concept with a much narrower semantic range than that of the Greek *philia*. "Unlike Greek," Konstan therefore states, "Latin has a

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[7] This view is denied, for instance, by David Konstan in his recent study of the conceptions of friendship in classical times. See Konstan 2-3 and 9.

[8] Konstan 9.

[9] Konstan 9. That there is no separate expression for friendship does yet not mean, that the Greeks had no separate conception of such a relationship, but friendship in the modern sense, i.e. as an affectionate relationship between two persons on the basis of similar interests and opinions, is indeed only one aspect of the ancient concept of *philia*. Besides this it can also refer to one's social, political, and family relationships or, especially when it appears in the form of *philotēs* in early Greek writings, to one's relationship with a companion or comrade-in-arms (*hetairos*/ἑταῖρος) or to the guest-friendship with visitors from foreign countries (*xenoi*/ξένοι)—although these two specific forms of *philia* were also individually referred to as *hetaireia* (ἑταιρεία) and *xenia* (ξενία). Cf., for example, Konstan 2-3, 8-9, 67ff; Suzanne Stern-Gillet, *Aristotle's Philosophy of Friendship* (Albany: State U of New York P, 1995) 5-8; and especially A. W. H. Adkins, "'Friendship' and 'self-sufficiency' in Homer and Aristotle," *CQ* 13 (1963): 30-45. For a comprehensive account of *xenia* and other ritualised friendships, see Gabriel Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987) 10-13 and passim. And for a thorough discussion of the semantic range of *philia i*n comparison with other terms of friendship like *hetaireia* and *xenia*, see Pat Easterling, "Frienship and the Greeks," *The Dialectics of Friendship*, ed. Roy Porter and Sylvana Tomaselli (London: Routledge, 1989) 11-25; and Franz Dirlmeier, *Philos und Philia im vorhellenistischen Griechentum* (München:, 1931) passim.

word for friendship."[10] And indeed, the Latin word *amicitia* has nearly the same meaning as *friendship*, or comes at least much closer to the modern concept of friendship than the Greek term *philia*, as Konstan explains:

> Though *amicitia* has a certain breadth of meaning, as does the English "friendship," and may assume, especially in philosophical contexts, some of the wider connotations of philia, it does not normally designate love in general but rather the specific relation between friends (*amici*). […]
>
> There is thus no need to demonstrate for Latin as for Greek that the vocabulary of friendship marks off a field of relations different from kinship, ethnicity, and utilitarian associations such as business partnerships.[11]

And yet, *amicitia* has long been seen as the Roman word for political relationships and aristocratic alliances that would lack any sentiment of personal intimacy. This view, however, has lately been rejected by most scholars, since, as J. G. F. Powell puts it in the introduction to his edition of Cicero's *Laelius*, "it is unjustified in Latin usage, and unnecessarily confusing."[12] And he makes the argument clear by stating: "*Amicitia* may have slightly different connotations from the English word 'friendship', but nobody who reads the Laelius – or indeed any other Latin literature – can doubt that its primary meaning is essentially the same. It refers properly to a personal relationship involving genuine feelings of goodwill and affection on both sides."[13]

The difference between the Greek and the Roman vocabulary of friendship, however, is indeed only of minor significance for the present study, which is primarily concerned with the concept of friendship in early modern times. Since, from Roman times onwards, *philia* had usually been translated as *amicitia*, which Renaissance writers then also rendered into the vernaculars by terms like *friendship*, *amitié*, *amistad*, *amicizia*, or *Freundschaft* (here, of course, given in their modern spelling), it is here indeed not necessary to go further into detail about this point.[14]

Now, instead of one generally valid theory of friendship, there was rather a multitude of theories circulating around the different philosophical schools that existed in classical times. Friendship was such a popular subject in ancient Greece and Rome that we find it not only as a topic in the dialogues of Plato, the ethics of Aristotle, or the moral writings of Cicero but as a theme widely treated by nearly every other philosopher or philosophic school as well. It appears equally in the ethical writings of

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[10] Konstan 122.

[11] Konstan 122.

[12] J. G. F. Powell, trans., introduction, *On Friendship & The Dream of Scipio*, by Marcus Tullius Cicero (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1990) 22. This view is also held by Konstan. Cf. Konstan 123.

[13] Powell 22.

[14] However, although it is not represented in the writings that interpret the Greek sources in later ages, the knowledge that there is a difference between *philia* and *amicitia* – or the modern terms of friendship, which share more or less the same meaning as *amicitia* – is indeed necessary for the understanding of the classical conceptions of friendship themselves.

Plutarch (AD 46-after 119), in the letters of Seneca (4 BC-AD 65), in the poetry of Euripides (*c.* 484-406 BC), Horace (65-08 BC), and Ovid (43 BC-AD 17/18), in the treatises of Xenophone (431-before 350 BC), Speusippus (d. 339/338 BC), Xenocrates (d. 314 BC), and Theophrastus (*c.* 372-287 BC), as in the doctrines of the Pythagorians, the Epicureans, and the Stoa.[15] And since these writers and schools produced divers doctrines concerning the definition of those fundamental qualities that must affect all human relations (namely the nature of man, that of society and of morality in general), they consequently had to come to different hypotheses concerning friendship as well.

Yet, however different the various conceptions might be, when we take a closer look at them, we will find that nearly all of them share at least two characteristics: a fairly idealistic view of friendship, and the stress they put on its high moral value. This common ground on which the classical philosophers meet, is probably best summed up by C. S. Lewis when he says that "to the Ancients, Friendship seemed the happiest and most fully human of all loves; the crown of life and the school of virtue."[16] With this one sentence he perfectly summarizes the main ideas that the classical conceptions share: First of all friendship is a kind of love, secondly it leads to happiness and virtue, and thirdly it is the highest objective one can achieve in his entire life.[17] In fact, this common denominator, to which nearly all of the theories can be reduced, led in later ages to an indiscriminate view of the classical theories. It is for this reason that we find a mixture of Platonic, Aristotelian, Epicurean, Stoic, and Ciceronian ideas, combined with some few remnants of Christian and chivalric doctrines, when we look at the conceptions of friendship in the Renaissance. Due to the permanent citation of the classical sources in the Renaissance, various aspects of the original theories became alienated from their authors. Some of their thoughts even became commonplaces, and by this, got detached from their origin.

However, most of the classical thoughts that became commonplaces in the Renaissance had in fact already been theoretical commonplaces in classical times. The old Greek and Roman philosophers simply adopted them to back up their own views with generally accepted notions of the topic. And by integrating these commonplaces into their theories, they preserved them for the revival in later ages. Without this integration, these notions might have never entered into the conceptions of friendship in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. And some of these classical ideas might indeed seem familiar to the modern reader as well, as they still form a part of our own conception of the nature of friendship. It was, for example, generally believed that:

- there is a close, reciprocal connection between friendship and justice,

[15] For a more detailed overview of the philosophical treatment of friendship in Greek and Roman times, see Powell 2-3.

[16] Lewis 69.

[17] Cf. Mills 6.

- there is a mutual connection between friendship and virtue,[18]
- two friends are like one soul existing in two bodies,
- the equality of the friends is a necessary precondition for friendship,[19] and that
- the frankness of speech in an intimate conversation between friends is a quality that distinguishes friendship from other relationships.

Besides these notions of friendship there were also commonly accepted considerations concerning the friends themselves, such as the questions:

- Who is considered a friend?
- What kind of character and which other qualities should he have?
- How can a true friend be distinguished from a flatterer or a false friend?
- How much attention should the friends pay to each other and how much time should they spend together?
- With how many friends can a man share such a close relationship?
- How long will a friendship last, and what kind of circumstance could lead to a separation?
- Should the friends only share good news with each other, or the bad ones as well?
- Should friends always be honest, or are they allowed to lie in order not to hurt one another?
- Is friendship something for good times only, or for bad times as well?
- Will spatial separation end the friendship?
- Should friends share not only thoughts and time but also material goods?[20]

As we have said, most of these views and ideas, which had originally been classical commonplaces of friendship, were used by the Greek philosophers to support their individual theories on friendship, i.e. commonly accepted ideas were more or less absorbed into their specific conceptions. In the Renaissance, however, they were again extracted from those individual theories, blended, and reorganized, so that, in the end, they formed a patchwork-like pattern on which the humanistic conception of friendship was based. What we see in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe is therefore not primarily the development of a new interest in Aristotelian or Ciceronian theories on friendship in particular but the development of a new interest in classical notions of friendship in general. The multitude of classical thoughts concerning friendship was to become the reservoir from which the Renaissance could draw its ideas about the subject.[21]

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[18] For Plato, this connection is the end, for Aristotle it is the precondition of friendship. See 43 and 50 below.

[19] This is especially stressed by Aristotle.

[20] This question was particularly popular with the Pythagoreans.

[21] Cf. Mills 384n49.

It might hence be appropriate to have a brief look at how the classical philosophers incorporated these ideas into their well-rounded theories about the nature of friendship, before we will come to the analysis of how these complete concepts were again fragmented by the poets and essayists of the Renaissance. This will first of all help to identify the separate fragments, to relate them with others of the same theoretical source, and by this, to recognize which of the details belonged to which conception. This knowledge will then help to make out with whom of the Renaissance writers and at which time—i.e. whether quite at the beginning or rather towards the end of the period—which of the classical theories dominated the literary representation and with whom and at which time there is simply no individual philosophical school recognizable in the writings, which rather merely present a real hotchpotch of classical ideas of friendship. This will then finally help to understand not only which role the classical theories played per se in the rise and fall of the idealized conception of friendship in the Renaissance, but also which role each individual theory played in this development.

However interesting an extended examination of the various commonplaces of *philia* and *amicitia* and the numerous treatments of their different aspects in classical literature would be, it would yet go far beyond the scope of this study. In fact, this cannot be the place to give a comprehensive account of the complete variety of all the different perspectives classical poets and philosophers took on friendship, since not all of them really took an influence on the view of the topic in the Renaissance. In fact, besides the mentioned commonplaces and the several isolated ideas of friendship that repeatedly appear in the writings of quite a number of well-known Greek and Roman writers from Homer to Seneca, there were hardly more just three individual approaches to a theory of friendship that really played a significant role in the Renaissance reception of the classical conceptions of the subject: with the Greeks, Plato's integrated theory of friendship and love as established chiefly in the *Lysis* and the *Symposium*, and Aristotle's comprehensive analysis of friendship as elaborated in his three ethical treatises—the *Magna Moralia*, the *Eudemian-*, and the *Nicomachean Ethics*—and with the Romans, Cicero's theory of friendship as applied ethics that he presents in his famous dialogue on friendship, the *Laelius de amicitia*. Of these three ancient philosophers, the credit for preparing the ground for philosophical treatments of personal friendship is certainly to be given to Plato. Aristotle's theory of *philia*, however, is definitely the most important and most comprehensive of all; yet by far the most influential work on friendship in the Renaissance was Cicero's dialogue *De amicitia*.

As these three theories had an enormous impact on the treatment of the topic in the Renaissance, we will have to take a closer look at them in the following. However, the present study can of course only provide a brief summary or synopsis of each approach, and since the main aim of their representation in this study is to show the

origins of the conceptions valid in later times, we will also merely concentrate on the description of these theories and avoid a detailed interpretation or analysis. For discussions that are more comprehensive, the interested reader is asked to consult some of the various monographs that exist on the individual theories and their authors.[22]

1.1. PLATO'S INTEGRATED THEORY OF FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE

Among the three classical writers on personal friendship we will now have a look at, Plato was the first to write about the topic in his Socratic dialogues. Referring to the Socratic approach to philosophy in general, A. E. Taylor, in quoting Cicero, points out that "Socrates 'brought down philosophy from heaven to earth'—i.e., from the nature speculation of the Ionian and Italian cosmologists to analyses of the character and conduct of human life […]."[23] For the conception of *philia*, this means that it is now no longer regarded as the cosmological principle that it has been with Empedocles but as a form of personal relationship.

Yet, however important friendship was now regarded as being to man's social life, the role it plays in the context of Socrates and Plato's philosophy is though only second to that of love. For Socrates, love is the driving force behind friendship and the means by which the friends will finally ascend to the state of true virtue and wisdom, and the sight of the absolute beauty, i.e. the idea of the ultimate good. Friendship, however, is the form of relationship in which love will lead the friends to this height. Therefore, as far as the Socratic-Platonic philosophy is concerned, the concepts of friendship and love (ἔρος/ *eros*), though individually treated in separate dialogues, have to be

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[22] For more detailed discussions of the Platonic view of love and friendship, see, for instance, Robert Lloyd Mitchell, *The Hymn to Eros: A Reading of Plato's* Symposium (Lanham: UP of America, 1993); A. W. Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); David Bolotin, *Plato's Dialogue on Friendship: An Interpretation of the 'Lysis' with a New Translation* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1979) and Willibald Ziebis, "Der Begriff der Philia bei Plato," diss., U Breslau, 1927. More extensive surveys of Aristotle's theory of friendship are to be found, for example, in Ahmad Berwari, *Die Theorie der Freundschaft bei Aristoteles* (Marburg: Tectum, 1997); Suzanne Stern-Gillet, *Aristotle's Philosophy of Friendship* (Albany: State U of New York P, 1995); Paul Schollmeier, *Other Selves: Aristotle on Personal and Political Friendship* (Albany: State U of New York P, 1994); Maria Fasching, *Zum Begriff der Freundschaft bei Aristoteles und Kant* (Würzburg: Königshausen, 1990); and Erenbert Josef Schächer, *Quellen- und problemgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Grundlegung der philia-Theorie bei Aristoteles und im frühen Peripatos* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1940). Finally, an ampler account of Cicero's conception of friendship is given, for instance, in Karl August Neuhausen, *M. Tullius Cicero, Laelius: Einleitung und Kommentar* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1981); in Fritz-Arthur Steinmetz, *Die Freundschaftslehre des Panaitios: Nach einer Analyse von Ciceros 'Laelius de Amicitia'* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1967); in Friedrich Lossmann, *Cicero und Caesar im Jahre 54: Studien zur Theorie und Praxis der römischen Freundschaft* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1962); or in Josef Steinberger, "Begriff und Wesen der Freundschaft bei Aristoteles und Cicero," diss., U Erlangen, 1956.

[23] Alfred Edward Taylor, "Socrates," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 29 July 1999 <http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=117549&sctn=1&pm=1>.

considered in association with each other. The following summary of Socrates and Plato's conception of friendship will thus also include a brief look at their theory of love. The dialogues in which Plato deals with friendship and love—apart from the discussion of love in the *Phaedrus*—are the *Lysis*, which is concerned with the examination of *philia*, and the *Symposium*, in which he elaborates the Socratic theory of *eros*.

Summarizing the quintessence of Plato's Socratic theory of friendship that he elaborates in the *Lysis* is yet not that easy, as the difficulty that some of Plato's early dialogues present us with, especially the shorter ones to which also *Lysis* belongs, is their aporetic and elenctic character. In each of these dialogues, Socrates enters into the discussion about a difficult subject and by the successive refutation (ἔλεγχος/*elenchos*) of his own suppositions and every potential answer to the puzzles he is posing in the course of the conversation he finally ends without providing a satisfying solution to the problems in question.[24] Now, the *Lysis*, in fact, is such a 'dialogue of search', as it leaves the reader in a state of confusion and perplexity (ἀπορία/*aporia*). At the end of the dialogue, Socrates is not able to tell what the exact nature of friendship is, or to describe the characteristics of a friend, and has to admit: "[…] but what a 'friend' is, we have not yet succeeded in discovering."[25] Yet, this confession should not lead us to consider the *Lysis* a failure, as Socrates' aim is not primarily to describe or analyse the nature of friendship—at best, he is interested in the definition of a friend. His actual interest is directed towards the friend's motives for loving each other. Socrates' intention is thus not to examine what friendship is, but what causes it, i.e. the reasons for its development. However, he does in fact not even satisfyingly succeed in answering this question. The achievement of the *Lysis* is thus not the provision of any solutions but the laying of the theoretical foundation not only for Socrates' discussion of love, but also for all later treatments of friendship.

The *Lysis* reports the conversation between Socrates and two of his pupils, Menexenus and Lysis. The boys regard each other as friends, which causes Socrates to ponder on friendship. He first reflects on the apparent equality of the friends. The idea that friends need to be equal or at least similar to each other was one of the classical commonplaces later on also adopted and emphasised by Aristotle and Cicero. But in comparison to their conception, which predominantly stressed the equality of the friends' character and social standing, Socrates primarily thought of the similarity of their financial background. He supported the archaic idea that friends should have all things in common and should share above all, not time or thoughts, but their

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[24] Cf. Jonathan Barnes, "Plato," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 19 July 1999 <http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=115123&sctn=11>.

[25] "[…] οὔπω δὲ ὅ τι ἔστιν ὁ φίλος οἷοί τε ἐγενόμεθα ἐξευρεῖν." Plato, *Lysis* 223b. – Trans. W. R. M. Lamb, *Lysis; Symposium; Gorgias*, by Plato, 2nd ed., The Loeb Classical Library 166 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1991) 71.

possessions with each other.[26] This had already been a commonplace of friendship in Presocratic times and was particularly highlighted by Pythagoras and his disciples. For Socrates, the proposition that friends should share their belongings was certainly also a vital requirement. He did not run a philosophic school of his own—like Plato or Aristotle—nor did he charge any fees for his lessons. For his livelihood, he was therefore absolutely dependant on his pupils—whom he considered his friends—to share their possessions with him. In the theories of Aristotle and Cicero, however, there was no room for the idea of friendship as a community of property anymore, and in the course of time, after a short revival in the Christian notions of friendship in patristic and medieval times, it became increasingly unpopular and finally, by the time of the Renaissance, although still discussed, it was almost completely dismissed.

But there is more than only this material facet to the idea of equality between friends in Socrates' conception. Homer says that the Gods would lead similar men together.[27] But this would mean that equal men were always friends.[28] For Socrates this is doubtful, since bad persons can never become friends, even if they are equal in their badness. Bad people are in fact not even always similar to themselves as they are of an unsteady and unbalanced nature, and since they cannot always be similar to themselves, they cannot be similar to anyone else, of course. Good persons on the other hand are consistent in their nature and are therefore similar to each other. Thus, in Socrates' opinion, friendship can only exist between good men, which excludes the possibility that any kind of friendship could exist between bad people, or between a good and a bad person.[29] This, however, leads to the question why good men should make friends, since, being equal in their good disposition, they would have no benefit from each other and therefore no motivation to become friends.[30]

Is the solution to this problem the assumption that friendship can only exist between unequal men, since they would be attracted to each other by their inequality? Would such a state of difference create a friendship in which the friends complement each other, and would thereby lead to a situation of mutual benevolence and esteem? If this were so, the bad man would make friends with the good, the unjust with the just, and he who hates with the one who loves. As this is as unthinkable as the friendship between equally good men logical, Socrates concludes: "So neither is like friend to like, nor opposite friend to opposite."[31]

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[26] See Plato, *Lysis* 207c and *Phaedrus* 279c.

[27] See Homer, *Odyssey* 17.218.

[28] See Plato, *Lysis* 214a-b.

[29] See Plato, *Lysis* 214c-d. Aristotle will later on contradict this view. In his threefold categorization, there will also be room for minor friendships of bad people or of a mixed pair. An idea that Socrates' concept cannot cover yet. See 49.

[30] See Plato, *Lysis* 214e-215c.

[31] "Οὔτε ἄρα τὸ ὅμοιον τῷ ὁμοίῳ οὔτε τὸ ἐναντίον τῷ ἐναντίῳ φίλον." Plato, *Lysis* 216b. – Trans. Lamb 49.

The solution must therefore be that there are three different types of objects: the good, the bad, and that which is neither good nor bad. Here the good, the bad, and the 'neither good nor bad' are meant in both senses, the person or thing that has the respective quality, and the principle of the good, bad, or 'neither of both' per se. Since the bad can have no friendship at all, and the good will have no friendship with another good, the only possible combination that remains, is the friendship of the good with the 'neither good nor bad'.[32] The reason for the affection that underlies this friendship is the attraction the good has for the 'neither good nor bad' because of the presence of the bad in the latter. This causes the 'neither good nor bad' to develop a desire for the good, since, through the friendship with the good, it hopes to eliminate this bad part in itself. "In other words," David Bolotin explains, "friendly love—in the best sense—is the love of imperfect beings, like us, for those who are good and capable of helping us to become better and happier. According to this suggestion, our friendly love of the good depends on the presence of evils and on our need to free ourselves from them."[33] The idea of friendship is thus brought into a close connection with that of desire (*ἐπιθυμία*/*epithumia*)—the desire for the good, and by the friendship with the good, to become equally good as well. So it is the desire of the 'neither good nor bad' to *be* good, from which its wish to have a friendship with the good originates.[34] The good, on the other hand, will reciprocate the friendly approach of the 'neither good nor bad' for the sake of the good per se.[35] In Plato's rather intricate style this reads as follows: "So what is neither bad nor good is a friend to the good because of what is bad and a foe, for the sake of what is good and a friend. […] Hence the friend is a friend of its friend for the sake of its friend and because of its foe."[36] Socrates tries to clarify this by the following example: The body is a thing neither good nor bad. By getting ill, it receives the presence of the bad (the illness), which it tries to eliminate by asking 'medicine' for help (the friendship with the good). Both the body and 'medicine' acquired this friendship for the sake of health (the good per se).[37] Significantly, in this context the good per se is called 'a friend' as well. It is this 'friend' for whose sake only the friendship exists, the first principle of friendship, or the 'first friend'—the *proton philon* (*πρῶτον φίλον*).[38]

That the good will do something for the sake of the good per se, and against the bad, seems to be the motive for the formation of a friendship. But what happens to a

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[32] See Plato, *Lysis* 216d-217b.

[33] Bolotin 11.

[34] Cf. Price 7.

[35] See Plato, *Lysis* 216c-218c.

[36] "*Τὸ οὔτε κακὸν οὔτε ἀγαθὸν ἄρα διὰ τὸ κακὸν καὶ τὸ ἐχθρὸν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ φίλον ἐστὶν ἕνεκα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ φίλου. […] Ἕνεκ᾽ ἄρα τοῦ φίλου ‹τοῦ φίλου› τὸ φίλον φίλον διὰ τὸ ἐχθρόν.*" Plato, *Lysis* 219a-b. – Trans. Lamb 57.

[37] See Plato, *Lysis* 219a-b.

[38] See Plato, *Lysis* 219d. Cf. Hutter 100.

friendship when, through the restoration of the good in the 'neither good nor bad' and the eradication of the bad, the original basis for that friendship vanishes? Will the 'neither good nor bad' still have the desire to continue the friendship with the good when it is of no further use?[39] Apparently not, since Socrates rhetorically asks: "Is not this the nature of the good—to be loved because of the bad by us who are midway between the bad and the good, whereas separately and for its own sake it is of no use?"[40]

As there is obviously no enduring love of the good per se that could provide the foundation for durable friendships, Socrates has to lead his considerations into another direction. What remains, however, is the basic assumption that friendships exist, on the one hand because, and on the other for the sake of something. This 'something', Socrates infers now, must be a thing one lacks, and what one lacks, but another one has, must be something that was originally possessed, but was somehow lost or taken away. "So it is one's own belongings, it seems, that are the objects of love, friendship, and desire."[41] The desire for these objects, one's 'own belongings', is therefore the initial motivation for making friends with others. This means, friends love each other because they somehow belong to one another, as Plato has Socrates say: "And in a case where one person desires another, my boys, or loves him, he would never be desiring or loving or befriending him, unless he somehow belonged to his beloved either in soul, or in some disposition, demeanour or cast of soul."[42]

Socrates concludes as follows: a durable friendship is only possible between those who belong together. Due to what was said before about the impossible friendship between equals, it must therefore be assumed that those belonging together cannot be alike but must somehow differ from each other. Accordingly, friendships can exist between 'neither good nor bad' and bad or good people just as between bad and good men. This, however, contradicts Socrates' earlier inferences. The good cannot belong to the 'neither good nor bad' or even to the bad, nor can any of these qualities belong to anything else but to its counterpart. The good can therefore only belong to the good, the bad to the bad, and the 'neither nor' to its equivalent. The good can thus only have a friendship with another good. This is yet exactly what Socrates has already proven illogical.[43] Here the discussion of the origin and the nature of friendship has reached an impasse and the examination ends in an aporia.

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[39] See Plato, *Lysis* 220b-d.

[40] "*Ἆρ᾽ οὕτω πέφυκέ τε καὶ φιλεῖται τἀγαθὸν διὰ τὸ κακὸν ὑφ᾽ ἡμῶν, τῶν μεταξὺ ὄντων τοῦ κακοῦ τε καὶ τἀγαθοῦ, αὐτὸ δὲ ἑαυτοῦ ἕνεκα οὐδεμίαν χρείαν ἔχει.*" Plato, *Lysis* 220d. – Trans. Lamb 63.

[41] "*Τοῦ οἰκείου δή, ὡς ἔοικεν, ὅ τε ἔρως καὶ ἡ φιλία καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τυγχάνει οὖσα,* […]." Plato, *Lysis* 221e. – Trans. Lamb 65.

[42] "*Καὶ εἰ ἄρα τις ἕτερος ἑτέρου ἐπιθυμεῖ, ἦν δ᾽ ἐγώ, ὦ παῖδες, ἢ ἐρᾷ, οὐκ ἄν ποτε ἐπεθύμει οὐδὲ ἤρα οὐδὲ ἐφίλει, εἰ μὴ οἰκεῖός πῃ τῷ ἐρωμένῳ ἐτύγχανεν ὢν ἢ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν ἢ κατά τι τῆς ψυχῆς ἦθος ἢ τρόπους ἢ εἶδος.*" Plato, *Lysis* 222a. – Trans. Lamb 67.

[43] See Plato, *Lysis* 222c-d.

However, Plato's *Lysis*, in all its elenctic inconsistency, has to be regarded as a first attempt to examine the origin and the basic principles of friendship. As such, it already provides the starting-points for following reflections on the nature of friendship, viz. the propositions "that it is shared goodness and not any sort of likeness that underlies friendship (214d); that the inconstancy of the bad in relation to themselves makes them unfit to befriend others (214c-d); and that affection for other persons must somehow be grounded in a desire that terminates in a primary object of love (219c-220b)," as Michael Pakaluk sums it up.[44] It is especially this last proposition and the assumption that "the basis of [this] desire is rooted in a metaphysical incompleteness of the human soul," as Konstan puts it, with which Plato links the Socratic theory of *philia* in the *Lysis* with that of *eros* in the *Symposium*.[45]

The *Symposium* is an account of a conversation, held at a banquet that took place in the house of Agathon in order to celebrate the great success of his first play, presumably on some evening in the year 416 BC. According to Plato, the whole conversation on that evening was on a single subject, namely that of love (ἔρος/*eros*). In the dialogue, all the participants of the banquet have to contribute a speech on this topic, and the multitude of different perspectives on *eros* reflects the variety of notions that existed of the theme in ancient times. Besides the praise of the God Eros in Agathon's speech,[46] the praise of the custom of boy-loving in the speech of Pausanias,[47] and the mythological story of the human archetypes told by Aristophanes,[48] there is even a representation of some of the ideas of Empedocles' cosmological theory in the speech of Eryximachus.[49]

When it comes to Socrates' turn to contribute something to the topic, he gives an account of a conversation he once had with a Mantinean woman named Diotima.[50] He first stresses that what one loves and desires must necessarily be what one has not, is not, or lacks; since, if one possessed it oneself, there would be no reason to desire, and hence none to love it.[51] In Socrates' philosophy, the object of love is therefore the same as that of friendship.[52] Since, by general agreement, one can only love something that is beautiful, and not something that lacks beauty, and since the good is also beautiful, one will always love the beautiful and the good—in the concrete as well as in the

[44] Michael Pakaluk, ed., *Other Selves: Philosophers on Friendship* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991) 1.

[45] Konstan 73.

[46] See Plato, *Symposium* 194e-197e.

[47] See Plato, *Symposium* 180c-185e.

[48] See Plato, *Symposium* 188c-194e.

[49] See Plato, *Symposium* 186a-189b.

[50] See Plato, *Symposium* 201d.

[51] See Plato, *Symposium* 200a-e.

[52] Cf. 36f.

abstract sense. Consequently, neither the lover (ἐραστής/*erastēs*), the subject of love, can be beautiful or good (since he desires these qualities, which he would not do if he already had them), nor can love in itself be beautiful or good. Only the beloved (ἐρώμενον/ *erastos*), the object of love, possesses these two qualities.[53] Here Socrates clearly implies that the quality of love is solely attributed to its subject and not to its object. Love is therefore only a defect, an imperfection on the side of the lover.

The fact that the lover, and love itself, are not beautiful, wise, or good, does not mean that they are inevitably ugly. They are rather like the 'neither nor' of the *Lysis*.[54] This leads to the following two conclusions. Firstly that love is the search for the lost good,[55] and that the meaning and end of love is happiness, since the achievement of the beautiful and good results in happiness.[56] Secondly that for the one who is already beautiful, wise, and good, and therefore happy, obviously no reason for loving remains.[57]

The end of love, however, is not only to achieve the good and beautiful, but also to retain the possession of it forever.[58] The meaning of love is therefore to tie the beautiful and good qualities of the beloved constantly to the lover. It is the purpose of the lover to unite with the beloved and thus, in an act of reproduction, to merge his own qualities with the goodness and the beauty of the beloved. The lover does thereby not only mingle his personal characteristics with the qualities of goodness and beauty but, by means of generation, also obtains a certain kind of immortality. In fact, since beauty and goodness are immortal qualities, the lover, too, has to achieve immortality if the union should be forever. But since immortality in itself is considered something good and beautiful, something that the lover does not have, his desire and love will naturally be directed towards the achievement of immortality as well.[59]

Those whose bodily qualities have an advantage over their mental capacities will thus find their immortality in the love of good and beautiful women and the generation of children. Those, however, whose qualities are more of an intellectual nature, will also seek a way to raise these qualities to immortality. In contrast to those of the first group, they will achieve this by the love of boys rather than of women, by uniting with one who possesses the qualities of goodness and beauty and by

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[53] See Plato, *Symposium* 204c.

[54] See Plato, *Symposium* 204b. Cf. 36.

[55] As with the idea of the 'own belongings' in the *Lysis*, Socrates here believes that one can only desire and love something that was formerly possessed but then somehow lost. In the *Symposium*, this 'something' is the good the lover has lost—in contrast to the *Lysis*, where the idea of the 'own belongings' is not directly connected with that of the *proton philon*, the good per se, but could refer to the good as to the bad or the 'neither nor'. Cf. 37f; and Plato, *Lysis* 219d, 221e.

[56] See Plato, *Symposium* 205a.

[57] See Plato, *Symposium* 204a.

[58] See Plato, *Symposium* 206a.

[59] See Plato, *Symposium* 206a-207d.

procreating their kind of children with him.[60] In search of an appropriate partner, the lover is looking for someone who is good and beautiful in both body and soul, as he naturally do not want to unite with someone who is physically repulsive. When he has found such a beautiful boy with a good soul, both can mentally unite; and by means of teaching and instructing the boy, he can generate his ideas and opinions in him. The thoughts, discoveries, and insights they gain from their conversations, and the goodness and virtue that develops from the union of their souls are the products of their love-friendship and therefore, in fact, their spiritual children.[61] Such is the kind of immortality that is gained by the union of souls. Concerning the lover (*ἐραστής*/*erastēs*) and his beloved (*ἐρώμενος*/*erōmenos*), and the children engendered by their friendship, Diotima extols the virtues of this friendship to Socrates by saying:

> 'For I hold that by contact with the fair one and by consorting with him he bears and brings forth his long-felt conception, because in presence or absence he remembers his fair. Equally too with him he shares the nurturing of what is begotten, so that men in this condition enjoy a far fuller community with each other than that which comes with children, and a far surer friendship, since the children of their union are fairer and more deathless. Every one would choose to have got children such as these rather than the human sort […].'[62]

The main characteristic of love is therefore either the physical or the intellectual reproduction of the lover in beauty.[63]

A thorough description of the nature of this love-friendship is also to be found in the *Phaedrus*, where Socrates emphasises the exceptional value of the friendship

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[60] The custom of boy-loving in ancient Greece, of which Pausina gives us a brief but vivid idea in his praise of love (see *Symposium*, 180c-185e), was closely connected with the concept of education, as Michel Foucault poits out: "En Grèce, la vérité et le sexe se liaient dans la forme de la pédagogie, par la transmission, corps à corps, d'un savoir précieux; le sexe servait de support aux initiations de la connaissance." Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité: La volonté de savoir*, vol. 1, 3 vols. ([Paris]: Gallimard, 1976) 82. – "In Greece, truth and sex were linked, in the form of pedagogy, by the transmission of a precious knowledge from one body to another; sex served as a medium for initiations into learning." Trans. Robert Hurley, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, by Michel Foucault, vol. 1, 3 vols. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990) 61. For a detailed account on pederasty in ancient Greece see, for example, Eva Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, trans. Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) 17-35. For an analysis of how some passages in the *Symposium*, especially Aristophanes' story (see *Symposium*. 188c-194e), reveal a classical conception of a sort of homosexual identity, see David M. Halperin, "Sex before Sexuality: Pederasty, Politics, and Power in Classical Athens," *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin B. Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991) 43-45.

[61] See Plato, *Symposium* 208d-209c.

[62] "*ἀπτόμενος γάρ, οἶμαι, τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ὁμιλῶν αὐτῷ, ἃ πάλαι ἐκύει τίκτει καὶ γεννᾷ, καὶ παρὼν καὶ ἀπὼν μεμνημένος, καὶ τὸ γεννηθὲν συνεκτρέφει κοινῇ μετ᾽ ἐκείνου, ὥστε πολὺ μείζω κοινωνίαν τῆς τῶν παίδων πρὸς ἀλλήλους οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἴσχουσι καὶ φιλίαν βεβαιοτέραν, ἅτε καλλιόνων καὶ ἀθανατωτέρων παίδων κεκοινωνηκότες. καὶ πᾶς ἂν δέξαιτο ἑαυτῷ τοιούτους παῖδας μᾶλλον γεγονέναι ἢ τοὺς ἀνθρωπίνους,*[…]." Plato, *Symposium* 209c. – Trans. Lamb 201.

[63] See also Price 15.

between the lover and the boy, and especially stresses the reciprocity of their love.[64] Contrary to the uncertainty he expresses in the *Lysis* concerning the question whether friends should be of an equal or unequal nature, Socrates leaves here—in the *Symposium* as in the *Phaedrus*—no doubt that the lover and his beloved (i.e. the friends) must be dissimilar to each other, as this is the necessary precondition of their relationship. In fact, this kind of friendship requires the inequality of the friends, as both are interested in something else. The lover admires the beauty of the boy and the beloved boy admires the erudition of his lover. Consequently, we can assume that the lover has to be as virtuous and wise, as the beloved is beautiful, and vice versa. If the motivation of the lover for entering into a friendship with the boy is to achieve immortality, the boy's motivation is to achieve knowledge and virtuousness. Therefore, both love each other for lack of something they want to achieve. It is usually the older friend who is in search of beauty and the younger one who is in search of wisdom, wherefore this love-friendship normally develops between a youth and his mentor. This kind of friendship is thus distinctly different from the one between equal friends, who usually are of the same age and share the same interests. Although this notion of different sorts of friendship—some being based on the equality of the friends, others on their inequality—is briefly discussed in the *Lysis* and also mentioned in the *Phaedrus*,[65] neither Socrates nor Plato seems to pay enough attention to this distinction as to examine it in detail.

We are certainly coming to the heart of Socrates' considerations of the nature of love (and friendship) when Diotima presents the theory of what we might call the 'ladder of love'. It describes the various phases through which the lover has to go on his way to the ultimate end of his love. This end, at first defined as the achievement and the possession of the beautiful object (see above), is now redefined as the sight of pure beauty itself. The lover achieves this sight of absolute beauty, which in Plato's philosophy also represents the idea of the highest good, by beginning to value the sight of a specific beauty—the body of the boy he loves.[66] The physically perceivable beauty of the boy's body is, as it were, the reflection of the highest beauty itself that is not physically perceivable anymore. The appreciation of the physically beautiful is therefore the initial precondition to reach the stage of the highest beauty. This is the point where Socrates brings sexual desire into a direct connection with virtue, since virtue is defined as the love of the good. Erotic energy serves, so to speak, as the foundation, as the fuel for the development of virtue. In this context, sexual desire is not only described as an independent and legitimate form of love but, being the first step on the ladder of love, it also directly points to its end, the virtuous love of

[64] See Plato, *Phaedrus* 255a-256a.

[65] See Plato, *Phaedrus* 240b-c.

[66] See Plato, *Symposium* 210d-e.

beauty.[67] Now, love is no longer just the desire for the beautiful object, but by shifting its direction from the particular to the general, it becomes the desire for beauty itself.

Beginning with the admiration of the beloved's body, the lover has to ascend the following steps on the ladder of love: First he will, attracted by the beauty of the boy's body, love the boy and engender good and virtues conversations with him. Then he will realize that the beauty of this specific body is related to that of other bodies, as it is the same beauty that is common to them all. This means that he would consequently have to love all the other bodies just as the specific one. He will therefore come to have a lower opinion of the love of bodies.[68]

On the second level, the lover will thus place his love for the boy's soul over that for his body. He will lead elaborate discussions about such subjects as the beauty of observances and laws and will come to the realization that this beauty is also the same in all laws and observances. Seeing the beauty of things intellectual, he will despise the love for physical objects. This is the level where friendship has its place.[69]

After the sight of the beauty of observances and laws, the lover learns about the beauty of knowledge. But this beauty is already so comprehensive and great that he comes to consider the beauty of a single object too trivial to be really appreciated.[70]

Being drawn towards the width and greatness of this beauty, he will advance his thoughts and interests in unlimited philosophy to such an extent that he eventually arrives at the stage where the vision of a single knowledge is revealed to him. This is the knowledge of absolute beauty (i.e. the idea of the highest good) itself. In the end, the lover thus reaches the level of absolute wisdom and virtue and partakes, as it were, in the idea of the highest good, i.e. he obtains a friendship with heaven and becomes immortal.[71]

The conclusion we can therefore draw from this crucial passage is that in the Socratic-Platonic conception, wisdom (i.e. philosophy) and its beauty, are the real ends of love (and friendship) and will lead to immortality, just as Diotima says, when she summarizes the whole theory:[72]

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[67] In the *Phaedrus* it is yet stressed that, at least on the level of learning and philosophy, the expression of physical love should no longer be performed. See Plato, *Phaedrus* 256b-e. However, with Socrates, carnal love is not despised, but included in his concept of virtuous love and friendship—in contrary, though, to the late Plato and to Aristotle. See G. R. F. Ferrari, "Platonic Love," *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, ed. R. Kraut, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992) 260-61.

[68] See Plato, *Symposium* 210a-b.

[69] See Plato, *Symposium* 210b-c.

[70] See Plato, *Symposium* 210c-d.

[71] See Plato, *Symposium* 210d-e, 212a. Plato here lays the foundation of his theory of ideas, i.e. his conception of the realm of forms, which he elaborates in his later dialogues.

[72] For a detailed analysis of Diotima's 'ladder of love', see Price 38ff, 45ff.

> 'So when a man by the right method of boy-loving ascends from these particulars and begins to descry that beauty, he is almost able to lay hold of the final secret. Such is the right approach or induction to love-matters. Beginning from obvious beauties he must for the sake of that highest beauty be ever climbing aloft, as on the rungs of a ladder, from one to two, and from two to all beautiful bodies; from personal beauty he proceeds to beautiful observances, from observance to beautiful learning, and from learning at last to that particular study which is concerned with the beautiful itself and that alone; so that in the end he comes to know the very essence of beauty. […][And] when he has begotten a true virtue and has reared it up he is destined to win the friendship of Heaven; he, above all men, is immortal.'[73]

In conclusion, we can state that in Socrates' philosophy, of which Plato gives us a vivid account in these two dialogues, there is an inseparable interconnection between the idea of *philia* and that of *eros*. One can only become the friend of another by sincerely loving him. Love, therefore, leads to friendship, or, in other words, friendship is the aim and end of love. That love, or at least affection, is a necessary precondition of friendship has yet always been a commonplace and is certainly no innovation of Socrates' conception. The innovation of his theory is rather the interdependence between the concepts concerning their function, namely to lead the friend (or the lover, as he is referred to in the *Symposium*) to the state of absolute wisdom and virtue. This conception is in fact exceptional, since "in classical Greece erotic love and friendship were understood normally to be incompatible relationships," as David Konstan remarks.[74]. In most other theories that are concerned with the achievement of virtue by means of having a relationship with someone, the capacity of achieving virtue is in fact exclusively ascribed to friendship, since the idea of virtue is usually closely connected with that of equality, and the equality of the partners is one of the major characteristics of *philia* but not of *eros*. In general, *philia* and *eros* have thus to be conceptualised differently, but in Socrates' theory the differences become blurred. The peculiarity of the Socratic-Platonic conception is that Plato in the *Symposium*—just like Aristotle later on in his *Nicomachean Ethics*—refers to the relationship of a male adult lover and his male under-age beloved as *philia*, and thus obviously conceives of it as a kind of friendship.[75]

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[73] "*ὅταν δή τις ἀπὸ τῶνδε διὰ τὸ ὀρθῶς παιδεραστεῖν ἐπανιὼν ἐκεῖνο τὸ καλὸν ἄρχηται καθοραῦν, σχεδὸν ἄν τι ἅπτοιτο τοῦ τέλους. τοῦτο γὰρ δή ἐστι τὸ ὀρθῶς ἐπὶ τὰ ἐρωτικὰ ἰέναι ἢ ὑπ' ἄλλου ἄγεσθαι, ἀρχόμενον ἀπὸ τῶνδε τῶν καλῶν ἐκείνου ἕνεκα τοῦ καλοῦ ἀεὶ ἐπανιέναι, ὥσπερ ἐπαναβαθμοῖς χρώμενον, ἀπὸ ἑνὸς ἐπὶ δύο καὶ ἀπὸ δυοῖν ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ καλὰ σώματα, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν καλῶν σωμάτων ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ μαθήματα, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν μαθημάτων ἐπ' ἐκεῖνο τὸ μάθημα τελευτῆσαι, ὅ ἐστιν οὐκ ἄλλου ἢ αὐτοῦ ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ μάθημα, ἵνα γνῷ αὐτὸ τελευτῶν ὃ ἔστι καλόν. […] τεκόντι δὲ ἀρετὴν ἀληθῆ καὶ θρεψαμένῳ ὑπάρχει θεοφιλεῖ γενέσθαι, καὶ εἴπερ τῳ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ.*" Plato, *Symposium* 211b-212a. – Trans. Lamb 205-09.

[74] Konstan 38.

[75] See, for example, Plato, *Symposium* 209c; and Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.4, 1157a.

However, that the nature of the friendship between friends is distinct from that between a lover and his beloved is indisputable and not denied by Socrates. For him, too, lover and beloved are far from being equal and what they gain from their friendship is by no means comparable. In fact, when Socrates comes to the idea of the 'ladder of love,' love and friendship do not lead both friends or lovers to the height of the idea of the highest good, but only one of them, viz. the older mentor as the lover of beauty. Hyatte gives a brief account of this peculiar idea of the one-sided dispensation of the benefits of love-friendship and of Plato's paradoxical conception of a solitary friend and lover who can only ascend to the view of absolute beauty by means of a friendship with a boy whose role in this friendship is so insignificant that it is not even mentioned:

> Once Socrates begins, however, to investigate the ultimate object of *philia* and posits ideal Beauty, he shifts the discussants' attention from the pair of lovers-friends to a single man's rational and transcendent love of the absolute. […]
>
> Plato does not provide an explanation of the role of the 'other,' the second equal person in a friendly relationship, and consequently a theory of the reciprocal activity of friendly parties on the way to ultimate happiness is not possible. […] Plato's metaphysics leaves one with a paradoxical single friend, the universal *philos* of all good persons, actions, and ideas and the particular friend of none.[76]

Viewed logically, the theory seems to imply that the youth, the beloved of the lover, also ascends to a higher state of knowledge and virtue—yet, this is nowhere explicitly formulated.

Probably precisely because of this problematic role of the beloved as a friend, and due to the aporia of the Socratic approach to friendship in the *Lysis*, Plato's works, in comparison with those of Aristotle and Cicero, contributed least to the contemplations of the subject in later times. It was rather his treatment of love in the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* that interested following philosophers, especially the Renaissance humanists. And it were then their immediate successors who, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, finally made use of Plato's integrated theory of love and friendship to create a new concept of a love-friendship relationship between the sexes that in the end, among other causes, led to the debasement of the idealized conception of friendship that had dominated the Renaissance, as we will see later on. The knowledge of the basic ideas of Plato's *Symposium* is therefore necessary to understand how the transformation that the concept of friendship underwent at the end of the Renaissance was theoretically backed up.

The importance of the *Lysis*, however, in general and to this study in particular, does though rather result from the fact that it contains a number of significant propositions

[76] Hyatte 14.

that served as a starting-point for many philosophic approaches to friendship in antiquity itself. As the most prominent among them certainly ranks Aristotle's treatment of the subject in his *Eudemian* and *Nicomachean Ethics*.[77] In creating his theory of friendship, Aristotle adopts both individual ideas and general propositions from Plato, and especially his notion of the close connection between friendship, virtue, and the idea of the good per se mirrors the basic assumption of the Socratic conception.

1.2. ARISTOTLE'S COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF FRIENDSHIP

Even if it is still a matter of scholarly disagreement whether Plato or Aristotle is to be considered the supreme figure of classical philosophy, the acceptance of Aristotle's dominating role in the field of classical friendship theory is clearly beyond dispute. The community of scholars is in fact unanimous in its acknowledgement of the quality and the outstanding significance of his approach. Hyatte, for example, points out that Aristotle "was the first to formulate a complete theory of friendship […] where he identifies, defines, and classifies most species of *philia*."[78] For Konstan, "Aristotle's analysis of friendship in the context of his discussion of *philia* […] is the most comprehensive and intelligent treatment in all antiquity."[79] And Hutter equally remarks: "The discussion of *philia* in Aristotle is the most comprehensive and most extensive of all such discussions to be found in Greek philosophy. […] None of them is equal to it in breadth and depth of vision."[80]

In fact, if one had to choose a single text from the enormous variety of friendship literature in classical antiquity to represent the remarkable concern for the topic in the period, it would have to be books eight and nine of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.[81] This treatise incorporates all or at least most of the classical notions of friendship in one theory and uniquely combines practical with ethical considerations. The systematic analysis of *philia* in these two books is by far the most comprehensive exposition of the subject to be found in classical literature. Above all, we would have to choose Aristotle's theory because its influence on subsequent works on friendship, in antiquity

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[77] Cf. Price 1, 14.

[78] Hyatte 16.

[79] Konstan 21.

[80] Hutter 107.

[81] However, besides his treatment of *philia* in books eight and nine of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle deals with the topic in book seven of the *Eudemian Ethics*, the *Magna Moralia*, and his treatise *On Rhetoric*. Yet, in none of these works Aristotle presents his conception of *philia* as clearly and completely as in the two books of the *Nicomachean Ethics,* which explains why his other writings remained fairly insignificant concerning the influence of his theory on succeeding works on friendship. On the printing, translation, and reception of Aristotle's other writings, especially the *Eudemian Ethics* and the *Magna Moralia*, see Charles B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983) 121-33, 149-51; and Hyatte 16n15.

as in later periods, exceeds that of any other classical writing of Greek origin. Only from Roman antiquity onwards, the influence of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is accompanied and sometimes even surpassed by that of Cicero's *Laelius de amicitia*, which clearly draws on the Aristotelian ideas itself.

Due to its aporetic nature, Plato's approach to a theory of friendship remains quite vague and general. In defining friendship and love as the means that lead to the sight of the ultimate good, it denies the possibility that friendship itself could ever be this good. With Aristotle, the view of friendship becomes more explicit and develops into a systematically defined concept. Seeming to be a more practical conception at first, due to the greater sense of realism that is reflected in Aristotle's theory, it turns out to be much more idealistic than that of Plato. Friendship is now not only the way to virtue but somehow also becomes a state of virtue itself, as Aristotle states right at the beginning of the eighth book of his *Nicomachean Ethics*: "Our next business after this will be to discuss Friendship. For friendship is a virtue, or involves virtue; and also it is one of the most indispensable requirements of life."[82] The special emphasis Aristotle places on the connection between friendship and virtue becomes obvious by the fact that he dedicates his initial statement to it, although the idea of the virtuous quality of *philia* does not apply to friendship in general, but only to his concept of perfect friendship (*τελεία φιλία*/*teleia philia*), which is introduced later in the text.

Since the mutual feeling of affection that friends have for each other is an essential characteristic of friendship, Aristotle begins by analysing the nature of this feeling, and tries to identify the objects to which it is directed. On the principle that not everything is loved but only that which is loveable or what is considered loveable, Aristotle comes to the proposition that everything that is loved must be either good, pleasant, or useful—or must at least seem to be so. Following this definition, someone can therefore only love something that possesses at least one of these three qualities, which can therefore be called the three motives for loving. One might however say that 'useful' means the same as 'productive of some good or pleasure', so that in the end only two motives of love remain, since something which is useful, will consequently result in something that is either good or pleasant.[83] The nature of things that are good is yet somehow different from that of things that are pleasant or useful, since these latter qualities only apply to the individual lover. This means that something that is pleasant or useful for some does not have to be so for others. With the good, it is different since

[82] "Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα περὶ φιλίας ἕποιτ' ἂν διελθεῖν. ἔστι γὰρ ἀρετή τις ἢ μετ' ἀρετῆς· ἔτι δ' ἀναγκαιότατον εἰς τὸν βίον." Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.1, 1155a3-5. – Trans. H. Rackham, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, by Aristotle, rpt. of. 1934 rev. ed., The Loeb Classical Library 73, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1999) 451. A brief account on the philosophical disputes in the Renaissance, whether Aristotle here equates friendship with virtue or not, is given in Stephen David Bolton, "Friendship in the Renaissance: An Examination of Theoretical Writings on Friendship by Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Italian Authors," MPhil diss., London U, Warburg Institute, 1990, 17ff.

[83] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.1, 1155b.

there are two different kinds: the individual or personal good, and the absolute good. Accordingly, there are things that are good for someone, but do not have to be equally good for another, and things that are good per se. These latter ones are equally good for all and therefore generally loveable.[84]

Having defined friendship as a state of mutual affection, it can consequently only last as long as affection exists on either side. This is also the reason why we do not speak of friendship when we want to characterize our affection for inanimate things, since, in this case, our feelings are not reciprocated. Accordingly, having a feeling of goodwill and benevolence for persons who do not reciprocate this affection can therefore not be regarded as having a friendship either. The foundation of friendship is therefore the mutual affection of two people who are totally aware of the reciprocity of their feelings, since mutual affection is not yet friendship when either side is ignorant of the feelings of the other: "To be friends therefore, men must (1) feel goodwill for each other, that is, wish each other's good, and (2) be aware of each other's goodwill, and (3) the cause of their goodwill must be one of the lovable qualities mentioned above."[85]

As there are three motives for loving someone, there are correspondingly also three sorts of friendship that originate from these motives. With each of these friendships, there is a kind of mutual affection, known to both sides, and each party wishes the other only the best with regard to the reason for which the friendship exists. If the friendship, for example, is based on bilateral utility, it is not the personality of the friend that is of interest but only the cause of his usefulness. And with regard to this cause, the friend will certainly wish him the very best. Friendships of this sort are to be found among merchants, people who have an eye to their own interests in general, and mainly among elderly persons who have no further need for pleasures, but a considerable one for utility.[86] The same applies to friendships that are based on reciprocal pleasures. Here the friend is again not appreciated for what he is, but for that which makes him pleasant. Those are the prevailing friendships among the young. Their orientation is mostly hedonistic and they change their friends as often as they change their preferences concerning the things that provide them with pleasure. Here, among the friendships of the young, Aristotle also includes the erotic relationships, which he considers equally changeable and inferior as all other relations that exist for the sake of pleasure.[87] For Aristotle, these are only inferior friendships since the friend

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[84] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.2, 1155b.

[85] "**[…]** *δεῖ ἄρα εὐνοεῖν ἀλλήλοις καὶ βούλεσθαι τἀγαθὰ μὴ λανθάνοντας δι᾽ ἕν τι τῶν εἰρημένων.*" Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.2, 1156a4-5. – Trans. Rackham 457.

[86] Aristotle thinks that old people would not make friends with others that easily for the reason that they are neither sociable nor good-tempered. They would not enjoy the society of others and would therefore avoid friendships. See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.3, 1156a; 8.6, 1158a.

[87] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8. 3, 1156a-b. For a detailed analysis of Aristotle's opinion on erotic love see Price 236-250.

is rather loved for the function he fulfils than for his own sake. Such friendships are normally not of long duration, as they only exist as long as the reason for which they exist (either pleasure or utility) remains.[88]

The third sort of friendship is formed neither for the reason that the friend is useful nor because he is pleasant, but because he is good. The quality of being good is here and in the following also meant in the sense of being virtuous. Good and goodness are accordingly used as synonyms for virtue. This kind of friendship exists only because both friends love the good—the good per se and the good in the friend. In such a friendship, the friends will wish each other all the best for the friend's sake only. They love and cherish each other because of their personalities and not because of some trivial profit, pleasure, or utility. A friendship of this kind can only exist because each friend is good in himself, good in the absolute sense, and good for his friend. The friendship will therefore last as long as the friends continue to be good, and since goodness is a durable quality, such friendships are likely to be enduring.[89] For Aristotle, this is the true and perfect friendship: "The perfect form of friendship is that between the good, and those who resemble each other in virtue."[90]

However, when this kind of friendship is entirely based on the equality of the friends' goodness, the question arises, whether the friendship should be ended, when the friends become unequal in their virtuousness. For Aristotle this depends on the degree to which they differ. If there is the chance that the more virtuous friend can help his partner to take him back to the lost stage of virtue, it is his obligation to do so. If, however, the discrepancy between them is too distinct, and the friend refuses the help, the friendship must be ended, as it has lost its basis. The lost friend should yet not be treated as if he had never been one.[91]

According to the concept of perfect friendship, a man who is good and virtuous will causally be good for his friend. But the virtuous friends will also be of pleasure and utility for each other, because virtue itself is pleasant and useful. It is pleasant because every virtuous man will appreciate his own conduct for being virtuous, and since the conduct of every virtuous man is similar to his own, he must therefore consider it to be equally pleasant. It is useful since virtue always generates new virtue in the one to whom it is directed. The reason for the durability of such perfect friendships is that they include all of the necessary and loveable qualities: the virtuous friends are good, and therefore also pleasant and useful for themselves as for each other. One could also say that they are good, virtuous, pleasant, and useful—absolute and relative.

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[88] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.3, 1156a.

[89] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.3, 1156b.

[90] "Τελεία δ' ἐστὶν ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν φιλία καὶ κατ' ἀρετὴν ὁμοίων." Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.3, 1156b6-7. – Trans. Rackham 461.

[91] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 9.3, 1165b. Cicero reverts to this problem in his *Laelius*. See 58.

Here the main contrast to those friendships that Aristotle calls incidental becomes obvious. For him the object of every friendship is, as we have seen, something absolutely or relatively good or pleasant—which is then consequently also useful. In the perfect sort of friendship, these qualities do not only apply to the friendship but also to the friends themselves. Such friendships are indeed rare since men of good character, who are necessary to form these friendships, are rare. Friendships of the inferior kind are possible between nearly everybody, this means between good men as well as between a good and a bad, or even between purely bad men, or between men of whatsoever character. Here the threefold division of *philia* allows Aristotle to contradict Socrates' conception of a uniform kind of friendship that can only exist between truly good men and that denies the possibility that bad people, or a good and a bad person, could have any sort of friendship.[92] However, Aristotle in a way agrees with Socrates again, when he admits that perfect friendship can only exist between truly good persons.[93]

A friendship that is built on the absolute virtuousness of the partners has many advantages for the friends. It is, for example, an effective insurance against treason since a good man, because he is virtuous, will never betray his friend. This is something which cannot generally be expected from someone who is called a friend on the basis of one of the other two kinds of friendship.[94] And as perfect friendship is an insurance against betrayal for the individual, so it is for the whole community, since both friends will remain virtuous, and virtuous men will never do wrong, neither to their friends nor to others, or even the state, nor will they ever allow their friends to do so.[95]

Perfect friendship also needs time to develop. It is only achieved by a high grade of intimacy and confidence, and when the friends have proved to each other that they are truly worthy of this kind of friendship. Unless this stage is reached, for every relationship, even if it has the potential to become such a perfect friendship, there will remain nothing but the friends' wish to have one, as "[…] the wish to be friends is a quick growth, but friendship is not."[96] To achieve this high grade of intimacy and confidence, the friends will have to spend much time together, and for Aristotle, this is another essential characteristic of friendship. To support this argument, Aristotle even quotes the proverbial saying that friends cannot speak of having a true friendship as long as they have not eaten at least a bushel of salt together.[97] However, this does not

[92] See 35.

[93] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.3-4, 1156b-1157a.

[94] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.4,1157a.

[95] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.8-9, 1159b.

[96] "[…] *βούλησις μὲν γὰρ ταχεῖα φιλίας γίνεται, φιλία δ' οὔ.*" Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.3, 1156b32-33. – Trans. Rackham 465.

[97] We find this poetic dictum also in Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics* (1238a2), and as well in Cicero's *Laelius de amicitia* (19.67) as in Plutarch's *Moralia* (94A and 482B).

mean that perfect friendships, once achieved, will immediately break off as soon as the friends are spatially separated from each other. True friendship will normally withstand such a trial, although a long or even permanent separation may indeed do harm to the friendship.[98]

The reflection on how much time friends should spend together directly leads to the question how many friends—or rather how few—a man can consequently have.[99] Here Aristotle distinguishes between the different kinds of friendship. Concerning the inferior sorts one can have quite a number of friends, but a true and perfect friendship is something so rare that it can normally only be shared with one single person at a time. In carnal love, it rarely happens that someone whose feelings are totally concentrated on his beloved is also attracted by others—and the same applies to perfect friendship. The reason for this is probably that there are only very few candidates who are likely to meet the essential preconditions which such relationships require. As erotic love is initiated by the physical attractiveness of the partners, perfect friendship is inspired by their virtuousness. The prospects of meeting two or more persons who are equally fit to become either one's friend or lover are therefore relatively poor. Keeping this and the amount of time that one should spend with his friend in mind, Aristotle's statement that there can only be one true friend becomes plausible.[100]

Recapitulating, we can say that there are three different sorts of friendship, which are all based on either the equality or the inequality of the friends in a certain respect and on the mutual exchange of something either useful, pleasant, or good.[101] In each of these friendships, the friends are only interested in that aspect of their friend that produces the relevant quality. In relation to this aspect, they wish each other all the best, but the friendship can only last as long as the reason for which it was formed exists. Ordinary people will therefore form friendships for their personal pleasure or utility. It is the equal inferiority of the friends that provides the basis for such friendships. We will call these people friends, although their friendship is only a reflection of the true, the real friendship. This true and perfect friendship, however, can only exist between good men who love their friend for nothing else but the friend's sake and whose common virtue constitutes the basis for their friendship. When two good men are united in such a relationship, which thereby also obtains the quality of being good in itself, this friendship will even increase their virtuousness. Friendship is therefore, as it were, an amplifier of virtue.

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[98] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.5, 1157b.

[99] Considerations of this kind are typical of Aristotle's practical view of the subject; a view that Plato's rather general and academic concept of friendship lacks. In the Renaissance, when people where very fond of any sort of guidebook, model or maxim, these ideas became a kind of guideline for the formation and leading of friendships, as we will see later on.

[100] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.6, 1158a.

[101] For the discussion whether friends should be of an equal or unequal nature, see two paragraphs below.

Like Socrates, Aristotle is troubled by the question whether friendship is based on the equality or inequality of the friends.[102] While in perfect friendship, which is based on the virtuousness of the friends, their equality concerning this virtuousness is a prerequisite, the inferior kinds of friendship rather require friends of different natures and qualities.[103] The aim of each friend is here to give something of which he has plenty in order to gain something that he lacks.[104] As everyone is looking for something else, each partner has accordingly a different motive for becoming the friend of the other. Different, if not unbalanced, is therefore what the friends gain from the friendship. Those who have an advantage over their partners in terms of money or social status have naturally more to give than they can expect to receive. The necessary compensation can then only be achieved by the agreement that the inferior partner will love the superior much more than he is loved in return. Affectionate feelings can thus serve as a form of settlement when one partner is inferior to the other, as, for example, in friendships between persons of higher and lower rank.[105]

Normally, the devotion of the inferior to his superior friend is considered sufficient to discharge the debt, even though this can only provide a pretended balance of exchange, as it were. It clearly depends on the partners' mutual agreement and the superior's demand for affection and respect whether the inferior's devotion to his friend is accepted as an equivalent to whatever he receives from him. For these kinds of relationship, this is the crux of the matter. Although the equality of the friends' nature or qualities is not a prerequisite for these friendships, there has to be a balance of exchange—may it be true or, by mutual agreement, pretended. In other words, the equality of the friends is thus not a matter of character but of exchange. If the gap between the partner's abilities to give is so distinct that it cannot be bridged even by the greatest possible contribution of love and respect from the inferior, a friendship between the two is impossible. Because of this, there can be no friendship between kings and their subjects, or between men and gods.[106]

The idea that friendship requires the friends' equality became one of the characteristics of classical reflections on the subject; but it is not originally Aristotelian, Platonic, or Socratic. It is already to be found in numerous proverbial sayings and poetical dictums of the Presocratic era.[107] With Aristotle, however, this essential

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[102] See 34 and 41.

[103] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.1, 1155b and 8.3, 1156b. Aristotle thus "rejects the premise that allowed Socrates to deny in *Lysis* that like is drawn to like and good to good." Hyatte 18.

[104] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.8, 1159b.

[105] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.7, 1158b; 8.12-13, 1162a-b.

[106] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.6-8, 1158b-1159a; 8.13-14, 1163 a-b. Although Aristotle denies the possibility of a friendship between a king and one of his subjects, he sees a form of friendship existing between the sovereign and his people in general. See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.10-13, 1161a-b.

[107] That this idea also plays an important role in some of the earlier theoretical approaches to the phenomenon of friendship is pointed out by Hutter: "For Empedocles, friendship consists in the

characteristic of friendship becomes explicitly connected with the quality of virtuousness. From now on the idea of friendship is inseparably united with the idea of virtue.[108]

However intriguing Aristotle's idea of a perfect friendship between two equally good men may be, there still remains a logical problem with this conception. According to his theory of a tripartite categorization of *philia*, each of the three different kinds of friendship is not only based on the equality of the friends but also on the mutual exchange of a certain quality. But which motivation should truly good men have for making friends with other good men when they are very likely to be self-sufficient in their goodness and would therefore have no need for friendships? A question with which Socrates already concerns himself in Plato's *Lysis*, and that in the end led to the aporia of his approach.[109]

Aristotle, however, believes to have found the answer to this problem in the human phenomenon of self-love. This approach, of course, requires a philosophical definition of self-love that clearly distinguishes it from selfishness. To ascribe self-love as a character trait to the good and virtuous, it must be regard as a positive quality. This is achieved by means of the following consideration: every human being consists of two different parts, of his physical and of his mental qualities. His mental qualities form his personality, identity, reason, and soul. His drives, emotions, and needs on the other hand belong to his physical qualities. While he has only little power over these bodily expressions as they are dominated by nature, his intellect, his will, is deliberately controllable. It is this intellect that distinguishes man from beasts. This is the reason why the mental qualities are the specific characteristic of man and are therefore estimated as his highest and most noble ability. The highest good that man can achieve is virtue, and when he, by means of reason, deliberately wishes to become virtuous, he has found the only possible way to achieve virtue. The better men are therefore those who follow the principles of reason, while worse men rather follow their drives. These bad people, however, cannot achieve this highest good as they are completely captivated by their emotions and desires, which will never lead them to absolute virtue. Since they prefer their animal qualities to their fine mental capacities, they do not even want to become virtuous and, accordingly, cannot love themselves, since loving oneself means wishing oneself only the very best—and that is virtue. Good men will therefore always strive to lead a virtuous life. This is then also to become a leading

harmony that results from the equal and mutual love of friends. Such equal and mutual love leads to the sharing of goods and property between friends. Thus friendship, in distinction from other relationships, is based on an equality which extends both to the inner life of men and their outward possessions." Hutter 112.

[108] Cf. Hutter 112.

[109] See 35.

principle of Renaissance philosophy in general and of the early modern philosophy of friendship in particular, as we will see later on.

Those who love virtue will love it absolutely, which means that they do not only love their own virtuousness but also that of others. These are of course the other good men, and the company and friendship with them will again produce virtue, since friendship, as we have seen, is an amplifier of virtue. Making friends with another good man therefore means to intensify one's own virtuousness. Loving a friend for the friend's sake, and doing him a good turn, is also virtuous. So, each one, in loving his friend, loves himself, and in doing him good, he also benefits himself.[110] It can therefore be assumed that, conversely, everything a good man does for himself will also be of benefit to his friend, since the actions of a good man will always be virtuous, and the intensification of one's own virtue—by doing virtuous deeds—will always positively affect that of the friend as well.

If everything someone does for his friend is equally good for both, there is hardly anything a good man would not do for his friend. This simple statement is not only the essence of his idea of self-love, it also provides the solution to the philosophical problem how egoism, so characteristic of the human nature, can be united and reconciled with altruism.[111] Aristotle can therefore even employ his theory of self-love to explain the phenomenon of the true friend who is willing to sacrifice himself for his best friend.[112] According to Aristotle, the friend has in fact no other choice if he wants to remain virtuous. Saving his friend's life would be a virtuous deed, but not doing so would mean to behave in a dishonourable way. A virtuous man will therefore rather choose to lead a shorter but honourable, virtuous, and therefore happier life than a longer but disgraceful one in ignominy.[113] Here Aristotle does not only link his concept of self-love with that of virtue but also with that of happiness (*εὐδαιμονία*/ *eudaimonia*). His idea that virtuousness also leads to happiness is based on the following assumption: Life is good per se, a virtuous life is even better, and the realization that one leads such a virtuous life provides happiness. Since the existence of his own virtuous life makes a good man happy, and since the friend is his other self and identical to him, the virtuous life of his friend will also provide him with happiness. It will, in fact, double it; and for this reason a good man needs a friend when he wants to increase his happiness.[114] Here, of course, Aristotle's conception of friendship reveals

[110] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1168b-1169a.

[111] Indeed, an earth-shattering achievement—if there were only more good men in this world. Cf. Pakaluk xi-xii.

[112] This archaic motif of the brave and virtuous man who is willing to die for his friend also remained a popular and essential part of later conceptions of friendship, especially of those dominated by chivalric and Christian thought.

[113] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 9.8, 1169a.

[114] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 9.9, 1170a-b.

its egoistic character, as the friend is rather loved for the function he performs as an amplifier of happiness than for his own sake[115].

From all this might follow that, since the benefit of virtue is simultaneously directed towards the self and to the friend, both become the united object of their good and virtuous intentions. But as they are the united object of their own good intentions, they must consequently also be their united subject. Their friendship is then the power that makes this fusion possible. It merges, so to speak, the origin of their virtuousness, their reason, into one soul, so that each becomes the 'other self' of his friend, as Aristotle describes it: "(for a friend is another self)**.**"[116] In fact, the well-known image of the single soul that dwells in two bodies, which is frequently associated with Aristotle, does not appear in the context of the discussion in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The statement in which Aristotle used the image to explain his idea of friendship was ascribed to him by Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, to which later authors referred when they linked the expression with Aristotle.[117]

Aristotle's theory of perfect friendship is therefore based on the assumption that the mere equality of the friends is just the precondition for their friendship. In the course of this friendship, due to their love of virtue and for themselves, they become even identical to each other. From this follows that each friend has the same feelings and intentions for himself as he has for his friend and that thereby the distinction between the object and the subject of love disappears. Each of the friends is thus as much a loving friend to himself as to his friend.[118] The ability to love oneself, however, is derived from the ability to love a friend, and not vice versa. Why this is also one of the main controversies between the conceptions of Plato and Aristotle, is explained by Hutter:

> For Plato, one could love another only to the extend one could love oneself while for Aristotle one could love oneself only to the extend that one could love another. This difference results from the fact that for Plato friendship is a means for the attainment of the vision of the world of ideas, whereas for Aristotle friendship (due to its character of being a virtue) is an end in itself as well as a means.[119]

With his conception of friendship, Aristotle was the first to succeed in presenting a coherent theory of the subject that, complete in itself, also provided the theoretical background to notions of the theme that had already existed. Thus, he did not only

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[115] For a commentary on the question whether Aristotle's concept of friendship is primarily an egoistic or an altruistic one, see Pakaluk 29.

[116] "(ἔστι γὰρ ὁ φίλος ἄλλος αὐτός)." Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 9.4, 1166a33. – Trans. Rackham 535. For the representation of this idea in Cicero's work, see also 59.

[117] See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* 5.20.

[118] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 9.4, 1166a.

[119] Hutter 114.

incorporate traditional ideas into his theory, he also turned from purely hypothetical considerations to a more practical view of friendship. With this approach, Aristotle set new standards and inspired most of the subsequent treatments of friendship. Hutter even goes so far as to say that "later works on *philia*, such as those of Epicurus, Stoic treatises, and the essay by Plutarch are merely repetitions of views already presented by Aristotle."[120] What is sometimes said about Shakespeare and his plays seems also true for Aristotle and his treatment of *philia*: it was very difficult to produce anything original after him. In fact, until Cicero—definitely influenced by his ideas—became one of his most significant successors, Aristotle remained the main authority in the field of friendship theory.

1.3. CICERO'S THEORY OF FRIENDSHIP AS APPLIED ETHICS

The credit for preparing the ground for philosophical treatments of personal friendship is certainly to be given to Plato, whereas Aristotle's theory of friendship might be considered the most important and perhaps also the most original of all. Probably the most influential work on friendship was though written more than two centuries later. It were in fact not so much Aristotle's or even Plato's writings but Cicero's *Laelius de amicita* that in medieval times and especially in the Renaissance became a set book as far as the matter of friendship was concerned.[121]

Although the *Laelius* is philosophically by no means original and does hardly provide any new theoretical detail for the subject—most of Cicero's ideas are, in fact, Aristotelian, and Powell rightly states that the "difference between Cicero and Aristotle is more one of emphasis and approach than of fundamental doctrine"—the dialogue has yet to be reckoned among the most important and influential treatises on friendship in history.[122] The *Laelius* is outstanding in its fine, polished style that makes it a masterpiece of rhetorical art, and this it is not only due to the eloquent wording, its structure is equally skilled: it descends from the theoretic general to the rather practical particular. Beginning with a definition of friendship, it ends with examples, principles and advises.[123] So, Cicero's achievement is not the invention of a completely new conception but that he skilfully collected and blended the existing and well-tried notions, and, by emphasizing its moral value, produced a practicable theory of friendship as applied ethics. He could do so, as in contrast to the Greek treatment of

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[120] Hutter 107.

[121] For a detailed discussion of the title question of Cicero's treatise on friendship, i.e. the question which of the variants of the title was originally given to it by Cicero (*Laelius*, *Laelius de amicitia*, *Laelius vel de amicitia*, or just *De amicitia*), see Karl August Neuhausen, ed., *Laelius*, by Marcus Tullius Cicero (Heidelberg: Winter, 1981) 25-47.

[122] Powell, introduction 19.

[123] Cf. Pakaluk 77.

philia as a generic concept, which could refer to any kind of affectionate relationship, Latin *amicitia* was a more exclusive concept that referred to the relation between friends only. This enabled Cicero and other Roman philosophers to focus on the characteristics of this particular kind of relation. As they were especially interested in the private and public value of friendship, they placed special emphasis on the moral and social aspects of *amicitia*. The aim was to set up an ethical yet practicable code of friendship.[124]

Cicero introduces the topic of the *Laelius* with the statement that friendship has to be considered the highest good of all, when he says: "ego vos hortari tantum possum ut amicitiam omnibus rebus humanis anteponatis; nihil est enim tam naturae aptum, tam conveniens ad res vel secundas vel adversas."[125] He does indeed not only regard friendship as being more valuable than worldly goods, such as wealth, honour, glory, peace of mind, and enjoyment, but also as being even more estimable than virtue itself, since friendship is the end of virtue.[126] In friendship, however, all the things that man considers desirable and necessary for his happiness are included. Friendship is therefore the key to happiness, and virtue is the way to it. Through their friendship, friends will thus be able to achieve happiness when they strive for virtue together.[127] This, however, does only apply to the true and perfect friendship (*vera et perfecta amicitia*) and not to the ordinary or even false ones. There are only few passages in the text where Cicero distinguishes between superior and inferior friendship. He obviously draws on Aristotle's threefold classification even though he only speaks of true friendship in contrast to common ones. He does not distinguish the ordinary friendships any further but considers them both pleasurable and profitable.[128] His categorization is therefore rather twofold and in the context of the *Laelius* even

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[124] In doing so, Cicero did not only refer to particularly Platonic-, Socratic-, or Aristotelian thoughts but also took Peripatetic- and Stoic opinions into consideration. Yet, although Cicero's philosophy was certainly influenced by the Stoics, he regarded their strict idealization of virtue as impracticable. Like the Epicureans, he remained in his own ethical conceptions rather realistic, though he never tried to integrate Epicurean elements into his own thought. In his treatise on friendship, he even clearly dissociates his conception from the predominantly utilitarian ideas of the Epicureans. However, Cicero adopted most of his ideas of friendship, in fact, from Stoic and especially from Peripatetic sources, and thus indirectly from Aristotle. Cf. Hutter 133n3. Powell is therefore right in saying that "the philosophical content of the *Laelius* appears as a characteristically Ciceronian mixture, with elements of Stoic idealism incorporated alongside the more practical observations of the Peripatetics." Powell, introduction 20.

[125] Cicero, *Laelius* 5.17. – "All that I can do is to exhort you to rank friendship above all other things in human life. There is nothing so natural, nothing so beneficial either in favourable or in unfavourable circumstances." Trans. Powell 37.

[126] See Cicero, *Laelius* 6.20. In this, of course, he differs from Aristotle and rather resembles the Socratic view presented by Plato. For Cicero as for Socrates, virtue only produces and maintains friendship; for Aristotle, friendship itself is a kind of virtue. See 46.

[127] See Cicero, *Laelius* 22.83-84. Here Cicero agrees with Aristotle in assuming that there is a causal connection between virtue, friendship, and happiness. See 53.

[128] See Cicero, *Laelius* 6.22.

ambiguously and inconsistently employed. In fact, most of the time Cicero only speaks of friendship in general without making any distinction.

Like his predecessors, Cicero emphasizes the idea that friendship can only exist between truly good men.[129] In contrast to the Aristotelian or the Stoic conception, however, his definition of 'good' corresponds to its conventional meaning and does not denote an unattainable philosophical ideal.[130] He considers friendship to be better than kinship since friendship fundamentally needs the friends' mutual benevolence to exist. Without benevolence, friendship would be impossible. Kinship, however, can also exist without goodwill.[131]

For Cicero, the main characteristic of friendship is that it "originates in Nature, and is based on a complete community of thought and action between virtuous men":[132] "Est enim amicitia nihil aliud nisi omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum cum benevolentia et caritate consensio; qua quidem haud scio an exepta sapientia nihil melius homini sit a dis immortalibus datum."[133] In such a relationship the friends will equally share happiness and sorrow, talk to each other as they would to themselves, and enjoy the pleasures of life together.[134]

In contrast to the Epicureans, who considered friendship mainly in terms of utility, Cicero, like Aristotle, insists on the idea that true friendship can only arise from mutual affection and each friend's love for the virtuous soul of his friend. It is the perception of virtue, or to be precise, the perception of the virtuous character of the friend that evokes affection for him. This affection, and not the hope for profit, is the true origin of friendship:

> Saepissime igitur mihi de amicitia cogitanti maxime illud considerandum videri solet, utrum propter imbecillitatem atque inopiam desiderata sit amicitia, ut dandis recipiendisque meritis, quod quisque minus per se ipse posset, id acciperet ab alio vicissimque redderet, an esset hoc quidem proprium amicitiae, sed antiquior et pulchrior et magis a natura ipsa profecta alia causa. Amor enim, ex quo amicitia nominata est, princeps est

[129] See Cicero, *Laelius* 5.18. It is not clear if he adopted this idea directly from Aristotle or, as Powell suggests, rather from Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (2.6.16). See Powell, introduction 2. In connection with this idea, Cicero at least repeats Aristotle's opinion that friendship is such a close and intimate relationship that it should ideally exist only between two friends. See Cicero, *Laelius* 5.20.

[130] See Cicero, *Laelius* 5.18-19.

[131] See Cicero, *Laelius* 5.19.

[132] Powell, introduction 18. The idea that friendship originates in Nature refers to both Cicero's belief that Nature itself has created a bond of friendship between those who are naturally close to each other, like neighbours or relatives (see Cicero, *Laelius* 5.18), and his belief that good men are naturally attracted to each other. Cf. Powell, commentary 90.

[133] Cicero, *Laelius* 6.20. – "For friendship is in fact nothing other than a community of views on all matters human and divine, together with goodwill and affection; and I am not sure that the gods have given men any better gift than this, leaving aside wisdom." Trans. Powell 37. This became in fact a popular and often quoted definition for friendship in the Renaissance.

[134] See Cicero, *Laelius* 6.22.

> ad benevolentiam coniungendam; nam utilitates quidem etiam ab eis percipiuntur saepe qui simulatione amicitae coluntur et observantur temporis causa; in amicitia autem nihil fictum est, nihil simulatum, et quidquid est, id est verum et voluntarium. Quapropter a natura mihi videtur potius quam ab indigentia orta amicitia, applicatione magis animi cum quodam sensu amandi quam cogitatione quantum illa res utilitatis esset habitura.[135]

Like Aristotle, Cicero here proclaims that utility is the result of friendship, but that friendship cannot be the result of utility.[136]

Besides the representation of these well-known ideas about the origin and the nature of friendship, Cicero also places extraordinary emphasis on the dangers to which friendship is exposed. When the friends begin to develop different or even opposing interests or political convictions; when one friend undergoes an alteration of character due to misfortune or increasing age; when the friends become rivals in matters of courtship,[137] profession, or social standing; or when one friend expects the other to do something that is not virtuous, morally wrong, or even illegal; their friendship enters a serious state of crisis. Under such conditions, the friendship might be ended or it can even turn into an enmity.[138] But when a friendship is past saving, it should rather peter out than be abruptly broken off. It is then important to avoid the rise of enmity between the former friends.[139]

Among those situations that might endanger the continuation of a friendship, one is particularly tricky. The question whether one should do his friend a favour when this would mean to act against one's own convictions, is a problem that has already troubled Aristotle.[140] The real question that is here implied is whether it is more

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[135] Cicero, *Laelius* 8.26-27. – "Well then: I have often had occasion to think about friendship, and it has always seemed to me that a point that deserves most serious thought is this: whether friendship is something that we need because of our own weakness and insufficiency, whereby, in a mutual exchange of favours, each man receives from another what he could not achieve for himself, and vice-versa; or whether, though this might indeed be a characteristic of friendship, its cause is something else, more fundamental and nobler, with its source in nature herself. For the first thing to bring people together in a relationship of goodwill is love (*amor*), from which friendship (*amicitia*) derives its name. There are, indeed, practical advantages to be enjoyed also by those whose society is cultivated by others and who receive favours, under the pretence of friendship, for temporary expediency; but in friendship itself, pretence and deception have no place; whatever is done, must be done freely and truthfully. For this reason it seems to me that friendship originates in nature rather than in need: more because of an attachment of the mind accompanied by a sense of affection, than because of a calculation of the amount of advantage that the association will bring." Trans. Powell 41. Here Cicero combines various ideas from Plato's *Lysis* and *Symposium*, and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Cf. Powell, commentary, 93.

[136] See 48.

[137] The rivalry of friends in matters of courtship is an idea that frequently reoccurs in the discussion of friendship and especially in the literary treatment of the subject in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. See 185ff.

[138] See Cicero, *Laelius* 10.33-35.

[139] See Cicero, *Laelius* 21.76-79.

[140] See 48.

virtuous to remain loyal to one's friend than to the principle of virtue itself. For Cicero the maintenance of the virtuous conduct of the friends is indispensable—not at least because of its political dimension. Since friendship is based on virtue, there can consequently be no service rendered out of friendship that aims at something that is not virtuous. Vicious conduct cannot be harmonized with virtuous friendship, and the friends should never require dishonourable services from one another, nor should a friend give in to such demands. If he does it nevertheless, his friendship with the instigator will not be an excuse for his actions nor will they serve as a proof of friendship or a sign of loyalty. He even cannot consider their friendship to be a real one, as true friendship is always based on virtue.[141] This statement reveals Cicero's special interest in the political and social value of true friendship. His *amicitia* is, as it were, a kind of safety device, which protects the state from any potentially subversive actions of the friends. This is also the reason why he regards friendship as the highest good and considers the best community to be that which is based on the friendship of its members. Reflections on the political advantages of friendship, however, are not originally Ciceronian but are already to be found in the Greek discourses.

Another element that Cicero adopts from his predecessors and which he explicitly emphasizes is the conception of the friend as one's 'other self': "Verum enim amicum qui intuetur, tamquam exemplar aliquod intuetur sui."[142] Together with the almost proverbial motif of the single soul, or single mind, that dwells in two bodies, this idea became, as it were, *the* symbol of true friendship. If it had not already been so since Greek times, it achieved this status at least with the Romans.[143] From Aristotle (or probably rather from the Peripatetics) he also adopted the idea that the unity of souls in friendship must somehow derive from the self-love of the friends since it is the same kind of love that is directed towards the friend as to oneself: "Ipse enim se quisque diligit, non ut aliquam a se ipse mercedem exigat caritatis suae, sed quod per se sibi quisque carus est; quod nisi idem in amicitiam transferetur, verus amicus numquam reperietur; est enim is qui est tamquam alter idem."[144]

Despite all borrowings, something distinguishes Cicero's dialogue from the writings of his predecessors. The *Laelius* is not designed to approach personal friendship as an uncharted subject (like Plato's *Lysis*), or to establish a complete philosophical theory of it (as in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*). Its main purpose is rather to serve as a practical

[141] See Cicero, *Laelius* 11.36-12.42.

[142] Cicero, *Laelius* 7.23. – "For he who looks at a true friend, sees as it were a reflection of himself." Trans. Powell 39.

[143] For Cicero's use of the image, see *Laelius* 25.91.

[144] Cicero, *Laelius* 21.80. – "For every person loves himself, not in order to recover some reward of his affection from himself, but because everyone is naturally valued by himself; now unless this same principle is transferred into friendship, one will never find a true friend, who is, as it were, another self." Trans. Powell 65.

guide to the right conduct of friends in a friendship. Besides his fundamental notions of friendship, which he primarily adopted from his predecessors and that provide the theoretical background to his concept, Cicero also presents some ideas of a less elementary, but rather practical nature. Most of these practical maxims are in fact derived from those fundamental but partly idealized conceptions; and it is the combination of both that constitutes Cicero's practicable concept of moral friendship, as it were. Since the majority of these guiding principles reoccurred in the literary contemplation of friendship from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment, it may now be well appropriate to mention the most important ones.

For Cicero, a friend should ideally have an irreproachable character, although some minor faults, as long as they do not endanger life or reputation, should always be tolerated by true friends. One should be, however, very careful in the choice of one's friends since true and faithful friends are hard to find. Those who will stand by their friends in good as in bad times are rare and should hence be held in high esteem.[145]

Although both friends should have an impeccable character, it might sometimes become necessary to criticize the friend. There should hence be no hesitation to do so, if the friendship is considered a true and sincere one. Yet, the rebuke should never be harsh or even hurting. Not to criticize the friend for something he has done wrongly would though mean to flatter him, and flattery is the most serious enemy of true friendship. True friendship needs honesty and loyalty. Otherwise, Cato's complaint that we learn more truth from our enemies than from our friends would be justified.[146]

Loyalty and confidence are hence the main preconditions for a durable friendship. Pretence, hypocrisy, suspicion, and listening to those who make charges against the friend, are qualities which are by no means tolerable and which have nothing to do with true friendship.[147]

Old friendships are, like good wine, the better ones since the friends can look back on a long time that they have spend together. Old friends are the closest since they have eaten that certain amount of salt together that already Aristotle regarded as the best measurement for a good and lasting friendship. Nevertheless, this should not be taken as a reason for avoiding new friends or potential friendships.[148]

In a friendship between two good men who are of a different social standing, both friends should be regarded as being equal since equality is the most characteristic feature of friendship.[149] The difference in social status, normally a definite obstacle to

[145] See Cicero, *Laelius* 17.61-64.

[146] See Cicero, *Laelius* 24.88-25.96.

[147] See Cicero, *Laelius* 28.65-66.

[148] See Cicero, *Laelius* 19.67-68.

[149] See Cicero, *Laelius* 19.69-70.

the formation of true friendships, is here balanced by the equal virtuousness of the friends.

In times of need, when one friend should help the other, two things are to be considered: firstly, to what degree the helping friend is able to give, and secondly, to what extent the receiving friend can accept this help.[150] Cicero here probably refers to the Aristotelian view on this aspect. In the *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle expects the one who is in need, not to trouble his friend with his problems since he certainly does not want to cause the one who will share all sorrows with him, any of such. On the other hand he also expects the one who is able to help, to support his friend without being asked, since by this, he does something good for his friend and thus also for himself. The best help, however, is that which causes the helper the least trouble, but provides the maximum service for the one in need.[151]

It is certainly due to all the qualities of the *Laelius*—the elegance of its sophisticated style, the combination and inclusion of former conceptions, and the practical character of the guiding principles it presents—that it became one of the most popular classical sources in medieval times as well as in the Renaissance.[152] The fact that the *Laelius* could be read as a practical guide to perfect friendship—similar to the handbooks that were written to give guidance for the right conduct of princes or courtiers from medieval times onwards[153]—was though certainly the main aspect that made the source so popular, especially with the humanistic readership in the Renaissance. The concept it presents was no longer a mere theoretical hypothesis, but so comprehensible that people could not only easily grasp its argumentation but were also able to translate these ideas into practice. Besides this, the reason for the significance of Cicero's *Laelius* for the scholastic as for the humanistic discussion of friendship is certainly not only that it mirrors all the classical notions of friendship—just as Aristotle's discourse did before—but also that it was written in Latin, and therefore accessible to a larger readership. In other words: "Cicero's importance in the history of philosophy is as a transmitter of Greek thought. In the course of this role, he gave Rome and, therefore, Europe its philosophical vocabulary."[154]

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[150] See Cicero, *Laelius* 20.71-73.

[151] See Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 9.11-12, 1171b-1172a.

[152] Together with the dialogue *De officiis*, the *Laelius*, by later writers often simply referred to as *De amicitia*, was probably the most widely read of Cicero's works in medieval times. It had a definite influence on the writings of such Christian authors as Augustine, Aelred of Rievaulx (*c.* 1110-1167), and Peter of Blois (*c.* 1135-*c.* 1203). Cf., for example, Powell, introduction 24; and Hyatte 16.

[153] The 'codes of conduct' or 'mirrors for princes,' as these handbooks were called, became extremely popular in the Renaissance. For the treatment of friendship in one of these books, see 94ff.

[154] Ferguson and Balsdon, 4 Aug. 1999 <http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=84794&sctn=1>.

2 THE REASSESSMENT OF THE CLASSICAL NOTIONS IN RENAISSANCE HUMANISM

There is no doubt that, before the revived enthusiasm for classical thought in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the meaning and significance of personal friendship and thus the underlying philosophical and theological conceptions of it in the Middle Ages were distinctively different from those in antiquity or the Renaissance. During medieval times, the notions of friendship were predominantly determined by the Teutonic conception of kin-relationship or by the beliefs of Christian doctrine. This means that friendship was either considered an individualized form of Christian charity—as in the theological contemplation of Saint Aelred of Rievaulx and Thomas Aquinas[1]—or was conceptualized in the feudal-Teutonic terms of chivalry and brotherhood. In medieval times the conception of those relationships that the classical writers and those of the Renaissance would have regarded as friendships, was rather similar to that of family connections. And since, in the hierarchy of the feudal family, brothers were the most equal ones concerning age and position, friendship often came under the name of brotherhood. The friends who were engaged in such a friendship became 'brothers' either by the mingling of their blood[2] or by oath, like the two heroes of the Scottish metrical romance *Eger and Grime*:

> These knights, Sir Egar and Sir Grime.
> They were fellowes good and fine.
> They were nothing sib of blood,
> But they were sworne bretheren good.

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[1] For a detailed presentation of Aelred's and Aquinas' theories see Mark F. Williams, trans., introduction, *Aelred of Rievaulx's 'Spiritual Friendship': A New Translation*, by Aelred of Rievaulx (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 1994) 18-20; Heinrich M. Christmann, ed., introduction, *Summa Theologica: II-II, 23-33*, by Thomas von Aquin, Die Deutsche Thomas-Ausgabe 17A, (Heidelberg/Graz: Kerle/Styria, 1959) 8-9; and Pakaluk 129-130, 146.

[2] "Abundant examples of the rite [of blood-brotherhood] among the peoples of Germanic stock, especially in its Scandinavian form, have been collected and analyzed. Here, as elsewhere, it first took the shape of an artificial commingling of blood, by which the contracting parties were thought to become brothers in fact, bound to each other by ties and obligations no less sacred than those which joined sons of the same parents. It was their duty to stand side by side in the conflicts of life, to die together in battle, and to avenge their blood if one of them were slain in the absence of the other. The ceremonies of entrance on blood brotherhood were sometimes elaborately symbolical, usually involving, at least in the Scandinavian rite as illustrated by the sagas, the mingling of the companions' blood in the earth, – the common mother of all." Gordon Hall Gerould, "Social and Historical Reminiscences in the Middle English *Athelston*," *Englische Studien* 36 (1906): 195-96.

> They keeped a chamber together att home;
> Better loue loved there never none.[3]

One might, in fact, even venture to say that for most people in the Middle Ages friendship was no longer an ideal form of relationship but merely a means to another end. For the scholastics, it was the reflection of the love of God. For the feudal, chivalric, and Teutonic societies, it was a useful means to the preservation of a system that was based on faith and loyalty. However, when Mills says that

> with the lack of general knowledge of classical views; the emphasis on the otherworldly, the religious, and the didactic; the prevalence of feudal and chivalric principles in society; and the admixture of friendship notions of separate origin, there was, in the Middle Ages, almost no glorification of friendship as a boon and privilege on this earth,[4]

his view of the situation in medieval times might be a bit too general and simple. Of course, the factors he mentions did certainly contribute to a widespread neglect or disregard of classical friendship ideals, but the age had produced its own idealized conceptions, either more spiritual or more down-to-earth notions of the topic.

Now, it is of course undeniable that the views on friendship in the Renaissance were primarily based on the ideas that had been developed in antiquity. But to overemphazise the difference between the medieval and the classical and early modern notions of friendship or to speak even of a revival of classical ideas of friendship in the Renaissance could of course also give the impression that in the period which directly preceded it, these ideas had widely been ignored. This, however, is not quite true. The educated elite of the Middle Ages, and particularly the clergy, had been well acquainted with the ancient ideas of friendship—at least with those of Roman times, since they were written in Latin. And it is precisely for this reason of language that, when we look at the major classical theories of friendship presented in the previous sections concerning their reception and their importance in medieval times, from the most to the least influential, we will find the order to be nearly the reverse of the chronological one.

Cicero's works, for instance, were widely read, and enjoyed a very good reputation during the Middle Ages, even though some of them were only accessible in fragments and others not yet at all. The *Laelius de amicitia*, however, was already available in its complete form, and the relatively large number of about 500 preserved manuscript copies of the text that date back to the period from the ninth to the sixteenth centuries document the popularity it enjoyed in medieval as in later times. And the fact that Cicero's *Laelius* was so widely accessible and, since he was writing in Latin, also

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[3] "Eger and Grime," *Middle English Metrical Romances*, ed. Walter Hoyt French and Charles Brockway Hale, 2nd ed. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964) 673.

[4] Mills 17.

readable for most of the literate people fostered the overwhelming popularity of this work even more. It was held in such a high regard that it even became one of the major school texts—besides the *Cato Maior* in fact the only work of the whole Ciceronian corpus—that was used not only by medieval teachers but later on also still by those in the Renaissance.[5] "In medieval Europe," as Reginald Hyatte points out, "this dialogue was one of the most widely read classical works on *amicitia perfecta* along with Latin versions of the *Nicomachean Ethics* after the twelfth century."[6]

Here, Hyatte also hints at the other classical source on friendship that received considerable attention with the medieval readership—at least after 1247. In fact, although in the ancient world, Aristotle's works had already enjoyed such a tremendous reputation that they had become widely accessible by the first century BC, in the Middle Ages, Latin editions of his writings were not available to the western European scholars and the educated elite before the second half of the twelfth century, and some of his works remained inaccessible or incompletely translated even until the second half of the following century. For this reason, a complete reception of the *Nicomachean Ethics* was for most scholars not possible before the midst of the thirteenth century, when the Oxford scholar Robert Grosseteste (*c.* 1175-1253) and his circle presented a revised and completed Latin translation of the text in the years 1246-47. For many medieval thinkers and writers, like Albertus Magnus (*c.* 1200-1280) and Thomas Aquinas (1224/25-1274), this edition provided the first approach to this important source. And for years it was to remain the only Latin access to it, until in 1273 the Flemish translator William of Moerbeke (*c.* 1215-*c.* 1286) presented a complete Latin edition of all Aristotelian works known by that time.[7]

Although Aristotle's writings had been rediscovered and translated into Latin only relatively late in the Middle Ages, their influence was enormous. Once his work became accessible to a broader scholarly readership, it immediately began to influence their views on medieval philosophy, so that the scholasticism of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries became clearly dominated by the new Aristotelianism.

The same, however, cannot be said about the writings of Plato. With the Romans, Plato had still been much read and held in high esteem, although his works had only seldom been translated into Latin. In the Middle Ages, however, the reception of Platonic ideas took place primarily through the intermediary of the works of the patristic Platonists and Neoplatonists, and in particular through the writings of Augustine. Plato's own writings did though not meet with much response and copies

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[5] See Charles B. Schmitt et al., eds., *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 779; and Neuhausen, Vorwort 1.

[6] Hyatte 26.

[7] Cf. Thompson, appendix J, by Hugh Trendennick, 365; and Lorenzo Minio-Paluello, ed., "Aristotelianism: The later Latin tradition," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 24 May 2000 <http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?artcl=108313&seq_nbr=1&page=n&isctn=7>.

of them were not widely spread. Up to the fifteenth century, only Chalcidius' translation of nearly half of the *Timaeus*, Henricus Aristippus' rendering of *Meno* and *Phaedo*, and an incomplete version of the *Parmenides*, translated by William of Moerbeke, were available in Latin. The three dialogues in which Plato presents his Socratic view on friendship, however, (the *Lysis*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus*) were not on hand in Latin or in any vernacular versions before the fifteenth century.[8]

One can therefore say that the *Laelius* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*, together with several passages on friendship from Cicero's *De officiis* and Seneca's *Epistulae morales*, "constituted the canon of *amicitia* for the Middle Ages."[9] And the few though remarkable treatises that were written on friendship in the period, and those by Aelred of Rievaulx and Thomas Aquinas in particular, were based to a great extent on these texts. So, what Laurens J. Mills says about the literature of the English Renaissance in his study of the representations of friendship in Tudor literature and Stuart drama, is certainly also true for the rest of the European literature of that time: "English literature of the Middle Ages is not lacking altogether in the use of the classical theories of friendship. It would, in fact, be surprising, considering the amount of learning possessed by medieval students and scholars, if no reflections of the classical views on the subject were perceptible."[10] Thus, what we can find when we look at the literary representation of friendship in medieval times is not an ignorance of the classical conceptions but rather their skilful transformation into concepts that could be harmonized with the doctrines of Christianity and adapted to the realities of feudalism and chivalry.[11]

For the treatment of personal friendship in the Renaissance, however, these medieval notions were only of secondary importance since they influenced the humanistic conception only indirectly and rather on the level of religious considerations concerning the subject. A detailed analysis of the medieval views, inevitable for a comprehensive study of the history of friendship conceptions, would though go beyond the scope of this work which is rather interested in the question of how the classical conceptions were revived in the literature and life of the Renaissance.[12]

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[8] Cf. Hyatte 10, 10n9; and Schmitt et al. 786f.

[9] Hyatte 16.

[10] Mills 16.

[11] The terminology, however, by which the new ideas of friendship were conceptualized, remained the same, as Hyatte points out: "Throughout the medieval period, the Ciceronian-Senecan terminology of *amicitia vera* persisted in large part as the basic vocabulary of *amicitia christiana* and also of secular sorts of friendship in Latin and vernacular works. The pagan terminology persisted, but its semantic content was radically altered." Hyatte 40.

[12] For a reference to some excellent studies on the topic of medieval friendship, see 23n31.

The emergence and spread of humanistic ideas at the end of the Middle Ages marks not only the transition to a new age, the Renaissance, but also the transition from medieval to modern times. At this significant point in history, we can notice a gradual change in the intellectual attitude to a variety of notions and opinions, and, besides a number of other conceptual changes, also a new quality in the conceptualisation of friendship. When in late fourteenth-century Florence the first humanists began to regard the world—and the role of man in this world—from a different perspective, they also challenged the medieval views on the kinds of relationship men should have. The humanists' educational ideal of the *studia humanitatis*—the ideal of an education that is devoted to the study of the wisdom of pagan antiquity—led to a new interest in and search for classical literature and to a new approach to classical philosophy. The re-approach to classical thought in general then also evoked a renewed interest in the classical conceptions of friendship.[13] Now we can find, as Mills puts it, an "increased amount of emphasis on the subject, a preponderance of classical ideas over medieval […], more numerous complaints of the absence of perfect friendships, a more enthusiastic welcome to the classical theories as applicable directly to life […], and finally, […] frequent use of the theme as adequate motivation in literary productions."[14] Friendship became in fact a very popular subject for literary treatment in writings of various kinds, so that we can find it not only in the numerous essays and discourses that dealt with it either exclusively or as part of more comprehensive discussions of moral issues, but also as the theme of many pieces of prose, poetry, and drama.[15] Besides all this, friendship also often appears, directly or indirectly, as the major topic of concern in the correspondence of the time's most eminent men of letters. It is thus not only the enormous number of different treatments of the subject in the period, but precisely the great variety of different genres that proves how popular the topic was. That it was dealt with in all kinds of text, texts with so different intentions, signifies the importance of which friendship was to the Renaissance humanists. Since there are certainly more occurrences of friendship representations in Renaissance literature than in classical literature itself, it would indeed be a Sisyphean task to examine them all, and the expenditure on such a work would truly be out of all proportion to its informative value. Therefore, we will here limit our examination to a number of selected texts that represent the nature of the different conceptualizations of friendship in the period best.

Now, talking about the new, favourable attitude towards the classical definitions of friendship in the Renaissance does in fact primarily mean talking about the humanistic

[13] On the emphasis on classical thought in the Renaissance in general, see, for example, Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).

[14] Mills 112-13.

[15] For an abridged list of essays or discourses on friendship that were published in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Mills 422n172.

attitude towards the matter. This in turn means that the further development of this attitude and the changes in the conceptualizations and representations of friendship per se in the period were closely connected with the spread of humanism and the rise and fall of this intellectual 'movement'. Although the fate of humanistic ideas in general is not the only factor that determined the history of friendship in the forthcoming centuries, it is indeed important to notice the connection between the changing views on friendship and the development of humanism itself.

Humanism was of course a phenomenon of the European Renaissance as such and wherever humanistic ideas fell on fertile ground, authors sooner or later also began to write about friendship in one way or another. It is, however, quite remarkable that there seem to be more instances of classically inspired representations and treatments of friendship in the literature of the Italian Renaissance in the fifteenth century and the English Renaissance in the sixteenth century than in the writings of French and particularly Spanish and German authors of that time.[16] This should of course not mean that the topic was completely excluded from the works of such writers—in Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra's *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quixote de La Mancha*, for example, the theme of friendship plays an important role indeed—or that friendship was not to become a favourite subject for consideration in these national literatures at all.[17] French contributions to the discussion of the value of friendship, for instance, increased in the seventeenth century, and in German literature, the topic even enjoyed an overwhelming revival in the so called 'friendship cult' of the eighteenth century. But as far as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are concerned, the variety of occurrences of the theme in Italian and English sources is outstanding, for which reason we will here primarily concentrate on them. To focus on fifteenth-century Italian and sixteenth-century English writings has furthermore the benefit of gaining a good impression of the attitudes towards friendship at the beginning and at the end of the European Renaissance, which is of course indispensable to the examination of the development that the conception of friendship underwent in the course of the period.

In the following, we will see in which high esteem the humanists held the topic, but also that the close connection between friendship and humanism was one of the causes for the concept's later disparagement. Humanism was mainly interested in two aspects of knowledge: in its classical origin and in its practicability. Realism was indeed an

[16] How popular the topic of friendship really was with writers of the different European countries at that time and how present the treatments of this subject really are in the different national literatures has in fact to be shown by more detailed studies on the literary representation of friendship in these particular literatures. Until today, however, such studies are seldom, as the interest in the topic of friendship is in most cases limited to the writings of specific authors, and is not focused on the whole literature of a nation at a particular time. One of the few exceptions is the study of Minna Skafte Jensen, "Humanist Friendship in 16th Century Denmark," *A Literary Miscellany Presented to Eric Jacobsen*, ed. Graham D. Caie (Copenhagen: Dept. of Eng., U of Copenhagen, 1988) 185-201.

[17] For a detailed discussion of the role friendship played in the work of Cervantes, see Matthew Alan Wyszynski, "Cervantes' 'Don Quixote' and the Idea of Friendship," diss., U of Michigan, 1996.

important feature of the humanistic approach to philosophical matters; the classical conceptions of perfect friendship, however, are for the most part mere ideals, and ideals are not that easily put into practice. So, in the end, it was certainly also the impossibility of living up to an ideal of friendship that led to a debasement of the concept in the early seventeenth century. Thus, when Peter Burke asserts that the Renaissance "marks a turning-point in the history of friendship,"[18] he is definitely right, but the renewed interest in classical ideals of friendship in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries did in fact not lead to an unrestricted or even enduring enthusiasm for the subject in the following centuries, nor can the development, as Mills explains, "be visualized as a simple overturning of an hour-glass or a mere reversal in direction of movement; the situation is too complex for that. In fact, the history of the theme is one of growing complexity."[19] This complexity makes the representation of the different conceptions of friendship and of the history of their development of course quite difficult. As the Renaissance did not take place in all European countries at the same time, the conceptions of friendship did also not develop in the same way in all places. Developments that can be traced in the early fifteenth century in Italy, for example, recurred nearly a hundred years later in England, while others took place almost exclusively at a particular time in a particular region. The history of friendship in early modern times was indeed anything but a unilineal development that began and ended with the rise and fall of humanism. There were, in fact, many views on friendship that existed and developed parallel to each other: some of them always prominently present and with an influence that was of longer duration than the time that is here under investigation, some of them existing independently as alternative conceptions, some of them occurring only in connection with others, and some of them only developing very slowly until they suddenly became more popular and then even led to important changes in the general attitude towards the subject. In the following, we will therefore examine the different aspects and trace the different developments of the conceptualization of friendship in the Renaissance and the early Enlightenment at first thematically and then, on the sublevel, also chronologically, hoping thereby to shed some light on the complexity of the history of friendship in this period.

2.1. THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ANCIENT CLASSICS

The conceptions and representations of friendship that we find in the writings of the late fourteenth to late sixteenth centuries are indeed different from those that can be found in the medieval sources. Yet, as we have already said, to speak of a renaissance of classical *ideas* of friendship in order to characterize the early modern attitude

[18] Burke 265.

[19] Mills 109.

towards the topic, as some still use to do, is though not quite correct, since the classical ideas already influenced the conceptions of friendship in medieval times. It is, however, correct to speak of a renaissance of classical *ideals* of friendship in this new age, as the humanistic authors who were mainly responsible for the revival of these idealized conceptions, presented their views of perfect and true friendship in almost the same way as the classics had done. So, contrary to the treatment of the subject in the Middle Ages, the ancient ideas served now no longer as a mere foundation for remodelled conceptions of friendship, but as the genuine model of *vera amicitia* itself. The classical sources from which the humanists derived their notions of how perfect friendship ought to be were though still the same as those that medieval authors had used (viz. Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, et al.), and besides a certain affinity of some writers for Presocratic theories of friendship, only the renewed interest of the Renaissance Platonists in the writings and teachings of Plato and the Neoplatonists added a new perspective to the reception of the classical views on the subject.

However, in the Renaissance, as in medieval times, Cicero's *Laelius* was still considered the most important of the various Greek and Roman sources. In the fourteenth century, the dialogue enjoyed paramount popularity with early humanistic classicists, moralists, and poets like Petrarch (1304-74), who even included it in the list of his favourite works. In the 1470s, the first printed versions of Cicero's texts came on the market, and in the sixteenth century, editions of his complete writings were published by so prominent scholars as Erasmus, Vettori, Lambin, and Paulus Manutius.[20] Apart from these complete editions there were of course also abridged ones—most of which including the *Laelius*—as for instance those by G. B. Egnazio (Venice 1519), Erasmus (Basel 1520), and Robert Estienne (Stephanus) (Paris 1538). Moreover, many of Cicero's works were now also translated into English and several other European vernaculars. As early as in 1481, for example, an edition of the *Laelius* in the English translation by John Tiptoft left Caxton's press under the title *Of Friendship*, published together with a rendition of Cicero's treatise *Of Old Age*.[21] The same translation was then reissued in 1530, before, in 1535, Thomas Lupset's treatment and translation of *De officiis* and *De amicitia* appeared in his *Exhortation to Yonge Men*. In 1577, Thomas Newton published another English edition under the title *Frendshippe in Foure Several Treatises of M. Tullius Cicero*, but the best-known rendering of the *Laelius* into English is probably that by John Harington of Stepney (1520-82), who translated the *De amicitia* for the Duchess of Suffolk, Katherine Willoughby, during imprisonment. He referred to his work as *The Booke of Freendeship of Marcus Tullie Cicero*

[20] Cf. Schmitt et al. 779-80.

[21] In his list of fifteenth-century books, Duff gives the twelfth of August 1481 and Westminster as the exact date and place of publication. See E. Gordon Duff, *Fifteenth Century English Books: A Bibliography of Books and Documents Printed in England and of Books for the English Market Printed Abroad* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1917) 29-30.

and had it printed by Thomas Berthelet in 1550.[22] In the dedication to this book, Harington mentions to have translated the work not directly from Latin but from a French rendition, yet to have at least compared his version with the Latin original. It is therefore very likely that he used Jean Collin's translation of 1537, titled *Le Livre de Amytié*, and verified his own rendering by comparing it with the Latin edition by either Egnazio or Erasmus.[23]

In contrast to the humanistic reception of Cicero's Latin writings, that of the Greek sources was not without problems. The early humanistic scholars were, as their predecessors in medieval times, well educated in Latin, yet only very few of them also in Greek. As a result, the majority of readers approached Plato's and especially Aristotle's writings by means of their Latin translations, which had been first rendered from Arabic versions, and then from the Greek originals. But the rendition of Greek ideas into Latin produces certain difficulties. The confusion that might occur in the reception of the concepts of love and friendship is, as we have seen earlier in this study, due to the different semantic capacities of the Greek and Latin terms.[24] While in Latin the meaning of the term for friendship (*amicitia*) is clearly defined, the one for love (*amor*) is rather vague, denoting a number of different emotional states and feelings. In Greek, on the other hand, nearly the opposite is the case, as Stephen D. Bolton reminds us:

> All forms of desire come under the heading of *amor* in Latin; Renaissance authors tend to treat the theories of Aristotle and Plato as though the same conceptual framework applied. This is misleading, since there is no single word in Greek which corresponds to *amor* in all its various meanings. The Greek language distinguishes between the different kinds of love by using two different verbs: ἐράω, which is etymologically linked with ἔρως and indicates passionate or sexual love, and φιλέω, linked with φιλία (friendship), which indicates affectionate or friendly love. The fact that these two kinds of love are called by the same name in Latin obscures their differences to some extent and allows Renaissance authors to think of them as being more closely linked than they are in Plato and Aristotle. The difference between the two languages leads to a further complication: the word φιλία is of broader application than *amicitia*, denoting all types of affectionate love, not simply friendship strictly defined. The Greek accounts, therefore, have no parallel to the conceptual framework used by Latin authors, in which the more precise *amicitia* is derived from a generic *amor*.[25]

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[22] Cf. Ruth Hughey, *John Harington of Stepney, Tudor Gentleman: His Life and Works* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1971) 291; Lorna Hutson, *The Usurer's Daughter: Male Friendship and Fictions of Women in 16th Century England* (London: Routledge, 1994) 63; and Mills 79.

[23] Cf. John Harington, trans., *The Booke of Freendeship*, by Marcus Tullie Cicero, ed. E. D. Ross, rpt. of 1550 ed. (London: Essex House, 1904) iii-v; and Hughey 292. For a detailed comparison of Harington's translation with other vernacular or Latin editions of the *Laelius* in the sixteenth century, see Hughey 291-95; for a critical examination of Harington's text itself, see Hughey 299-305.

[24] See 27.

[25] Bolton 35.

As Bolton here points out, the humanistic authors of the Renaissance, and, in fact, all writers since then—and some even despite their knowledge of Greek—tended to treat the word *philia* as if its meaning were the same as that of *amicitia*, a concept that was of course much more familiar to them, due to its similarity to that of *friendship*. So, when we talk about the humanistic reception of Greek ideas of friendship, we should rather speak of Greek ideas of *philia* that Renaissance authors interpreted as ideas of friendship, than to assert that these writers simply revived the classical conceptions in their genuine form, or even that they understood them in their original meaning.

Whether the humanists understood Aristotle correctly or not, the whole corpus of his texts was now at least newly translated from the Greek. In fact, most humanistic scholars wanted to overcome what they regarded as the scholastic barbarism, i.e. the unrefined vocabulary and sometimes inappropriate philosophical terminology of the medieval translations—although there were also many who still preferred these traditional renditions to the new ones. As one of the most significant and influential of the early humanistic authors and translators who argued in favour of a new Latin terminology to approach the work of the classical Greek philosophers, Leonardo Bruni (*c*. 1369-1444) insisted that Aristotle should to be rendered in a Ciceronian style, and he consequently provided new translations of a number of his writings—among them, in 1416, also a Latin rendition of the *Ethics*, which was later on also used for the first printed edition of the text.[26] Despite these new humanistic translations of Greek works, however, gradually, more and more scholars were also able to read the texts in the original, and in 1495-98, the Venetian Aldine Press of Aldus Manutius and Andrea Torresani published a complete edition of Aristotle's writings in Greek, the *editio princeps*.[27] That Aristotle, in spite of the renewed interest in Plato and the undiminished glorification of Cicero, still remained extremely popular during the following sixteenth and seventeenth centuries becomes evident from the enormous amount of editions that were published of his works in nearly all European countries in this period. "Thanks to printing and the vast expansion in college-level arts teaching," Schmitt et al. explain, "Aristotle had an enormous diffusion in the Renaissance, in the original, in Latin, in the vernacular and in summaries, study guides and manuals of every kind; the most recent list of sixteenth-century Aristotelian printing fills 160 pages."[28] Besides several complete, abridged, and separate editions, either merely presenting the plain text or additionally providing annotations, giving the Greek original, a Latin rendition, or both, there were also various translations in almost every European language. Since the middle of the sixteenth century, works of Aristotle were available in Italian, Spanish, French, English, German, and even in Polish. And although the majority of

[26] Cf. Schmitt et al. 777; and "Bruni, Leonardo," *The Hutchinson Encyclopedia of the Renaissance*, ed. David Rundle (Oxford: Helicon, 1999) 65.

[27] Cf. Schmitt et al. 777; and "Manutius, Aldus," Rundle 265.

[28] Schmitt et al. 778.

vernacular translations of the *Ethics* were produced only around the midst of the century, as the English rendition of 1547, there were also earlier ones, as the Spanish edition by George Coci, which was already available in 1509. Among the range of printed works, the *Nicomachean Ethics* belonged indeed to the most popular writings and was not only included in all complete editions (which bore this title often unjustifiably) but also in most abridged collections.[29]

The popularity of the view of friendship that Aristotle presents in his *Nicomachean Ethics* was probably only surpassed by that of Cicero's representation of friendship in the *Laelius*. Presenting almost the same conception of friendship—Aristotle in providing the theoretical foundation, Cicero in refining the theory rhetorically—both authors were now often read in parallel and as complementary to each other.[30] From a modern scholarly perspective, however, Aristotle's theory of *philia* has certainly to be regarded as the most ingenious and significant of the classical contributions to the discussion of friendship. One would therefore of course be inclined to believe that a readership of times in which friendship was much more a matter of concern than today had shared this opinion. The majority of post-classical readers and writers, however, judged differently. They clearly preferred Cicero's *Laelius de amicitia*. The reason for this is certainly not an argumentative superiority or originality of thought, as Cicero adopted most of his ideas, in fact, from Stoic and Peripatetic sources, and thus indirectly from Aristotle. That Cicero enjoyed greater popularity among the readership of later periods might primarily be explained by the fact that he wrote in Latin, which means that the majority of literate people could study his writings in the original without requiring a translation—as most of them did when they wanted to read the Greeks.[31] Moreover, Cicero's eloquent and elaborate language was much appreciated by the scholars of both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and even served as a model of good Latin style. In fact, during the Renaissance, in most humanistic Latin schools, Ciceronianism became the standard of teaching the language.[32] Another explanation might though also to be found in the greater practicability of his ideas.

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[29] Cf. Schmitt, app. A 121-33, and app. C 149-51.

[30] Cf. Bolton 10.

[31] Latin texts have of course always been far more accessible to a European readership than those in Greek. Before the triumph of the vernacular, Latin was the *lingua franca* of medieval Europe and in the Renaissance, and especially in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, it was, as Frederic J. E. Raby puts it, "still a necessary medium for the abundant humanistic, scientific, philosophical, and religious literature that was a mark of the new age." And although the "excitement over Latin sources touched off a widespread search for ancient documents that led in time to Greek and Hebrew studies," Latin remained the preferred language for scientific, philosophical, or historical works until the early eighteenth century. Frederic James Edward Raby, "Latin Literature," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 15 October 2000 <http:// search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=109603&sctn=1>.

[32] On the imitation of Cicero as a model for style and the high regard in which his text were held in the period, see, for example, Izora Scott, *Controversies over the Imitation of Cicero in the Renaissance: With Translations of Letters between Pietro Bembo and Gianfrancesco Pico, "On Imitation" and a Translation of Desiderius Erasmus, "The Ciceronian" (Ciceronianus)* (Davis: Hermagoras, 1991).

Compared to Plato's theory of *philia*, Aristotle's is certainly the more practical one, but Cicero's treatment of *amicitia* is even more pragmatic and rather has to be considered a handbook than a theory of friendship.

Compared with the importance of that of Cicero and Aristotle, Plato's direct influence on the conceptions of friendship in the Renaissance was indeed only of minor significance. Yet, his influence on the early modern conception of love was immense and therefore here indeed of special interest when we want to understand how and why the conceptual changes concerning the view of love and friendship could take place at the end of the period. Without Plato's theories, love would probably not have finally replaced friendship as the conceptually and practically preferred kind of relationship. In the fourteenth century, after his writings had been nearly completely neglected in the Middle Ages, humanistic authors from Petrarch onwards begun to rediscover Plato's writings and developed a lively interest in his teachings. He was soon held in high estimation and by some even regarded as the master of all classical philosophers. Plato was now indeed so popular that it became fashionable among the Italian and especially Florentine intellectuals to collect copies of his works, even though only very few of these early humanists could in fact also read their collector's items, since most of them were only available in Greek at that time. Thus, in 1397 the Florentine scholar Manuel Chrysoloras and some of his students began to translate parts of Plato's work into Latin, but it was not before 1484 that Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), financially supported by Cosimo de' Medici, published the first complete translation of Plato's works in Latin. This printed edition reached the number of 1,025 copies and was so popular among the European scholars that it was sold out within only six years. An edition of the Greek original, however, was not printed before 1499, but even though by that time Greek scholarship had already been established in Italy, Ficino's annotated Latin translation was still preferred by most readers, and therefore dominated the reception of Plato's ideas for at least the following century. To speak of the reception of Plato in the Renaissance thus means to speak primarily of the reception of Ficino's interpretation of Plato—and this was far from being an authentic representation of the Platonic philosophy, as Ficino based his understanding of Plato in turn mainly on earlier Neoplatonic commentaries like those of Plotinus (AD 205-270) and Proclus (410-485), for instance.[33] This, however, also means that as far as the Renaissance reception of the philosophical notions of Socratic origin are concerned (and of the Socratic conception of friendship in particular), we even cannot speak of more than merely of a reception of Ficino's reading of Plato's own interpretation of the Socratic ideas.[34] Yet, despite the demerits of his adaptation, Ficino has at least to be given the credit for being the first who made Plato and his philosophy again accessible to a European readership after a very long time of neglect. But although Ficino's

[33] Cf. Schmitt et al. 787.

[34] Cf. Schmitt et al. 786-87, and Bolton 10.

edition enjoyed great popularity, concerning the conception of friendship, Plato hardly ever achieved the repute of Cicero or Aristotle. This is certainly for the most part due to the rather incoherent character of his work, which it even retains in Ficino's adaptation. Much more popular, as we have said, were Plato's reflections on love, and although the topic had already belonged to the most favourite subjects for discussion in medieval times, the revived enthusiasm for Platonic ideas now gave the tradition of treating the subject in prose or poetry (now mostly in the form of sonnets) a fresh impetus.

2.2. THE COMMON LITERARY REPRODUCTIONS OF THE INHERITED IDEAS

The rediscovery of Platonism and its popularization was certainly one of the most significant characteristics of the Italian, and particularly the Florentine approach to classical philosophy in the fifteenth century; yet, despite their enthusiasm for Plato and his theory of love, the Italian philosophers and writers, humanists as well as Platonists, also shared a great interest in the classical idea of perfect friendship. Almost 30 years before manuscript copies of Ficino's enormously influential commentary on Plato's *Symposium*, his *De amore*, began to circulate among the educated elite of the time and to foster the interest in theories of love, another Florentine had already celebrated the glory of friendship. In 1441, in order to promote the use of the vernacular for poetical purposes (instead of the commonly used Latin), Leon Battista Alberti (1404-72) initiated and organized a poetry contest, the *Certame coronario*, on the subject of true friendship. The poems that participated in this contest had to deal with the topic of *la vera amicizia* and had to be written in the *volgare*, the Italian vernacular. In fact, there was nothing like a standard Italian tongue at that time, but merely several regional dialects. So, when Alberti refers to the *volgare*, he first of all means Tuscan, the kind of Italian that, thanks to the *tre corone* (the three crowns: Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio—all of Florentine origin and all best known for works that were written in the Tuscan tongue) had the strongest tradition of being used for literary purposes, and which was thus commonly considered the most suitable dialect for poetry and prose—at least until this conviction was challenged by the *questione della lingua* in the early sixteenth century, the debate over which of the several dialects was best suited for a standard vernacular style. With the contest, Alberti wanted to show that it was possible to present any subject in any form of prose or poetry in the *volgare*, and thereby to achieve the same or an even better quality than with a treatment of the theme in Latin. Another advantage of the vernacular was, of course, that literature could be made accessible to a wider audience, as even people who could not read, could at least listen to the works when they were read to them. So, the use of the vernacular also supported the humanistic endeavour to implement new educational standards.

The *Certame coronario* took place in the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore on 22 October, and some of the most famous Italian poets of the age competed against each other for the laurel wreath endowed by Piero de' Medici (1418-69), among them, for example, Antonio degli Agli, Mariotto Davanzati, Benedetto Accolti, Ciriaco d'Ancona, and Leonardo Dati. Alberti himself presented a sixteen-verse Italian poem that was modelled on Latin hexameters and a prose dialogue on friendship, which he later revised and included as the fourth book in his famous work *I libri della famiglia*. It is in this treatise that he has his protagonists agree on the view on friendship that all the participants in the contest shared as well, namely that "in vita de' mortali più quasi trovarsi nulla sopra alla amicizia da tanto essere pregiata e osservata."[35]

The competition was held before a jury consisting of ten apostolic secretaries, and in the presence of the Florentine signoria, the archbishop, and the Venetian envoy. In the end, however, the jury refused to announce a winner and the laurel wreath was donated to Santa Maria del Fiore. Most participants, of course, believed that the jury's inability to declare a winner was only due to the secretaries' envious attitude towards the *volgare* and that they simply wanted to prevent the vernacular from becoming too influential as an alternative language for literary purposes. Most people, in fact, thought that the clergy feared that the coronation of an Italian poet with a laurel wreath would undermine the superiority of Latin—the language of the Church—as the only acceptable tongue for the written word. Alberti therefore intended to organize a second *Certame*, this time on the subject of envy, but this poetical contest on *L'invidia* never took place, as the officials—for some obscure reason—did not share Alberti's enthusiasm for the idea. The success of the *Certame* on friendship, however, could hardly be denied; in less than no time, 200 manuscript copies of the poems that entered the contest were sold.[36]

This favourable response to the *Certame* does of course not only reflect the popularity of the *volgare* but also that of the topic of friendship, which it enjoyed not only in the early decades of the Italian Renaissance but throughout the whole of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Yet, despite the great interest that the Italian humanist showed in friendship, it was their enormous enthusiasm for the topic of love whose influence on later European literature in the end overshadowed that of their writings on friendship. Mills is therefore certainly right, when, concerning the English Renaissance, he says: "It seems safe to say that, on the whole, the Italian literature that

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[35] Leon Battista Alberti, *I libri della famiglia*, ed. Cecil Grayson (Bari: Laterza, 1960) 263; Vol. 1 of *Opere Volgari*. – "[…] there is almost nothing to be found in the life of man as well worth cherishing and keeping as is friendship." Trans. Renée Watkins, *The Family in Renaissance Florence* [*I libri della famiglia*], by Leon Battista Alberti (Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 1969) 246.

[36] See G. Busetto, "Certame Coronario," *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, ed. Robert-Henri Bautier and Robert Auty, vol. 2 (München: Artemis, 1983) col. 1633-34; and Joan Gadol, *Leon Battista Alberti: Universal Man of the Early Renaissance* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1969) 218-19. For the text of the poems that participated in the contest, see *De vera amicitia: I testi del primo Certame coronario*, ed. Lucia Bertolini (Modena: Panini, 1993).

reached England stressed love more than friendship, and in no way interferes with the assumption that the friendship ideas reached England primarily through the humanistic emphasis on the classics."[37] What we can find in the representations of friendship in the works of continental writers other than Italian, and of course in those of English authors, is therefore rather an independent and original approach to the classical ideas of friendship than one inspired by the Italian treatments of the topic.

How thoroughly their reception of the classics in fact was, shows a line from Sir Philip Sidney's pastoral romance, *The Arcadia*, in which one of the characters sums up the description of his friendship with the words: "[…] nature began my friendship, education confirmed it, and virtue hath made it eternal."[38] Here, Sidney incorporates three of the most significant ideas from the three major classical theories on friendship in a single brief statement: the ideas that friendship originates in Nature (from Cicero's *Laelius*, see 57), that it is strengthened and improved by education (from Plato's *Symposium*, see 42), and that virtue is the means by which friendship becomes perfect (from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, see 48). The idea that a true friendship that is based on the virtuousness of the friends is thereby made eternal, i.e. that it is here, in this world, only founded, and is continued and perfected in heaven, is though, of course, a Christian conception (to be found, e.g., in Aelred's *De spirituali amicitia*, where the author states: "Haec est uera et aeterna amicitia quae hic inchoatur, ibi perficitur; […]."[39]).

That the Renaissance writers adopted not only the key notions of classical friendship theory but the whole range of classical ideas of perfect friendship, is probably best illustrated by a very apt example from John Lyly's *Euphues – The Anatomy of Wyt* of 1578. Here, Euphues, considering whether he should make friends with Philautus, reflects upon the nature of friendship in general:

> I haue red (saith he) and well I beleeue it, that a friend is in prosperitie a pleasure, a solace in aduersitie, in griefe a comfort, in joy a merrye

[37] Mills 182. On the influence of the Italian sources on the treatment of the topic of love in later European literature, and especially in later Renaissance poetry, see, for example, Maurice J. Valency, *In Praise of Love: An Introduction to the Love-Poetry of the Renaissance* (New York: Octagon, 1975); Albert J.Smith, *The Metaphysics of Love: Studies in Renaissance Love Poetry from Dante to Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985); and J. W. Lever, *The Elizabethan Love Sonnet*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen, 1978).

[38] Sir Philip Sidney, [*The Old Arcadia*] *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia)*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994) 152. Sidney's fictional treatment of the subject is to be found in all three versions of his *Arcadia*. The *Old Arcadia*, from which this quotation is taken, was written in 1580; it was never printed in the sixteenth century but the text circulated in manuscript. Sidney began to revise his book, but when he died in 1586, he left the text unfinished. In 1590, this half revised version was posthumously published and is now known as the *New Arcadia*. In 1593 a hybrid version, consisting of the first three chapters of the *New Arcadia* and the last two chapters of the *Old Arcadia*, was published under the title: *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia*. Cf. "Arcadia, The," *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*, ed. Ian Ousby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[39] Aelred of Rievaulx, *De spirituali amicitia* 3.79-80. – "This is what true and eternal friendship is: it takes shape here, in this world, and is perfected in the next; […]." Trans. Mark F. Williams, *Aelred of Rievaulx's* 'Spiritual Friendship'*: A New Translation*, by Aelred of Rievaulx (Scranton: U of Scranton P, 1994) 76.

> companion, at all times an other I, in all places y^e^ expresse Image of mine owne person : insomuch that I cannot tell whether the immortall Gods haue bestowed any gift vpon mortall men, either more noble, or more necessary, then friendship. Is ther any thing in the world to be reputed (I will not say compared) to friendship? Can any treasure in this transitorie pilgrimage, be of more valewe then a friend? in whose bosome thou maist sleepe secure without feare, whom thou maist make partner of all thy secrets without suspition of fraude, and pertaker of all thy misfortune without mistrust of fleeting, who will accompt thy bale his bane, thy mishap his misery, the pricking of thy finger, the percing of his heart. But whether am I carried? Haue I not also learned that one shoulde eat a bushel of salt with him, whom he meaneth to make his friend? that tryall make trust? that there is falshood in fellowship? and what then? Doth not the sympathy of manners, make the coniunction of mindes? Is it not a by woord, like will to like? Not so common as commendable it is, to see young gentlemen choose thē such friends with whom they my seeme being absent to be present, being a sunder to be conuersant, beeing dead to be aliue. I will therefore haue *Philautus* for my pheere, and by so much the more I make my selfe sure to haue *Philautus*, by how much the more I view in him the liuely Image of *Euphues*.[40]

Here, Lyly (1553/54-1606) refers indeed to a wide range of classical ideas of friendship and summarizes almost completely Cicero's view of the subject as it is presented in the *Laelius*; he even cites the proverbial saying of the bushel of salt that, according to Aristotle and Cicero, friends should have consumed together before they might regard themselves as true friends (see 49 and 60). Such ample representations of the classical views on the topic in so concise a passage are in fact seldom, since in most cases, the authors only reflect upon specific aspects of the topic. An equally comprehensive listing of the different views on friendship can only be found in the various anthologies of adages: catalogues reciting the most prominent proverbs and aphorisms of mainly classical origin. In 1500, Erasmus (1469-1536) published such a collection of maxims, poetical sayings, and literary commonplaces, his *Adagia*, and in the subsequent edition of 1525, we can already find 62 adages concerning the topic of friendship.[41]

The *Adagia* provides, as it were, a reservoir of classical notions of the subject, but of all the diverse views on friendship that Erasmus here presents, he explicitly stresses the ideas that had already been common to nearly all of the classical conceptions. He presents, for example, the notion of "amicitia aequalis",[42] the idea that ideal friendship can only exist between men who are similar in age, character, and manners, and equal in their virtuousness. This notion had in fact become as elementary to the conception of

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[40] John Lyly, "Euphues—The Anatomy of Wyt," *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, ed. R. Warwick Bond, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967) 197.

[41] Erasmus' *Adagia* enjoyed great popularity among the European humanists, and it was not the only work of its kind. In the course of the sixteenth century, such compilations of classical ideas became in fact as popular as the original sources they had been fragmented from themselves.

[42] Desiderius Erasmus, [*Adagia*] *Adagiorum chiliades quatuor cum sesquicenturia* (Basileae: Episcopius, 1574) 15.b. – "Equal friendship" (i.e. "Friendship between equals.") Trans. mine.

true friendship in the Renaissance as it had been in classical times.[43] For a Renaissance humanist, speaking about his notion of perfect friendship, such a relationship could only exist between those who share certain characteristics, such as a good character and good manners, the same age, similar opinions and interest, and so on.[44] With such an emphasis on similarity and equality, it is not surprising that the ideal image of friends was the paradoxical one of almost identical individuals. The friends' aim was therefore not to complement but to resemble each other.[45] Moreover, as Cicero declares mutual affection as the precondition, virtue as the basis, and private and public welfare as the objective of perfect friendship, the humanistic writers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries likewise stressed these qualities as the pillars of the friendship conception. Virtue was, as in classical times, clearly seen as the most important of these qualities, a quality that is equally demanded as intensified by friendship, and which provides the basis for its duration.[46] But the initial stimulus to the formation of such a companionship, the *primum mobile* of friendship, as it were, is love, or to be precise: the mutual affection of the friends. Mutual love, as was generally agreed, can though only exist between equals. The Renaissance conviction that between unequals of any sort, as a matter of principle, there can hardly be any kind of reciprocal affection, nor even a sense of community, is, for example, still shown in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, when Adam, before the creation of Eve, laments the lack of an equal companion:

> Among unequals what society
> Can sort, what harmony or true delight?
> Which must be mutual, in proportion due
> Giv'n and receiv'd; but in disparity

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[43] The idea that friends should ideally be equal in standing, be of the same age, and have the same dispositions, or, if this is not the case, should at least share the same interests and views on morals and political matters, was indeed one of the generally accepted notions of friendship in classical times and is explicitly stressed in treatises like Cicero's *Laelius*, for example. Exactly this idea is, for instance, also expressed in a letter that Horace once wrote to one of his friends, in which he assures him of his commitment to the conventions of friendship and hospitality: "Haec ego procurare et idoneus imperor et non / invitus, ne turpe toral, ne sordida mappa / corruget naris, ne non et cantharus et lanx / ostendat tibi te, ne fidos inter amicos / sit qui dicta foras eliminet, ut coeat par / iungaturque pari." Horace, *Epistles* 1.5.21-26. – "Here is what I charge myself to provide—and able and willing I am: that no untidy coverlet, no soiled napkin wrinkle up your nose; that tankard and plate become for you a mirror; that there be none to carry abroad what is said among faithful friends; that like may meet and mate with like." Trans. H. R. Fairclough, *Satires; Epistles; Ars Poetica*, by Horace, rpt. of 1929 ed., The Loeb Classical Library 194 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1991) 283.

[44] The classical idea that true friends should also be of the same rank and have the same social background was though usually not stressed by the humanistic thinkers. Most of them considered this in fact either irrelevant or not really worth to be mentioned, as most friendships do naturally exist between persons of the same origin, education, social standing, and cultural background anyway.

[45] Cf. Barbara Puschmann-Nalenz, *Loves of Comfort and Despair: Konzeption von Freundschaft und Liebe in Shakespeares Sonetten* (Frankfurt a.M.: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1974) 76.

[46] In general, we can say that in the Renaissance the meaning of the term *virtue* corresponds to the common one of classical times and is used as a synonym for morality, goodness, integrity, uprightness, and justice, as well as for manliness, power, and strength. *Virtue* with the semantic meaning of chastity or sexual purity, however, did not appear before the end of the sixteenth century. Cf. Puschmann-Nalenz 75, 175.

> The one intense, the other still remiss
> Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
> Tedious alike […].[47]

That Milton (1608-74) presents this view still in the seventeenth century shows how important it was to the conception of friendship in the Renaissance.

However, the humanistic writers did not only put emphasis on the equality of the friends as a necessity for their friendship, they especially argued for the necessity of mutual affection between them. They were indeed convinced that true friendship could only originate from love. Affectionate love, of course, can only develop from a certain feeling of intimacy between the friends. Intimacy, however, needs time to develop. This is the reason why Aristotle and Cicero laid so much emphasis on the factor time when they considered the preconditions of perfect friendship. They knew that friendship is perfected by time and knowledge, but that they are not the source of it. But even if time is not the source of friendship itself—which can, as we have seen, only be love—it can certainly strengthen this love, especially when it is so consequently spent together as in the case of Rosalind and Celia in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*:

> We still have slept together,
> Rose at an instant, learn'd, play'd, eat together,
> And whereso'er we went, like Juno's swans,
> Still we went coupled and inseparable.[48]

Intimacy of this kind will certainly eventually lead to the strong reciprocal affection between the friends on which true friendship is based and from which it originates. How strong this affection for the friend in some cases really was can be seen from the mourning of a man for his lost friend, when both were separated by death. An apt example of this can be found in Michel de Montaigne's essay "De L' Amitié". The grief he here expresses over the loss of his best friend Etienne de La Boëtie reflects the strong emotional bond that must have existed between them:

> Depuis le jour que je le perdy,
>
> *quem semper acerbum,*
> *Semper honoratum (sic, Dii, voluistis) habebo,*
>
> je ne fay que trainer languissant; et les plaisirs mesmes qui s'offrent à moy, au lieu de me consoler, me redoublent le regret de sa perte. Nous estions à moitié de tout; il me semble que je luy desrobe sa part,
>
> *Nec fas esse ulla me voluptate hic frui*

[47] John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 8.383-89.

[48] Shakespeare, *As You Like It* 1.3.69-72. That Shakespeare's representation of the friendship between two women instead of the usual one between men does not affect the way in which their friendship is portrayed, reveals the Renaissance belief that, in principle, there is no difference between the nature of male and female friendships. On this point and the attitude towards female friendships, see 207ff below.

Decrevi, tantisper dum ille abest meus particeps.

J'estois desjà si fait et accoustumé à estre deuxiesme par tout, qu'il me semble n'estre plus qu'à demy.

// Illam meae si partem animae tulit
Maturior vis, quid moror altera,
Nec charus aeque, nec superstes
Integer? Ille dies utramque
Duxit ruinam.

/ Il n'est action ou imagination où je ne le trouve à dire comme si eut-il bien faict à moy. Car, de mesme qu'il me surpassoit d'une distance infinie en toute autre suffisance et vertu, aussi foisoit-il au devoir de l'amitié.

Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus
Tam chari capitis?

O misero frater adempte mihi!
Omnia tecum una perierunt gaudia nostra,
Quae tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor.
Tu mea, ti moriens fregisti commoda, frater;
Tecum una tota de mente fugavi

Haec studia atque omnes delicias animi.
Alloquar? audiero nunquam tua verba loquentem?
Nunquam ego te, vita frater amabilior,
Aspiciam posthac? At certe semper amabo.[49]

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[49] Michel de Montaigne, *Essais: Livre I*, ed. Alexandre Micha (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1969) 241-42. –

"Since that day when I lost him,

which I shall ever hold bitter to me, though always honour (since the gods ordained it so),
[Virgil, Aeneid, V, 49-50. (Annotations 217.)]

I merely drag wearily on. The very pleasures which are proferred me do not console me: they redouble my sorrow at his loss. In everything we were halves: I feel I am stealing his share from him:

Nor is it right for me to enjoy pleasures, I decided, while he who shared things with me is absent from me.
[Terence, Heautontimorumenos, I, 1, 97-8. (Annotations 217.)]

I was already so used and accustomed to being, in everything, one or two, that I now feel I am no more than half:

[B] Since an untimely blow has borne away a part of my soul, why do I still linger on less dear, only partly surviving? That day was the downfall of us both.
[Horace, Odes, II, xvii, 5-9. (Annotations 218.)]

[A] There is no deed nor thought in which I do not miss him—as he would have missed me; for just as he infinitely surpassed me in ability and virtue so did he do so in the offices of friendship:

What shame or limit should there be to grief for one so dear? … How wretched I am, having lost such a brother! With you died all our joys, which your sweet love fostered when you were alive. You brother, have destroyed my happiness by your death: all my soul is buried with you. Because of your loss I have chased all thoughts from my mind and all pleasures from my soul … Shall I never speak to you, never hear you talking of what you have done? Shall I never see you again, my brother, dearer than life itself? But certainly I shall love you always.
[Catullus, LXVIII, 20 f.; LXV, 9f. (adapted). (Annotations 218.)]"

Trans. M. A. Screech, ed., *The Complete Essays,* by Michel de Montaigne, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993) 217-18. (The slashes in the original and the capital letters in square brackets in the translation indicate from which of the different original editions of the *Essais* the passages are taken.)

Montaigne's frequent use of classical quotations to support his own words illustrates how close the relation between the ancient and the Renaissance conceptions of friendship in fact was. It does also show, however, how deeply any kind of friendship representation, even still in the late Renaissance, was rooted in the tradition of quoting from and referring to the classical sources. In its dependence upon the authority of the classical writers, Montaigne's essay is in fact quite conventional. And although the author's grief over the loss of his friend is certainly authentic, the representation of it corresponds exactly to the traditional representations of this literary motif in fictional writings.[50] That the motif of a man's grief over the death of his friend as a means to portray the intensity of the friends' affection for one another is in fact nearly as old as literature itself, shows the example of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.[51] And in classical times, the representation of a mourning friend was considered a very suitable means to hint at the quality of a friendship, especially of one between heroes, as in the case of Homer's *Iliad*, in which he tells the story of the friendship between Achilles and Patroclus, and of the great sorrow that Achilles feels at Patroclus' death.[52] So, what makes Montaigne's account of his grief so innovative is therefore not the description of this grief itself, but the fact that it is real.

Now, when it is true that friendship originates from affectionate love, and affectionate love from intimacy, and intimacy needs time to develop, then this must mean that the best friendships are those that were already founded in childhood. The representations of fictional friendships therefore often begin with the description of the protagonists' friendship in boyhood, or at least with a brief reference to this early companionship, as, for instance, in Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in which Valentine says about his friend Proteus: "I knew him as myself; for from our infancy / We have convers'd, and spent our hours together […]"[53] The motif is in fact quite often to be found in Shakespeare's plays. The closeness of the friendship between young Rosalind and Celia in *As You Like It* has already been referred to above, and in *The Winter's Tale*, the nature of the early friendship between the two kings, Polixenes and Leontes, is described in great detail by Polixenes himself, who, in a conversation

[50] Montaigne's treatise on friendship certainly belongs to most frequently discussed and interpreted of his *Essais*, and the point that is most often disputed is whether his representation is truly a subjective account of his own ideas of friendship, which would make it for the time at which it was written indeed highly innovative, or merely a compilation of traditional views on the subject that is only skilfully applied to the description of a friendship that really existed. For a closer examination of this point, see, for example, Maurice Riveline, *Montaigne et l'amitié* (Paris: Alcan, 1939); Janice S. Green, "Montaigne's 'De l'amitié' and the Friendship Tradition," diss., Tufts U, 1970; and Barry Weller, "The Rhetoric of Friendship in Montaigne's Essais," *New Literary History* 9 (1978): 503-523.

[51] See 9.

[52] See Homer, *Iliad* 19.303-39.

[53] Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* 2.4.57-58. For a brief account of the views on friendship presented in the play, see Paul R. Thomas, "The Marriage of True Minds: Ideal Friendship in Two Gentlemen of Verona," *Iowa State Journal of Research* 57.2 (1982): 187-192.

with Leontes's wife, gives her a lively account of how amazingly innocent the men's friendship was, back in their childhood days:

> We were, fair queen,
> Two lads that thought there was no more behind,
> But such a day to-morrow as to-day,
> And so be boy eternal.
> [……]
> We were as twinn'd lambs that did frisk i' th' sun,
> And bleat the one at th' other: what we chang'd
> Was innocence for innocence: we knew not
> The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dream'd
> That any did. Had we pursu'd that life,
> And our weak spirits ne'er been higher rear'd
> With stronger blood, we should have answer'd heaven
> Boldly 'not guilty', the imposition clear'd
> Hereditary ours.[54]

Does this not sound like a memory of better yet vanished times? The idealization of the boys' friendship may indeed seem to be a bit too exaggerated; for Shakespeare, however, it is merely a necessary means of preparing the ground for the portrayal of the friendship between the adult kings. As far as the Renaissance view on the subject is concerned, the representation of an honest friendship between adults is hardly credible when no hint is given that it was already perfect in their boyhood. And so, right at the beginning of the play, the importance of their childhood experiences and the foundation that these provided for the friend's later relationship is stressed:

> They were trained together in their childhoods, and there rooted betwixt them then such an affection which cannot chose but branch now. Since their more mature dignities and royal necessities made separation of their society, their encounters, though not personal, have been royally attorneyed with interchange of gifts, letters, loving embassies, that they have seemed to be together, though absent; shook hands, as over a vast; and embraced, as it were, from the ends of opposed winds. The heavens continue their loves![55]

The representation of a friendship that has its roots in the childhood of the friends does of course allude to the amount of time that the friends have spend together, which was generally taken as an indication of the good quality of their friendship—in fact a literary motif that was already used by classical authors for the same reason, as, for example, again by Homer in his story of the friendship between Achilles and Patroclus in the *Iliad*. Thus, Shakespeare's references to the childhood of his protagonists, and the

[54] Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale* 1.2.62-74.

[55] Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale* 1.1.21-32.

friendship that already existed between them at this early stage, only support his representation of the perfect friendship that exists between them at the beginning of the play. Nevertheless, there are still some critics who believe that Shakespeare might have "distrusted the friendship that begins in childhood."[56] Now, this is indeed quite an arguable interpretation, but even if he did, this attitude was not commonly shared by other writers.

The motif of the perfect friendship that originates in the childhood of the friends was in fact quite popular with Renaissance authors and does of course not appear in Shakespeare exclusively.[57] Another good example of a friendship story in which this motif is used is that of the adventures of the two noble princes Pyrocles and Musidorus in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*. In describing the friendship of these princes, Sidney employs indeed many of the popular motifs that were frequently used in the literary representations of the theme at that time, but that the friendship of Musidorus and Pyrocles begins in their childhood, is strengthened in their youth, and flourishes in adulthood, is here particularly emphasized. As they were brought up together, the connection between the two young princes is a very close one, even closer than it would have been between brothers, "for *Pyrocles* bare reverēce ful of love to *Musidorus*, & *Musidorus* had a delight full of love in *Pyrocles*."[58] The fact that they are not of exactly the same age, which could normally be an obstacle to the relationship between young boys, does here not cause any difficulties since "by reason that *Musidorus* being elder by three or foure yeares, it was neither so great a difference in age as did take away the delight in societie, and yet by the difference there was taken away the occasion of childish contentions; till they had both past over the humor of such contentions."[59] Musidorus, being the elder one, teaches Pyrocles everything he knows and Pyrocles is "so glad to learn of none, as of Musidorus […]."[60] As soon as by the time of Pyrocles's sixteenth birthday he has learned so much and has developed so well that he is now in no way inferior to anyone else anymore—not even to Musidorus—"which may well

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[56] Helen Grierson, "Friendship in Shakespeare's Plays," *Contemporary Review* 120 (1921): 665. For a brief overview of the treatment of friendship in the Shakespearean plays, see Grierson 665-676.

[57] It is, in fact, not even typical only of classical or Renaissance representations of friendship but occurs frequently in those of medieval times as well, as, for example, in the legend of Amis and Amile, or in Boccaccio's version of the Titus and Gysippus story. For a summary of this story see 96 below; for a summary of the plot of the legend of the knights and sworn brothers Amis and Amile (var.: Amiles), see Mills 39-42, or Hyatte 124-29. For detailed analyses of the story, see also Werner Bauerfeld, *Die Sage von Amis und Amiles: Ein Beitrag zur mittelalterlichen Freundschaftssage* (Ohlau in Schlesien: Eschenhagen, 1941); and William Morris, *Of the Friendship of Amis and Amile* (Hammersmith: Kelmscott, 1894), and for the story itself, see, e.g., *Amis und Amiles: Geschichte einer Freundschaft am Hofe Karls des Grossen,* ed. Inge Vielhauer (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1979)

[58] Sir Philip Sidney, [*The New Arcadia*] *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia*, ed. Albert Feuillerat (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1922) 190, vol. 1 of *The Complete Works of Sir Philip Sidney*.

[59] Sidney, *New Arcadia* 190.

[60] Sidney, *New Arcadia* 190.

seeme woderfull; but wonders are no wonders in a wonderfull subject."[61] With this comment, Sidney concludes his description of the origin of their friendship.

Now presenting the story of their friendship in adulthood, Sidney describes it as an especially intimate and affectionate one. The friends show all signs of affection for one another, including embraces and kisses, share all joys and sorrows, and are united in the mingling of their souls, as Sidney puts it when he comments: "there is no sweeter taste of friendship than the coupling of their souls in this mutuality either of condoling or comforting […]."[62] By employing the image of the friends' coupled souls Sidney here combines two important classical ideas. On the one hand, he alludes to the Platonic conception of the friends whose minds are coupled to reach a higher level of perfection; on the other hand, he refers to the famous classical commonplace image of the united soul that exists in the bodies of two friends. Now, Sidney's image of the coupling of two souls was not the first combination of these notions; both ideas had already been included in a third before: in the classical image of the friend as another self. This is the idea that Erasmus deals with in his comment on the adage "Amicus alter ipse."[63] The idea that a friend is something like a 'second self' is yet originally ascribed to Pythagoras and his circle.[64] Now, from this idea of the friend as 'another self' (ἄλλος αὐτός/*allos autos*), probably also derives the metaphor of the single soul that lives in the two bodies of a pair of friends. Similar images expressing the close connection between two partners—whether they be friends or lovers—appear indeed frequently in ancient Greek and Roman literature, and they clearly depict the classical notion of the character of such relations. In the *Symposium*, for instance, Plato has Aristophanes tell the story of the primeval human prototypes who were of three different natures. One was purely male, the second entirely female, and the third androgynous. They had two faces, four arms, and four legs and were of extraordinary strength and vigour. As they conspired against the gods, Zeus decided to cut them into two parts, in order to diminish their power. So he did. And since then, humans have the shape they have today and each is still searching for his other half. Those who were originally purely male are hence now looking for their other male part, those who were entirely female are accordingly searching for another female, and those who were formerly both want to reunite with a suitable part of the opposite sex.[65] Here love is defined as the search for one's other half, friendship as the reunion of two persons that originally already belonged to each other. The opinion that one could only have one real friend probably also derives from this image of the other self.

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[61] Sidney, *New Arcadia* 190.

[62] Sidney, *Old Arcadia* 148; see also *Old Arcadia* 39.

[63] Erasmus, *Adagia* 15.b. – "A friend is another self." Trans. mine.

[64] Cf. Diogenes Laertius 8.10.

[65] See Plato, *Symposium* 189d-192d.

The idea of the friend as another self, however, appears not only in Greek writings. In Latin poetry the image reoccurs in so prominent poems as the *Odes* of Horace (65-08 BC), in which he writes on the occasion of Virgil's voyage to Athens:

> Sic te diva potens Cypri,
> sic fratres Helenae, lucida sidera,
> ventorumque regat pater
> obstrictis aliis praeter Iapyga,
>
> navis, quae tibi creditum
> debes Vergilium; finibus Atticis
> reddas incolumem, precor,
> et serves animae dimidium meae.[66]

The same image is used by Ovid (43 BC-AD 17/18) in his *Tristia*, in which he describes the friendship of the Greek mythological heroes Orestes and Pylades by referring to them as two loving friends "qui duo corporibus, mentibus unus erant."[67]

Now, this image was in fact to become the chief symbol of friendship in the Renaissance conception of friendship as well. It was even so popular that it was not only applied to the relationship between two friends but also to that between three, as in the passage in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* in which the friendship between the three brothers Priamond, Dyamond, and Triamond (the three sons of Agape!) is described:

> These three did loue each other dearely well,
> And with so firme affection were allyde,
> As if but one soule in them all did dwell,
> Which did her powre into three parts diuyde;
> Like three faire branches budding farre and wide,
> That from one roote deriu'd their vitall sap […].[68]

How lasting the popularity of the idea of the friend as an alter ego in fact was, shows an example from the seventeenth century, when in 1685 John Dryden (1631-1700) decided to translate Horace's ode on Virgil's embarkation for Greece in order to inscribe it to the Earl of Roscommon on his intended voyage to Ireland:

> So may th' auspicious Queen of love,
> And the twin stars (the seed of Jove),
> And he who rules the raging wind,
> To thee, O sacred ship, be kind;

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[66] Horace, *The Odes and Epodes* 1.3.1-8. – "May the goddess who rules over Cyprus, may Helen's brothers, gleaming fires, and the father of the winds, confining all but Iapyx, guide thee so, O ship, which owest to us Virgil entrusted to thee,--guide thee so that thou shalt bring him safe to Attic shores, I pray thee, and preserve the half of my own soul!" Trans. C. E. Bennett, *The Odes and Epodes*, by Horace, 2nd ed. The Loeb Classical Library 33 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1988) 13. On representations of friendship in Horace in general, see W. S. Maguinness, "Friends and the Philosophy of Friendship in Horace," *Hermathena* 51 (1938): 29-48.

[67] Ovid, *Tristia* 4.4.72. – "who were [like] a single mind in two bodies." Trans. mine.

[68] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* 4.2.43.

> And gentle breezes fill thy sails,
> Supplying soft Etesian gales,
> As thou, to whom the Muse commends
> The best of poets and of friends,
> Dost thy committed pledge restore,
> And land him safely on the shore;
> And save the better part of me
> From perishing with him at sea.[69]

The image of the friend as another self was indeed to remain the favourite metaphor for friendship in literary representations of the subject until well into the Romantic period. A friendship conception that enjoyed a popularity of much shorter duration, and which was to be almost completely ignored in the early seventeenth century, was the idea that friends should hold all their property in common. In classical philosophy, it is especially the Pythagorean idea of friendship that is often associated with the principle of *koinōnia* (**κοινωνία**), the idea that friends should hold all things in common.[70] But whether it is originally Pythagorean or not, the idea of the shared property of friends was in fact a commonplace of *philia* in classical times and appears in philosophical treatments of friendship, as in Socrates' *Lysis* (207c) or *Phaedrus* (279c), as well as in more literary representations of the subject, as in the *Orestes* by the Greek tragedian Euripides (*c.* 484-406 BC) in which he has one of the characters state: "Friends share everything."[71] In the sixteenth century, Erasmus then deals with this notion in his comment on the adage "Amicorum communia omnia,"[72] and in some contexts it was indeed presented as a significant characteristic of friendship, as in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, where Antonio assures his friend Bassanio: "My purse, my person, my extremest means / Lie all unlock'd to your occasions."[73] Overall, however, the idea was only considered a minor aspect of the subject, or was even completely rejected as an inappropriate view on the matter. In his study of Spenser's conception of friendship, Charles G. Smith remarks about Spenser's attitude towards the idea: "[…] in portraying true friendship he does not use the proverbial idea that friends' good are common goods. It is highly significant that this idea is employed in his delineation of false friendship only."[74] And concerning the English attitude towards the idea in general, he rightly states: "[…] whenever in Renaissance English literature this theory is referred

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[69] John Dryden, *The Poems of John Dryden - Vol. II: 1682-1685*, ed. Paul Hammond (London: Longman, 1995) 363.

[70] Cf. Iamblichus, [*De vita Pythagorica*] *On the Pythagorean Way of Life* 18.80, 33.229-230, and 33.232; Diogenes Laertius 8.10; Hyatte 8; White 19; and Holger Thesleff, "Pythagoreanism," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. 25 May 2000 <http://search.eb.com/ bol/topic?xref=10758&pm=1>.

[71] "**κοινὰ γὰρ τὰ τῶν φίλων**." Euripides, *Orestes* 735. – Trans. M. L. West, *Orestes*, by Euripides (Warminster: Aris, 1987) 109.

[72] Erasmus, *Adagia* 15.a. – "Friends' goods are common property." Trans. mine.

[73] Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* 1.1.138-39.

[74] Charles George Smith, *Spenser's Theory of Friendship*, Studies of the Fourth Book of the Faerie Queen (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1935) 50.

to, it is usually disapproved. Perhaps this is accounted for by the fact that communistic theory was taboo in England in the sixteenth century."[75] So, the hostile attitude towards the matter was not at all uncommon and Spenser (1552-99) was indeed not alone in rejecting the idea, neither in England nor on the Continent.

That the idea that friends should have all things in common was generally rejected, does though not mean that the idea that one should use every means at one's disposal to help a friend in need, even if that would mean that one had to share all one's property with the friend, was not held in high regard. It was, in fact, the only way in which the idea of sharing one's possessions with a friend was accepted. And so, in 1657, in a period in which the attitude towards friendship was clearly dominated by mercantile interests, and in which communistic notions of any kind were fiercely turned down, Jeremy Taylor (1613-67) could only dare to take up the idea in his *Discourse of the Nature and Offices of Friendship* by restricting its implementation to instances of need: "It is certain that amongst friends their estates are common; that is, by whatsoever I can rescue my friend from calamity, I am to serve him, or not to call him friend […]."[76] It is indeed not the idea that a friend should share all his possessions with us but the trust in the friend's readiness to do so when we are in need, which derives from this classical belief in the obligation to assist a friend in times of hardship, that was to become regarded as one of the most significant characteristics of true friendship in early modern times.[77] And still today, it is often mentioned first when the specific qualities of friendship are to be named. Closely connected with this notion is of course the classical idea that only in times of need one could distinguish one's true friends from the false ones—the idea that Erasmus deals with in his comment on the adage "Amicus certus in re incerta cernitur."[78] To be abandoned by one's friends is in fact a bitter experience and in classical times, in which the loss of friends and allies could have had grave effects on the safety of one's life, the fear of abandonment was taken very seriously indeed and led the ancients to emphasize this aspect in the treatment of friendship in particular. Thus, in many classical treatises, plays, poems, and tales, we can find the recommendation to make friends only with men of proven trustworthiness and reliability. A good example of such a piece of advice in literary

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[75] C. G. Smith 50.

[76] Jeremy Taylor, "A Discourse of the Nature and Offices of Friendship: In a Letter to the Most Ingenious and Excellent Mrs. Katherine Phillips," *B. Taylor's Opuscula: The Measures of Friendship With Additional Tracts, to Which Is Now Added His Moral Demonstration Proving That the Religion of Jesus Christ Is from God*, 4th ed. (London: 1684) 40.

[77] In times before insurance companies, it were, of course one's kith and kin who were a man's only means of security and the only source of support in times of need. Euripides, for example, has his character Orestes make this point crystal clear: "[…] it's in time of trouble that people must help their friends and family. When Fortune is being generous, what need is there of human attachments?" – "**[…]** *τοὺς φίλους / ἐν τοῖς κακοὶς χρὴ τοῖς φίλοισιν ὠφελεῖν· / ὅταν δ' ὁ δαίμων εὖ διδῷ, τί δεῖ φίλων.*" Euripides 665-68. – Trans. West 105.

[78] Erasmus, *Adagia* 744.b. – "A reliable friend proves to be one in uncertain times." Trans. mine.

form is the famous story of two travelling friends and a bear presented in one of the Greek fables of unknown origin that are traditionally ascribed to Aesop (*c.* 6th cent. BC):

> Two friends walking along a road were suddenly confronted by a bear. One of them managed to get away and climbed into a tree, but the other, about to be caught, lay on the ground and pretended to be dead. The bear sniffed at him and he held his breath. They say that bears never touch a corpse. When the bear went away the man in the tree asked his companion what it was that the bear had whispered in his ear, and his answer was, 'Hereafter don't travel in company with friends who fail to stand by you in time of danger.'[79]

In the Renaissance, as in classical times, it was regarded as a matter of course that in perfect friendship a loyal friend would help his 'alter ego' in times of crisis, as in such a friendship both friends would naturally observe the rules of virtue. The virtuousness of the friends was seen as the most important feature of perfect friendship, since love was merely considered the initial motivation for the formation of such a friendship, but virtue was regarded as the foundation of its duration. The conviction that a friendship that is not based on virtue cannot last for long, is expressed, for example, by Spenser in book 4 of his *Faerie Queene*:

> It often fals, (as here it earst befell)
> That mortall foes doe turne to faithfull frends,
> And friends profest are chaungd to foemen fell:
> The cause of both, of both their minds depends,
> And th'end of both likewise of both their ends.
> For enmitie, that of no ill proceeds,
> But of occasion, with th'occasion ends;
> And friendship, which a faint affection breeds
> Without regard of good, dyes like ill grounded seeds.[80]

The humanistic emphasis on virtue as the prerequisite for a perfect and enduring friendship was thus certainly as great as it had already been in the classical sources that served as the model for the Renaissance representations of the subject. Of course, this stress on virtue was precisely what made it so difficult to live up to the conception of perfect friendship, and which eventually evoked an increase in critical remarks on

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[79] "*Δύο φίλοι τὴν αὐτὴν ὁδὸν ἐβάδιζον. ἄρκτου δὲ αὐτοῖς ἐπιφανείσης ὁ μὲν ἕτερος φθάσας ἀνέβη ἐπί τι δένδρον καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἐκρύπτετο, ὁ δὲ ἕτερος μέλλων περικατάληπτος γενέσθαι πεσὼν κατὰ τοῦ ἐδάφους τὸν νεκρὸν προσεποιεῖτο. τῆς δὲ ἄρκτου προσενεγκούσης αὐτῷ τὸ ῥύγχος καὶ περιοσφραινομένης, τὰς ἀναπνοὰς συνεῖχε· φασὶ γὰρ νεκροῦ μὴ ἅπτεσθαι τὸ ζῷον. ἀπαλλαγείσης δέ, ὁ ἀπὸ τοῦ δένδρου ἐπυνθάνετο αὐτοῦ τί ἡ ἄρκτος πρὸς τὸ οὖς εἴρηκεν. ὁ δὲ εἶπε Ἐτοιούτοις τοῦ λοιποῦ μὴ συνοδοιπορεῖν φίλοις, οἳ ἐν κινδύνοις οὐ παραμένουσιν.*" "The Travellers and the Bear" (*Ὁδοιπόροι καὶ ἄρκτος*), Fabulae Graecae no. 65, Ben Edwin Perry, ed., *Aesopica: A Series of Texts Relating to Aesop or Ascribed to Him or Closely Connected With the Literary Tradition That Bears His Name* (New York: Arno, 1980) 346. – Trans. Ben Edwin Perry, ed., *Babrius and Phaedrus*, appendix, The Loeb Classical Library 436 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1990) 432.

[80] Spenser 4.4.1.

the idealization of the topic, as we will see in the following. For the time being, however, the idea of the necessity of virtue in friendship clearly dominated the Renaissance understanding of the matter.

3 REPRESENTATIONS OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN IDEALISM AND REALISM

Due to the increase in literary treatments of friendship in the classical sense since the rise of humanism at the end of the fourteenth century, we can find representations of the ancient conceptions—the idealized as well as the more pragmatic ones—in all kinds of writing of the following two centuries. Many of these representations are though of course only mere imitations of classical commonplaces, which the Renaissance writers frequently copied from the Greek and Roman sources, and which they repeatedly presented neither with a new kind of interpretation nor with an original point of view. Besides this simple reproduction of classical notions, however, one of the most significant characteristics of humanism was its interest in the practical value of philosophical theories and in their applicability to real life. Ever more often, thoughts on friendship were now no longer the mere theoretical considerations of how such a relationship should be that they had been during the Middle Ages. Now, the conceptions of friendship also had to be translatable into practice. This, of course, posed a major problem. The ancient ideal of perfect friendship that most Renaissance writers took as a model was indeed such an idealized conception that it could scarcely be put into effect. Only very few were actually able to have such friendships with a couple of close friends. For the majority of people, however, the classical idea of prefect friendship remained an unattainable ideal. Yet, the solution to the problem was once again provided by the ancient theories of friendship themselves, namely by Aristotle's idea that there is not one single kind of friendship but several ones, and that these different kinds have to be kept distinct when dealt with. So, even though it was not possible for everyone to live up to the high standards of the perfect kind of friendship, it was still possible for everybody to life up to the standards of the inferior ones, and thus to put at least some of the classical ideas of friendship into practice. It is therefore no surprise that this idea became one of the most crucial of the classical notions that dominated the Renaissance attitude towards the subject.

Although Aristotle still distinguishes between three individual types of friendship, the division can certainly be restricted to only two different sorts: the perfect and the inferior ones. In accordance with this distinction, there are now—besides the mere imitation of classical commonplaces—also two different kinds of friendship representation in Renaissance literature that can be regarded as truly characteristic of the early modern approach to the classical ideas. On the one hand, there are the enthusiastic accounts of the nature of perfect friendship and of the qualities it either demands or possesses, and on the other there are the descriptions of the inferior forms,

presenting these in either accusing or apologetic tones. The way in which friendship is portrayed in these different kinds of representation is consequently either purely idealistic, utterly realistic, or somewhere in between.

In detail, this means that in Renaissance literature we can find first of all the representations of the idealized idea of virtuous, honourable, and true friendship in which the friends are portrayed not only as confidants and equal companions, but also as loving partners and often even as alter egos. Such representations of perfect friendship often appeared in moralizing plays, courtesy books, or the mirrors for princes, and they were nearly always presented for didactic purposes. Excellent examples of such didactic representations are to be found in Thomas Elyot's *The Boke Named the Governour* and in Richard Edwards's *Damon and Pithias* at which we will have a closer look in the following.

Then there are those writings that give evidence of some people's endeavour to implement the idea of perfect friendship in real life. Especially the correspondence of the leading humanist and Platonists of the age reveals their wish to live up to the high standards of true friendship. In their letters, they frequently assured each other of the quality of their friendship, which, of course, is the clearest sign that they did in actual fact not manage to translate their ideals into reality. Nevertheless, it shows how seriously the idea of true friendship was taken at that time. We will therefore have a brief look also at some of these letters in 3.2.

Finally, there are those representations of friendship that focus on the utility value of this form of relationship. Contrary to the condemnation of this attitude that we can find in those writings that idealize and glorify the idea of perfect friendship, these presentations of friendship do not only try to justify the emphasis they put on the utility of friendship, they do also provide elaborated contemplations of how this utility could be maximized. One of the most sophisticated of these considerations is certainly the one Leon Battista Alberti presents in the fourth book of his *Libri della famiglia*, his treatise "De amicitia," which we will therefore examine in some detail in 3.3.

3.1. DIDACTIC IDEALIZATIONS: FRIENDSHIP AS AN EDUCATIONAL END

As we have seen from examples like those by Lyly or Sidney in the previous chapter, the great majority of representations of classical friendship conceptions in Renaissance literature portray an image that glorifies the ideal of friendship in its most perfect form. And even when only an inferior or false kind of friendship is presented, it is in most cases meant as an argument in favour of perfect or true friendship. For a modern reader, this does in fact not seem to be anything to wonder about, as many of the modern representations of friendship also present a positive, if not perfect image of

friendship—and the topic is today by far not as popular as it has been in the Renaissance. Of course, it is in human nature that people like to read about things that are somehow idealized, that do not represent things as they usually are in reality but as they could be, perhaps as they should be, but certainly as most people would wish them to be in their own life. Dealing with Renaissance literature, however, it would not do justice to the writings of the time to regard their idealized portrayal of friendship merely as a romanticized view of the subject, for it neglects the actual aim most of the early modern writers pursued with this kind of representation. Their intention was certainly not to simply present a romanticized image of friendship, but was indeed much more high-minded, as Mills points out: "When, thanks to the printing-press and the enthusiasm of the humanists, the philosophical and ethical aspects of classical friendship became familiar to a larger number of people—people who had embraced the Renaissance delight in the life here and now—the purpose of those who disseminated the classical ideas was didactic."[1] The aim was therefore not to present an unattainable ideal of friendship as it could only exist in a better world but to depict an image of friendship that the readers could use as a model for the fashioning of their own relationships.

This idea, that the main function of literature is to provide examples worthy of imitation, is in fact one of the basic propositions in Renaissance literary criticism and does of course apply not only to the representation of friendship but to representations of everything that becomes the object of literary treatment. Like with many other notions that dominated the Renaissance view of things, the original idea on which this definition of the main function of literature is based dates back to classical times and originally appears in Aristotle's treatise on *Poetics*. Here, for Aristotle the main characteristic of poetry is the *mimesis*, the imitation of things as they are—or as they could be—in reality, produced for the delight of the readers, listeners, or spectators.[2] An excellent Renaissance interpretation and elaboration of this idea is presented, for example, by Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poesy*.[3] Here he expresses the conviction that poetry is first of all a means by which the poet skilfully imitates reality: "Poesy therefore is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in the word *mimesis*—that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth—to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture—with this end, to teach and delight."[4] On the other hand, however, it

[1] Mills 376.

[2] See Aristotle, *Poetics* 4, 1448b.

[3] The work, posthumously published in 1595, is also known under the title of its twin edition: *An Apology for Poetry*. Another example of a sixteenth-century treatise on literary criticism that reflects on the Aristotelian ideas and that also emphasises the educative power of poetry, is *The Art of English Poesy*, which is commonly ascribed to George Puttenham (1529-90). For the discussion of the function of literature, see book 1.

[4] Sir Philip Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy," *Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones, The Oxford Authors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 217. The classical saying that "poetry is a speaking

is also a way of giving proper examples of how reality should be. So, for Sidney, it is the duty of a poet not to simply imitate what is real, but rather to create a vision of a better reality. It is this function of poetical writings to which Sidney refers when he speaks of the poet's task to teach and delight:

> For these third [the 'right poets', in contrast to the theologians and philosophers] be they which most properly do imitate to teach and delight, and to imitate borrow nothing of what is, hath been, or shall be; but range, only reined with learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what may be and should be. These be they that, as the first and most noble sort may justly be termed *vates* [Latin for poets; also denoting prophets][…]. For these indeed do merely make to imitate, and imitate both to delight and teach; and delight, to move men to take that goodness in hand, which without delight they would fly as from a stranger; and teach, to make them know that goodness whereunto they are moved—which being the noblest scope to which ever any learning was directed […].[5]

According to Sidney, a poet should always be concerned with the right representation of virtue, since: "as virtue is the most excellent resting place for all worldly learning to make his end of, so poetry, being the most familiar to teach it […]."[6] It is the poet's task not to present what is, but what should be, just as the philosopher does. But in contrast to the philosopher, the poet is able to create a fictional ideal, and, thereby, to give such examples of virtue that are both instructive and delightful. The aim of poetry is therefore to act as a stimulus to the realization of these idealized examples, "with the end of well-doing and not of well-knowing only."[7]

Now, at least as far as the topic of friendship is concerned, this attitude towards literature seems to have influenced not only Sidney's work as a writer but also his life as a friend. His reflections on literature might in fact even be seen as the theoretical link between the literary treatment of the fictional friendship between Pyrocles and Musidorus in the different versions of *The Arcadia* and Sidney's own friendship with Hubert Languet as it is presented in their correspondence with each other. However, the treatment of friendship in Sidney's fictional writings, his considerations of the function of poetry, and the reflection of his own friendship with Languet in their correspondence, might suggest that all these texts were written exactly in this chronological order—which would indeed be logical, according to Sidney's propositions in the *Defence of Poesy*. But, in fact, this is not so. The first version of *The Arcadia* was written in 1580. The exact date of the composition of *The Defence of Poesy*, posthumously published in 1595, is not clearly ascertainable, but it is assumed that it

picture and painting a silent poetry" was indeed very popular in the Renaissance. Cf. Duncan-Jones, annotations, *Sir Philip Sidney* 374n217.221.

[5] Sidney, *Defence of Poesy* 218.

[6] Sidney, *Defence of Poesy* 228.

[7] Sidney, *Defence of Poesy* 219.

was written sometime around the year 1581. Sidney's friendship and correspondence with Languet, however, already began in 1573. That he used his own fiction as a model for his actual friendship is therefore impossible. This does though not mean that he could not have been inspired by the idealistic representation of friendship by some other author. However, Sidney's conviction that the representation of ideals in poetry can serve as a catalyst to their realization, and the fact that the considerations of friendship played a dominant role in his writings as well as in his life, makes him an important figure in the study of the manifestations of realistic and idealistic conceptions of friendship in the Renaissance. We will therefore have to come back to him in the next section, where we will have a brief look at some of the letters scholarly pen-friends of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have sent to each other in the name of friendship.

An excellent example of the idealized representation of friendship for didactic purposes is to be found in *The Boke Named the Governour* by Sir Thomas Elyot (*c*. 1499-1546), published in 1531. As a kind of handbook, similar to the courtesy books or mirrors for princes that were so popular at the time, the *Governour* is basically a treatise on the education of young noblemen, in which Elyot presents numerous guidelines for the right conduct of 'governors'.[8] Among the various reflections on the standards of behaviour and the moral principles a gentleman should have, and on the best educational means by which these qualities might be imparted to the youth, we can also find some of his thoughts on friendship.

Since the exercise of true friendship was seen as one of the cardinal virtues of humanism, it was of course not unusual to include such reflections in a humanistic courtesy book or mirror for princes (which is here rather a mirror for governors), but it is the extent to which it is done, and the way in which Elyot treats the subject that made the *Governour* so important to the popularization of classical friendship conceptions in Renaissance England. In English literature, Elyot is in fact the first who breaks completely with the medieval moralistic representation of friendship to stress instead its practical and affective side—just as it is typical of the classical, and especially the Ciceronian conception.[9] Concerning the importance of the *Governour* to the development of the conceptualization of friendship in the English Renaissance, Mills even goes as far as to say that "here for the first time is there glowing enthusiasm in discussing the relationship of friendship to life, a real passion for the ecstasy of

[8] The aim of such handbooks was to recall the norms and values of antiquity, especially those of virtue, and to convert them into guidelines for the correct behaviour of rulers, courtiers, or noblemen, suitable for the needs of their own time. The reader was advised to live up to, or at least to imitate the image of what the author considered to be a truly virtuous man, an '*uomo virtuoso*' as Machiavelli calls him in one of the most famous of such books, his *Il principe*, written in 1513. Cf. also Wilhelm Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel des hohen und späten Mittelalters* (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1938).

[9] Cf. Mills, 95-97.

friendship as a great amenity of life and a social necessity."[10] The *Governour* was in fact so popular that in the course of the sixteenth century eight editions of the book were published, the last in 1580. Since there is no work in English literature before Elyot that treats the topic of friendship with such devotion to the classical conceptions, we can certainly assume that the literary revival of the ancient notions of idealistic friendship in England started with the *Governour*.[11]

The *Governour* consists of three parts (or books), of which the second is nearly completely devoted to the topic of friendship. To treat a single subject—other than virtue—to such an extent seems to be very unusual for a work of the courtesy book genre indeed. Yet, to write about friendship is for Elyot in fact nothing else but to write about virtue, as he entirely follows the classical idea that friendship and virtue are inseparably connected with each other: "Aristotle saieth/that frēdship is a vertue/or ioyneth with vertue/which is affirmed by Tulli [Cicero]/sayenge that frendship can nat be without vertue/ne but in good men onely."[12] So, indirectly, his treatise is also on virtue, and Elyot leaves no doubt that his intention in presenting his thoughts on friendship is in fact not so much to delight but to teach, when he reveals his didactic purpose right at the beginning: "I will therefore borowe so moche of the gentle redar/thoughe he be nigh wery of this longe mater/barrayne of eloquence and pleasaunt sentence : & declare some what by the way of very & true frendship. whiche perchaunce may be an allectife to good men to seeke for their semblable/on whom thay may practise amitie."[13]

He begins his reflections with the definition of friendship as a form of benevolence, directed towards a single person: "Beneuolence/if it do extende to a hole contraye or citie/it is proprely called charitie/and some tyme zele : and if it concerne one persone/than is it called beneuolence. And if it be very feruent & to one singuler psone, than may it be named loue or amitie."[14] After having reflected on the virtue of beneficence in general, he stresses the importance of both benevolence and beneficence to friendship (and vice versa) and laments the neglect of such virtues in the past, by which he clearly means the Middle Ages:

> I haue all redy treated of beneuolence and beneficence generally. But for als moche as frendship/called in latine *Amicitia*/cōprehendeth bothe those vertues more specially/& in an higher degree/and is nowe so infrequent or straunge amonge mortall men/by the tyrannie of couetise & ambition/ which haue longe reigned/and yet do/that amitie may nowe vnethe be knowen/or founden throughout the worlde by them that seeke for her as

[10] Mills 97.

[11] Cf. Mills 105.

[12] Thomas Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor: 1531*, English Linguistics: 1500-1800 (A Collection of Facsimile Reprints) 246 (Menston: Scolar Press, 1970) 2.11, 141v.

[13] Elyot 2.11, 141r-v.

[14] Elyot 2.8, 129v.

> diligently/as a mayden wolde seeke for a small siluer pinne in a great chāber strawed with white russ bes.[15]

Following the classical tradition, Elyot now explicitly stresses the necessity of the existence of virtue in the characters of the two friends and consequently regards their virtuousness as the essential precondition of their friendship. To illustrate his conception of friendship in general and to emphasize the indispensability of the friends' virtuousness in particular, Elyot tells the story of the model friends Titus and Gysippus. He presents the story in a separate chapter, which he heads with the title: "The wonderfull history of Titus & Gisippus, & whereby is fully declared the figure of perfect amitie."[16] This chapter, as Mills puts it, "gives the earliest fully elaborated friendship story to appear in the sixteenth century [in England]."[17] This story, as it is here presented in the twelfth chapter of the *Governour*, is briefly summarized by Mills as follows:

> Titus, son of a Roman senator, was sent to Athens to study. There he became a close friend of Gysippus, son of an honorable Athenian. The two young men were of the same size and looked so much alike that even their parents could hardly distinguish them. They studied and lived together, and were inseparable. When Gysippus' father died, his kin and friends urged the young man to marry, and selected Sophronia for him. When on one occasion he took Titus along with him as he called on Sophronia, Titus fell deeply in love with her. He became sick for love, though bewailing the fact that he was thus untrue to Gysippus. Gysippus, visiting Titus, urged him to tell the cause of his illness, and after expressing many regrets Titus confessed his love for Sophronia.
>
> Preferring friendship to love, Gysippus urged Titus to marry Sophronia, and even brought it about that, unknown to the bride, it was Titus who became the husband and not Gysippus. On the next day Gysippus invited the nobles of the city to his house; Titus explained what had happened, and justified the substitution. Soon after, Titus' father died and he was recalled to Rome. He took his bride with him.
>
> The Athenians resented the behavior of Gysippus, and slighted him; finally they despoiled him of his wealth and drove him out of Athens. In poverty and distress he travelled to Rome, thinking to ask aid of his old friend Titus. He approached Titus' house as Titus and Sophronia were leaving it to go riding; they saw him but did not recognize him in his rags, and passed on. In despair because he thought Titus ungrateful, Gysippus wandered to a barn and lay down. He fell asleep, worn out by fatigue, weeping, and sorrow. A murderer placed his bloody knife in Gysippus' hand and departed. Gysippus was charged with the crime and, weary of life, confessed to it. At his trail, Titus recognized him, and said that e himself was the guilty man. But the real murderer was present and confessed, to save innocent persons. In the discussion of motives, Titus were reunited. Titus took his friend home, where he was welcomed by Sophronia, and

[15] Elyot 2.11, 141r.

[16] Elyot 2.12, 145v.

[17] Mills 99.

> entertained him; he offered Gysippus the free use of all his possessions. But since Gysippus wished to return to Athens, Titus collected an army and forced the Athenians to restore Gysippus to his former position and wealth.[18]

Elyot presents the story in great detail although most of his educated readers were certainly familiar with the plot, as a version of the story had already appeared as one of the tales in Boccaccio's *Decameron*.[19] That another, slightly different version of the story is also to be found in the *Gesta Romanorum*, in Steinhöwel's and Caxton's collections of Aesopian fables, and in Petrus Alfonsus' *Disciplina clericalis*, indicates how popular it had already been during the Middle Ages.[20] In fact, the question from which source Elyot adopted his version of the Titus and Gysippus story is still unanswered. Some scholars think that he borrowed it from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, which would in fact make it the first translation of any part of the *Decameron* into English. Both versions, however, show such a great divergence that this appears to be quite doubtful indeed. Another supposition assumes that Elyot adopted the story from its version in Petrus Alfonsus' *Disciplina clericalis*, but whether Elyot used Boccaccio, Petrus or even a third source remains uncertain.[21]

Now, from whatever source Elyot has adopted the narrative of Titus and Gysippus' friendship, in contrast to the medieval versions he no longer tells the story of the mere guest-friendship that is only part of the commercial relationship of the two men: a story that is centred around the love of both for the same woman and that glorifies the ideals of chivalry. Instead, he presents the friendship of the two in the warm and affective tone that has become as typical of the humanistic representations of friendship as it has already been of the classical ones. Yet, even with Elyot the 'new' humanistic conception of friendship still has to compete with the traditional court-of-love convention of medieval times. And this also already hints at the struggle that the concepts of love and friendship had to undergo during the Renaissance. With the Titus and Gysippus story that Elyot presents to illustrate his view of friendship, "for the first time in the sixteenth century," as Mills puts it, "the medieval emphasis on love and the

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[18] Mills 99-100.

[19] See Boccaccio, *Decameron* 10.8. For a discussion of Boccaccio's version of the Titus and Gysippus story in the *Decameron*, and the view of friendship he presents here, see, for example, Reginald Hyatte, "Reconfiguring Ancient Amicitia Perfecta in the Decameron 10.8," *Italian Quarterly* 32 (1995): 27-37; or Victoria Kirkham, "The Classical Bond of Friendship in Boccaccio's Tito and Gisippo (Decameron 10.8)," *The Classics in the Middle Ages. Papers of Twentieth Annual Conf. of Center for Medieval & Early Renaissance*, ed. Aldo S. Bernado and Saul Levin (Binghampton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1990) 223-35.

[20] For the treatment of the story in these sources, see *Gesta Romanorum*, chap.171; Heinrich Steinhöwel, *Steinhöwels* Äsop, ed. Hermann Oesterley (Tübingen: Fues, 1873). 294-301; William Caxton, *Caxton's* Aesop, ed. R. T. Lenaghan (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1967) 193ff.; and Petrus Alfonsi, "De integro amico," *Die* Disciplina Clericalis *des Petrus Alfonsi: Das älteste Novellenbuch des Mittelalters*, ed. Alfons Hilka and Werner Söderhjelm (Heidelberg: Winter, 1911) 6.

[21] Cf. Mills 100-01. It has been supposed that Elyot and Boccaccio independently used the same source, a Greek romance (now lost) that itself adopted the story from the oriental original. Cf. Mills 388-89n47.

classical doctrines of friendship come into dramatic conflict in English literature—but not the last," as we will see in section 4.2.[22]

That Elyot mirrors Cicero's definition of friendship in summary when he presents his own understanding of the matter shows how much his humanistic conception of friendship is indeed based on the classical ones:

> Verely it is a blessed and stable connexion of sondrie willes/makinge of two parsones one in hauinge and suffringe. And therfore a frende is pprely named of Philosophers the other I. For that in them is but one mynde and one possession : and that/which more is a man more reioiseth at his frēdes good fortune than at his owne.[23]

It is only to illustrate this view of friendship, that Elyot tells the story of Titus and Gysippus. That he uses the companionship of the two friends as a model for the perfect friendship he wants to present can also be seen from the résumé he gives after having told the story: "This example in the affectes of frendshippe expresseth (if I be nat deceyued) the description of frendship engendred by the similitude of age and personage : augmented by the conformitie of manners and studies : and confirmed by the longe continuaunce of company."[24] From this and the previous quotation we can clearly see what Elyot regards as the essential characteristics of true friendship: the selflessness of the friends and their readiness to sacrifice their own lives for each other as the result of their loving companionship, and their equality or similarity and the time that they have spent together as its prerequisites. These classical commonplace notions play indeed such a significant role in Elyot's view of the subject that he refers to them repeatedly in his treatise. In fact, the story of Titus and Gysippus is not the only one he presents to illustrate his ideal of perfect friendship—although it is the one he elaborates to the greatest extent; he also gives brief accounts of the famous classical stories of Damon and Pithias, and Orestes and Pylades, and at least in the latter one, he again refers to the idea of the similarity between the friends, when he mentions how "wonderfull like in all features" they were.[25] The notion that similarity, or equality, is a

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[22] Mills 103.

[23] Elyot 2.11, 144r.

[24] Elyot 2.12, 160v.

[25] Elyot 2.11, 144r. In classical times, Orestes and Pylades were indeed renowned for their exemplary friendship. Being popularised by Euripides in his *Orestes*, their story soon ranked with the most famous examples of true friendship that everyone was acquainted with; among them the stories of so well-known couples as Achilles and Patroclus, Theseus and Pirithous, and, of course, Damon and Pithias (var.: Pythias or Phintias). One of the best known collections of short stories dealing with such exemplary friendships is the dialogue *Toxaris* by the Greek rhetorician, pamphleteer, and satirist Lucian (AD 120-after 180). Here Lucian presents several of the classical commonplaces and literary motifs of friendship, woven into a debate between a Scythian, Toxaris, and his future friend, a Greek called Mnesippus, over which of the two peoples holds friendship in higher regard. The argument starts once more with a reference to the friendship of Orestes and Pylades, depicting it as an example of the unswerving loyalty of friends, and after also mentioning Achilles and Patroclus, and Theseus and Pirithous, each of the speakers presents a series of five made-up stories, which indeed reflect many of

necessary precondition of any true friendship was indeed a Renaissance commonplace of the topic, but in contrast to the classical conception that the friends should also ideally be of the same rank or have the same social background—a view that Cicero as well as Aristotle expound in their treatises—this was now no longer seen as a necessary prerequisite as long as the friends were similar in their manners and interests and equal in their virtuousness. This notion, that friends who are united in a perfect friendship are not necessarily of the same social standing but always of the same moral integrity, and that it is this equality of virtuousness that characterises the friendships of all model friends of classical history, is also presented by Petrarch in his epic on Scipio Africanus, *Africa*, where we can read in a speech addressed to Scipio about his friendship with Laelius:

> Rebus in humanis nil dulcius experiere
> Alterno convictu et fido pectore amici.
> Est equidem e multis tibi nunc certissimus unus
> Lelius. Archani sit conscius atque minister
> Ille tui, regat affectus pectusque profundum
> Cernat inaccessum reliquis. Post tempore multo
> Lelius alter erit domui claroque nepoti
> Carus et eximio pariter coniunctus amore.
> Hinc olim multi errabunt, parque omnibus unum
> Lelius et Scipio celebrabitur inter amicos
> Quos tulit extrema veniens ab origine mundus,
> Cum duo sint paria et longo distantia tractu.
> Suscipe tu primum, nec, sic licet altus, amicum
> Despice plebleium, quoniam de plebe verendi
> Surrexere viri, quos nobilioribus equos
> Viva tulit Virtus animusque parentibus impar.[26]

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the classical ideas and views of friendship that have been mentioned above, especially the Pythagorean emphasis on fidelity in friendship.

The numerous legendary tales telling the stories of the amazing friendship and unswerving loyalty of mythological heroes had indeed proved a much more effective method to transport moral philosophical ideas of friendship than the purely theoretical treatises on the subject. Of course, this was a way to present a certain view of the matter that already Homer (fl. 9th or 8th cent. BC) had employed in his portrayal of the friendship of Achilles and Patroclus in the *Iliad*, but it became particularly popular in Roman times, and later on also with the Christian writers of the Middle Ages and the humanistic authors of the Renaissance, both looking for suitable examples and classical authority to back up their own views of friendship. For this reason we still come across these classical heroes of friendship in the tales, plays, and poems of much later times, from the moralizing short stories of the *Gesta Romanorum* to such romanticizing ballads as *Die Bürgschaft* by Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805).

[26] Francesco Petrarca, *Africa* 2.515-30. –

> "There is naught sweeter in the lot of man
> than intimate exchange of trust and faith
> with a true-hearted friend. And happily
> one such stands with you now, the firmest, he,
> of all your company. May Laelius share
> and counsel your most secret thoughts and guide
> your habits and be free to scrutinize
> your deepest mind, from other men concealed.
> Another Laelius after many years

There are, in fact, quite a number of friendship couples that classical literature provides as examples of perfect companions. Titus and Gysippus certainly belong to this circle as well as Orestes and Pylades, Damon and Pythias, and Scipio and Laelius. The stories of their friendships have of course been very popular at all times: long before the humanistic Renaissance, and also long after. A German emblem-book of the seventeenth century, for example, provides a list of such famous friends in which it ads to the above mentioned pairs also the following: Castor and Pollux, Alexander and Hephestion, Theseus and Pirithous, Epaminondas and Pelopidas, Achilles and Patroclus, Aeneas and Achates, David and Jonathan, Nisus and Euyalus, and Lucan and Tullus.[27] The reason why the stories of the companionships of these famous friends have always enjoyed such a great popularity is that they do not only provide ideal examples of the most perfect kind of friendship but that the representation of these friendships also serves a double didactic purpose. On the one hand, it illustrates the concept of *vera amicitia*, which might otherwise be considered too theoretical, and thereby helps the reader to visualize the author's idea of what a perfect friendship looks like. On the other hand, it provides a traditional and hence supposedly an authentic example of the existence of perfect friendship; it provides, as it were, a proof, an evidence that plausibly shows that true friendship is not only an ideal but that it can be put into practice, even if only by a very small number of outstanding men. It is therefore no surprise that references to these famous pairs of friends frequently occur in the friendship literature of all ages and particular in that of the Renaissance, the age that was so enthusiastic about the didactic value of literature. In fact, we can find references to the different pairs of friends not only in those writings of the time that deal with friendship extensively, but also in those that touch only lightly on the topic. In the *Faerie Queene*, for example, Spenser refers to some of these couples to illustrate the Platonic idea of the two different kinds of love.

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shall by another scion of our house
be cherished and deserve a special love.
And men may err and blend the twain in one
and speak of Laelius and Scipio
as but one case of friendship and unique
since time's beginning, though between the pairs
like-named a lengthy space will intervene.
Do you first claim your Laelius, nor allow
your noble blood to shrink from one base-born,
for many a worthy hero, made the peer
of senators by active virtue and
a spirit loftier than his state, has come
from a plebeian stock."

Trans. Thomas G. Bergin and Alice S. Wilson, *Petrarch's* Africa, by Francesco Petrarca (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977) 40.

[27] P. Michaele Pexenfelder, "Vera Amicitia," *Ethica Symbolica e Fabulorum umbris ecc.* (München, 1675) 650, qtd. in Mab van Lohuizen-Mulder, *Raphael's Images of Justice - Humanity - Friendship: A Mirror of Princes for Scipione Borghese*, trans. Patricia Wardle (Wassenaar: Mirananda, 1977) 160-61n320.

In the *Symposium*, Plato has Socrates differentiate between two types of love: the 'earthly love', i.e. the love of the body, mythologically symbolized by the young and beautiful Aphrodite, and the 'heavenly love', i.e. the love of the soul, of virtue, and of wisdom, symbolized by the old and wise Aphrodite.[28] Following this Platonic distinction, Renaissance writers sometimes also related this notion to the idea of the two different sorts of friendship, i.e. of the ordinary friendship that is formed for reasons of utility or pleasure and the perfect friendship that exists for the sake of virtue and the well-being of one's friend. In these representations, true friends are regarded as lovers of the intellectual kind, as their love is directed exclusively towards each other's soul, whereas those who are primarily interested in their material, sensual, or carnal satisfaction are classified as lovers of the 'earthly' kind. This blending of the concepts of love and friendship is indeed typical of the literary representation of friendship by Renaissance Platonists or by writers who were influenced by their philosophical views. It is therefore no surprise that it also occurs in the *Faerie Queene*, namely in book 4, where Spenser explains that in contrast to the lovers (or friends) who are only interested in pleasure, there is

> another sort
> Of louers lincked in true harts consent;
> Which loued not as these, for like intent,
> But on chast vertue grounded their desire,
> Farre from all fraud, or fayned blandishment;
> Which in their spirits kindling zealous fire,
> Braue thoughts and noble deeds did euermore aspire.
>
> Such were great *Hercules*, and *Hylas* deare;
> Trew *Ionathan*, and *Dauid* trustie tryde;
> Stout *Theseus*, and *Pirithous* his feare;
> *Pylades* and *Orestes* by his syde;
> Myld *Titus* and *Gesippus* without pryde;
> *Damon* and *Pythias* whom death could not seuer:
> All these and all that euer had bene tyde
> In bands of friendship, there did liue for euer,
> Whose liues although decay'd, yet loues decayed neuer.[29]

Among the numerous legendary tales of the amazing friendship and unswerving loyalty of these famous pairs of friends, there was indeed one that enjoyed a much greater popularity with the Renaissance writers than any of the others. This was the story of Damon and Pithias. The reason for its outstanding popularity was twofold: on the one hand, the story of the friendship between Damon and Pithias was of such an exemplary kind that its literary representation proved to be indeed a very effective means to transport the moral philosophical idea of perfect friendship; on the other

[28] See Plato, *Symposium* 180c-181e.

[29] Spenser 4.10.26-27.

hand, their names were closely linked with the philosophical school of Pythagoras. This, of course, made the story even more suitable for a didactic representation of *vera amicitia*, since in the Renaissance, as already in classical times, Pythagoreans were regarded as the personification of perfect friendship.[30] It is therefore not surprising that the classification of the friends as Pythagoreans was particularly stressed. In Elyot's *Governour*, for instance, the two friends are referred to as "Pitheas and Damon/two Pythagoriens/that is to say studentes of Pythagoras lerninge/beinge ioyned to gither

[30] Unfortunately, none of Pythagoras' writings has survived, but from the works of later philosophers, and especially from the biographical accounts in Diogenes Laertius' *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (8.1-50) and Iamblichus' *Vita Pythagorica*, we know that he considered friendship a fundamental necessity of human life. His conception of *philia* as a universal principle of being is probably best portrayed by Iamblichus: "Friendship of all with all, Pythagoras taught in the clearest manner: of gods with human beings through piety and scientific worship; of doctrines with one another, and generally, of the soul with the body, and of the rational part of the soul with all forms of the irrational through philosophy and contemplation in accord with this; of human beings with one another: of citizens through sound observance of law and of those of another race through correct inquiry into natural laws; of a husband with a wife or children, brothers and relatives, through an unperverted spirit of community; in short, friendship of all with all, and furthermore, with certain irrational animals through justice and natural union and affability; and friendship of the mortal body with itself, by reconciliation and conciliation of the opposite powers concealed in it, accomplished through health and a way of life conducive to this and temperance conducive to this, in imitation of the efficient functioning of the cosmic elements." – "*Φιλίαν δὲ διαφανέστατα πάντων πρὸς ἅπαντας Πυθαγόρας παρέδωκε, θεῶν μὲν πρὸς ἀνθρώπους δι᾽ εὐσεβείας καὶ ἐπιστημονικῆς θεραπείας, δογμάτων δὲ πρὸς ἄλληλα καὶ καθόλου ψυχῆς πρὸς σῶμα λογιστικοῦ τε πρὸς τὰ τοῦ ἀλόγου εἴδη διὰ φιλοσοφίας καὶ τῆς κατ᾽ αὐτὴν θεωρίας, ἀνθρώπων δὲ πρὸς ἀλλήλους, πολιτῶν μὲν διὰ νομιμότητος ὑγιοῦς, ἑτεροφύλων δὲ διὰ φυσιολογίας ὀρθῆς, ἀνδρὸς δὲ πρὸς γυναῖκα ἢ τέκνα ἢ ἀδελφοὺς καὶ οἰκείους διὰ κοινωνίας ἀδιαστρόφου, συλλήβδην δὲ πάντων πρὸς ἅπαντας καὶ προσέτι τῶν ἀλόγων ζῴων τινὰ διὰ δικαιοσύνης καὶ φυσικῆς ἐπιπλοκῆς καὶ κοινότητος, σώματος δὲ καθ᾽ ἑαυτὸ θνητοῦ τῶν ἐγκεκρυμμένων αὐτῷ ἐναντίων δυνάμεων εἰρήνευσίν τε καὶ συμβιβασμὸν δι᾽ ὑγείας καὶ τῆς εἰς ταύτην διαίτης καί σωφροσύνης κατὰ μίμησιν τῆς ἐν τοῖς κοσμικοῖς στοιχείοις εὐετηρίας.*" Iamblichus 33.229. – Trans. John Dillon and Jackson Hershbell, *On the Pythagorean Way of Life*, by Iamblichus (Atlanta: Scholars P, 1991). 227.

After having given this concise account of Pythagoras' theoretical view on friendship, Iamblichus also alludes to the dominant role it played for the Pythagoreans in the reality of their every day life, when he concludes: "For all these instances taken together, then, there is one and the same word, that of 'friendship,' of which, by common consent, Pythagoras was the discoverer and legislator, and he taught such an admirable friendship to his friends, that even now many say of those who are unusually well-disposed to one another that they belong to the Pythagoreans." – "*ἐν πᾶσι δὴ τούτοις ἑνὸς καὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ κατὰ σύλληψιν τοῦ τῆς φιλίας ὀνόματος ὄντος, εὑρετὴς καὶ νομοθέτης ὁμολογουμένως Πυθαγόρας ἐγένετο, καὶ οὕτω θαυμαστὴν φιλίαν παρέδωκε τοῖς χρωμένοις, ὥστε ἔτι καὶ νῦν τοὺς πολλοὺς λέγειν ἐπὶ τῶν σφοδρότερον εὐνοούντων ἑαυτοῖς ὅτι τῶν Πυθαγορείων εἰσί.*" Iamblichus 33.230. – Trans. Dillon and Hershbell 227.

From the biographical accounts by Iamblichus (*c.* AD 250-330) and Diogenes Laertius (fl. 3rd cent. AD), we also know that Pythagoras divided his followers into two groups, according to their level of knowledge. The students belonging to the first group would stay at his academy at Croton like at a boarding school, living there together in a kind of religious brotherhood. These students he considered his true disciples and called them Pythagoreans (*Πυθαγόρειοί*/Pythagoreioi). Those of the second group, however, would only come to the lessons and meetings but would not stay at the school. These students he referred to as Pythagorists (*Πυθαγορισταί*/ Pythagoristai). Contrary to the Pythagorists, who had apparently no other obligation than to regularly participate in the lessons, the Pythagoreans were obliged to spend all their time together as friends, abiding by the strict rules of true friendship according to Pythagoras' doctrine. This means that their communal live was not only based on the principles of equality, loyalty, trust, and mutual aid, but also on that of joint possessions. Cf. Iamblichus 18.80, 33.229-230, and 33.232; Diogenes Laertius 8.10; Hyatte 8; White 19; and Holger Thesleff, "Pythagoreanism," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. 25 May 2000 <http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?xref=10758&pm=1>.

in a parfeite frendship […]"[31] In contrast to the majority of classical philosophers who merely wrote about the topic of friendship, the Pythagoreans are known to have tried to live up to the high standards they set of friendship. Of course, this endeavour to put their ideas about what makes a perfect friendship into practice, also lent credibility to their theories and made the Pythagoreans become regarded as true authorities in the field of friendship philosophy. That their authority was still acknowledged by the Renaissance philosophers when they dealt with the topic of friendship, is shown by the following example from Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's *Oratio de hominis dignitate*:

> Tam blande vocati, tam benigniter invitati, alatis pedibus quasi terrestres Mercurii, in beatissimae amplexus matris evolantes, optata pace perfruemur; pace sanctissima, individua copula, unanimi amicitia, qua omnes animi in una mente, quae est super omnem mentem, non concordent adeo, sed ineffabili quodam modo unum penitus evadant. Haec est illa amicitia quam totius philosophiae finem esse Pythagorici dicunt, haec illa pax quam facit Deus in excelsis suis, quam angeli in terram descendentes annuntiarunt hominibus bonae voluntatis, ut per eam ipsi homines ascendentes in caelum angeli fierent; […].[32]

The story of the friendship between Damon and Pithias was already extremely popular in ancient times, when it was regarded as a model of true friends' loyalty and willingness to self-sacrifice. The ancient writer were in fact so enthusiastic about the story that it can be found in quite a number of classical source, in various lengths and slightly differing versions. The core of the story, however, always remained the same: Damon and Pithias (var.: Pythias or Phintias) are two Pythagoreans, i.e. followers of the Pythagorean teaching, and, following this doctrine, are united in the most perfect friendship, sharing not only each other's thoughts, joys, and sorrows, but also all their possessions.[33] They spend their time at the court of king Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, when, one day, one of the friends is accused of having conspired against the king. He is condemned to death but on request is granted a couple of day's grace to be able to settle his affairs before he has to die. As a security for his return, his friend agrees to be imprisoned and, in case his convicted friend should not return within the granted period of time, to be also executed in his stead. But when the day has come on which

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[31] Elyot 2.11, 144r.

[32] Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, [*Oratio*] *de hominis dignitate* / [*Rede*] *über die Würde des Menschen: Lateinisch-Deutsch*, trans. N. Baumgarten, ed. A. Buck (Hamburg: Meiner, 1990) 20. – "When we have been so soothingly called, so kindly urged, we shall fly up with winged feet, like earthly Mercuries, to the embraces of our blessed mother and enjoy that wished-for peace, most holy peace, indivisible bond, of one accord in the friendship through which all rational souls not only shall come into harmony in the one mind which is above all minds but shall in some ineffable way become altogether one. This is that friendship which the Pythagoreans say is the end of all philosophy. This is that peace which God creates in his heavens, which the angels descending to earth proclaimed to men of good will, that through it men might ascend to heaven and become angels." Trans. Elizabeth Livermoore Forbes in Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall Jr., eds., *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man: Petrarca, Valla, Ficino, Pico, Pomponazzi, Vives* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1948) 231-32.

[33] See 86.

the sentence is expected to be carried out, there is still no sign of the friend who has set out to arrange his personal affairs, and his friend prepares to be executed for him. Yet, to everyone's amazement, the missing friend returns and appears on the scene just in time to avert his friend's execution and to take the place on the scaffold that was intended for him in the first place. Amazed by this proof of the unswerving loyalty of the friends, of their trust in one another, and of their brave readiness to die for each other, the tyrant pardons the friends and full of admiration for their outstanding friendship even asks them to be allowed to join them in this friendship.

This is basically the story as it appears in the writings of the classical authors, for instance in Cicero's treatise *De finibus bonorum et malorum* and in his *Tusculanae disputationes*, although he mentions them here only briefly and without any reference to the names of the friends.[34] However, he deals with the story in more detail in his work *De officiis*.[35] Another version is to be found in Plutarch's essay "De amicorum multitudine" in his *Moralia*, and Hyginus presents the story as one of his fables, in which the friends appear under the names of Moerus and Selinuntius.[36] Finally, a very detailed version of the story is provided by Iamblichus in his biography *De vita Pythagorica*.[37] This version is based on the treatment of the theme by Aristoxenus, who claims to have heard the story told by Dionysius himself.[38]

Since ancient times, the tale has been frequently presented or referred to in various literary treatments on friendship. In the medieval *Gesta Romanorum*, for example, it appears in an altered version in the story "De promissionis fideli constantia."[39] Here, however, the friends are not honourable noblemen but ordinary thieves, of which the one is not condemned by a king but by a judge, who in the end does not even want to be admitted into the friendship of the two. In 1476, when Caxton published *The Game and Play of the Chess Moralized* as one of his first books, he also included a version of the Damon and Pythias story, but the way in which he presents the tale, makes it with him still a typical example of the chivalric conception of friendship.[40] In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the story then appears in quite a number of writings. Besides the mention of it in Elyot's *Governour*, we can also find it as the topic of a French play by Samuel Chappuzeau (1625-1701), his *Damon et Pythias* (later on reprinted as *Les Parfaits Amis, ou le Triomphe de l'Amour et de l'Amitié*), first acted in 1656.[41] And when in 1655

[34] See Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 2.79 and *Tusculanae disputationes* 5.22.63.

[35] See Cicero, *De officiis* 3.10.45.

[36] See Plutarch, *Moralia* 2.4.; and Hyginus, *Fabulae* fab. 257.

[37] See Iamblichus 33.234-36.

[38] See Iamblichus 33.233.

[39] See *Gesta Romanorum*, chap. 108.

[40] Cf. Mills, 82-83. In 1476, William Caxton founded the first English press in London, in the same year in which *The Game and Play of the Chess Moralized* was published.

[41] Cf. Mills 416n99.

William Painter (*c.* 1540-94) published his *Palace of Pleasure*, a collection of some 60 tales of classical origin, it also contained a narrative that was almost entirely based on the story of Damon and Pithias.[42] The story was indeed so popular, that it still occurred as the topic of a lengthy poem by Friedrich Schiller in the late eighteenth century.[43]

One of the most extensive representations of the tale was though presented in the sixteenth century, namely by Richard Edwards (1523-66) in his didactic play *Damon and Pithias* (1561), which Martin L. Kornbluth describes as "virtually a pure dramatization of the classical concept of friendship."[44] In fact, the whole play is entirely about the exemplary friendship between these two classical heroes and is presented for the sole reason to illustrate the advantages of such a friendship and to show what disadvantages might result from the lack of it. As the play was thus written purely for didactic purposes, Edwards had yet to alter some few details of the original story. The main difference between most representations of the tale and that of Edwards is that with him the friend who is convicted and condemned to death, is not accused of having committed an act of treason or of having conspired against the king, but is found guilty of espionage.[45] This, of course, also means that the friends cannot belong to the court of king Dionysius but have to be citizens of another country who are merely visiting the tyrant's court. These alterations were certainly made to avoid any doubt of the friends' virtuousness, as even in case the accusation had been just, it would have been far more honourable to commit espionage for one's own country than to betray it, or to conspire against one's own sovereign.

Another major deviation from all other versions of the story occurs at the end of Edwards's play, when the king requests to be admitted to the friendship of the two loyal friends. In fact, the story usually ends without mentioning whether they agree or not, and in the few versions in which their decision is stated, as in that of Iamblichus, for instance, the request is explicitly rejected.[46] In Edwards's play, however, the friends agree and accept the king into their companionship. This was of course a much more effective end as far as its didactic effect on the audience is concerned, since it allows them to believe that everyone—even a former tyrant—can have or enter into such a perfect friendship when he decides to becomes virtuous.

Now, the last aspect in that Edwards's story differs from the versions in other sources, has nothing to do with the didactic purpose of the play, but rather with the necessities of its form. In most versions, the names of the characters are in fact

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[42] Cf. Mills 172f.

[43] See Friedrich Schiller, *Die Bürgschaft*.

[44] Martin L. Kornbluth, "The Degeneration of the Classical Friendship in Elizabethan Drama," *Costerus: Essays in English and American Language and Literature* 1 (1972): 161.

[45] In Iamblichus' version, the friend is even falsely accused by Dionysius himself, who thereby wants to test the loyalty of the friends. See Iamblichus 33.233.

[46] See, for example, Iamblichus 33.236.

mentioned at the beginning but not any more within the story itself, so that there is no indication of which of the friends is accused of the crime and which is to be imprisoned in his stead. This is, for example, the case in Cicero's description of the tale in his treatise *De officiis*. Although this work is assumed to be the source from which Edwards adopted the story when he wrote his play, he, of course, had to determine and name the friend who is to be accused. Yet, his choice is again very peculiar, as in the classical versions that mention the names of the friends, it is Pithias who is condemned to death and not Damon, as in Edwards's play.

From the very beginning of the play, Edwards leaves no doubt that in presenting the story, he solely pursues an educational end. Already in the prologue, he puts much emphasis on the fact that his play is not about a purely hypothetical moral philosophical ideal of friendship, but about a friendship that has once really existed:

> Which here wee shall present is this: *Damon* and *Pithias*,
> A rare ensample of Frendship true, it is no Legend lie,
> But a thinge once donne in deede as Hystories doo discrie,
> Which doone of yore in longe time past, yet present shalbe here,
> Even as it were in dooynge now, so lively it shall appeare."[47]

With this last line, Edwards makes clear in no uncertain terms, that he considers perfect friendship a phenomenon of the past, which is in his time no longer to be found. Instead, he explains in the following, he can only make out flattery and false friendliness, which, by his contemporaries, seem to be regarded as the only qualities of friendship. It is clear that his criticism is directed against the common attitude towards friendship in general and against the customs at court in particular. However, he could of course hardly accuse Elisabeth's courtiers openly of flattery and falseness, and so he does not hesitate to placate his audience by declaring that the abuse of friendship is naturally not taking place at England's court, nor at any other but that of the one presented: "Wherein talkyng of Courtly toyes, wee doo protest this flat, / Wee talke of *Dionisius* Courte, wee meane no Court but that […]."[48] This declaration might have preserved him from a longer stay at the Tower, but it can hardly disguise his real opinion about the situation in the second half of the seventeenth century—a situation that even caused him to write this didactic play on true friendship.

Instead of beginning his play with the introduction of Damon an Pithias and their companionship, and thus with the perfect example of true friendship, Edwards starts with the representation of what he has criticized in the prologue as the ordinary and most commonly spread kind of relationship: the court friendship that is merely formed for reasons of utility. He illustrates the nature of this kind of friendship by having the villain of the play, the flatterer Carisophus, try to make friends with the nobler courtier

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[47] Richard Edwards, *Richard Edwards*' Damon and Pithias*: A Critical Old-Spelling Edition*, ed. D. Jerry White (New York: Garland, 1980) 20, ll. 29-34.

[48] Edwards 20, ll. 39-40.

Aristippus, a "pleasant Gentilman" as he is called in the list of Dramatis Personae, in the hope of personal gain and advantage:

> Yet now I crave your friendship, which if I may attayne,
> Most sure and unfained frindship I promyse you againe:
> So we two linckt in frindshippe brother and brother,
> Full well in the Courte may helpe one another.[49]

And after Aristippus has pretended to accept the offer to become his friend, Carisophus adds:

> Sith we are now so friendly joyned, it seemeth to mee,
> That one of us helpe eche other in every degree,
> Prefer you my cause when you are in presence,
> To further your matters to the Kinge let me alone in your absence.[50]

From this depiction of what he thinks their friendship is going to be like, it becomes absolutely clear, what conception of friendship Carisophus has and that his only interest is in the advantage he could take of the relation. That his motives are purely egoistic is even explicitly stressed by him a bit later in the play, when he reveals his true intention in an aside: "I wyll use his friendship to myne owne commodytie […]"[51]

Most striking about the notion of friendship that Carisophus here presents, is that he still uses the image of two brothers who help each other in times of need to illustrate his idea of the duty of friends, and thus returns to the vocabulary of the Christian and chivalric friendship conceptions of medieval times. In fact, the notion of the utility friendship Carisophus here presents does resemble the chivalric conception of companionship in a way, even though, of course, it lacks the aspect of virtuousness and hence the major characteristic of friendship in the medieval view of it. This aspect, however, is exactly what the whole story of Damon and Pithias is about. Now, that Edwards has here used the image of the friends as brothers to remind his audience of the stress that was put on the utility of friendship in the feudal-chivalric conception of it is though very unlikely, as he also makes use of this image when he talks about the friendship between Damon and Pithias. It is therefore very reasonable to assume that the use of the image of brothers when referring to friends was still very common in Edwards's time.

Of course, Carisophus' motivation for making friends with others is so obvious that also Aristippus knows that it is anything but the virtuous one of a high-minded character. Yet, Aristippus has nevertheless pretended to accept his offer of friendship. After Carisophus has left the scene, however, he denies that there could ever be a real friendship between the two and reveals his true opinion about the false friend before

[49] Edwards 24, ll. 69-72.

[50] Edwards 25, ll. 86-89.

[51] Edwards 45, l. 550.

he finally explains why he made him believe that he would willingly make friends with him:

> Is Aristippus linckt in Friendship with Carisophus?
> *Quid cum tanto Asino, talis Philosophus* [What has such a philosopher in common with such an ass]?
> They say, *Morum similitudo consuit amicitias* [Likeness of characters cements friendships].
> Then, how can this Friendship betwene us two come to passe?
> We are as like in condicions, as Jacke Fletcher and his Bowlt,
> I brought up in learnyng, but he is a very dolt.[52]

So, Aristippus here at first explains that there cannot be a true friendship between the two for they were too different in their characters. That his conception of true friendship, in contrast to Carisophus' rather medieval notions, is modelled on the classical ideas, is not only skilfully illustrated by the insertion of Latin expressions, but becomes explicitly clear by the reference to the classical commonplace that true and perfect friendship can only exist between equals. When he now goes into detail about Carisophus' character, this serves not only to show the difference between the two but also to introduce Carisophus as the villain of the play, and thus to point towards the role he will play in the further development of the plot (namely that he will falsely accuse Damon of espionage, and will hence be responsible for his condemnation):

> A Villaine for his life, a Varlet died in Graine,
> You lose Money by him if you sel him for one knave,
> for he serves for twaine:
> A flatteryng Parasite, a Sicophant also,
> A commen accuser of men: to the good, an open Foe,
> Of halfe a worde, he can make a Legend of lies, /
> Which he wyll advouch with such tragicall cryes,
> As though all were true that comes out of his mouth,
> Where in dede to be hanged by and by,
> He cannot tell one tale but twyse he must lie,
> He spareth no mans life to get the kinges favour,
> In which kind of servis he hath got such a savour […].[53]

With this characterization, Aristippus perfectly foreshadows Carisophus' role in the play. But the function of this passage is not only to prepare the audience for the further development of the plot, but also to present the image of a certain type of courtier, of whom honourable courtiers should be wary and against whose intrigues they should take precautions. When Aristippus now explains why he has pretended to make friends with Carisophus, this does hence first of all serve a didactic rather than a dramatic purpose:

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[52] Edwards 26, ll. 100-105. Trans. Joseph Quincy Adams, *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas* (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin, 1924), qtd. by White in Edwards 140.

[53] Edwards 26, ll. 108-118.

> That he [Carisophus] wyll never leave, me thinke then that I,
> Have done very wisely to joyne in friendship with him, lest perhaps I
> Comming in his way might be nipt, for such knaves in presence,
> We see oft times put honest men to silence:
> Yet I have played with his beard in knitting this knot,
> I promist frendship, but you love few words: I spake it, but I ment it not.[54]

Pretending to make friends with flatterers and villains, not in the hope of personal gain but to take precautions against their intrigues, is here presented as a just method to protect oneself against those whose revenge one had to fear when their offer of friendship was rejected. This cunning diplomatic tactic, which in fact dominated the reality of many common friendships (or worldly friendships, as Edwards calls them), has of course nothing to do with the idea of perfect friendship Edwards really wants to propagate with his play. Yet, to do so, he has to illustrate at first the kind of friendship he seeks to criticise and the situation in which it usually occurs in practice. He does so not only by presenting Carisophus' attempt to make friends with Aristippus but also by having Carisophus' servant Jacke—one of the impartial characters who are not involved in any true or false friendships at all—refer to the fact that the false kind of friendship is indeed often to be found in reality, and especially in the reality of court live:

> […] I have heard say, there is falshod in felowshippe,
> In the Court somtimes, one geves another finely the slippe:
> Which when it is spied, it is laught out with a scoffe,
> And with sporting and playing, quietly shaken of.[55]

This negative representation of court relations is indeed an important didactic means, as it emphasises the contrast between these false friendships and the perfect one of Damon and Pithias. Thus, Edwards has much later in the play, again a very similar account of the friendship situation at court given by another minor character, the collier Grimme, who, in a typical groundling scene, declares:

> Friendship is dead in Courte, Hipocrisie doth raigne,
> Who is in favour now, to morow is out agayne:
> The state is so uncertaine, that I by my wyll,
> Will never be courtier, but a Colier styll.[56]

Edwards leaves no doubt that he condemns the false kind of friendship, but he nevertheless has to accept its existence and an honourable man's necessity to be now and then engaged in it if he does not want to expose himself to danger. Edwards certainly considers it not very honourable to join in such friendships, but he also considers it not very wise not to do it, when it is appropriate to the situation. However,

[54] Edwards 26-27, ll. 119-124.

[55] Edwards 30, ll. 196-99.

[56] Edwards 76, ll. 1219-22.

he still makes absolutely clear that these should only be regarded as inferior friendships and that the value of a true and perfect friendship is far beyond the one of such ordinary relations, when he has Aristippus conclude his explanation by addressing the audience with the words:

> Who markes this friendship betwene us two,
> Shal jude of the worldly friendship without any more a doo,
> It may be a ryght Patron therof, but true friendship in deede,
> Of nought but of vertue, doth truly proseed […].[57]

Having thus prepared the ground for his discussion of true friendship, Edwards begins his representation of the friendship between Damon and Pithias not by introducing any of the two directly but by having them introduced by their servant Stephano. This, in fact, is a very skilful way to do it, as it fulfils a double purpose. On the one hand, it gives special emphasis to the nobility of the friends, as truly virtuous men would never boast about the perfect friendship that exists between them to impress others; on the other hand, it lends much more credence to the description of their friendship when it is not given by the friends themselves, as they could of course merely pretend to have such a friendship, just as the friends in a false one use to do. The characterization of their relationship is therefore better be given by a third person, and who would be more suited to do this than the one who knows them best, as he spends most of his time with them: their servant. Introducing himself, Stephano immediately comes to speak about the extraordinary friendship that exists between his two masters:

> A bondman I am so nature hath wrought me,
> One Damon of Greece, a gentleman bought me: /
> To him I stand bond, yet serve I another,
> Whom Damon my Master loves, as his owne brother:
> A Gentleman too, and Pithias he is named,
> Fraught with Vertue, whom vice never defamed:
> These two, since at Schoole they fell acquainted,
> In mutual friendship, at no time have fainted:
> But loved so kindly, and friendly eche other,
> As thoughe they were Brothers by Father and Mother:
> Pithagoras learnynge, these two have embrased,
> Which bothe are in vertue so narrowly laced,
> That all their whole dooynges do fall to this issue
> To have no respect, but onely to vertue:
> All one in effecte, all one in their goynge,
> All one in their study, all one in their doyng:
> These Gentlemen both, beyng of one condicion,
> Both alike of my service have all the fruition:
> Pithias is joyfull, if Damon be pleased:
> Yf Pithias be served, then Damon is eased:
> Serve one, serve both: so neare, who would win them?
> I thinke they have but one hart betwene them.[58]

[57] Edwards 27, ll. 125-128.

Except for the rather medieval image of the friends as brothers, which must have still been so closely connected with people's notion of true friendship in Edwards's time that Stephano refers to it even twice, the way in which he describes the friendship between his two masters is purely classical. Particular stress is here put on the fact that their friendship is based on their virtuousness, and that they are so similar to each other in their actions and thoughts that it almost seems as if they were one person. Stephano even refers to the image of the single soul that is dwelling in two bodies, although with him the soul is represented by a single heart that the friends seem to share. The idea that the friends are almost like one person is furthermore stressed by the fact that they are accompanied by only one servant, just as if they were really merely one person, since every nobleman had usually his own. That Stephano serves both men, also emphasizes the idea that the friends share all their possessions with each other—an idea that is also supported by his description of the friends as Pythagoreans, who were known to hold all their belongings in common.

By having a third party commented on the friends, Edwards has thus made clear that there is indeed a perfect friendship between them, one that really exists and is not only pretended. Now he can also let the friends speak for themselves. He does so by having them ensure each other of their friendship in the most classical terms and by making use of nearly all of the typical commonplaces, like that of the friend as another self, for example, which he has Pithias here begin with:

> My Damon, of this thyng, there needes no proofe to mee, /
> The Gods forbyd, but that Pithias with Damon in al things shuld agree.
> For why is it said: *Amicus alter ipse* [A friend is another self],
> But that true friendes should be two in body, but one in minde,
> As it were one transformed into another? whiche against kynde
> Though it seeme: yet in good faith, when I am alone,
> I forget I am Pithias, me thinke I am Damon."[59]

Now Damon continues by highlighting the characteristics on which their friendship is based, by particularly stressing its deep rootedness in virtue, and thus by differentiating it from the false friendships that commonly exist:

> […] thrise happy are wee,
> Whom true love hath joyned in perfect Amytie:
> Which amytie first sprong, without vaunting be it spoken, that is true,
> Of likelines of maners, tooke roote by company, and now is conserved by vertue,
> Which vertue alwaies through worldly things do not frame
> Yet doth she atchive to her followers immortall fame:
> Wherof if men were carefull, for Vertues sake onely
> They would honour friendship, and not for commoditie:

[58] Edwards 31, ll. 223-42.

[59] Edwards 35, ll. 330-36.

> But suche as for profite in friendship do lincke,
> When stormes come, they slide away sooner then a man wyll thinke:
> My Pithias, the somme of my talke falles to this issue,
> To proove no friendship is sure, but that which is grounded on vertue.[60]

Damon is here summing up the classical conception: Friendship is based on the mutual affection of the friends for each other and on their similarity in character and manners. It is strengthened by the time the friends spend together and finally becomes perfect and lasting due to their virtuousness. But Damon's account of their friendship is more than merely a recapitulation of the classical commonplaces. It supports the main message of the play, Edwards's intention to show not only how reprehensible the false kind of friendship is, but also how stupid it is to make friends only for reasons of utility and advantage. In contrast to Aristippus, who has already blamed this sort of friendship for its lack of virtue, Damon now adds a very convincing argument against the formation of friendships in the hope of personal gain and security to his criticism. He hints at the fact that the situation in which a true friendship proves to be most useful, is in times of need, when one friend can rely on the help of the other. This, however, only happens when both friends are bound to each other by means of virtue. In friendships that are not based on virtue, the friends would of course immediately abandon each other as soon as one of them is getting into any kind of trouble, since both friends' aim is merely to obtain help, not to provide it. Hence, there is indeed no sense in making friends purely for selfish reasons, as one could not look to such friends for help when help is most urgently needed.

However, there are of course also those whose interest is not so much in obtaining help from their friends in times of need, as they do everything not to get into unpleasant circumstances in the first place. They would even rather betray a friend to avoid trouble or critical situations than to expect his help afterwards. The model of such a man is Carisophus, as we have already learned from Aristippus description of him. He is ruthlessly ambitious, egocentric, and always only feathering his own nest. He is a person with no scruples who will stop at nothing to attain his objectives; he would not even shrink from scheming against others, from slander, or from crime. He reveals his true character in a kind of revelation soliloquy, just as it is later also to be found in Shakespeare's plays *Othello* and *Richard III*, for example, in which Jago and Richard deliver a speech very similar to that of Carisophus:

> He is a foole that for his profit will not take payne:
> Though it be joyned with other mens hurt, I care not at all,
> For profit I wyll accuse any man, hap what shall.[61]

[60] Edwards 34-35, ll. 318-29.

[61] Edwards 37, ll. 373-75.

And a bit later, he even confesses: "I care not who fall, so that I may ryse."[62] This last statement is in fact not merely a perfect characterization of Carisophus' personality but also a clear prediction of what is now to come. The one who has to fall that he may rise is namely Damon, who is accused by him of espionage in order to win the king's favour. Carisophus does in fact not hesitate to sacrifice a stranger, so that he is honoured for his concern for the king's interests and security. With no further ado, the tyrant condemns Damon to death but on request grants him a couple of day's grace to be able to sail home to settle his affairs before he has to die. As a security for his return, Pithias agrees to be imprisoned and, in case his convicted friend should not return within the granted period of time, to be also executed in his stead. Pithias' willingness not only to serve as a hostage for his friend, but also to die for him if necessary, clearly corresponds with the classical conception of true friendship as we can find it in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, for instance.[63] And that Pithias is not only ready to take the risk of being executed but even prefers to die in his friend's stead is again purely classical. For Edwards, this readiness to die for one's friend is the most important characteristic of true friendship, as to give one's own life for a friend is indeed the supreme sacrifice a man can make. It is, of course, also this readiness to make the supreme sacrifice to save a friend's life that is in sharp contrast to the attitude towards any kind of sacrifice or help that characterizes the majority of ordinary or even false friendships. It is hence not surprising that Edwards places special emphasis on this point:

> The kinge hath sworne that Pithias should die,
> Whereof Pithias hath intelligence very secretly,
> Wishing that Damon may not returne, tyll he have payde
> His lyfe for his friend: hath it ben heare to fore ever sayde,
> That any man for his friend would die so wyllyngly?
> O noble friendship, O perfect amitie,
> Thy force is heare seene, and that very perfectlie.[64]

It is, in fact, exactly this willingness to die for one another that causes one of the few quarrels between the friends. When the day of the execution has come, Damon is not yet back and everyone expects to see Pithias being executed in his stead. The faithful friend is then already on the scaffold when suddenly Damon appears, just in time to avert his friend's execution and to take the place on the scaffold that was intended for him in the first place—or so he thinks. What now follows, is a lengthy discussion about whether Damon was still in time and should therefore be executed or whether he arrived too late so that Pithias has to die in his stead. Both friends are in fact so eager to die for each other that none of them would give in.[65] In the end, this almost

[62] Edwards 45, l. 546.

[63] See 53.

[64] Edwards 68, ll. 1035-40.

[65] Cf. Edwards 94, ll. 1583ff.

unconsciously funny discussion of who has the right to die for his friend, miraculously causes a change of the king's character and of his opinion of the friendship between the two Pythagoreans. Cleansed of all evil thoughts, the tyrant suddenly recognizes the friendship that he has not long before described as a "straunge thinge" and "mad kind of amitie," as the noble and rare kind of friendship that it is.[66] He grants the friends a pardon and is in fact so fascinated by their loyalty to one another that he even wants to participate in their friendship. In contrast to most other versions of the story, Edwards sees indeed no reason why this request should be rejected, and has Damon therefore reply: "For my part, most noble king, as a third frind, welcom to our friendly societie, / But you must forget you ar a king, for frindship stands in tru equalitie."[67]

In fact, only this last hint at the friends' equality as a necessary precondition of their friendship reveals the inconsequence of Edwards's decision to let a king join the friendship of ordinary subjects—at least when seen in regard to the classical conceptions on which the rest of his representation of friendship is based. From the classical viewpoint, as presented by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, for example, it is impossible that a king could make friends with individual subjects as he can only have a friendship with his subjects as a whole.[68] And even though Damon and Pithias are foreigners in Syracuse, and thus in fact not real subjects of Dionysius, the difference between a king and ordinary noblemen is still so great that it is unlikely that the classics would have thought a friendship between them possible. But Edwards is here not so much interested in classical state theory than in presenting his view of the perfect kind of friendship that is based on virtuousness—and virtuousness is a quality that certainly also becomes kings (and queens). So, at the end of his play, by recapitulating the advantages of true and faithful friendship, Edwards even encourages his queen, Elisabeth I, to follow the example of Dionysius and to make friends with as many good and loyal men as she could find:

> The strongest garde that Kynges can have,
> Are constant friends their state to save:
> True friendes are constant, both in word and deede,
> True friendes are present, and help at each neede:
> True friends talke truly, they glose for no gayne,
> When treasure consumeth, true frindes wyll remayne,
> True frindes for their tru Prince, refuseth not their death:
> The Lorde graunt her such frindes most noble Queene Elizabeth.[69]

Interestingly enough, Edwards's play, in contrast to the classical versions of the story, does not end with the release of the friends and the king's request to participate in their

[66] Edwards 59, l. 857; 58, l. 831. Cf. also 96, ll. 1665-6.

[67] Edwards 97, ll. 1689-90.

[68] See 51.

[69] Edwards 101, ll. 1761-68.

friendship, as it has not yet completely fulfilled its didactic purpose. Edwards has now to bring also the subplot of the play to an end by showing what happens to the villain Carisophus and his false friendship with Aristippus. After the tyrant's character has changed, he recognizes Carisophus' evil ambitions and the flatterer who has accused the king's new friends, now falls from grace. With the example of Carisophus' false friendship with Aristippus, Edwards is now able to show that such a friendship has necessarily to come to an abrupt end when either the reason for which the relation was formed is suddenly of no further relevance to one of the friends (i.e. when one them considers their friendship no longer of any use for him), or when one of the friends suddenly gets into trouble and asks for the other's help, which is then of course refused. This is exactly what happens in the case of Carisophus and Aristippus' pretended friendship, which the first has merely initiated for reasons of utility and the latter only entered into for reasons of security. When king Dionysius begins to doubt about Carisophus' honesty and the honourableness of his intentions when he accused Damon, the villainous flatterer suddenly finds himself in danger of falling from the king's grace and asks Aristippus for help. Aristippus, however, now free from all fear that the villain could bring him into discredit and denounce him to Dionysius anymore, does of course not see any reason why he should put in a good word for him with the king. Now the time has come for Aristippus to tell Carisophus what he really thinks about him, that he has only pretended to enter into the friendship with him, that there could be no friendship between them anyway, as they are too different in character, and that he is not willing to take any measures to help him:

> What a Devell then ment Carisophus,
> To joyne in frindship with fine Aristippus?
> In whom is as much vertue, trueth and honestie,
> As there are true fethers in the three Craines of the ventrie:
> Yet these fethers have the shadow of lively feathers the truth to scan,
> But Carisophus hath not the shadowe of an honest man
> To be playne, because I know thy villany
> In abusing Dionisius, to many mens injury,
> Under the cloke of frindship, I playd with his head,
> And sought meanes how thou with thine owne fancy might be lead:
> My frindship thou soughtest for thine owne commoditie,
> As worldly men doo by profite measuring amitie:
> Which I perceaving, to the lyke my selfe I framed,
> Wherein I know of the wise I shall not be blamed:
> If you aske me *Quare* [Why]? I answere, *Quia prudentis est multum dis simulare* [Because it is the part of a wise man to dissemble much].
> To speake more playner, as the proverbe doth go,
> In faith Carisophus, *Cum cretense cretiso* [With the Cretan I lie]:
> Yet a perfect frinde I shew my selfe to thee in one thing,
> I doo not dessemble, now I say I wyll not speake for thee to the King,

> Therefore sinke in thy sorrow, I doo not deceave thee,
> A false knave I found thee, a false knave I leave thee.[70]

Here Edwards tries to illustrate the nature of the false friendship between Aristippus and Carisophus—certainly also in order to contrast it with the ideal friendship of Damon and Pithias. He wants to show that such friendships do not only exist between vicious characters but that also actually good men like Aristippus could sometimes get into a situation in which they are forced, or in which they are at least well advised to pretend to agree to enter into the friendship with a villain, as the rejection of such an offer of friendship might turn out to be to their own disadvantage. This is exactly what Aristippus did and now he tries to justify his doing. A wise man, he claims, will sometimes have to disguise his true intentions not to deceive innocent people but to protect himself from harm. Now, it is precisely this difference in the motivation to make friends that distinguishes the villain from the wise man. A villain would always deceive others in the hope of personal gain, or simply to do them harm. The wise man, however, only disguises his true intentions to protect himself. It is, of course, only in this latter case that joining a false friendship is acceptable. The inclusion of these pragmatic considerations in his treatment of friendship makes Edwards's play so remarkable. There is no doubt that he considers the false kind of friendship bad, no matter for what reason it was formed or entered into; yet, he can still muster up enough understanding for those who participate in such friendships for reasons of self-protection not to condemn their behaviour. As he has Aristippus put it, these men are of course not truly virtuous, but they are at least not as evil and ignominious as the flatterers who deceive others only for reasons of utility and personal gain. So, Edwards is not the severe critic who rejects the ordinary people's wish for security as pure opportunism and who only accepts the truly honourable behaviour of those who remain steadfast to the principles of virtue. His representation of friendship is in fact not simply the naïve glorification of *vera amicitia*; it is also a realistic account of the way in which friendship manifests itself in the everyday reality of most ordinary men. In the very last line of the play, Edwards even admits hat the ideal kind of friendship is "so rare, that scarce foure couple of faithfull frends have ben since the world began."[71] The doubt as to whether the ideal of perfect friendship is truly realizable, is therefore already indirectly included in Edwards's play. Of course, to evoke this doubt was certainly not his intention, but even Edwards cannot still present a plausible image of

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[70] Edwards 85-86, ll. 1421-41. Trans. Adams, qtd. by White in Edwards 164. The 'three craines of the ventrie' that Aristippus refers to in line 1424, was "a famous London tavern, from at least as early as 1560, in Upper Thames Street, named after the three cranes of timber on the adjoining Vintry Wharf. The sign of the tavern was punningly blazoned as three birds of the crane species, and it is apparently the sign which is referred to here." James Louis Jackson, *An Edition of Richard Edwardes*' Damon and Pithias, diss., U of Illinois, 1949, qtd. by White in Edwards, 164. Aristippus' remark that he would lie with the Cretan, refers to the traditional idea that in ancient times the Cretans were known as liars. See Adams, qtd. in Edwards 164.

[71] Edwards 101, l. 1756.

perfect friendship without hinting at the difficulties the realization of this classical ideal would make—especially at his own time. In the course of the Renaissance, this doubt as to whether the ideal is translatable into practice at all will indeed turn into the certainty that it is not, and at the end of the age the disappointment and frustration about this certitude finds expression in the harsh criticism of the idealization of friendship and the rejection of the idea of *vera amicitia* in the plays of writers like Ben Jonson (1572-1637) or Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) and John Fletcher (1579-1625).

After Aristippus has thus broken off his relation with Carisophus, the abandoned villain in fact at first complains about being deceived, but then realizes that he could hardly expect any help from a friend with whom he had only a false friendship, which he himself merely initiated in the hope of personal gain in the first place. And so, Edwards has Carisophus utter the play's message for all the villains who make friends for reasons of utility, that they might watch out not to be deceived by those they intend to deceive themselves, for that they do not fall into the pit they have dug themselves:

> […] is this frindship to leave his friend in the plaine fielde?
> Well I see now, I my selfe have beguylde,
> In matching with that false fox in amitie,
> Which hath me used to his owne commoditie.
> Which seeing me in distresse, unfainedly goes his wayes,
> Loe this is the perfect frindship among men now a daies:
> Which kinde of frindship toward him I used secretly:
> And he with me the like, hath requited me craftly.
> It is the Gods judgement, I see it playnely,
> For all the world may know, *Incide in foveam quam feci*. [I have fallen into a pit which I myself digged.][72]

Finally, in a concluding monologue, Edwards has Eubulus, the king's wise adviser, recapitulate in a few lines the ideal of true friendship that was presented in the play—as the quintessence, as it were, that the audience might take out of it. The image he draws herein of perfect friendship is almost identical with the one Stephano has drawn when he introduced his masters at the beginning of the play. Now, however, Eubulus is not referring to the specific friendship between Damon and Pithias anymore, but to the abstract concept of true and virtuous friendship as such:

> One loveth another now for vertue, not for gayne,
> Where Vertue doth not knit the knot, there Friendship cannot raigne,
> Without the whiche, no house, no land, ne kingdome can endure,
> As necessarie for mans lyfe, as Water, Ayre, and Fier,
> Which frameth the minde of man, all honest thinges to doo,
> Unhonest thinges Friendshippe ne craveth, ne yet consents thertoo,
> In wealth a double joye, in woe a present stay,
> A sweete compagnion in eche state true Friendship is alway:

[72] Edwards 86-87, ll. 1442-51. Trans. Adams qtd. by White in Edwards 165. Cf. also Ps. 7.15; Prov. 26.27, 28.10; and Eccles. 10.8.

> A sure defence for Kinges, a perfecte trustie bande,
> A force to assayle, a Shield to defende the enemies cruel hande,
> A rare, and yet the greatest Gifte, that God can geve to man.[73]

Here Eubulus sums up the classical ideas of friendship and even includes a reference to the advantage of which true friendship might be for the state and its leader or leaders. Most remarkable, however, is his final statement, in which he presents the Christian idea of friendship as a gift given to man by God. This might reveal the influence that the Christian view of the matter still has on the humanistic approach to a reassessment of the classical notions of friendship.

Edwards's play does certainly not belong to the masterpieces of Elizabethan drama and hence remains in obscurity with most modern readers. Despite its subplot, the representation of friendship in the play is rather one-dimensional and too obviously following the classical sources to deal with the subject subtly enough or in a way that suits a dramatic treatment of the theme. There are problems frequently occurring with the maintenance of the metre, as Edwards wants to keep up the very simple rhyme scheme *abab* throughout the whole play. And there are not only technical but also logical flaws in it. Edwards puts, for example, some of the Latin proverbs into the mouths of servants and other certainly not that well educated characters, while his own knowledge about classical mythology proves to be rather sketchy. The major flaw in the play, however, is the choice of the reason for which Damon is accused and condemned. To have him charged with conspiracy or treason, as in the classical sources, is of course only possible when the friends were already courtiers at Dionysius' court and had lived there for a longer period of time. As Edwards chooses to make them foreigners to Dionysius' court, however, the only logical reason for which he could have Damon be accused of is espionage—so far, so good. Now, however, it does not make sense to let him sail home to settle his affairs anymore, as nobody would let a spy return home, for he would naturally tell his people about what he has found out about the enemy. This, of course, makes Edwards's version become quite implausible.

Despite these deficiencies, however, it is precisely the simplicity and straightness of the way in which Edwards presents the image of true friendship in his play that makes it so typical an example of the literary treatments of the classical ideal in the Renaissance. Furthermore, however,—and this is very untypical of such treatments—he also refers to one of the two major conflicts that the ideal of friendship has to face in the course of the age and that in the end will lead to its debasement: the conflict between the idealization and the realization of the classical ideas. (The other one is the conflict between the concept of friendship and that of love, to which we will come in section 4.2) But Edwards's drama is not primarily intended as a discussion of this

[73] Edwards 100, ll. 1745-55.

conflict, but as a didactic play acted by schoolboys to illustrate the advantages of true and faithful friendship by means of giving account of the ideal amity between Damon and Pithias, who are, as Kornbluth puts it, "about the only pair of friends in an English drama who embody so completely the Ciceronian precepts—they *live De Amicitia*."[74] So, with his play, Edwards certainly did not want to give the impression that perfect friendship can only exist on the stage, but rather wanted to encourage his audience to make every endeavour to live up to this ideal. With this intention, he produced indeed one of the best examples of Renaissance didactic literature on friendship to be found in the whole period.

3.2. THE COMMUNITY OF FRIENDS: HUMANISTIC 'PEN-PALS' AND THE QUEST FOR REAL FRIENDSHIP

To make every endeavour to live up to the classically inspired ideal of perfect friendship did in fact not simply remain the mere appeal of the numerous didactic representations of the matter in Renaissance literature; people now also began to really feel an urge to translate the classical ideas into the realities of their personal lives, and thus to experience an alternative to the rather professional and hence functional relationships that were commonly thought of when the concept of friendship was referred to. In other words, as Mills puts it, "as there was a desire to recreate the best aspects of classical thought and to embody them in life, there was, especially in the Elizabethan period, a longing to experience glowing personal friendship and live up to—or exceed—the classical encomiums on it."[75] This urge for the experience of a close and intimate personal relationship with someone who does not belong to the same family was indeed especially felt by the humanistic scholars of the time, who, of course, had propagated the ideal in the first place. That it was particularly them who were so enthusiastic about the idea of the realization of perfect friendship is in fact hardly surprising, as they had both the knowledge of how such a friendship could and should look like and the need for such a relationship. In the course of the fifteenth and especially the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the meaning of traditional relationships and the structures of social interaction changed significantly. One of the main aims of humanism was to provide a decent education to a broader section of the population, with the result that by the early sixteenth century the educated elite in Europe no longer consisted of merely some few clergymen but of thousands of theologians, lawyers, physicians, scholars, or teachers, who were not concentrated at a few important cities or, like the educated elite of medieval times, gathered together in a number of monasteries but spread all over the continent. Forming a completely new

[74] Kornbluth 161.

[75] Mills 112.

stratum of society, these educated men soon found themselves in a situation that Paul Münch describes in his work on *Lebensformen in der Frühen Neuzeit* as a "'besondere Existenz'," a 'special existence'.[76] They realized that their education had separated them from the traditional structures of societies and from their former communities and acquaintances. They formed a new social group, the *nobilitas litteraria*, which consisted of members who were spread all over Europe. In nearly every little village, there was at least one or two educated men like the pastor, vicar, or priest and the schoolmaster, who were, though integrated into the social community of their parish, intellectually rather isolated. It was this experience of isolation that made most of them longing for a friendly society of equal intellectuals, for a humanistic society of friends. In the cities and larger towns, the humanistic elite soon began to meet regularly in scholarly circles, and with their colleagues in the countryside, they kept up a frequent correspondence and tried to keep in contact also by means of regular mutual visits. Using Latin as their common language, it was indeed no problem for the European humanists to get or keep in contact with each other. An English scholar, for instance, was thus as easily able to keep up the correspondence with his English associates as with his French, Dutch, German, Italian, or even Polish colleagues and friends.[77] Considering the way in which the European humanists in the Renaissance were linked to each other by means of correspondence and visits and the friendly and sometimes even intimate way in which they addressed and treated each other, one can certainly speak of a broad system of various networks of friends that often also overlapped each other. It is, of course, not surprising that the leading humanistic scholars of the time also had the largest circles of friends and were thus part of the most wide ranging friendship networks. Probably the most prominent figure in the European humanistic 'friendship scene' at that time was Erasmus, and the friendships he had with many other important thinkers of his age almost became legendary. How international his contacts indeed were, becomes visible from the long list of his friends, of whom Burke mentions some of the best known in his brief essay on humanism and friendship in sixteenth century Europe:

> The international circle of Erasmus included Thomas More (a close friend for a few years at least), the Valencian humanist Juan Luis Vives (who described Erasmus as his *amicus probatissimus*), the town clerk of Antwerp, Peter Gillis, and the German humanists Willibald Pirckheimer (addressed by Erasmus as 'incomparable friend'), and Beatus Rhenanus. Rhenanus called Erasmus 'most constant in keeping up friendships' and was described by him in return as a 'Pythagorean friend' (*pythagoricus amicus*), presumably a reference to Damon and Pythias.[78]

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[76] Paul Münch, *Lebensformen in der Frühen Neuzeit: 1500 bis 1800* (Frankfurt a. M.: Ulstein, 1996) 265.

[77] Cf. Münch 265-66.

[78] Burke 264. For detailed discussions of Erasmus's friendships, see, for example, Virginia W. Callahan, "The Erasmus-Alciati Friendship," *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Lovaniensis: Proceedings of the First*

Humanists, however, as members of the group of educated upper and middle class citizens that formed a completely new social stratum within the Renaissance society, were in fact not the only who felt the need for a new kind of social integration. Friendship, as an alternative to the conventional forms of relationship, also became popular with those who found themselves facing considerable changes in the structures of their traditional social groups. Communities of friends became, as Burke puts it, "some kind of substitute for the decline of such groups as the religious confraternities, threatened by both the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, the craft guilds, threatened by economic changes, brothers-in-arms, threatened by new modes of warfare, and finally of youth groups, attacked as sources of disorder by the reformers of popular culture."[79] This new form of friendship, of course, as every kind of relationship, needed its own rituals and symbols to become an acceptable alternative to the other, more established forms of human interaction—especially if it was to become an alternative to the most ritualized form of relationship with the greatest amount of symbolic associations attached to it: the bond of love. So, people began to assure each other of their friendship by means of exchanging avowals of their affection in written form, as in friendship poems or in contributions to the friend's *album amicorum* (a kind of autograph album, sometimes also referred to as l*iber amicorum* or *hortus amicorum*), or in the form of friendship tokens like friendship rings or friendship portraits.[80] The most favourite way to assure each other of one's affection and, of

International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies, Louvain, 23-28 August 1971, ed. Jozef Ijsewijn, Eckhard Kessler, and Lawrence V. Ryan (Leuven UP: Leuven, 1971-72) 133-41; Yvonne Charlier, *Érasme et l'amitié: D'apres sa correspondance* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1977); Thomas H. White, "Legend and Reality: The Friendship between More and Erasmus," *Svpplementvm Festivvm. Studies in Honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller*, ed. James Hankins, John Monfasani, and Frederick Jr Purnell (Binghamton: Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies, State U of New York, 1987) 489-504; and Forrest Tyler Stevens, "Erasmus's 'Tigress': The Language of Friendship, Pleasure and the Renaissance Letter," *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. Jonathan Goldberg (Durham: Duke UP, 1994) 124-40. On some of the friendships between other prominent humanists of the time, see, for example, K. J. Wilson, "Vsque ad aras: Thomas Elyot's Friendship with Thomas More," *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Sanctandreani: Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies, St. Andrews, 24 Aug. to 1 Sept. 1982*, ed. I. D. McFarlane (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1986) 531-35; Virginia Woods Callahan, "Andreas Alciatus and Boniface Amerbach: The Chronicle of a Renaissance Friendship," *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Guelpherbytani: Proceedings of Sixth International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies, Wolfenbüttel, 12 Aug. to 16 Aug. 1985*, ed. Stella P. Revard, Fidel Radle, and Mario A. Di Cesare (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1988) 193-200; Robert Seidel, "Gelehrte Freundschaft - die 'Epistula ad Philippum Melanchthonem' des Jacobus Micyllus," *Daphnis: Zeitschrift für Mittlere Deutsche Literatur* 19 (1990): 567-633; or Philip Caraman, *A Study in Friendship: Saint Robert Southwell* [1561-1595] *and Henry Garnet* [1555-1606] (Anand: Prakash, 1991).

[79] Burke 270.

[80] Cf. Burke 268-69. "The *album amicorum*," Burke explains, "was a kind of visitors' book in reverse, in which a traveller, usually a student would invite famous people he met (such as Luther or Melanchthon), or his teachers, or his fellow-students or other friends, to write something: a proverb, or verses, or whatever." Burke 269. About the custom of commissioning and exchanging friendship portraits, Burke further explains: "By the early sixteenth century, the friendship portrait seems to have become an institution. Raphael made a portrait of his friend the poet Tebaldeo as a gift for the sitter, who responded with a sonnet in praise of the painting. Bembo owned a double portrait by his friend Raphael of his other friends Andrea Navagero and Agostino Beazzano, until he presented it to Beazzano himself in 1538. This looks very much like a portrait commissioned precisely in order to

course, to keep the contact, was though still—besides visits or regular meetings—the exchange of letters.

To gain at least an impression of the nature, i.e. of the contents and the tone of such letters, we will now take a brief look at two very different series of friendship correspondence. One of the two consists of the letters either written or received by the fifteenth-century Italian scholar Marsilio Ficino. His letters reflect the way in which the members of his circle, the Platonic Academy of Florence, dealt with each other, and reveal the conception these classical scholars had of friendship. The other series of letters, which we will also begin with, dates back to the sixteenth century. It is the correspondence between the English author and nobleman Sir Philip Sidney, whose literary representations of friendship have already been mentioned above, and the French writer and diplomat Hubert Languet (1518-1581). Unlike the letters of Ficino that are to be examined here, the ones by Sidney and Languet only reflect the friendship of two men, who were most of the time, also unlike Ficino and his friends, unable to visit and see each other regularly. Their letters were not send merely from the countryside to the town and vice versa, or even only from one side of a city to another, but from and to different places spread all over Europe, due to the various travels and diplomatic missions of both men.

It is, in fact, no accident that the correspondence of precisely these two writers, Ficino and Sidney, was chosen to illustrate the nature of the Renaissance custom of exchanging friendship letters—instead of, for instance, choosing some of the famous letters from Erasmus's correspondence. It is not only that Ficino's and Sidney's letters are divided by almost exactly a century's time, but also that they clearly reflect the development of the attitude towards personal friendship that took place in the course of the Renaissance. Of course, the letters of Ficino are also particularly interesting since he was one of the leading figures in the Italian Renaissance; Sidney and his letters of friendship, however, are not so much of interest because of their contents or the importance of their authors to their time but because of the extraordinary attachment Sidney seems to have had for the topic of friendship. In the Renaissance, as we have seen, the new enthusiasm for the classical notions of friendship found expression in various literary forms. First, there were writers like Lyly or Shakespeare, who presented their idealized image of friendship in fictional writings. Then there was such theoretical contemplation of friendship as that of Elyot or Edwards, who considered the theme in rather idealistic terms. But there were also writers like Montaigne, who

commemorate a friendship. So does the Giorgione *Double Portrait* of *c.* 1502, and Giovanni Cariani's *Two Young Men*, though as in so many cases it is impossible to identify the sitters. Another Italian example reveals the link with Cicero: a Moroni portrait at Brescia shows a gentleman holding a book entitled *Dell'amicitia*." Burke 268. On the topic of friendship portraits, see also Harald Keller, "Entstehung und Blütezeit der Freundschaftsbilder," *Essays in the History of Art Presented to Rudolf Wittkower on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Douglas Fraser (London: Phaidon, 1967) 161-73. See also Sidney's letter to Languet (Padua, 4 Feb. 1574), 125 below.

gave no fictional or theoretical but a very personal account of their own experiences of friendship. However, in most cases only one of these forms of expression was used. There are in fact not many writers of that time from whose writings we know that they were concerned with the linking of all three kinds of representation. One of those very few who presented the idealized image of friendship in their fictions but who also tried, on the basis of theoretical contemplation, to translate these noble ideas into the realities of their own friendships, was Sir Philip Sidney. In fact, we can find exactly the same elements of the classical *amicitia* ideal in the presentation of his actual friendship with Languet in their correspondence as in his fictional representation of friendship in his *Arcadia*. We might therefore conclude that friendship obviously played a truly significant role in Sidney's entire life and work.

That Sidney was not only concerned with the composition of fictional prose or lyric poetry but that his interest was also directed towards philosophical and theoretical considerations has already become clear from the quotations from his works cited above. From these citations, it has also become very obvious that he was not only familiar with the humanistic commonplaces of friendship, but also with the classical sources from which they were extracted—and this can be seen from his letters as well, as the way and the terms in which Sidney and Languet describe their friendship are unambiguously classical. As an educated nobleman, Sidney certainly knew Cicero's *Laelius* and, as we learn from one of his letters of 1579, he must also have been familiar with Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* when he wrote his first version of *The Arcadia*.[81] That he was as well familiar with Plato shows his reference to the *Republic* in his *Defence of Poesy*.[82] That he also knew the *Symposium* is very likely, since he frequently presents some of its Socratic ideas and motifs in the *Old Arcadia*, as for example in the third eclogues when he has Dicus consider the nature of Cupid, which clearly resembles the theme of the whole *Symposium* and especially Agathon's speech.[83] The same applies to the second eclogues where Sidney presents the dispute between Reason and Passion whether reason is to be preferred, or passion.[84] One of the sources of this motif might again be found in Diotima's reflection on the relation between wisdom and love in the *Symposium*.[85] Now, from the correspondence with his friends, we can learn that he did not only use these classical notions for the representation of friendship in his fictional writings but that he also endeavoured to translate these idealistic ideas into the realities of his own friendships, and especially into those of that with Hubert Languet.

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[81] Cf. Sir Philip Sidney, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, trans. and ed. Steuart A. Pears, facs. rpt. of 1845 ed. (Farnborough: Gregg International, 1971) 195.

[82] See Sidney, *Defence of Poesy* 234.

[83] See Sidney, *Old Arcadia* 213-216; and Plato, *Symposium* 194e-197e.

[84] See Sidney, *Old Arcadia* 119-120.

[85] See Plato, *Symposium* 203c-204b.

The relationship between Sidney and the Frenchman Hubert Languet was certainly both that between friends and that between a mentor and his pupil, as Sidney was just in his nineteenth year when he met Languet, who was at that time already in the fifty-fourth year of his life.[86] The educational character of Languet's friendship with Sidney becomes visible in the way in which Sidney in one of his letters replies to his mentor's advice: "Quod de periculo scribis, ego non secus ac omnia alia tua consilia semper observabo."[87] From their correspondence, it becomes plainly recognizable how important the matter of friendship must have been to them, and the notion of friendship that is presented in the letters vividly reflects the conceptions of the classical authors. It definitely reminds one of Cicero's proclamation that friendship is to be considered the highest good (see 56), when Sidney writes in one of his letters to Languet: "Summum bonum (post illam aeternam felicitatem) in colenda vera amicitia constituam, in qua re tu facile primas tenebis."[88] That Sidney did indeed consider real friendship to be a very valuable relationship, possible only between men, and that he must have considered it truly important to have such a friendship with an honourable and virtuous partner, might also be seen from a passage in one of his letters to Languet, which he writes in reply to his friend's complaint about not having heard anything from him for quite a while, to which Languet has even added the suspicion that Sidney might not really be interested in their friendship:

> […] quod vero tacite me cujusdam remissionis amoris quo te et divinam tuam virtutem prosequutus sum et semper prosequar, incusas, agnosco humanitatem tuam, sed id serio et vehementer a te peto, ut quantumcunque inter nos sit locorum intervallum, semper tamen id persuasum habeas, me non adeo puerili stultitia, aut inconstantia muliebri, aut belluina ingratitudine esse praeditum, ut non talis viri amicitiam cupide adipiscar, adeptam non conservem, conservatae vero me minus gratum exhibeam […].[89]

Whether deliberately or unconsciously, Sidney here indirectly refers to a number of classical commonplaces of friendship: that the virtuousness of a friend is the main

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[86] Cf. Pears, introduction, *Correspondence*, by Sidney ix, xvi.

[87] (Sidney to Languet: Venice, 5 Dec. 1573.) Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesie; Political Discourses; Correspondence; Translations*, ed. Albert Feuillerat (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1923) 80. – "I will give heed to that which you say about danger as I do to all your advice." Trans. Pears 4.

[88] (Sidney to Languet: Padua, 15 Jan. 1574.) Sidney, *Correspondence*, ed. Feuillerat 83. – "I shall find the *summum bonum* [highest good] (next to eternal bliss) in the cultivation of true friendship, and here you will unquestionably hold first rank." Trans. Charles S. Levy, "The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet, 1573-76," diss., Cornell U (Ithaca), 1962, 55-56.

[89] (Sidney to Languet: Venice, 5 Dec. 1573.) Sidney, *Correspondence*, ed. Feuillerat 79-80. – "As to your implied charge that my affection for you is waning, affection which was and always will be my tribute to your surpassing virtue, I acknowledge your kindness; but I very earnestly beg you always, no matter how great the distance between us, to retain the conviction that I am not so full of childish stupidity, womanly fickleness, or brutish ingratitude as not eagerly to seek the friendship of such a man, once having acquired it not to cultivate it, and having cultivated it, not to show myself thankful for it." Trans. Levy 15.

reason for making friends with him; that friendship is based on love or affection; that friendship remains unchanged, even if the friends are separated from each other by a great distance; that women cannot have real friendships, for they are too fickle and inconsistent friends and lovers; that friendships with good men should be cultivated and preserved; and that one should be truly grateful to have such friendships. The high esteem in which Sidney held his friendship with Languet—a friendship that he really considered to be one of the perfect kind—is clearly reflected in the way in which he talks to his friend about the nature and the value of their relation:

> Ego te effigiem meam adeo vehementer a me expetere et laetor quod ejusmodi indicia spirant dulcem tuum et jam diu perspectum erga me amorem, et doleo quod tam leves res a me cum dubitatione petis, si enim inter nos nulla esset vera et perfecta amicitia (quae omnia communia officia, ut Sol minora lumina obfuscat) tamen ea a te accepi, ut multo majora quam haec debiti loco exigere possis […].[90]

The friendship between the two men bears indeed all the characteristics of the classical conceptions. It might again remind us of Cicero, for example, that each friend's care and interest is only directed towards the sake of the other, and that nothing would be expected from the friend that he might not want to do (see 58): "Non expeto ut quicquam in mei gartiam facias quod tibi non fore jucundum aut utile existimes: nec volo te ulla mihi facta promissione esse obstrictum, praeterquam ea qua pactus es te habiturum diligentem curam tuae salutis & incolumitatis […]."[91] It is exactly this 'health and safety' to which the only acceptable self-interest of the friend is directed: "Deus te mihi diu conservet."[92] The fear, however, that the friend would consider himself bound to his companion rather by a promise he had made than by the love for him, was obviously a common one among the scholarly friends and pen friends of early modern times, since we can also find its expression in one of the letters Marsilio Ficino wrote to his 'unique friend' Giovanni Cavalcanti (1444-1509) exactly one hundred years before:

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[90] (Sidney to Languet: Padua, 4 Feb. 1574.) Sidney, *Correspondence*, ed. Feuillerat 84. – "I am both glad and sorry that you ask me so urgently for my portrait; glad, because a request of this kind breathes the spirit of that sweet and long-tried affection with which you regard me; and sorry that you have any hesitation in asking me so mere a trifle. For even if there were not between us that true and genuine friendship which throws into shade all other feelings, as the sun obscures the lesser lights, still I have received that from you, which gives you a right to demand from me as a debt greater things than this." Trans. Pears 29.

[91] (Languet to Sidney: Vienna, 4 Dec. 1574.) Hubert Languet, *Huberti Langueti, viri clarissimi epistolae politicae et historicae: Scriptae quondam ad illustrem, & generosum dominum Philippum Sydnaeum* (Frankfurt: Fitzer, 1633) 8-9. – "I do not wish you to do anything to please me which you do not think you would find pleasant and profitable; nor do I want you to be bound by any promise you have made me, beyond your promise to be extremely careful of your health and safety […]." Trans. Levy 13.

[92] (Sidney to Languet: Venice, 19 Dec. 1574.) Sidney, *Correspondence*, ed. Feuillerat 81. – "May God grant you long life for my sake." Trans. Pears 10.

> Sed unum mihi molestum est prae caeteris, quod ideò scribis ad me, quia promiseris, ergo pactioni istud tribuo non amori.
> Amatorias posco literas non mercatorias, an es etiam pacto meus scilicet quia ego sum tuus, amore uolo sis meus.[93]

It might also remind us again of Cicero, when Sidney and Languet consider casual, open, and uncensored speech to be one of the fundamental qualities to tell a friendship by (see 60): "Peto à te ne ineptas literas quas ad te soleo scribere, cuiquam ostendas. Scribo absque; delectu quicquid mihi suggerit animus variis modis affectus, & mihi satis est si id apud te consequar, ut credas nihil esse mihi charitus te."[94] It is indeed the quality of such casual and uncensored speech that marks the conversation between friends, and conversation, as the eighteenth-century English essayist Susannah Dobson still puts it two hundred years later, is the heart of friendship: "A French writer has observed that conversation is the soul of friendship; it may truly be said that friendship is the soul of conversation, as it takes away every reserve, and gives the fullest scope to the sentiments and emotions of the soul."[95] Consequently, the conversation with a friend must be a source of much greater pleasure than anything else, and will therefore, as Sidney admits, be preferred to all material values: "Et te charissime Languete videbo, cujus ego uno colloquio, magis profecto delectarer, quam omnium horum magnificorum magnificis magnificentiis."[96]

In view of this importance of conversation to friendship, it becomes clear how significant the correspondence between friends must be when they are spatially separated, even though this kind of communication can only be a substitute for an actual conversation. It might therefore be understandable why the absence of any news from the friend might cause considerable uneasiness or even annoyance, as it is expressed by Languet in one of his letters to Sidney:

> Quanta cura & solicitudine, immo quanto metu me liberasses, si semel atque iterum ex itinere ad me scripsisses. Non requirebam operosas literas, sed quae tantum continerent, Hoc die huc incolumes pervenimus, vel aliquid

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[93] (Ficino to Cavalcanti: 5 June 1474.) Ficino, "Quod gratis, gratius est, quam quod ex debito" ("What is done freely is more pleasing than an act of obligation"), *Opera Omnia*, vol. 1 (Basileae: Adamus Henricus Petri, 1561) 624. – "But, one thing that troubles me more than anything else is that you write to me because you promised; and that I attribute to a bargain and not to love.
I desire letters of love, not of barter; or are you really mine by contract? Because I am yours through love, I wish you to be mine through love too." Trans. members of the Language Department of the School of Economic Science, London, *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, by Marsilio Ficino, ed. Paul Oskar Kristeller, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (London: Shepheard-Walwyn, 1983) 73.

[94] (Languet to Sidney: Vienna, 4 Dec. 1574.) Languet 9-10. – "I beg you not to show anyone the foolish letters I am in the habit of sending you. I write, without taking a second thought, whatever my changeable moods suggest, and it is enough for me if I can make you believe that nothing is dearer to me than you." Trans. Levy 14.

[95] Dobson 1.

[96] (Sidney to Languet: Venice, 19 Dec. 1573.) Sidney, *Correspondence*, ed. Feuillerat 80. – "And then, my very dear Languet, I shall see you, and one conversation with you would give me more delight, than all the magnificent magnificences of all these magnificos." Trans. Pears 8.

> simile. Meministi quam obnixe id à te discedente petierim. At inquies, parum tua refert id te scire. Ubi pervenero Patavium vel Venetias, tum demum ad te scribam. Potuisses & illud alterum praestare, & si id secisses, magno me beneficio à te affectum esse iudicassem.[97]

The accusation is in fact a serious one, and correspondingly firm and defensive is Sidney's reply: "Non vero, inquam, parum tua refert, id te scire, bene enim novi quam res sit solliciti plena timoris amor, sed id dicam et vere dicam me nulli plane obviam fuisse, qui iter Viennam versus haberet […]."[98] The conviction that it is a matter of great importance to a friendship that the postal contact between two separated friends is kept alive at any time, as its one-sided interruption would cause one friend's displeasure, was in fact a common one in the Renaissance. It is therefore not really surprising that we can find nearly the same lamentation as that of Languet also in one of Ficino's letters to Cavalcanti:

> At tu cur scribis nihil? Nihil equidem habeo quod scribam, inquies. Id ipsum saltem nihil habere te, scribe, quanquam nunquam deest amicis argumentum literarum. Quid enim amico charius quam amici uita? Ergo uicissim qualis ualitudo sit, saepe significandum. Ego meam ualitudinem declarare non possum nisi prius ipse tuam. Quippe ualeo si tu uales, imo si te ualere intelligo.[99]

This idea, that one's own health depends on the health of the friend and that the absence of the friend would necessarily cause discomfort or even illness if he does not regularly send letters in which he confirms his well-being, is also expressed in a letter addressed to Ficino by Carlo Marsuppini Jnr.: "Salue solus mea salus. Tamdiu enim sanus saluusque sum quamdiu tecum sum. Ac tum denique uiuere mihi uideor cum tecum uiuo. Quotiens absum, totiens perij. Vide ergo, mi Marsili, ne me deserendo hominem perdas, imo amicum occidas."[100]

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[97] (Languet to Sidney: Vienna, 19 Nov. 1573.) Languet 3. – "What care and anxiety, nay what fear had you spared me, if you had written to me only once or twice on your journey! I did not desire a laboured letter, only a word or two, as, 'This day we arrived here in safety,' or the like. You remember how earnestly I begged this of you when you were leaving me. But you will say, 'it matters little to you whether you hear or not: when I arrive at Padua of Venice, then I will write to you.' You might have done both, and if you had, I should have thought myself greatly obliged by you." Trans. Pears 1.

[98] (Sidney to Languet: Venice, 5 Dec. 1573.) Sidney, *Correspondence*, ed. Feuillerat 79. – "I certainly do not say, 'It is of little consequence to you to know this,' for I well know how 'full of anxious fear love is,' but I will say this, and say it truthfully, that I came upon absolutely no one who was travelling toward Vienna." Trans. Levy 15.

[99] (Ficino to Cavalcanti: 19 Sep. 1468.) Ficino, "Quod necessariae epistolae inter amicos" ("Letters are necessary between friends"), *Opera Omnia* 625. – "But how is it that you don't write? You will say that you have nothing to write about. At least write that you have nothing to say; although there is always a reason for a letter to friends. What is dearer to a friend than the life of his friend? For this reason they should frequently write to each other about the state of their health. I cannot reveal to you my state of health unless I hear first of yours. Certainly I am well if you are; or rather, if I know that you are." Trans. Language Dept., School of Economic Science, ed. Kristeller 74-75.

[100] (Carlo Marsuppini to Ficino: no date.) Ficino, "Salus amici ab amico" ("The health of a friend depends on his friend"), *Opera Omnia* 638. – "Blessings upon you, sole source of my health. For I am healthy in

How important letters indeed were to early modern friends, not only as a confirmation of each others health and well-being, but also as a proof of their friendship (or simply as a token of their mutual respect and loyalty), might be seen from Lorenzo de' Medici's letters to Ficino. In one of them, for instance, he complaints about the delay of a letter from Ficino:

> Cum isthinc huc iucundissime Marsili me reciperem, tecum uerbis egi atque impetraui, ne absentes diutius literas tuas desideraremus. Quod quidem facturum te recepisti, uerùm cum quatuor iam post discessum dies praeterierint, neque adhunc tuae literae perferantur, cum aliorum tamen familiarium & necessariorum nostrorum plereque perlatae ad nos fuerint, tuam in scribendo tarditatem & miror et doleo, nam sane existimabam si par in ambobus beniuolentia uigeret, par scribendi studium quod amoris officium est non defuturum.[101]

The harsh tone of Lorenzo's complaint reveals how seriously the exchange of letters was taken. One might sometimes truly wonder, in fact, how the friends managed to do anything else at all apart from writing letters to each other, since we are here not talking about the exchange of messages between only two friends but between the members of a whole community of friends. Politicians and patrons like Lorenzo (1449-92) and scholars like Ficino or Erasmus must have indeed spend a vast amount of their time dealing with their voluminous correspondence, especially as not only the number of letters send to different friends but also the frequency with which letters between the individual friends were exchanged was quite considerable. Between some friends, in fact, this frequency of postal contact must have been so high, that they even saw a reason for complaint when they have had no word from each other for only four days, as in Lorenzo's case. His complaint impressively shows how important the exchange of letters between friends must have been to them as tokens of loyalty and friendly affection, but it also reveals the conventionalism of this habit and the constraint under which some of these letters were certainly written. Finally, of course, it also shows how gravely the violation of the obligation to write was condemned, especially when the correspondence became decidedly unbalanced, i.e. when the writing of letters and thus the expression of one's respect and affection for the friend became a unilateral activity, as Lorenzo, in his next letter to Ficino, claims it to have become the case after Ficino had failed to reply satisfactorily to Lorenzo's first message. Now, he bitterly complaints

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mind and body, just as long as I am with you. And I seem to be alive only when I live with you. Whenever I am absent from you I waste away. So, my Marsilio, see that you do not destroy a man, or rather kill a friend, by deserting me." Trans. Language Dept., School of Economic Science, ed. Kristeller 109.

[101] (Lorenzo de' Medici to Ficino: no date.) Ficino, "Invitatio ad scribendum" ("A request for a letter"), *Opera Omnia* 620. – "DEAREST MARSILIO, when I was leaving for this place I urged you not to let me await your letters too long while I was away, and to this you agreed. But already four days have passed since our parting and there is still no letter from you; although a great many letters have been delivered to me from my household and other friends." Trans. Language Dept., School of Economic Science, ed. Kristeller 61.

about Ficino's carelessness and accuses him even more harshly than in his first letter of disobeying the rules of friendship and of thereby not only betraying the one between them but also destroying his confidence in friendship as such:

> O falsum meum de te iudicium, uerumque illud uulgatum prouerbium. Locorum, scilicet, interuallum ut ab oculis disiungit, ita nos ab amorum cogitationibus separare. Verum quis hoc credidisset? quod ego uix credo cum perspexerim. Ego binas ad te literas dedi, tu unam uix epistolam nobis, atque ita paucorum uerborum, ut fiex ea primam salutationem atque ultimam loci & diei particulam demas, nihil ferè sit reliqui. At non decet Philosophum loquacem esse? At non decet mutuum? […]
> Quod tamen tum miror, tum uerò quibus uerbis te accusem non inuenio. Nullum est enim tam asperum tamque contumeliosum uerbum, quin deterior multo sit Marsiliana taciturnitas, qua & fidem tuam & nostram amicitiam fefellisti. Doleo quidem non parum, quod fidem fregeris, atque amicitiae nostrae huiusmodi iniuria intuleris. At quod magis mihi molestum accidit illud prorsus est, quod dum tu amorem nostrum frustratus es, ita nos à caeterorum hominum beniuolentia alienasti, ut nemo supersit, cui fidem deinceps adhibere posse uidear. Nihil enim tam perfectum, tam constans, tam uerum uidebatur, quam nostra amicitia, quae quidem & tua uirtute & temporis diuturnitate a Deo creurat, ut si quodammodo decoxerit, nulla restet cui credere tuto possimus.[102]

From these words, we might see as what serious and important a matter friendship was indeed taken at those times—at least in Florentine circles. Yet, however severe and bitter Lorenzo's accusation and condemnation may be, his attitude towards Ficino (and towards their friendship) is not really as unforgiving as it might seem. The retrieval seems in fact to be as easy as the offence was serious. A simple, even though well-written letter by Ficino would regain the correspondence's balance, and in expectation of receiving such a letter from his friend, Lorenzo finishes his own with more conciliatory words:

> Quapropter scito nos ergate mirum in modum iratos esse. Neque tamen ita iratos, ut si iucundissimae literae tuae ad nos perferantur, sua illi incredibili suauitate cunctam animi asperitatem atque indignationem mulcere non

[102] (Lorenzo de' Medici to Ficino: no date.) Ficino, "Amatoria" ("Matters of Love"), *Opera Omnia* 622-23. – "How wrong was my judgment of you, and how right the old saying 'Out of sight, out of mind'. Who would have believed it? Indeed, I can scarcely believe my own eyes. I sent two letters to you; you sent scarcely one to me, and it was so sparing in words that if you leave out the greetings at start, the farewell at the end, the date and address, there is almost nothing left. Should a philosopher be talkative, or should he be mute? […]
Yet I am amazed and I really cannot find the words with which to accuse you, for there is no word so harsh or so abusive that Marsilian taciturnity does not far surpass it. By this you have betrayed your faith and our friendship. I am indeed hurt in your breaking faith with me, and by the blow you have dealt to our friendship. But much more wounding still is that, in setting the love between us at naught, you have separated me from the good will of all other men, and there seems no one left now to whom I can entrust my faith. For there appeared to be nothing so perfect, so constant, so true, as our friendship which had grown by your virtue and the passage of time, [in God], if this is now bankrupt, there is no friendship left in which I can safely trust." Trans. Language Dept., School of Economic Science, ed. Kristeller 68. Addition mine.

> possint. Nam cum Achillis telum in manibus habeas, scito tarditatem in scribendo, cuspidem esse qua uulneras, literas uerò ita illato uulneri mederi posse, ut non modo uulnus ipsum, sed omnem penitus cicatricem auferre ac delere possint.[103]

The tone of Lorenzo's letters and the way in which he talks about his relation with Ficino clearly reveal the kind of friendship that exists between them, namely that between a patron and his protégée. The friendship between Ficino and Cavalcanti, on the other hand, is a real one, based on the mutual love of equals. It is true that Ficino's demand for Cavalcanti's reply to his letters is almost as insistent as Lorenzo's for his own, but contrary to Lorenzo, for whom the exchange of letters seems to be a mere duty, Ficino wants his friend to write only for reasons of love and not because he feels obliged to (see above). That the friendship between Ficino and Lorenzo de' Medici is not primarily based on mutual affection but rather on theoretical considerations, i.e. on ideas rather than on emotions, becomes quite clear in another one of Lorenzo's letters to his protégée:

> Declaraueras tu quidem saepe mentem erga nos tuam. Verum mecum ipso saepius hanc tuam epistolam uoluntati uideris omnem aliud amicitiae officium superasse, siue quod primas in amore erga nos partes obtineas, ac longe caeteris in amicitia praestes, siue quod ea amicitiae munera abunde praestare ualeas quae caeteri nequeant. Caeteri nempe qui nos beniuolentia prosequuntur, aut diuitijs iuuare possunt aut honoribus aut uoluptatibus, quae quidem omnia in fortunae potestate constituta sunt, ut nihil firmius habeamus, nihilque constantius quam eorum imbecillitatem ac mobilitatem, quod & tu saepe docuisti, & nos faepius experti sumus. Tu uero his abundas praeceptis, atque eo amicitiae genere nobiscum agis, ut facile appareat, sicut nemini amicorum uirtute cedis, ita reliquos in amore superare. Facis hoc tu quidem naturali quadam beneficentia tua. Facis insuper quod te non fugit, hac conditione datas esse ab immortali Deo hominibus uirtutes, ut quamplurimos iuuent, neque adduci potes, ut diuina hac liberalitate abutaris.[104]

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[103] (Lorenzo de' Medici to Ficino: no date.) Ficino, "Amatoria" ("Matters of Love"), *Opera Omnia* 623. – "Know therefore that my anger towards you is exceedingly fierce: yet it is not so fierce that should one of your wonderful letters at last arrive, it could not soothe all my resentment and bitterness by its incredible sweetness. For since you have in your hands the spear of Achilles, the delay in writing being the point with which you pierce me, know that a letter from you could so heal the wound that has been inflicted, that it would not only cure the wound itself, but even remove all trace of a scar." Trans. Language Dept., School of Economic Science, ed. Kristeller 68-69.

[104] (Lorenzo de' Medici to Ficino: 10 Oct. 1474.) Ficino, "Responsio ad epistolam de tempore parce expendendo" ("Reply to the letter about the sparing use of time"), *Opera Omnia* 647-48. – "You have often unfolded your mind to me, but in this letter of yours you seem repeatedly to have gone beyond every other proof of friendship in good will towards me. Perhaps this is because you are first in love and far exceed all others in friendship to me; perhaps it is because you are able to bestow abundantly those gifts of friendship which other cannot. For others who attend us with their kindness can bestow riches, honours, or pleasure. But those gifts are all in fortune's hand, so that we have nothing surer than their uncertainty nor more reliable than their inconstancy. This you have often taught and I have even more often experienced. But you are such a source of instruction and you show such friendship towards me that it is obvious you are second to none of my friends in virtue, as you surpass them all in love; and this you do from your own natural goodness. You do this moreover because you are aware

At first sight, the friendly tone of the letter might give the impression that the friendship between Lorenzo and Ficino is also one based on affection. A closer look, however, reveals how theoretical, functional, and unemotional Lorenzo's conception of friendship really is. The view of the nature and function of friendship he here presents is indeed typical of the way in which the conventionalized and rather utilitarian relationships between persons of different social rank were conceptualized at that time. Between the lines, Lorenzo makes his understanding of the matter quite clear. For him, friendship is constantly in need of a proof of the friends' respect and affection for each other, so that the voluntary sending of letters to provide this proof should be one of the main duties of every friend. Of course, the permanent verification of the loyalty of one's friends was a vital necessity for someone like Lorenzo de' Medici, as his wealth and power depended decidedly on the strength and intactness of his friendship network. For him, contrary to the classical commonplace, friendship can and should therefore not only exist between two persons but between as many friends as possible; one has simply to differentiate between one's ordinary friendships, based on utility and pleasure, and one's better friendships, based on virtue and love. That he considers his friendship with Ficino to be one of the latter kind is of course not surprising, even though it was quite obviously rather one of the first sort.

Ficino, on the other hand, leaves no doubt that for him the friendship with Lorenzo is primarily that between a protégée and a patron, and thus first of all one of utility, when he directly and repeatedly asks favours of Lorenzo for his other friends. In one of his letters of recommendation, for example, he refers to their friendship only to persuade Lorenzo to also help one of his acquaintances: "Si Paci docto & bono sacerdoti fauebis, fauebis & mihi. Cum enim uiri boni & amici agitur res, res agitur nostra."[105] And in another letter of this kind, he even refers to the virtuousness of the friend recommended to have Lorenzo support him for the sake of the idea of friendship per se, as it were: "Multi à te digniora se petunt Gregorius Epiphanius longe dignior est his quae postulat. Et si nobis amicissimus est, tamen propter eius uirtutem magis quam propter amicitiam eum tibi commendo. Nam propter uirtutem est amicus."[106]

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that these virtues have been given to men by immortal God on this condition: that they are used for as many people as possible; and you cannot be tempted to misuse this divine generosity." Trans. Language Dept., School of Economic Science, ed. Kristeller 133.

[105] (Ficino to Lorenzo de' Medici: no date.) Ficino, "Qui fauet bonis, sibi fauet" ("He who shows favours to good men shows favour to himself"), *Opera Omnia* 669. – "If you show favour to Pace, that good and learned priest, you will also show favour to me. For when something is done for a good man and a friend, it is done for me too." Trans. Language Dept., School of Economic Science, ed. Kristeller 184.

[106] (Ficino to Lorenzo de' Medici: no date.) Ficino, "Quae sit petitio & commendatio iusta" ("A fair request and commendation"), *Opera Omnia* 669. – "MANY seek undeserved honours from you, but Gregorio Epifanio deserves far more than he asks. Even though he is a great friend of mine, I recommend him to you more for his virtue than for his friendship. For he is a friend because of his virtue." Trans. Language Dept., School of Economic Science, ed. Kristeller 184.

Probably because of the not always entirely unconstrained relationship between a protégé and his patron, Ficino puts much emphasis on the voluntariness with which the tokens of affection should be given in true friendships. True friends, Ficino stresses in his letters to some of his closer friends, always treat each other unselfishly and not in the hope of personal gain or for the sake of anything else but their mutual love. They make friends with each other and maintain their friendship only because of their free will to do so, and not because they are bound to each other by expectations or obligations, as he explains in a letter to Bernado Bembo: "Ergo amori huic in me tuo quid gratiae referam? amorem. Caetera ut plurimum alieno pretio comparantur. Amor autem cum in libera uoluntate sponte nascatur, ideoque sit liber nullo unquam pretio aut emitur aut uenditur, nisi seipso."[107] And in a letter to Naldo Naldi, he makes the difference between such friendships and the functional ones—like the one he had with Lorenzo de' Medici, for instance—quite clear, when he says about true friendship: "Nunquid benefica multa ultro citroque accepta id agunt? nequaquam. Voluntas enim cum libera sit, libera emitur, uoluntate non pretio."[108]

However, that even these true friendships were not completely free of the friends' self-interest, or rather self-love, shows Ficino's statement earlier in the same letter to Bembo:

> Opinabar, Bernharde, me sic amare Marsilium ut magis eum aliquando amare non possem. Quoniam quisque sui gratia singula in singulisque seipsum seque ipsum summopere diligit. Sed heri mea haec me feliciter nimium fefellit opinio. Tunc enim primum ardentius quam consueueram amare me cepi, cum primum certissime agnoui abs te ardenter amari uiro prae caeteris amore dignissimo. Tantum equidem Bernhardo tribuo, ut quanti ab illo fieri me intelligo, tanti me faciam. Quis igitur mihi magis unquam placere potest quam ille per quem magis indies mihi ipse placeo. Vtinam tibi placeam, Bernharde semper, ut prudentium nulli displiceam.[109]

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[107] (Ficino to Bernardo Bembo: Florenz, 7 March 1474.) Ficino, "Feliciter amatur qui a uiro amatur amore dignissimo" ("He is forunately loved who is loved by a man most worthy of love"), *Opera Omnia* 652. – "And for your love towards me, what return can I make but [my] love? Other things are usually acquired at the cost of something else. But since love is born of its own free will, it is therefore free and is never bought or sold at any price but itself." Trans. Language Dept., School of Economic Science, ed. Kristeller 145. Addition mine.

[108] (Ficino to Naldo Naldi: 8 April 1474.) Ficino, "Gratia, Amor, Fides, Amicitia" ("Grace, love, faith, friendship"), *Opera Omnia* 630. – "Is it fostered by the frequent exchange of many favours? No, certainly not. For since the will is free, Friendship is obtained by free will and not at a price." Trans. Language Dept., School of Economic Science, ed. Kristeller 102.

[109] (Ficino to Bernado Bembo: Florenz, 7 March 1474.) Ficino, "Feliciter amatur qui a uiro amatur amore dignissimo," *Opera Omnia* 652. – "I THOUGHT, Bernado, such was my love for Marsilio, that never could I love him more. Since every man loves each single thing for the sake of himself, and himself in each thing, it is himself that he loves most. But happily yesterday my opinion proved quite wrong, as I then began to love myself even more than usual when I discovered that I was most certainly loved by you, a man worhty of love above all others. Indeed, so highly do I esteem Bernardo, that I value myself as highly as I feel I am valued by him. So who can ever please me more than he through whom I am daily better pleased with myself? Would that I might always please you, Bernardo, and thus displease none of the wise." Trans. Language Dept., School of Economic Science, ed. Kristeller 144-45.

This view of the connection between friendship and self-love is of course wholly un-Aristotelian, as here (with Ficino), it is not the love of each other and thus the friendship itself that originates in the self-love of the friends (as it is with Aristotle), but the love of oneself that is only evoked by the already existing friendship. However, Ficino's statement is certainly not meant to contradict Aristotle or to establish a new theory of the interrelation between self-love and friendship, but obviously simply to pay a very cunning compliment to Bembo.

From what we have seen in the letters cited, we can now conclude that apart from the idealized representation of friendship in literature, which distinguished between the perfect and the inferior kinds of amity, Renaissance friends also had to differentiate between two different kinds of friendship in real life: one between equals that was based on mutual love and affection, the other between a patron and his protégée, formed for reasons of pleasure and utility respectively. And although the latter of the two has become rare today, due to the social changes since Renaissance times, its nature is not as unfamiliar to us as we at first might think, since it bears indeed a number of similarities to modern relationships of dependence, especially to those between persons we would nowadays call business associates, rather than friends. And this is exactly what makes the understanding of the early modern forms of friendship so difficult for modern readers: both kinds of relationship are not only referred to by the same name—that of friendship—but are also described by the same kind of vocabulary. The rhetoric of friendship is in fact in both cases the same, and one has to look very carefully, not for commonplaces of friendship but for sings of true intimacy, to tell the difference and to be able to identify whether the friendship referred to is an affectionate or a functional one.

3.3. PATRONAGE AND CLIENTAGE: THE VOCABULARY OF FRIENDSHIP AND EARLY MODERN PRAGMATISM

That both kinds of friendship—the affectionate as well as the functional—were referred to by the same term makes it not only difficult for us to differentiate between them but also caused some considerable confusion concerning the conceptualization of the subject in the Renaissance itself. The glorified image of friendship as the most exceptionally valuable and affective relationship between two absolutely virtuous men that the Renaissance writers presented in their works, had indeed hardly anything to do with the use of the term in the language of everyday life or with the actual relationships denoted by it. There was in fact such an inflationary use of the term in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that nearly every kind of personal, political, or commercial relationship was rhetorically elevated to the level of true and perfect friendship. Even in such idealized representations as that of Edwards, who explicitly

contrasts the prefect friendship of Damon and Pithias with the false one of Aristippus and Carisophus, we can find some instances in which the terms *friendship* and *friends* are (probably unconsciously) used to describe purely functional relationships. Interestingly enough, Edwards does this not only without the criticism of such friendships that is so typical of his play, he also has the terms misused, as it were, by characters whose virtuous intentions are otherwise beyond all doubt. In a scene directly after Damon has been imprisoned, for example, Pithias tries to find himself allies who might help him to make representations to the king about his friend's arrest, and explains to the audience: "I wyll to the Courte my selfe to make friendes […]."[110] With these 'friends', he does of course not mean true ones but merely those who would be willing to help him for some reason or another. In exactly the same way, his servant Stephano uses the term *friendship* a few lines later to explain how he gained access to Dionysius court: "By friendship I gate into the Courte […]."[111] That he does here of course not mean that he really made friends with anybody but that he gained access by being friendly to persons who seemed willing to support him in his endeavours goes without saying.

Now, that even someone like Edwards in such a text as his *Damon and Pithias* fails to differentiate between the true and the false type of friendship without at the same time unconsciously misusing the term *friendship* to denote the most ordinary and incidental kinds of relationship shows how casually and inflationary the term was in fact used and tells us much about the common attitude towards friendship at that time. Despite the many instances of friendship idealization in the literature of the age, for most people in the Renaissance—not only the ordinary ones—friendship was indeed primarily an economic necessity, a means of maintaining and securing one's social and financial status, rather than the state of mingled souls that it was for Sidney and Languet or Montaigne and La Boëtie (see 79).[112] In fact, as Guy Fitch Lytle remarks, "one might even suggest that the Renaissance need to emphasize 'ideal' friendships was a way to compensate for the unstable, intensely self-interested and self-promoting social relationships of that time."[113]

That self-interests, economic dependencies, and the giving and receiving of gifts and favours in general had already in classical times been considered delicate matters when they occur in friendships becomes clear when one looks at Aristotle's reflections upon these aspects. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, as we have seen, he distinguishes between the nobler and the inferior sorts of friendship. In any of the latter kind, he says, it is

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[110] Edwards 49, l.622.

[111] Edwards 49, l. 631.

[112] Cf. Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London: Weidenfeld, 1977) 97-98.

[113] Guy Fitch Lytle, "Friendship and Patronage in Renaissance Europe," *Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy*, ed. F. W. Kent and Patricia Simons (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 56.

essential to return the support that a man gets from his friend to exactly the same extent, since otherwise a disharmonious dispute might arise as to whether one friend takes more advantage of the friendship than the other. In cases in which one of the friends is not able to return the benefits he has received in the same way, he has, according to Aristotle, to compensate his friend for the imbalance by an increase in the love for him (see 51). A present should therefore never be taken as a friendly donation that expects no reply, as to do this would mean to force someone to be a better friend than he might probably want to be. Only in perfect friendships it would be acceptable not to feel obliged to repay a gift either directly or at a later time.[114] Here, the repayment of received gifts or favours remains a hypothetical duty anyway, since true friends are not interested in the profit they can gain from their friendship but in the support they can give each other for the sake of the friend and not for their own. For Aristotle, it is one of the main characteristics of a good and virtuous man to give rather than to take. A true friend will therefore always try to give more in return than he has received. The contrary, however, applies to friends in inferior friendships.[115]

Now, in the everyday realities of Renaissance life, the manifestation of friendship as a "credit system based on bonds of reciprocal service and gift-exchange," as Lorna Hutson puts it, was certainly as common as it had been in classical times.[116] This, of course, caused many modern critics to take a rather negative view of the early modern attitude towards friendship. Hutson as well as Barbara Puschmann-Nalenz, for example, though admitting that there was indeed also an affective side to it, explicitly stress the pragmatic, economic, and hence rather unemotional part of the Renaissance concept of friendship.[117] Mainly on the basis of Boccaccio's version of the Titus and Gysippus story, Hutson for instance states that friendship in the early Italian Renaissance was primarily considered part of the 'capital' of someone and that Gysippus, by disappointing his other friends (who had arranged his marriage with Sophronia for him, which he then cancelled) consequently loses "the readiness of others to assist him in times of need."[118] So, deprived of the support of his kin and friends, Gysippus' social status soon deteriorates and sinking into poverty, his only hope of help remains his friendship with Titus.[119] In the end, however, his trust in the

[114] In sixteenth-century England, for example, as in classical times, there was in fact no definite difference between the terms 'give' and 'lend'. To 'give' something for which one could probably expect something in return at some time in the future was also a sign of trust and respect. By this means, economical as well as social dependencies were created. Such dependencies were then also called friendships. Cf. Hutson 55.

[115] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.13, 1162b-1163a. The same view is expressed by Cicero in his *Laelius* (9.29-32).

[116] Hutson 54. For the role that women played in this "credit system of gift-friendship" (Hutson 7) in the Renaissance, see Hutson 7-11.

[117] Cf. Hutson 52ff and Puschmann-Nalenz 76ff.

[118] Hutson 52.

[119] See 96.

friend's readiness to help him, and the decision to give up all other relationships for the sake of the friendship with Titus proved justified and right. So, at first sight, the story seems to be of the same idealized kind as that about Damon and Pithias. Yet, questioning the virtuous and particularly the affectionate nature of Titus and Gysippus' friendship, Hutson argues:

> To read 'Titus and Gisippus' as a story which introduces into early modern culture a new ideal of masculine friendship as 'affective' rather than 'instrumental' is surely to misrecognize as uncalculated the vastly superior instrumentality proved by Titus and Gisippus' version of 'friendship' over that practised by the 'frendes' that found Gisippus his bride.[120]

Now, whether the fictional friendship between Titus and Gysippus really has to be interpreted as instrumental rather than affective, is certainly disputable; the intention of the story, at least, is definitely to present an affective one. That many, if not most friendships that really existed in Renaissance times were indeed primarily based on pragmatic considerations is though less debatable. This does of course not mean that the impression one gets from the friendship correspondence examined above that there were also truly affectionate friendships—even if they were naturally not as perfect as the idealized one between Damon and Pithias in Edwards's play—was wrong. Such friendships certainly existed as well. But some of the letters referred to above also show that the borderline between these clearly affectionate friendships and the obviously instrumental ones is hard to define. Especially from the letters between Ficino and Lorenzo de' Medici it becomes clear that there was also a special sort of friendship that has to be placed somewhere between the purely affectionate and the openly functional ones: differing from the first by the not completely unselfish intentions of the friends and from the latter by the degree to which the fact that these self-interested intentions truly exist is veiled. This sort of friendship is nowadays known as patronage, but in the Renaissance, it was always referred to as real friendship—and it was certainly often also truly considered to be one. Yet, the letters between Ficino and Medici clearly show that the relationship between a patron and his client was in fact a form of friendship in which the concealing of the actual motivations for its formation and existence was most skilfully practised.

As a means of social and economic bonding, the system of patronage and clientage was certainly as important to the post-feudal societies of the Renaissance as that of livery and maintenance had been to the feudal ones of medieval times.[121] But whereas

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[120] Hutson 64.

[121] On the system of patronage in the Renaissance in general, and on the manifestation of the phenomenon in the different national societies of Renaissance Europe in particular, see also, for example, F. W. Kent and Patricia Simons, "Renaissance Patronage: An Introductory Essay," *Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy*, ed. F. W. Kent and Patricia Simons (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 1-21; Guy Fitch Lytle and Stephen Orgel, eds., *Patronage in the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981); Louise Rice, ed., *Patterns of Patronage in Renaissance Italy: Essays in Honor of John R. Spencer* (Durham: Duke UP, 1994); Mary Hillingsworth, *Patronage in Renaissance Italy: from 1400 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London:

the relationship between a liveryman and his master was considered in terms of loyalty and service, the connection of a client to his patron usually came, as we have seen, under the heading of friendship. However, that the relation between a patron and his client was referred to as friendship does of course not mean that they had necessarily also to be friends in reality, as Guy Fitch Lytle points out:

> The personal and social relationships of the Renaissance were an amalgam of overlapping ties: kinship, patronage, and friendship […]. Renaissance patronage was much broader than friendship and did not derive its impetus or justification from friendship *per se*. Patrons and clients did not have to be personal friends. But the convergence of linguistic usage forces the connection in all its ambiguity.[122]

So, in general, the concept of friendship was merely used as a euphemism rather than as a model for the relationship between a patron and his client. Sometimes, however, such relationships bore in fact all the characteristics of truly affectionate friendships. In such cases, the friendships were indeed indistinguishable from those between men of equal status. This means that "friendships," as Lytle puts it, "could be vertical or horizontal with very much the same vocabulary and emotion."[123] Yet, the fact that the patron-client-friendship was in reality a connection between friends of unequal social disposition was then often either ignored, or regarded as a considerable problem. The feeling of discomfort that this inequality in status could have caused with the inferior friend is still impressively expressed by Henry King in *A Letter* in 1657:

> You are my friend, and in that word to me
> Stand blazon'd in your noblest Heraldry;
> That style presents you full, and does relate
> The bounty of your love, and my own fate,
> Both which conspir'd to make me yours. A choice
> Which needs must in the giddy peoples voice,
> That onely judge the outfide, and like apes
> Play with our names, and comment on our shapes,
> Appear too light : but it lies you upon
> To justifie the disproportion.
> […….]
> Indeed 'tis seldom seen that such as you
> Adopt a friend, or for acquaintance sue ;
> Yet you did this vouchsafe, you did descend
> Below your self to raise an humble friend,
> And fix him in your love : where I will stand
> The constant subject of your free command.

Murray, 1994); and Sharon Kettering, "Friendship and Clientage in Early Modern France," *French History* 6 (1992): 139-158.

[122] Lytle 60.

[123] Lytle 52.

> Had I no ayerie thoughts sure you would teach
> Me higher then my own dull sphere to reach :
> And by reflex instruct me to appear
> Something (though course and plain) fit for your wear
>
> Know, best of friends, however wild report
> May justly say I am unapt to sort
> With your opinion or society,
> (Which truth would shame me did I it deny)
> There's something in me sayes, I dare make good,
> When honour calls me, all I want in blood.
>
> Put off your Giant titles, then I can
> Stand in your judements blank an equal man.
> Though Hills advanced are above the Plain,
> They are but higher earth, nor must disdain
> Alliance with the Vale : we see a spade
> Can level them, and make a Mount a Glade.
> Howere we differ in the Heralds book,
> He that mankindes extraction shall look
> In Natures Rolles, must grant we all agree
> In our best parts, immortal pedigree […].[124]

In such relationships as here described by King, the friendship of the unequal friends was, as Hutson remarks, "evidently an economic dependency as well as an affective bond."[125] It is indeed the fact that in the Renaissance "'friendship' could be both the synonym and the antithesis of 'patronage',"[126] as Lytle puts it, that is mainly responsible for the difficulties that most modern readers have with the understanding of the connection between friendship and patronage at that time. So, to better understand the nature of these instrumental friendships of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the interpretation of friendship that justified the pragmatic view of it, we now have to go a few years back in time, to one of the texts from the beginning of the discussion of friendship in the Renaissance, namely to the fourth book of Leon Battista Alberti's *Libri della famiglia*, to his treatise "De amicitia," which has already been quoted from above (see 75).

The *Libri della famiglia* were at first written by Alberti only for the members of his own family and for his friends and were therefore circulating for a very long time merely in several manuscript copies (of which at least 13 have survived from the quattrocento). The first printing of any part of the work—precisely of the third book,

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[124] Henry King, *Poems, Elegies, Paradoxes and Sonnets*, ed. Eluned Brown (Menston: Scolar Press, 1973) 61-63. For a detailed examination of the system of patronage (and especially that of literary patronage) in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Dustin Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England 1650-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996); or French R. Fogle and Louis A. Knafla, *Patronage in Late Renaissance England: Papers Read at a Clark Library Seminar, 14 May 1977* (Los Angeles: U of California, 1983).

[125] Hutson 3.

[126] Lytle 47.

the "Economicus"—took indeed place not before 1734, and since then, either simply this third book or the first three books were printed. Only in 1908 a complete edition of the *Libri della famiglia* appeared in print, containing all four books, and thus also the one on friendship, the "De amicitia," on which we will concentrate here.[127]

Alberti's 'books on the family', or rather 'on the household', might be seen as a bourgeois equivalent of the extremely popular mirrors for princes and courtesy books of the time. They are, as it were, handbooks for the right conduct and guidelines for the right lifestyle of merchants and occasional courtiers. Like most other mirrors that were written by humanists at that time, the *Libri della famiglia* mainly reflect not on Christian but on classical authors and sources to support their opinions and ideas concerning the important matters of life. For a merchant or a courtier with mercantile interests in the early quattrocento, these were such important subjects as, for instance: the fickleness of fortune, the meeting of adversity and prosperity, husbandry, education, old age and the differences and obligations between the generations, the family, marriage and love, and of course friendship, dealt with by Alberti in the four books 'De officio senum erga iuvenes et minorum erga maiores et de educandis liberis', 'De re uxoria', 'Economicus', and 'De amicitia'. It is quite remarkable that the first three of these four books must have been produced before the year 1434 and within a relatively short time, i.e. within about 90 days, whereas the fourth book, the one on friendship, was separately written in 1437.[128] Alberti then obviously considered the subject important enough to write an individual treatise about it and to include this a bit later in his *Libri della famiglia*, after he had presented it as one of his contributions to the poetry contest he initiated and organized in 1441, the *Certame coronario*.[129] Of course, all the subjects dealt with in the four books are topics that had already been extensively treated by the classical philosophers, and in imitation of another classical literary tradition, Alberti also presents his thoughts in the form of dialogues, dialogues that take place between various members of his family and primarily at the dinner table, reminding one the form of conversation in Plato's *Symposium*.

In contrast to Ficino, who is to write his Platonic-Christian treatise on love, his *De amore*, 30 years later also in dialogue form—yet this time directly imitating the setting of Plato's *Symposium*—Alberti deals with the topic of friendship within the context of his whole work, and especially in the fourth book, by entirely following the humanistic ideas, drawing the views on friendship he wants to present almost exclusively from the classical sources, with hardly any reference to Christian ones. In this respect, Alberti's work clearly corresponds to the humanistic vogue of the time. However, rather

[127] Cf. Watkins, introduction, *The Family in Renaissance Florence*, by Alberti 3. For the present examination, the critical edition of the *Libri della famiglia* by Cecil Grayson of the year 1960 was used, which replaced the standard edition of 1908 by Girolamo Mancini.

[128] This we know from the anonymous biography of Alberti. Cf. Watkins, introduction 2; and Grayson, nota sul testo, *I libri della famiglia*, by Alberti 379.

[129] See 74. Cf. also Watkins, introduction 2; and Grayson, nota sul testo 380.

unusual for a humanistic text—particularly for a text of a more theoretical than poetical nature—was apparently his decision to compose the *Libri della famiglia* not in Latin but in the Tuscan vernacular. Up to the early fifteenth century, mirrors and courtesy books, like all theoretical texts (theological, philosophical, or political), had usually been written in Latin, and even throughout the whole Renaissance the medieval tradition to compose non-poetic texts in Latin was largely followed by most European writers, and especially by the humanistic ones. In fact, many of the greatest theoretical works of the age, written by so prominent authors as Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Erasmus, More, or even still Bacon, had first been written and published in Latin, before much later also vernacular versions of their writings appeared. Interestingly enough, however, as far as such books as the mirrors for princes, the courtesy books, and other enchiridions of this kind are concerned, it seems to have been in fact a common habit of the time to write these works no longer in Latin but in the respective national tongue of their authors, so that unlike other theoretical texts nearly all important examples of this genre that were written in the Renaissance are composed in the vernacular, like, for example, *Il libro del cortegiano* (1528) by Baldesar Castiglione, *The Boke Named the Governour* (1531) by Thomas Elyot, *Il principe* (1532) by Niccolò Machiavelli, or *The Schoolmaster* (printed posthumously in 1570) by Roger Ascham (1515-68). Only Erasmus, perhaps the greatest of all humanists, still wrote even his enchiridions in Latin, and so also his handbook of the Christian Soldier, the *Echiridion Militis Christiani* (1503) and his treatise on the education of a Christian prince, the *Institutio Principis Christiani* (1516) are, following the Roman Catholic tradition of composing Christian text, written in the language of the Church. It was, however, certainly this Christian orientation of his texts, in contrast to the rather worldly ones of the others mentioned, that made Latin a much more applicable language for their composition. Moreover, Erasmus's texts were in fact not intended for a large or even uneducated readership, but instead for a very exclusive and international one. His *Institutio Principis Christiani*, for example, was dedicated to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1500-58), but copies of the text were also sent to Francis I, the King of France (1494–1547) and to Henry VIII of England.[130]

Now, in contrast to Erasmus, Alberti's intention was not to make his work accessible only to a highly educated international readership. He wanted his books to be understandable for the people most close to him, i.e. at first for the members of his own family and later on also for all citizens of Florence—even for the illiterate among them, the 'non litteratissimi cittadini', who could only get access to his ideas by having his work read to them. As part of his endeavours to establish the *volgare*, the Italian vernacular, as an acceptable alternative to the traditional Latin as the preferred

[130] Cf. "Erasmus, Desiderius," Rundle 145.

language for poetical as theoretical texts, Alberti even produced a first grammar of the Tuscan tongue, the *Grammatica Lingua Tosca*.[131]

However, that Alberti considered the *volgare* and not Latin the ideal language for his *Libri della famiglia* was certainly not only because he wanted all members of his family or all citizens of Florence to be able to read them; obviously, he thereby also wanted to emphasize his intention to deal with the topics of the four books not merely on an academic level but on a very pragmatic one. This attitude towards the treatment of so theoretical subjects as those dealt with in his work is, of course, again a typical humanist one. To regard the favourite subjects of classical philosophy not simply as ideal topics of learned treatises in which the theories of the leading thinkers of ancient times simply serve as sources of ideas, conceptions, and commonplaces that might be copied and rearranged to produce useful guidelines for real life (as it has been done by many Renaissance authors), but to test these theories for their practical value and to take them as a basis for one's own reflections on the subjects that really matter in people's everyday life, is indeed characteristic of a humanistic approach to ancient philosophy. To emphasize this attitude, Alberti thus begins his discussion of the practical value of friendship with having Buto, an old servant of his family, comment on the view on friendship that was commonly held by the scholars of his time: "Molte diceano dell'amicizia cose bella a udirle, ma cose quale a chi poi le pruova favole."[132] And to give a typical example of these idealized but unrealistic ideas about friendship, he adds: "Diceano che a ben fermare l'amicizia convenia che due in uno si congiungessero, e bisognarvi non so io che moggio di sale."[133] With this hit at the proverbial bushel of salt that friends should have eaten together before they might consider themselves to be real ones, Buto illustrates how unrealistic he thinks the classical idealizations to be.

Whether unrealistic or not, the idea of the union of only two friends that is so close and intimate that they even become one another's other self, is not the one that Alberti regards as a very useful one anyway. For him, the true meaning of friendship is clear, and he has it expressed by his relative Lionardo Alberti already in the second book of the *Libri della famiglia*: "Pertanto a voi sempre stia in mente, dell'altre cose, quali sono non molte a numero ma ben necessarie alle famiglie, e sanza le quali niuna può essere felice e gloriosa, sola l'amicizia sempre fu quella la quale fra tutte in ogni fortuna tiene

[131] See Leon Battista Alberti, *Grammatica Lingua Tosca*, ed. Cecil Grayson (Bari: Laterza, 1960) vol. 3 of *Opere Volgari*.

[132] Alberti, *I libri della famiglia* 264. – "They said many beautiful and well-sounding things about friendship, but everything they said was such that, if you test the proposition, you will find it [a fable]." Trans. Watkins 247. Alteration mine.

[133] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 264. – "They said, for one thing, that good friendship requires the union of two persons so that they become one. For that you need more salt than I can tell." Trans. Watkins 247.

il principato."[134] Friendship is for Alberti therefore not merely a personal matter, it is a means by which the members of a family build up networks of contacts that will be useful and advantageous not only for the individual but for the family as such. So, the friendships of the individual become here an instrument for the security and the support of all of his relatives as well.

To illustrate how such friendships might be formed, Alberti, at the beginning of the fourth book, introduces a distant relation of him, the courtier Piero Alberti (1357-1429), and has him tell of his life and his experiences as a 'friend' of a duke, a king, and a pope, "per fare noi altri, quali ancora in questa età di dì in dì cerchiamo essere, in farci amare più dotti, onde alla famiglia nostra quanto in noi sia accresciamo da ogni parte presidio e molto favore."[135] So, when Piero now comes to describe how he made friends with these important and powerful men and thus secured their goodwill and support for himself, he emphasizes at first again how interesting and useful he thinks his listeners will find his narration: "E credo vi diletterà udire mie varie e diverse vie, mie caute e poco usate forse e raro udite astuzie, molto utilissime a conversare con buona grazia in mezzo el numero de' cittadini."[136] He then begins his report with the story of how he became the friend and protégée of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, the Duke of Milan. As he had never met the duke before, who therefore could not know him, Piero's initial aim was to get access to Visconti's inner circle of courtiers by first making friends with one of his closest confidants. He did in fact succeed in his aims, became acquainted with the duke, won his favour, and then even became one of his closest confidants himself. The duke soon held him in high regard as he especially appreciated Piero's restrained and moderate character, his wise and knowledgeable advice, and his apparent virtuousness. Once Piero had thus made friends with Visconti, he did not, in fact, make use of the trust that the duke put in him and the favour he bestowed on him merely for his own sake, but successfully tried to employ his influence with Visconti also for the benefit of his relatives. Here, the idea that to have the opportunity to make use of one's friendships to support one's family was one of the major advantages and one of the main functions of patronage is again explicitly stressed by Alberti, when he has Piero remark: "E le amicizie de' principi massime si voglion acquistare e aoperare

[134] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 100. – "Always keep in mind that among the few things which are really vital to the family, and without which none can be fortunate and distinguished, friendship has always, under all circumstances, been the [first]." Trans. Watkins 106. Alteration mine.

[135] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 270. – "[…] to make the rest of us learn, as these days we are all eagerly trying to do, how to make ourselves well loved. We would, by this means, do our family much good and obtain for it as much support and favor as possible." Trans. Watkins 252.

[136] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 270. – "I think, too, that you will be pleased to learn of my various and different devices, my [careful] and seldom-used [ruses], which have rarely been described. These are most useful ways to deal [gallantly] with men in civic life […]." Trans. Watkins 252. Alterations and addition mine.

per accrescere e amplificare a' suoi e alla famiglia sua nome e buona fama e degna autorità e laude."[137]

Piero then comes to continue his narration with the story of how he won the favour of King Ladislas of Naples, after Visconti had died and he had to leave the duke's court in search of a new patron. He became acquainted with the king on an occasion when Ladislas was hunting and suddenly got into the precarious situation of being attacked by a bear. Piero came to his assistance and saved the king's life—though not by actively fighting with the bear but by merely having it brought done by the two dogs he had with him. Afterwards, however, Piero declares in front of the king's men that it was Ladislas himself who had bagged the bear. This, of course, secured him the favour of the king, who, in contrast to the duke, who had always most appreciated Piero's intelligence and virtuousness, liked Piero also in the following most for his sporting and fighting spirit, and for his flattering remarks about him.[138]

Now briefly reflecting on his friendships with the duke and the king, Piero explains what difficult and hard a work it is to stay in a patron's favour. With the duke, he always had to be vigilant and well-informed, as he had to have good advice and pleasant news ready at any time to serve him. With Ladislas, however, he was constantly busy entertaining the king with new games and sporting activities, so that he had hardly any time for himself. Being a courtier and client at his time thus seems to have been a full-time job indeed.[139]

Finally, Piero comes to describe how he managed to win the favour of pope Giovanni XXIII in Bologna, when he had to find a new patron after Ladislas's death. This time, he became acquainted with his new patron, the pope, not on his own but on the pope's initiative, namely, when he was summoned to appear before him because Giovanni was in need of money, which he intended to obtain from the Alberti family. So, Piero seized the opportunity to make friends with the pope and by assuring him of the humble obedience and loyalty of the House of Alberti—and, not least, by also paying him 80.000 gold coins—secured for the Albertis (and for himself as their representative) the pope's favour, good graces, and benevolence. So, by taking advantage of the pope's greed for money and his belief that the wealthy Albertis would also in the future assist him with their financial strength, Piero used the pope's patronage to be granted many wishes, favours, offices, and benefices—and if he asked not for himself, he made sure that the other members of his family benefited from his friendship with Giovanni.[140]

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[137] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 273. – "The friendship of princes is particularly valuable if we can [acquire and] make use of it to increasse [sic] the name and repute, the dignity and standing of our kinsmen, and to exalt the family." Trans. Watkins 255. Addition mine.

[138] Cf. Alberti, *Della famiglia* 276f.

[139] Cf. Alberti, *Della famiglia* 279.

[140] Cf. Alberti, *Della famiglia* 280-82.

Most striking about the patron-client-relationship between Piero and the pope that Alberti here presents is in fact the way in which both parties are seeking to take advantage of each other without having to give too much in return themselves. Now, as far as the client is concerned, this seems to have been regarded as just the usual and commonly accepted way to look after one's own interests. On the other hand, however, Piero fiercely complains about this behaviour by the pope, for he, as the patron, should not seek to make friends with his clients in the hope of personal gain. This was obviously considered an indecent and even ignominious practice that is not becoming a patron. The picture that Alberti here gives of the pope does in fact correspond to the utterly negative one that we can find in so many sources of the time, which harshly criticize the papacy as the Catholic Church as such, not only for the pope's insatiable lust for power but also for the priests' wantonness, gluttony, avarice, and all too worldly lifestyle. This widespread disapproval of the priests' manners and especially of the greedy and miserly behaviour by those of the higher ranks among them, is also shared by Buto, the old servant, who sums up the common opinion about the clergy when Piero has finished his narration: "E troverrete così essere el vero: la natura ce 'l dimostra, che di cucuzzolo raso non bene si cava pelo. E sono questi preti fatti come la lucerna, quale posta in terra a tutti fa lume, e in alto elevata, quanto più sale, tanto di sé più rende inutile ombra."[141]

The account Piero here gives of his life as a client to several patrons shows quite clearly, as Watkins puts it, "what it meant to be a Machiavellian courtier before the time of Machiavelli and Castiglione."[142] With the stories of his friendships with the three princes—the duke, the king, and the pope—and the description of the three different ways in which Piero won their favour, Alberti apparently also wants to create a connection with Aristotle's theory of the three different kinds of friendship. When we look at the princes' motivation for making friends with Piero, we will in fact find that with the duke it was Piero's virtuousness, with the king his pleasant company, and with the pope his usefulness as the provider of his family's money, for which he was most appreciated.[143] And Adovardo, another one of Alberti's relatives, refering to Piero's friendships even explicitely speaks of "quelle tre oneste, voluttuose e utile amicizie."[144] Yet, however obvious the connection at first seems to be, on closer examination we will find that there is merely a very superficial correspondence between Piero's friendships and those mentioned by Aristotle. In each of the three

[141] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 283. – "You'll find it the truth, for nature shows us the truth of it: 'You can't pluck a hair from a shaved pate.' These priests are like a lantern, when you put it on the ground it gives light to all, and, when you lift it high, the higher it goes, the more it casts useless shadows." Trans. Watkins 264.

[142] Watkins, introduction 15.

[143] The question whether Piero's virtuousness was only pretended or not might here be neglected for the moment.

[144] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 283. – "[…] those three honest, enjoyable and useful friendships." Trans. mine.

kinds of friendship that Aristotle refers to in his theory, the friends meet on an equal basis and have almost the same motivation for making friends with each other. Of course, also Aristotle acknowledges the possibility that in a friendship of the inferior kinds one friend likes the other for his usefulness while the other likes him for his pleasant company, but in a friendship of the perfect kind, according to his theory, both friends cannot but love each other for their virtuousness. In a friendship of this kind, there is indeed no place for any reflections upon the utility value of their friendship. So, we might say, that although Piero's friendships with the king and with the pope were in fact such of the inferior kind described by Aristotle, his friendship with the duke was by no means one of the perfect kind, as it was not founded on the friends' mutual interest in the virtuousness of each other. Piero's motivation for making friends with the princes was in fact always the same, and one that was far from being a virtuous one: the hope of personal gain. The classical idea that true and perfect friendship could in any case merely exist between equals—an idea that is not only stressed by Aristotle but also by Cicero and many other ancient writers—is of course not even mentioned by Alberti, as, in the given context, it would indeed hardly support his view of patronage as an honourable kind of friendship.

On the whole, the classical conceptions of friendship and the philosophical reflections upon it are indeed not really supporting Alberti's view of the matter. And although, by indirectly referring to Aristotle, he obviously seeks to create a connection between the practical examples of friendship just given and the ancient conceptions of it, he cannot really provide any classical idea that would justify his pragmatic attitude towards the subject. In fact, the only of the classical notions of friendship that would somehow correspond with the way Piero seems to understand the meaning of friendship are those in the Epicurean tradition, but due to the bad reputation that Epicurus enjoyed in the Renaissance—mainly because of the fierce criticism of his views by so popular and highly esteemed writers as Cicero—they are, of course, not applicable.[145] All the approved views on friendship that derived from the classical

[145] According to the Epicurean conception, a friendship, once it is formed, is indeed cherished for its own sake. The initial motivation to form friendships, however, is nothing but man's natural quest for happiness and pleasure, since a happy life can only be enjoyed when it remains happy, and the guarantee that it will, can only be provided by a friend's help in times of need. To fully understand this view on friendship it has to be seen against the background of Epicurus ethical philosophy. He and his followers believed pleasure (*ἡδονή*/hēdonē) to be the chief good of life, and friendship to be the natural means to achieve and maintain pleasure. (Cf. Diogenes Laertius 10.127-132; Carlo Diano, "Epicureanism," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 25 May. 2000 <http://search.eb.com/bol/ topic?artcl=108669&seq_nbr=1&page=p&isctn=1&pm=1>; and Carlo Diano, "Epicurus," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 25 May 2000 <http://search.eb.com/bol/ topic?eu=33359P&sctn=1&pm=1>.) Quite a lucid presentation of his conception is given in Cicero's treatise *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, in which Cicero contrasts the basic philosophic opinions of the Epicureans with those of the Stoics. In book 1, he has the Epicurean view of friendship presented by his friend L. Manlius Torquatus, who has obviously been in sympathy with this conception himself: "Nam cum solitudo et vita sine amicis insidiarum et metus plena sit, ratio ipsa monet amicitias comparare, quibus partis confirmatur animus et a spe pariendarum voluptatum seiungi non potest. Atque ut odia, invidiae, despicationes adversantur voluptatibus, sic amicitiae non modo fautrices fidelissimae sed etiam effectrices sunt voluptatum tam

conceptions, however, are far too idealized as to support Alberti's approach to a practical theory of the subject. He has therefore Adovardo claim that, after they have listened to Piero's practical examples of friendship, they are now in need for a thread and a texture ("filo e testura"), i.e. for a closer analysis of the matter.[146] For Adovardo, as he makes it very clear, only the practical value, i.e. the utility of friendship is of any interest. As he is in the field of medicine more interested in the practical means by which a man's health might be maintained or regained than in any theoretical statements about what the scholars think health really is or what the function of the different parts of the body might be, he is also in the discussion of friendship rather interested in the methods and means by which one can make friends and keep them, in the ways a good friendship can be fostered, and in how bad friendships might be ended without having to break them off and thereby make a former friend one's enemy, than in the learned contemplations of what the nature of friendship is or should be.[147] We might therefore sum up his argumentation by saying that if the idea that friendship is a virtue, or at least something that leads to virtue, which then leads to happiness, is true, it would be much more interesting to know which realistic way one can go to achieve this happiness, rather than to reflect upon the question what this way

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amicis quam sibi; quibus non solum praesentibus fruuntur sed etiam spe eriguntur consequentis ac posteri temporis. Quod quia nullo modo sine amicitia firmam et perpetuam iucunditatem vitae tenere possumus neque vero ipsam amicitiam tueri nisi aeque amicos et nosmet ipsos diligamus, idcirco et hoc ipsum efficitur in amicitia et amicitia cum voluptate connectitur. Nam et laetamur amicorum laetitia aeque atque nostra et pariter dolemus angoribus. Quocirca eodem modo sapiens erit affectus erga amicum quo in se ipsum, quosque labores propter suam voluptatem susciperet, eosdem suscipiet propter amici voluptatem." Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 1.20.66-68. – "A solitary, friendless life must be beset by secret dangers and alarms. Hence reason itself advises the acquisition of friends; their possession gives confidence, and a firmly rooted hope of winning pleasure. And just as hatred, jealousy and contempt are hindrances to pleasure, so friendship is the most trustworthy preserver and also creator of pleasure alike for our friends and for ourselves. It affords us enjoyment in the present, and it inspires us with hopes for the near and distant future. Thus it is not possible to secure uninterrupted gratification in life without friendship, nor yet to preserve friendship itself unless we love our friends as much as ourselves. Hence this unselfishness does occur in friendship, while also friendship is closely linked with pleasure. For we rejoice in our friends' joy as much as in our own, and are equally pained by their sorrows. Therefore the Wise Man will feel exactly the same towards his friend as he does towards himself, and will exert himself as much for his friend's pleasure as he would for his own." Trans. H. Rackham, *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, by Marcus Tullius Cicero, The Loeb Classical Library 40 (London: Heinemann, 1971) 71.

Yet, the dislike of the Epicurean conception, and especially of the idea that friendships are merely formed for the sake of utility, was in fact a feeling commonly experienced by stoically influenced philosophers at that time. Cicero himself, for example, after having Torquatus present the Epicurean conception of friendship in book 1 of his *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, criticizes this view in book 2. Here he even assumes that the Epicureans only pretended to love friends for their own sake, since this affectation of affection would help them to benefit even more from their friendships, as the feeling of being loved, even if it is only pretended, would flatter their friends and thus preserve their friendships, and would hence provide the Epicureans with security, utility, and pleasure on a permanent basis. For Cicero, the essence of the Epicurean conception of friendship can therefore be summed up in a single statement: "Utilitatis causa amicitia est quaesita." Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 2.26.84. – "Utility is the reason for which friendship is sought after." Trans. mine.

[146] Cf. Alberti, *Della famiglia* 283.

[147] Cf. Alberti, *Della famiglia* 284.

could ideally look like. This is then also precisely what Adovardo criticizes the classical treatments of the topic for:

> *Nam* e che utile porge in vita sapere disputando persuadere che la sola qual sia amicizia onesta persevera durabile e perpetua più che l'utile o la voluttuosa? che ancora troverrò io forse più numero d'amici, quando Pitagora filosofo m'arà persuaso che degli amici tutte le cose debbano fra chi insieme s'ama essere comuni? che credo quelli me ameranno con più fede e più constanza, quando Zenone, quell'altro, o Aristotele filosofo m'arà persuaso che l'amico, come domandato Zenone rispuose, sia quasi un altro sé stessi, o sia, come rispuose Aristotele, l'amicizia ha due corpi, una anima? Né Platone ancora mi satisfa dicendo che alcune amicizie sono da essa natura quasi constituite, alcune unite con semplice e aperta coniunzione ed equalità d'animo, alcune con minor vinculo collegate e solo con domestichezza, conversazione e convivere, uso d'amicizia, contenute; […].
> E dicono che la virtù è vinculo e ottima conciliatrice della amicizia, e che l'amicizia fiorisce a buon frutto, poiché fra loro el beneficio sia ricevuto, lo studio conosciuto, adiuntovi consuetudine. E dicono starvi la virtù ad onestà, la consuetudine ad iocondità, ed esservi una quasi necessitudine creata dai benefici, quale induca ad amare. Simile né molto suttili, né assai al vivere utilissimi detti sì certo sapevi tu non inesperto prima che mai gli leggessi altrove scritti.[148]

In contrast to Lionardo, to whom these words are addressed, Adovardo does not believe in the practical value of these notions. For him, in this wicked world people would always only feather their own nest, and one has therefore to be at any time very cautious and alert not to be deceived by them. So, he doubts that the classical propositions are of any practical use for the actual making of friends, since, as he rhetorically asks, "chi mai si credesse colla sola simplicità e bontà potersi agiugnere amicizia, o pur conoscenze alcune non dannose e alfine tediose?"[149] Lionardo, however,

[148] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 284, 287. – "Really, what is the practical use of being able to argue in debate that only friendship based on virtue is strong and enduring while friendships for utility and pleasure are transitory? Shall I find more friends, perhaps, when I have been persuaded by the philosopher Pythagoras that all things ought to be held in common by truly affectionate friends? And those I have, shall I suppose they will love me with greater faith and constancy when, from that other philosopher, Zeno, or from Aristotle, I have learned to consider a friend another self, as Zeno once called him, or to view friendship with Aristotle as a being composed of two bodies and one soul? Nor does Plato satisfy me any better when he instructs us that some friendships arise as if by nature, others through the simple and open alliance and congruence of souls, and still others only through the lesser bonds of habit, association, and continued intimacy; […].
They say that virtue is the bond and the best source of friendship, and that friendship flourishes and brings forth good fruit where there is good will, agreement on goals, and frequent association. They say that virtue leads to an honorable friendship, and frequent meeting gives pleasure, while mutual service creates a near certainty of mutual affection. You, who have some experience, certainly knew such things, which are neither very subtle nor very practical in their application, long before you ever read them written anywhere." Trans. Watkins 266, 268. Alberti's knowledge of Aristotle's ideas of friendship certainly derives from a reception of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that about Pythagoras, Zeno, and Plato, however, can only be an indirect one acquired from Diogenes Laertius' doxographical account of these philosophers. Cf. Diogenes Laertius 8.10, 7.23, and 3.81.

[149] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 285. – "[…] how can anyone [believe] that mere simplicity and goodness will get him friends, or even acquaintances not actually harmful and annoying?" Trans. Watkins 266. Alteration mine.

argues that it is well worth taking into consideration what the classical authors have to say about the subject, as their notions of friendship are not wrong and are at least providing a first approach to an understanding of the subject and thereby also a theoretical foundation, a guideline as it were, for the actual handling of friendships in reality.[150] He does indeed succeed in convincing Adovardo of the not completely useless meaning of the classical ideas, who then even has to admit: "Queste adunque simili scolastice e definizioni e descrizioni in ozio e in ombra fra' litterati non nego sono pur ioconde, e quasi preludio come all'uso dell'arme lo schermire."[151] And a bit later he seeks to compromise with Lionardo by concluding: "Né io a te negherei, Lionardo, e' precetti antiqui assai essere utilissimi, né però ti concederò che in questo artificio siano quanto vi desidero scrittori molto copiosi; già che oggi, come tu sai, troviamo in questa materia de' nostri scrittori non molti più che solo Cicerone, e in qualche epistola Seneca; e de' Greci hanno Aristotele, Luciano."[152]

Since Adovardo agrees with Lionardo about the importance that friendship has to man's life, but insists on his view that one needs practical guidelines for the right conduct in friendship rather than an idealized description of it, they now come to a discussion of how friendships should best be handled in reality. On the question of the best way to make friends, Adovardo first explains that one has to act very cleverly and skilfully to endear oneself to one's future companions ("E meco compresi bisognarci varie arti, vario ingegno, e non poca prudenza, e molto uso a legarsi gli animi degli uomini, […]."[153]), and Lionardo adds that one has to arouse in them a feeling of benevolence and goodwill for oneself, just as strong as it is necessary for the beginning of a friendship ("[…] quanto basti in loro accrescere molta benivolenza e ferma grazia […]."[154]). To maintain the friendships that were formed in this way, Lionardo remarks, one has to cultivate them by regularly meeting with one's friends and by making the contact for both sides a jolly, honourable, and useful one: "[…] quale, a mantenerla,

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[150] Cf. Alberti, *Della famiglia* 288.

[151] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 285. – "I don't deny that the scholastic definitions and descriptions composed by learned men in their sheltered leisure are useful as a kind of preparation, like jousting for the use of arms." Trans. Watkins 266.

[152] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 286. – "I won't deny, Lionardo, the usefulness of the old writers' counsels. Yet I cannot agree that there is [as] much written on this problem and the art of resolving it [as I would wish]. Today, as you know, we have of our own writers only Cicero and an occasional letter of Seneca and not much more on the subject; among the Greeks we have Aristotle and Lucian." Trans Watkins 267. Addition mine. From Adovardo's assertion that there were not many classical sources dealing with friendship, and from the few text he explicitly refers to, we can quite clearly see which and how few of the many texts on friendship that classical literature in fact provides, were actually only known in the early quattrocento—at least when we assume, as we might certainly do, that Alberti, as a well-educated humanist, had indeed knowledge of all sources on the topic accessible at his time.

[153] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 292. – "I have found, too, that we must know diverse arts, must have a supple spirit, must show no little discretion as well as assiduity, if we would attach the spirit of men to ourselves." Trans. Watkins 273.

[154] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 291. – "[…] to increase as much benevolence and steady kindness in them as necessary […]." Trans. mine.

nulla stimo più ivi ben sia accommodato che l'uso frequente, lieto, onesto e nutrito non senza qualche utile."[155] Here, Alberti now combines the three different types of friendship, which he has, in the description of Piero's friendships, just before regarded separately, into a single one, one that is at the same time pleasant, useful, and honourable. This, however, is exactly the major characteristic that Aristotle ascribes to only the perfect friendship, which is first of all honourable because of the virtuousness of the friends, and which thereby then also becomes pleasant and useful. So, Alberti tries once more to create a connection between his idea of a practicable friendship and Aristotle's idealized concept of true and perfect friendship.

Now proceeding to the question what kind of men one should choose as friends, Adovardo stresses that the best candidates are the rich and powerful, as those are the ones whose wealth and influence will be of the greatest use to oneself. Besides this, by the friendship with these men, who have also got many other friends, one will get into contact with various other, probably less influential or rich but still useful people one can then make friends with. The friendship with such men will therefore have a snowball effect and one can finally choose from a great variety of potential friends and can acquire as many of them as one likes to. Of course, it is not that easy to make friends with the rich and powerful, as many others are also trying to become acquainted with them, and so we are again facing the problem that might be seen as the key question of Alberti's whole treatise and to which already Piero, at the beginning of the book, could not provide a satisfying answer, and had thus to admit: "Non sapre' io qui certo averarvi qual più sia, o la virtù, o pure le ricchezze, utile a farsi amare."[156] This is in fact the one question that dominates Alberti's reflections upon the topic throughout the whole book: shall we really try to translate the idealized philosophical idea of perfect friendship that is based on virtue, which the ancients have bequeathed us, into reality, or shall we rather conceive of friendship as a practical and useful relationship with the rich and powerful that redounds to our own advantage, and try to set up guidelines that, when put into practice, might help us to acquire such friendships? That Alberti himself, in contrast to many other humanistic writers of his time (here, in *Della famiglia*, represented by Lionardo, who always advocates the classical conceptions), rather supports the latter view (here held by Adovardo), becomes quite clear from the way in which he deals with the topic.

Now, Adovardo at least admits to agree with Lionardo and the classics about the notion that true friendship can only exist between really good men, as only the good could love each other *and* themselves. Although not mentioning him directly,

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[155] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 291. – "To maintain these I suppose there is nothing better than frequent intercourse, happy, honorable, and substantial--[not without any usefulness to it]." Trans. Watkins 272. Addition mine.

[156] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 267. – "I am not sure whether I should declare to you that it is virtue that makes a man well loved, or wealth." Trans. Watkins 250.

Adovardo refers to the idea Aristotle elaborates in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that merely a good man could love himself, as a bad one had not only nothing to be proud of and thus no reason for self-love but would also compromise himself by his vicious behaviour, what a man who loves himself would never do.[157] A man who cannot love himself, Adovardo states, has no moral principles he would act according to, and must thus be considered an immoral character. The reason for which such a person should not be chosen as one's friend, according to Adovardo, has though nothing to do with this philosophical estimation but with the fact that the friendship with such a man would not only not redound to one's advantage and honour but would on the contrary bring one even into disrepute, due to the bad reputation of one's friend. Yet, Adovardo also admits that he still wants to be loved not only by the good but also by such bad men, as it is much more advantageous to have them as friends than as enemies.[158] One has therefore to be very careful in choosing one's friends.[159] Now, this is of course a very practical view of the matter, though not really an honourable or even virtuous one.

Coming to the classical notion that true friendship can only exist between equals, which is expressed by the ancient authors in references to the friends as alter egos, for example, or by making use of the image of the single soul that dwells in the two bodies of the friends, Adovardo now agrees that one should be equal to ones friends—or rather that one should seem to be equal to them. For him, it is in fact not necessary—as far as the acquisition of new friends is concerned—that one is really equal to one's future friends as far as one can at least appear to be so: "E come diceano sapea Alcibiade, così noi imitaremo el cameleonte, animale quale dicono a ogni prossimo colore sé varia ad assimigliarlo. Così noi co' tristi saremo severi, co' iocundi festivi, co' liberali magnifici […]."[160] The mere appearance of equality, according to Adovardo, is often indeed sufficient to arose in others a feeling of goodwill for us. Yet, although the

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[157] See 52.

[158] After the discussion of friendship, Alberti in fact also devotes a considerable part of the fourth book of the *Libri della famiglia* to his reflections upon the topic of enmity. In the present study, we are not going any further into detail about this part as our interest shall here be limited to Alberti's representation of friendship only, but the mere fact that he includes a lengthy discussion of enmity in his treatise on friendship clearly shows that for him, there is indeed a close connection between the two subjects. Regarding the point of view from which he considers the matter, this does of course make sense, as he is interested not so much in any isolated philosophical theory but in the practical value of things. According to this pragmatic attitude towards the matters of life, he has to regard others of course as people who are either good, bad or negligible concerning one's own interests. Therefore, he puts much emphasis on his opinion that for a man who has to survive in such insecure times as his own, it is not only important to know how to make friends but also to know how to avoid making enemies. See Alberti, *Della famiglia* 319-335.

[159] Cf. Alberti, *Della famiglia* 293.

[160] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 335. – "And as Alcibiades, as they say, was able to do, so let us imitate the chameleon, an animal which is said to be able to vary its color to suit its environment. Therefore, with sorrowful men we will be serious, with cheerful men joyous and with liberal men generous." Trans. mine.

pretence of equality is a well-tried method to win the favour of new friends, it is also an art that requires not little skill and cunning, as he explicitly stresses:

> Ma per in tempo accommodarsi e accrescere amicizia, fia luogo comprendere ne' gesti, parole, uso e conversazioni altrui, di che ciascuno si diletti, di che s'atristi, qual cosa el muova a cruccio, ad ilarità, a favellare, a tacere. E per più certificarsi quali in loro siano affetti e proclinazioni d'animo e volontà, non manca certa ottima astuzia da non molti conosciuta […].[161]

This, of course, rather sounds like a piece of advice addressed to prospective diplomats or governors than to prospective friends. So, once again, one is inclined to compare Alberti's work with Machiavelli's *Il principe*, written almost a century later. The parallels in the two texts, at least, are most striking.

According to the pragmatic attitude towards friendship that Adovardo here takes, he is of course not only interested in the ways in which one can make friends but also in those in which one can abandon them once they have become unpleasant, awkward, or simply useless. Concerning this question, Lionardo now suggests that the best method would be to merely reduce the frequency of the contact with those friends one wants to part from: "[…] a discinderla chi negasse che'l disuso più che cosa altra alcuna molto giova? Cosa niuna tanto cancella dell'animo qualunque ferma inscritta si sia memoria, quanto fa la dissuetudine."[162] Here, it becomes very obvious that Alberti's practical view of friendship has indeed nothing to do with the classical one of *vera amicitia*, as with the classics, friendship is nearly always represented as precisely that kind of relationship that withstands the discomforts of the partners' absence from each other best. True friendship, they say, can even survive the longest separation of the friends, as they would remain close to each other in spirit.[163] On the other hand, of course, Lionardo's suggestion does indeed also remind one of Cicero's advice given in the *Laelius* that when the friends are seriously at variance with each other over certain key issues and their friendship is past saving it should rather peter out than be abruptly broken off.[164] Although Alberti does not mention Cicero or his *Laelius* directly, it is quite clear from which source he borrows his views on the topic of friendship dissolution. Like Cicero, he stresses that it is very important to avoid the rise of enmity between former friends, and that one should therefore treat someone who has once be one's friend accordingly, i.e. in a respectful way that makes it not impossible that he

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[161] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 297. – "But to adapt quickly to a situation and to make friends it is necessary to study the gestures, words, customs, and conversation of others. One must learn what pleases and what saddens each one, what moves him to anger, to laughter, to talk, and to silence. Truly to know the emotions, to recognize the inclinations of people's temperament and character, one must not lack a special kind of excellent cleverness which is rare in the world." Trans. Watkins 277.

[162] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 291. – "As to dissolving friendships, who would deny that lack of contact is the most applicable means. Nothing so thoroughly cancels out even the strongest impression as absence." Trans. Watkins 272.

[163] See, for example, 50.

[164] See 58.

might become one's friend again some day. It is hence especially important to keep the former friend's secrets as if one was still his confidant and to do or say nothing that might damage his reputation, as any violation of these principles would naturally make him one's enemy. In fact, also the instances in which a friend can and should be abandoned are for Alberti the same as for Cicero, namely when one's friend undergoes a negative alteration of character, or when he expects one to do something that is morally wrong or even illegal. Yet, the explanation why one should abandon a friend under these circumstances is with Alberti no longer a moral philosophical but a thoroughly practical one. For him, it is not as for Cicero of any significance that the friend, because his actions are now bad, immoral, or even criminal, is violating the principles of virtue, which one would even support if one remains his friend. For Alberti, it is much more worrying that one's friend, by acting in this way, is not only compromising himself but might also be damaging one's own reputation—and a man's reputation, according to Adovardo, has to be considered his highest good.[165] Lionardo, fully convinced by him of this view, hence accordingly concludes: "Lodoti. E parmi così vuoi: se dallo amico per suo vizio a te impendesse infamia, conosciutola gravissima, per deporre ogni sinistro nome sarà permesso segregarselo e da sé volerlo lungi."[166]

Although Alberti adopts many ideas from the writings of the classical authors, and especially from those by Aristotle and Cicero, he never refers to them directly. There is, of course, a very good reason for this. Cicero and Aristotle, as most other classical writers, put much emphasis on virtue and on the importance of which it is to friendship as both its source and its end. Virtue, however, only plays a minor role in Alberti's conception of friendship. For him the end of friendship is the benefit one can derive from it, and the source of it is one's good reputation. Reputation is for Alberti, in fact, what virtue is for Aristotle and Cicero, since, as bad friends can damage one's reputation, so can a good name help one to make new friends and to win their favour. It is therefore essentially necessary to maintain an impeccable reputation—of oneself as well as of one's family as a whole: "Uno atto di levità, una parola inconsiderata cancella di noi spesso buona oppinione. Adunque in ogni nostro processo serviremo agli occhi della moltitudine, poiché nostro officio fie piacerli quando indi instituimo sceglier copia d'amici a noi."[167] Reputation is thus defined as the public opinion of someone. But when Alberti stresses that it is important to serve the eyes of the masses in order to

[165] Cf. Alberti, *Della famiglia* 310.

[166] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 316. – "I admire you. It seems to me, then, that this is your answer: if our friend, by his vices, imperils our reputation, we recognize the evil of this thing. We may to keep from getting some sort of bad name segregate ourselves from him and try to put plenty of distance between us." Trans. Watkins 294.

[167] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 294. – "One frivolous act, one unconsidered word, cancel out the good reputation we have won. Let us therefore, in everything we do, serve the public eye, for it is our task to please the public if we hope to draw an abundance of friends to ourselves, whom we shall choose from the public." Trans. Watkins 274.

achieve their good opinion of us, this also indirectly implies the rejection of the necessity to be good as long as one can merely appear to be so. In fact, Alberti only mentions the idea that real virtuousness is a requirement for friendship in passing, and when he explicitly emphasizes the means by which one can make friends and maintain them, he does not even refer to it at all. For him, it seems only necessary to appear good and virtuous—not to be or act like that. It is precisely this disparity between appearances and reality that is later on to become one of the most popular topics of Renaissance literature and especially of late Renaissance drama, and the pretence of goodness one of the most fiercely criticized behaviours in any treatment of the matter dating from that time. In fact, when Alberti recommends his readers to pretend to be good and virtuous, especially when they are not, he anticipates the advice Machiavelli is to give a century later in the eighteenth chapter of his *Principe*, a work that in the end is to evoke a widespread hostility towards this point of view. Yet, although he is to become the sole target of criticism, Machiavelli does indeed not invent anything new, but merely borrows the advice Alberti has already given to his bourgeois audience to recommend it now also to his princely readership:

> A uno principe, adunque, non è necessario avere tutte le soprascritte qualità, ma è bene necessario parere di averle. Anzi, ardirò di dire questo, che avendole et osservandole sempre, sono dannose, e parendo di averle, sono utile: come parere pietoso, fedele, umano, intero, relligioso, et essere; ma stare in modo edificato con l'animo, che, bisognando non essere, tu possa e sappi mutare el contrario. […]
> Debbe adunque avere uno principe gran cura che non li esca mai di bocca uno cosa che non sia piena delle soprascritte cinque qualità, e paia, a vederlo et udirlo, tutto pietà, tutto fede, tutto integrità, tutto relligione.[168]

So, to refer to Alberti's view of friendship as a Machiavellian conception of it is actually wrong, as we should indeed rather speak of Machiavelli as an Albertian than of Alberti as a Machiavellian. However, it would certainly be wrong to see the *Libri della famiglia* as a direct model for the *Principe*. Instead, we should rather take Alberti as a forerunner of Machiavelli, as his language and the rigour with which he presents his thoughts are not yet as blunt and obviously unscrupulous as they are to become with Machiavelli. Both derive the justification for their theories from the classical sources, but in contrast to Machiavelli, Alberti still veils his thoughts with a thin cover of moral philosophical

[168] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il principe* (Verona: Valdonega, 1968) 55. – "In actual fact, a prince may not have all the admirable qualities listed above, but it is very necessary that he should seem to have them. Indeed, I will venture to say that when you have them and exercise them all the time, they are harmful to you; when you just seem to have them, they are useful. It is good to appear merciful, truthful, humane, sincere, and religious; it is good to be so in reality. But you must keep your mind so disposed that, in case of need, you can turn to the exact contrary. […]
Hence a prince should take great care never to drop a word that does not seem imbued with the five good qualities noted above; to anyone who sees or hears him, he should appear all compassion, all honor, all humanity, all integrity, all religion." Trans. Robert M. Adams, *The Prince*, by Niccolò Machiavelli, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1992) 48-49.

and ethical ideas and commonplaces, which lays loosely over his work without really being attached to it. In the end, of course, it becomes clear that already Alberti is not so much interested in the philosophical considerations he refers to as such, but rather in the assessment of their practical applicability to real life. Both writers thus do not want to simply represent or reformulate classical ideas; they want to develop a new approach to their subjects, to draw up a code of ethics that is realistic and applicable and to thereby create a new philosophy of pragmatism, as it were. In contrast to Machiavelli, however, Alberti still tries to include the classical notions in his practical considerations, and in most cases even to base his own teachings on those of the ancient philosophers. This commitment to the classical ideas is in fact almost completely vanishing with Machiavelli.

Adovardo's reflections upon the importance of one's reputation lead him now to the last aspect of friendship Alberti discusses in his treatise: that of a friend's help when help is needed. This aspect of friendship, with which already Plutarch has concerned himself at length, is, according to Adovardo, the most characteristic feature of this kind of relationship—at least if it is given of one's own free will, unhesitatingly, unbidden, and generously—and certainly also the most useful one, of course. In fact, nothing is more useful than to receive kindness and help when they are most needed. For this reason, Adovardo regards this aspect not only as the most characteristic but also as one of the most important, if not *the* most important feature of friendship, and backs up his view with a reference to the classical sources: "E quella antiqua notissima oppinione di que' filosofi, quali affermavano l'amicizia solo essere nata per sovvenire l'uno all'altro ne' nostri quasi assidui d'ora in ora varii bisogni e necessità, potrà ella nulla a persuaderci che a' bisogni dello amico sia officio dell'amicizia sovvenirli?"[169] That Adovardo, in spite of his reservations about the teachings of the classics, here willingly refers to them is not really surprising. He needs the support of their moral philosophical authority, as it were, to justify his demand for the performance of this duty that he considers so important to friendship. Accordingly, he is very ill-disposed towards those hypocrites and deceiving flatterers who withhold their support from their friends in times of need by abandoning them when they were supposed to help them: "Odiosi! e quanto vero! Nulla tanto stimerò alieno da chi sia uomo iusto e buono, quanto non odiar molto simile astuzie, certo villane e brutte, e al tutto contrarie a chi meriti e cerchi amici."[170]

[169] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 314. – "Does not the ancient opinion of some philosophers run that friendship was invented precisely so that we might assist one another in our ever recurring needs and wants? Doesn't that help to persuade us that it is the duty of friendship to assist a friend in need?" Trans. Watkins 292.

[170] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 314. – "How disgusting! And how true. Nothing is further from the mind of a just and good man than to see no evil in such vile and ugly cunning. It is altogether foreign to one who deserves and who seeks real friends." Trans. Watkins 292.

Of course, one is inclined to return this expression of indignation to Adovardo, i.e. to Alberti himself, as his own practical attitude towards friendship seems to be not so much different from the one he is criticising here. Yet, on closer examination we will find that there is a decisive difference between his notion of friendship and that of a common flatterer or false friend. Alberti's Adovardo is not only demanding the friend's help when he needs it, he is also willing to provide help when his friends need it. For him, in real friendship, the giving of aid is a reciprocal duty of the friends, and like Aristotle, he sees not only the advantage one might gain from the friend's help one receives, but also the benefit one might gain from the help one gives. In contrast to Aristotle, however, for whom the benefit one gains from one's help is of course the increase in virtuousness one achieves by aiding others, Alberti's interest is not in the intensification of virtue but in the enhancement of one's reputation.[171] For him, the help one provides for a friend always also contributes to the enrichment of one's good name and should therefore—however expensive this aid may be—be willingly given: "Non so degli altri, ma io certo per acquistar lode esporrei molte richezze."[172]

So, Alberti is once again using Aristotle's theory as a foundation or a framework for his own by simply substituting reputation for virtue. The major difference between the two conceptions, however, becomes quite clear when we look at the actual limits of the readiness to help one's friends. With Aristotle, an honourable man would always be willing to sacrifice himself for his best friend, as he has in fact no other choice if he wants to remain virtuous. Saving his friend's life would be a virtuous act, but not doing so would mean to behave in a dishonourable way. A virtuous man will therefore rather choose to lead a shorter but honourable, virtuous, and therefore happier life than a longer but disgraceful one in ignominy.[173] For Alberti, however, this would go much too far, as a dead man can naturally gain no advantage from his good reputation anymore. Yet, in fact, he has Adovardo claim that there is almost nothing he would not do to enhance his good reputation, and that neither the fear of loosing possessions nor the one of suffering pain and misery would keep him from helping his friends, as the good reputation one is going to gain will compensate one for one's efforts. He has him therefore finish his argumentation with the conclusion: "E riputeremo ogn'altra cosa minore che la infamia."[174]

In the end, Adovardo has thus convinced Lionardo, who was so taken with the idealized ideas of the ancient writers, that in practice there is much more to learn about friendship than the classical works of moral philosophy—or, as he puts it, books and

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[171] For Aristotle's view on this, see 53.

[172] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 315. – "I don't know about other people, but I myself would certainly risk much wealth in the hope of gaining honor." Trans. Watkins 293.

[173] See 53.

[174] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 315. – "[And] anything else is negligible compared to a bad name." Trans. Watkins 293. Addition mine.

scholarship—are able to teach us. So, even if Adovardo (and thus Alberti) does not intent to criticize the study of classical works in general, he here at least impeaches the practicability of their teachings and thereby indirectly also the practical value of academic erudition as such. For Alberti, as for most humanists, the mere study of philosophy remains in fact useless if one is not able to apply the findings of one's reflections to reality.[175]

In conclusion, we must say that Adovardo's view of friendship and of the ways to achieve it is indeed not without its problems. For him, the world on the whole is bad and the circumstances in which the individual has to live usually disadvantageous, but by the means of friendship, one might be able to place oneself in a more advantageous position. In order to make friends, however, one has to act very cleverly and skilfully. This is the negative view of one's usual situation that he presents throughout the whole of the fourth book of the *Libri della famiglia*, and his idea of the practical way to deal with it. Yet, there is a crucial contradiction in this representation. Adovardo agrees with the ancient philosophers that friendship is an expression of virtue and that virtue leads to happiness. But since by mere virtuousness, friendliness, and helpfulness, according to him, no one would be able to make friends in reality, one has to employ cunning and trickery to become the friend of others and to achieve thereby happiness. That his definition of happiness is no longer the achievement of virtuousness but the securing of financial support and the obtaining of a good reputation and useful connections becomes here quite clear. Of course, the idea that the motivation for making friends with others, with whom one can then have a virtuous friendship, might be based on self-love and the longing for happiness, is still Aristotelian, but with Adovardo, this idea now lacks the concern for the friend, which is for Aristotle the decisive source of justification for the advantage one derives from the friendship. For him, one may speak of a true and virtuous friendship only when the friend derives the same advantage from the friendship as oneself and when everything one does is equally good for both. This concern not only for oneself but also for the friend occurs with Adovardo at best in his treatment of the aspect of the friends' reciprocal help in times of need, but even here the concern for the friend is indeed rather a concern for the enhancement of one's own reputation. In all other cases in which Adovardo refers to the ways in which one should deal with one's friends, he stresses the necessity to flatter and deceive them in order to appear as a pleasant, useful, or virtuous friend and as a companion who is equal to them in character and manners and who has similar interests and opinions and similar likes and dislikes. As far as any giving is concerned, he even recommends to give only as much as is essentially necessary to maintain the friendship by appearing generous and pleasant to one's friends. The advantages that a friend might derive from the friendship are therefore not in the least what Adovardo is

[175] Cf. Alberti, *Della famiglia* 299.

interested in; his focus is merely on the advantage that he or his family can gain from it.

This restriction of his view of the subject to only those aspects that concern his own interests or, at best, those of his family, is though not the most crucial characteristic of Alberti's understanding of the meaning of friendship. The most significant feature of his conception is the substitution of cunning and trickery for affection and virtuousness as the means by which he expects to make friends. Yet, that this has of course nothing to do with virtue and, according to the classical conceptions, can therefore hardly lead to happiness, is a fact that Alberti seems to ignore. When he has Adovardo explain his view of the matter, the argumentation proves to be indeed somewhat inconsistent. On the one hand, Adovardo criticizes the classical authors for the idealized and thus impracticable nature of their ideas, but on the other hand, he frequently refers to precisely these ideas to support his own. By using the classical notions as a foundation for his own conception, however, he mingles, as it were, the idealized image of perfect friendship with his practical one of friendship as a patron-client relationship, and thus the specific qualities of two kinds of friendship of which, according to Aristotle's theory, one is superior and the other inferior. Now, this is in fact the main problem of the whole treatise. Reflecting upon the philosophical conceptualization of friendship with the classical writers, Alberti puts particular emphasis on Aristotle's theoretical division of the subject into the three categories of friendships that are based on either virtue, pleasantness or utility. Dealing with the topic at first on a theoretical level, Alberti makes the distinction between these different kinds of friendship indeed quite clear, but as soon as he has Piero describe his friendships with the princes, and furthermore when he has Adovardo explain his practical view of the matter, the distinction between the three types of friendship becomes blurred and the specific qualities of the different types are blended into a dim view of friendship that seems to be full of logical contradictions when seen against the background of the philosophical theory on which it pretends to be based. Alberti describes his idea of friendship without really specifying it. In fact, he never directly refers to the friendships he speaks of as belonging to either of the three groups, but he leaves no doubt that he or his family would only be engaged in honourable friendships, which would therefore have to belong to the superior one.[176] In actual fact, however, he only describes friendships and their specific characteristics that rather belong to the inferior kinds. So, to sum it up, we might say that, in practice, Alberti tries to acquire true friendships, i.e. those of the perfect kind, by means and for purposes that are typical of the ordinary and thus inferior kinds. Moreover, he does not even seem to realize this contradiction, as he does not hesitate to criticize most severely those whom he regards as flatterers and false friends for their selfish attitude

[176] Even in the description of Piero's friendship with the vicious pope, he lays great emphasis on the fact that Piero preserved his dignity and self-respect at any time.

towards friendship and for the deceiving behaviour towards their companions—although this is almost exactly the kind of attitude and behaviour he recommends to his relatives. Now, we have to conclude that his attempt to apply the theoretical tripartite division of friendship to the realities of friendship in practice has indeed failed because of the incompatibility of the altruistic love of the friend and of virtue per se that characterizes the idealized conception of true friendship and the pursuit of wealth and security that dominates the realities and the constraints of a life as a merchant or courtier in the Renaissance. The specific qualities of Aristotle's three different types of friendship do never appear in really existing friendships in isolation but always only in mixtures. In practice, there is nothing like a true and perfect friendship in which the friends would not also be concerned with their own interests, i.e. profit and pleasure. This is what Alberti's treatise has shown most clearly, even though it might not have been the author's intention.

Alberti's treatment of friendship and his endeavour to develop a practicable image of it is indeed symptomatic of the humanistic attempt to apply the teachings and idealized notions of the classical philosophers to the realities of their own age, an age on the threshold of modern times that experiences rapid changes in almost all areas and that therefore really demands for completely new conceptions. Contrary to Machiavelli, for example, who is to break with this idea of the applicability of ideals to reality and who is to exclude all moral philosophical principles from his pragmatic considerations only a hundred years later (an offence against common philosophical and literary conventions, of course, that is to earned him quite an unsavoury reputation), Alberti, as Renaissance humanism as such, is yet not able to take this step—at least not in regard to the conception of friendship. This inability to adapt the concept of friendship to the requirements of a new time, however, will finally contribute to the concept's decline in the early seventeenth century.

4 THE CONCEPTUAL CRISIS OF FRIENDSHIP IN THE LATE RENAISSANCE

The discrepancy between the wish for a true, honest, virtuous, and affectionate relationship and the recognition of both the necessity for useful friendships—and thus of the priority that these functional relationships should take over affectionate ones—and the impossibility of actually translating the idealized ideas of friendship into the reality of this kind of relationship that took place in the course of the Renaissance finally led to a considerable disenchantment with the classical conceptions of friendship. It was clearly this disenchantment with the ancient ideals, in connection with the emergence of mercantilism and the according attitude towards the meaning of economic success in the late Renaissance, that decidedly determined the further development of the view of friendship in the seventeenth century.

Another factor that had a considerable effect on the estimation of friendship in the seventeenth and the following centuries, was the conflict between the concepts of friendship and love that appeared at the end of the Renaissance—a conflict from that the concept of love could finally emerge victoriously by taking over the characteristic quality of the intellectual unity between the two partners of a relationship from the concept of friendship, with the consequence that it determined the ideas of intimate relationships from then on.

Both factors together—the recognition of the necessity of the formation of practicable and useful relationships in an increasingly mercantilistic environment and the adoption of the typical quality of friendship, the intellectual unity of two partners, by the concept of marital love—led at first to a reduction of the meaning of friendship by the limitation of the conceptions of it to one of a mere functional relationship, and then to its final debasement by the increasing criticism of this reduced functionalistic view of friendship, now lacking the virtuous qualities of the classical conceptions, and the consequential condemnation of the concept of friendship as such.

In the end, the idealized concept of friendship had to meet the same fate as Renaissance humanism, whose child it once was, itself. Just as humanism was superseded by a new scientific movement in the seventeenth century, initiated by scholars like Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and later Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), the idea of perfect friendship was at the same time superseded by the new one of perfect

love.[1] Of course, the idealized view of friendship did not disappear immediately, but it was now pushed into the background—and it never regained its former position in the foreground, its position as the ideal kind of relationship. This position was from then on occupied by the concepts of love and marriage.

4.1. FROM CLASSICAL TO MODERN VIEWS OF FRIENDSHIP: THE DECAY OF THE IDEALIZED IDEAS

The emergence of mercantilism at the beginning of the seventeenth century and the general development of a clear consciousness of economic structures, processes, and requirements also led to a change in the view of friendship. Now the relationship between two persons was no longer primarily evaluated by taking into account the intimacy that there was between them, or the virtuousness that characterized their relation, but first of all by estimating the usefulness that their friendship had for each of the friends. Of course, the emphasis on the usefulness of a friend is already to be found in Alberti's treatment of the subject almost two hundred years earlier. The difference between the old view of friendship and the new, mercantilistic attitude towards the matter is, however, that Alberti and his fellow humanists still tried to reconcile the classical ideals of the concept and the practical requirements of friendship that one has to face in reality. The poets, philosophers, and essayists of the seventeenth century, on the other hand, did obviously no longer feel such an obligation towards the classical ideals, and although their notions of friendship still seem to be founded on the basic ideas of the old conceptions, their representations of the subject have now clearly become emancipated from the ethical precepts that characterized those of their predecessors.

This change from the idealized view of friendship that dominated, or at least clearly influenced the humanistic conception of the matter in the Renaissance to the purely pragmatic and functionalistic attitude towards friendship in the early seventeenth century, is perfectly illustrated by the way in which one of the leading representatives of this new time deals with the subject. In Francis Bacon's brief treatment of friendship, which he included in his collection of *Essays*, we can find the tenor of this new attitude most clearly reflected. Even though his essay speaks in the end in favour of friendship, it also includes remarks that reveal Bacon's decidedly critical if not sceptical attitude towards the subject. That he sees the intimacy between two friends as a quality of friendship that is not without its problems when the bond between the friends becomes too close, is, for example, made clear when he states: "Certainly, if a man

[1] On the decreasing influence and the final decay of humanism in the seventeenth century, see, for example, Charles G. Nauert, Jr., *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995) 213-15.

would give it a hard phrase, those that want friends to open themselves unto, are cannibals of their own hearts."[2] That Bacon's view of friendship was indeed not unreservedly positive is also shown by some of his statements in other works. In *The Advancement of Learning*, for instance, he incidentally mentions that at his time teachers "use to advise young students from company keeping, by saying, *Amici fures temporis* […]," without rejecting this opinion by any means.[3] These two remarks might hint at the critical view that was commonly held of friendship as too intimate a relationship at the beginning of the seventeenth century. At that time, with its increasingly mercantilistic atmosphere that was characterized by greed and competition, there was a clearly recognizable fear to become vulnerable and to expose oneself to disadvantages by making friends with others. On the other hand, the benefits of friendship could hardly be denied. So, people began to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of friendship—just as Bacon does in his essay "On Friendship," when he finishes his discussion of the topic with what he calls the "Antitheta on friendship:"

> Pro.
> 'Pessima solitudo, non veras habere amicitias.'
> '*The worst solitude is to have no real friendships.*'
> 'Digna malæ fidei ultio, amicitiis privari.'
> '*To be deprived of friends is a fit reward of faithlessness.*'
>
> Contra.
> 'Qui amicitias arctas copulat, novas necessitates sibi imponit.'
> '*He who forms close friendships, imposes on himself new duties*'
> 'Animi imbecilli est, partiri fortunam.'
> 'It is the mark of a feeble mind to go shares in one's fortune with another.'[4]

Of course, the use of classical Latin adages was still common literary practice in the seventeenth century, even though they were often merely used for traditional reasons, but Bacon here refers to these ancient commonplaces deliberately, in order to show that the topic of friendship had already in classical times been controversially looked upon—just as if he wants to justify his critical approach to a subject that has been so glorified in the preceding two centuries. He makes thus as much use of the classical commonplaces of friendship to support his critical view of the matter as the Renaissance humanist have made use of them to support their idealized notion of it.

It is hence no surprise that Bacon, even when he refers to the positive aspects of friendship, remains purely rational, emphasizing its utility value instead of employing the old humanistic standardized images of friendship as a virtuous and entirely unselfish kind of relationship in which the friends' whole attention is given only to

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[2] Francis Bacon, "Of Friendship," [*Essays*] *Bacon's Essays: With Annotations*, ed. Richard Whatley, 4th ed. (London: J. W. Parker, 1858) 285.

[3] Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. G. W. Kitchin (London: Dent, 1973) 180, (2.23.3). – "Friends are the thieves of time."

[4] Bacon, *Essays* 289.

each other's well-being. And although he still avoids speaking about the usefulness of friendships directly, he makes the focus of his treatment quite clear by metaphorically using the image of three different fruits of friendship. Now, fruits, of course, are both: on the one hand, they are sweet, delicious, and thus pleasant; on the other hand, however, they are primarily nutritious and nourishing foodstuffs, and as such not only useful but even indispensable to our health and well-being. And so, by choosing this image, Bacon shows that he is in total agreement with Jeremy Taylor, who is a bit later to sum up this argument by claiming that "that which in friendship is most pleasing and most useful, is also most reasonable and most true."[5]

The first fruit of friendship, according to Bacon, is the pleasure and the relief that a close and trustworthy friend can give when we share our joys as well as our sorrows with him. Other than the classics or the Renaissance philosophers, however, Bacon does not put any stress on the moral duty to help a friend in times of trouble or on the wish to entertain him and make him happy when we are happy ourselves. With Bacon, the focus is not on the service we could do our friends—it is on the service that they could do us. This becomes quite clear from the standpoint from which he looks at the matter. The advantages and disadvantages of friendship are always estimated by only seeing them from the perspective of the friend who gains something, never from that of the one who has to give. This makes the focus of his argumentation extremely one-sided, as, for instance, when he here, in the discussion of the first fruit of friendship, explains that "this communicating of a man's self to his friend, works two contrary effects, for it redoubleth joys, and cutteth griefs in halfs; for there is no man that imparteth his joys to his friend, but he joyeth the more, and no man that imparteth his griefs to his friend, but he grieveth the less."[6] This statement shows how the focus is here clearly on the friend who shares his joys and sorrows, not on the one who has to participate in his friend's emotions.

This emphasis on the usefulness of a friend and the focus of the discussion on his benefiting partner, is yet not only to be found in Bacon's treatment of the pleasure that a friend can give on the emotional side. Also on the rational side, a friend, according to Bacon, is a helpful and thus useful device, as he here functions as a kind of catalyst for the development of one's own cognition, as it were. By "communicating and discoursing" with a friend, Bacon explains, a man "tosseth his thoughts more easily—he marshalleth them more orderly—he seeth how they look when they are turned into words—finally, he waxeth wiser than himself; and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation."[7] This discourse with a friend, is here of course again not thought of as a balanced, reciprocal exchange of ideas for the sake of acquiring knowledge on both sides, but as a mere monologue, a presentation of the ideas of only

[5] Jeremy Taylor 2.

[6] Bacon, *Essays* 285.

[7] Bacon, *Essays* 286.

one of the friends for the sake of only his cognitive development. His friend does here merely function as an audience, as the passive receiver of his partner's thoughts, who could have as well talked to a blank wall with almost the same effect. The listening friend's only task is to occasionally respond to his performing friend's statements, either by showing agreement with his opinions or by questioning his friend's views.

Now, if this one-sided dialogue with the friend has not yet solved one's problems or has not resulted in the satisfactory coordination of one's thoughts, there is of course still the chance that the friend might help one with his "faithful counsel."[8] Of course, if a man forms his opinion without the influence of others and is thus able to solve his problems by himself and without the help of his friends, he does not have to confide in anyone and does thus of course avoid showing any weakness. Yet, the great advantage of asking a trustworthy friend for his view on a troublesome matter is, according to Bacon, that "the light that a man receiveth by counsel from another is drier and purer than that which cometh from his own understanding and judgment, which is ever infused and drenched in his affections and customs. So as there is as much difference between the counsel that a friend giveth, and that a man giveth himself, as there is between the counsel of a friend and of a flatterer; for there is no such flatterer as is a man's self, and there is no such remedy against flattery of a man's self as the liberty of a friend."[9]

Interestingly enough, the fear of being flattered by one's friends, which we can find in so many other treatments of the topic, is here not mentioned. On the contrary, the friend is here presented as an effective remedy for flattery, or rather for self-deception. But even though the friend is here portrayed as a positive element in a man's life, he is not depicted as an equal partner who derives as much advantage from the situation as his friend. Bacon's representation of the advantages of friendship is of course far from being innovative but indeed still utterly classical, as the same or at least similar arguments are already to be found in the texts of the ancient philosophers. The perspective of Bacon's approach, however, is now a very different one. The emphasis is with him no longer on our virtuous behaviour towards our friends, a behaviour that is characterized by our selfless devotion to them—a virtuousness that is merely indirectly rewarded by the way in which our friends treat us in return. The focus of Bacon's discussion is no longer on the reciprocity of the usefulness in friendship or on the commonly accepted principle that only who gives can also receive. With him, only taking is of interest, and the duty to give is merely subliminally implied as the logical requirement for a lasting friendship.

After having discussed these first two fruits of friendship, "peace in the affections and support of the judgment," as he sums them up, Bacon now comes to the last and

[8] Bacon, *Essays* 286.

[9] Bacon, *Essays* 287.

most fruitful fruit, "which is, like the pomegranate, full of many kernels—I mean, aid and bearing a part in all actions and occasions."[10] Now the friend is no longer just a companion but rather becomes an assistant and in the following even a deputy, a personal clone as it were. Bacon here simply reinterprets and redefines the classical image of the friend as another self, as one's alter ego, which the classical philosophers set up to illustrate the idea of the close intellectual connection that there is between two good friends, in a purely utilitarian sense:

> Here, the best way to represent to life the manifold use of friendship, is to cast and see how many things there are which a man cannot do himself, and then it will appear that it was a sparing speech of the ancients, to say 'that a friend is another himself,' for that a friend is far more than himself. Men have their time, and die many times in desire of some things which they principally take to heart; the bestowing of a child, the finishing of a work, or the like. If a man have a true friend, he may rest almost secure that the care of those things will continue after him; so that a man hath, as it were, two lives in his desires.[11]

With this definition of a friend's function, Bacon completes his perversion of the classical concept of friendship. Not just that he speaks quite bluntly about the 'manifold use of friendship'—and thus, in fact, about the kind of utility friendship that Aristotle has described and defined as one of the two inferior forms of friendship—even the idea of the single soul that dwells in two bodies, which in the classical conception represents the ideal of a true and virtuous friendship, is here redefined to suit his utilitarian view of the matter. Now the main focus of the image is no longer on the single soul that exists in two bodies, and hence on the intellectual unity of the friends, but merely on the second body that, thanks to their shared soul, is now also at the first one's disposal. The friend thus now becomes almost the instrument of his partner, a reliable means to pursue one's interests even beyond the grave.

But not only on tasks that one cannot do oneself, due to one's decease, also on such that one considers not appropriate or convenient for oneself, one can of course employ one's friend—or one's deputy, as Bacon calls him: "A man hath a body, and that body is confined to a place; but where friendship is, all offices of life are, as it were, granted to him and his deputy; for he may exercise them by his friend."[12] The situations in which one can send his alter ego to do unpleasant jobs or jobs that are better be done by someone else than by oneself are indeed as manifold as the use of friendship itself:

> A man can scarce allege his own merits with modesty, much less extol them; a man cannot sometimes stoop to supplicate or beg, […] but all these things are graceful in a friend's mouth, which are blushing in a man's own. […] A man cannot speak to his son but as a father; to his wife but as a husband: to

[10] Bacon, *Essays* 288.

[11] Bacon, *Essays* 288.

[12] Bacon, *Essays* 288.

> his enemy but upon terms: whereas a friend may speak as the case requires, and not as it sorteth with the person.[13]

A friend can therefore not only be of use in so noble a matter as the wooing of a lady in one's behalf or the caring for one's children after one's untimely death. Also in ordinary, banal, and trivial matters, like in the begging for money or the boasting about one's merits, the friend could prove to be one's useful and indispensable representative. So, it is no surprise when Bacon, despite his initial reservations about friendship, finally declares: "I have given the rule, where a man cannot fitly play his own part; if he have not a friend, he may quit the stage."[14]

It is precisely this special stress on the services a friend can do for us that we can also find a bit later in the treatment of the matter by Jeremy Taylor, when he states: "And although I love my friend because he is worthy, yet he is not worthy if he can do no good."[15] Bacon would have certainly agreed with this estimation, and he would have certainly also agreed with Taylor when he declares: "He only is fit to be chosen for a friend, who can do those offices for which friendship is excellent. For (mistake not) no man can be loved for himself; our perfections in this World cannot reach so high."[16] So, with Taylor, the parting of seventeenth-century conceptualizations of friendship from one of the most fundamental principles of the old conceptions, namely the idea that the friend has first to be loved for nothing but his own sake, becomes manifest. In fact, Bacon has not yet dared to present his view of the matter so bluntly, but the conclusion that Taylor now draws form his reflection and the spirit of his justification for holding this view, is also implicit in Bacon's treatment:

> He only is fit to be chosen for a friend who can give counsel, or defend my cause, or guide me right, or relieve my need, or can and will, when I need it, do me good. […] For can any wise or good man be angry if I say, I chuse this man to be my friend, because he is able to give me counsel, to restrain my wandrings, to comfort me in my sorrows; he is pleasant to me in private, and useful in publick; he will make my joys double, and divide my grief between himself and me? For what else should I chuse.[17]

Bacon and Taylor's functionalistic view of friendship is indeed typical of the seventeenth century. It has no longer anything of the intimacy that characterized Montaigne's friendship with La Boëtie or of the mutual respect that marked Sidney's relation with Languet. Bacon and Taylor's idea of a perfect friend is now rather that of a private secretary, and their essays on friendship provide a model image of the subject that a hundred years later, in the eighteenth century, is really to become a common

[13] Bacon, *Essays* 289.

[14] Bacon, *Essays* 289.

[15] Jeremy Taylor 18.

[16] Jeremy Taylor 18.

[17] Jeremy Taylor 19, 23-24.

kind of relationship between two men of unequal standing. Now, in the period of the Enlightenment, the idea of a friendship in which one of the friends clearly dominates the other—usually intellectually—becomes a commonly accepted conception of a possible form of friendship. The most prominent examples of such unbalance relationships might be the friendships of Dr Samuel Johnson (1709-84) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) with their 'friends' James Boswell (1740-95) and Johann Peter Eckermann (1792-1854), whose positions have indeed to be described rather as being that of their mentor's confidants and secretaries than as being that of their friends in the classical sense.[18] This inequality between the friends has though certainly not been realized, or if, at least not been thematized by any of those involved in such friendships. Ironically, it is Dr Johnson himself who emphasizes in one of his articles in *The Rambler* the necessity of equality in friendship, as any considerable imbalance in a kind of relationship that is like this based on the reciprocal usefulness of the partners would inevitably lead to its breach:

> Friendship is seldom lasting but between equals, or where the superiority on one side is reduced by some equivalent advantage on the other. Benefits which cannot be repaid, and obligations which cannot be discharged, are not commonly found to increase affection; they excite gratitude indeed, and heighten veneration, but commonly take away that easy freedom, and familiarity of intercourse, without which, though there may be fidelity, and zeal, and admiration, there cannot be friendship.[19]

This passage should though not lead one to the estimation that Johnson's general view of friendship was still as functionalistic and utilitarian as it has been with Bacon or Taylor. His attitude towards friendship was now, as it was typical of the Enlightenment, rather rationalistic. In contrast to most writers of the early and the mid-seventeenth century, the majority of eighteenth-century writers now held the classical ideals of friendship in high esteem again—even though they now, contrary to their Renaissance predecessors, took them as what they are, namely as mere ideals. That Enlightenment writers like Johnson had indeed not completely given up the hope that there might be still some who make friends for reasons other than purely egoistic ones, becomes clear in one of Johnson's statements in the same article in *The Rambler*: "Some however, though few, may perhaps be found, in whom emulation has not been able to overpower generosity, who are distinguished from lower beings by nobler motives than the love of fame, and can preserve the sacred flame of friendship from the gusts of pride, and the rubbish of interest."[20]

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[18] It is precisely this kind of friendship that was later on also to be glorified in fictional literature, as, for instance, in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories of the adventures of Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson. Cf. June Thomson, *Holmes and Watson: A Study in Friendship* (London: Constable, 1995).

[19] Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler* (no 64. Saturday, 27 October 1750), ed. W. J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss (New Haven: Yale UP, 1969) 344.

[20] Johnson 344.

That, due to the treatment of the matter in the preceding century, there was yet also still a considerable disenchantment with the idea of friendship from which it had not been able to fully recover, can be seen from a statement made by Claude Adrien Helvétius (1715-71) in his essay *De l'Amitié* about the reason for the widespread disregard of friendship that is still to be found in the eighteenth century:

> Dans la forme actuelle de notre gouvernement, les particuliers ne sont unis par aucun intérêt commun. Pour faire fortune on a moins besoin d'amis que de protecteurs. En ouvrant l'entrée de toutes les maisons, le luxe, et ce qu'on appelle l'esprit de société, a soustrait une infinité de gens au besoin de l'amitié. Nul motif, nul intérêt suffisant pour nous faire maintenant supporter les défauts réels ou respectifs de nos amis. Il n'est donc plus d'amitié; on n'attache donc plus au mot d'ami les mêmes idées qu'on y attachoit autrefois [i.e. in the Renaissance]; on peut donc en ce siecle s'écrier avec Aristote, *O mes amis! il n'est plus d'amis*.[21]

The criticism of the purely mercantile attitude towards friendship that characterized the representations of the topic in the first half of the seventeenth century emerged though indeed much earlier than just with the writers of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. Already in the second half of the seventeenth century, the increasingly functionalistic and utilitarian attitude towards friendship evoked severe criticism by the moralists of the time, and writers now began to lament the increasing decay of the friendship ideal.[22] In 1665, for example, a friendship sceptic like François duc de La Rochefoucauld (1613-80) was even ready to give such a devastating comment on the common usage of the term in his time as the following: "Ce que les hommes ont nommé amitié n'est qu'une société, qu'un ménagement réciproque d'intérêts, et qu'un échange de bons offices; ce n'est enfin qu'un commerce où l'amour-propre se propose toujours quelque chose à gagner."[23]

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[21] Claude Adrien Helvétius, "De l'Amitié," *De L'esprit* 3.14, rpt. of Paris 1795 ed. (Hildesheim: Olms, 1967) 111-112. – "In the actual form of our government, the individuals are not united by any common interest. In order to make our fortunes, we have less need of friends than of an infinite number of protectors. Luxury, and what is called the spirit of society, have secured a great number of men from the want of friendship. No motive, no interest, is now sufficient to make us overlook the seeming or real faults of our friends.—There is therefore no friendship; we do not affix to the word friend even the same ideas as formerly; we may in this age cry out with Aristotle, 'O my friends! no longer is there a friend to be found.'" Trans. anon., *De l'esprit: or Essays on the Mind and its Several Faculties*, by C[laude] A[diren] Helvétius, rpt. of 1810 ed. (New York: Franklin, 1970) 274.

[22] Niklas Luhmann assumes that these lamentations occurred under the probable influences of political conflicts and courtly intrigues. Speaking about the situation in Europe in general he is though concentrated on the circumstances at the French court. See Niklas Luhmann, *Liebe als Passion: Zur Codierung von Intimität* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1982) 101.

[23] François duc de La Rochefoucauld, "Maxime 85," *Maximes: Suivies des Réflexions diverses, du Portrait de La Rochefoucauld par lui-même et des Remarques de Christine de Suède sur les Maximes*, ed. Jacques Truchet (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1967) 26. – "What people have called friendship is nothing but an association, a reciprocal management of interests, and an exchange of good offices; in short it is nothing but a transaction from which the self always means to gain something." Trans. Dennis Joseph Enright and David Rawlinson, eds., *The Oxford Book of Friendship* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991) 20.

In 1665, La Rochefoucauld was certainly only one of the few early friendship sceptics, but in the course of time, more and more writers began to take a similarly sceptical view of the development of the common attitude towards friendship. And nearly 200 years later, the image of this relationship was so disparaged that in 1851 the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) resignedly comments:

> Der Mensch edlerer Art glaubt, in seiner Jugend, die wesentlichen und entscheidenden Verhältnisse und daraus entstehenden Verbindungen zwischen Menschen seien die *ideellen*, d. h. die auf Aehnlichkeit der Gesinnung, der Denkungsart, des Geschmacks, der Geisteskräfte u. s. w. beruhenden: allein er wird später inne, daß es die *reellen* sind, d. h. die, welche sich auf irgend ein materielles Interesse stützen. Diese liegen fast allen Verbindungen zum Grunde: sogar hat die Mehrzahl der Menschen keinen Begriff von anderen Verhältnissen.[24]

Now, this comment shows to which disenchantment with the topic of friendship the writers of the nineteenth century have finally come. Now the impossibility of realising the classical ideals was eventually accepted and the idea of true and perfect friendship irretrievably lost its fascination.

That it was yet not only the increasingly functionalistic view of friendship, the consequential criticism of this conception by the moralists of the time, and the final disenchantment with the classical ideals that led to the debasement of the concept in the seventeenth century and to its further negative development in the following centuries—a development that in the end resulted in the low esteem in which friendship is commonly held today (compared to the high regard in which love is nowadays held)—will be shown in the following.

4.2. THE CHALLENGE: FRIENDSHIP VERSUS LOVE - AND THE CONCEPTUAL RIVALRY BETWEEN REASON AND PASSION

Since Plato's Socratic reflections upon love and friendship, the conception of each has been closely connected with the conception of the other. And as it has always been difficult to determine the exact nature of friendship, it has also been problematic to find a distinct definition of love. In general, the term only denotes a strong feeling of affectionate sympathy that can underlie a number of different relationships. It is therefore rather the way in which this emotion finds expression and the object to which it is directed that determines the name under which it comes. The feeling of love might

[24] Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1938) 488. – "A man of noble kind, in his youth, believes that the essential and crucial relations and the relationships between persons that arise from them, would be the spiritual ones, i.e. those which are based on the similarity of convictions, mental attitude, taste, mental abilities etc.: however, he will later on realize that they are the real ones, i.e. those which are based on some material interest. They are the basis of nearly all relationships: in fact, the majority of people has no notion of other relations." Trans. mine.

be equally aimed at individuals or at humanity in general, but it can also be directed towards animals and even inanimate objects. And in each case, the character and the intention of love will be a different one. When it is mainly a feeling of affection that is directed towards the soul and the mind of a single person, it might be called 'friendship'. If it is aimed at the beauty and the body of someone, it will commonly be called 'love'—or might be denoted by the Greek term '*eros*'. In this case, 'love' does not only denote the feeling of passion but also the kind of relationship of which this emotion is so characteristic.

The difference between intellectual friendship and sensual love is certainly the most distinct among the various forms of love relationship, and since Socrates and Plato, the relation and the distinction between both—symbolically represented by the two Aphrodites—has always been considered a significant one.[25] Now, almost at the same time at which people began to keep these two kinds of love distinct, they also began to determine the sex of the person to which each love should be directed. In Socrates times, the sexual love of boys was still customary and so both kinds of love were equally directed towards the beloved boy—although the emphasis was clearly placed on the intellectual friendship with him. The love of mature men, in fact, was at any time only considered acceptable as a purely spiritual one. The love of women, however, was apparently not held in the same esteem as that of boys or men and was generally rather considered possible merely as a sexual one.[26] This sex-specific distinction between the two kinds of love and the disadvantaged role of women in general led to the emphasis on male friendship and the disparagement of marital love in ancient times, as Mills explains:

> Vitally connected with the distinction between the two kinds of love was the view concerning marriage held by Socrates and by the Greek thinkers in general. Marriage was not a union of souls; it was considered a means of perpetuating the race and a convenient domestic and economic arrangement. Woman was held to be intellectually inferior to man. Man found his intellectual and spiritual companions outside the home. Hence there was no very chivalrous attitude toward woman; hence also the immense emphasis on friendship. In proportion as love was debased, friendship was elevated.[27]

However, that there are in fact in Greek as well as in Latin a variety of terms denoting the different types of love and friendship—i.e. the various kinds of personal

[25] For an explanation of the image of the two Aphrodites, see 101, and Plato, *Symposium* 180c-181e.

[26] In classical times, carnal love in general, i.e. directed towards either sex, was a quality surely enjoyed but apparently not held in high esteem. In contrary to Socrates and Plato, it plays in fact hardly any role in Aristotle's theory of friendship. The reason for this is obvious: the feeling of passionate love must result from the libido of the lover, the affectionate love for the friend, however, from his noble state of character—and this, of course, makes it superior to the first. See Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethic* 1157b. For a closer analysis of Aristotle's attitude towards erotic love, see, for example, Price 236-250.

[27] Mills 381n10.

relationship and the emotions involved in them—indicates that already the classics had their difficulties in defining the exact nature of both and might illustrate how closely the notions of love and friendship are indeed connected with each other. Now, it might be due to the fact that the conception of love has always incorporated specific ideas of friendship—and vice versa—that these forms of relationship had to come into conflict with one another sooner or later.

This conflict first emerged when a decisive change in the attitude towards women took place in the Middle Ages. The love relationship between man and woman that had been so disparaged in classical times was now reassessed and under the influence of the enthusiasm for the new literary genre of courtly love poetry the view of women underwent a definite alteration—at least in chivalric circles. Although women were not yet regarded as being intellectually equal to man, they were now seen not only as the appropriate objects of men's love and affection but also as their most favourable ones. Most of the attention that was formerly paid to the friend was indeed now paid to the mistress. A man's friendship had thus become secondary to the love for his lady. The conflict that might arise from a situation in which a man has to choose between his friend and his lady and particularly from the consequence, the usual preference for the woman, was certainly realized by a number of medieval writers, and has even been dealt with in the works of a few of them, but was in general not considered a really serious one—at least not one worthy of extensive literary treatment. The reason for this was quite obviously the attitude towards friendship in medieval times, which was decidedly different from that of classical ones, as Mills points out: "It was a case of see-saw: with the ancients, friendship was up, love down; in chivalric and courtly love, love was up, friendship down."[28] However, although usually preferred to friendship, the love of women was not yet conceptualized in a way that would have secured it the dominant position among the various forms of relationship in the long term. It was not yet seen as the kind of love between equal partners that characterizes modern love relationships or the modern idea of marriage. The woman was still merely the object of the man's love and not really required nor even expected to reciprocate this love. Together with a number of other factors, however, this chivalric attitude towards women contributed to the development of the conception of love into the view of the matter that we can find in much later times, as Mills explains:

> It is a decided change from ancient ways of thinking when we come to the modern emphasis on conjugal love as the basis of society. Yet that change has its roots in the classical philosophers themselves; viz., in the Platonic discussions of love, which, subject to the handling of the neo-Platonists and to the influence of Mariolatry, combined with the medieval chivalrous attitude toward woman to form modern ideas.[29]

[28] Mills 52.

[29] Mills 10.

In fact, the emergence of such modern ideas about love in combination with the humanistic revival of the classical glorification of friendship led to the inevitable outbreak of the conflict between both concepts in the Renaissance, as Mills points out:

> The sixteenth-century emphasis on friendship was in deepest fact a rebirth, but came at a time when social conditions and literary traditions were quite different from those of ancient days. It had to struggle against a new set of ideas and traditions, and that struggle became one, not of widespread actual fact, but of assumed ideas that found best expression in literature, particularly the drama.[30]

Now, looking at love and friendship from a modern perspective, the main difference between them—besides the sexual aspect—seems to be, as C. S. Lewis puts it, that "lovers are always talking to one another about their love; Friends hardly ever about their Friendship. Lovers are normally face to face, absorbed in each other; Friends, side by side, absorbed in some common interest."[31] Lewis also states that this common interest must be the heart of friendship, just as affection or a passionate feeling is that of love. Without this common interest—of whatever kind it might be—there can consequently be no lasting friendship. Moreover, he stresses that erotic love can only exist between two persons, as a love of this kind that is divided between more than two lovers would necessarily lead to anger and jealousy. Friendship, on the other hand, is not only possible between more than two persons but even also in addition to existing love relationships that the friends have, for friendship is a kind of love that is completely free of jealousy.[32] Now, this is indeed quite a modern view of the matter, based on a conception of friendship that only acknowledges a very restricted function of this kind of relationship. Of course, already Aristotle knew that it is the emotional factor that makes the difference between these two kinds of love, and that erotic love, in contrast to friendship, is highly susceptible to jealousy, as it always implies the lover's demand to be loved in return—which inevitably leads to distress if the lover thinks this demand not fulfilled.[33] But contrary to Lewis, he still believed friendship to be a relationship that—just like erotic love—could also ideally exist only between two partners. And, in general, the modern idea that love and friendship could coexist with each other, i.e. that someone could have an erotic love relationship with one person and a close and intimate friendship with another one, has not always been considered

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[30] Mills 10. Indeed, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the literary treatment of friendship was as popular as that of love, but whereas friendship was rather a topic for the stage or for fictional and non-fictional prose, love was the favourite one not merely of the neo-Platonic philosophers but particularly of the sonneteers. (That Mills here limits his statement to the sixteenth century is due to the focus of his study on the literature of Renaissance England and thus to his exclusion of the one of the Italian quattrocento, to which it might though be applied as well.) Cf. also Puschmann-Nalenz 73.

[31] Lewis 73.

[32] Lewis 79-80.

[33] Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.8, 1159b.

as unproblematic as it here appears with Lewis. In the main, in fact, the literature of the past rather provides us with representations of love and friendship in which one of them is preferred, or in which a conflict occurs that demands for a decision in favour of one or the other.

The idea of the opposition between intellectual and sensual love, which for a very long time meant that between homosocial friendship and heterosexual love, is indeed almost as old as the idea of friendship itself. And the comparison between these two kinds of love and the idea that the friendship between men is based on an affectionate feeling that is at least as emotional and intensive as men's love of women is even to be found in the oldest representations of the topic. In *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, for example, there is much emphasis placed on the great affection that Gilgamesh felt for Enkidu, and that he "loved him and embraced him as a wife."[34] About a millennium later, the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers also put much emphasis on their preference for the love of the mind over that of the body and even in the Old Testament, in the second book of Samuel, David compares his friendship with Jonathan with the love of women—and stresses his preference for the first—when he laments over his friend's death: "doleo super te frater mi Ionathan / decore nimis et amabilis super amorem mulierum."[35]

In the literary representation of these two loves in medieval times, it was then the love of a man for a lady that was preferred, and whenever it came into conflict with his friendship or friendships with other men, the problem was usually solved in favour of the love of the lady, as in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* or in the different versions of the Tristan and Isolde story, for example. In general, however, the conflict between the two concepts was not one widely dealt with in medieval literature. This only changed with the revival of the classical idealizations of friendship that was following from the rise of humanism in the late fourteenth century. In Renaissance literature, the conceptual conflict between male amity and conjugal love now became a very popular motive indeed. Even in such a pure friendship story as that of Edwards's *Damon and Pithias*, in which the love of women plays hardly any role at all, and is in connection with the two protagonists not even mentioned, the extraordinary value of friendship is emphasized by briefly contrasting its nature with that of conjugal love, when Gronno, the hangman, astonished by Pithias' wish to be executed on his friend's behalf asks him:

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[34] *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (1.252), trans. Kovacs 12.

[35] Vulgate [Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem], 2 Sam. 1.26. – "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." King James Version. Instead of citing passages from the Scripture in their Hebrew or Greek original they shall here be quoted from the Latin version, the Vulgate, which was—despite the various versions in different vernaculars that appeared in the course of the age—still by far the most widely accessible and commonly read in Renaissance times. Moreover, the passages are always quoted from a modern revised version of the *Editio Vulgata*, since—in spite of the revisions and corrections—this comes still closest to the Bible people in the Renaissance would have read, when they were able to read.

> Here is a mad man: I tell thee, I have a wyfe whom I love well,
> And if iche would die for her, chould ich weare in Hell:
> Wylt thou doo more for a man, then I would for a woman?[36]

The answer he gets is of course a definite yes. So, with this little passage of just three lines Edwards simply dismisses the possibility that love could ever be a potential rival to friendship. He does so by illustrating the inferiority of love in even two respects: Pithias is ready to do something for friendship what Gronno would not even do for love. So, Gronno does indeed rate love higher than friendship and would do more for love than for friendship—but he is a hangman and thus a representative of the lowest social class. His preference of love over friendship is therefore marked as the typical choice of the populace, which supports the view of friendship as the relationship of those of noble mind and origin even more. So, friendship is here not only presented as the nobler relationship of both, but also as the one for which the partners are most ready to make a sacrifice, and which is hence also the more valuable one of the two. On the whole, however, this superiority of friendship over love was in Renaissance times not always considered so definite, obvious, and indisputable as here with Edwards.

With Renaissance writers, considerations of the differences between friendship and love and of the advantages and disadvantages of friendship in comparison with those of love were indeed very popular, and opposing views on the value of both occurred frequently in their writings. One of the earliest discussions of this topic in Renaissance literature is, for example, again to be found in Alberti's *Libri della famiglia*. The second book of the work starts—after a brief introductory passage—with a dispute between Lionardo and Leon Battista himself over the question whether love should be preferred or friendship. Lionardo, again representing the typical humanistic point of view, begins his argumentation in favour of friendship with the following advice to his two listeners, Battista and his brother Carlo: "Così vi conforto facciate: giudicate niuna cosa quanto l'amicizia essere utile e molto atta a vivere bene e beato. Persuadetevi al tutto, come fo io a me stessi, questa vera una amicizia nella vita de' mortali doppo la virtù essere tale che molto sé stessi possa non solo agli altri amori, ma a qual si sia cara e pregiata cosa preferirsi e soprastare."[37] Battista, however, disagrees with Lionardo about the superiority of friendship and states that it is rather marital love that is by many people preferred to friendship, and, moreover, that it is often not only preferred to friendship but even also to a good reputation, to honour, and to fame. Thus, he concludes, it has to be conjugal love and marriage (as the kind of relationship in which this love is manifested) that should be considered the most important kind of union between two human beings:

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[36] Edwards 60, ll. 878-880.

[37] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 86. – "[I advise you to do this: judge nothing as so useful and beneficial to a good and happy life as friendship.] You may become persuaded, as I am, that, after [virtue], true friendship is the one thing in human life to be preferred and exalted, not only above all other kinds of love but above whatever is precious and highly prized." Trans. Watkins 94. Addition and alteration mine.

> Puossi l'amor tra moglie e marito riputar grandissimo, però che se la benivolenza sorge da alcuna voluttà, el congiugio ti porge non pochissima copia d'ogni gratissimo piacere e diletto; se la benivolenza cresce per conversazione, con niuna persona manterrai più perpetua familiarità che colla moglie; se l'amore si collega e unisce discoprendo e comunicando le tue affezioni e volontà, da niuno arai più aperta e piana via a conoscere tutto e dimonstrarti che alla propria tua donna e continua compagna; se l'amicizia sta compagna della onestà, niuna coniunzione più a te sarà religiossima che quella del congiugio.[38]

That Alberti has here himself hold the opinion in favour of love should though not be mistaken as a hint of his actual attitude towards the matter. On the contrary, by making himself the advocate of love, he indeed cunningly disparages the idea of its superiority. Only by pretending to hold this view himself, he can reveal its wrongness, as by proving himself wrong he avoids offending one of his relatives. Moreover, in the context of the story of the *Libri della famiglia* Alberti describes himself as being still a young man. So, by having a youth holding the opinion in favour of love, he can represent this view as a typical misconception of the young, who are naturally rather ruled by passion than by reason. The outcome of the discussion leaves of course no doubt that this folly does not become an older and thus also wiser man, and that now, at the time he writes the story down, he is himself no longer holding this view anymore as well.

But for the time being, in the story, he still continuous to speak in favour of love, presenting it as a divine gift that—in contrast to friendship—is able to rejuvenate the hearts of the old and to make such worldly things as social standing, reputation, and even the bonds of friendship and kinship become insignificant. So, opposing Lionardo's view, Battista thus claims to prefer love to all other things in life: "Non dubitare ch' io statuirei l'amore essere, sopra non dico all'amicizia, ma a qualunque gloriosa cosa, degno molto e divino."[39]

Lionardo, of course, rejects this view and dismisses Battista's statement as the typical foolish talk of lovers. Moreover, he states that, when talking about love, it is at least necessary to distinguish the love between lovers who are physically attracted to one another from the love that friends feel for each other:

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[38] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 90. – "We may consider the love of husband and wife greatest of all. If pleasure generates benevolence, marriage gives an abundance of all sorts of pleasure and delight: if intimacy increases good will, no one has so close and continued a familiarity with anyone as with his wife; if close bonds and a united will arise through the revelation and communication of your feelings and desires, there is no one to whom you have more opportunity to communicate fully and reveal your mind than to your own wife, your constant companion; if, finally, an honorable alliance leads to friendship, no relationship more entirely commands your reverence than the sacred tie of marriage." Trans. Watkins 98.

[39] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 93. – "Yet doubt not that I would put love not only above friendship but above whatever is glorious, whatever is most noble and divine." Trans. Watkins 100-101.

> E perché il nostro conferire sia più chiaro, questa furia, cioè amore venereo, chiamerollo inamoramento, e chi da essa sia preso dicasi inamorato. Quello altro amore libero d'omni lascivia, el quale congiugne e unisce gli animi con onesta benivolenza, nominiàllo amicizia. Questi di così onesto e benivolo animo affezionati chiaminsi amici.[40]

Unsurprisingly, Lionardo, the humanistic classicist, thus refers to the classical idea of the two kinds of love—in ancient times represented by the two Aphrodites, the younger and the older one—to illustrate the nature of these two different kinds of affection that are based on either passion or reason. The discussion of whether passion should be accepted as the drive that rules man's life or whether reason should be employed to keep control of one's decisions and actions is indeed frequently to be found in the humanistically inspired literature of the Renaissance and the hostility against the first and the glorification of the second that is here presented by Alberti is indeed typical of early modern treatments of the matter.

To back his argument up, Lionardo now also refers to another two classical ideas that were very popular with Renaissance humanists not only at Alberti's time but throughout the whole age: those of the dignity of man and of the freedom of the will. Carnal desires, which Lionardo considers the origin and the basis of sensual love, are, according to him, first and foremost the typical quality of beasts. Such desires can indeed be attributed neither to inanimate objects nor to plants but only to animals and humans. In contrast to man, however, beasts are not able to control or suppress their desires. For this reason, passion is—according to the idea of the chain of being and the different levels of existence, which ascribes specific qualities to the various classes of being—one of the characteristic attributes of animals, as it belongs to the features that distinguishes beasts from all inferior forms of being, i.e. plants and non-living objects. Reason, on the other hand, which animals lack, is the most characteristic quality of man, as he is the only being who is, due to his dignity and the freedom of his will, able to make use of the power of mind over matter.[41] This view is based on a conception of man's role in this world that is about half a century later to be most perfectly represented by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in the probably best-known passage from his *Oratio de hominis dignitate*:

> Statuit tandem optimus opifex, ut cui dare nihil proprium poterat commune esset quicquid privatum singulis fuerat. Igitur hominem accepit indiscretae opus imaginis atque in mundi positum meditullio sic est alloquutus: 'Nec certam sedem, nec propriam faciem, nec munus ullum peculiare tibi

[40] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 93. – "To make our discussion more clear, that madness, that is, erotic love, I shall call infatuation, and anyone taken with it, I shall describe as enamored. The other love, free from all lasciviousness, which joins and unites our [souls] in honorable [benevolence], I shall call friendship. Those bound by such an honorable and benevolent affection may be called friends." Trans. Watkins 101. Alterations mine.

[41] For a detailed description of the early modern idea of the chain of being, see E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990) 33ff.

> dedimus, o Adam, ut quam sedem, quam faciem, quae munera tute optaveris, ea, pro voto pro tua sententia, habeas et possideas. Definita ceteris natura intra praescriptas a nobis leges coercetur. Tu, nullis angustiis coercitus, pro tuo arbitrio, in cuius manu te posui, tibi illam praefinies. Medium te mundi posui, ut circumspiceres inde commodius quicquid est in mundo. Nec te caelestem neque terrenum, neque mortalem neque immortalem fecimus, ut tui ipsius quasi arbitrarius honorariusque plastes et fictor, in quam malueris tute formam effingas. Poteris in inferiora quae sunt bruta degenerare; poteris in superiora quae sunt divina ex tui animi sententia regenerari.'[42]

So, since man is therefore free to choose the way in which he leads his life, as he incorporates in addition to his own specific quality—namely reason—also all the characteristic qualities of the forms of being inferior to his own class, he is also free to choose whether he wants to act like a beast, following his drives and abandoning himself to the pleasures of love, or whether he rather behaves as it becomes a rational being, preferring the virtuous union of two souls in friendship to the libidinous union of two bodies in carnal love. Thus, with Lionardo, friendship here becomes, as it were, a measure of one's own personal dignity.[43]

In a last forceful exhortation, Lionardo now addresses his two younger listeners almost in the tone of a Savonarolan sermon and makes his hostile view of love and his favourable one of friendship once more unmistakably clear:

> Tanto vi ramento, frategli miei, fuggiamo questa furia amatoria, né monstriamo preporla all'amicizia, me neanche la diciamo tra' beni della vita umana, imperoché l'amore sempre fu pieno di fizioni, maninconie, suspizioni, pentimenti e dolori. Fuggiamo adunque questo amore. Sia in noi verso di lui quanto si richiede non poco odio, poiché manifesto si vede e con dolore si pruova ch'egli è cagione d'ogni scandolo e d'ogni male.[44]

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[42] Pico della Mirandola 5-6. – "At last the best of artisans ordained that that creature to whom He had been able to give nothing proper to himself should have joint possession of whatever had been peculiar to each of the different kinds of being. He therefore took man as a creature of indeterminate nature and, assigning him a place in the middle of the world, addressed him thus: 'Neither a fixed abode nor a form that is thine alone nor any function peculiar to thyself have we given thee, Adam, to the end that according to thy judgment thou mayest have and possess what abode, what form and what functions thou thyself shalt desire. The nature of all other beings is limited and constrained within the bounds of laws prescribed by Us. Thou, constrained by no limits, in accordance with thine own free will, in whose hand We have placed thee, shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature. We have set thee at the world's center that thou mayest from thence more easily observe whatever is in the world. We have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honor, as though the maker and molder of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine." Trans. Livermoore Forbes in Cassirer et al. 224-225.

[43] Cf. Alberti, *Della famiglia* 94-95.

[44] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 97. – "This much I do urge on you, my little brothers, let us flee this amatory madness, nor seem to put it above friendship. Better, let us not even call it one of the goods of this life. Love has always been burdened with deceit, sorrow, suspicion, regret, and grief. Let us flee, then, from

To bring the discussion to an end and to a solution in favour of friendship, Alberti has himself eventually give in to Lionardo's argumentation when he has the Battista of the story now vow to take heed of the advantages of friendship and to devote himself to the making of friends and the cultivation of his friendships in future. Yet, he has himself also say something that—although apparently only meant as a final excuse for his enthusiasm for love—might be taken, as it were, as a prophetic prediction and even as an explanation of the whole development of the conflict between the two different concepts of relationship and their rivalry that is to dominate the view of love and friendship in the forthcoming two centuries of the European Renaissance:

> Io e per età e per ogni reverenza, Lionardo, non ardirei oppormi all'autorità e ragioni tue. […] Io mai ardirei negarti la vera amicizia non essere forte, ma forse la credo meno veemente che l'innamoramento. Ma chi sarà, se già tu uomo eloquentissimo uno solo quello fussi, el quale mi provasse mai oggi in questa età nostra trovarsi quelle piladee e lelie amicizie? Certo gl'innamoramenti oggi sono qual sempre furono ne' ricchi, ne' poveri, ne' signori, ne' servi, ne' vecchi, ne' giovani, tale che niuna età, niuna fortuna, niuno petto umano si truova vacuo dalle fiamme amatorie.[45]

Certainly without being aware of this, Alberti here already alludes to three major factors that are to be responsible for the debasement of the concept of friendship at the end of the Renaissance and the following triumph of love as the preferred form of intimacy:

1. Just as the young Battista is not able to successfully oppose the eloquent argumentation of his older cousin Lionardo, or even dares to challenge his authority and thus his view of the value of friendship, and so finally fails to stand firm in his preference of love over friendship, the humanists of the age were completely devoted to the teachings of the ancient philosophers and were equally not able to question the classical views on the matter or even to challenge the authority of the classical works on the subject. In fact, there is hardly any theoretical treatise dating from that time in which its author is not citing at least some classical writers or commonplaces in the hope of supporting or even legitimizing his own thoughts or statements by referring to these classical authorities. The phenomenon of such an unrestricted devotion to traditional authorities is of course not only to be found in the Renaissance with its enthusiasm for the ancients, but already in medieval times, when theologians and

this kind of love. Let us give it the ample detestation it deserves. Clearly do men see and sadly do they experience that this is a source of all kinds of disgrace and suffering." Trans. Watkins 104.

[45] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 97-98. – "Because of my age and my reverence for you, Lionardo, I dare not resist your authority and your arguments. […] I would never dare to deny your claim that true friendship is strong, but I think, perhaps, it is less powerful as a force than passion. Who indeed, unless it be you with your eloquence, could persuade me that today in our time there are friendships like those of Pylades and Laelius? Passionate love, certainly, is just what it has always been, in rich and in poor, in lords and in serving men, in old and in young. It remains such that no age, no estate, no human heart is empty of that amorous flame." Trans. Watkins 104-105.

other clergymen considered it obviously not sufficient to rely on the Scripture alone but frequently also referred to the writings of the Fathers of the Church, which were seen as almost as authoritative as the text of the Bible itself, to support and legitimize their own views. And even today, in some relatively new fields of research, the devotion to the founders of specific schools of thought and to their theories is often so unswerving and sometimes even so fanatical that it is quite difficult to overcome the common belief in these views. So, the reason for the widespread uncritical adoption of the classical ideas and ideals of friendship in Renaissance humanism is to be found in its lack of emancipation from the authorities of classical thought until about the second half of the sixteenth century, when increasing criticism of the classical friendship conceptions began to establish an opposition against the idealized view of this kind of relationship.

2. When Battista claims that only Lionardo's eloquence could persuade him that friendships like those of Pylades and Orestes or Laelius and Scipio would or could exist at his own time, he indirectly also alludes to another cause of the negative development of the common attitude towards the ideal of friendship. The doubt that the classical representation of friendship, with its various examples of perfect friendship couples from Achilles and Patroclus to Orestes and Pylades, to Laelius and Scipio, and finally to Damon and Pithias, which the humanists frequently referred to as a proof of the realizability of the friendship ideal, might no longer be translatable into the socio-political reality of a constantly changing world, and that it has therefore to remain a pipedream, an unrealizable ideal, was thus already subliminally existent in Alberti's time. This doubt, as Alberti clearly illustrates, can here, at his time, still be dispelled by the eloquent and persuading rhetoric of the humanists, but one and a half centuries later, at the latest, this doubt is no longer to be smothered, and is then to find expression particularly in the English stage plays of the early seventeenth century.

3. A third reason for the common preference of love over friendship that is to prevail in the end—again a reason that Alberti here already alludes to—is to be found in the characteristic natures of both the two different kinds of affection and the forms of relationship that results from them. It is precisely the apparent advantage of the nobility of friendship as a product of reason and the supposed disadvantage of the instinctiveness of love as a product of passion that are to turn out as the main causes for the eventual decline of the first and the triumphant progress of the latter. The idea of a purely rational friendship, as it is idealized in the classical theories, might in fact only be put into practice, if at all, in times in which the socio-political conditions permit or even support the emergence and flourishing of an intellectual elite. Yet, even then, it would merely be realizable within this social class, i.e. between its philosophically educated members. This, however, means that it needs a society in which broad sections of the population have access to a humanistic education, and a certain wealth of the community to make this mass education affordable, before the classically

inspired ideal of amity could become established as a commonly accepted concept of friendship or even as a commonly aspired model of relationship. Love, on the other hand, as Battista correctly explains, is a much more democratic kind of affection, as it is for everyone possible to love or to be loved, no matter what his age, social standing, or educational level might be. Furthermore, it is also much more independent of the current socio-political climate than friendship and can thus also flourish when the cultural conditions are not in favour of erudition and of spiritual relationships that are built exclusively on the moral philosophical values of ancient times. The libidinous motivation for loving is hence not a disadvantage of this sort of affection; it rather makes it the most natural one, and the union of two lovers thus the most universally valid of all types of relationship. This, in fact, is one of the main reasons for the forthcoming success that this kind of relationship is to have in the centuries following the Renaissance.

For the time being, however, the common Renaissance attitude towards the matter is usually still pro-friendship, so that, whenever it comes to the question whether friendship should be preferred or love, in most literary treatments the choice is still made in favour of friendship, as, for example, by Spenser in his *Faerie Queene*:

> Hard is the doubt, and difficult to deeme,
> When all three kinds of loue together meet,
> And doe dispart the hart with powre extreme,
> Whether shall weigh the balance downe; to weet
> The deare affection vnto kindred sweet,
> Or raging fire of loue to woman kind,
> Or zeale of friends combynd with vertues meet.
> But of them all the band of vertuous mind
> Me seemes the gentle hart should most assured bind.
>
> For naturall affection soone doth cesse,
> And quenched is with *Cupids* greater flame :
> But faithfull friendship doth them both suppresse,
> And them with maystring discipline doth tame,
> Through thoughts aspyring to eternall fame.
> For as the soule doth rule the earthly masse,
> And all the seruice of the bodie passe,
> So loue of soule doth loue of bodie passe,
> No lesse then perfect gold surmounts the meanest brasse.[46]

Here, it is now the Socratic-Platonic idea originally expressed in the *Symposium* that 'loue of soule doth loue of bodie passe' that Spenser presents, and this emphasis on the intellectual or spiritual quality of friendship in contrast to the inferior characteristic of love—the sexual desire—is once more used as the main argument for the preference of the first over the second. It is, in fact, the one and only argument that the pro-friendship writers of the Renaissance put forward to explain this preference. Thus,

[46] Spenser 4.9.1-2.1-18.

we can find the same way of argumentation also in Montaigne's essay "De L' Amitié" when he praises the advantages that friendship has over love:

> / D'y comparer l'affection envers les femmes, quoy qu'elle naisse de nostre choix, on ne peut, ny la loger en ce rolle. Son feu, je le confesse,
>
> *neque enim est dea nescia nostri*
> *Que dulcem curis miscet amaritiem,*
>
> est plus actif, plus cuisant et plus aspre. Mais c'est un feu temeraire et volage, ondoyant et divers, feu de fiebvre, subject à accez et remises, et qui ne nous tient qu'à un coing. En l'amitié, c'est une chaleur generale et universelle, temperée au demeurant et égale, une chaleur constante et rassize, toute douceur et polissure, qui n'a rien d'aspre et de poignant. Qui plus est, en l'amour, ce n'est qu'un desir forcené après ce qui nous fuit:
>
> *Come segue la lepre il cacciatore*
> *Al freddo, al caldo, alla montagna, al lito;*
> *Ne pui l'estima poi che presa vede,*
> *Et sol dietro a chi fugge affretta il piede.*[47]

Most Renaissance writers did indeed come to the conclusion that passion and desire, as the emotional seeds of carnal love, are feelings that do not become the natural disposition of man, as they are quite comparable with the symptoms of a feverish illness, and that they must therefore be controlled by reason to prevent them from prevailing over man's mind. Only the dominance of reason over these emotions would enable man to become virtuous and thus to occupy the place in God's divine order, the chain of being, that He has designed him for as the only rational being in this world. This view is summed up, for example, in a brief statement by Ottaviano Fregoso in Baldesar Castiglione's *Libro del Cortegiano*, his famous courtesy book on the right conduct of courtiers: "[…] perché sempre quella cosa per la quale l'appetito vince la ragione è ignoranzia, né po mai la vera scienzia esser superata dallo affetto, il quale dal

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[47] Montaigne 233-34. –

> "[A] You cannot compare with friendship the passion men feel for women, even though it is born of our own choice, nor can you put them in the same category. I must admit that the flames of passion –
>
> *for I am not unacquainted with that goddess who mingles sweet bitterness with love's cares* –
> [Catullus, Epigrams, 66.17-18. (Annotations 209.)]
>
> are more active, sharp and keen. But that fire is a rash one, fickle fluctuating and variable; it is a feverish fire, subject to attacks and relapses, which only gets hold of a corner of us. The love of friends is a general universal warmth, temperate moreover and smooth, a warmth which is constant and at rest, all gentleness and evenness, having nothing sharp nor keen. What is more, sexual love is but a mad craving for something which escapes us:
>
> *Like the hunter who chases the hare through heat and cold, o'er hill and dale, yet once he has bagged it, he thinks nothing of it; only while it flees away does he pound after it.*
> [Ariosto, Orlando furioso, 10.7. (Annotations 209.)]"
>
> Trans. Screech 208-09.

corpo e non dall'animo deriva; e se dalla ragione è ben retto e governato, diventa virtú, e se altrimenti diventa vicio; […]."[48]

Now, one might be inclined to say that the literary treatment of the opposition between reason and passion, and correspondingly also the one of that between friendship and love, was simply the consequence of the general enthusiasm for antitheses that was so typical of the Renaissance. "Antithesis, or the juxtaposition of opposites," as James Saslow explains in the introduction to his edition of Michelangelo's poetry, "was frequent in Renaissance literature," and appears, for example, in "such traditional oppositions as burning-freezing, sun-shade, fire-ice, life-death, and pleasure-pain [...]."[49] That it was yet much more than just the fashion of an age to create an artificial conflict between these two pairs of concepts for mere literary purposes, shows the enduring popularity of theoretical treatments of both the antithesis between reason and passion and, frequently associated with this one, that between friendship and love in the centuries following the Renaissance. In his biography of Samuel Johnson, for instance, James Boswell describes in the entry for Sunday, 16 April 1775, a dispute between him and Dr Johnson whether love is more pleasing than friendship or vice versa:

> I maintained that Horace was wrong in placing happiness in *Nil admirari* ['Nought to admire'], for that I thought admiration one of the most agreeable of all our feelings; and I regretted that I had lost much of my disposition to admire, which people generally do as they advance in life. JOHNSON. 'Sir, as a man advances in life, he gets what is better than admiration—judgement, to estimate things at their true value.' I still insisted that admiration was more pleasing than judgement, as love is more pleasing than friendship. The feeling of friendship is like that of being comfortably filled with roast beef; love, like being enlivened with champagne. JOHNSON. 'No, Sir; admiration and love are like being intoxicated with champagne; judgement and friendship like being enlivened.'[50]

Boswell's view is here in fact already foreshadowing the common Romantic attitude towards love and friendship, which is a bit later to find expression in allegories as the one by John Keats (1795-1821), who speaks of "the wine of Love—and the bread of Friendship."[51] However, although representing a typical disagreement of the

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[48] Baldesar Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* 4.16. – "For reason is always overcome by desire because of ignorance, and true knowledge can never be defeated by the emotions, which originate in the body rather than the soul. And if the emotions are properly governed and controlled by reason, then they become virtuous, and if otherwise, then vicious." Trans. George Bull, *The Book of the Courtier*, by Baldesar Castiglione (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976) 293.

[49] James M. Saslow, introduction, *The Poetry of Michelangelo*, by Michelangelo Buonarroti, trans. James M. Saslow (New Haven: Yale UP, 1991) 42.

[50] James Boswell, [*The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL. D.*] *Boswell's 'Life of Johnson'*, ed. R. W. Chapman (London: Oxford UP, 1965) 624. Trans. in square brackets Chapman 624n3.

[51] John Keats, Letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, Teignmouth, 3rd May [1818], *Letters: 1814 to January 1819* (New York: AMS, 1970) 110, vol. 4 of *The Complete Works of John Keats*, ed. H. Buxton Forman.

eighteenth century between an early romanticist (Boswell) and an ardent advocate of the ideas of the Enlightenment (Dr Johnson), the dialogue here described does clearly resemble the discussions of the matter in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Only the view on the sensual aspect of love was then even more hostilely expressed than here with Johnson.

In Renaissance literature, such an expression of an utterly disparaging view on the sexual aspect of love is to be found, for example, in Shakespeare's sonnet 129, where the poet impressively illustrates his vision of what happens when reason is supplanted by passion, desire, and lust:

> Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame
> Is lust in action, and till action lust
> Is perjured, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
> Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
> Enjoyed no sooner but despisèd straight,
> Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,
> Past reason hated as a swallowed bait,
> On purpose laid to make the taker mad,
> Mad in pursuit, and in possession so,
> Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme,
> A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe,
> Before, a joy proposed, behind, a dream.
> All this the world well knows, yet none knows well
> To shun the heav'n that leads men to this hell.[52]

It is quite remarkable that Shakespeare does here not speak of love directly, but only of lust, the sexual desire, the carnal aspect of love. Spiritual love, if this interpretation may be proposed, is here only mentioned as the heaven that will lead the lover in the end to the hell of sensual passion. That Shakespeare, as most of his contemporaries, is indeed not simply equating lust with love, is most clearly shown in his *Venus and Adonis* when Adonis rejects Venus attempt to seduce him with the following comment on love and lust:

> I hate not love, but your device in love,
> That lends embracements unto every stranger.
> You do it for increase : O strange excuse,
> When reason is the bawd to lust's abuse!
>
> 'Call it not love, for Love to heaven is fled,
> Since sweating Lust on earth usurp'd his name ;

[52] Shakespeare, *Sonnets* No 129. It is though not only sensual love itself that Shakespeare so disparages in his *Sonnets*; it is especially the object of this passionate love that is presented in the most negative way, as J. K. Gardiner explains: "He projects all his negative emotions on the wicked woman, the she-'devil' or 'female evil.' Like a female version of Persephone's ravisher Hades, the dark lady is associated with sexuality, violence, grief, sin, and death, as she takes the friend from the poet and carries him off to her 'hell.' " J. K. Gardiner, "The Marriage of Male Minds in Shakespeare's Sonnets," *Journal of English and German Philology* 84 (1985): 343.

> [……]
>
> 'Love comforteth like sunshine after rain,
> But Lust's effect is tempest after sun ;
> Love's gentle spring doth always fresh remain,
> Lust's winter comes ere summer half be done ;
> Love surfeits not, Lust like a glutton dies ;
> Love is all truth, Lust full of forgéd lies.[53]

From this view on love, however, there are two difficult problems arising: at first the question "wie ein Mann in Kenntnis der unersättlichen, polymorphen libidinösen Lebensgier der [menschlichen] Kreatur […] am Ideal der Liebe festhalten kann,"[54] as Alan Posener puts it, and furthermore, if he does hold on to the ideal, how a friend in love with a woman, can resolve the conflict arising from this situation and might fulfil the duties of friendship and the duties of love at the same time. Now, that this might be possible at all is indeed to be doubted. It is, in fact, much later even to be explicitly denied by Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97) in her famous *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*:

> Friendship is a serious affection; the most sublime of all affections, because it is founded on principle, and cemented by time. The very reverse may be said of love. In a great degree, love and friendship cannot subsist in the same bosom; even when inspired by different objects they weaken or destroy each other, and for the same object can only be felt in succession. The vain fears and fond jealousies, the winds which fan the flame of love, when judiciously or artfully tempered, are both incompatible with the tender confidence and sincere respect of friendship.[55]

Now, whether friendship and love can exist simultaneously in someone's life or not, it is at least very difficult for the individual to cope with the problems that are involved in the endeavour to satisfy both the demands of the friend and those of the lover at the same time. The realization of this fact led Renaissance writers, and especially the English dramatists of the time, not only to the conclusion that one has therefore to make a choice between these two kinds of affection and relationship but also to the discovery that the inner conflict that the individual might be subjected to because of this need to choose between the friend and the lover, would provide a suitable starting-point for a stirring story. In other words, they realized, as Mills points out, that "the stress on love, chivalric or courtly, exalted one loyalty; the revived admiration for friendship exalted another; and when those two loyalties came into conflict as they

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[53] Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis* 132-34.789-804.

[54] Alan Posener, *William Shakespeare* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1995) 78. – "[…] how a man, knowing about the [human] creature's insatiable, polymorphic libidinal appetite for life […] can still hold on to the ideal of love." Trans. mine.

[55] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, The Wollstoncraft Debate, Criticism*, ed. Carol H. Poston (New York: Norton, 1988) 73.

well might, a crucial and absorbingly interesting situation was created."[56] From the conflict between these two loyalties, in fact, various plot patterns are thinkable to develop, and the authors of the time proved to be quite resourceful and imaginative indeed when they set out to enrich their stories with this intriguing theme—particularly when they were to be presented on the stage. As the way in which the representation of this fictional conflict between friendship and love in English Renaissance literature developed in the course of the age—from the glorification of friendship to the preference of love—does indeed not only reflect but, by intensely influencing it, also fostered the gradual change in the common attitude towards the matter that in fact took place in the reality of the time as well, we will in the following take a closer look at this development in literature that, as it were, foreshadowed the real development of the conflict at the end of the period.

The initial situation is in all of such stories the same: two male friends, A and B, live happily and enjoy their friendship, when suddenly a woman, lady C, enters the scene and causes one of the friends (or both) to fall in love with her. The friendship of A and B, of course, is then affected by this love of the one (or both) for C. The further development and the outcome of this conflict varies, but in principle, every possible plot pattern might be classified as belonging to one of the six different variants that Mills categorizes as follows:

1. A and B are friends; B loves C; consequently A loves C, since A and B are alike in interests and equal in most ways—'One soul in two bodies.' B resigns C to A. Friendship surpasses love.
2. A and B are friends; B loves C; A voluntarily or by request woos C for B. C loves A instead of B. B, learning of the situation, resigns C to A.
3. A and B are friends; B loves C; A woos C for B; C loves A (as in 2). B accuses A of unfair tactics. A duel ensues, followed by reconciliation or fatal results.
4. A and B are friends; B loves C but for some reason ceases to love her and resigns her to A. C refuses to accept A unless he kills B. A reconciliation or tragic results follow.
5. A and B are friends; B loves C and invites A to accompany him a-wooing. A refuses, lest he fall in love with C. C's curiosity is aroused and she visits A. Tragic results.
6. A and B are friends; both love C. But because of their friendship neither will take advantage of the other. A woos C for B; C loves A. Likewise B woos C for A; C loves B. Consequently, as C falls in love with both A and B, the solution of the *impasse* is still to seek. A and B become rivals, but rivals in magnanimity; each is resolved to bring about success in love for the other. Various circumstances and means are used to resolve the situation.[57]

[56] Mills 376.

[57] Mills 377. The extraordinary popularity of the literary treatments of this conflict between friendship and love appears to be, according to Mills, an exclusively English phenomenon in the Renaissance (just like the *Freundschaftskult*, the cult of friendship in the eighteenth century in Germany, which was an

As Mills here mentions, one of the ways most frequently used by Renaissance writers to introduce the conflict between friendship and love is the representation of a situation in which one of the friends is wooing a lady for the other. Little has indeed changed since medieval times in the enthusiasm for the chivalric custom to woo a lady for one's friend.[58] It was still regarded as one of the major duties of a friend to undertake this delicate task and as one of the best ways to show one's confidence in the person entrusted with this duty, as a passage from Castiglione's *Libro del Cortegiano* shows:

> […] perché ogni amante desidera far conoscer le sue passioni alla amata, ed essendo solo è sforzato a far molte piú dimostrazioni e piú efficaci, che se da qualche amorevole e fidele amico fosse aiutato; perché le dimostrazioni che lo amante istesso fa dànno molto maggior suspetto, che quelle che fa per internunci, e perché gli animi umani sono naturalmente curiosi di sapere, súbito che uno alieno comincia a sospettare, mette tanta diligenzia, che conosce il vero, e conosciutolo non ha rispetto di publicarlo, anzi talor gli piace; il che non interviene dell'amico il qual, oltre che aiuti di favore e di consiglio, spesso rimedia a quegli errori che fa il cieco innamorato, e sempre procura la secretezza e provede a molte cose alle quali esso proveder non po; oltre che grandissimo refrigerio si sente dicendo le passioni e sfocandole con amico cordiale, e medesimamente accresce molto i piaceri il poter comunicargli.[59]

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exclusively national phenomenon as well), as one will find, when examining the writings of Continental authors of the time, that "in the foreign productions the primary interest is love." And he adds: "It is when that primary interest meets the time-honored and widely known theme of friendship in English literary tradition that the essential conflict becomes of first importance." Mills 431n269.

[58] The wooing of a lady for a friend has indeed already been a very popular literary motive frequently appearing in courtly love poetry. The different representations of this traditional chivalric service, however, vary considerably. Of course, not all love stories can have a happy ending; some, in fact, must end in tragedy, and the portrayal of the unforeseeable and often disastrous consequences that can result from a situation in which a man courts a lady in behalf of his friend was apparently much more popular than that of a story in which everything turns out well in the end. The realization that love and friendship can easily come into conflict with each other when a man has to make a decision between the love for his lady and the loyalty to his friend was yet not new, as the view that love is a serious threat to friendship, since it undermines the lover's loyalty to his friend, is in fact a classical one. In medieval literature, however, the treatment of this conflict became one of the leading motifs in courtly love poetry and the consequences that result from this conflict were the topic of many tragic love stories. In medieval writings, contrary to classical and most early modern ones, the emphasis is though put on the threat that friendship can be to love, not on the threat that love can be to friendship. For a detailed study of courtly love poetry and the relation between love and friendship that it usually presents, see Bernard O'Donoghue, *The Courtly Love Tradition* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1982); and Anna Hubertine Reuters, *Friendship and Love in the Middle English Metrical Romances* (Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 1991).

[59] Castiglione 3.73. – "For every lover wants to let his beloved know what he is suffering; but if he has to rely on himself he has to make many more and stronger demonstrations than if assisted by some loyal and loving friend. Then the demonstrations of affection made by the lover himself arouse far more suspicion than those made through intermediaries; and since people are naturally inquisitive, as soon as some stranger begins to suspect something he at once works diligently to find out the truth, and when he has discovered it he doesn't scruple to tell the world; on the contrary, quite often he is delighted to do so. This is not the case with a friend; indeed, a friend not only helps the lover with sympathy and advice but often repairs the errors into which he stumbles, always ensures secrecy and looks after many things that the lover cannot. Moreover, it is a welcome relief for the lover to be able to

The conflict now emerges, when the one who is supposed to woo the lady for his friend is, for some reason or another, believed to woo her for himself. Probably the best-known scene in which this suspicion is expressed by the friend who thinks himself to be betrayed, is the one in Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*, where Claudio suspects his friend Don Pedro, who had offered him to woo his beloved for him, of courting the lady for himself:

> 'Tis certain so; the Prince woos for himself.
> Friendship is constant in all other things
> Save in the office and affairs of love:
> Therefore all hearts in love use their own tongues;
> Let every eye negotiate for itself,
> And trust no agent; for beauty is a witch
> Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.[60]

The same situation appears in *The Trial of Chivalry*, an anonymous drama first printed in 1605. In this play, the king of Navarre's son Ferdinand falls in love with the French princess Katherine and entreats his English friend Pembrooke to woo the lady for him. Since Pembroke is not instantly eager to do his friend this favour, Ferdinand beseeches him to serve as a go-between by appealing to his sense of honour and by reminding him of the duties of a true and loyal friend and of his chivalric obligations:

> […] by our vowes,
> Which in the booke of heauen are registred,
> By all the rightes of friendship, by that loue
> Thou bearst thy natiue Countrey, I coniure thee,
> This day to be the Trumpet of my worth,
> To speake the passions of thy grieued friend,
> To *Katharine's* eares, till those pure Iuory gates,
> Pearst with the volley of thy battring words,
> Giue way to my lament to touch her heart:
> For this haue I extracted thee from many,
> Made thee my fellow Pilgrim to her shrine,
> Knowing thy thoughts from loue's Religion free,
> When my prayers fayle, thy tongue may plead for me.[61]

As a soldier, Pembrooke still feels a bit uneasy with this task, claiming that it would really pose a challenge to him. However, in the end he finally gives in and promises to woo Katherine for his friend:

> Must I be spokesman? *Pembrooke* plead for loue?
> Whose toung tunde to the Instruments of war,

unburden himself by telling his sorrows to a faithful friend, just as it augments his joy when he can share it with someone else." Trans. Bull 274.

[60] Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing* 2.1.162-68.

[61] *The Trial of Chivalry*, ed. John S. Farmer, facs. rpt. of London, 1605 ed. (n.p.: Tudor Facsimile Texts, 1912) Br-Bv (no lines).

> Neuer knew straine of fancy on my breath:
> Affection neuer dwelt, but war and death.
> [……]
> I am too blunt and rude for such nice seruice.
> Yet since my friend inioynes me to this taske,
> Take courage, ile both speake, plead, woo for thee,
> And when I want fit words to moue her mind,
> Ile draw my sword, and sweare she must be kind.[62]

Unfortunately, Pembrooke is not successful in his attempt to woo the lady for the friend. Instead, he rather inadvertently succeeds in arousing Katherine's interest in himself. Although he remains loyal to his friend and rejects the lady's advances to him, he is suspected by Ferdinand of having betrayed him, since Katherine in a following conversation with Ferdinand reacts to his inquiry about Pembrooke's courtship by calling upon the prince to woo for his friend as he has wooed for him. Now, in fact, Ferdinand believes himself to be the victim of an extremely vicious and subtle betrayal:

> Why, he was Orator in my behalfe:
> If I should speake for him, as he for me,
> Then should I breathe forth his passions, not mine owne.
> I, I, tis so; the villaine, in my name,
> Hath purchas'd her affection for himselfe, […].[63]

After a turbulent plot that develops from this initial situation, the play finally ends happily. The friends renew their friendship and Ferdinand and Katherine become engaged. So, in the end, both kinds of relationship succeed, and the play thus provides not only an utterly romantic but, as it were, also a decidedly undecided solution of the conflict as it shirks making a clear decision in favour of either love or friendship.

Equally undecided is the ending of another story that begins with a situation quite similar to that of the first scene of *The Trail of Chivalry*, Robert Green's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. Here, Edward, the Prince of Wales and son of Henry III is in love with Margaret of Fressingfield and asks his friend and confidant Lacy, the Earl of Lincoln, to woo the lady for him. He watches Lacy's endeavour to win Margaret's affections in his friend's behalf through the magic perspective glass of Friar Bacon. Contrary to the loyal Pembrooke in *The Trail of Chivalry*, however, Lacy falls in love with the lady himself and Friar Bacon has to prepare the Prince for what he is to see by breaking the news to him that "friends are men, and loue can baffle Lords; / The Earl both woes and courtes her for himselfe."[64] Lacy, meanwhile struggles with himself what to do:

> Daphne, the damsell that caught Phaebus fast,
> And lockt him in the brightnesse of her lookes,
> Was not so beautious in Appollos eyes,

[62] *Trial of Chivalry* Bv.

[63] *Trial of Chivalry* B4v.

[64] Robert Greene, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* ll. 639-40.

> As is faire Margret to the Lincolne earle;
> Recant thee, Lacie—thou art put in trust,
> Edward, thy soueraignes sonne, hath chosen thee
> A secret friend, to court her for himself:
> And darest thou wrong thy Prince with trecherie?—
> Lacie, loue makes no exception of a friend,
> Nor deemes it of a Prince, but as a man:
> Honour bids thee controll him in his lust,
> His wooing is not for to wed the girle,
> But to intrap her and beguile the lasse:
> Lacie, thou louest, then brooke not such abuse,
> But wed her, and abide thy Princes frowne:
> For better die, than see her liue disgraced.[65]

Although Lacy thus decides to betray his friend and consequently also their friendship, and although he puts his plans in the following also into action, the story finally takes a favourable turn and ends—just like the one of *The Trail of Chivalry*—happily with the renewal of the friendship between the prince and the earl and with the engagement of the latter to the lady Margaret. Thus, here again the conflict between the two kinds of affection is represented but no clear choice in favour of either love or friendship is made. In contrast to *The Trail of Chivalry*, however, where the conflict emerges from a mere misunderstanding and Ferdinand's groundless jealousy, in the story of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* there is indeed not just an imaginary conflict but a very actual one, as Lacy, contrary to Pembrooke, really falls in love with the woman he is supposed to woo for his friend. The conflict is thus initially an inner one, one that Lacy has first of all to cope with by himself. It is indeed this inner conflict of a friend to have to make a choice between the two loyalties mentioned above that—in addition to the outer conflict between the three protagonists involved in it (the two friends and the lady)—adds to the story an extra dramatic quality.

Another play in which this inner conflict of the friend and lover is impressively represented is, for example, John Lyly's *Endymion: The Man in the Moone*. Here, it is Endymion's friend Eumenides, unhappy in love with Seleme, who suddenly finds himself in the difficult situation in which he has to make a choice in favour of either his friend or his beloved. Given the opportunity to look into a magic fountain and to find the answer to only one single question written on the ground of the well, he now has to decide whether he should use his chance to learn what he could do to make Seleme love him in return, or to find a remedy with which he could deliver his friend Endymion, on whom the old witch Dipsas has cast a spell, from the charmed sleep in which he has fallen. This situation, of course, is an utterly mystical and surreal one, but the inner conflict Eumenides is here subjected to, is indeed as realistic and understandable as it has been in the plays mentioned above. Eumenides is in fact torn as to what to do, and his inability to make a choice in favour of either his friend or his

[65] Greene ll. 733-49.

beloved is revealed in his soliloquy, in which he makes the seriousness of his dilemma impressively clear:

> What now, Eumenides? Whither art thou drawn? Hast thou forgotten both friendship and duty, care of Endymion and the commandment of Cynthia? Shall he die in a leaden sleep because thou sleepest in a golden dream?—Ay, let him sleep ever, so I slumber but one minute with Semele. Love knoweth neither friendship nor kindred.
>
> Shall I not hazard the loss of a friend, for the obtaining of her for whom I would often lose myself?—Fond Eumenides, shall the enticing beauty of a most disdainful lady be of more force than the rare fidelity of a tried friend? The love of men to women is a thing common, and of course; the friendship of man to man infinite, and immortal.—Tush, Semele doth possess my love.—Ay, but Endymion hath deserved it. I will help Endymion; I found Endymion unspotted in his truth.—Ay, but I shall find Semele constant in her love. I will have Semele.—What shall I do?[66]

Thus unable to make a decision, Eumenides seeks advice from Geron, an old and wise man who offers to help him in his misery. Geron's recommendation now represents once more the typical humanistic attitude towards the matter and perfectly reflects the common Renaissance views on the nature of friendship and love and on the question which of the two should always be preferred by a truly virtuous person of moral integrity:

> Eumenides, release Endymion; for all things, friendship excepted, are subject to fortune. Love is but an eye-worm, which only tickleth the head with hopes and wishes; friendship the image of eternity, in which there is nothing movable, nothing mischievous. As much difference as there is between beauty and virtue, bodies and shadows, colours and life, so great odds is there between love and friendship. Love is a chameleon, which draweth nothing into the mouth but air, and nourisheth nothing in the body but lungs. Believe me, Eumenides, desire dies in the same moment that beauty sickens, and beauty fadeth in the same instant that it flourisheth. When adversities flow, then love ebbs, but friendship standeth stiffly in storms. Time draweth wrinkles in a fair face but addeth fresh colours to a fast friend, which neither heat, nor cold, nor misery, nor place, nor destiny can alter or diminish. O friendship, of all things the most rare, and therefore most rare because most excellent, whose comforts in misery is always sweet and whose counsels in prosperity

[66] Lyly, *Endymion* 3.4.110-27.

> are ever fortunate! Vain love, that only coming near to
> friendship in name, would seem to be the same, or better,
> in nature![67]

Eumenides, of course, acts on this wise man's advice, or rather, he defers to Geron's greater wisdom and declares himself convinced:

> Father, I allow your reasons and will therefore
> conquer mine own. Virtue shall subdue affections, wis-
> dom lust, friendship beauty. Mistresses are in every place,
> and are as common as hares in Athos, bees in Hybla, fowls in
> the air; but friends to be found are like the phoenix in
> Arabia, but one, or the philadelphi in Arays, never above
> two. I will have Endymion.[68]

In the end, Eumenides realizes that he has indeed done very well making this morally correct choice, as he is doubly rewarded for this 'right' decision: his friend Endymion is delivered from the curse and awakes from his bewitched sleep, and additionally—as a reward for his honourable behaviour and his readiness to abandon his feelings of love to fulfil his duties as a faithful friend—Eumenides is given Seleme's hand by Cynthia, the Queene, who is in turn engaged to Endymion. The representation of friendship and love that Lyly here provides is thus an utterly classical one in which the union of two male friends is given precedence over the love of a man for a woman. This love, in fact, is merely seen as a libidinous desire that only by those under its influence might be considered a possible alternative to friendship. Every man in his right mind, however, would clearly see the superiority of friendship to love. That the choice Eumenides has to make is not one between the preservation of either his friendship or his love affair but one between the preservation of his existing friendship with Endymion and the mere possibility of a love affair with Seleme, even underlines the irrationality to which a lover is thought to be subjected to additionally, and, of course, supports the idea of the mind affecting qualities of love. How insane does one have to be not to instantly prefer an existing pleasure to the mere fantasy of a pleasure? Or, in other words, who would give up a valuable treasure one has already found to gain a treasure of uncertain worth? This alone reveals the low regard that is shown for love in the play.

Furthermore, however, love is here, with Lyly, only represented as the one that the friend and lover feels for his mistress, the object of his love. That the feelings of the woman are obviously of no interest at all is shown by the way in which Seleme becomes engaged to Eumenides. At first, she is far from being enthusiastic about the idea that she has to marry him merely because she should serve as a reward, as it were,

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[67] Lyly, *Endymion* 3.4.129-50. David Bevington, in the annotations to his edition of the play, explains the meaning of this very last sentence as follows: "How frivolous of love to trade on the nominal similarity of *amor* and *amicitia*, and how absurd to claim a higher status in the nature of things!" David Bevington, ed., *Endymion*, by John Lyly (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1996) 137.

[68] Lyly, *Endymion* 3.4. 151-57.

for his loyalty to his friend Endymion. Eventually, of course, she acquiesces in the marriage—but it is, in fact, hardly more than merely the acquiescence in the marriage, as she is not really in love with Eumenides.[69] This, however, seems to be of no importance in a play that only wants to present the superiority of the friendship between two men to their feelings of love for women.

A very similar message is conveyed in another Elizabethan play, the well-known *Merchant of Venice* by Shakespeare. Presenting almost the entire repertoire of classical commonplaces of friendship, the play represents one of the last unreserved glorifications of the traditional friendship ideal of the period. Antonio, the merchant of Venice, and his friend Bassanio are enjoying a friendship that instantly reminds one of that between Damon and Pithias. Bassanio, in need of some money to woo the heiress of Belmont, the fair, virtuous, and (most important of all) rich lady Portia, asks his friend to lend him 3000 ducats so that he might be able to compete with all the other suitors courting her. Antonio, however, has invested all his fortune in his ships at sea and has now no liquid assets at hand to make such a sum of money immediately available. So, in order to help his friend none the less, he goes to the Jewish moneylender Shylock who consents to lend him the money on condition that, if it is not repaid within three months, he may take a pound of Antonio's flesh off him. Only interested in helping his friend, Antonio foolishly agrees. Unfortunately, Bassanio, having successfully wooed Portia, has now to learn that all of Antonio's ships seem to have been either lost or destroyed, and that he was not able to repay Shylock in time, who therefore now insists on taking the pound of flesh off Antonio. As Shylock rejects all offers of a belated repayment, the case is brought before the Venetian court. Bassanio, still in Belmont, receives the money he needs to save his friend from Portia and leaves her immediately after their marriage in haste for Venice.

In this play, the conflict is not at first sight one between friendship and love but one between the old classical conception of friendship and the new mercantilistic attitude towards it—an attitude that is to dominate the forthcoming seventeenth century. In *The Merchant of Venice*, love is indeed not represented as an alternative to friendship but rather as a means of its preservation. Contrary to the traditional courtship stories in which the friend merely serves as a go-between, only fulfilling his function as a means of help in the other friend's endeavour to wed a lady, here, the friend's mistress serves as a means of help in her lover's endeavour to save his friend and thus to perpetuate their friendship. By providing her lover with the money he needs to release his friend, and by encouraging him to leave her immediately after their marriage, she clearly accepts the superiority of her husband's relationship with another man over that with her—an attitude she is then even explicitly praised for by Lorenzo, one of Bassanio's fellows:

[69] Cf. Lyly, *Endymion* 5.4.200-49.

> Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
> You have a noble and a true conceit
> Of god-like amity, which appears most strongly
> In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
> But if you knew to whom you show this honour,
> How true a gentleman you send relief,
> How dear a lover of my lord your husband,
> I know you would be prouder of the work
> Than customary bounty can enforce you.[70]

Her reply to Lorenzo's well-meant compliment, however, clearly shows that she is not only familiar with the classical friendship ideal and its symbolism, but also that she is well aware that in her case the perpetuation of the men's friendship is the key to her own happiness in the marriage with Bassanio, since only by saving Antonio as her husband's 'other half'—and thus also the friendship between the two—she will ever be able to fully enjoy Bassanio's love for her:

> I never did repent for doing good,
> Nor shall not now: for in companions
> That do converse and waste the time together,
> Whose souls do bear an egall yoke of love,
> There must be needs a like proportion
> Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit;
> Which makes me think that this Antonio
> Being the bosom lover of my lord,
> Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
> How little is the cost I have bestowed
> In purchasing the semblance of my soul,
> From out the state of hellish cruelty![71]

Of how little importance the woman and the marriage with her really is to Bassanio, compared to his friend Antonio and the friendship with him, finally reveals one of his statements in the trial scene, when there seems to be no further hope of preventing Shylock from implementing the gruesome contract by killing Antonio:

> Antonio, I am married to a wife
> Which is as dear to me as life itself,
> But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
> Are not with me esteem'd above thy life.
> I would lose all, ay sacrifice them all
> Here to this devil, to deliver you.[72]

Despite her appreciation of Bassanio's affectionate feelings for his friend Antonio, Portia, who, disguised as Antonio's lawyer, is present at the scene, is now of course not pleased to hear this from her husband, who mistakenly believes to have left her behind

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[70] Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* 3.4.1-9.

[71] Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice* 3.4.10-21.

[72] Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice* 4.1.278-83.

in Belmont, and scolds him for this remark: "Your wife would give you little thanks for that / If she were by to hear you make the offer."[73] However, she does not receive any direct reply to her criticism. Yet, a bit later she is once more shown the inferiority of the position she holds on Bassanio's list of priorities, compared to that of Antonio, when she, still in the disguise of the lawyer, asks Bassanio for the ring she has given him in Belmont before his departure for Venice as the only reward for the good service she has done his friend Antonio as his lawyer by winning the case against Shylock for him. At first, in fact, Bassanio hesitates to give the supposed lawyer the ring for fear of betraying his wife:

> Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife,
> And when she put it on, she made me vow
> That I should neither sell, nor give, nor lose it.[74]

Antonio, however, allays his doubts and, by indirectly urging him to get his priorities right, persuades him to give the lawyer what he asked for:

> Ant: My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring,
> Let his deservings and my love withal
> Be valued 'gainst your wife's commondement.[75]

Thus persuaded, Bassanio, giving precedence to his friend's request over that of his wife, sends one of his fellows after the lawyer to hand the ring over to him: "Go Gratiano, run and overtake him, / Give him the ring […]."[76]

Thus, the message that the play conveys, is, as Mills puts it, "that happiness in love (as in *Endimion*) can be gained only by respect to friendship as having a prior claim."[77] Yet, in both plays, in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* as in Lyly's *Endymion*, the conflict between love and friendship is not so fierce that love would be denied its place in the story—as long as this place is accepted to be one inferior to friendship. A situation in which love is completely excluded from the ending of a play, due to the final triumph of friendship, is in fact only very seldom to be found in Renaissance drama. One of these rare exceptions, however, is the story of *The Dutch Courtesan* by John Marston (1576-1634), first performed sometime around 1604. Here, a gentleman with the meaningful name Malheureux falls passionately in love with Franceschina, the Dutch Courtesan. Franceschina, however, has just been abandoned by Freevill, Malheureux's best friend, who has ended the love affair with her in order to marry another lady, Sir Hubert Subboys's daughter Beatrice. Driven by feelings of jealousy and injured pride, Franceschina promises to return Malheureux's love on condition

[73] Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice* 4.1.284-85.

[74] Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice* 4.1.437-39.

[75] Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice* 4.1.445-47.

[76] Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice* 4.1.448-49.

[77] Mills 275.

that he first kills his friend Freevill. Malheureux, of course, now finds himself subjected to one of the most excruciating inner conflicts thinkable: the dilemma of having to make a choice between his love for the lady and his friend's life:

> O heaven, there is no hell
> But love's prolongings!
> [……]
> To kill my friend! Oh, 'tis to kill myself!
> Yet man's but man's excrement, man breeding man
> As he does worms, or this. *He spits.*
> To spoil this nothing!
> The body of a man is of the selfsame soil
> As ox or horse; no murder to kill these.
> As for that only part which makes us man,
> Murder wants power to touch't. O wit, how vile,
> How hellish art thou when thou raisest nature
> 'Gainst sacred faith! Think more, to kill a friend
> To gain a woman, to lose a virtuous self
> For appetite and sensual end, whose very having
> Loseth all appetite and gives satiety—
> That corporal end, remorse and inward blushings
> Forcing us loathe the steam of our own heats,
> Whilst friendship clos'd in virtue, being spiritual,
> Tastes no such languishings and moments' pleasure
> With much repentance, but like rivers flow,
> And further that they run, they bigger grow!
> Lord, how was I misgone! How easy 'tis to err
> When passion will not give us leave to think!
> A learn'd, that is an honest, man may fear,
> And lust, and rage, and malice, and anything
> When he is taken uncollected suddenly:
> 'Tis sin of cold blood, mischief with wak'd eyes,
> That is the damned and the truly vice,
> Not he that's passionless, but he 'bove passion's wise.
> My friend shall know it all.[78]

Here, the contrast between the noble friendship of two virtuous men and the evil lust and passionate desire that marks men's love of women is indeed most impressively illustrated. This view of love and friendship, of course, clearly reflects the common humanistic attitude towards the matter: it represents the familiar conflict between reason, represented by the ideal of classical friendship, and passion, represented by the disastrous love for the evil woman, that 'a learn'd, that is an honest, man' (i.e. a humanistically educated man), would always solve in favour of reason. This is then, of course, also what Malheureux does. At the end of the play, the friends are again happily reunited and the evil woman is condemned "to the extremest whip and jail."[79]

[78] John Marston, *The Dutch Courtesan* 2.2.190-91; 198-224.

[79] Marston 5.33.59.

Even that Freevill in the end still intents to marry Beatrice can now not really pose a threat to his friendship with Malheureux anymore.

This clear preference of friendship over love characterizes in fact the great majority of dramatic treatments of the topic in the stage plays of the late sixteenth century. Only a couple of decades later, however, in the plays of first half of the seventeenth century, the protagonists' priorities then usually turn out to be quite the opposite. Now it is mostly the plea for love that dominates the outcome of such plays. One of these, in which this inner conflict of the friend and lover is at first still presented in quite the same way and tone as in those of the sixteenth century, yet which finally produces a very different ending—one in favour of love—is *The Combat of Love and Friendship* by Robert Mead, written in 1636 (though not printed before 1654) and performed at Christ Church, Oxford. The story of the drama tells of Lysander and his love for the lady Artemone. Artemone's brother Theocles, however, is Lysander's best and most intimate friend. Agreeing with the view that one can only be loyal to either one's friend or one's beloved, because of the "antipathy 'twixt love and friendship," as the character Marcus Tullius puts it in *The Faithful Friends* (another play on love and friendship, commonly ascribed to Beaumont and Fletcher), Lysander sees the necessity to make a choice in favour of either his love for Artemone or his friendship with her brother.[80] So, he presents the inner conflict he is subjected to right at the beginning of the play in his opening soliloquy:

> Instruct me some kinde Power,
> To which I may most Lawfully prove false;
> My friend, or Mistress.
> But what talk I of Law? as if that faith
> Could ere be broke with Justice!
> Rather, which
> Can my heart suffer to be torn away,
> And snatch'd from its own sinews?
> Which of them can my soul part with upon easiest tearms?
> For thus stands my ambiguous fate, that one
> Side of my heart must needs be ript from t'other,
> For so these two had fill'd it; one side each:
> My share was almost nothing; only that
> Which knit the other two, I cal'd my own.
> Friendship, thou art a name, and nothing real,
> A meer and empty word, and
> Here I quit thee,

[80] Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Faithful Friends* 4.1 (no lines). *The Faithful Friends* entered the Stationers' Register in 1660. The play was attributed to Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) and John Fletcher (1579-1625), but it is indeed to be doubted that it was really written by these two. It is, in fact, more likely that Fletcher had no part in its production at all and that Beaumont had only contributed, if anything at all, a small part of the work that was mainly written by another, yet unnamed collaborator. Cf. Alexander Dyce, ed., introduction, "The Faithful Friends," *The Works of Beaumont & Fletcher*, by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, rpt. of 1843-46 ed., vol. 4 (Freeport: Books for Libraries P, 1970) 199.

> Ile not be fetter'd in fantastick chains,
> To court *Ideas*, nothings, and adore
> A strange *Platonick Cupid*. Give me Love,
> That has some Life and vigor in it: Love
> That shall delight our bloods as well as Fancies. --
> But stay: Is this *Lysander* No, some Fiend,
> Some false malicious spirit crept within me,
> To poyson all my Faith. Methinks
> I am too earthly; and
> I feel my clogg'd thoughts groveling
> To baseness. O my *Theocles*!
> Pardon me friend; when I forget that name,
> May I be miserable; nay I need not with it, for
> 'Tis imply'd in that, and I may well
> Now save my curse.[81]

Now, from these lines one might expect that *The Combat of Love and Friendship* is one that will end with the victory of friendship over love, especially when one takes into account that Mead has even created a special character, Misterotos, who's only function in the play seems to be to denigrate love, to mock at those in love and to deride their attempts to win the favours of their beloveds as ridiculous acts of sheer folly. Just at the beginning of the second act, for instance, Misterotos mocks at two lovers who are eagerly busy quarrelling about a mistress with whom both of them are in love:

> Ha, ha, ha, I have ee'n burst my self yonder with laughing. and am now forc't to retire for feare of my ribs; The most prodigious Contention about a Mistresse that e're I beheld: A Ballad-singer and a vext Constable I should take e'm for; but that I know the one to be a boysterously valiant Captain, and t'other a Gentleman abus'd into a Poet by his Mistresse: who, having for a long time courted her with verses only and Sonnets, is now injoyn'd by Her to speak nothing but Rime. The Captain being his Rival hath now provok't the Quarrel, he hath drawn his Faulchion, and wheeling about, lies at his Guard most fiercely, whiles my Riming Gentleman makes at him with a pair of Heroick Verses, which he again puts by with a warlike Oath or two: Such strange Passadoes there are between e'm, such Hermaphroditical Play; short sword and long verse, as I ne're saw the like.[82]

However, in spite of this clear antagonism towards love that Mead here expresses at the beginning of his play, the outcome of *The Combat of Love and Friendship* is, contrary to expectation, not a definite plea for friendship. The plot develops in a way that causes Lysander, despite his initial decision in favour of friendship, to fall out with his friend Theocles, and love now seems to become the main theme of the drama. As in *The Trail of Chivalry* and in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, the friendship of the men is in the end renewed, but the emphasis is clearly on the successful and happy ending of the love

[81] Robert Mead, *The Combat of Love and Friendship* 1.1 (no lines).

[82] Mead 2.1.

affairs that have developed in the course of the play. So, "on the whole," as Mills points out, "the love interests are paramount; the friendship element merely complicates the love situations. It is far from being a play where a love element merely complicates the friendship relations."[83] Now, this representation of the dominance of love over friendship would indeed be highly unusual for a sixteenth-century play, even for one of the late 1690s. It makes it, however, in fact a typical example of what it is, a play of the early seventeenth century, a century that is, contrary to the previous one, rather characterized by an increasingly favourable view on love and an increasingly sceptical view on idealized friendship.

In most plays dating from the sixteenth century, the emphasis on the aspect of love is indeed still much less dominant; instead, it is rather put on the one of friendship. There is, however, also at least one example of Renaissance drama of that time in which the solution of the conflict between friendship and love is not at first sight to be recognized as one in favour of friendship—and in the end, it remains indeed disputable whether it really is. Despite an outcome of the play that clearly emphasizes the superiority of true friendship over lustful love, the triumph seems here to be at first that of love, and friendship is not even allowed to remain. This play, in which the inner conflict of the friend who is in love with a woman is pushed to exactly the same extremes as in *The Dutch Courtesan*, is Thomas Kyd's *Solyman and Perseda*. Solyman (var.: Solimon) the Emperor is in love with Perseda, the beloved of his friend Erastus. His inner conflict is the usual one: he is torn between the love for the lady and the loyalty to his friend. The decision he finally makes, however, is decidedly different from all those discussed above. Overcome by his passionate desire for Perseda, he makes his choice in favour of love and not of friendship, and thus betrays his friend Erastus. Ironically under the pretext of having been betrayed by him, Solyman even has him executed—although, not long before, he has still promised him everlasting friendship and his undiminished loyalty by making use of the typical classical imagery:

> Wert thou my friend, thy minde would iumpe with mine;
> For what are friends but one minde in two bodies?
> Perhaps thou doubts my friendships constancie;
> Then doost thou wrong the measure of my loue,
> Which hath no measure, and shall neuer end.[84]

The following actions, however, shall soon prove Solyman's words to be scarcely more than empty phrases, if not even mere hypocrisy. For Martin Kornbluth, these empty phrases, which refer to the classical ideal of friendship without really meaning anything to the person who speaks them anymore, are indeed characteristic of the

[83] Mills 362.

[84] Thomas Kyd, *The Tragedye of Solyman and Perseda* 4.1.27-31.

general situation at the end of the Renaissance.[85] The classical ideal of friendship is still glorified, yet the message does no longer convey any meaning to the audience. In the plays of the late sixteenth century, the humanistic enthusiasm for the classical conception of perfect friendship seems indeed to have turned into a mere pointless repetition of the classical commonplaces of friendship.

In Kyd's play, the Emperor immediately regrets his villainous deed, but his wrong decision is irrevocable. Since Kyd's intention is of course not to glorify villainy and the killing of one's friends, he has to lead the plot eventually to a tragic end in which Solyman and Perseda are both meeting death. In this sense, the play's moral still holds to the classical ideal of friendship. However, Kornbluth is certainly right when he remarks: "The motivations for friendship are still close enough to classical tradition in Kyd, but the seeds of degeneration have been planted."[86]

It is, however, not only the turn from the mere representation of an ideal to a more realistic and thus a more dramatic representation of friendship on the stage that characterizes most of the plays mentioned above. There is also another aspect that distinguishes these late sixteenth-century plays from the ones written before, an aspect that is also to play an important role in the conceptual change of friendship at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Kyd, for example, as most of the other writers of his time, is no longer interested in using the representation of friendship in his play as a means of conveying a moral message to the audience of what friendship should ideally be like. For him, as for the others, the representation of friendship, or rather of its conflict with love, is first of all a means of creating a dramatic situation on the stage and thus to entertain his audience. The English plays of the eighties and nineties of the sixteenth century have indeed little in common with plays like that of Edwards with its unconditional idealization of friendship, an idealization that was in fact typical of the moralities and the moralizing plays of Tudor and early Elizabethan times. So, Mills is certainly right, when he states in his commentary on Kyd's *Solyman and Perseda*:

> It is not to be inferred […] that Kyd wrote this tragedy to deplore inconstancy, as Edwards wrote his play to applaud constancy; Kyd is not upholding a theory, he is using a friendship-love situation for dramatic effect. In this respect Kyd, like Lyly in *Endimion*, belongs to the generation of dramatists succeeding Edwards; the drama of propaganda is passing into the drama for the sake of drama.[87]

And he is indeed also right, when he finally concludes:

> The period from Lydgate [(*c.* 1370-1449)] to Lodge [(*c.* 1557-1625)] is one of transition in the treatment of friendship. A great change has taken place

[85] Cf. Kornbluth 162.

[86] Kornbluth 162.

[87] Mills 158-59.

> since the time when Caxton printed an English translation of the *De amicitia* and Elyot rather hesitatingly told a good friendship story for cultural purposes, or even from the time that Edwards delighted his audience with a play that embodies the right and the wrong of friendship and its political bearings, to the day when a Sidney or a Lodge, or […] a Shakespeare can take the theme for granted and use it with a free hand.[88]

In fact, by the end of the sixteenth century, the ideal of friendship has become a very hollow concept indeed. And every concept that merely exists as a commonplace without really meaning anything to the people anymore, is sooner or later inevitably facing a conceptual change. Although this change is not to become clearly apparent until the early seventeenth century, it is yet already foreshadowed in the representations of friendship and of its rivalry with love in the literature of the late sixteenth century—and this not only in drama but also in prose fiction. There is, however, a distinctive difference between the representations of the conflict between friendship and love in these two genres. Although "the dramatists at the end of the century were utilizers, not propagandists, of the friendship theories," as Mills points out, they usually still solved the conflict between love and friendship represented in their plays in favour of friendship, or at least not to its disadvantage.[89] A somewhat different attitude towards the possible outcome of such a conflict is yet to be found in the representations of the topic in the novels of the time. Although friendship is here also held in high esteem and is theoretically still considered to be nobler than love, the representation of the rivalry between friendship and love in prose fiction does not necessarily have to end with the triumph of friendship—probably because of the much less educational function of novels, which, in Renaissance times, were exclusively read by the educated elite anyway, compared to the stage plays, which were of course written already with a much less educated audience in mind.

One of the best-known representations of the familiar situation in which the friendship of two men is endangered by the love of one for a woman in prose fiction is to be found in Sidney's pastoral romance, *The Arcadia*. The perfect friendship between the two princes Musidorus and Pyrocles has to face a first threat when both fall in love with the princesses Pamela and Philoclea. As long as both are equally enthralled by their love for the ladies, however, the conflict merely remains a rather theoretical one. Yet, when the circumstances take a turn for the worse and force Musidorus and Pamela to flee the country if they want to continue their love affair, the friendship of the two princes is suddenly facing an actual threat. As Pyrocles cannot join Musidorus in leaving the place without giving up his own love, the two friends now have to make a decision about what to do. Musidorus knows that when he leaves his friend for the sake of his love for Pamela, this will "violate that holy band of true friendship" that is

[88] Mills 225.

[89] Mills 267.

between him and Pyrocles.[90] He is also well aware that it would be rationally unjustifiable for a virtuous man to prefer his sensual love for a woman to the virtuous friendship with his 'other I'. Here, Sidney has Musidorus make a truly ingenious gambit: he leaves the decision to Pyrocles whether they should separate for the sake of love or should stay together and abandon the ladies. Thus, he has not only relieved himself of the load to take the only decision possible for a virtuous man (namely to give up his love for Pamela for the sake of his friendship with Pyrocles) but has also even made it possible for Pyrocles to make his choice in favour of love by still acting in a virtuous way, which he then also does. Claiming to be only concerned with the friend's fortune he gives in to Musidorus request:

> 'But because indeed I love thee for thyself, […] I am content to leave all that which might please myself. I am content to build my pleasure upon thy comfort; and then will I deem my hap in friendship great when I shall see thee, whom I love, happy. Let me be only sure thou lovest me still—the only prize of true affection. […] I joy in your presence; but I joy more in your good. That friendship brings fourth the fruits of enmity which prefers his own tenderness before his friend's damage. For my part, my greatest grief herein shall be I can be no further serviceable unto you.'[91]

So, both can still enjoy their love for their ladies without having betrayed the principles of friendship. Thus, friendship, as it were, is here outmanoeuvred by its own characteristic values. The example of the story of Musidorus and Pyrocles might reveal how problematic the nature of the conflict between love and friendship was indeed considered to be—even by someone like Sidney. His representation of the rivalry between love and friendship truly ends with love's victory over friendship, but with Sidney, the friends are still allowed to part in harmony. This is certainly due to the high regard in which Sidney held the idea of friendship himself. On the other hand, he was writing *The Arcadia* for the entertainment of his sister and her ladies, who would certainly have been offended if he had presented the triumph of male friendship over their love of women.

In some literary representations of the situation in which a man's love for a woman interferes with his friendship with another man, the conflict does yet not just lead to a spatial separation of the friends—as in Sidney's *Arcadia*—but even causes them to break their friendship off completely. An example of such an unpleasant development is given in Lyly's *Euphues—The Anatomy of Wyt,* in which Euphues gives up his friendship with Philautus for the sake of his love for a truly doubtful woman.[92] Philautus, disappointed by Euphues's betrayal of their friendship, writes to him:

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[90] Sidney, *Old Arcadia* 152.

[91] Sidney, *Old Arcadia* 153-54.

[92] In the end, in fact, the friends become reconciled, but only because Euphues has himself been abandoned by the woman he was in love with and now regrets his former decision (which he would certainly not have regretted if the lady had not abandoned him).

> Couldest thou *Euphues* for the loue of a fruitlesse pleasure, vyolate the league of faythfull friendshippe? Diddest thou waye more the entising lookes of a lewd wenche, then the entyre loue of a loyall friende? If thou diddest determine with thy selfe at the firste to be false, why diddest thou sweare to bee true? If to bee true, why arte thou false? If thou wast mynded both falselye and forgedlye to deceiue mee, why diddest thou flatter and dissemble with mee at the firste? If to loue me, why doest thou flinche at the last? If the sacred bands of amitie did delyght thee, why diddest thou break them? if dislyke thee, why diddest thou prayse them? Dost thou not know that a perfect friende should be lyke the Glaeworme, which shineth most bright in the darke? or lyke the pure Franckencense which smelleth most sweete when it is in the fire? or at leaste not vnlyke to the Damaske Rose which is sweeter in the still then on the stalke?[93]

Euphues's reply to these lines is in fact as harsh as the accusation itself and leaves no doubt about the preference he has for love over friendship. The view of love and friendship that is expressed in his answer to Philautus is definitely no longer the classical one that it has been before (see 76). Yet, his complete change of opinion does in fact impressively foreshadow the decisive change that the common attitude towards friendship is to undergo at the end of the Renaissance:

> Tush *Philautus*, I am in this poynt of *Euripides* his minde, who thinkes it lawfull for the desire of a kingdome to transgresse the bounds of honestie, and for the loue of a Lady to violate and breake the bands of amitie.
> The friendshippe betweene man and man as it is common so is it of course, betweene man and woman, as it is seldom so is it sincere, the one proceedeth of the similitude of manners, y^{e} other of the sinceritie of the heart […].
> But thou canst blame me no more of folly in leaunig thee to loue *Lucilla*, then thou mayst reproue him of foolishnesse that hauing a Sparrowe in his hande letteth hir go to catch the Phesaunt, or him of vnskilfulnesse that seeing the Heron, leaueth to leauell his shoot at the Stockedoue, or that woman of coynesse that hauing a deade Rose in hir bosome, throweth it away to gather the fresh Uiolette.[94]

Lyly, of course, is still a typical sixteenth-century author, and his primary intention by presenting Euphues's speech and his decision is certainly not to strike a blow for love, but merely to add a dramatic effect to the story of Euphues and Pilautus's friendship by having one of them make a fierce attack on classical moral values—an attack that is here of course still considered truly condemnable. But whether consciously or not, with this speech, Lyly here also already predicts the common attitude towards the concepts of love and friendship that we can find reflected in the writings of the following century, of which Mead's play about *The Combat of Love and Friendship* has already given us a first impression above.

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[93] Lyly, *Euphues – The Anatomy of Wyt* 234.

[94] Lyly *Euphues* 235-36.

5 *FRIENDSHIP AS LOVE - LOVE AS FRIENDSHIP: THE CONCEPTS REDEFINED*

The general attitude towards love that it is reflected in the literature of the late sixteenth century is in fact still a rather ambiguous one, showing unanimous enthusiasm neither for nor against it. However, irrespective of whether love is represented in a favourable way or not, in all the examples of Elizabethan drama given above the plays end with a definite plea for friendship—either directly as in Marston's *Dutch Courtesan* or Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* or indirectly as in Kyd's *Solyman and Perseda*. And even in the prose writings of that time, despite the serious crises that the friendships have to suffer in these stories, the friends remain loyal to one another—at least theoretically—or become in the end reconciled. Yet, this cannot conceal that from Alberti's early fifteenth-century discussion on friendship and love to these late sixteenth-century and very early seventeenth-century treatments of the conflict between them—so roughly from the beginning of the European Renaissance to its end—there has not only been a gradual yet decided change in the conception of friendship but also a decisive one in the conceptualization of love.

Of course, at first sight, the opposition between friendship and love presented in the *Libri della famiglia* seems to be not so different from the one presented in the plays and prose writings of Elizabethan times. But on closer examination, we will recognize that the choice in favour of love in preference to friendship is in Alberti's book merely made by an immature youth, who finally even accepts the arguments of his elder and humanistically educated relative for the advantages that friendship has over love. In the literary examples of the following century, however, the characters who are forced to make a choice between love and friendship are usually not only grown men but also experienced friends and thus certainly aware of the pleasures and noble qualities of friendship. So, love has here indeed become a potential rival to amity—an actual, not merely a rhetorical one—and is thus allowed to occupy a place almost equal to that of friendship. And even though in most cases the conflict between love and friendship is simply used as a dramatic means to create tension, and although love is still scarcely allowed to prevail in the end over friendship, it has nevertheless achieved a status of enhanced importance. And it is first of all this enhanced status that is to enable love to become in the following centuries what will then be considered the most intimate form of relationship.

Now, the conflict between the idealistic concepts of homosocial friendship and heterosexual love was though at first indeed almost entirely a conceptual one that took

place in Renaissance literature rather than in Renaissance reality—although it did of course reflect the time's actual attitude towards both kinds of relationship and indeed foreshadowed the fate that they had to face in the future. Beyond this conceptual level, however, in the realities of both loves, there was in fact another conflict emerging that was far subtler and much more complex. This conflict had its roots in the Renaissance but it was not until the eighteenth century—the century of the Enlightenment—that the results of it became evident to the full extent. With fifteenth and sixteenth-centuries writers, intellectual relationships had usually still been ascribed solely to persons of the same sex, predominantly men, while sensual love had been regarded as only possible between man and woman. In the course of the Renaissance, however, the view of the role of women had undergone another definite alteration—the second since ancient times. For the Sonneteers, women had still been the mere objects of courtship but the relation between men and women gradually became a different one. In the literary representations of marriage towards the end of the Renaissance and in the following century, men began to consider their wives to be more than simply the 'means of perpetuating the race'. From then on, they began to regard them as probable partners for a kind of relationship in which both man and woman were considered lovers *and* friends.[1]

Yet, before this could have happened, the concept of love had at first to adopt certain characteristic qualities of the concept of friendship—namely those that had made the old concept of friendship one of an outstandingly intimate relationship. Only with such a new conception of love that incorporates the union of bodies *and* souls, it was now able to challenge the old conception of friendship as "the marriage of true minds," as Shakespeare puts it in one of his *Sonnets* with a realistic prospect of success.[2] This it did, and finally, towards the eighteenth century, the new conception of marital love was no longer that of a merely sensual relationship, but had indeed adopted characteristic aspects of the friendship conception. Conjugal love was thus now to become a real substitute for male friendship.

On the other hand, however, also the concept of friendship underwent a decided alteration. More and more deprived of its emotional and particularly its intimate qualities by the increasingly mercantilistic attitude towards this kind of relationship and the commonly accepted adoption of these qualities by the concept of love, there was no longer any room for the homoaffectionateness and homoeroticism that could have formerly been covered up by the classically inspired concept of friendship in the Renaissance. The yearning for the satisfaction of these homoaffectionate or even homoerotic feelings therefore had to find a new form of expression and led in the eighteenth century eventually to the development of a homosexual identity and the

[1] Cf. Stone 325-334.

[2] Shakespeare, *Sonnets* No 116.

conception of a new kind of male friendship that also included the fulfilment of the friends' emotional and sexual desires.

So, there was at first an overlapping and then a gradual mingling of the concepts' main characteristics in either kind of relationship that of course led to considerable problems of definition and in the end even to completely new conceptualizations of love and friendship.

5.1. FRIENDSHIP AND THE SEXES: CAN A WOMAN ALSO BE A FRIEND?

As we have seen in the last section of the previous chapter (4.2), the idea that some people might seriously want to substitute love for friendship as their prior choice of relationship has already been expressed in the sixteenth century. In Euphues's letter to Philautus in Lyly's *Euphues – The Anatomy of Wyt*, for instance, he speaks of the 'fresh violet' of love that must replace the 'dead rose' of friendship, as he believes love to be the better kind of amity. This notion of love as the better kind of friendship, in contrast to the traditional view of friendship as the better kind of love, has indeed still been a very uncommon one when Lyly wrote his work in the late 1570s. It is also certainly not reflecting the author's own opinion on the matter, but Lyly here already makes clear on which condition the choice in favour of love can only be made: if the idea of love wants to be preferred to that of friendship, it has to bear the characteristic qualities of the classical conceptions of friendship as well. Before this can happen, however, another change has to take place. Before the concept of love can be brought into line with that of friendship, the object of love, the beloved, has to achieve an equality of status with the object of friendship, the friend.

The classical ideal of friendship, however, is an exclusively male concept, which means that true and perfect friendship in the classical sense is thought to be possible first of all between two (or more) men. The concept of love, on the other hand, is traditionally one of an intimate sexual relationship between a man and a woman. Now, the literature of the past that deals with either of these concepts usually provides us only with the male views on the subjects. This is, of course, because it has for the main part been written by men for men. And as to this, the writings of the Renaissance are no exception. The treatment of philosophical and conceptual matters is in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries indeed still a man's work. Conceptual changes at the time we are here talking about are thus tantamount to changes in the general male attitude towards certain ideas or concepts. So, the approximation of love to friendship can therefore only take place when a man considers his female beloved as equal a partner in their love relationship as he would consider a male friend in their friendship. This, of course, requires a view of woman that conceives of her not only as being equal to

man but also as being capable of taking part in an equally intellectual relationship as it is friendship—or even in a friendship in the traditional sense itself, may it be with another woman or with a man.

That the Renaissance attitude towards this matter was indeed far from being unanimous is most illustratively shown by Castiglione in a fictive discussion between Pallavicino Gaspare and Guiliano de'Medici in his *Libro del Cortegiano*. Here, Signor Gaspare, in reply to Guiliano's preceding praise of women and his description of an ideal court lady, continues the argument about the nature and worth of ladies, which has already been going on for some while, by giving a full account of his disparaging view of women:

> Ché ben bastar vi dovea far questa donna di palazzo bella, discreta, onesta, affabile e che sapesse intertenere senza incorrere in infamia con danze, musiche, giochi, risi, motti e l'altre cose che ogni dí vedemo che s'usano in corte; ma il volerle dar cognizion di tutte le cose del mondo ed attribuirle quelle virtú che cosí rare volte si son vedute negli omini, ancora nei seculi passati, è uno cosa che né supportare né a pena ascoltare si po. Che le donne siano mo animali imperfetti e per conseguente di minor dignità che gli omini e non capaci di quelle virtú che sono essi, non voglio io altrimenti affirmare, perché il valor di queste signore bastaria a farmi mentire; dico ben che omini sapientissimi hanno lassato scritto che la natura, perciò che sempre intende e disegna far le cose piú perfette, se potesse, produria continuamente omini; e quando nasce una donna, è diffetto o error della natura e contra quello che essa vorrebbe fare. Come si vede ancor d'uno che nasce cieco, zoppo, o con qualche altro mancamento e negli arbori molti frutti che non maturano mai, cosí la donna si po dire animal produtto a sorte e per caso; e che questo sia, vedete l'operazion dell'omo e della donna e da quelle pigliate argumento della perfezion dell'uno e dell'altro. Nientedimeno essendo questi diffetti delle donne colpa di natura che l'ha produtte tali, non devemo per questo odiarle, né mancar di aver loro quel rispetto che vi si conviene; ma estimarle da piú di quello che elle si siano, parmi error manifesto.[3]

[3] Castiglione 3.11. – "For it should have been quite enough for you to make this lady beautiful, discreet, pure and affable, and able to entertain in an innocent manner with dancing, music, games, laughter, witticisms and the other things that are in daily evidence at Court. But to wish to give her an understanding of everything in the world and to attribute to her qualities that have rarely been seen in men, even throughout the centuries, is something one can neither tolerate nor bear listening to. That women are imperfect creatures and therefore of less dignity than men and incapable of practising the virtues practised by men, I would certainly not claim now, for the worthiness of these ladies here would be enough to give me the lie; however, I do say that very learned men have written that since Nature always plans and aims at absolute perfection she would, if possible, constantly bring forth men; and when a woman is born this is a mistake or defect, and contrary to Nature's wishes. This is also the case when someone is born blind, or lame, or with some other defect, as again with trees, when so many fruits fail to ripen. Nevertheless, since the blame for the defects of women must be attributed to Nature, who has made them what they are, we ought not to despise them or to fail to give them the respect which is their due. But to esteem them to be more than they are seems to me to be manifestly wrong." Trans. Bull 217-18.

In reply to this diatribe against women, Guiliano now presents his idea of the equality between the sexes in an eloquent and skilfully prepared speech in favour of women, in which he argues:

> […] come niun sasso po esser piú perfettamente sasso che un altro quanto alla essenzia del sasso, né un legno piú perfettamente legno che l'altro, cosí un omo non po essere piú perfettamente omo che l'altro, e conseguentemente non sarà il maschio piú perfetto che la femina, quanto alla sustanzia sua formale, perché l'uno e l'altro si comprende sotto la specie dell'omo e quello in che l'uno dall'altro son differenti è cosa accidentale e non essenziale. Se mi direte adunque che l'omo sia piú perfetto che la donna, se non quanto alla essenzia, almen quanto agli accidenti rispondo che questi accidenti bisogna che consistano o nel corpo o nell'animo; se nel corpo, per esser l'omo piú robusto, piú agile, piú leggero, o piú tollerante di fatiche, dico che questo è argumento di pochissima perfezione, perché tra gli omini medesimi quelli che hanno queste qualità piú che gli altri non son per quelle piú estimati; e nelle guerre, dove son la maggior parte delle opere laboriose e di forza, i piú gagliardi non son però i piú pregiati; se nell'animo, dico che tutte le cose che possono intender gli omini, le medesime possono intendere anche le donne; e dove penetra l'intelletto dell'uno, po penetrare eziandio quello dell'altra. […]
>
> Non sapete voi che in filosofia si tiene questa proposizione, che quelli che sono molli di carne sono atti della mente? perciò non è dubbio che le donne, per esser piú molli di carne, sono ancor piú atte della mente e de ingegno piú accommodato alle speculazioni che gli omini. […] Se considerarete poi l'istorie antiche (benché gli omini sempre siano stati parcissimi nello scrivere le laudi delle donne) e le moderne, trovarete che continuamente la virtú è stata tra le donne cosí come tra gli omini; e che ancor sonosi trovate di quelle che hanno mosso delle guerre e conseguitone gloriose vittorie; governato i regni con somma prudenzia e giustizia e fatto tutto quello che s'abbian fatto gli omini.[4]

[4] Castiglione 3.12-13. – "[…] just as one stone cannot, as far as its essence is concerned, be more perfectly stone than another stone, nor one piece of wood more perfectly wood than another piece, so one man cannot be more perfectly man than another; and so, as far as their formal substance is concerned, the male cannot be more perfect than the female, since both the one and the other are included under the species man, and they differ in their accidents and not their essence. You may then say that man is more perfect than woman if not as regards essence then at least as regards accidents; and to this I reply that these accidents must be the properties either of the body or of the mind. Now if you mean the body, because man is more robust, more quick and agile, and more able to endure toil, I say that this is an argument of very little validity since among men themselves those who possess these qualities more than others are not more highly regarded on that account; and even in warfare, when for the most part the work to be done demands exertion and strength, the strongest are not the most highly esteemed. If you mean the mind, I say that everything men can understand, women can too; and where a man's intellect can penetrate, so along with it can a woman's. […]

Do you not know that this proposition is held in philosophy: namely, that those who are weak in body are able in mind? So there can be no doubt that being weaker in body women are abler in mind and more capable of speculative thought than men. […] Therefore if you study ancient and modern history (although men have always been very sparing in their praises of women) you will find that women as well as men have constantly given proof of their worth; and also that there have been some women who have waged wars and won glorious victories, governed kingdoms with the greatest prudence and justice, and done all that men have done." Trans. Bull 218-19.

The view on the matter Guiliano here presents is in fact almost a modern one. And when he replies to Gaspare's assumption that the phenomenon that most women would rather like to be men was merely due to the recognition of their own imperfection when they compared themselves to men—who were in contrast to them of course perfect—by arguing that "le meschine non desiderano l'esser omo per farsi piú perfette, ma per aver libertà e fuggir quel domino che gli omini si hanno vendicato sopra esse per sua propria autorità," he thereby even anticipates the feministic argumentation of much later times.[5]

The disagreement between these two characters in Castiglione's book, is, despite the fact that they really existed, of course merely a fictional one. There is though indeed little doubt that Castiglione here represents two views on the matter that could have really been found held by a number of men in the Renaissance—if these have not even been the two views on the topic most commonly held by men at that time.

However, even with the most open-minded or even sympathetic attitude towards the idea of the equality of the sexes, there might have still been some reservations about the idea that women could not only be equal to men but also capable of true friendship. In classical times, the question whether women could be good and true friends was not really one considered worth thinking about, for friendship was, as we have seen, an exclusively male concept. In medieval times, the attitude towards female friendship was at least no longer such a disparaging one. The Christian doctrine emphasized the spiritual qualities of man and put much stress on the purity of man's soul. And as souls were regarded as sexless, friendship, as the union of souls for the sake of Christ and God, was now in principle considered possible between women as well, at least between those who dedicated their lives to God, as Reginald Hyatte points out:

> Of no small interest here is the admission, at last, of woman into the domain of perfect friendship of the virtuous and the Good. Gender is, in principle, relatively unimportant in Christian *amicitia* as long as the partners are chaste; and because women on the path to heavenly glory reject the traditional household and marriage dominated by males, they operate, in practice, outside the social context assumed in classical *amicitia*.[6]

This view of friendship as a union of souls rather than one of men only has then been adopted by the Renaissance philosophers. Friendship was therefore considered a union that was theoretically possible between men as well as between women. Philosophy and literature, however, were still almost entirely male domains and it is therefore hardly surprising that we can find only very few representations of female friendship

[5] Castiglione 3.16. – "The poor creatures do not wish to become men in order to make themselves more perfect but to gain their freedom and shake off the tyranny that men have imposed on them by their one-sided authority." Trans. Bull 221.

[6] Hyatte 51.

in the writings of the time. Renaissance literature, as the majority of writings of the past in general, presents the world primarily from a male perspective, and that has only seldom been interested in female affairs—probably because men never had, as a rule, more than a dim understanding of what these affairs are about. However, in some pieces of Renaissance literature—even though they have been written by men—we can indeed find representations of an intimate and loyal friendship between women that meets the high standards of the classical friendship ideal.[7] In Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, for example, the friendship between the two female friends Celia and Rosalind is described in terms almost equal to those in which Sidney has described the one between his heroes Pyrocles and Musidorus when Celia explains to her father the extraordinary nature of her relationship with Rosalind:

> We still have slept together,
> Rose at an instant, learn'd, play'd, eat together,
> And whereso'er we went, like Juno's swans,
> Still we went coupled and inseparable.[8]

That the conception of female friendship also clearly resembled the one of the classical *amicitia* ideal when since the late Renaissance women writers began to represent their view of friendship on their own, shows, for example, the mid-seventeenth-century poem *L'amitie* by Katherine Philips, which the author dedicated to her close friend Mary Awbrey:

> Soule of my soule! my Joy, my crown, my friend!
> A name which all the rest doth comprehend;
> How happy are we now, whose souls are grown,
> By an incomparable mixture, One:
> Whose well acquainted minds are now as neare
> As Love, or vows, or secrets can endeare.
> I have no thought but what's to thee reveal'd,
> Nor thou desire that is from me conceal'd,
> Thy heart locks up my secrets richly set,
> And my brest is thy private cabinet.
> Thou shedst no teare but what my moisture lent,
> And if I sigh, it is thy breath is spent.
> United thus, what horrour can appeare
> Worthy our sorrow, anger, or our feare?
> Let the dull world alone to talk and fight,
> And with their vast ambitions nature fright;
> Let them despise so inocent a flame,
> While Envy, pride and faction play their game:
> But we by Love sublim'd so high shall rise,
> To pitty Kings, and Conquerours despise,

[7] For a detailed discussion of the representation of female friendship in the English Renaissance for instance, see Jo Eldridge Carney, "Female Friendship in Elizabethan Literature," diss., U of Iowa, 1983.

[8] Shakespeare, *As You Like It* 1.3.69-72.

> Since we that sacred union have engrost,
> Which they and all the sullen world have lost.[9]

Here, in the last few lines of the poem, Philips refers to the degeneration to which the classical friendship ideal had been subjected in the first half of the seventeenth century and from which it had not yet recovered in Philips's time. That women like Katherine Philips now began to adopt the classical concept of friendship to fashion their image of female friendship—and this at a time at which men used to conceptualize their own friendships as much less idealized relationships—was indeed not regarded with universal sympathy by their male contemporaries. That women claimed to have perfect friendships with other women when most men have come to regard such a relationship as a kind of union that was almost impossible to be realized, and who have therefore already banished the classical ideal from their conception of friendship, of course implied the notion that between women there could exist a dignified kind of relationship based on the spiritual nobility of the partners that was not possible to be realized between men. So, there was indeed some considerable hostility shown in the attitude towards the idea of female friendship on the part of the men, as most of them considered such a relationship not possible between women if it was not even possible between men. Thus, women writers like Philips had to defend their concept of female friendship against the numerous attacks on it by their male colleagues. Such a defence of the worth of female friendship is expressed, for example, in the fourth stanza of her lengthy poem *A Friend*:

> If soules no sexes have, for men 't'exlude
> Women from friendship's vast capacity,
> Is a design injurious and rude,
> Onely maintain'd by partiall tyranny.
> Love is allow'd to us, and Innocence,
> And noblest friendships doe proceed from thence.[10]

A similar defence, brought forth by Susannah Dobson in her *Dialogue on Friendship and Society*, shows that even in the late eighteenth century—so right at the height of the Age of Enlightenment—there was obviously still need for such a plea for the general acceptance of the worth of female friendship: "There are men who have confined this blessing [i.e. friendship] to their own sex; its nature say they, is too exalted to suit minds occupied with trifles, and in consequence subject to envy and caprice; but without any invidious comparisons, it may be asserted, there is a dignity in true friendship, to which mean souls of neither sex can never attain."[11]

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[9] Katherine Philips, "L'amitie" *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips, The Matchless Orinda: Vol. I: The Poems*, ed. Patrick Thomas (Stump Cross: Stump Cross Books, 1990) 142. For his edition of Philips's *Works*, Thomas used her autograph manuscript as the original source of the poems.

[10] Philips, "A Friend," ll. 19-24, *Poems* 166.

[11] Dobson 14.

That men's reservations about the value of female friendship have indeed never been entirely obliterated is revealed by a number of statements made by men even in the last two hundred years. In Friedrich Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, for instance, we can find a passage in which he speaks about women and friendship in quite a disparaging way:

> Bist du ein Sklave? So kannst du nicht Freund sein. Bist du ein Tyrann? So kannst du nicht Freunde haben.
> Allzulange war im Weib ein Sklave und ein Tyrann versteckt. Deshalb ist das Weib noch nicht der Freundschaft fähig: es kennt nur die Liebe.
> In der Liebe des Weibes ist Ungerechtigkeit und Blindheit gegen alles, was es nicht liebt. Und auch in der wissenden Liebe des Weibes ist immer noch Überfall und Blitz und Nacht neben dem Lichte.
> Noch ist das Weib nicht der Freundschaft fähig: Katzen sind immer noch die Weiber, und Vögel. Oder, besten Falles, Kühe.
> Noch ist das Weib nicht der Freundschaft fähig. Aber sagt mir, ihr Männer, wer von euch ist denn fähig der Freundschaft?[12]

This last sentence, of course, makes clear that he had obviously not a much better opinion of male friendship too, but it makes his estimation of female friends indeed not less disparaging. Now, one might certainly claim that his negative attitude towards female friendship was merely due to the fact that Nietzsche (1844-1900) had not a very high opinion of women anyway. However, he was far from being alone with his negative view on the matter. And even in the more recent past, the attitude towards the worth of female friendships has often not really been a favourable one, as the passage from one of the writings by Randolph Bourne (1886-1918) shows:

> The fatal facility of women's friendships, their copious outpourings of grief to each other, their sharing of wounds and sufferings, their half-pleased interest in misfortune—all this seems of a lesser order than the robust friendships of men, who console each other in a much more subtle, even intuitive way—by a constant pervading sympathy which is felt rather than expressed.[13]

However, so far we have only had a look at men's attitude towards the friendship between women, but what was their opinion about the question whether there can also

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[12] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, ed. Karl Schlechta (München: Hanser, 1980) 321. – "Are you a slave? Then you cannot be a friend. Are you a tyrant? Then you cannot have friends.
Far too long has there been a slave and a tyrant concealed in woman. On that account woman is not yet capable of friendship: she knows only love.
In woman's love there is injustice and blindness to all she does not lov. And even in woman's conscious love, there is still always surprise and lightning and night, along with the light.
As yet woman is not capable of friendship: women are still cats and birds. Or at the best, cows.
As yet woman is not capable of friendship. But tell me, you men, who of you is capable of friendship?" Trans. Thomas Common, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, by Friedrich Nietzsche, ed. H. J. Birx (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus, 1993) 81-82.

[13] Randolph [Silliman]Bourne, *The Radical Will: Selected Writings 1911-1918*, ed. Olaf Hansen (New York: Urizen, 1977) 111-12.

be amity between a man and a woman? In classical times, this problem was regarded as an equally insignificant matter as that of the friendship between two women, and thus as too unimportant than to be dealt with in philosophical treatises. In medieval times, the idea that there could be a non-sexual relationship between man and woman that was similar or equal to friendship, was—due to the notion of friendship as the union of two souls and the conception of the soul as a sexless entity—at least theoretically not rejected. In practice, however, the friendship between a man and a woman was far from being an accepted kind of relationship that was not always regarded with suspicion, as Hyatte explains:

> In theory, the Christian context affords woman equal footing with men in sublime friendship. But in practice—that is, in the texts usually composed by men—one often encounters traditional distrust of sexuality that makes *amicitia christiana* between religious man and woman seem much more of an intellectual and literary construct than a reality.[14]

In Renaissance times, the distrustful attitude towards the idea that a friendship between a man and a woman could not only really exist but could also have the same value and sublimity as that between two men remained prevalent among male writers throughout the whole of the age. In the fourth book of his *Libri della famiglia*, the one on friendship, Alberti has one of the characters make a statement that might be regarded as the expression of the opinion commonly held on the matter in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. When Buto, the old servant of the Alberti family speaks about the idealized view of friendship that is to be found in the writings of the classical philosophers, he also remarks: "Forse que' vostri savii, quali scrissero quelle belle cose dell'amicizia, poco si curavano in quella parte amicarsi femmine, o forse così a tutti stimorono essere noto che con femmina si può non mai contrarre certa amicizia."[15] Alberti here refers to the neglect of the matter in classical literature, and from the way he has Buto talk about it we can certainly assume that he did not consider it necessary to change this attitude towards the subject. In his own treatise on friendship, at least, there is no further mention of this kind of amity—just as there is scarcely any in Renaissance literature as a whole.

This negative attitude towards the idea of a woman who, instead of being merely the object of a man's love, is rather a valuable friend to him only began to change in the course of the seventeenth century. In his *Discourse of the Nature and Offices of Friendship*, Taylor, for example, admits that a woman could be a man's friend, even though she would not be as equally valuable to him as a male friend:

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[14] Hyatte 51.

[15] Alberti, *Della famiglia* 264. – "Perhaps the wise men who wrote those pretty things about friendship cared little about making friends with women, or perhaps they thought everyone knew you could never have a true friendship with a woman." Trans. Watkins 247.

> I cannot say that Women are capable of all those excellencies by which Men can oblige the World; and therefore a female friend in some eases is not so good a counsellor as a wise man, and cannot so well defend my honour; nor dispose of reliefs and assistances if she be under the power of another: but a woman can love as passionately, and converse as pleasantly, and retain a secret as faithfully, and be useful in her proper ministeries; and she can die for her friend as well as the bravest *Roman* Knight […].[16]

Here, Taylor makes clear that in his opinion a woman could only be a second-class friend, as it were, but that she can still fulfil a number of duties that are required of a friend. He therefore considers a female friend not completely useless:

> […] though a Knife cannot enter as far as a Sword, yet a Knife may be more useful to some purposes; and in every thing, except it be against an enemy. A man is the best friend in trouble, but a woman may be equal to him in the days of joy: a woman can as well increase our comforts, but cannot so well lessen our sorrows: and therefore we do not carry women with us when we go to fight; but in peaceful Cities and times, vertuous women are the beauties of society and the prettinesses of friendship.[17]

In both passages, in fact, Taylor stresses an idea that played in the classical conception only a subordinate role: the idea that a friend has to be useful. Now, this is indeed, as we have already seen, that quality of a friend that in the common conception of friendship in the seventeenth century was considered the most important one. And this is precisely the typical male view of friendship that Philips criticizes in her poem quoted above. In fact, it was primarily this mere interest in the usefulness of a friend and thus in the utility value of friendship as such at that time that played not only a decisive role in the general debasement of the concept of friendship in the seventeenth century but also in the delaying of the acceptance of women as equally valuable friends as men.

In Taylor's time, the idea that a woman could be as valuable a friend to a man as another man would be, was still regarded with reservations, but the idea that women could possibly be better friends than men, was completely rejected. However, that it might have been precisely this strong rejection of the latter idea that led in the end to the gradual acknowledgement of the first, is indicated by the somewhat strange argumentation with which Taylor justifies his willingness to admit women into the circles of friends that had formerly consisted exclusively of male members:

> […] we shall do too much honour to women if we reject them from friendships because they are not perfect: for if to friendships we admit imperfect men, because no man is perfect: he that rejects women does find fault with them because they are not more perfect than men, which either

[16] Jeremy Taylor 64-65.

[17] Jeremy Taylor 65.

> does secretly affirm that they ought and can be perfect, or else it openly accuses men of injustice and partiality.[18]

So, the acceptance of the idea of women as proper friends of men was a necessity, as it were, since its rejection would have either revealed men's fear to be inferior to women in terms of perfection or simply been a proof of male chauvinism. In fact, neither of these implications was one that men would have liked to be accused of. However, most men still considered female friends inferior to male ones as long as there was not added a specific quality to the friendship between them that would enhance its value. Now, there was yet only one thing that was acknowledged to be able to enhance the friendship between a man and a woman: sexual love. The inclusion of this aspect in the relationship between a man and a woman was, of course, only possible in the one between a husband and his wife. Consequentially, it did not take long and a woman was only regarded as a man's valuable friend—a friend who was then even equal in her worth to a man's male friends—when she was also his wife. This idea, that a woman could merely be equal to a man's male friends when she was married to him, soon dominated the common male attitude towards the idea of female friends. That also Taylor held this view, is revealed by one of his remarks when he directly addresses the dedicatee of his work, Katherine Philips, and tries to convince her of his liberal attitude towards the question whether woman should be admitted into the friendship with men or not: "[…] you may see how much I differ from the morosity of those Cynicks who would not admit your sex into the communities of a noble friendship. I believe some Wives have been the best friends in the World […]."[19]

Indeed, in the friendship between a man and a woman who are not married to each other, the fact of their sexual difference seems to have never really ceased to constitute a major problem—in theory as well as in practice. In the Renaissance, as still in the mid-seventeenth century, there was usually only one way to cope with this problem: the female friend had to be conceptualized as a male one. In practice, this meant that the woman had to be described as if she had been a man. When Michelangelo Buonarotti, for example, writes about his close female friend Vittoria Colonna, with whom he shared an intimate and exclusively spiritual friendship, he refers to her in one of his madrigals as "un uomo in una donna."[20] And even in the mid-seventeenth century, Owen Felltham explains that the perfect wife, if she also wants to be her husband's best friend, has to be like a male soul dwelling in a female body: "A wise *wife* comprehends both *sexes*: she is *woman* for her *body*, and she is *man* within: for her *soul* is like her *Husbands*'."[21] The conception behind both descriptions is obvious.

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[18] Jeremy Taylor 66.

[19] Jeremy Taylor 63.

[20] Michelangelo Buonarroti, *The Poetry of Michelangelo*, trans. James M. Saslow (New Haven: Yale UP, 1991) 398; (poem no 235).

[21] Owen Felltham, *Resolves: Divine, Moral, Political,* 9th ed. (London, 1670) 130.

Friendship was still considered a union of souls, and even though in principle the soul was regarded as being sexless, there was still the more popular notion of a difference between a male and a female soul. And as there was of course little doubt that the male soul was the more rational of the two, the ideal friendship was consequently believed to be that between two male souls. If a woman wanted to become the friend of a man on a purely spiritual basis, she had therefore, as it were, to change the sex of her soul from female to male. Only then, the problems that a friendship between two persons of different sexes could cause were thought to have been successfully avoided.

However, towards the end of the seventeenth century, in the early Enlightenment, the common attitude towards the matter became increasingly liberal and when in 1688 Jean de La Bruyère formulates his opinion about the possibility of a friendship between persons of different sexes, he presents a view of the affair that has indeed to be regarded as an utterly modern one: "L'amitié peut subsister entre des gens de différents sexes, exempte même de toute grossièreté. Une femme cependant regarde toujours un homme comme un homme; et réciproquement un homme regarde une femme comme une femme. Cette liaison n'est ni passion ni amitié pure : elle fait une classe à part."[22] Now, it is precisely this 'class à part' as which the intellectual friendship between a man and a woman was seen from then on. And there has indeed little changed in the common conception of this kind of friendship since La Bruyère's time.

5.2. THE REINTERPRETATION OF THE PLATONIC THEORY OF LOVE AND THE NEW CONCEPT OF COMPANIONATE MARRIAGE

The notion of the possibility of a non-sexual relationship between man and woman has indeed often been regarded with suspicion. And even those who accepted the idea that such a relationship could exist, hesitated to call it a proper friendship and rather preferred to consider it a kind of relationship that forms a class of its own, as La Bruyère puts it. The conception of friendship has thus usually been one of an unerotic and purely homosocial union between two persons generally conceived of as men. It is this common notion of friendship that Dobson speaks of when she remarks that there are men who "have supposed this sympathy an union of soul alone, subsisting between persons of the same sex, and subject to no ties but those of the mind […]."[23]

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[22] Jean de La Bruyère, "Du C[oe]ur, no 2," *Les Caractères*, ed. Pierre Sipriot and Pierre Ronzeaud (Paris: Librarie Générale Française, 1985) 99. – "Friendship can last between people of different sexes, even exempt from all grossness. However, a woman always regards a man as a man, and reciprocally a man regards a woman as a woman. Such a relationship is neither passion nor pure friendship: it forms a class apart." Trans. Enright and Rawlinson 130.

[23] Dobson 14-15.

However, apart from this idea of an unerotic, purely spiritual friendship, whether existing exclusively between men, solely between women, or between man and woman, there was at least since the early seventeenth century also a clearly perceptible longing for the concept of a new kind of relationship that would combine both the union of souls and that of bodies. Whether it was due to a growing respect for women in general or simply to men's search for a concept that morally legitimises sexual activities for reasons other than procreation, there was now indeed much interest in the redefinition of the concept of love and of that of the relationship related to it, marriage—especially in England under the increasing influence of the Puritans. The theoretical foundation for this redefinition of love, however, had already been laid a century before.

In the Renaissance, the common philosophical conception of love was primarily based on the Socratic-Platonic theory of *eros* presented in the *Symposium*. Renaissance Platonists, and first of all of course Marsilio Ficino with his *De amore*, his commentary on Plato's *Symposium*, have made the ideas elaborated in this work so popular that there is hardly any philosophical treatment of the subject dating from that age that is not dominated or at least heavily influenced by them.[24] However, while the Platonist philosophers of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries still remained faithful to the original meaning of Plato's ideas in their interpretation of his theory, the Platonists of the later sixteenth century became a bit more daring in their understanding of his conception and thus also in their definition and representation of the nature of love. To Ficino and his friends and philosophical colleagues, sensual love and the passion for bodily beauty had still been merely a rung on the ladder leading to the perception of true beauty. And this is also the view that Castiglione still presents in his *Libro del Cortegiano* when he has Pietro Bembo at the very end of the work deliver a eulogy of love that clearly stresses the disparaging attitude towards carnal love that characterizes the traditional interpretation of Plato's theory:

> O Amor santissimo, […] correggi tu la falsità dei sensi e dopo 'l lungo vaneggiare donaci il vero e sodo bene; facci sentir quegli odori spirituali che vivifican le virtú dell'intelletto, ed udir l'armonia celeste talmente concordante, che in noi non abbia loco piú alcuna discordia di passione; […] purga tu coi raggi della tua luce gli occhi nostri dalla caliginosa ignoranzia, acciò che piú non apprezzino bellezza mortale e conoscano che le cose che prima veder loro parea, non sono, e quelle che non vedeano veramente sono; accetta l'anime nostre, che a te s'offeriscono in sacrificio; abbrusciale in quella viva fiamma che consuma ogni bruttezza materiale, acciò che in tutto separate dal corpo, con perpetuo e dolcissimo legame s'uniscano con la

[24] On the spread of these Platonic ideas in the Renaissance and the status of Platonic philosophy in the period in general, see, for example, Sears [Reynolds] Jayne, *Plato in Renaissance England* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995); Henri D[ominique] Saffrey, *Recherches sur la tradition platonicienne au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance* (Paris: Vrin, 1987); Ernst Cassirer, *Die Platonische Renaissance in England und die Schule von Cambridge* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1932); or Kurt Schroeder, *Platonismus in der englischen Renaissance* (Berlin: Mayer; Müller, 1920).

> bellezza divina, e noi da noi stessi alienati, come veri amanti, nello amato possiam transformarsi […].[25]

Now, the dominance of this negative attitude towards the sexual aspect of love in the interpretation of the Platonic conception began to vanish only after the posthumous publication of the *Dialoghi d'amore* by Leone Ebreo (orig. Giuda Abarbanel, *c*. 1460-after 1521) in 1535. In one of these dialogues on love, Ebreo reinterprets Plato's theory of the ladder of love in a way that allows him to reintegrate the aspect of sensuality into the theoretical conception of sublime love as the end of the lovers' striving. By simply reversing the direction of the lovers' ascent on the Platonic ladder, Ebreo has them start off from pure reason, ascend the original ladder downwards, as it were, and finally arrive at the level of sensual love, with the effect that it is now precisely this aspect of sensuality that becomes the focus of attention.[26]

Ebreo's work consists of three separate dialogues that all take place between two lovers, or rather between a lover, Philo, and his mistress, Sophia. In the course of the different parts of their conversation, the male character explains to the female one his notions of the nature of love. In the first of the three dialogues, the one on love and desire ("D'amore e desiderio"), he also tries to define the nature of desire and that of the connection that there is between desire and love. Towards the end of this dialogue, Philo comes eventually to the point where he begins to elaborate his idea of the important role that sensuality and sensual love play in the strengthening of the spiritual union that results from the love of two souls. At first, he tries to convince Sophia of the unifying power of sex by claiming that the function of copulation is in fact not only to satisfy the desires of the lovers and their passion for each other's bodies but also to deepen their love on the spiritual level:

> E se bene l'appetito de l'amante con l'unione coppulativa si sazia, e di continente cessa quel desiderio o veramente appetito; non per questo si priva il cordiale amore, anzi si collega piú la possibile unione. La quale ha attuale conversione d'uno amante ne l'altro, o vero è fare di due uno, removendo la divisione e diversitá di quelli quanto è possibile, restando l'amore in maggiore unitá e perfezione. E resta in continuo desiderio di godere con unione la persona amata; che è la vera diffinizione d'amore.[27]

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[25] Castiglione 4.70. – "O most sacred Love, […] correct the falsity of our senses, and after our long delirium give us the true substance of goodness. Quicken our intellects with the incense of spirituality and make us so attuned to the celestial harmony that there is no longer room within us for any discord of passion. […] With the rays of your light cleanse our eyes of their misty ignorance, so that they may no longer prize mortal beauty but know that the things which they first thought to see are not, and that those they did not see truly are. Accept the sacrifice of our souls; and burn them in the living flame that consumes all earthly dross, so that wholly freed from the body they may unite with divine beauty in a sweet and perpetual bond and that we, liberated from our own selves, like true lovers can be transformed into the object of our love […]." Trans Bull 341-42.

[26] For Plato's original conception of the ladder of love, see 41.

[27] Leone Ebreo, *Dialoghi d'amore*, ed. Santino Caramella (Bari: Laterza, 1929) 49-50. – "And although it may be the case that a lover's appetite is sated by the union of copulation, and that his desire is, as a

Sophia, however, surprised by this unconventional interpretation of the role of sexuality, still holds to the traditional view of the minor value of sensual love and questions that the satisfaction of sensual pleasures could be the end of love if love is really so spiritual a union between two lovers as Philo has claimed before. To make his meaning clear and to convince her of his conception, he has therefore to elaborate his argumentation:

> Non ti concedo che sia questo il fine del perfetto amore: ma t'ho detto che questo atto non dissolve l'amore perfetto, anzi il vincola piú e collega con gli atti corporei amorosi; che tanto si desiderano quanto son segnali di tal reciproco amore in ciascuno de' due amanti. Ancora perché, essendo gli animi uniti in spirituale amore, i corpi desiderano godere la possibile unione, acciò che non resti alcuna diversitá e l'unione sia in tutto perfetta; massime perché, con la correspondenzia de l'unione corporale, il spirituale amore s'augumenta e si fa piú perfetto, cosí come il conoscimento de la prudenzia è perfetto quando corrispondeno le debite opere.[28]

Philo thus makes clear that in his conception of perfect love, the physical expression of the love between two lovers is just the result of their love on the spiritual level. Libidinous desire and the passion for bodily beauty are therefore the consequences of true love, and not the other way round, as it was indeed the case in the inferior kind of love. Contrary to perfect love, this ordinary type of love results from desire and passion, i.e. the beloved one is loved merely because he or she has been desired in the first place. It is this opposed causal connection between love and desire that makes the difference between the perfect kind of love and the inferior one, as Philo now explains when getting to the heart of his argumentation:

> L'amore è di due sorte. L'una genera il desiderio o vero appetito sensuale: ché, desiderando l'uomo alcuna persona, l'ama. E questo amore è imperfetto, perché depende da vizioso e fragile principio, perché è figlio generato dal desiderio: e tale fu l'amore d'Amon verso di Athamar. E questo è vero (come dici che interviene) che cessando il desiderio o appetito carnale, per la satisfazione e sazietá di quello, incontinente cessa totalmente l'amore; perché cessando la causa, che è il desiderio, cessa l'effetto, che è

consequence of this, extinguished, still the love in his heart is not sated. Indeed, it makes possible a closer and more binding union which actually converts the one lover into the other or, rather, fuses them both in one, eliminating, so far as this is possible, any difference between them. Thus the love endures in greater perfection and unity; and the lover remains continuously desirous of enjoying the beloved union, which is the true definition of love." Trans. Arturo B. Fallico and Herman Shapiro, "On Love and Desire: A Dialogue between Philo and Sophia (*Dialoghi d'amore*, The First Dialogue, complete)," by Leone Ebreo, *The Italian Philosophers: Selected Readings from Petrarch to Bruno*, ed. Fallico and Shapiro (New York: Modern Library, 1967).217.

[28] Ebreo 50. – "I did not say that this is the end of perfect love; what I have been insisting, however, is that this act, far from destroying perfect love, proves and integrates it by means of the bodily acts of love, which acts are desired because they give evidence of the reciprocity of love between the lovers. Further, when two spirits are absorbed in spiritual love, their bodies desire to further the union so that no distinction whatsoever may obtain between them, with the union being in all ways complete—the more so, as a corresponding physical union augments and completes the spiritual love, even as prudence is perfected by the congruity of prudent actions." Trans. Fallico and Shapiro 217.

> l'amore, e molte volte si converte in odio, come fu quello. Ma l'altro amore è quello che di esso è generato il desiderio de la persona amata, e non del desiderio o appetito; anzi, amando prima perfettamente, la forza de l'amore fa desiderare l'unione spirituale e corporale con la persona amata: sicché, come il primo amore è figliuolo del desiderio, cosí questo gli è padre e vero generatore.[29]

With this conception, of course, Ebreo sets up a theory of love that is indeed a clear negation of the Platonic original. While for Socrates and Plato, the perfect kind of love derives from a libidinous desire and the passion for bodily beauty, the kind of love that is generated in this way can for Ebreo only be an imperfect one. His idea of a perfect love is that of an affection that first develops on the intellectual level and then becomes desirous and in the end sensual. Ebreo thus simply reverses the traditional direction of the lovers' ascent on the Platonic ladder, having them climb from its top end to its bottom to reach the perfection of their love.

Yet, whatever Ebreo's intentions might have been to set up this new approach to the Platonic theory, they are not reflected by the intentions that his male protagonist in the story obviously has. Philo's aim is here indeed not to present a reinterpretation of the Platonic original but to win the favour of his mistress. Thus, he does of course not hesitate to assure her that his love for her is purely one of the perfect kind, and that his desire and his passion for her only derive from the love he feels for her on the spiritual level. Sophia, however, not yet fully convinced, demands to know what has brought his love for her about in the first place, if it was not his desire, which, as he has claimed, was not the cause of his love but merely its result. Now, this is the point where Ebreo has Philo present his new theory of a reversed Platonic ladder of love most clearly:

> Il perfetto e vero amore, che è quello che io ti porto, è padre del desiderio e figlio de la ragione; e in me la retta ragione conoscitiva l'ha prodotto. Che, conoscendo essere in te virtú, ingegno e grazia non manco di mirabile attraizione che di ammirazione, la volontá mia desiderando la tua persona, che rettamente è giudicata per la ragione in ogni cosa essere ottima e eccellente e degna di essere amata; questa affezione e amore ha fatto convertirmi in te, generandomi desiderio che tu in me ti converti, acciò che io amante possa essere una medesima persona con te amata, e in equale amore facci di due animi un solo, li quali simigliantemente due corpi vivificare e ministrare possino. La sensualitá di questo desiderio fa nascere l'appetito d'ogni altra unione corporea, acciò che li corpi possino conseguire

[29] Ebreo 51. – "Love is of two varieties: one is engendered by desire or sensuous appetite—a man may love a woman, that is, because he desires her. This kind of love is not perfect; it derives from an inconstant and vicious source: desire. Amnon's love for Tamar was of this kind; and in cases of this sort it does, as you observe, eventuate with the cessation of all love; because when the cause, desire, no longer operates, neither does its effect, love, which may even be converted to abhorrence, as happened in this case. But the other love generates desire of the beloved, rather than the other way around. In fact, we first love perfectly, in this second kind of love, and then the strength of that love makes us desire spiritual and bodily union with the beloved. Thus the first kind of love is the child of desire, while the second is the true begetter of desire." Trans. Fallico and Shapiro 218.

> in quella la possibile unione de li penetranti animi. Guarda, of Sofia, che per essere cosí successivamente in me da la ragione conoscitiva prodotto l'amore e da l'amore prodotto il desiderio, apprendesti per le mie prime parole, che il conoscerti causò in me amore e desiderio.[30]

Thus, for Ebreo, it is knowledge, or reason, that leads the lover to the love of his beloved's soul, which then leads him to the love of her body and finally to the desire to unite with her not only spiritually but also physically. This distortion of the Platonic theory of the ladder of love, which places the emphasis not only on the chaste intellectual aspect of love but particularly on the sensual one, arrested in fact much attention in the time following its publication.[31] Probably written in the late 1490s though not published before 1535, Ebreo's work became in fact soon extremely popular and certainly the most widely read work on love in the Renaissance after Ficino's *De amore*. Written in Italian and translated into French, Spanish, Latin, and Hebrew it clearly influenced all subsequent treatises on the subject in the following two centuries and beyond.[32]

Especially in the early seventeenth century, as already mentioned above, the idea of the reversed ladder of love that leads from the love of souls to the love of bodies seems to have still been extraordinary popular indeed. One of the literary masterpieces of the time that reflects this idea most perfectly is John Donne's *The Ecstasy*.[33] This excellent poem illustrates the conception of the lovers' ascent on the reversed Platonic ladder of love so impressively by describing the different rungs of the ladder form the chaste beginning when the lovers are merely holding each other's hands to the union of their

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[30] Ebreo 52. – "Such perfect and true love as I bear you, which begets desire, is born of reason. True reason has engendered it within me. I know you to possess virtue, intelligence, and beauty, admirable and seductive, and my will desired your person, which reason correctly judged to be noble, excellent, and worthy of love in every way. My affection and love has transformed me into you, begetting in me a desire that you may be fused with me, in order that I, your lover, may create with you, my beloved, a single being, with our mutual love making of our two souls, one, which may in the same way vitalize and inform our two bodies. The sensual element in this desire excites a longing for bodily union, so that the union of bodies may match the unity of spirits which wholly mesh with one another. Observe, Sophia, how this sequence of reason and knowledge, which first begot love, and which then begot desire, was implicit in my opening words to you—that my acquaintance with you had awakened love and desire within me." Trans. Fallico and Shapiro 219.

[31] For an overview commentary on Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'amore* in general and discussions of other Renaissance treatises on love, see, for example, John Charles Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love: The Context of Giordano Bruno's* Eroici furori (New York: Columbia UP, 1958). On Ebreo, see particularly 84ff.

[32] Cf. T. Anthony Perry, ed., introduction, *Dialogues D'Amour: The French Translation Attributed to Pontus de Tyard and Published in Lyon, 1551, by Jean de Tournes*, by Léon Hébreu (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1974) 9-11.

[33] As one of the poems included in the collections of Donne's *Collected Poems* (published posthumously in 1633) and his *Songs and Sonnets* (published in the second edition of the *Poems* two years later), *The Ecstasy* became thus known to a larger readership only from the 1630s onwards, but it was presumably written already sometime after Donne's marriage in 1601. Cf., for example, Marion Wynne-Davies, ed., "Songs and Sonnets," *The Renaissance: A Guide to English Renaissance Literature: 1500-1660* (London: Bloomsbury, 1992) 259-60.

souls and finally to the union of their bodies in every detail, that it shall here, despite its extent, be cited in full length:

Where, like a pillow on a bed,
A pregnant bank swelled up, to rest
The violet's reclining head,
Sat we two, one another's best.

Our hands were firmly cemented
With a fast balm, which thence did spring;
Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread
Our eyes, upon one double string;

So to intergraft our hands, as yet
Was all the means to make us one,
And pictures in our eyes to get
Was all our propagation.

As, 'twixt two equal armies, Fate
Suspends uncertain victory,
Our souls (which to advance their state
Were gone out) hung 'twixt her and me.

And whilst our souls negotiate there,
We like sepulchral statues lay;
All day, the same our postures were,
And we said nothing, all the day.

If any, so by love refined
That he souls' language understood,
And by good love were grown all mind,
Within convenient distance stood,

He (though he knew not which souls spake,
Because both meant, both spake the same)
Might thence a new concoction take,
And part far purer than he came.

This Ecstasy doth unperplex,
We said, and tell us what we love;
We see by this it was not sex;
We see we saw not what did move:*

But as all several souls contain
Mixture of things, they know not what,
Love these mixed souls doth mix again,
And makes both one, each this and that.

A single violet transplant,
The strength, the color, and the size,
(All which before was poor, and scant)
Redoubles still, and multiplies.

When love, with one another so
Interinanimates two souls,
That abler soul, which thence doth flow,
Defects of loneliness controls.

We then, who are this new soul, know
Of what we are composed, and made,
For the atomies of which we grow
Are souls, whom no change can invade.

But oh, alas, so long, so far
Our bodies why do we forbear?
They're ours, though they're not we, we are
The intelligences, they the sphere.

We owe them thanks because they thus
Did us to us at first convey,
Yielded their forces, sense, to us,
Nor are dross to us, but allay.

On man haeaven's influence works not so,
But that it first imprints the air;
So soul into the soul may flow,
Though it to body first repair.

As our blood labors to beget
Spirits as like souls as it can,
Because such fingers need to knit
That subtle knot which makes us man:

So must oure lovers' souls descend
To affections, and to faculties,
Which sense may reach and apprehend,
Else a great Prince in prison lies.

To our bodies turn we then, that so
Weak men on love revealed may look;
Love's mysteries in souls do grow,
But yet the body is his book.

And if some lover, such as we,
Have heard this dialogue of one,
Let him still mark us, he shall see
Small change, when we're to bodies gone.[34]

Now, despite all the enthusiasm for this conception in the first half of the seventeenth century, there were in fact also those who held a very sceptical view on this

[34] John Donne, "The Ecstasy," *John Donne's Poetry: Authoritative Texts, Criticism*, ed. Arthur L. Clements, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1992) 32-33. *(l. 32: "[…] what did move" = what was the cause and source of our love.) Clements, annotations 33.

interpretation of Platonic love and who did not hesitate to reveal it as what it really is: the expression of the wish for morally justifiable sex. Such a negative attitude towards the idea of an exalted union of souls and bodies is most clearly communicated, for example, in William Cartwright's poem *No Platonic Love,* written as a parody of Donne's *Ecstasy*:

> Tell me no more of Minds embracing Minds,
> And hearts exchang'd for hearts;
> That Spirits Spirits meet, as Winds do winds,
> And mix their subt'lest parts;
> That two unbodi'd Essences may kiss,
> And then like Angels, twist and feel one Bliss.
>
> I was that silly thing that once was wrought
> To Practise this thin Love;
> I climb'd from Sex to Soul, from Soul to Thought;
> But thinking there to move,
> Headlong I rowl'd from Thought to Soul, and then
> From Soul I lighted at the Sex agen.
>
> As some strict down-look'd Men pretend to fast,
> Who yet in Closets Eat;
> So Lovers who profess they Spirits taste,
> Feed yet on grosser meat;
> I know they boast they Soules to Souls Convey,
> How e'er they meet, the Body is the Way.
>
> Come, I will undeceibe thee, they that tread
> Those vain Aëriall waies,
> Are like young Heyrs, and Alchymists misled
> To waste their Wealth and Daies,
> For searching thus to be for ever Rich,
> They only find a Med'cine for the Itch.[35]

Despite such occasional criticism, as here expressed by Cartwright, of the reinterpretation of the Platonic theory and of the endeavour to establish the resulting view of Platonic love as the concept of a new kind of relationship that incorporates both the union of souls and that of bodies, the majority of writers and philosophers of the time were in fact longing for such a new concept. This longing for an incorporating conception of love, which combines the traditional characteristics of love with the typical qualities of friendship, can at least be found frequently expressed in the writings of the seventeenth century. Now, the only kind of relationship in which such a unified love-friendship was at that time thinkable, was of course marriage. So, it does indeed not surprise that it is primarily the attempt to set up a new definition of marriage that is to be found in the writings of the time, as, for example, in Robert

[35] William Cartwright, "No Platonique Love," *The Plays and Poems of William Cartwright*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1951) 494-95.

Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*: "Such should conjugal love be, still the same, and as they [husband and wife] are one flesh, so should they be of one mind, as in an Aristocratical government, one consent, Geryon-like, join in one, have one heart in two bodies, will and nill the same."[36] And Jeremy Taylor even goes as far as to claim that

> […] Marriage is the Queen of friendships, in which there is a communication of all that can be communicated by friendship: and it being made sacred by vows and love, by bodies and souls, by interest and custome, by religion and by laws, by common Counsels, and common fortunes; it is the principal in the kind of friendship, and the measure of all the rest.[37]

Both authors do here in fact employ a vocabulary to describe their notion of love and marriage that was formerly exclusively used to describe friendships. However, although it seems to be an enormous step from the rejection of love as a potential rival to amity to this equation of conjugal love with friendship, a process that took place within not even half a century, this new idea of friendship in love is yet still far from being what modern readers would understand by it, or from being what Georg Simmel calls the sociological idea of modern marriage that is marked by the community of all interest and purposes in life.[38] It is yet also far from being equivalent to the classical idea of friendship. The definition of marital love that Burton gives in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, for instance, does of course instantly remind one of the Aristotelian and Ciceronian notions of friendship. But even when Burton speaks of the wife as a husband's 'other self', he has obviously something in mind that is completely different from what the classical philosophers had when they referred to the 'other self' that a male friend is.[39] To believe that at Burton's or at Taylor's time the partners in a friendship-like marriage, i.e. in a so-called companionate marriage, have automatically been considered equal to each other, would certainly be wrong. In fact, Burton's description of the ideal wife reveals that women were yet by no means regarded as being equal to men: "A good wife, according to Plutarch, should be as a looking-glass, to represent her husband's face and passion. If he be pleasant, she should be merry; if he laugh, she should smile; if he look sad, she should participate of his sorrow, and bear a part with him, and so they should continue in mutual love one towards another."[40] A woman's function, however, was not only to resemble her husband. According to Burton, her role was obviously rather that of a man's servant:

> Women are the sole, only joy, and comfort of a man's life, born for the use and pleasure of men, and the founding of a family. […] A wife is a young

[36] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (London: Routledge, 1931) 655.

[37] Jeremy Taylor 53.

[38] Cf. Georg Simmel, *Soziologie*, ed. Otthein Rammstedt (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1992) 403.

[39] Cf. Burton 815.

[40] Burton 655.

> man's Mistress, a middle age's companion, an old man's Nurse: sharer of joys and sorrows, a prop, an help, &c. […] There is no joy, no comfort no sweetness, no pleasure in the world like that of a good wife.[41]

In this statement, Burton also indirectly refers to the main motivations men had for getting married: "legitimate procreation, sinless sexuality, and marital love," as Gardiner sums it up.[42] The sexual aspect of love was still a dominant one in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and in the realities of most marriages of that time, the role of a woman was presumably not that of her husband's best friend. Her function was, as Gardiner remarks, mostly a different one: "The woman who will bear his heir exists solely for this function, not as the man's companion or confidante."[43] It is hence no surprise that the educated women of the time usually showed a different attitude towards the idea of companionate marriage and rather still considered friendship "nobler then kindred or the marriage band, / Because more free […]," as Katherine Philips puts it in one of her poems.[44]

So, there was a clear discrepancy between the idealistic conception of companionate marriage that these early seventeenth century authors propagated and their actual view of the subordinate role of their partners in such a relationship—their wives. However, the idea of the companionate marriage that writers like Burton or Taylor were so keen to present and elaborate in their writings might have not really been suitable to support their view of wives as the subordinates of their husbands, but it was indeed suitable to bring about the changes—not only in the conceptualizations of love and friendship but also in those of many other ideas—that took place in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as Lawrence Stone points out:

> The many legal, political and educational changes that took place in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were largely consequences of changes in ideas about the nature of marital relations. The increasing stress laid by the early seventeenth-century preachers on the need for companionship in marriage in the long run tended to undercut their own arguments in favour of the maintenance of strict wifely subjection and obedience.[45]

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[41] Burton 815.

[42] Gardiner 334.

[43] Gardiner 334.

[44] Philips, "A Friend" ll. 13-14, *The Poems* 166.

[45] Stone 325. Now, there is indeed some scholarly disagreement on the exact determination of the temporal and ideological origin of the companionate marriage concept and on the question when the change in the conceptualization of marital love and—closely connected with this—of the role of wives really took place. In contrast to Stone, Valerie Wayne and Margo Todd, for example, believe in a humanistic rather than a purely Puritan derivation of the concept and thus locate its emergence already in the sixteenth century. Cf. Valerie Wayne, ed., introduction, *The Flower of Friendship: A Renaissance Dialogue Contesting Marriage*, by Edmund Tilney (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992) 3; and Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987) 100.

Now almost at the same time at which we notice a change in the conception of marriage, there is in fact also a change in the common view of women and especially of wives to be recognized. Christopher Hill, for instance, referring to the change in the general attitude towards marriage and women and to the reflection of these altering views in the stage plays of the time, speaks of a strengthened position of wives in the early seventeenth century—at least of one of wives belonging to the middle class—when he remarks:

> Historians of literature have made us familiar with controversies on the Jacobean stage over marriage and the position of women. By and large the popular theatre for which Shakespeare wrote was in favour of monogamous wedded love; the aristocratic coterie theatre was more cynical and contemptuous in its attitude towards women. This may in the main be attributed to a rise in economic importance of those middling-sized households, in town and country, in which the wife was a junior partner in the business.[46]

That the enhancement of the status of women was though not only a process taking place in the middle class households of the time, but—if not simultaneously then at least not more than merely a few decades later—also in those of the upper classes, is emphasized by Norbert Elias, when he states in his notable sociological study *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation*:

> Die Ehe in der absolutistisch-höfischen Gesellschaft des 17. und 18. Jahrhundert gewinnt dadurch einen besonderen Charakter, daß hier durch den Aufbau dieser Gesellschaft zum erstenmal die Herrschaft des Mannes über die Frau ziemlich vollkommen gebrochen ist. Die soziale Stärke der Frau ist hier annähernd gleich groß, wie die des Mannes; die gesellschaftliche Meinung wird in sehr hohem Maße von Frauen mitbestimmt […].[47]

The change in the conceptualizations of marriage and the role of wives was thus apparently one that took place gradually over quite a period of time and might therefore be located somewhere between the late sixteenth and the late eighteenth centuries. And in the end, we can indeed find a completely new attitude towards marital love that has succeeded the old views on the matter, as Stone points out:

> Once it was doubted that affection could and would naturally develop after marriage, decision-making power had to be transferred to the future spouses themselves, and more and more of them in the eighteenth century

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[46] Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution*, rpt. of 1975 ed (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991) 307.

[47] Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation: Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*, 17th ed., vol. 1 (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1992) 252. – "Marriage in the absolutistic courtly society of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries achieves a specific character by the fact that, due to the structure of this society, the dominance of men over women is completely overcome for the very first time. The social power of women is here almost as great as that of men; the public opinion is to a great extent influenced by women […]." Trans. mine.

> began to put the prospects of emotional satisfaction before the ambition for increased income or status. This in turn also had its effect in equalizing relationships between husband and wife.[48]

This is then also exactly what Niklas Luhmann refers to, when he remarks about the conception of marital love-friendship in the eighteenth century: "Liebe als Pflicht wird in Liebe als Sympathie umgeformt und dem Freundschaftsideal angeglichen […]. Das ganze 18. Jahrhundert durchzieht diese Bemühung, den Code für Intimität von Liebe auf 'innige' Freundschaft umzustellen […]. Die liebevolle Freundschaft läßt den Unterschied der Geschlechter fast verschwinden."[49]

However, even with the most idealistic conception of love as a marital friendship, in the realities of most marriages, the equality of the partners certainly remained merely a farce. The new conception of love—which the Renaissance had gradually paved the way for, which the seventeenth century eventually brought about, yet which became established and widely accepted only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—had indeed adopted many features of the traditional conceptions of friendship, but apparently not all. In the end, it appears to have been only an ingenious means of male self-deception, designed to provide men with the delusion that they could legally unite with both the soul and the body of the same person. Such a union, of course, was for a very long time merely conceivable—or, at least, publicly discussible—as one between the sexes.

5.3. A LOVE FEARFUL TO NAME: AFFECTIONATE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN VIRTUE AND SODOMY

The redefinition of the concept of marriage as a relationship that is based on both the love *and* the friendship between the two partners engaged in it was certainly the most promising means to accomplish the common wish for the concept of a relationship that would include the union of souls as well as that of bodies—and it was clearly regarded as the only conceivable and thus possible one. There was, however, a potential alternative, although it was not yet conceptualized as such.

The basic problem with the idea of marital friendship, in fact, was that in reality a relationship between a man and a woman at that time lacked, almost by definition, the significant feature of the partners' equality. In the seventeenth century, as in the centuries before, true equality was—despite the increasing endeavours to change this

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[48] Stone 325.

[49] Luhmann 102-03. – "Love as a duty is transformed into love as sympathy, and is made similar to the ideal of friendship […]. This endeavour to switch the code of intimacy from love over to heartfelt friendship runs through the whole of the eighteenth century […]. With affectionate friendship, the difference between the sexes nearly disappears." Trans. mine.

view—still widely regarded as thinkable only between members of the same sex. True friendship, in its classical sense, was therefore theoretically just possible between two male or, at best, two female partners. The original concept of Platonic love, on the other hand, and thus—at least in theory—also Ebreo's redefined version of it, was applicable to the relationship between a man and a woman as well as to that between two partners of the same sex. In other words, if the new conception of heterosexual love was able to adopt the characteristic qualities of that of homosocial friendship, was not the same possible the other way round?

Now, this question was certainly not one that people at that time would have dared to reflect upon openly. For them, a spiritual and sexual relationship between partners of the same sex was in fact nothing that could have been considered a possible form of relationship at all—not even secretly—, still less one that could be an alternative to marriage. And the (male) authors that made use of the Platonic conception of love as the passion for beauty, eliminated the sexual aspect included in the original theory in fact explicitly from their own representations of this kind of love when they applied it to a male object, as, for example, Shakespeare in those of his *Sonnets* addressing his 'fair friend', or Michelangelo in his *Rime* dedicated to his friend Cavalieri. The homoerotic passion for someone of the same sex was indeed, as Saslow explains, "a profound love that could not be fully understood, much less accepted, by the lover himself as anything more than either chaste longing or 'concealed sin'."[50] For this reason, any indication of a homosexual desire, and particularly one of that of a man for his (male) friend or one of that of two male friends for each other, had to be concealed or even suppressed, or had at least to be eliminated from the representation of their friendship in any kind of writing.[51] Sexuality was indeed nothing that was thought to be an acceptable part of the friendship between two friends of the same sex. The common opinion on the matter is clearly expressed by John Dryden when he writes about the nature of friendship:

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[50] Saslow 61.

[51] As the literary representation of friendship, and thus also that of any kind of emotion that might be involved in friendship, was in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries for the most part synonymous with the representation of male friendship, the expressions of a homoerotic or even homosexual desire in the literature of this time was usually also that of a male one. However, everything that is here said about the expressions of homoeroticism and homosexuality or about the common attitudes towards them, can be equally applied to the male as to the female variant of the subject. In fact, the general view on both variants was in principle the same, only the number of literary representations in which homoeroticism plays a definite role are much greater with the male than with the female one. Yet, for a study that deals exclusively with the expressions of female homoeroticism and homosexuality in the period, see, for example, Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: Morrow, 1981); and Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Oxford UP, 1986).

> For 'tis the bliss of Friendship's holy state
> To mix their Minds, and to communicate;
> Though Bodies cannot, Souls can penetrate.[52]

And yet, the sexual connotation is here still implied in the image of penetration. Sexual undertones like this are indeed frequently to be found in the literary treatment of male friendship by writers of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. And it is certainly due to this ambiguity and suggestiveness that modern scholars and writers have not long since begun with the 'outing' of supposed homosexuals of this period.

In today's post-Romantic and post-Freudian times, the general attitude towards any kind of relationship is indeed so much affected by the dominating concepts of love and sexuality that nearly every relation between two persons is believed to be—at least unconsciously—based on libidinal desires. Especially concerning male friendship this means, as C. S. Lewis remarks, that "it has actually become necessary in our time to rebut the theory that every firm and serious friendship is really homosexual."[53] That not every intimate friendship between men is rather a homosexual love affair or partnership is surely as true for our own time as it was for the Renaissance. But, on the other hand, not every text "of the period can always be explained in other terms and in ways in which anything like sex disappears into the 'convention' of friendship," as Jonathan Goldberg rightly states."[54]

For Renaissance men, however, it was indeed necessary to explain their sexual feelings for one another or even the actual sexual intimacy between them in terms other than those of homosexuality, since there was not yet anything like an exclusive conception of a homosexual identity that they could have referred to, even if they had been willing to do so. What we would consider the homosexual identity of the individual is indeed something that was to develop only in the following period and the first signs of its emergence were not to be recognized before the second half of the seventeenth century. Therefore, as Bray puts it in his excellent study of homosexuality in Renaissance England, "to talk of an individual in this period [the Renaissance] as being or not being 'a homosexual' is an anachronism and ruinously misleading."[55] And the development of a sexual identity of any kind would have been very difficult indeed at a time in which not even the concept of sexuality itself was an established one, as Goldberg remarks: "[…] the Renaissance comes before the regimes of sexuality, and to speak of sexuality in the period is a misnomer."[56]

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[52] John Dryden, "Eleonora," *Poems 1685 - 1692*, ed. Earl Minor (Berkeley: U of California P, 1969) 242.

[53] Lewis 72. In fact, Lewis's discussion of the relation between friendship and homosexuality clearly reveals his utterly homophobic attitude towards the matter and is thus as biased as those of most of the scholars of gay and lesbian studies who take part in the current crusade to detect the homosexuals of the past.

[54] Jonathan Goldberg, ed., introduction, *Queering the Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994) 6.

[55] Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, 2nd ed. (London: GMP, 1988) 16.

[56] Goldberg 5.

That in the Renaissance there was no specific conception of homosexuality as we know it does of course not mean that the persons, actions, and emotions that we would nowadays associate with the term did simply not exist at that time. They definitely existed, but instead of being conceptualized under the name of homosexuality they were rather seen as part of a different concept—that of sodomy.[57] *Sodomy* was though a term that was not only used to denote homosexual activities. Sodomy, as Goldberg explains, was rather seen "as a range of desires and acts that the period thought anyone could have or do, [and that] in its most capacious definition [included] just about anything but unprotected vaginal intercourse between a married couple."[58] Thus, the image of sodomy, closely connected with that of buggery, included the whole variety of all kinds of reputed sexual debauchery. And so, the sexual intimacy between men was considered equally damnable as that between man and beast. The common contemporary attitude towards these "things fearful to name," as William Bradford puts it in his history of Plymouth Plantation, is quite plainly reflected, for example, in Robert Burton's comment on the matter:[59]

> And not with brutes only, but men among themselves [had sexual intercourse], which sin is vulgarly called Sodomy; this vice was customary in old times with the Orientals, the Greeks without question, the Italians, Africans, Asiaticks. […] Among the Asiaticks, Turks, Italians, the vice is customary to this day. […] And terrible to say, in our own country, within memory, how much that detestable sin hath raged.[60]

He continues to report that in 1538, Henry VIII had the 'Doctors of Law' Thomas Lee and Richard Layton inspect the monasteries of England. And in the course of this investigation, according to Burton, they

> found among them [monks, priests, and votaries] so great a number of wenchers, gelded youths, debauchees, catamites, boy-things, pederasts, Sodomites, (as it saith in Bale), Ganymedes, &c., that in every one of them you may be certain of a new Gomorrah. […] If 'tis thus among monks, votaries, and such-like saintly rascals, what may we not suspect in towns, in palaces? what among nobles, what in cellars, how much nastiness, how much filth![61]

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[57] *Sodomy* was in fact the term that had already been used in medieval times to refer to the sexual activities between men, and, as Bray points out, "attitudes to homosexuality had hardly changed since the thirteenth century; it was in the Renaissance as it was then, a horror, a thing to be unreservedly execrated." Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* 61. For a detailed discussion of the attitudes towards homosexuality in the Middle Ages, see, for example, the excellent study by John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay people in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1980). See also, for example, Epp 89-90.

[58] Goldberg 13.

[59] William Bradford, *Bradford's History 'Of Plimouth Plantation'* (Boston: Wright & Porter, 1898) 459, qtd. in Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* 25.

[60] Burton 651-52.

[61] Burton 652.

Sodomy, in fact, was not simply seen as an offence against Christian morality and common sexual ethics; there was a certain mythological quality that was attributed to the idea of sodomy. Even though everything was believed to be somehow part of the divine order, sodomy was excluded from this order and was rather related to the chaos outside the divine system. Yet, that it was not conceived of as belonging to God's divine system, consequentially also means that it was not even regarded as a product of Satan's maliciousness, since he and his hell were also considered parts of God's system.[62] So, as Bray puts it, "whatever homosexuality was clearly it was not God's creation."[63] This attitude towards the matter might illustrate how strange and alien the idea of sodomy must have been to ordinary people in the Renaissance. And indeed, as Bray rightly remarks, "there was no civilisation in the world at that time with as violent an antipathy to homosexuality as that of western Europe."[64] It was therefore nearly impossible for the individual to develop a homosexual identity under such circumstances. The only way in which the individual and society in general could cope with the discrepancy between the hostile conception of sodomy and its actual occurrence in every day life, was to keep both detached and to regard them separately, as Bray explains:

> It was this that made it possible for the individual to avoid the psychological problems of a homosexual relationship or a homosexual encounter, by keeping the experience merely casual and undefined: readily expressed and widely shared though the prevalent attitude to homosexuality was, it was kept at a distance from the great bulk of homosexual behaviour by an unwillingness to link the two.[65]

In literary treatments of friendship in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, homosexual desires were therefore either totally denied or referred to by another name. In prose, such desires were usually represented as belonging to friendship. In lyric poetry, the representation of homosexual emotions was generally declared to be nothing more than a literary exercise, a poem written in imitation of ancient poetical traditions.[66] But again, this does of course not mean that every representation of male friendship was really a description of a homosexual partnership in disguise and that every love poem dedicated to a man was in actual fact a homosexual declaration of love. It is indeed very difficult to say whether a Renaissance text that, from our point of view, appears to give a clear indication of the author's homosexual inclination is really what we consider it to be or whether it is in fact only what it claims to be, namely

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[62] Cf. Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* 24-25.

[63] Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* 23.

[64] Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* 79.

[65] Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* 76.

[66] Cf. Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* 60-61.

either a mere literary exercise or simply the representation of an intimate and affectionate friendship between two men that is still free from any libidinous desire.

To illustrate this problem and the consequential danger of misinterpretation Bray refers to Richard Barnfield's *Affectionate Shepherd*, an apparently homosexual love-poem written by a definitely heterosexual author.[67] That even Barnfield himself was quite aware of the possibility that his readers might misinterpret the poem is shown by a remark in the preface to *Cynthia*, his third book of poetry:

> Some there were, that did interpret *The affectionate Shepheard*, otherwise then (in truth) I meant, touching the subject thereof, to wit, the love of a Shepheard to a boy; a fault, the which I will not excuse, because I never made. Onely this, I will unshaddow my conceit: being nothing else, but an imitation of *Virgill*, in the second Eglogue of *Alexis*.[68]

And Bray, convinced by this assertion, says about Barnfield's poems: "Like other self-consciously classical poetry of this kind they were the product of a literary genre which (if it was more than a mere exercise) was about friendship, the 'insensible part' of love, not sexuality but a Platonic meeting of minds. It was not about homosexuality."[69] The example indeed shows how difficult it is to conclude a writer's sexual inclination from his writings. In some cases, like that of Barnfield, we know that the author was writing the texts merely as literary exercises. In others, as for example in that of Christopher Marlowe's writings, we are quite certain that the author had what we would nowadays refer to as homosexual leanings. But there are still many cases in which we simply do not know whether the author of homoerotic poetry gives us an autobiographical account of his own love life or whether he is merely presenting literary exercises. The most famous of such cases is probably that of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, the series of poems describing the author's relationships with a 'fair friend' (whom he also calls the 'master-mistress of his passion') and a 'dark lady'—whom he refers to as the 'two loves' he had.[70] Especially the great number of sonnets dedicated to his young friend, in comparison with the relative small number that are addressed to his mistress, and the way in which the author praises the beauty of the youth have ever since inspired the suspicion that Shakespeare might have had indeed homosexual, or at least bisexual leanings. Concerning this, Stefan George says in the introduction to his German translation of the *Sonnets*:

> Im mittelpunkte der sonettenfolge steht in allen lagen und stufen die leidenschaftliche hingabe des dichters an seinen freund. Dies hat man hinzunehmen auch wo man nicht versteht und es ist gleich töricht mit

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[67] Cf. Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* 61.

[68] Richard Barnfield, *Richard Barnfield: The Complete Poems*, ed. George Kalwitter (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna UP, 1990) 115-16.

[69] Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* 61.

[70] See Shakespeare, *Sonnets*, no 20 and no 144.

> tadeln wie mit rettungen zu beflecken was einer der grössten Irdischen für gut befand. Zumal verstofflichte und verhirnlichte zeitalter haben kein recht an diesem punkt worte zu machen da sie nicht einmal etwas ahnen können von der weltschaffenden kraft der übergeschlechtlichen Liebe.[71]

Now, in the end, we do in fact not even know with certainty whether Shakespeare's sonnets are an autobiographical account or mere fiction, much less whether the friendship between Shakespeare and his friend was of a sexual nature or of the metasexual kind of which George speaks.[72] In fact, to spot the homosexuals of the Renaissance with certainty is a very difficult task indeed, since almost all of them either consciously or unconsciously made use of a strategy to conceal their desires that even protected them against themselves, i.e. it even prevented them from conceiving of themselves as having a special sexual orientation. This strategy was to see their desires either as the mere expression of Platonic love (in its original sense) or as part of a true and affectionate friendship that has been modelled on the perfect ones of the great classical friendship couples.[73]

However, this self-deceptive attitude towards one's own homosexual leanings began to change right at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Now the situation became in fact a completely different one, as Rictor Norton points out in his study of the male homosexual subculture in eighteenth-century England: "Narrowly defined,

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[71] Stefan George, trans, introduction, *Die Sonette*, by William Shakespeare (München: dtv, 1989) 7. – "In the centre of the sonnet-sequence there is on all layers and levels the poet's passionate devotion to his friend. This has to be accepted even if one does not understand and it is equally foolish to besmirch what one of the greatest mortals considered good with rebukes or with rescue attempts. Especially materialistic and pragmatic ages have no right to comment on this point as they cannot even have the slightest idea of the creative power of metasexual love." Trans. mine.

[72] Nevertheless, there are in fact numerous treatises dealing with this question that try to provide a plausible answer to it. Readers interested in such attempts might be referred to, for example, A. D. Wraight, *The Story that the Sonnets Tell* (London: Hart, 1993); Martin Green, *Wriothesly's Roses in Shakespeare's Sonnets, Poems, and Plays* (Baltimore: Clevedon, 1993); Simon Shepherd, "Shakespeare's Privat Drawer: Shakespeare and Homosexuality," *The Shakespeare Myth*, ed. Graham Holderness (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1988) 96-109; Josef Pequigney, *Such is my Love: A study of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985); and Alfred Leslie Rowse, *Shakespeare's Sonnets: The Problems Solved*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1973). For a general analysis of the friendship-love situation in the *Sonnets*, see, for example, Carolyn F. Scott, "'Master-Mistress of My Passion': The Failure of Friendship in Shakespeare's Sonnets," *Fu Jen Studies: Literature and Linguistics* 26 (1993): 108-126; M. Burnham, "Dark-Lady-and-Fair-Man: The Love Triangle in Shakespeare's Sonnets and 'Ulysses' (Joyce, James)," *Studies in the Novel* 22 (1990): 43-56; and Rodney Poisson, "Unequal Friendship: Shakespeare' Sonnets 18-126," *New Essays on Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Hilton Landry (New York: AMS, 1976) 1-19.

[73] On the expression of homosexuality in the Renaissance and the strategies to disguise homosexual desires, see, for example Steven J. Patterson, "Pleasure's Likeness: The Politics of Homosexual Friendship in Early Modern England," diss., Temple U, 1997; Michael Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996); Joseph Cady, "Masculine Love, Renaissance Writing, and the 'New Invention' of Homosexuality," *Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment England: Literary Representations in Historical Context*, ed. Claude J. Summers (New York: Harrington Park, 1992) 9-40; Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A cultural poetics* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991); Alan Bray, "Homosexuality and the Signs of Male Friendship in Elizabethan England," *History Workshop Journal* 29 (1990): 1-19; or the various essays in Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma, eds., *The Pursuit of Sodomy: Male Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe* (New York: Harrington Park, 1989).

homosexuals have of course existed during all periods of history, but it was not until about 1700 that gay men began to gather together within a structured social organisation which we can properly call a subculture."[74] This sudden and rapid development of a homosexual subculture also brought about the development of a distinct homosexual identity of homophile men who were not yet called homosexuals but 'mollies' in imitation of the name for the clubs and bars in which these men used to meet, the molly houses.[75]

Of course, not all men who had homosexual desires were now also able or willing to think of themselves as being something special, or even as being 'mollies'. Especially in the country—and for England at that time, for example, this actually meant anywhere outside London—neither the conception of nor the attitude towards homosexual feelings or activities had changed in any way. For anyone with homosexual desires living outside the major cities, the situation became in fact extremely fierce, as the only remaining category in which he could think of himself after having given up the strategy to conceal these desires was still that of a sodomite. In the capitals, however, the possibility to conceive of oneself as being something else than a sodomite now became a reality. Yet, it is truly difficult to say what exactly had brought about the emergence of a homosexual identity and in its consequence a homosexual subculture in the early eighteenth century. We can though assume that the general development of the ideas of individuality and subjectivity in the Renaissance, and thus the discovery of the self as such—a development that is especially towards the end of the period reflected in so great literary works as, for instance, Shakespeare's plays or Montaigne's *Essais*—as well as the development of a general conception of sexuality in the seventeenth century, had indeed contributed most to the eventual emergence not only of a heterosexual but also of a homosexual identity in the eighteenth century. Another two factors, however, which have certainly played a significant role particularly in the birth of the homosexual identity, were the adoption of characteristic features of the concept of friendship by the concept of love and the concurrent decline in the common belief in the realizability of the classical ideal of friendship in consequence of the increasingly mercantilistic attitude towards friendship in the seventeenth century. In other words, because friendship was now in practice no longer exclusively conceptualized as an intimate and affectionate relationship between two partners of the same sex but in the main rather as a functional alliance primarily based on utilitarian interests, it could no longer cover the homoerotic desires that could have easily been satisfied under the classical concept of friendship before—provided that this satisfaction had strictly been limited to occasional simple caresses and that real sexual activities had thus remained excluded. Due to the changed and decidedly de-

[74] Rictor Norton, *Mother Clap's Molly House: The Gay Subculture in England 1700-1830* (London: GMP, 1992) 9.

[75] Cf. Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* 80-81; Norton 9.

emotionalized general conception of friendship in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the satisfaction of these desires could only be obtained in a relationship that had to be defined by a different concept. And since there was no other concept that could have incorporated such desires than that of marriage, there had to be a new one created, one of a homosexual relationship in the disguise of friendship.

In all conceptions of friendship in which carnal love played a significant role, however, one problem remained: the impossibility of achieving true equality between the sexual partners. Now, this has indeed not only been the crucial problem with the idea of a sexual friendship between man and woman, conceptualized as companionate marriage, but also with that of a sexual friendship between men themselves. Michel Foucault presents a plausible explanation for this apparent impossibility to combine sensual love and intellectual friendship into the ideal of an absolute relationship when he says:

> L'amitié est réciproque, ce que ne sont pas les rapports sexuels: dans les rapports sexuels, on est actif ou passif, on pénètre ou on est pénétré. Je suis tout à fait d'accord avec ce que vous dites de l'amitié, mais je crois que cela confirme ce qu'on disait de l'éthique sexuelle grecque: là où il y a amitié, il est difficile d'avoir des relations sexuelles.[76]

Now, if Foucault is right, this was certainly as true for friendship-love-relationships in the early modern period as it had been for those in ancient Greek times—and it would thus explain why the concepts of love and friendship turned out to be in actual fact incompatible when they were meant to be united in the late Renaissance. And that it was indeed the aspect of sexuality that prevented the two concepts from being united, is also maintained by Niklas Luhmann when he remarks: "[…] eine Zeitlang sieht es so aus, daß Liebe und Freundschaft verschmolzen werden könnten, wenn nicht das Störproblem der Sexualität zu einer Unterscheidung zwänge. Jedenfalls konkurrieren jetzt beide Begriffe um die Anwartschaft, den Code für Intimbeziehungen zu bestimmen."[77] In the end, in fact, it was also the attempt to combine the two incompatible concepts (and its failure) that, in connection with the causes mentioned in the sections and chapters above, led in the short term to the decay of the traditional classically inspired ideal of perfect friendship and in the long term not only to a much more complex system of relationship categorization in general and to a diversification

[76] Michel Foucault, "Le sexe comme une morale," *Le Nouvel Observateur* 1021 (1984): 64. – "Friendship is based on equality, which does not apply to sexual relationships: in sexual affairs one is either active or passive, penetrates or is penetrated. I totally agree with what you have said about friendship, but I think, this only confirms what we have said about Greek sexual ethics: where friendship exists, it is difficult to have sexual relationships." Trans. mine.

[77] Luhmann 104. – "[…] for some time it seems as if love and friendship could be merged, if not the disturbing problem of sexuality enforced a distinction. However, both concepts are now competing for the candidacy for determining the code of intimate relationships." Trans. mine.

of the conceptions of friendship in particular but finally also to the victory of the idea of love in the competition to which Luhmann here refers.

Besides a rather traditional conception of affectionate and intimate homosocial friendship that yet henceforth only consisted of mere remnants of the old ideal of this relationship and a notion of heterosexual love that predominantly emphasized its sensual aspect, finally another four concepts took shape: that of a utilitarian one of homosocial friendship as a rather functional than affectionate relationship (and thus much more similar to the medieval conception of friendship than to that of the Renaissance), that of a marital friendship in a companionate marriage, that of homosexual love, and that of non-sexual heterosocial friendship. In fact, besides the first two of these new concepts, which had almost immediately commonly been acknowledged, now also the friendship between friends of the opposite sex was as conceivable as that between two men or two women, and the sexual love between two men (much more, in fact, than that between two women) became gradually as thinkable as that between man and woman. That relationships of these four new kinds were now equally conceivable as those of the rather traditional types does of course not mean that they were also equally accepted. Utilitarian friendship between men, for example, became indeed instantly the commonly acknowledged standard variant of amity. Heterosocial friendship, i.e. the unerotic friendship between man and woman, was now indeed much more accepted and much less suspiciously regarded than before, but it seems as if in the seventeenth century and even throughout the Enlightenment people still rather preferred the idealistic concept of marital friendship as their favourite idea of a relationship between the sexes. And homosexual love was still as condemned as before; yet, it was no longer seen as a mere variant of sodomy. It too, had now become a 'classe à parte.'

The form of relationship in which this love found expression, however, was still conceptualized, or rather, disguised as male friendship. The concept of homosexual love was now in existence and was also acknowledged as such, but the actual expression of this love was still neither accepted nor tolerated. For someone who had developed a homosexual identity and who had come to terms with it, it was hence still necessary to conceal his sexual relationship with another man and to present it as something that was still widely accepted as a close bond between two men, viz. as friendship. As there was no institutionalized form of a homosexual relationship or even the hope of creating one that would have been socially approved and then legalized, there was obviously also no need for a concept of such a relationship other than that of friendship. The idea of a male friendship that is primarily based on the sexual attraction of the friends for each other thus became then simply just another one of the increasing number of various conceptions of friendship. Due to the increasing diversification and individualisation of the conception of friendship in the course of the following centuries, we can nowadays find a common idea of friendship that has

become undefined and almost meaningless. The clear notion of what friendship is about, which characterized the old traditional conception, has now been lost. Love has instead become the dominant kind of relationship. Concerning the possible reason for this development Luhmann says:

> Aufs Ganze gesehen hat jedoch die Liebe und nicht die Freundschaft das Rennen gemacht und letztlich den Code für Intimität bestimmt. Warum? Die Gründe dafür sind nicht leicht aufzutreiben und zu belegen. Man kann jedoch vermuten, daß die Freundschaft trotz aller Privatisierung und aller Unterscheidung täglicher und absonderlicher Freundschaft (Thomasius) sich als nicht abgrenzbar, als nicht ausdifferenzierbar erwies. […] Ferner wird soziale Reflexivität jetzt zur Interaktionsmaxime schlechthin, so daß dieser Gesichtspunkt allein nicht mehr ausreicht, um einen Spezialcode für Intimbeziehungen besonders zu profilieren. Nicht zuletzt ist aber auch daran zu denken, daß der symbiotische Mechanismus der Sexualität, der die Ausdifferenzierung auf der Ebene der Interaktionsbeziehungen trägt, der Freundschaft, denn das gerade unterscheidet sie von der Liebe, nicht zur Verfügung steht.[78]

Luhmann here refers to two important factors that might have indeed been responsible for the development. He first claims that despite the increasing diversification and finally the total individualisation of the conception of friendship this has never really led to a true differentiation between separate original concepts that had been independent derivatives of the traditional concept of friendship. This is certainly true. Moreover, he claims that since friends do normally not sleep with each other they cannot use the sexual act as an indicator for measuring the exclusiveness of their friendship—as lovers normally do to distinguish their relationship from others. In comparison to lovers, friends have no means of marking their friendship as special. In times in which people are predominantly determined by the egoistic and materialistic urge to possess and to mark their possessions, this must truly make it inferior to love. This view, that it was indeed the aspect of sex—and its universal and democratic character that already Alberti had referred to in his *Libri della famiglia*[79]—that constitutes the essential difference that was responsible for the victory of the concept of love over that of friendship, is in fact also supported by Georg Simmel when he says:

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[78] Luhmann 105. – "On the whole it was however love that succeeded and that, in the end, has determined the code of intimacy. Why? The reasons for this are not easily to be denoted and to be proved. One can though assume that friendship, in spite of all privatizations and all differentiations between common and strange friendships (Thomasius), has proved to be inseparable, to be indistinguishable. […] Furthermore, the social reflectivity becomes now the interaction maxim par excellence, so that this feature alone is no longer sufficient to establish a specific code for intimate relationships. It has though also to be kept in mind that the symbiotic mechanism of sexuality, which carries the conceptual distinctions on the level of interactional relationships, is not at friendship's disposal—and precisely this distinguishes it from love." Trans. mine. – Luhmann here refers to Christian Thomasius's theory of love and friendship elaborated in his *Einleitung zur Sittenlehre* (1692).

[79] See 177.

> *Ein* sehr starkes Beziehungsmoment bricht oft die Bahn, auf der ihm die andern, ohne dieses latent gebliebenen, folgen; und unleugbar öffnet bei den meisten Menschen die geschlechtliche Liebe die Tore der Gesamtpersönlichkeit am weitesten, ja, bei nicht wenigen ist die Liebe die einzige Form, in der sie ihr ganzes Ich geben können, wie dem Künstler die Form seiner jeweiligen Kunst die einzige Möglichkeit bietet, sein ganzes Inneres darzubieten.[80]

Now, agreeing with the assumptions Luhmann and Simmel here make, one might indeed say that, in addition to the causes analysed in the course of the present study, these are the most important reasons for the way in which the development of the concepts of love and friendship took place in the last four hundred years and for the common attitude towards them that we can notice today. On the whole, however, the network of causes that have determined this development and thus the history of friendship since the Renaissance is in fact much more complex, and it has indeed to be doubted whether all of the various causes will ever be determined with certainty.[81]

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[80] Simmel 400. – "*One* extremely strong element in a relationship often opens up a path on which the others, which would have remained latent without this strong one, could then follow. And, undeniably, it is with most humans sexual love that flings the doors to the whole personality most widely open. Indeed, with not a few of them, love is the only means by which they can present their whole self, just as the particular art of an artist enables him to expose his whole inner being." Trans. mine.

[81] The further development of the conceptions of friendship in the time following the seventeenth century is indeed a story that has to be told in detail at another time, in another study. However, there are though, in fact, already a number of studies dealing with the conceptions of friendship in this time. On the notions of the subject in the Enlightenment and especially on the national phenomenon of the cult of friendship in eighteenth-century Germany there are indeed several works published. The most significant among those on the German friendship cult is certainly that by Wolfdietrich Rasch, *Freundschaftskult und Freundschaftsdichtung im deutschen Schrifttum des 18. Jahrhunderts: Vom Ausgang des Barock bis zu Klopstock*, Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte: Buchreihe 21 (Halle/Saale: Niemeyer, 1936). See though also on this subject: Albert Salomon, "Der Freundschaftskult des 18. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland: Versuch zur Soziologie einer Lebensform," *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 8 (1979): 279-308; Ernst von Schenck, *Briefe der Freunde: Das Zeitalter Goethes im Spiegel der Freundschaft*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1949); and Eva Thaer, *Die Freundschaft im deutschen Roman des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg: Berngruber & Henning, 1917). On the view of friendship in the Romantic period, see, for example, Anne Vincent-Buffault, *L'exercise de l'amitié: Pour une histoire des pratiques amicales aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles*, (Paris: du Seuil, 1995); Berkeley Stevenson Blatz, "Romanticism and the Rhetoric of Friendship," diss., U of California, Los Angeles, 1994; and Klaus Lankheit, *Das Freundschaftsbild der Romantik* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1952). On the individualised notions of friendship today, see, for instance, the various essays in Elliott Leyton, ed., *The Compact: Selected Dimensions of Friendship* (St. Johns (Nfld.): Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1974).

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FORMELLER ANHANG

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG IN DEUTSCHER SPRACHE

Da die vorliegende Dissertation nicht in der deutschen Sprache abgefasst ist, folgt nun, gemäß der Promotionsordnung der Gemeinsamen Fakultät für Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften der Universität Hannover, § 9 Abs. 2b, eine Zusammenfassung der Arbeit in deutscher Sprache.

THEMA UND HYPOTHESE DER DISSERTATION

Die Begriffe von Liebe und Freundschaft verkörpern in der okzidentalen Dichtung und Philosophie von jeher das Ideal einer vollkommenen zwischenmenschlichen Beziehung. Isoliert betrachtet, repräsentieren beide Begriffe dabei jedoch nicht nur zwei gänzlich unabhängige Bereiche einer solchen Idealbeziehung, sondern durch ihre divergenten Konzeptionen zunächst vor allem auch zwei völlig unterschiedliche Beziehungsarten.

Diese alternativen Beziehungsformen basieren wiederum auf den spezifischen Begriffsmerkmalen von Liebe und Freundschaft. Ist in diesem Zusammenhang von Liebe die Rede, so ist jedoch stets bloß die Konzeption von *Eros* gemeint: Liebe als das Gefühl der sinnlichen Zuneigung der Liebenden zueinander. Der Kontext der Untersuchung macht diese eingeschränkte Definitionsbestimmung notwendig, da der heute gültige Begriff der Liebe in seinem semantischen Gesamtvolumen eine klare Abgrenzung der hier diskutierten Beziehungskonzeptionen nicht zulassen würde. Während der Begriff der Liebe, gemäß dieser Einschränkung, also grundsätzlich mit dem Attribut des Emotionalen und Sinnlichen belegt ist und damit traditionell der Verbindung von Mann und Frau zugeschrieben wird, ist die Freundschaft eher dem Bereich der Ratio beigeordnet, die geistesgeschichtlich als vornehmlich homosoziale Domäne gilt. Die daraus resultierende Unterscheidung zwischen körperlich und geistig motivierten Beziehungen mittels der Begriffe von Liebe und Freundschaft hat wiederum die separate Untersuchung der Herkunft und Entwicklung der Konzeptionen beider Begriffe zur Folge.

Während zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Liebesbegriffs bereits ausführliche Studien vorliegen, gibt es bislang zur geistesgeschichtlichen Evolution der Freundschaftsidee erstaunlicherweise verhältnismäßig wenige Untersuchungen.[1] Dies mag zum einen an dem allgemein größeren Interesse an der Liebe liegen, dominiert sie doch die Vorstellung von einer Idealbeziehung insbesondere in unserer eigenen Epoche. Zum anderen liegt es aber sicherlich auch an der besonderen Komplexität des Entwicklungsverlaufs der Freundschaftsidee selbst. Es ist daher zunächst das Anliegen meiner Arbeit, diesen Verlauf in seiner wesentlichen Ausprägung nachzuzeichnen und zu analysieren und so dazu beizutragen, das vorhandene Forschungsdefizit auszugleichen. Der Focus der Arbeit liegt dabei auf der für die Gesamtentwicklung des Freundschaftskonzeptes bedeutendsten Periode zwischen dem fünfzehnten und siebzehnten Jahrhundert.

Verfolgt man die geistesgeschichtliche Entwicklung des Freundschaftsbegriffs von der Antike bis zur Moderne, so trifft man in jeder Epoche auf eine spezifische Konzeption von Freundschaft, deren Wesen sich deutlich vom Freundschaftsbegriff der jeweils vorhergehenden Periode abgrenzt. Dabei werden stets bestimmte Aspekte des überlieferten Freundschaftsbegriffs übernommen und mit neuen Inhalten kombiniert.

Beim Übergang von der Antike zum Mittelalter und hiernach zur Renaissance, kam es jedoch zunächst nur zu einem einfachen Wandel der Begriffsimplikationen von Freundschaft. Der Begriff der Freundschaft wurde also lediglich neu definiert. Inhaltsschwerpunkte und die Bedeutung des Freundschaftsbegriffs als Beziehungsideal wurden in einem solchen Prozess zwar verändert – meist in konträrer Wechselbeziehung zu dem Begriff von Liebe – die grundsätzliche Opposition der beiden miteinander konkurrierenden Beziehungsformen, Liebe und Freundschaft, beeinflusste dies jedoch nicht. Während die Konzeption von Freundschaft stets untrennbar mit der Idee von der intellektuellen Einheit der Freunde assoziiert war, wurde der Begriff der Liebe meist von ihrem erotischen Aspekt dominiert. Ein interkonzeptioneller Austausch begriffsspezifischer Merkmale, oder gar eine Verschmelzung derselben miteinander, fand nicht statt. Die Redefinierungen der

[1] Stellvertretend für eine Vielzahl diesbezüglicher Untersuchungen sei hier hingewiesen auf: Annemarie Leibbrand und Werner Leibbrand, *Formen des Eros: Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte der Liebe*, 2 Bd. (Freiburg: Alber, 1972).

Begriffe von Freundschaft und Liebe hatten daher lediglich die Dominanz des einen über den anderen zur Folge.

Beim Übergang vom sechzehnten zum siebzehnten Jahrhundert, d.h. von der Renaissance zur Frühaufklärung, stellt sich dieser Transformationsprozess jedoch völlig anders dar. Gehörte die Freundschaft zur Zeit der Renaissance noch zu den höchsten in der Literatur verherrlichten Idealen und in der Realität zu den erstrebenswertesten Zielen einer humanistischen Lebensphilosophie, lässt sich in der Darstellung der Freundschaft in der ersten Hälfte des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts nur noch ein degeneriertes Zerrbild dieses Ideals wieder finden. Auf der anderen Seite konnte sich nun die Liebe als Idealkonzeption einer vollkommenen Beziehung endgültig durchsetzen. Die Aufwertung sowohl der Rolle der Frau als auch der der Ehe, die zunehmende Betonung des utilitaristischen Aspekts der Freundschaft infolge des im siebzehnten Jahrhundert aufkommenden Merkantilismus, und die allmähliche Etablierung einer homosexuellen Identität im frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert, die sich vormals unter dem Konzept der innigen Männerfreundschaft subsumieren konnte, führten dazu, dass sich das Bild von der Freundschaft grundlegend wandelte. Auf lange Sicht als affektive Beziehungsform zur relativen Bedeutungslosigkeit verurteil, war die Freundschaft fortan nicht mehr in der Lage, der Liebe als Beziehungsideal Konkurrenz zu machen und sie als 'Code für Intimität' abzulösen.[2]

Der Niedergang des Freundschaftsbegriffs im frühen siebzehnten Jahrhundert liegt jedoch zunächst im übermäßig idealisierten Wesen der humanistischen Freundschaftskonzeption selbst begründet. Darüber hinaus sind die Gründe für den Abstieg jedoch auch in den komplexen Veränderungsprozessen zu suchen, denen die konzeptionelle Weltsicht der Renaissance im ganzen unterworfen war. Veränderungen, die ihre Ursprünge im fünfzehnten und sechzehnten Jahrhundert hatten, deren Auswirkungen jedoch bis weit in das achtzehnte Jahrhundert hinein reichten.

Die Rückbesinnung auf klassische Freundschaftsideale in der Renaissance entsprach durchaus der zeitgemäßen Gepflogenheit, auf tradierte Werte der griechisch-römischen Antike zurückzugreifen. Die hehren Ideale der klassischen Freundschaftskonzeptionen erwiesen sich in der Praxis jedoch als rein theoretische Konstrukte, die sich in der Realität nicht ohne weiteres umsetzen ließen.

Dieser Umstand ist im wesentlichen darauf zurückzuführen, dass die Glorifizierung der klassischen Freundschaftsideale in den intellektuellen Kreisen der Renaissance zu einem Zeitpunkt betrieben wurde, zu dem sich in der Praxis offenbar bereits ein neues, noch nicht konzeptualisiertes Beziehungsverständnis zu etablieren begann. Diese neue Denkweise unterschied nun nicht mehr ausschließlich zwischen den traditionellen Beziehungsbegriffen von Liebe und Freundschaft – also zwischen körperlichen und intellektuellen Verbindungen – sondern differenzierte vielmehr zwischen primär utilitaristischen und vorwiegend affektiven Beziehungen. Als Konzeption zwischen diesen Extremen erwiesen sich das klassisch inspirierte Freundschaftsideal der Humanisten zwangsläufig als inkompatibel zu einem derartig polarisierten Beziehungsverständnis und folglich in der Praxis als kaum umsetzbar.

Durch die zunächst fehlende Konzeptualisierung dieses neu aufkommenden Beziehungsverständnisses benutzte man zur Bezeichnung der entsprechenden Beziehungen jedoch nach wie vor die traditionellen Begriffe. Ohne eigene Konzeption wurden jedoch die neuen Beziehungsformen nicht nur weiterhin mit der alten Bezeichnung, sondern auch mit den Konnotationen des bereits überholten Begriffs etikettiert. So bezeichnet Montaigne seine überaus affektive Beziehung zu La Boëtie in den *Essais* ebenso als Freundschaft im klassischen Sinne, wie Shakespeare das Abhängigkeitsverhältnis des Dichters zu seinem Mäzen in den *Sonnets*. Neben diesen Freundschaftsverhältnissen im Rahmen des im fünfzehnten und sechzehnten Jahrhunderts stark verbreiteten Systems der Patronage und Protektion galten auch andere gesellschaftliche oder politische Beziehungen durchaus als Freundschaften im klassischen Sinne.

Das bedeutet, dass in der Renaissance bestimmte Freundschaftsbeziehungen allein auf Grund fehlender Neukonzeptionen explizit mit einem auf klassischen Freundschaftstheorien beruhenden idealisierten Freundschaftsbegriff in Verbindung gebracht wurden, obwohl sie von ihrem Wesen her mit dieser Konzeption keineswegs übereinstimmten.

Diese Disharmonie zwischen Ideal und Realität führte im siebzehnten Jahrhundert schließlich zu einer kritischen Beurteilung der Freundschaft und letztlich zu dem Versuch, den traditionellen Begriff dem neuen Beziehungsverständnis anzugleichen.

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[2] Niklas Luhmann, *Liebe als Passion: Zur Codierung von Intimität* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1982) 105.

Dazu wurde der Freundschaftsbegriff denotativ wie konnotativ erweitert, wodurch die Konzeption der Freundschaft jedoch nicht etwa bereichert, sondern vielmehr verzerrt wurde. Als Folge dieser Mutation ergaben sich neben einer nostalgischen Reminiszenz an die alte Vorstellung nun alsbald im Wesentlichen zwei alternative Repräsentationen des Begriffs. Freundschaft wurde nunmehr vor allem entweder als eine rein utilitaristische oder als eine höchst emotionale Beziehungsform dargestellt. Als utilitaristische Beziehung verlor die Idee der Freundschaft ihre idealistische Qualität, womit der Begriff zwangsläufig eine Abwertung erfuhr. Als affektive Beziehung zwischen gegengeschlechtlichen Partnern ging sie hingegen in dem nun neu aufgewerteten Beziehungsideal der Liebe auf und formte mit diesem zusammen die Konzeption von einer freundschaftlichen Ehe. Als sensitive Beziehung zwischen gleichgeschlechtlichen Partnern bestand sie zunächst unter dem klassischen Begriff der Freundschaft weiter, bis sich im frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert eine erste homosexuelle Identität zu etablieren und das alte Konzept damit langsam abzulösen begann.

Da sich die tradierten Idealkonzeptionen von Freundschaft unter dem Einfluss dieser neu entstandenen Ideen der modernen Denkart, welche im Verlauf der Renaissance immer mehr an Bedeutung gewannen, letztlich weder praktisch noch konzeptionell durchsetzen ließen, muss man feststellen, dass der Versuch des Renaissancehumanismus, die klassischen philosophischen, und damit vor allem theoretischen Idealvorstellungen von der Freundschaft für deren Umsetzung in der Realität einer Zeit zu adaptieren, deren kontinuierliche Veränderung währenddessen hingegen nach ganz neuen Beziehungskonzepten verlangte, letztlich gescheitert ist.

Dies erklärt jedoch nur zum Teil das Problem, mit dem der traditionelle Freundschaftsbegriff konfrontiert wurde, und beantwortet die Frage, wieso es beim Epochenwechsel nicht zu einer einfachen linearen Transformation der Begriffe von Freundschaft und Liebe kam, nur ungenügend.

Wie bereits erwähnt, ist in der Tat eine ganze Reihe von Umständen dafür verantwortlich zu machen, dass es schließlich zur völligen Aufspaltung und Neudefinierung der Begriffe kommen sollten. Zum einen wurde in der Renaissance die Rolle der Frau als Beziehungspartner dahingehend aufgewertet, dass sie nun nicht mehr ausschließlich als Symbol der Schönheit und Objekt sinnlicher Liebe betrachtet

wurde, sondern nun auch zunehmend als intellektuell gleichwertiger Partner des Mannes Anerkennung fand. Synchron zu dieser Entwicklung scheint zum anderen der Wunsch nach der Konzeption einer perfekten, absoluten Partnerschaft aufgekommen zu sein. Diese Idealkonzeption einer Beziehung strebte die intellektuelle wie auch die physische Vereinigung der Partner an, kombinierte also das Ideal des klassischen Begriffs der Freundschaft mit dem traditionellen der Liebe. Da die intellektuelle Einheit zweier Menschen nach dem Vorbild eines klassischen Freundschaftsideals nun auch zwischen Mann und Frau denkbar war, die körperliche Vereinigung zwischen Personen des gleichen Geschlechts aber nach wie vor als Sodomie[3] galt, lag nichts näher, als die Idee der absoluten Beziehung in der Konzeption der ehelichen Liebesfreundschaft zu suchen.

Zur Verwirklichung der neuen Liebeskonzeption musste diese notwendigerweise die wesentlichsten Begriffsmerkmale der Freundschaft adoptieren. Die Ideale der Freundschaft wurden somit auf den Begriff der Liebe transferiert. Als affektive aber asexuelle Beziehung, die hauptsächlich auf der Idee der geistigen Vereinigung der Freunde beruhte, konnte sich die Freundschaft gegen die so geschaffene Universalkonzeption auf Dauer nicht behaupten und verschwand mit der Zeit als alternative Form einer affektiven Partnerschaft fast gänzlich.

Als sich auch die politischen und sozialen Strukturen auflösten, die bisher für ein gesellschaftlich relativ hohes Ansehen primär utilitaristischer Freundschaften gesorgt hatten, erfuhr der Freundschaftsbegriff auch in dieser Hinsicht eine eklatante Abwertung. Zudem fand in der zweiten Hälfte des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts eine Rückbesinnung auf die elementaren moralischen Werte der Freundschaft statt, die die rationalistische Einstellung der Aufklärung zur Freundschaft als gesellschaftliche Notwendigkeit vorwegnahm. Diese Neubetonung der moralischen Qualitäten der Freundschaft, die in der ersten Hälfte des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts so eklatant missachtet wurden, führte natürlich nun auch zu einer harschen Kritik an den primär utilitaristischen Ansichten über die Freundschaft und damit an den Freundschaftsdarstellungen dieser Zeit.

[3] Unter den in der Renaissance noch sehr weit gefassten Begriff der Sodomie fiel *jede* außereheliche sexuelle Handlung, die nicht dem Zwecke der Fortpflanzung diente.

Eine Herabsetzung ganz anderer Art erfuhr die Freundschaft zudem durch den Umstand, dass durch das geschrumpfte Volumen des abgewerteten Freundschaftsbegriffs auch der Aspekt der physischen Intimität freigesetzt wurde. In der neuen Konzeption von Freundschaft blieb nunmehr kein Raum für die körperlichen Zärtlichkeiten, die im klassischen Freundschaftsbegriff sehr wohl ihren Platz hatten. Die Liebe zweier Freunde zueinander und der Austausch körperlicher Zärtlichkeiten galten durchaus als charakteristische Merkmale einer Freundschaft im klassischen Sinne. Solange eindeutig sexuelle Handlungen ausgespart blieben, konnten homosexuelle Tendenzen daher problemlos unter dem Begriff der Freundschaft ausgelebt werden, ohne in den Verdacht der Sodomie zu geraten.

Der Verlust der Möglichkeit, diese Tendenzen unter dem Schutz einer anerkannten Beziehungskonzeption zu entfalten, hatte zwangsläufig die Suche nach einer potentiellen Kompensationsform zur Folge. Dieser Umstand wirkte schließlich mit dem in der Renaissance aufkommenden Bestreben des Humanismus nach der Identitätsfindung des Einzelnen zusammen und führte im achtzehnten Jahrhundert letztlich zu einer Entwicklung, die wir durchaus als das Entstehen einer homosexuellen Identität werten können. Die homosexuelle Verbindung zwischen Männern wurde zwar gesellschaftlich noch keineswegs akzeptiert, als konzeptualisierbare Beziehung wurde sie aber nun nicht mehr als Teil der Sodomie sondern gleichsam als 'classe à parte' betrachtet.

Als Folge der oben beschriebenen Transformation der traditionellen Begriffe von Liebe und Freundschaft – deren Prozess sich letztlich vom fünfzehnten bis zum achtzehnten Jahrhundert erstreckt – findet man in der Aufklärung also eine Ausdifferenzierung der unterschiedlichsten Beziehungskonzeptionen vor: zunächst, neben einem weiterhin bestehenden aber nicht mehr repräsentativen traditionellen Begriff der Freundschaft als eher affektive homosoziale Beziehung, vor allem einen rein funktionalisierten Freundschaftsbegriff (dem des Mittelalters nicht unähnlich). Hierzu kommt der nach wie vor auf dem erotischen Aspekt basierende Begriff der (heterosexuellen) Liebe, wie auch das neue Beziehungsideal der ehelichen Liebesfreundschaft; weiterhin die Konzeption einer heterosozialen, nicht ehelichen Freundschaft zwischen Mann und Frau; und schließlich die Idee einer homosexuellen Beziehung zwischen Männern.

STAND DER FORSCHUNG

Die gegenwärtige Renaissanceforschung erkennt zwar zweifelsfrei an, dass der Idealbegriff der Freundschaft eins der bedeutendsten Themen der frühen Neuzeit war, nähere Untersuchungen dieses Phänomens weist sie aber meist mit dem Hinweis ab, dass es sich hierbei lediglich um die Adoption tradierter Vorstellungen aus der Antike handelte, die jeglicher Innovation entbehrten. Diese Beurteilung ist sicher nicht falsch, ignoriert aber die Bedeutung der oben geschilderten Folgen, die sich aus dem Versuch der Umsetzung dieser unverändert übernommenen philosophisch idealisierten Werte in die Realität einer sich im Umbruch befindlichen Zeit mit einem veränderten Wertesystem ergaben.

Obwohl in den letzten Jahren ein deutlich erkennbarer Trend zur Beschäftigung mit diesem Themenbereich eingesetzt hat, sind umfassende monographische Kultur-, literatur- oder sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Freundschaft bis heute nach wie vor relativ selten geblieben. Gewöhnlich erscheint das Thema nur in Verbindung mit Fragestellungen, die sich mit den historischen Problemen geschlechtsspezifischer Rollenverteilung oder sexueller Identitäten beschäftigen. Freundschaft wird hierbei oft nur unter dem Gesichtspunkt der Funktion betrachtet, welche sie in Bezug auf das eigentliche Untersuchungsthema ausübt.[4] Die jeweils zugrunde liegende historische Konzeption von Freundschaft ist dabei meist nur von marginalem Interesse.

Komplexere Untersuchungen zur geistesgeschichtlichen Entwicklung des Freundschaftsbegriffs – oder eigens zum Freundschaftsideal der Renaissance – wurden in den letzten Jahrzehnten – bis auf die auf diesen Themenbereich gerichtete Interpretation einiger weniger ausgewählter Texte der Zeit von Ullrich Langer – nicht veröffentlicht.[5] Die einzige umfassendere Arbeit zum Thema der literarischen Behandlung des Freundschaftsideals im sechzehnten und siebzehnten Jahrhundert bleibt damit nach wie vor Laurens J. Mills *One Soul in Bodies Twain* von 1937 – und auch diese beschäftigt sich lediglich mit der literarischen Darstellung der Freundschaft in der Englischen

[4] Die Arbeiten von Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Josef Pequigney und Lorna Hutson sind z.B. von dieser Art. Vgl.: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Josef Pequigney, *Such is my Love: A study of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985); und Lorna Hutson, *The usurer's daughter: male friendship and fictions of women in 16th century England* (London: Routledge, 1994).

[5] Vgl.: Ullrich Langer, *Perfect Friendship: Studies in Literature and Moral Philosophy from Boccaccio to Corneille* (Genève: Droz, 1994).

Renaissance.[6] Die einzigen Untersuchungen der literarischen Bearbeitung des Freundschaftsthemas im gesamthistorischen Kontext, Edward Carpenters *Ioläus: An Anthology of Friendship* und Carl Friedrich Stäudlin's *Geschichte der Vorstellungen und Lehren von der Freundschaft*, datieren sogar zurück auf die Jahre 1906 und 1826![7] Alle diese Arbeiten werden aber, was ihre wissenschaftliche Genauigkeit und Objektivität anbelangt, auf Grund ihres Ursprungs in einer anderen Wissenschaftstradition, heutigen Standards nicht mehr gerecht.

Zum Thema historischer Freundschaftsbegriffe im Allgemeinen gibt es darüber hinaus neben einer Reihe von Untersuchungen zu den klassischen Freundschaftskonzeptionen der griechisch-römischen Philosophie und einigen Studien die sich mit der Freundschaftsidee im Mittelalter beschäftigen, lediglich noch eine Anzahl von Arbeiten zum Thema des Freundschaftskults im Deutschland des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts.[8]

Eine detaillierte Untersuchung der geistesgeschichtlichen Bedeutung des Freundschaftsideals in der Renaissance und seine Auswirkungen auf die Beziehungskonzeptionen späterer Epochen stand daher noch aus.

ANSATZ UND ZIELSETZUNG DER DISSERTATION

Ziel der Arbeit war es demnach, dazu beizutragen, den fehlenden Erkenntnisstand auszugleichen. Hierzu musste neben der Analyse des Transformationsprozesses, der im siebzehnten und achtzehnten Jahrhundert zu der Neuordnung der Begriffe von

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[6] Laurens J Mills, *One Soul in Bodies Twain: Friendship in Tudor Literature and Stuart Drama* (Bloomington: Principia Press, 1937).

[7] Vgl.: Edward Carpenter, *Ioläus: An Anthology of Friendship*, 2. Aufl. (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1906); und Carl Friedrich Stäudlin, *Geschichte der Vorstellungen und Lehren von der Freundschaft* (Hannover: n.p., 1826).

[8] Zum Thema der Freundschaftskonzeptionen in klassischer Zeit, vgl. z.B.: Horst Hutter, *Politics as Friendship: The Origins of Classical Notions of Politics in the Theory and Practice of Friendship* (Waterloo (Ont.): Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1978); A. W. Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); and David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997). Zum Themenbereich der Freundschaftsdarstellungen im Mittelalter, vgl. z.B.: Robert R Edwards und Stephen Spector, Hrsg., *The Olde Daunce: Love, Friendship, Sex, and Marriage in the Medieval World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991); Carolinne White, *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); und Verena Epp, *Amicitia: Zur Geschichte personaler, sozialer, politischer und geistlicher Beziehungen im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1999). Zum Freundschaftskult des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts in Deutschland, vgl. z.B.: Wolfdietrich Rasch, *Freundschaftskult und Freundschaftsdichtung im deutschen Schrifttum des 18. Jahrhunderts: Vom Ausgang des Barock bis zu Klopstock* (Halle/Saale: Niemeyer, 1936); und Albert Salomon, "Der Freundschaftskult des 18. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland: Versuch zur Soziologie einer Lebensform," *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 8 (1979): 279-308.

Liebe und Freundschaft führte, ebenso das Wesen der Freundschaftskonzeption in der Renaissance selbst untersucht werden.

Es erschien hierbei sinnvoll, zunächst das für die Epoche relevante theoretische Erbe der antiken Freundschaftsphilosophie kurz zu umreißen. Im Folgenden ist dann die Darstellung der entsprechenden Theoriefragmente in der Literatur des fünfzehnten bis siebzehnten Jahrhunderts untersucht worden. Dabei kam es zum einen darauf an, theoretische, fiktionale und epistolarische Texte miteinander in Verbindung zu setzen, um zu untersuchen, wie die übernommenen philosophischen Vorstellungen über Freundschaft, insbesondere die idealisierten der klassischen Konzeption, sich durch ihre Umsetzung in der Literatur auf das tatsächliche Werteverständnis der Menschen in der Renaissance auswirkten. Anhand der Korrespondenz namhafter Dichter der Zeit ließ sich z.B. das vergebliche Bemühen Einzelner nachweisen, den theoretischen Ansprüchen des damaligen Freundschaftsideals auch in der eigenen Realität gerecht zu werden. Zum anderen konnte anhand dieser Texte untersucht werden, wie die Unvereinbarkeit bestimmter Attribute des humanistischen Freundschaftsideals mit den Gegebenheiten der Wirklichkeit in der frühen Neuzeit bereits im fünfzehnten Jahrhundert zu einer janusköpfigen Darstellung des Freundschaftsbegriffs führte. Bei der Auswahl der Texte stützt sich die Arbeit neben einigen wenigen französischen Schriften im wesentlichen auf italienische und englische Quellen, da diese für die Untersuchen des Freundschaftsbegriffs in der Renaissance sich einerseits als am Ergiebigsten herausgestellt haben und darüber hinaus eindrucksvoll die unterschiedlichen Darstellungsweisen zu Beginn und zum Ende der Renaissance in Europa repräsentieren.

Die anschließende Untersuchung der literarischen Repräsentationen von Freundschaft im siebzehnten und achtzehnten Jahrhundert erlaubte es schließlich, den Transformationsprozess zu analysieren, dem der Begriff beim Epochenwechsel unterlag, und die aufgestellte (und oben erläuterte) Hypothese zu verifizieren.

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