KOINONIKON ZOON: THE PLACE OF FRIENDSHIP IN CLASSICAL AND EARLY MONASTIC COMMUNITY BUILDING

The Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

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In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY

January 2018

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ABSTRACT

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January 2018

This study analyzes the significance of the concept of friendship in the works of three Classical Greek philosophers—Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—and various Desert Fathers—mainly, but not only, Pachomius and his contemporaries—and two important monastic legislators—St. Basil the Great and St. John Cassian. It considers monastic friendship to be a distinct phenomenon which overlaps with—and takes root from—but is not the same thing as Christian friendship. Since the two last figures, Basil and Cassian, were influenced by the two former groups of writers in question (that is, classical and Egyptian), this work treats the teachings of Basil and Cassian as the synthesis of both influences, and, by examining the ideals of friendship as can be reconstructed from all these sources, it offers an assessment of the place of these ideals in terms of community building.

Key Words: Christian Friendship, Classical Friendship, Community Building, Monastic Friendship

ÖZET

KOINONIKON ZOON: ANTİKİTE VE ERKEN MANASTIR GELENEĞİNDE TOPLULUK İNŞASINDA ARKADAŞLIĞIN YERİ

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Ocak 2018

Bu çalışma, üç Antik Yunan filozofunun—Sokrates, Platon ve Aristoteles'in—ve—yalnızca değilse bile başta Aziz Pakhomios ve çağdaşları olmak üzere—kimi Çöl Büyüklerinin ve iki büyük manastır yasamacısı olan Aziz Vasilios ve Aziz Yuhanna Kassianos'un yapıtlarında arkadaşlık kavramının önemini incelemektedir. Bu çalışmada manastır arkadaşlığı, Hristiyan arkadaşlığı ile örtüştüğü noktalar olsa bile ondan—kaynaklanan ama—ayrılan bir olgu olarak ele alınmıştır. Kendilerinden önce sözü geçen iki yazar grubundan da etkilenen son iki yazarın, yani Vasilios ve Kassianos'un öğretileri, öncülleri olan iki etki kolunun bir bireşimi olarak değerlendirilmiş ve bütün bu kaynaklardan yola çıkarak yeniden oluşturulabildiğince arkadaşlık idealleri irdelenerek, bu ideallerin topluluk inşası konusundaki yeri değerlendirilmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Antik Arkadaşlık, Hristiyan Arkadaşlığı, Manastır Arkadaşlığı, Topluluk İnşası

DEDICATIO

PARENTIBVS MEIS ET CARNE ET SPIRITV DVPLEX GERMANO FRATRI MEO, QVI SEMPER NON SOLVM AVXILIVM SED ETIAM BONVM CONSILIVM DEDERVNT (QVOD DE EIS SCRIBAM NISI LAVDES SEMPITERNAS!),

ELODIE, BEATAE SPIRITV ET CORDE (QVAE ANIMVM MEVM COMMOVERE SEMPER POTEST, CVIVS PARS IN HOC OPERE MAGNA FVIT, CVIVS PARS IN ANIMA MEA LONGE MAIOR EST),

TAILAN ET ESTIENNE, ANIMAE DIMIDIIS MEAE GRADV EXCELLENTISSIMO—VT ITA DIXERIM (AD QVOS FREQVENTER PROFICISCOR, ET VTILITATIS CAVSA ET CONSILII CAVSA),

AISCE, AMICAE MEAE (QVAE MIHI NVMQVAM DEFVIT),

HOC OPVS DEDICATVM EST CVM SEMPITERNA GRATITVDINE ET SVBLIMI CHARITATE.

MIHI NECESSE EST VIROS DOCTISSIMOS DAVID ET KENNETH ET PAVLVM COMMEMORARE ET EIS GRATIAS AGERE, QVI MIHI VALDE LAVDANDI SVNT, QVIA REM BENE NON GEREREM NISI TALES DVCES HABVISSEM; ERGA EOS CHARITAS ERIT IN ANIMA MEA AD AETERNITATEM. SEDA ERKOC QVOQVE, QVAE ADIVTORIVM CVM BENEVOLENTIA ET CARITATE OBTVLIT, GRATIAS AGO.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Themes and Scope

One of the main problems that one has to tackle while comparing classical and Christian ideals of friendship is that of compatibility between inclusive and exclusive love, which arises following the rise of Christianity, whereby spiritual and preferential love, Christian and Pagan ideals, seem to have a clash.[1] The classical term, *philia*, was commonly accompanied by *eros* in Greek philosophy[2] and even this simple conjunction implies that the classical term refers to a love that desires something exclusively, and loves not at all in the way that Christian love does by including the enemy as well as the neighbor in a model of love based on a positive understanding of self-love—the command to love as "thyself". Even though in the Old Testament friendship was not often found as a valuable concept, save for a few influential examples such the friendship of David and Jonathan,[3] Carolinne White explains that some books—such as

[1] See, for example David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 157: "In the fourth century, some Christians … came to regard friendship as a pagan ideal distinct from Christian love."
[2] Carolinne White, *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 46.
[3] See, for example, "Planctus David super Saul et Jonathan" by Peter Abelard in PL 178, 1821-24.

the Proverbs, the Wisdom of Solomon, and Ecclesiasticus—present a more positive image of friendship thanks to the influence of Hellenism and points out how some of the views on friendship are modelled on classical Hellenistic ideas.[4]

In Sirach 6:5-17, for example, the warnings against false friendships and the praise of good friendships reflect attitudes to be found in Classical sources—how friendships based on utility or pleasure dissolve over time and only do harm, but how a true friend is like a treasure and a medicine, as well as the idea that only God-fearing people can cultivate the second kind of friendship.[5] Likewise, Philo the Jew, who may have influenced early Christian writers by offering a model of friendship that was familiar to them thanks to their classical learning but was also made acceptable within a Christian framework, also refers to the Greek proverb about friends having all in common, *koina ta ton philon*, and to "the Stoic definition of benevolence as the desire that good should befall your neighbour for his own sake."[6] Philo further refers to the ideas that true friendship can only flourish between good, virtuous people, and that the bond of virtue is much stronger than kinship, and that the friend's deviance from the path of virtue ends the friendship.[7] Moreover, White argues that "texts such as Acts 2:44, 4:32, Gal. 6:2 and Phil 1:27 were themselves influenced by such well-known

[4] White, *Christian Friendship*, 47.
[5] Cf. Plato and Aristotle's ideal of true friendship that can occur only between good and virtuous people.
[6] White, *Christian Friendship*, 47; cf. Philo, *On the Special Laws* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937), I.69-70, dx.doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.philo_judaeus-special_laws.1937.
[7] Philo, *Special Laws*, III.155-56: "It is right indeed to shew friendship, to those whose actions are worthy of friendship, but no evil-doer is a true friend. Those whom we call our kinsfolk or within the circle of kinsmen our friends are turned into aliens by their misconduct when they go astray; for agreement to practice justice and every virtue makes a closer kinship than that of blood, and he who abandons this enters his name in the list not only of strangers and foreigners but of mortal enemies."

maxims as *koina ta ton philon* and 'one soul in two bodies.'"[8] The former, attributed to Pythagoras whose followers held their possessions communally, being a maxim Plato uses to describe the perfect constitution,[9] and the latter being Aristotle's definition of friendship (or, at least, a definition attributed to him by Diogenes Laertius),[10] the influence of the ideas expressed in these two maxims on the parts of the Bible where ideals of community relations are described, suggests points of contact and continuity between the two ideals despite the fundamental shift caused by Christianity and the new worldview it propagated.

Another source of continuity is that, despite the contradictions of these two models of friendship, spiritual/all-inclusive and exclusive, many Christian thinkers still relied on their classical learning and understood pagan ideals in a new, Christian light, and it is for this reason that sharp categorical distinctions may be misleading rather than helpful. For the terms *philia*/*amicitia* and *agape*/*caritas* not only overlap in meaning, they are often used interchangeably by Christian writers. St. Basil the Great, for example, uses *agape* more often than he uses *philia*, while Gregory Nazianzen shows a preference for *philia*, and Basil also refers to classical ideas and terminology to express his Christian teachings.[11] Therefore, it is difficult to argue that there is a sharp distinction between the two terms, whereby one gains an invariably positive meaning

[8] White, *Christian Friendship*, 52; Hans Dieter Betz, *Plutarch's Ethical Writings and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 237.
[9] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), 8.1.14-16, dx.doi.org/ 10.4159/DLCL.diogenes_laertius-lives_eminent_philosophers_book_viii_chapter_1_pythagoras.1925; Plato, *Laws* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 739C-740A, dx.doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.plato_philosopher-laws.1926.
[10] Laertius, *Lives*, 5.1.21-22.
[11] See, for example, Augustine Holmes, *A Life Pleasing to God: the Spirituality of the Rules of St Basil* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2000), 75.

while the other has a negative one. White also notes how "the Classical terminology of friendship was not necessarily restricted to an inferior, worldly, purely human relationship," referring to John Chrysostom, who uses the classical term while referring to Matt. 22:40 and writes that "*philia* is the basis of all good things and that on this depend all the law and the prophets."[12] As long as that fundamental feature of the Christian ideal—that God is the source and the end of true friendship—is kept, Christian and classical ideals overlap and merge in many ways. Furthermore, the Christian ideal is not all that monolithic, no matter how firmly rooted in the Scripture the different expressions of it were. It seems necessary, therefore, to distinguish the shape Christian love takes in a monastic context, where it was necessary to develop an administrative structure for a certain group of people who required a socio-political framework, and where the Christian ideal of universal love, despite being the spiritual ideal, could not solve practical problems by itself.

The reason this study restricts itself to classical philosophical, Egyptian ascetical and early monastic sources is that the monastic theorists studied in the last chapter of the present study—St. Basil the Great and St. John Cassian—present monastic ideals of friendship and community which synthesize the two earlier influences—that is, Greek and Egyptian. From both sources come ideals of renunciation, virtue, and love; however, being political units that can be compared to the model of state envisaged by classical writers both at the administrative and social levels, the ideal monasteries theorized by Basil and Cassian combine the politico-philosophical and ascetical ideals in an effort to create communities which are as viable within the world they occupy as they are

[12] John Chrysostom, Hom. 7 in 2 Tim.; quoted in White, *Christian Friendship*, 54.

compatible with the spiritual ideal to which they aspire. As in the classical ideal of state, where reason rules and desires obey, in a monastic context, it is essential that superiors and inferiors play the parts considered fit for them and either rule or be ruled and obey, while in both ideals the members hold everything in common in a bond of perfect friendship.

Carolinne White identifies the distinctive characteristics of classical friendship as follows:

> A fundamental belief in reciprocity …, a high degree of intimacy … [whereby a friend becomes] a second self; the idea that a friend ought to possess some reason for being loved, which in the case of good men would be their virtue, and that friends should share material things and have interests in common … [and] a need for some kind of equality between friends, as well as a concern for justice.[13]

Unlike the classical ideal, the Christian ideal extends to one's enemies as well, and therefore does not see reciprocity as an indispensable element of its ideal of love.[14] Rather than forgiveness, which White sees as replacing reciprocity in the Christian ideal,[15] it seems that *apatheia* was what replaced reciprocity in the monastic model. The emphasis on loving equally, which will be discussed in the following chapters, supports this idea by advocating neutrality of love. By loving everyone equally, one is saved from actually loving or hating anyone in particular and is spared the dangers of particular affection which may result in loving one whom God hates or hating one whom God loves.

Certain things persist, however, from the classical ideal to the Christian ideal. As White notes, just as devotion to virtue and shared pursuits had provided a good basis for the classical ideal of true friendship, the Christians saw their ideal friendship as

[13] White, *Christian Friendship*, 55; see also Konstan, *Friendship in Classical World*, 123, where the same or similar themes are discussed in relation to Roman friendships.
[14] White, *Christian Friendship*, 55.
[15] Ibid.

springing from "common faith and devotion to God."[16] However, even though White's argument that equality in the sight of God helped Christian love overcome difficulties arising between friends who were not equal applies to Christian love in a general sense,[17] it does not necessarily apply to the monastic context. In the same way as classical thinkers favored unity of interests for social and individual advancement, these were also appreciated by monastic thinkers for the further development of a community and the individuals that constitute it, but still the community was built on a strict hierarchy.[18] The solution offered to this issue by monastic thinkers can be compared to the classical solution of the superior one receiving more love, for their ideal was based on the idea that a member of an inferior standing should befriend and submit to their superior; like the classical ideal, this was to bring harmony and order for the further development both of the individual and the community.

This state of order and harmony within the community would last as long as it was based on true, virtuous relationships between its members. This emphasis on permanence is another element that survives. It survives both at an individual and a communal level; if, at an individual level, people achieve such a relationship, their relationship will be lasting, and likewise the communal order and harmony will be lasting as long as the individuals retain this disposition. Just like the classical ideal of friendship became lasting when based on similarity of virtue and shared pursuits, the

[16] White, *Christian Friendship*, 57.
[17] Ibid.
[18] This is not to be confused with the classical ideal that, at a social level, every part of the whole must play its proper part, because, while advocating this, the same writers also advocated equality in individual friendships. The phenomenon of individual friendship loses its central position in discussions of monastic friendship, as we shall see in the following chapters. However, the classical ideas that the superior friend should receive more, and that, in a social context, everyone must act according to their position while sharing everything, persist.

monastic ideal would also be lasting if the relationships resulted from a love of and a desire for God. The necessity for agreement in source and end is observed in both. Again, in a similar way to the classical ideal playing an important part in bringing about social harmony and justice, the monastic ideal would bring those to the community. The Christian commandment to love the neighbor as one's self, just like Aristotle's good man having a friendship modelled on his relationship with his own self, envisages a positive self-love whereby the love profits not only the person but also those around the person. The reason for this is that the self-love of a virtuous/good person can never be selfish, that it will invariably serve to bring about what is good as much for the person as for all. These surviving elements are witnessed in the writings of Pachomius, Horsiesios and other desert father who emphasized loving equally, obedience to the will of the spiritually superior people, and harmony in the community, and also in the writings of St. Basil the Great and St. John Cassian, who, in addition to emphasizing the same elements, also further developed the idea of such virtuous close associations playing a part in keeping order and harmony.[19]

This overarching theme of friendship, a pillar of society which helps preserve order and justice, extends to the relationship of the members to one another as equals who not only wish one another the good that is accepted and desired but also help one another toward that good, as well as to the relationships the ruled and the ruling classes have with one another. Unlike a tyranny, where there is no friendship between the ruler

[19] In Brian Patrick McGuire, "Introduction" to *Friendship and Community: The Monastic Experience, 350-1250*. (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1988), xl, it is noted that monastic politics was "based not on individual self-sufficiency but on the development of the individual within a community that could help his spiritual growth."

and the ruled,[20] having established friendship among themselves and therefore having common interests, the two classes of the ideal community/society according to classical and monastic sources work together to preserve order and justice while at the same time the ruling classes act as shepherds and lead the ruled closer to the ideal good that everyone wishes both for themselves and for the other members of their community. From Aristotle to Cassian, the central motive—and motif—in discussions of friendship is the virtuous, good people coming together in an inter- and intra-personal union both with themselves and with their neighbors/friends, which results in a positive view of self-love insofar as it benefits not only the person but the whole community. The emphasis on virtue is an essential element to avoid subversive associations within the community, and it moreover has spiritual implications and is incorporated into the monastic ideal. This interplay of social/worldly and spiritual concerns from classical sources to very influential monastic texts is an interesting theme to consider. This, too, has both political/administrative and spiritual implications just as the relationship between the ruler and the ruled is an important factor both for the preservation of justice and order and for the spiritual development of the community.

1.2 Sources and Structure

[20] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 1161a32-36, dx.doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.aristotle-nicomachean_ethics.1926. (Hereafter *Nic. Eth.*). See also Aristotle, *Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), 1295a17-25, dx.doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.aristotle-politics.1932: "But there is a third kind of tyranny which is thought to be tyranny in the fullest degree, being the counterpart of universal kingship; to this sort of tyranny must necessarily belong a monarchy that exercises irresponsible rule over subjects all of the same or of a higher class with a view to its own private interest and not in the interest of the persons ruled. Hence it is held against the will of the subjects, since no free man willingly endures such rule."

The interplay of the spiritual and the secular in monastic communities which retain strictly hierarchical structures makes the emphasis on Christian love prevalent in current secondary literature seem less relevant and significant in a monastic context. The tendency has been to focus on the phenomenon of Christian love and to understand it in contrast to pagan love—the former being spiritual and based on equality before God, while the latter is secular and has worldly rather than spiritual aims. *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century* by Carolinne White, while devoting a chapter to monastic friendship, focuses largely on the phenomenon of Christian love—as is suggested by the title of the book—and, even though she makes compelling comments on the issue of continuity from antiquity to Christianity through Hellenism and Neo-Platonism, she does not focus on monastic friendship as a distinct phenomenon. The invaluable collection of essays by Adèle M. Fiske, *Friends and Friendship in the Monastic Tradition,* points out significant points of connection between the teaching of Cassian and the teachings of Evagrius Ponticus and St. Basil. However, one needs to consult Augustine Holmes and his seminal work, *A Life Pleasing to God: the Spirituality of the Rules of St Basil* for more comprehensive arguments about the theme of continuity from Aristotle and the Stoics to Basil and those he influenced—including Cassian. Another comprehensive study, *Friendship and Community: The Monastic Experience, 350-1250,* by Brian Patrick McGuire, contrasts the early monastic tradition's understanding of friendship and the aristocratic friendships of the late Empire, and, even though this yields some significant results to better understand the changes in the fourth century, an emphasis on the continuity—both in administrative and spiritual ways—is missing, perhaps as a result of the absence of a comparison between classical writers

such as Plato and Aristotle and the monastic writers they influenced—who include Basil and Cassian in their numbers. Other secondary sources such as scholarly articles have been used when relevant, but comprehensive monographs on the concept of monastic friendship and its relation to classical teachings, especially in its formative period with the influential currents at play, are still in need—with McGuire's work being the most substantial study on the subject to this date.[21]

The main distinction to point out here is that the present study treats monastic friendship as a phenomenon that is distinct from Christian friendship, and understands it within the larger social and historical context of monasticism while also considering interpersonal affection and its functions for the individual and the community in comparison to the functions expressed in classical sources. Of course, Christian love is inevitably a central theme in the way the monastic legislators in question understand and discuss community relations; however, rather than a universal model of love, they needed a political model that would promote spiritual advance without losing touch with the earthly difficulties that might arise in relation to the organization and administration of large communities. The themes that become decisive elements within this scheme can be grouped into three main headings which contain interrelated theme groups: 1. Loving equally, loving based on absolute value/virtuousness, and the ensuing agreement of interests; 2. Renunciation of the world and self-will—which is connected to humility and obedience; 3. Order, hierarchy, and achieving the good life in community. This study will consider points of continuity as well as discontinuity between the sources in which

[21] Even though the number of works devoted specifically to the phenomenon of monastic friendship are limited, there are numerous scholarly books and articles dealing with classical friendship—some of which have been used in this study.

it traces ideals of friendship in relation to the practice of building a community which is devoted to spiritual aspirations but cannot escape practical concerns.

Even though there are classical other sources discussed whenever relevant, the main primary sources in which these ideals are traced in the second chapter of this study are the *Laws*, *Phaedrus*, and *Lysis* by Plato, and the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Eudemian Ethics* by Aristotle. In the works of Plato, friendship is a subtype of desire, which, if it becomes intense, is called love.[22] The relationships between friends is not an asymmetrical relationship,[23] however; for, although it includes desire, it is not a relationship in which the two parties desire one another for what is lacking in themselves or for what the other has to offer, making their bond quite susceptible—as it is prone to end once the object of desire is gone.[24] While such a relationship in which the participants come together in a way that places them on unequal levels cannot last,[25] friendship is a relationship that is based on equality and therefore lasts. Likewise, in the ideal state, where there is friendship between the elements that constitute the state, friends hold everything in common.[26] This equality is a source of unity and harmony in a community.[27] Aristotle sees the relationship of true friends as being modelled on a good person's relationship with themselves, and argues that such friends want to live together in a union where they lead one another closer to virtue—unlike base people whose union

[22] Plato, *Laws*, 837A.
[23] I use this term to refer to the nature of a relationship whereby each party seeks their own distinct interest rather than having shared interests for which they work together.
[24] Plato, *Phaedrus* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 238E-241D and 252D-E, dx.doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.plato_philosopher-phaedrus.1914. (Hereafter *Phdr*.)
[25] Plato, *Laws*, 837B.
[26] Plato, *Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 450a, dx.doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.plato_philosopher-republic.2013; cf. Ibid., 424A. (Hereafter *Rep*.)
[27] Plato, *Laws*, 739C-E.

generates even worse habits.[28] Similar to Plato, Aristotle sees friendship to be the result of similarity in virtue and agreement in aims, which can happen only between good people. [29] By wanting to live together, these people make the virtue they love and desire even more widespread—after all, loving virtue means wanting it to be as widespread as possible. The reason for this attitude is that the same aim in life constitutes the *eudaimonia* of both parties and therefore their relationship cannot be asymmetrical, just like their value cannot be relational to the beneficiary—the opposite of an asymmetrical/false relationship.

In the third chapter, works by or relating to some Desert Fathers are considered. One group, the Coptic Lives of Saint Pachomius, survive in twenty-two recensions, twenty-one in Sahidic, the idiom of Pachomius and his disciples, and one in Bohairic. The Sahidic lives survive in very fragmentary versions which range from one or two pages to twenty-five to thirty pages in length. The *First Sahidic Life* consists of a few fragments that survive in a manuscript from the sixth century, and is probably the most primitive source. Even though the Sahidic sources offer interesting insights into the early career of Pachomius, the best preserved and the most popular life is the Bohairic text, which is thought to be a translation of a text written originally in Sahidic Coptic. It is commonly accepted that the *Bohairic Life* and the *First Greek Life* must have had a common source. The *First Greek Life*, believed to be composed in the 390s by a Pachomian monk, follows the *Bohairic Life* both in its wording and in the things it

[28] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1172a7-14.
[29] Ibid., 1156b7-11.

recounts. All the other lives in Greek depend on it in one way or another.[30] The Rules by Pachomius and his disciples consist of four series of regulations. Having adapted to changing conditions over time, the works were known in the West for centuries in the form of a Latin translation made by St. Jerome in 404 from a Greek source that was translated for him from Coptic. He translated documents attributed to Pachomius and his disciples and successors Horsiesios and Theodore.[31] The *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, the anonymous anthology also known as the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, first written in Greek but based on Coptic oral tradition, focuses on monastic figures who were active from the 330s to 460s. Likely compiled in Palestine in the late fifth century, the anthology survives in two forms, the alphabetical and the systematic collections, which include about 1000 and 1200 sayings, respectively.[32] They offer concise sayings which do not have the erudite complexity of either the classical or the later monastic sources discussed here.

The Pachomian texts focus on renunciation of all worldly bonds, including private property and family, as well as on the importance of humility and obedience in a community. They also emphasize, especially for those in positions of power, the importance of loving equally in an effort to avoid loving or hating an unworthy person.[33] In a similar way to the teleological ethics of Aristotle, which considers a human life to

[30] See *The Pachomian Koinonia*, vol. 1, trans. Armand Veilleux (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1980), 1-10, and William Harmless, *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 116-17. The information provided here on the history of Pachomian sources are taken from these two sources.

[31] *The Rules of Saint Pachomius*, in *The Pachomian Koinonia*, vol. 2, trans. Armand Veilleux (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1981), 7-9.

[32] See Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 169-71.

[33] *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, trans. Benedicta Ward (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1984), 95, 145, 202; *The Instructions of Saint Pachomius*, in *The Pachomian Koinonia*, vol. 3, trans. Armand Veilleux (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1982), 14, 16, 17,20.

be a success or a failure depending on the person's ability or inability to reach the ultimate end of human life—a *telos* which is identified by Aristotle as *eudaimonia*, the point of ultimate fulfillment where no other desire remains and all that is good is attained at once, for the sake of which everything else is desired but which is desired only for its own sake[34]—the monastic understanding of friendship, while acknowledging true friendship as a virtue, recognizes such close human relations as means to a higher end. Friendship with God being the ultimate end, which is desired as an end in itself and for its own sake, human friendship is desired only insofar as it leads one closer to that ultimate end—most likely in the form of a master-disciple relationship between a monk and an elder, as in the case of young Pachomius and his master Palamon.[35] All worldly bonds having been renounced in favor of spiritual bonds, the understanding of friendship in the Egyptian tradition may have been diminished to a master-disciple relationship, but this is not without its complexities. Moreover, the idea that true friendship based on the right motives engenders order and harmony and encourages both practical and spiritual development in the individual members of the community and within the community itself still survives.[36]

The first part of the fourth chapter focuses on St. Basil the Great, who, having been introduced to ascetical ideals through his classical education and having then travelled to Egypt, was familiar with and was influenced by both currents.[37] The main

[34] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1175b7-9, 1176a30-32.
[35] See *the First Greek Life of Pachomius*, in *Pachomian Koinonia*, vol. 1, 363, 369 for examples.
[36] Cf. The ideal political communities described by Plato and Aristotle.
[37] See the "Introduction" to St. Basil, *Ascetical Works* (The Fathers of the Church, vol. 9), trans. M. Monica Wagner (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1999), ix: "Pachomian Coenobitism, considerably corrected and modified, was the model of the monastic system propagated by St. Basil." See also Holmes, *A Life Pleasing to God*, 15 and Phillip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*

Basilian source to be considered in the chapter is the *Great Asceticon*, known in English as the Long Rules, which was translated into Latin by Rufinus of Aquileia (c. 354-411) and became as influential in western monasticism as in eastern monasticism. This work was in progress for a long time, and had an earlier, shorter version known as the *Small Asceticon*. Probably finished in 366, the *Small Asceticon* reflects Basil's vision for the monastic community which he developed as a result of his own experience as an ascetic. The *Great Asceticon*, more than twice the size of its predecessor, was categorized into themes in what is known as the 'Pontic Recension,' which may have been completed as early as 376.[38] The major focus of the second section of the chapter is the *Conferences* by John Cassian, and more specifically the sixteenth conference on friendship. Owen Chadwick sets the earliest date for this source as 425 and argues that, since this date is more than twenty-five after Cassian left Egypt, the teachings he presents in the conferences cannot be a factual account of what he had heard from the abbas during his time in Egypt, and that the "Egyptian abbots are being made to conform to a literary convention."[39] Therefore, the conference in question is taken in this study to reflect the teachings of Cassian which reflect the Egyptian and Basilian influences on his teaching.

The initial experience of St. Basil the Great, who had received a classical education in Athens, was an endeavor approved by Libanius, his pagan tutor in Athens,

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(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 78-82 and Anthony Meredith, "Asceticism-Christian and Greek," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 27, no. 2 (October 1976): 325-6, for the classical influences of St. Basil.

[38] *The Rule of St Basil in Latin and English*, trans. Anna M. Silvas (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013), 8-12. The information provided here on the history of Basilian sources are taken from this book and from Holmes, *A Life Pleasing to God* and the "Introduction" to Basil, *Ascetical Works*.

[39] Owen Chadwick, *John Cassian: A Study in Primitive Monasticism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1950), 29.

as being compatible with the ancient ideals of philosophical asceticism and seclusion.[40] Later, encouraged by family and friends, he visited Egypt and other centers of monasticism, and was influenced by Pachomian teachings.[41] Similarly, Cassian received a classical education and visited Egypt, and was moreover influenced by Basilian teachings. The points of continuity are, therefore, numerous. In an Aristotelian manner, Basil sees people to be social animals who naturally desire to live with and depend on and love their kind.[42] As people come together in Aristotle's ideal of political community to make the "good life" possible for all, likewise, in a monastic community, people come together to work for the similar but Christianized shared aim of being pleasing to God. According to Basil, this desire should not result from fear of punishment or from an expectation of reward, but from the supreme love one has for the ultimate good.[43] Like Aristotle's *eudaimonia*, this desire for the ultimate good is one that is an end in itself and never a means to something else—because it comprises at once all that is good. The process of spiritual perfection begins, according to Basil, with this supreme love.[44] In Cassian's thought, the process of purification starts with the kind of fear that leads one to renounce the world.[45] It is followed by humility and obedience, which make one comply with the rule and the example of their predecessors while also considering themselves lower than everyone else. The end of this process is a love that is

[40] Holmes, *A Life Pleasing to God*, 15.
[41] See the "Introduction" to Basil, *Ascetical Works*, ix, and Holmes, *A Life Pleasing to God*, 15.
[42] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 239; cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1278b21-26.
[43] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 227.
[44] Ibid., 233-35.
[45] John Cassian, *The Institutes*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (New York: the Newman Press, 2000), 4:39, 99-100.

identified with God, which one attains through the sublimation of fear and humility into perfect love.[46] Parallels in classical and Pachomian sources are numerous.[47]

The monastic community, in both Basil and Cassian, is where people come together to successfully go through this process and help each other along the way. Since the end of the process is one that is so high and requires diligent effort, and since it is a difficult matter to keep order and harmony in any community, both writers resort to a structure of strict hierarchy, within which humility and obedience find new meaning in the form of submission to a friend's will—the ideal friend now being the elder in charge, who is capable of guiding one to the desired end. Again, true friendship is seen as existing only between good people who, unlike base people, lead each other to a higher end. It is, moreover, a chaste relationship—as in classical sources. Perhaps the emphasis on equality and reciprocity has faded away with the phenomenon of individual friendship losing its central position; however, within the monastic community, where individual relationships are given sense as parts of the whole socio-political structure, this is not a serious deviation from the classical ideal of state where there is friendship between all the elements who hold everything in common. There is, therefore, more adaptation of the classical than deviation from it in the way these two writers theorized ideal communities, and I hope the following chapters will provide sufficient material to make a compelling argument about this continuity despite the fundamental shift caused by the rise of Christianity.

[46] Cassian, *Institutes*, 4:39, 100; Ibid., 4:43.
[47] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1156b15-1157a15 and 1157b34-36; Plato, *Phdr.*, 255B-256E and 256C-D; *Instructions of Pachomius*, 16, 20; *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 145, 202.

CHAPTER II:

THE CLASSICAL ORIGINS OF FRIENDSHIP IDEALS

In this chapter, the ways in which three Greek philosophers—Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—thought and wrote about the concept of friendship will be discussed. The ideal of friendship in all three philosophers shares certain aspects: equality of virtue, shared desires, living together in community and holding everything together. Ideal friendship is presented, in all three, as a harmonizing influence which brings together otherwise discordant elements. It is therefore a significant topic in discussions of political organization, as it is commonly associated with community building. The main sources discussed in the chapter are the *Laws, Phaedrus,* and *Lysis* by Plato, and the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Eudemian Ethics* by Aristotle. It is important start a discussion of monastic friendship with these philosophers, because all three of them had a persisting influence on later philosophers, including St. Basil the Great and St. John Cassian, whose ideas are discussed in the last chapter of the present work as the culmination of classical and Egyptian sources.

2.1 The Classical Background: the Writings of Socrates and Plato

One common difficulty encountered in relation to discussing the concept of friendship in Socrates and Plato is identified by David Konstan as resulting from the fact that the Greek term *philia*, commonly translated as 'friendship,' refers to "almost all that English includes under 'love,'" as well as to kinship relationships, especially in its plural adjectival form (*philoi*), and even to social harmony and diplomatic alliances, whilst also referring to a 'friend' (*philos*). [48] The concept of friendship was not, then, clearly distinguished from other bonds of affection; it was, however, distinctly separate from "*erôs*, 'erotic love', which a man typically felt towards a woman … or an adolescent boy."[49] Discussing the nature of Plato's dialogue, the *Lysis*, which is commonly regarded as being on the subject of friendship, Konstan contends that Plato's chief concern was with "the nature of desire or attraction in general, of which friendship is one type," and that the dialogue was concerned just as much with *erôs* because to Plato *erôs* "seemed … a better emblem of the philosophical aspiration to pass beyond the world of changing appearances to the timeless realm of 'ideas.'"[50] And indeed, Plato explains in the eighth book of the *Laws* that "friendship is the name we give to the affection of like for like in point of goodness, and of equal for equal; and also to that of the needy for the rich, which is of the opposite kind; and when either of these feelings is intense we call it 'love.'"[51] This quotation is an indication not only that Plato saw friendship as a relationship that would flourish among people who were equals or whose

[48] David Konstan, "Friendship (*Philia*)," in *The Continuum Companion to Plato*, ed. Gerald A. Press (London: Continuum Books, 2012), 175.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Plato, *Laws*, 837A. The Greek terms used by Plato here are *phílon* and *éros*.

expectations from a relationship were compatible and who were, as it were, made equal by this relationship—despite differences of wealth or influence—but also that, for Plato, friendship was a subtype of desire and, as such, was dealt with within the larger framework of desire.

Socrates also explains that lovers have an asymmetrical relationship while friends are people who are like each other and therefore cannot have an asymmetrical relationship that is ultimately defined by one party's self-love.[52] Likewise, when Crito offers to bribe the jailer to rescue Socrates, thinking that there is no worse reputation than that of one who values money more than friendship, Socrates refuses this offer as being wrong and advises Crito not to heed the opinion of the many. Here, again, their likeness in virtue, despite difference of social/legal position, is what brings them together.[53] Given the age difference between the two main characters of Plato's dialogue *Lysis*, Hippothales and Lysis, and the different roles played by each, lover and beloved, their relationships is not, by definition, one of friendship. For an example of the emphasis on equality, the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Aristotle may be consulted. There, Aristotle explains that each friend should derive from the friendship the same benefit, or at least similar ones,[54] and again elsewhere that "in all of these [kinds of friendship] the term friendship in a manner indicates equality, for even with those who are friends on the ground of goodness the friendship is in a manner based on equality of

[52] Plato, *Phdr.*, 238E-241D and 252D-E.
[53] Plato, *Crito* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 44B-C, dx.doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.plato_philosopher-crito.2017.
[54] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1156b35 and 1157a6.

goodness."[55] Other examples include Plato's *Phaedrus*, where he explains that "the beloved … receives all service from his lover, as if he were a god," seeing an asymmetrical relationship as being properly attributed to lovers—not to friends.[56] Further, drawing on the Pythagorean maxim that friends have all in common ("κοινὰ τὰ φίλων" in the *Republic*), Socrates suggests that there would be no private property in the ideal state: "as regarding women and children it is completely clear that the property of friends will be held in common."[57] Elsewhere, Plato uses the Pythagorean dictum to exemplify the perfect constitution, bringing everyone and everything in a state into a state of harmonious communality, to such a degree that all their actions are in harmony and all their grief and joy is in common.[58] It follows, therefore, that for all the three philosophers in question, the ideal of friendship involves equality as an essential principle.

Such a political or civic view of friendship leads to an association of it with concord (ὁμόνοια) as an essential ingredient of the cement of society: "justice brings concord and friendship."[59] In the *Republic*, there is a tripartite division of the individual into reason, spirit, and appetite, with the three parts corresponding to three classes in society. Reason must govern, while the spirit and appetite must act as an ally and a subject, respectively; for, if the appetitive side is corrupted by means of physical pleasures, it enslaves and governs the whole, turning it upside down.[60] Harmony is the

[55] Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 1238b15-19, dx.doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.aristotle-eudemian_ethics.1935. (Hereafter *Eudem. Eth.*)
[56] Plato, *Phdr.*, 255A.
[57] Plato, *Rep.*, 450a; cf. Ibid., 424A.
[58] Plato, *Laws*, 739C-E.
[59] Plato, *Rep.*, 351d.
[60] Ibid., 441a-442c

friendship of these three classes, both in the state and in the individual.[61] From an agreement that reason must rule, and the other two must be subject to it, springs harmony and temperance; this is the way to be just. Justice and harmony in the state as well as in the individual are achieved by nothing other than every part performing its respective function of ruling or being ruled.[62] Friendship being such an integral part of social harmony, while trying to reason as to find a way to achieve balance in a community which does not engage in manual labor, which is the surest way to cope with the carnal desires that cause the ruin of many individuals as well as states, the Athenian stranger of the *Laws* suggests that "it is necessary to discern the real nature of friendship and desire and love (so-called)," because "what causes the utmost confusion and obscurity is the fact that this single term embraces these two things, and also a third kind compounded of them both."[63]

He explains that "friendship is the name we give to the affection of like for like, in point of goodness, and of equal for equal; and also to that of the needy for the rich, which is of the opposite kind; and when either of these feelings is intense we call it "'love.'"[64] In addition to these two kinds of *philia*, the Athenian describes a third kind, which is a blend of the two, and argues that, while the friendship between opposites is "terrible and fierce" and not lasting, the friendship that is based on similarity is "gentle

[61] Plato, *Rep.*, 442d.
[62] Such a model surely has important implications for later Christian models for reaching salvation—including personal salvation through interpersonal friendship—and for models of monastic community building, where great emphasis is placed on the authority of the abbot and the duty of the brethren to obey. An interesting point of comparison is the Evagrian triple division of the soul into *epithymia*, *thymos*, and *logistikon* – purification of the soul from passion leads to dispassionate love for all, that is, engenders just behavior that is unsullied by personal favoritism.
[63] Plato, *Laws*, 836E-837A
[64] Ibid., 837A.

and reciprocal throughout life."[65] The third kind, which is a blend of these, presents a difficult case because the person affected by this kind is torn between two tendencies, one of which "bids him to enjoy the bloom of his beloved, while the other forbids him."[66] The reason for this is that, while someone whose desire is focused on the body lusts for their beloved regardless of the beloved's disposition, someone who regards bodily pleasure as secondary lusts for the soul of the beloved and reveres "temperance, courage, nobility and wisdom;"[67] the third kind, blended of these two, as surely as it involves desire just as the other two kinds do, is difficult to determine. The discussion ends with the Athenian and Megillus agreeing that the state should involve "the kind of love which belongs to virtue and desires the young to be as good as possible" and exclude the other two kinds.[68]

Dimitri El Murr argues, in relation to this passage, that the one name that is used for all, thus causing confusion, is none other than *philia*, explaining that the term *philon* is applied both to friends who are like and to friends who are opposites, while the term *erôs* is used to refer to an intense variation of both relationships—not a separate species of *philia*.[69] Moreover, desire seems to be a necessary component in both kinds of *philia* (bodily desire and spiritual desire, respectively), and therefore, El Murr argues, desire needs to be part of the third kind of relationship not yet specified.[70] The friendship of opposites results mainly from a deficiency in one for what the other possesses; the two

[65] Plato, *Laws*, 837B.
[66] Ibid., 837B.
[67] Ibid., 837B-C.
[68] Ibid., 837D.
[69] Dimitri El Murr, "*Philia* in Plato," in *Ancient and Medieval Concepts of Friendship*, ed. Suzanne Stern-Gillet and Gary M. Gurtler (New York: SUNY Press, 2014), 8.
[70] Ibid.

examples provided by Plato illustrate this point by referring to the state of one who is poor in relation to that of one who is rich, as well as to the state of the lover in relation to that of the beloved. In both cases, the former party is wanting of something possessed by the latter, and, by feeling friendship to the latter by virtue of what is lacking in themselves, the former party in fact only loves itself, and this is why a friendship between opposites is "terrible and fierce" and cannot last. This kind of friendship is reminiscent of friendships based on utility and on pleasure, as defined by Aristotle,[71] for in both cases the love of one for the other is valid only in so far as one gains something—profit or pleasure—and the friendship is not felt for the sake of the friend himself. In the second species, however, where *philia* is used to define the "the affection of like for like…and of equal for equal,"[72] reciprocal and lasting friendship is possible, for the friend is loved as an end and not as a means. Despite the fact that likeness does not provide a stable cause for friendship in the *Lysis*, one of Plato's early dialogues, it seems to do so in the *Laws*, Plato's last dialogue.

In the *Lysis*, Socrates moves from an investigation of causes traditionally thought to be the underlying causes of friendship to a search for a more stable cause, suggesting likeness as the first possibility. Quoting the famous line from *Odysseus*, "Yea, ever like and like together God doth draw,"[73] Socrates argues that only the good who are like can be friends to like, while the bad are friends neither to good nor bad.[74] He then goes on to refute this point by arguing that if like is friend to like, there is

[71] Aristotle's taxonomy of friendship will be discussed later in the chapter.
[72] Plato, *Laws*, 837A.
[73] Homer, *Od*. xvii.218; quoted in Plato, *Lysis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), 214a, dx.doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.plato_philosopher-lysis.1925.
[74] Plato, *Lysis*, 214a-e.

nothing to be prized in this relationship, because one cannot offer the other something of which the other is not already in possession, and something that is not prized cannot be a friend; the good, however, can still be friends because they are good, not because they are like, but, since the good are self-sufficient, they would not need or prize anything.[75] The ensuing argument is that opposites must become friends, for the sake of assistance, for things seek their opposite for the fulfillment of what they wish but lack.[76] If opposites are to be friends, however, then a friend is a friend to the enemy and the good to the bad, and this seems to be irrational; therefore "neither is like friend to like, nor opposite friend to opposite."[77] Having reached an agreement with his audience that there are three kinds of things, "the good, the bad, and what is neither good nor bad,"[78] Socrates establishes that, because like is not friend to like, and nothing is a friend to the bad, only the neutral can be friends with the good.[79] His rationale behind this is that, since bad is present in the neutral before it turns bad, as a virus in a body, this presence makes it desire what is good; however, if this presence takes precedence and the neutral becomes bad, then it is deprived of this desire because now it has simply become bad, and the bad cannot be friends to the good.[80]

Having asserted, however, that, just as a patient is friend to a doctor for the sake of a cure and on account of a disease, Socrates argues that "the friend is a friend of its friend for the sake of its friend and because of its foe."[81] In an effort to define the first

[75] Plato, *Lysis*, 215a-c.
[76] Ibid., 215d-216c.
[77] Plato, *Lysis*, 216b.
[78] Ibid., 216d.
[79] Ibid., 216d-217a.
[80] Ibid., 218a.
[81] Ibid., 219b.

friend, alternatively called the first-loved, "the one original friend, for whose sake all the other things can be said to be friends,"[82] Socrates goes on with his enquiry by pointing out that if someone loves something, they also love what is for the sake of that something, as in a father loving the medicine that will cure his son for the sake of his son,[83] and defines the real friend as "a friend for the sake of nothing else that is a friend."[84] However, what is good has no value and therefore is not prized if what is bad is removed; therefore, what is good is loved on account of what is bad by those that are neither. Despite the good becoming redundant in the absence of the bad, the neutral will continue to exist, therefore desires, which can either be good or bad, will exist even when the bad has been eliminated; since desiring something engenders feelings of friendship toward it, friendship also exists in the absence of the bad by virtue of desires; and since something desires what it is deficient in, and since it has become deficient because something has been taken away from it, then what it really desires/its friend is nothing but its own, and therefore friends belong to each other.[85] Even though Socrates' discussion on friendship seems to offer no more than an aporia, the idea that friends belong to each other because they seek in each other what has been taken away from them, as well as the idea that friends lead each other to completion and perfection, are significant contributions that would have important repercussions for later writers on friendship.

[82] Plato, *Lysis*, 219d.
[83] Ibid., 219e.
[84] Ibid., 220b.
[85] Ibid., 220c-222a.

Quoting the argument from the *Lysis* 221d2-4 about desire being the cause of friendship, with the thing that desires being a friend to that which it desires at the time when it desires it, El Murr argues that the Athenian of the *Laws* builds up on this point.[86] E. B. England points out, in relation to the end of the Athenian's argument, that when he says that the state should have "the kind of love which belongs to virtue and desires the young to be as good as possible,"[87] his use of the conjunction 'and' "'connects two *aspects* of the same passion: to desire what is excellent 'is the same thing as desiring excellence to be as great as possible.'"[88] What constitutes similarity in the *Laws* is goodness, and what matters is not the identity of friends but their shared desire for virtue.[89] While in the *Lysis* the dictum of like loving like leads to a dead end, in the *Laws* Plato points to a shared desire for virtue as the source of such a friendship between likes; therefore, the likeness is significant in so far as the two friends' quest for virtue is shared, and their likeness results from their love of virtue. As long as both friends long for virtue, their lasting friendship will accommodate differences because their souls will resemble each other inasmuch as each desires utmost virtue for their soul and the other's soul. This everlasting relationship is also essentially reciprocal because the joint search for virtue also lasts thanks to the friends' efforts. Unlike in bodily desire, where there is an asymmetrical relationship between the lover and the beloved, where the beloved is a means for satisfaction and not a concern in itself for the lover, or unlike desire based on need, where the relationship—for example, between the rich and

[86] El Murr, "*Philia* in Plato," 11.
[87] Plato, *Laws*, 837D.
[88] Quoted in El Murr, "*Philia* in Plato," 29*n*20.
[89] Ibid., 11-12.

the poor—is again asymmetrical, in this kind of friendship which results from resemblance regarding virtue, friends seek each other's good as well as their own good. There is a paideutic relationship between the two souls which are brought together by their common quest for virtue and the relationship is reciprocal and chaste; there is no asymmetrical or bodily desire, and the search is for a common object of desire: virtue. Friends bring each other closer to virtue through the relationship they form. The third kind of relationship referred to by the Athenian is also reciprocal and entails desire, but the person is torn between conflicting desires.[90]

Just like Robert G. Hoerber, who detects a triad of *philia* in the *Lysis*, El Murr sees such a triad also in the *Laws*, the *Symposium*, and the *Phaedrus*.[91] Having explained how law always has in view the restriction of desire, such as in the form of a proscription of excessive wealth, the Athenian turns to homosexual desire in the *Laws* 8.836d and discusses if it can ever engender virtue, providing a negative response and arguing that the laws should not encourage the akratic. The following taxonomy of friendship, discussed previously, corresponds to the three forms of friendship analyzed in the *Phaedrus*.[92] Socrates begins his speech by explaining that one who is governed by pleasure and is of unsound mind will try make his beloved as pleasing as possible by striving to keep the beloved in a position of inferiority and deficiency, thus keeping opposition out of the picture, for to such a person everything equal or better will be hateful. Having demonstrated that such a lover is no profitable guardian for the intellect,

[90] El Murr, "*Philia* in Plato," 12-13. This idea can be compared to the monastic tradition's view of true friendship in which the two friends elevate each other to a spiritually higher level and assist each other in their quest for God, by which they are united like Plato's friends who are united by their joint longing for virtue.
[91] Ibid., 13.
[92] Robert G. Hoerber, "Plato's *Lysis*," *Phronesis* 4 (1959), 27; El Murr, "*Philia* in Plato," 14.

Socrates argues that a weak and effeminate beloved is not a trustworthy companion in times of crisis. Likewise, the lover would strive to keep the beloved without possession, family, friends, so that the presence of these do not hinder his enjoyment of his object of desire. Their asymmetrical relationship, Socrates contends, will not last, for the lover who is harmful when in love will be false when out of love and ask the beloved to return former favors instead of keeping his generous promises. Socrates ends his speech by dismissing the love of such a lover by likening it to the love of a wolf for a lamb.[93] The type of friendship discussed here corresponds to the friendship of opposites in the *Laws*; such a friendship is fierce and cannot last, for it is ultimately defined by self-love.

Following remarks on people who have not been initiated and are corrupted and therefore cannot rise toward absolute beauty but rather choose its namesake and give themselves to pleasure and lust, Socrates goes on to explain that one who has been initiated by a vision of realities will be overcome by awe at the sight of a beautiful form or face and, seeing the person as possessing not only beauty but also the remedy for his woes, will forget for his sake all earthly things. He will do everything to be near his beloved and yearn constantly; this condition is called love, or the winged one.[94] Socrates further explains that every follower of each god loves like the god, and seeks a beloved that is compatible with that god: "The followers of Zeus desire that the soul of him whom they love be like Zeus; so they seek for one of philosophical and lordly nature, and when they find him and love him, they do all they can to give him such a

[93] Plato, *Phdr.*, 238E-241D.
[94] Ibid., 251A-252C.

character."[95] Their search to find their god within themselves leads them to a reminiscence of their god, which inspires the adoption of that god's traits and habits, and they become as much like that god as a human being can be god-like. In the core of this resemblance is thought to lie the beloved, who is loved all the more.[96] As in the *Laws*, this kind of love that draws one near the absolute, is thought to be sufficient reason for everlasting friendship: "For it is the law of fate that evil can never be a friend to evil and that good must always be friend to good."[97]

The love of the "inspired lover" is of value, unlike the love of a false lover, who in fact only loves himself. Over time, this love overflows and affects the beloved as well, who starts seeing in his lover a mirror of himself and a friend. If the two engage in philosophical involvement, rather than giving into passion, their relationship will be transformed into one of mutual goodwill and culminate in what Socrates describes as a "blessing." This love, which is a blessing and a source that generates virtue, like the true friendship described in the *Laws*, refrains from carnal desire, and is mutual.[98] The features of perfect friendship are, therefore, that it lasts a lifetime, it is reciprocal, and it is chaste. There are hints in the *Phaedrus* as to what the third kind of friendship described in the *Laws* corresponds to, as well as a bit of further elucidation on the type. If the life of the friends is governed by their love for honor rather than philosophy, they will at certain moments yield to desire, even though such an action cannot be endorsed by the whole mind. They live their life as inseparable friends who cannot fall into

[95] Plato, *Phdr.*, 252E.
[96] Ibid., 253A.
[97] Ibid., 255B.
[98] Ibid., 255B-256E.

enmity, and, even though they cannot have wings like the philosophical couple to fly upward, they will nevertheless have some feathers granted to them by virtue of their love, which is the beginning of the journey upward.[99] The endorsement of actions by the whole mind, that is, the subject's ability to identify with his acts, or lack thereof, would become a central point of discussion in Aristotle's understanding of friendship.

2.2 The Classical Background: the Writings of Aristotle

Another very important source for the whole of western philosophy, the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Aristotle, declares friendship to be a virtue, and as such, a necessary component in everyone's lives. The rich and the powerful need it because, by having friends, they find an opportunity for beneficence as well as a source of protection for their riches and power, while the poor find refuge in friends, the young a warning against error, and the old care and support. It is also a bond between parents and children, as well as between humans in general.[100] Being the bond of humanity at large, friendship is also what holds cities together, and legislators ascribe more importance to it than they do to justice because friendship is a miniature of the social harmony they strive to bring about, whereas enmity engenders civil conflict.[101] Further, friendship obviates the need for justice, while justice itself is not sufficient without an element of friendship in it.[102]

[99] Plato, *Phdr.*, 256C-D.
[100] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1155a1-20.
[101] Ibid., 1155a23-25.
[102] Ibid., 1155a26-29: "And if men are friends, there is no need of justice between them; whereas merely to be just is not enough—a feeling of friendship also is necessary. Indeed the highest form of justice seems to have an element of friendly feeling in it."

Having established friendship as a virtue that appears to be the bond of humanity as well as of the state, Aristotle goes on to define causes of love. For friendship is reciprocated goodwill, and there can be no reciprocation in one's love for a soulless thing, this relationship cannot be considered friendship; and even among human beings, unless there is an awareness of this reciprocation, there cannot be friendship—for when someone feels goodwill toward someone they do not know, even if their feeling of goodwill is reciprocated by the other party, the two cannot be spoken of as friends without being aware of their mutual goodwill.[103] The three forms of friendship, as defined by Aristotle, are friendship based on utility—one loves another only in so far as they gain something—and friendship based on pleasure—again, the person is not loved for who they are, but because they are pleasant; when the friend stops being useful or pleasant, these friendships dissolve.[104] As opposed to these two, Aristotle places true friendship based on virtue, for the "perfect form of friendship is that between the good, and those who resemble each other in virtue,"[105] and the good love each other and show goodwill toward one another for the sake of one another, not coincidentally or for the prospect of gain or pleasure, so their friendship is lasting and they remain good and virtuous.[106] Since people find their own actions to be pleasant, and are also pleased by actions similar to their own, and since virtuous people are pleasant both objectively and for each other, their friendship lasts by combining similarity with what is good and pleasant. In this sense, friendships based on utility and pleasure bear some resemblance

[103] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1155b29-34 and 1156a1-5.
[104] Ibid., 1156a5-1156b5.
[105] Ibid., 1156b5.
[106] Ibid., 1156b5-10.

to true friendship, for the virtuous and good are both pleasant and useful, but the difference is that they derive pleasure from the same thing—when one party loses the quality that makes them useful, for example, a false friendship fades; in the case of true friendship, however, friends love each other for their sake, and derive pleasure from the same thing, be it goodness or virtue or wit, rather than loving each other for what makes them pleasant or useful.[107]

Aristotle maintains the idea that actions are a necessary part of friendship, and it is for this reason that he places emphasis on communal life in which friends can actively express their feelings of friendship by means of their actions. This emphasis on action also explains why his followers insisted so much on maintaining friendships by means of letters at times of absence; for doing otherwise would mean that, even though the friends retained their affection for each other, the parties involved did not fulfill the duties of true *philia*. For separation ends the activity of friendship, even though it does not end friendship itself, and may cause friendship to be forgotten, a necessary component of true friendship based on virtue is living together; people who are in need seek help or benefit from friends, while people who need no more than what they have seek to spend their days together with friends, because a solitary existence does not become them.[108] The expression *philotes isotes* (friendship is equality),[109] is best expressed in the friendship of the good, according to Aristotle, because friendship is "a fixed disposition … [and] when men wish the good of those they love for their own sakes, their goodwill does not depend on emotion but on a fixed disposition. And in

[107] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1156b15-1157a15.
[108] Ibid., 1157b10-25.
[109] Ibid., 1157b37.

loving their friend they love their own good, for the good man in becoming dear to another becomes that other's good."[110] Another type of friendship Aristotle cites is based on status, and takes place between father and son, ruler and ruled, old and young, for each one of these groups is different and has a distinct virtue and function.[111] In such cases, superior people must be loved more than they love, so that the loving is proportional to the friend's worth and a sort of equality is reached despite the basic superiority of one over the other.[112] Another very important function of true friendship is that friends who are similar in virtue not only avoid erroneous behavior themselves but prevent their friends from such conduct, thus being virtuous both in themselves and to their friends.[113]

Quoting the ubiquitous saying about friends holding everything in common, *koina ta ton philon,* Aristotle discusses the more social aspects of friendship. He sees friendship as an element that increases just conduct in communities, because just behavior is commonly shown to a close associate (as in helping a friend before a stranger) whereas unjust behavior is perceived to be worse when done to a close associate (robbing, an unjust behavior, is perceived to be even worse when a friend is robbed).[114] As the highest form of community, Aristotle offers the political community, because, whereas each community seeks an immediate advantage, the political community seeks the advantage of the whole; the political community, therefore,

[110] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1157b34-36.
[111] Ibid., 1158b12-24.
[112] Ibid., 1158b25-30.
[113] Ibid., 1159b5-7.
[114] Ibid., 1160a1-10.

encompasses all other types of community and all communities are subordinate to it.[115] Friendship appears in all political systems, to the extent that justice also appears; a king's friendship to his subjects involves superior beneficence, for he benefits his subjects, is good to them and ensures that they do well, very much as a shepherd attends to and looks after his flock.[116] Accordingly, just as a craftsman benefits from his tool, or the soul from the body, but feels no friendship toward the soulless object with which he has nothing in common, in deviations such as tyrannies, where the ruler and the ruled have nothing in common, there can flourish little or no justice as well as little or no friendship.[117]

Aristotle distinguishes another category of friendship that is based on a relationship of superiority/inferiority, applying the term 'friendship' to the relationship of children to their parents, of human beings to gods, and even to the relationship between spouses.[118] In friendships that correspond to superiority, the better party wants more because what he gets should depend on his—superior—worth, while the lesser or the needy party asks for more because he is in need and therefore expects his friend's beneficence. While both claims are correct, and it is fine for both parties to get more from the friendship, they should not get more of the same thing; rather "the superior should receive the larger share of honour, the needy one the larger share of profit," in a way that they complement each other, with the superior one receiving honor as the reward of his virtue and beneficence and the needy one obtaining help in the form of

[115] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1160a21-30.
[116] Ibid., 1161a10-15.
[117] Ibid., 1161a32-36. See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1289a28-b5, where tyranny is discussed as a deviation from kingship.
[118] Ibid., 1162a5-10 and 16-17.

profit.[119] Distribution that corresponds to worth is, therefore, what preserves friendship; for, whereas quarrel arises in other kinds of friendship when one party gives the other less or other than what they wished, no such quarrel occurs in friendships of virtue because there is no agreement about services or payment, but rather a friend provides services because of the friend himself.[120] That is why disinterested friendships based on character endure. Unlike friendships for utility or pleasure—which end when the thing that engendered the friendship is no longer obtained through that friendship, because the parties in such friendships become friends not because of who they are but rather for gain—in friendships based on virtue, friends love each other for who they are; a friend is loved *qua* friend. What the two friends expect of their friendship is in agreement, because they strive to attain the same the same ultimate end. The only condition for breaking such a friendship is that the friend be incurably altered. In other types of friendship, it makes sense to dissolve the relationship when the friend alters and stops being useful or pleasurable. In a friendship based on virtue, however, if one of the friends alters or errs, the other must make every effort to correct his friend. It is only if the friend has irretrievably lost his good character that the friendship can be dissolved.[121]

Another concept discussed by Aristotle that can be compared to later ideas of all-inclusive Christian love that extends beyond one's friends, called *caritas*/*agape*, is that of goodwill. He is of the conviction that, because goodwill lacks the intensity of friendship and can be felt toward people one does not even know, it does not necessarily

[119] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1163a26-b4.
[120] Ibid., 1164a35-b1.
[121] Ibid., 1165b1-24.

mean that one would trouble oneself on account of those toward whom one feels goodwill. This is why Aristotle calls goodwill "inoperative friendship," and explains that "when it continues and reaches the point of intimacy may become friendship proper—not the sort of friendship whose motive is utility or pleasure, for these do not arouse goodwill."[122] Because virtue stems from "some kind of excellence or moral goodness,"[123] it cannot engender friendship for utility or pleasure. For, just as these two types of friendship really involve love for oneself and not for one's friend, goodwill that is based on an anticipation of favors is not true goodwill that is felt toward another but rather goodwill toward oneself.[124] Benefactors feel "friendship and affection" for the people who receive the benefit of their goodwill, and they are not, therefore, like creditors who care for the wellbeing of their debtors; for while the creditor does so for the return of his favor, the same is not true of the benefactor.[125] For Aristotle, the relationship between a benefactor and a recipient is more comparable to the relationship between an artist and his work. Since every being loves existence but can exist only in so far as it acts, the recipient is loved more by the benefactor than the benefactor is loved by the recipient because the recipient becomes a means for the benefactor to actualize his potential and exist for real.[126] People of such moral excellence, who are like the benefactor and not the creditor, when they come together and work together on common resolution for what is just and to the advantage of all, they engender concord,

[122] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1167a11-12.
[123] Ibid., 1167a19.
[124] Ibid., 1167a14-20.
[125] Ibid., 1167b17-32.
[126] Ibid., 1167b33-1168a9.

which is "friendship between citizens."[127] Unlike them, base people attain concord only to a small degree, because, while the wishes of good men are in agreement and they strive for what is just and therefore for the advantage of all, base men always look out greedily to attain more advantage for themselves and at the same time spy on their neighbors to prevent them from doing the same; the outcome of this is "discord, everybody trying to make others do their duty but refusing to do it themselves."[128]

Another important aspect of friendship for Aristotle is sharing a common life. He sees living together as an indispensable feature of friendship[129] and argues, therefore, that it is next to impossible to be close friends with many people. The reason for such a difficulty is that all these people would also need to be friends with one another for the whole group to live together in concord, and also that it is difficult to share the joy and distress of a large group of people.[130] Having established living together as an essential part of friendship, on the grounds that friends desire each other because their relationship to one another is like their relationship to themselves and they want to share with one another the pursuits that make their lives meaningful, Aristotle elaborates on the subject of mutual influence which is inevitable when people live together. Base people, when they come together, engage in base pursuits and cause each other to become worse people; good people, on the other hand, become even better in the society of their friends, because their friendship is based, in the first place, on their love for each other's virtuous character and they take from one another the traits that

[127] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1167b2-10.
[128] Ibid., 1167b10-15.
[129] See ibid., 1171a1, where he calls living together "the chief mark of friendship."
[130] Ibid., 1171a1-8.

please them. For nothing pleases the lovers of virtue more than virtue itself, these people correct each other's faults, inspire each other to virtue, and ultimately contribute to the betterment of one another.[131]

Going back to the beginning of the discussion, where Aristotle was quoted as being of the conviction that true friendship can exist only between the good who resemble each other in respect of virtue and who wish each other good because their mutual love is based on a love of character/self,[132] the reason why Aristotle sees bonds of perfect friendship flourishing only among the good is that he sees—just like Plato who sees perfect friendship as opposed to asymmetrical relationships as being engendered by a common search for virtue that forms a bond of reciprocity—that the same act can constitute the *eudaimonia* of two persons who are in such a relationship and is therefore absolute rather than relative. Whereas the value of a doctor who cures, or the value of a musician who entertains, is instrumental and relational to the other person's well-being or entertainment, the value of a good character, though it may be similar to the other two in that it is pleasant and useful, is intrinsic and not relational; therefore a friend is enjoyed "qua good," as himself and not as something else, in a perfect friendship.[133] The value of that which can constitute the *eudaimonia* of multiple persons is, therefore, also intrinsic and not relational. What it means to love someone as nothing other than themselves, and what constitutes the self, as well as their relation to *eudaimonia*, still require elucidation.

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[131] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1172a7-14.
[132] Ibid., 1156b7-11.
[133] Ibid., 7.2.1237b1-6; see Anthony William Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and* Aristotle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 109-10.

Aristotle's teleological ethics presupposes a *telos*, an end, by which the life of a person will be judged in the end as having failed or succeeded. Human life is given so that a purpose is achieved—a purpose that is not a choice but an essential part of human nature. It is through the process of growing into this good and achieving it that one becomes fully human; for to fail at achieving this good, the very thing for which human life exists, is the same as not having existed at all.[134] Alasdair MacIntyre's distinction between "man-as-he-happens-to-be" and "man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature" applies. Ethics, he explains, is the science that instructs people "how to move from potentiality to act," how to move from the former category of human beings to the latter, fulfilling our purpose and realizing our true nature.[135] This *telos* is defined by Aristotle as *eudaimonia*,[136] which is desired for its own sake and not for the sake of anything else, because it is that point of ultimate fulfillment where no desire of longing remains anymore.[137] It follows, therefore, that *eudaimonia* is never chosen as a means but always as an end, for it is the most final of all goals.[138] Even though virtues are chosen partly for themselves, for they are goods that are chosen without expectation of

[134] Paul J. Wadell, *Friendship and the Moral Life* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 31-32.
[135] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 51; quoted in Wadell, *Friendship and Moral Life*, 33.
[136] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1176a30-32: "it remains for us to treat in outline of Happiness [εὐδαιμονία (*eudaimonia*) in the original], inasmuch as we count this to be the End of human life."
[137] Ibid., 1175b7-9.
[138] Ibid., 1097a30-b6: "… a thing pursued as an end in itself is more final than one pursued as a means to something else, and that a thing never chosen as a means to anything else is more final than things chosen both as ends in themselves and as means to that thing; and accordingly a thing chosen always as an end and never as a means we call absolutely final. Now happiness [εὐδαιμονία (*eudaimonia*) in the original] above all else appears to be absolutely final in this sense, since we always choose it for its own sake and never as a means to something else; whereas honour, pleasure, intelligence, and excellence in its various forms, we choose indeed for their own sakes (since we should be glad to have each of them although no extraneous advantage resulted from it), but we also choose them for the sake of happiness, in the belief that they will be a means to our securing it. But no one chooses happiness for the sake of honour, pleasure, etc., nor as a means to anything whatever other than itself."

further advantage than the good they bring to a person's life, they are still chosen partly for the sake of *eudaimonia*; although virtue, a good in itself, may be chosen as a path to *eudaimonia*, *eudaimonia* is never chosen for anything other than its own sake.[139] Being final and comprehensive, *eudaimonia* is inclusive of all that is good but it is still "the 'most final' of the 'final' goods inasmuch as none of them alone can be counted the highest good, but no life can be good without them."[140] It is not one of these goods which, by virtue of being more desirable than all the others, constitutes *eudaimonia*; *eudaimonia* consists in the coming together of all that is good to constitute the best that can ever be.

Aristotle explains that the dominant part of any composite body is thought to be that body, such as the sovereign and the state, and man is no exception. Love of self, therefore, signifies the satisfaction of this dominant part, while self-control signifies restriction by one's intellect. The intellect is, therefore, the man himself, for "it is our reasoned acts that are felt to be in the fullest sense our own acts, voluntary acts."[141] Since one lives inasmuch as one lives and does, one's actions also constitute the actualization of what one potentially is.[142] Aristotle argues that "every activity aims at the end that corresponds to the disposition of which it is the manifestation" and that "a thing is defined by its end."[143] Because courage is noble, the end of what a courageous man does is also noble, and, because the end of an activity is what defines it, the courageous man performs actions which manifest courage "for the sake of that which is

[139] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1097a33-b6.
[140] Wadell, *Friendship and Moral Life*, 37.
[141] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1168b31-1169a1.
[142] Ibid., 1168a5-10.
[143] Ibid., 1115b20-22.

noble."[144] In a way that confirms Aristotle's definition of man "as an originator of action, [a]s a union of desire and intellect,"[145] and drawing on the F. H. Bradley quote that "'nothing is desired except that which is identified with ourselves, and we can aim at nothing, except so far as we aim at ourselves in it,'" Price explains that "acts can help realize a self that is a moral persona of the agent … when they are *chosen*."[146] If our choices are the actions that we deliberately choose through reason, and not through passion or anger, in other words, desire that is deliberated by and made compatible with the intellect, and if this dominant part constitutes our character, then it follows that a good man will love this part of himself and be a lover of self, albeit in a different sense than those who are called so with contempt.

According to Aristotle, the two lovers of self are different from each other as "living by principle differs from living by passion."[147] Obeying his intelligence, therefore, which must necessarily choose that which is best, the good man's self-love benefits both the man himself and his fellow humans, while the self-love of a bad person, following base passions, harms all the parties; the good man must be a lover of self, a bad man must not.[148] A man whose rational part is not coerced by his passions is, therefore, "one and indivisible,"[149] for otherwise he cannot be at one with himself on

[144] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1115b20-24.
[145] Ibid., 1139b5-6.
[146] Quoted in Price, *Love and Friendship*, 106-107.
[147] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1169a5.
[148] Ibid., 1169a11-18.
[149] Aristotle, *Eudem. Eth.*, 1240b13-18: "In a wicked man on the other hand, for instance in one who lacks self-control, there is discord, and because of this it is thought to be possible for a man actually to be his own enemy; but as being one and indivisible he is desirable to himself. This is the case with a good man and one whose friendship is based on goodness, because assuredly an evil man is not a single individual but many, and a different person in the same day, and unstable."

account of possessing "one mind but not a single will."[150] The value of such a man is intrinsic, and not relational to anything or anyone else, for he benefits himself and others invariably, not conditionally. It is for this reason that such a man acts in a way that his actions constitute the *eudaimonia* both of himself and of his friend, for his actions that he identifies with are invariably and intrinsically good; and so true friendship can flourish only among such men who can love their friends for the friends' sakes—in other words, for their character, which is the agreement between their desires and intellects, their intrapersonal concord, actualized in their actions that are chosen through reason.

Aristotle sees a person's intrapersonal relationship as constituting a model for interpersonal relationships,[151] for a friend is someone who wishes for his friend what he thinks is good and desires the friend's existence and company, not for his own benefit but for the friend's sake. These definitions reference the person's relationship with himself, for a person's relationship with himself cannot be asymmetrical, no one can have an ulterior motive in their relationship with their own self.[152] True friendship has, therefore, all the attributes of a good man's relationship with himself, and for this reason it can only flourish between good people. Base people who do not have the traits of a

[150] Price, *Love and Friendship*, 108.

[151] Aristotle, *Eudem. Eth.*, 1240a22-24: "From the state of friendship for oneself are determined the remaining modes of friendship under which we usually study it in our discourses;" cf. Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1166a33: "he [the good man] feels towards his friend in the same way as towards himself (for a friend is another self);" Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1171b33: "a man stands in the same relation to a friend as to himself;" and ibid., 1166b1, where Aristotle argues that an extreme degree of friendship resembles one's relationship to oneself: "ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς φιλίας τῇ πρὸς αὑτὸν ὁμοιοῦται."

[152] Aristotle, *Eudem. Eth.*, 1240b8-13: "And wishing for the other to exist, and associating together, and sharing joy and grief, and 'being one spirit' and being unable even to live without one another but dying together—for this is the case with the single individual, and he associates with himself in this way,—all these characteristics then belong to the good man in relation to himself."

good person cannot feel friendship even toward themselves, and this is a miserable state as well as a disincentive to aspire to virtue and to shun vice.[153] Such a view of true friendship as a relationship modelled on a person's relationship with himself explains why Plato could declare similarity as the source of true friendship. It is not similarity of age, or of station in life, but rather a similarity in terms of the friends' pursuit of virtue. A good person, or a person who strives to attain the highest good, will invariably choose what is good, and therefore their actions, as well as the actions of their friend who is also a good person, will contribute to the advancement of both parties and never will there ever be an asymmetrical relationship between the two. After all, as the sayings about true friends that Aristotle cites confirm, "'Amity is equality' and 'True friends have one spirit.'"[154]

The idea that friendship should invariably include equality to be considered true friendship, that it can last only insofar as the condition for its existence remains if it is based on anything other than equality, will be significant for the discussions in the following chapters. What is equally significant is the idea that, not just any similarity but similarity of virtue is required for friendship. Virtue being the outcome of moral goodness, people who are brought together by virtue of being good will have a relationship in which they will have not only equality but agreement as well. Both of them being good, such friends will necessarily desire what is good and strive for that, and therefore their purposes will be in agreement; for what is good absolutely is good for everyone, and desiring that good can never be a selfish act as the absolute good

[153] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1166b6-29.
[154] Aristotle, *Eudem. Eth.*, 1240b3-4.

benefits everyone. In the following chapters, a Christianization of this idea, with God as the absolute good and the ultimate desire, will be discussed in relation to the monastic ideal of friendship. Even though the insistence on equality and reciprocity will not be as strong, other characteristics will be shown to persist in the writings of important monastic legislators.

CHAPTER III:

EGYPTIAN ASCETICISM AND THE TRANSITION TO COENOBITISM

The emphasis classical sources place on equality and reciprocity are replaced by an emphasis on renunciation and obedience in the Egyptian sources discussed in this chapter. While certain elements survive in their friendship ideal, such as the idea that true relationship is based on virtue and an agreement of desire and purpose shaped by a shared ultimate aim, equality transforms into renunciation. Instead of being equals who have everything in common, the new Christian ideal stipulates renunciation of all that is worldly before one can arrive at a spiritualized state of equality—the fine line between not claiming ownership of anything but having everything at the same time. Obedience is another element that becomes significant as the ideal of individual/particular friendship evolves into an ideal whereby the ideal relationship is one between a master and a disciple. As does the classical ideal, the Christianized ideal still includes friendship as a harmonizing influence, which becomes significant for community building as the transition from solitude to community takes place, but it is nonetheless seen in a new light with a new, Christian ideal as its end.

3.1 An overview of the Larger Egyptian Tradition of Asceticism

The development of Egyptian monasticism along eremitical lines, and its ensuing emphasis on solitude and separation from human affairs, gave way to the argument that, for the desert fathers, friendship was not something to be sought for its own sake, even though friendship may well develop within the spiritually-united desert communities, but rather a part of the larger scheme that came into existence either out of coincidence or necessity.[155] However, such a view of friendship in the desert communities does not seem to do justice to the complex ways human relations were understood and dealt with by the desert fathers; for, even if they did not want anything to do with personal relations of an exclusive nature, they still envisioned a transformation of such relations into a more spiritual form. Abba Poemen's reply to the brother wondering what to do about his "sterile affections" should be seen in this connection: "There are men who tire themselves to death involving themselves in the friendships of this world. But keep yourself away from all that and do not get involved in such relationships and they will be transformed of their own accord."[156] The warning here is not against association with people, but rather against *worldly* association, whereby the relationship becomes an impediment to one's salvation. These worldly associations extend well beyond friendship and include kinship, marriage, and so on. Leaving behind these worldly cares

[155] See, for example, McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, 34. See White, *Christian Friendship*, 167, for a view of friendship in the desert which is more similar to the one discussed in this chapter: "friendships based on a common spiritual purpose often developed between master and disciple or between two or more of the brothers. If a younger monk visited an elder … admiration for the elder's great virtue might provide the initial incentive to start a friendship: the young man would love the elder for his virtue and stay by him to profit from him spiritually and to serve him, while the elder would love his disciple for his devotion and his obedience."

[156] *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 185.

is the first step toward establishing true, spiritual friendships that may one day lead one to friendship with the Lord, by virtue of providing a human taste of that ultimate longing.

In this strife, all exclusive relationships are not only secondary but also dangerous, and this is why one who seeks the ultimate end of pleasing God, or being a friend to God, must cease to be a friend to this world. This includes the renunciation of family, friends, private property, pride, and desires. The example of Abba Carion and his son is a good explanation for the place of renunciation within the Egyptian tradition. Carion and his son resided together in Scetis because, due to the ongoing famine, Carion's wife could not take care of the boy. The community disapproved of them being there together until the boy washed himself in a lake of nitre and became unrecognizable even to his own father. As a result of this act, the priest of Scetis saw something angelic in the boy's altered, leper-like form.[157] The meaning of his action is twofold: first, by means of this deformation, the boy becomes unrecognizable to his father and their exclusive bond of kinship is therefore eliminated and ceases to be a point of discomfort for the other monks; second, because he is no longer an object of desire, he becomes dead to the world and therefore no longer poses a threat.[158] Being no longer of this world, he has acquired an angelic form, and the way to reach such a status is by *metanoia* and *continentia* leading to *apatheia*.

Metanoia, meaning conversion, repentance, or change of heart, is a term that is reserved in the New Testament for "the divinely effected change of heart which leads to

[157] *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 117-18.
[158] The following saying by Carion in ibid., 118, is as follows: "A monk who lives with a boy, falls, if he is not stable; but even if he is stable and does not fall, he still does not make progress."

salvation."[159] For the desert fathers, the term not only meant "a reorientation of the soul" but further a radical change in the way of life that found expression in their ideal of seeking peace by eliminating human obligations from their lives.[160] The words of the abbas Paphnutius, John, and Arsenius to the brother who wanted to leave the desert to go to a monastery for the sake of progress are telling. Abba Paphnutius advises him to take no notice of the thought and stay in the cell, to pray thrice a day, and to eat and drink as necessary. The brother then asks Abba John, who tells him not to pray at all but to stay in the cell, and the emphasis on remaining in the cell is further reiterated by Arsenius.[161] It is imperative that one who wishes to do God's work must have nothing to do with anyone and be dead to this world. This is why, when Abba Poemen is troubled by his brother making friends outside his cell and goes to Abba Ammonas to voice his complaint, Ammonas replies: "'Poemen, are you still alive? Go, sit down in your cell; engrave it on your heart that you have been in the tomb for a year already.'"[162] The soul must be given a new direction away from the turbulences of city life and family relations, as well as the obligations created by such affiliations. As Evelyne Patlagean argues, "'[the family became, from the fourth century onward] a closed circuit for the distribution and conservation of material goods;'" however, individual salvation sought by flight to the desert replaced such material concerns as financial and family interests.[163] The step to be taken once one is removed from the world of exclusive

[159] *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*: *Abridged in One Volume*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Exeter: The Paternoster Press Ltd., 1985), 527.
[160] McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, 3.
[161] *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 203.
[162] Ibid., 164.
[163] See Pahnutius 4 in *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 203, for the example of the brother who left his monastery because of his lust which he thought could not be satiated even if he took ten wives, and who

human bonds is self-control, so that the removal is not only in appearance but also in the spirit, where there is no longer a desire for what has been abandoned.

An important concept to be considered in this connection is *continentia*, meaning abstinence and self-control, and referring to one's control over one's senses—that is, the threats posed by earthly involvement through establishing kinship bonds, by associating with young boys, by anger, or by gluttony. Personal intimacy is no exception, of course, for the intimate involvement a brother develops with a friend who is his equal, rather than with a spiritual guide who is his superior, has the potential of turning into a hindrance; hence the emphasis on loving equally, which means at once not loving anyone in particular but also loving everyone. As St Antony explains, the virtue of solitude lies in the fact that it allows one to escape the disturbances caused by hearing, speech and sight,[164] leaving the monk to overcome on his own the disturbances caused by the flesh in an effort to reach total *apatheia*—"the state of being unmoved by passion [which] involves control of the passions rather than their destruction."[165]—which gives one a clear vision directed toward God. According to Athanasius' *Life of Saint Antony*, his only friends were angels, and those men who started living in his vicinity to imitate his way of life were either *discipuli* or sometimes *fratres* who never had personal proximity to him; Antony was a friend of God and angels and at best a brother to men but not a friend.[166]

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then became miserable trying to satisfy the needs of one wife and returned to his monastery to become a renowned monk.

[164] Ibid., 3.

[165] Ibid., 249.

[166] McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, 8.

Antony did make himself available to the outside world, though; for example, in about the year 305 he came out of his hermitage and became the spiritual father of those who had settled near him, and he visited Alexandria to support Athanasius against heresy.[167] While saying that a monk must rush to his cell like a fish to the sea and not be involved "with men of the world [lest he] lose the intensity of inner peace," he also says that "Our life and our death is with our neighbour. If we gain our brother, we have gained God, but if we scandalise our brother, we have sinned against Christ."[168] This brings us back to the initial argument that, even though exclusive relationships of a horizontal nature pose the danger of not loving all equally and therefore losing one's better judgment, relationships of a vertical character based on a strict hierarchy actually have the potential of having positive outcomes by means of providing guidance, support, and, when necessary, admonishment.[169] This attitude also reiterates the importance of retirement from the world, for it is only in total retirement that one can hope to get completely rid of such temptations. Indeed, again according to Antony, solitude is imperative for individual salvation, for it strips one of the disturbances caused by hearing, speech and sight,[170] and allowing any other kind of relationship would turn into an impediment to success. The answer of Abba Arsenius to Abba Mark, who asks why Arsenius avoids them, is telling: "God knows that I love you, but I cannot live with God and with men. The thousands and ten thousands of the heavenly hosts have but one will,

[167] *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 1.
[168] Ibid., 3; cf. the words of St. Basil in "The Long Rules," 240: "It is … possible to keep the second commandment [love of neighbor] by observing the first [love of God], and by means of the second we are led back to the first."
[169] The terms 'horizontal relationship' and 'vertical relationship' in this context are borrowed from McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, 9.
[170] *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 3.

while men have many. So I cannot leave God to be with men."[171] Again, the answer is loving all equally and not loving anyone in particular; even though their teachings and guidance may benefit others, neither Antony nor Arsenius show willingness to let others affect them and hinder their way. The important part in the relationships forged by the fathers is not the personal intimacy they shared with their disciples, but the wisdom they passed on to them. Instances of disturbing one's solitude to have relationships with other people is condoned only insofar as the action does not pose threats to solitude and individual salvation.

If such a relationship assumes a horizontal rather than a vertical character and becomes exclusive and personal, however, it simply becomes a replacement for the earthly entanglements that one strives to get rid of in solitude. This is why friendship, being a form of *prospatheia*, may cause breaches of order by threatening individual salvation—either by encouraging desire and blurring judgment, or by making people follow one another into error. As is expressed in the Epistle of Saint James—"Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God"[172]—friendship is a worldly bond of which a monk must strip himself. However, as the description of peace of and harmony within the early Christian community in Acts 4:32-33 shows, people can be attached to one another in a way that takes its roots from their shared faith in and longing for God, and become a community in which no one claims exclusive ownership over a thing—or a person, for that matter. Still, in such a community, where solitude is

[171] *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 11.
[172] Jm. 4:4.

not retained in its physical form but by means of not having exclusive attachment, attachment to a thing of the world for its own sake, and not for the sake of a higher spiritual end, would pose a threat to harmony on a personal as well as a communal level. Similarly, while the brothers as well as the superiors in a community could be friends to one another and hold everything in common as a community of peace and harmony, if favoritism arose, be it between the brethren or the brethren and their superiors, it would threaten peace and harmony. For such individual favors put justice in jeopardy by allowing the sensations to blur one's better judgment. As such, these bonds make *apatheia* and therefore friendship with God impossible, because they create earthly attachments which are the very danger against which the Epistle of James warns.

The danger of being driven away from God is at the root of the practice of allowing personal closeness only as a way of ensuring the well-being and further development of the individuals within the community—and is an important aspect of the transition from eremitism to coenobitism. It is for this reason that when coenobitism became more prominent with the emergence of the Pachomian tradition, personal closeness was often expressed in a context of master-apprentice relationship—as in the relationship between Palamon and Pachomius or in the case of Silvanos, whom Pachomius places in the care of a proven monk for instruction,[173] or in the insistence on the importance of spiritual guidance provided by a superior.[174] The way Theodore, a disciple and successor of Pachomius, dealt with a brother when he was hurt is especially telling. The same Theodore who denies his biological brother the affection resulting

[173] *First Greek Life*, 369.
[174] Ibid., 363.

from their kinship bond, shows brotherly affection and understanding to a brother who is hurt by the admonishments of Pachomius, and by doing so, he ensures peace within the community as a mediator between the two.[175] This is a good example of what kind of friendship is desired within the community: no special favoritism is shown, but care is taken of everyone so that the community can become a likeness of the community described in Acts 4:32-33. The love that binds the community together as one heart and soul, and not the brother himself, is the source of the instance of intimacy recounted here. The intimacy is not an end in itself, but a means to a higher end.

3.2 St. Pachomius and the Transition to Coenobitism

Brian Patrick McGuire contrasts the aristocratic friendships of the late Empire and the Christian ideal of friendship, which emerged as classical Roman society began to break down, both in terms of their sources and ends. While the former was thought to be an indispensable element of social life which was based on delight resulting from sharing the same culture and acted as supplementary to the bonds that furthered the position and influence of a person and their family by being formed in conjunction with the already-existing kinship bonds, the latter took the love and desire for God as its point of departure, replacing "the friendship of the kin group" with "the friendship of God" and "blood relations and socially useful or enjoyable relationships" with "spiritual kinship."[176] Such a shift inevitably presupposes a need to create a new understanding of community, especially in a monastic context where it was mandatory to relinquish all

[175] The story is quoted in Patrick McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, 24.
[176] Ibid., 1-2.

worldly ties including kinship and private property. The description of the early Christian community in Acts 4:32—"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common"—was, according to McGuire, an ideal shared by every Christian in the fourth century, and individual bonds only made sense within this new framework, inasmuch as they could be integrated.[177] Integration into the mystical body therefore replaced social, political and cultural concerns hitherto associated with friendship.

Even when friendships occurred in desert communities, they did not necessarily entail the personal relations associated commonly with friendship. The most intimate bond one could have was with their spiritual leader who would guide and advise them within a hierarchical structure which made all intimate bonds between equals seem secondary and even dangerous.[178] In the writings of Pachomius, community relations are transformed, while retaining their strictly hierarchical character. Even though he ordinarily does not allow any special attention to be given to a brother for example, he allows it under special circumstances and with the permission of a superior, which is his way of catering to the needs of the brethren while also coping with the dangers of *prospatheia*, particular affection, or favoritism. This breaking of the rules under special circumstances could be traced to the very nature of his conversion, which involved Christian charity as a point of departure, while also offering insights, albeit implicitly, into his ideal of friendship. Pachomius was born into an Egyptian pagan family in 292

[177] McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, 2.
[178] Ibid., 5-6.

and, at age twenty, when he was a conscript in the Roman army, he was so touched by the goodness of local Christians who gave him and his companions food and drink that he was baptized one year later. The importance of charity is apparent in the very nature of his conversion:

> When young Pachomius saw them, he asked the men who were with him, 'Why are these people so good to us when they do not know us?' They answered, 'They are Christians, and they treat us with love for the sake of the God of heaven.' He withdrew to one side and spent the whole night praying before God saying, 'My Lord Jesus the Christ, God of all the saints, may your goodness quickly come upon me, deliver me from this affliction and I will serve humankind all the days of my life'.[179]

Pachomius was so moved by the love of God that he wanted to become a monk, and joined an anchorite called Palamon in apprenticeship. Palamon was a man who practiced a fierce model of asceticism, stressing prayer, manual labor, a scanty diet, but also charity in his work—for "in their work they toiled not for themselves but they *remembered the poor*"—and he was the source of Pachomius' acquaintance with asceticism.[180]

There are two visions recounted in the lives which account for his choice of coenobitism. The first one is from the time of his apprenticeship with Palamon, when one day, praying in the desert, Pachomius hears a voice that is discernably holy telling him to "'stay here and build a monastery; for many will come to you to become monks.'"[181] The interesting thing about this first vision is that it grieves Palamon, who has grown accustomed to Pachomius whom he considers his "true son," and that he allows Pachomius to follow his calling only because the command is from a holy source,

[179] *The Bohairic Life of Pachomius*, in *Pachomian Koinonia*, vol. 1, 27.
[180] *First Greek Life*, 301-2.
[181] Ibid., 305.

and even then only on the condition that they visit each other "so as not to be separated from each other."[182] The second vision comes from a time when he is on an island to collect material, and keeping vigil alone when an angel appears to him and says: "'The will of God is [for you] to minister to the race of men in order to reconcile them to himself.'"[183] Pachomius then establishes a community of monks and makes himself their servant. Being their servant in this context also means being their father, for in servitude there is glory, and Pachomius serves them as a father serves his children—"our father Pachomius nourished them as well as he could, as it is written, *A good father gives good food*."[184] Pachomius' servitude here results from his covenant with God, in reference to Paul who writes "For free though I was in everything, to all I have made myself a servant that I might win more."[185] The *First Sahidic Life* depicts the contempt of his monks for Pachomius, who would ultimately have to drive them away after his failed first attempt at community building. Taking heed of the advice given at 2 Tim. 2:24-26,[186] Pachomius endures the humiliations and confrontations from his monks who refuse to obey him, he does not push them but bears with them, feeling sad for the irreverence in their hearts. Grieving their lack of fear and reverence, Pachomius spends a night in prayer, then tries to impose a rule on the disciples who answer with sneers, and in the end, Pachomius expels the disciples.[187]

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[182] *First Greek Life*, 311-12; cf. *Bohairic Life*, 305.
[183] Ibid.; cf. *Bohairic Life*, 45.
[184] *The First Sahidic Life of Pachomius*, in *The Pachomian Koinonia*, vol. 1, 431.
[185] 1 Co. 9:19; *First Sahidic Life*, 432.
[186] 2 Tim. 2:24-26: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."
[187] *First Sahidic Life*, 432-37.

No matter the troubles experienced at first, at least according to one of the lives, by the time of Pachomius' death in 329, eleven Pachomian monasteries had been established—nine for men and two for women. *Koinonia*, a term from the New Testament, is the term Pachomius used to describe this community of monasteries, some of which existed before but were brought together with the others by him. William Harmless regards Pachomius' real success to be the organization of these monasteries into "one tightly regulated whole," a success which was to be surpassed centuries later by the Cluniacs and Cistercians.[188] Among Pachomius' organization skills must be mentioned the fact that he wrote the first known monastic rule, a Latin translation of which survives,[189] and his establishment of a strict chain of command within the *koinonia*. In addition to the existing hierarchy, he imposed rules about where each person would sit during meals or worship based on the person's date of entrance—a practice retained by later figures such as Benedict—and established that a newcomer would be discreetly interviewed to find out if he was ready to renounce parents and possessions.[190] Even though the Pachomian model is similar to the eremitical model, especially in its desired ends, it incorporates community relationships to a greater degree. As a natural outcome of such a model of organization, obedience became key for the monks and compassion for those superiors who were in charge of maintaining discipline. The vision he had for community relations are exemplified by his precepts. Rule 93 orders that "no one shall oil or bathe a sick man unless ordered;" rule 94 forbids

[188] Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 122.
[189] The Rule of Pachomius, translated from the Greek by Jerome, became known in the West in the early fifth century.
[190] Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 126.

everyone from speaking to their neighbor in the dark, while rule 95 explains that "no one may clasp the hand or anything else of his companion; but whether you are sitting on standing or walking, you shall leave a forearm's space between you and him," rule 97 forbids the brothers from shaving another man without orders to do so.[191]

The *Precepts and Judgments of Pachomius* explains that persistence in disobedience leads to punishment and isolation: "If someone has the wicked habit of soliciting his brothers by words and of perverting the souls of the simple, he shall be admonished three times. If he shows contempt and remains obstinately in the hardness of his heart, he shall be isolated outside the monastery." [192] However, even then, the person is not denied the possibility of salvation but is rather presented with an opportunity to cleanse himself, through public beating and near starvation, of his former sins. Again, the warning that "if someone among the brothers is caught easily laughing and playing with boys and having friendships with those of tender years, he shall be admonished three times to withdraw from their intimacy,"[193] exemplifies how obedience and compassion are given their respective places within the hierarchical organization—obedience for the brethren, and compassion for the elders. The organization of the monastery, under the authority of those who are in charge of maintaining discipline while showing compassion, takes into account not only the possible corruption of those impressionable members but also the threats to the salvation of brothers who may be inclined to take advantage of their impressionability. This is a structure that not only protects one brother from another but also every brother from himself. This motivation

[191] *Rules of Pachomius*, 161.
[192] Ibid., 176.
[193] Ibid., 177.

explains why the relations between the brethren were so strictly regulated, why, for example, despite living in community, they were not to develop intimacy with their brothers, or why they could not even tend to a sick brother without having the necessary permission or order.

3.3 Life in Community: Ensuring Equality within Hierarchy

Referring to the Patriarch Joseph, who was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers but who later became the second most powerful man in Egypt, Pachomius orders the brothers to "do battle in chastity and service until you make yourself a king."[194] Again, the promise of reward won through service to a higher authority is emphasized. Humility and obedience, associated in classical pagan writers with lowliness, are seen in a new light as points of departure for the ultimate end that a Christian strives for.[195] Quoting Rom. 14:14, "Who are you to judge a servant that is not yours? The lord can certainly raise up anyone who has fallen," Pachomius teaches that the person who judges everyone to be inferior will be punished by God, while those who have obtained humility and judge not others but themselves because they perceive their own sins to be greater than anyone else's, will receive and guard all virtues.[196] Instead of condemning

[194] *Instructions of Pachomius*, 14.

[195] John the Dwarf 41 in *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 95, recounts the story of a boy who works for years, gives away all that he earns, and endures all insults to do penance. When the boy then goes to Athens to study philosophy and a man at the gate who insults everyone insults him, he laughs because he is now insulted free of charge. Abba John then explains that "The gate of the Lord is like that, and we Fathers go through many insults in order to enter joyfully into the city of God."

[196] *Instructions of Pachomius*, 16; cf. ibid., 20: "... the beginning of pride is keeping your distance from God, and hardening the heart is what follows. ... on the contrary, persevere in humility and you will abide in the glory that God has given you. Watch out, be vigilant ... [and the] friends of the bridegroom will love [you], because they have found [you] keeping watch over his vineyard." Cf. *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 202: "Then behold an angel came, holding a sword and he said to me, 'Paphnutius, all those who judge their brothers perish by his sword, but because you have not judged, but have humbled yourself before

people out of pride, which is an attitude that leads to sin, one must "shun the praise of men and love the one who, in the fear of the Lord, reprimands," and "let every man be profitable to [them] so that [they] may be good to everyone."[197] This warning is reminiscent of the classical writings on false friendships based on flattery: please though they may, they also corrupt rather than develop a person. They create people who, in their pride, become sinful and irredeemable. The sincere admonishments of a God-fearing friend are the foundations of true friendship that not only makes one better in themselves but also better for all humanity—which is comparable to the situation of Aristotle's good man whose self-love is not a selfish inward act but beneficial to all.[198]

Referring to Gen. 22, where God tests Abraham and rewards him for his obedience, Pachomius writes that "[Abraham] was courageous in trial and offered Isaac in sacrifice to God; and for that God called him his friend."[199] As the example shows, to Abraham, the world, even his own son, was nothing in comparison to his love of God. Such a love that results in the renunciation of self-will and in the submission of self to the will of a higher authority should be the model for the love between the brethren. Like Aristotle's *eudaimonia*, love of God is the ultimate end which is desired for its own sake, not for the sake of something else, and for the sake of which everything else is desired. While the brothers love and support one another within the community, their struggle is ultimately for a higher end, and it is for this reason that, as in the example of Abraham, even sacrificing a brother for the love of God would be a loving act. One

God, saying that you have sinned, your name is written in the book of the living!'" Cf. also Mark, Disciple of Abba Silvanus in *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 145.

[197] *Instructions of Pachomius*, 17.

[198] Cf. Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1169a11-18.

[199] *Instructions of Pachomius*, 13. The reference here is to Jm. 2:23: "And [Abraham] was called the friend of God."

loves one's brother both as a gateway to and as a result of one's love of God. The strife for this higher end, and submission to it, do not cause destruction but rather enrichment; therefore submission to it is neither shameful not harmful but rather full of rewards.[200] While warning against impure attachments that corrupt, Pachomius acknowledges that friendship, when pure and spiritual, has the potential of bringing people closer to the Lord, writing that we must "love all men for then we shall be the friends of Jesus who is a friend to men."[201] Again, friendship is not an end that is desired in itself, but rather a reflection of one's ultimate profession of love as well as a way of attaining that love. No matter how close, any association that is based on the precept, "we must love all men to be the friends of Jesus," will necessarily lack the personal and exclusive character of a relationship that is based on loving one for who they are.

Pachomius' disciple and successor, Horsiesios, makes a similar warning, advocating friendship with all men, which again means being friends with everyone and no one at the same time: "… my brother, move away from evil friendship. But perhaps you will reply and say, 'You are thereby teaching me enmity.' No, indeed; but on the contrary, be at peace with your neighbor, because of God and the commandment."[202] He warns against evil friendship, writing that it is like a father who makes light of his son's death and wants to "deflower his virginity," and like a brother who not only neglects but laughs at the ruin of his brother, which he writes is not to be taken lightly because "it is

[200] *Instructions of Pachomius*, 39: "Be the friend of a man of God, having the law of God in his heart. Be like a poor man carrying his cross and loving tears. ... May your cell be a tomb for you till God raises you and gives you the crown of victory."
[201] Quoted in White, *Christian Friendship*, 171; cf. 1 Jn. 4:7.
[202] *The Instructions of Horsiesios*, in *Pachomian Koinonia*, vol. 3, 147.

the plight of hell with its punishments."[203] His vision for perfect friendship is similar to that expressed by Pachomius:

> Now learn what the friendship of those from heaven is like. First of all, they attach themselves to men who control their belly, who are full of knowledge, who have learned prudence, who are perfect, who are lovable, who are eager to listen attentively, who are firm in the faith of the Koinonia, who seek peace and purity, who accuse no one, who do not rejoice at anyone's fall, who do not alienate anyone's feelings towards his companions, and who do not temporize in order to avoid the trials of tribulation, but persevere in doing what is agreeable to God.[204]

Again, friendship as such, or feelings toward companions, are not rejected—after all Jesus called his disciples his friends and God called Abraham his friend—but rather the corruption of this into an exclusive bond within a community of equals is condemned. The common quest for virtue, which for Plato brought friends together in perfect union, is replaced by a shared faith and strife for union with God, the ultimate end of monasticism.

As can be observed in Horsiesos' warning against bonds within the community gaining an exclusive character, another important aspect of the Pachomian community is the emphasis on maintaining an equality of bonds,[205] which is essential in a monastic community for the preservation of order. For loving one more than another blurs the judgment and can lead to error—either by deceiving one and causing them to love someone who is hated by God, or by convincing them to disregard or even participate in evil for the sake of their exclusive friendship. These reservations are expressed in the following warning by Horsiesios against favoritism within the community: "et cavere quam maxime, ne alterum ames et alterum oderis, sed et cunctis exhibeas aequalitatem:

[203] *The Instructions of Horsiesios*, 147.
[204] Ibid., 150.
[205] See, for example, Aristotle, *Eudem. Eth.*, 1238b15-19.

ne forte quem tu diligis Deus oderit, et quem tu oderis Deus diligat. Nulli erranti pro amicitia consentias, et alterum premas, et alterum subleves, et pereat labor tuus."[206] One must exhibit equality so as not to love one whom God hates or hate one whom God loves, and not indulge another's mistakes for the sake of friendship. Equality of bonds is the surest way to avoid such errors based on limited human judgment. Carolinne White sees this warning as an expression of humility and obedience, and quite rightly so, for the uniformity of life within the community is indeed a manifestation of "the obedience and humility before God and before the superiors of the community."[207] It seems necessary to me to also look at this in connection with the suspicion that surrounds personal friendships within monastic communities. Of course, true friendship can only flourish between good men, but human weaknesses can always hinder better judgment, and it is not only the brethren who need to be watchful but also those, perhaps especially those, who are in charge of a whole community.[208]

As can be seen from the rules quoted above (about holding hands or shaving one another) Pachomius disapproves also of particular relationships between the brethren,[209] and retains the emphasis on relinquishing earthly bonds such as family and

[206] Saint Horsiesios, *Doctrina atque tractatus*, ix (PL 103, 456 B).
[207] White, *Christian Friendship*, 174.
[208] Cf. *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, 2:36-38: "Non ab eo persona in monasterio discernatur. Non unus plus ametur quam alius, nisi quem in bonis actibus aut oboedientia invenerit meliorem," where the only reason to love someone more is their excellence in work, but no favoritism is allowed; cf. also McGuire, "Introduction" to *Friendship and Community*, xliv, where he gives the example of a "novice training to be a Dominican … [who] was supervised even on walks so that he and his companions did not always choose the same partners and avoided getting to know each other too well"; cf. also St. Basil, *An Ascetical Discourse*, in *Ascetical Works*, 213: "The law of charity does not allow particular friendship or exclusive groups in community life, for particular affection inevitably works great harm to communal union."
[209] See, for example, rules 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, and 97 in *Rules of Pachomius*, 161.

possessions.[210] However, as has been explained, certain special conditions call for exceptions: a monk is not to oil or bathe another unless ordered to do so in times of sickness, nor shall he help a brother with wounds unless ordered to do so, and likewise, the only way a monk may shave another is by being ordered to do so.[211] Even though equal love must be maintained against favoritism, the monks who help one another in a manner normally prohibited, as well as the superiors who order them to do so when necessary, do these as acts of charity which are part of their shared strife for God. Because these acts, whereby a brother receives particular attention from another, are not ends in themselves, they are not promoted at all and are even prohibited; however, there is still the wider understanding that people within the community must help one another out of love. Intimacy between the brethren is allowed only when it is a necessity, a means to an end, and not a possible threat to a monk's inner peace or to peace and harmony within the community. Just as kinship transforms itself in such a community of fathers and brothers, friendship must transform itself by means of a higher spiritual end and become pure and spiritual rather than worldly. The bond between Pachomius and his master Palamon is a good example in this connection. Even such a fierce ascetic as Palamon, who shows reluctance to have anything to do with Pachomius when he first shows up, manages in the end to create a bond modelled on kinship—they are father and son.[212] And even though the first thing Pachomius asks to his three first disciples (and

[210] See, for example, rule 49 in *Rules of Pachomius*, 152-53, which states a young man desirous of entering a Pachomian community must be asked whether he is ready to renounce family and possessions, which are the same in the sense that they keep one attached to the world.
[211] See, for example, rules 93, 96, and 97 in ibid., 161.
[212] See Palamon's reaction upon hearing Pachomius' vocation in *Bohairic Life*, 40: "[Palamon] wept and said to him, 'Is this it, that after these seven years you have borne with me ... you too are now going to leave me in my old age? ... I hope that the dream you have seen a first and a second time is going to

later to anyone who wishes to join a Pachomian community) is whether they will be able to renounce their parents,[213] here the father-son relationship between Palamon and Pachomius is not dealt with in a critical light. The fact that such a bond is acceptable, even holy, between the two proves that, while running away from all worldly bonds, one can actually benefit from bonds modelled on them as far as they are based on love of and a strife for God. They are not *amices huius mundi*, friends of this world, and their companionship is pure and beneficial both to them and to the many with whom they share this spiritual bond.

However, this equality is not to be confused with the classical ideal. The idea of loving equally is one that is connected to the teaching of renunciation whereby everyone is shown an equal amount of love regardless of who they are. Even though this means that one is friends both with everyone and no one at once—for, even though the relationship is maintained with everyone, it is not maintained with anyone in particular—it should also be noted that obedience, another key concept in the sources discussed in the chapter, makes room for a relationship between the members of a community that is closer to an actual friendship than the ideal of Christian love which extends even to one's enemies. As long as one can renounce particular bonds, one can be admitted into the monastic community as a first step in their process of spiritual perfection. Then, having renounced the world in deed, one is expected to do the same in spirit through the practice of humility and obedience. After this point, guidance from an elder becomes key, for it is what leads the brother along the path that leads to spiritual

become reality for you in this affair the Lord has imposed on you. Now, my son, let us go soutward and let us put up a small cell for you. We shall visit each other, you and I in turn, until the Lord shall visit me."
[213] Ibid., 45.

perfection. It must be noted here that, being equally available to everyone, the elder does not and should not develop particular relationships, because then it turns into *prospatheia*. The danger of *prospatheia* as opposed to loving equally can be compared to the danger Aristotle voices in relation to the base man who seeks his own advantage at the expense of others, as opposed to the political community where the advantage of all is sought by all.[214] These two currents, classical and Egyptian, are synthesized by St. Basil the Great and St. John Cassian as the transition to coenobitism develops further into monasticism proper. The way these two monastic legislators, both of whom were influenced by both currents discussed so far, chose to reconcile and further develop the two will be the subject of the next chapter.

[214] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1160a21-30 and 1167b10-15.

CHAPTER IV:

MONASTICISM PROPER: THE INFLUENCE OF BASIL AND CASSIAN

St. Basil the Great and St. John Cassian, both of them very influential on the development of monasticism both in the East and the West, both spent time in Egypt and received a classical education. As a result of their familiarity with both, and of the Basilian influence on Cassian, there is a great deal of continuity and synthesis. The emphasis on renunciation remains, but is coupled with the classical view of man as a social animal who needs other people. Likewise, the root and the end of true friendship are understood in a way that reflects both the classical and the Egyptian ideals, but is of course Christianized. In terms of community building, friendship is again represented as an influence that unites discordant elements within a hierarchical order that is shaped by a higher principle. Renunciation also takes a new shape within this scheme, whereby certain worldly bonds are integrated insofar as they have a beneficial influence on the members of the monastic community. In this chapter, their teachings on monastic community building will be discussed as representing a synthesis of the influences discussed in the previous chapters.

4.1 St Basil: Background and Reasons for Choosing Community over Solitude

Despite the development of monasticism along more ascetic lines in the Judean desert, the influence of Basil of Caesarea extended to Armenian, Georgian and Palestinian monasticism, and his *Longer Rules*, the *Asceticon*, was translated into Armenian, Georgian and Arabic. Through its influence on Byzantine monasticism, the *Asceticon* also influenced Slavic monasticism and was translated into Old Slavonic.[215] Having been translated into Latin in 396/7, the *Small Asceticon* was both used and recommended by St Benedict in his rule, and, as Augustine Holmes observes, "Benedictine coenobitism has a strongly Basilian character."[216] In the second Council of the Lateran in 1139, the *Asceticon* was recognized alongside the rules of Augustine and Benedict, it was adopted by a group of Spanish Catholic hermits in the 16th century and was still a key element in Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytsky's revival of traditional Byzantine monasticism in Ukraine in the 20th century.[217] Its status as a vastly influential work, in addition to the fact that Basil's teachings mark an important point of transmission from older models of asceticism, makes it an adequate focal point for those who wish to understand the place of friendship within eastern monasticism.

Basil was born to a rich Christian family around 330 and spent most of his life in Pontus and Cappadocia. His father, Basil the Elder, was a rhetor who taught at Neocaesarea. Basil followed in the footsteps of his father and received a classical education. When he was about sixteen, he moved to Caesarea, then two years later to Athens, where he stayed for about five years as a student of the sophist, Libanius of

[215] Holmes, *A Life Pleasing to God*, xix-xx.
[216] Ibid., xxi.
[217] Ibid., xxi.

Antioch, who was a renowned pagan rhetor and a proponent of the traditional values of the *polis*.[218] As can be derived especially from Gregory Nazianzen's funeral oration for Basil, even though their relationship can be traced back to their school days in Caesarea, their friendship really sprang while they were studying in Athens. Gregory recounts two incidents that cemented their friendship, in which, according to the oration, he sees divine providence in action. The first one is an incident that took place shortly after Basil's arrival in Athens, when Gregory convinced other students to refrain from playing the usual initiation trick on Basil; and the second is when he supported Basil in an argument with a group of quarrelsome Armenians who were jealous of his reputation. Basil's ensuing gratitude was what helped to engender a friendship between the two.[219]

Speaking of his student life in Athens, and later of his friendship with Basil, Gregory notes that "Nor were we seduced by those who led the way to trouble;/instead we ourselves drew our friends on to higher things,"[220] and that he held everything in common with Basil, to whom he was bound, above all, by shared ideals and a longing for higher things:

> All things we held in common and one soul
> united our two separate bodies.
> What particularly brought us together
> was this: God and a desire for higher things.
> For from the moment we achieved such a degree of
> confidence
> that we divulged to each other even the deep secrets of our hearts,
> we were bound together all the more closely by our longing,
> for shared ideals are a strong incentive to close friendship.[221]

[218] Holmes, *A Life Pleasing to God*, 5.
[219] White, *Christian Friendship*, 62.
[220] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Autobiographical Poems*, ed. and trans. Carolinne White (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), ll. 219-20.
[221] Ibid., ll. 225-36.

The ancient ideal of true friendship based on virtue and shared ideals, which engender confidence and common living, survive in Gregory's description of his relationship with Basil. Likewise, their friendship is not one that ushers in temptations but rather elevates both the participants and those around them above such temptations. However, writing later of his years in Athens, Basil claims to have hated everything there, and although he dismisses his classical education in his letter 223, Holmes sees this as Basil's effort to rewrite his history because, as his letter 336 shows, his plans for seclusion were approved by Libanius as being comparable to the ancient traditions of philosophical asceticism and seclusion.[222] His friendship with Gregory and his decision to pursue an ascetic lifestyle are not the only instances which bring Basil's classical learning into light, for even his rules sometimes reflect classical ways of thinking and vocabulary.

In a letter to Gregory, Basil speaks of how his physical removal from the city and all its distractions and temptations have not resulted in a renunciation of the self, but still quotes Matthew 16:24 to preach separation from the world and worldly cares to reach tranquility. It is the way of the world that "every day brings with it some particular cloud to darken the soul; and night takes over the cares of the day, deluding the mind with the same cares in fantasy."[223] Unless it has first of all been cleansed of all the evil teachings of the world and has renounced "sympathy with the body, … home, personal possessions, love of friends, property, means of subsistence, business, social relations,

[222] Holmes, *A Life Pleasing to God*, 15.
[223] Basil, letter 2 to Gregory, in St. Basil, *The Letters*, vol. 1, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (London: Heinemann, 1926), 11.

and knowledge derived from human teaching,"[224] the soul cannot open itself to receive divine instruction. The rest of the letter elaborates on Basil's vision of discipline for a person who wishes to receive this and live a life of piety; however, regardless of the Christian context in which he deals with the ideal of discipline, of withdrawal and contemplation, these are nonetheless ideals all too identifiable for an educated pagan.[225] Not finding asceticism sufficiently adequate, Basil was later inspired by his family and his friend Gregory to visit Egypt and other centers of monasticism, and was influenced by Pachomian coenobitism.[226] Because Basil's choice to live an ascetic life was in part an extension of his familiarity with classical philosophical traditions, and later evolved into coenobitism, his teaching offers a good point of departure for those who wish to observe "the transition from older models of ascetic practice to monasticism proper."[227]

The first question in the *Asceticon*, Basil's book of questions and answers regarding the ideals and practices of coenobitic life, deals with the issue of order. Basil's answer refers to the double commandment of love, the first two commandments about loving God and neighbor, which are to him points of departure for personal and communal spiritual order. Unlike Cassian, who places love at the end of the process of growth in an Evagrian way, Basil perceives love as coming first. Since we have been given the commandment to love, we also by nature have within us the power to love, and, just as we do not need to learn to love those who are dear to us, we do not need to learn the love of God; it is implanted within us. According to Basil, "we are by nature

[224] St. Basil, *The Letters*, 11.
[225] See Holmes, *A Life Pleasing to God*, 17; also noted by Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, 78-82 and Meredith, "Asceticism-Christian and Greek," 325-6.
[226] The influence of Pachomian and other Patristic sources on his thought is visible, for example, in his use of the concept of the memory of God (*mneme tou Theou*); see Holmes, *A Life Pleasing to God*, 122.
[227] Ibid., 27.

desirous of the beautiful," and the ultimate manifestation of this natural desire is our yearning for divine beauty, which is the most superior.[228] Here, Basil uses the word *pothos*, loving desire, which is used neither in the New Testament nor in the Septuagint, but is paralleled in Diotima's speech in Plato's *Symposium* and in Plotinus' commentary on the *Symposium* in *Ennead* 3:5, and this leads Holmes to argue that Basil is speaking "the language of the philosophers."[229] Likewise, the section on saints trying to escape the oppression of this life by means of contemplating divine beauty is reminiscent of Plato's allegory of the cave.[230]

The following argument on the second part of the commandment, that is to love one's neighbor as one's self, turns into a justification for communal living and an elaboration on the part played by the love shared by those who make up the community. Defining man to be "a civilized and gregarious animal, neither savage nor a lover of solitude,"[231] Basil refers to Jesus' commandment that his disciples love one another and to his subsequent remark that their love will be a sufficient sign for people to recognize them as his disciples.[232] Another reference is made to Jesus transferring to himself the "benefit conferred upon the neighbor," showing the close relationship between the two loves; the first and second commandments are intertwined in Basil who writes that "It is … possible to keep the second commandment by observing the first, and by means of the second we are led back to the first."[233] In this connection, Basil argues, since human

[228] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 233-35.
[229] Holmes, *A Life Pleasing to God*, 75.
[230] Ibid., 77.
[231] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 239.
[232] John 13:34-35.
[233] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 240; cf. Gregory the Great, *Moralium* lib. vii, cap. xxiv (PL 75, 780 C – 781 A): "… per amorem Dei amor proximi gignitur, et per amorem proximi amor Dei nutritur … amor

beings are "gregarious[234] animal[s]," that "Nothing, indeed, is so compatible with our nature as living in society and in dependence upon one another and as loving our own kind."[235] Holmes points out how Basil echoes Aristotle when he calls man a sociable and not solitary animal, and it is also noteworthy how this argument is also reminiscent of Aristotle, who writes that "even when men have no need of assistance from each other they none the less desire to live together. At the same time they are also brought together by common interest, so far as each achieves a share of the good life. The good life then is the chief aim of society, both collectively for all its members and individually...."[236] As in Aristotle's society with its chief aim of achieving the good life, in Basilian communities monks came together to achieve a life of piety—which seems to have been a better compromise for Basil, given his never-ending concern with administering the masses and his frustration with asceticism. In addition to the Aristotelian influence, some scholars point out to the influence of *oikeiosis*, the Stoic principle that beings of the same kind by nature attract one another.[237] In terms of both ideals and desired ends, there are numerous parts in Basil's teaching where his classical education, as well as the influence of Pachomius, become prominent; and all this blends into an ideal Christian community in Basil's writings.

Dei amorem proximi generat" and Homil. in Evang. i, ix (PL 76, 1108 D): "Charitas … est amicum diligere in Deo, et inimicum diligere propter Deum."

[234] In Greek "κοινωνικὸν ζῶον (*koinonikon zoon*)," translated into Latin as "animal sociabile." The opposite, "solitary animal," is expressed by the adjective *monastikos* instead of *monios*. See Holmes, *A Life Pleasing to God*, 93 for the argument that this pejorative use of *monastikos* results from Basil's rejection of Egyptian asceticism—to which *koinonia* is the natural and Christian alternative.

[235] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 239.

[236] Aristotle, *Politics*, 1278b21-26.

[237] See Holmes, *A Life Pleasing to God*, 91.

4.2 Seeking Perfection through Love and Renunciation

A community based on love of neighbor, where people are led to love God by means of loving their neighbor, is, to Basil, the fulfilment of human nature. Drawing on 1 John 4:18, where it is said that "perfect love casts out fear," Basil writes in his preface to the *Asceticon* that, in order to have "the dispositions of sons," one must not avoid evil for fear of punishment or seeking a reward—for the former is the attitude of a slave, and the latter of a hireling—but must do so out of true love for the Lord.[238] A parallel discussion is found in John Cassian, which will be dealt with later in the chapter, but also in the seventh chapter of the Rule of St Benedict. What is more interesting, however, is how comparable such a conception of God is to Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* as the ultimate good which is desired for its own sake and not for the sake of anything else.[239] A longing for the good itself is the point of departure in both cases for the search that will ultimately make one's life worth living, and within this framework of teleological ethics love becomes an important tool for building communities of people who share this longing and can help one another along the way—either by only being good or by being both good and at a more advanced stage of the search.

The fifth rule, or rather answer, focuses on the necessity of *anachoresis*, retirement from the world. Since it is impossible to master metalwork by practicing pottery, for example, and it is necessary, therefore, to perform actions that correspond to the desired end (*telos*), one who wishes to master the art of being pleasing to God should not at the same time engage in the dealings of this world; for it is said that "He that is

[238] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 227.
[239] Cf. Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1097a33-b6.

without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife,"[240] and that the world cannot receive the spirit of truth. Therefore, it is imperative to be like the disciples, who were not of this world,[241] and renounce the world and its pleasures and cares. Renunciation is accompanied by watchfulness, because one must never lose sight of the desired end, and must organize both the physical and the spiritual activity in a way that is directed toward that end. Again, a comparison is possible with Aristotle's teleological ethics, where meaning is given to one's life by the end (*telos*) for which it was given; this end is the ultimate good which comprises all goods at the same time as being desired not for the sake of these goods but only for its sake. Likewise, according to Basil, it is impossible to perform the Lord's commandments if the intention is to please men.[242]

Suggesting life in community as the natural and fitting alternative for those seeking to please and attain union with God, Basil nevertheless warns against the dangers of living with the wrong kind of people, referring to Solomon's words: "Be not a friend to an angry man and do not walk with a furious man; lest perhaps thou learn his ways and take snares to thy soul."[243] For it is impossible to cleanse oneself of the residues of one's previous life in the world in a crowd that continually introduces distraction, one must unlearn what has become one's nature over time and overcome

[240] 1 Cor. 7:32-33, quoted in St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 242.
[241] Jn. 15:19, quoted in St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 242.
[242] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 245.
[243] Prov. 22:24-25; quoted in St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 245-46.

their alienation from Christ's commandments.[244] As Holmes notes, "we go apart from the crowd to love God, but live in community to love our neighbour."[245] It is in this connection that Basil favors living in a community with like-minded people who have the same aim of piety rather than living privately while he also advocates renunciation of worldly bonds such as kinship and marriage. His model of spiritualized bonds within the monastic community is far from being a replacement for these bonds, though; it is rather one that is organized according to a strict hierarchy within which the renunciation of self-will among other things is a prerequisite. Giving the example of body parts which need the support of one another to constitute a fully-functioning body, Basil writes that "in the solitary life, what is at hand becomes useless to us and what is wanting cannot be provided, since God, the Creator, decreed that we should require the help of one another."[246] However, a life of solitude only caters to the needs of one person, concerning itself only with the salvation of that person, and makes it impossible for the person to be aware of their defects, while in community one finds support, guidance and correction.[247] It is in the life in community that unity, order and obedience can be retained, both among the members of the community and in accordance with the end that defines their mode of life—as pious Christians keeping the commandments of the Lord. Moreover, in this life in community, the gifts bestowed upon each person becomes the shared property of everyone—the well-known formula, "singula omnium, omnia

[244] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 246.
[245] Holmes, *A Life Pleasing to God*, 129.
[246] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 248.
[247] Ibid., 249.

singulorum," is the result.[248] Such a community is like the apostolic community according to Basil, who quotes the description in Acts 2:44 and 4:32 to draw a comparison.[249]

Within the context of renunciation and spiritualization of kinship bonds, Basil also deals with the proper behavior of a monk toward "relatives according to the flesh."[250] Since retaining bonds with biological relatives creates dangers by driving a brother away from the community, and by distracting his minds with relevant cares, superiors should do their best to keep those who are admitted permanently to the community from such distractions. After all, private property—including personal bonds of an exclusive nature—among the members of such a community is strictly prohibited by the scripture.[251] However, it is also said at Matthew 12:50 that "whosoever shall do the will of my Father that is in Heaven, he *is* my brother and sister and mother,"[252] and Basil's response to this is to transform rather than completely eliminate bonds of kinship. If the relatives of a brother live piously and are therefore in spiritual union with all the brothers by virtue of their shared faith and worldview, these relatives are to be "treated by all the brethren as fathers or other relative possessed in common,"[253] whereby the bond ceases to have an exclusive character. From the relatives who do not

[248] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 250; cf. Aelred of Rievaulx, quoted in Charles Dumont, "Seeking God in Community According to St Aelred," in *Contemplative Community*, ed. Basil Pennington (Washington: Cistercian Publications, 1972): "Each of you, my brethren, before coming here, had a soul which belonged to him alone. You have been converted to God, and behold, the Holy Spirit … has reached your souls and out of all your hearts has made one heart and soul. … What belongs to each individually belongs to all and what belongs to all belongs to each."
[249] Ibid., 252.
[250] Ibid., 295.
[251] Ibid. Here, Basil refers to Acts 4:32.
[252] Quoted in ibid.
[253] Ibid.

follow the commandments of the Lord, the brother is required to separate himself, for they not only have no common ground with the brother, they even create occasions for sin by causing worldly anxiety and distraction.[254] In order not to be reminded of their former life, in order for their hearts not to be stirred away from peace and devotion, the brothers are allowed to see and converse with only those relatives who can contribute to their spiritual development.[255] This way, under strict guidance and supervision, kinship is transformed from something private to common, and from a source of distraction and therefore sin to a source of edification.

The brethren, having renounced marriage as well, are liberated from the distraction of having to please their wives but rather seek to please God, taking heed of the reminder that "God hath scattered the bones of them that please men."[256] Despite the transitory nature of worldly relations, *caritas* toward fellow people is not to be forgotten, and no one should be denied the "zeal for [the] neighbor which every person is obliged to show according to the command of God."[257] This does not mean, however, that one neighbor can be favored over another; it is still the favor the brethren seek to have with God, not with people, which should define their behavior toward other people. This is why, warning against *prospatheia, amor singularis*, or particular affection, Basil urges especially those in positions of power to show utmost partiality so as not to have even the image of favoritism within the community, because it is by *prospatheia* that "the union of charity among the brethren is torn asunder and is replaced by base suspicions,

[254] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 295.
[255] Ibid., 296.
[256] Ps. 52:6, quoted in St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 297.
[257] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 297.

jealousies, strife, and a distaste for work."[258] Elsewhere, Basil argues that, even though loving equally is essential in a community, there will always be those who are accorded more importance by virtue of their greater work—in the same way as St. Benedict argues—just as one takes the pain suffered by each part of one's body seriously but an injury to the eye more so than an injury to the toe.[259] For Basil, loving one more than the others is to give up perfect love for other lesser kinds of love. Further, particular affection creates factions within the community to the detriment of the whole, and "from the particular friendship and the faction arise suspicions and jealousies," which nourish not the good but the evil within a community; particular affection is, therefore, the opposite of charity, because its outcome is evil while charity is God himself.[260] In other works, too, while encouraging mutual love within a community, Basil warns against the forming of close associations in a way that is comparable to John Cassian's concerns about the formation of another community within the community:

> And it is fitting that the brothers indeed have mutual charity among themselves, but not in the way that two or three conspiring at the same time form some close associations. For this is not charity but sedition and division, and a proof of the depravity of those who join in this way. If those who are like this had a regard for the common good of discipline, they would have common and equal love toward all: if truly, dividing and separating themselves, they become another community within the community, association in such a friendship is corrupt ... Therefore it is necessary neither to permit such close association within the convents, nor, in order to serve charity, to make anybody a companion of the brother who wants to

[258] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 299; cf. Horsiesios, PL 103, 456: "non cesses … et cavere quam maxime, ne alterum ames et alterum oderis, sed et cunctis exhibeas aequalitatem: ne forte quem tu diligis Deus oderit, et quem tu oderis Deus diligat. Nulli erranti pro amicitia consentias, et alterum premas, et alterum subleves, et pereat labor tuus" and *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, 2:36-38: "Non ab eo persona in monasterio discernatur. Non unus plus ametur quam alius, nisi quem in bonis actibus aut oboedientia invenerit meliorem".
[259] St. Basil, "An Ascetical Discourse," 219.
[260] Ibid.; cf. 1 John 4:16 "Deus caritas est et qui manet in caritate in Deo manet et Deus in eo."

> act wickedly ... but, for as long as all shall persevere in good, each one must associate and join together with all the rest.[261]

Loving equally is the best means to ensure peace and harmony both for the individual and the community. For it is in this way that the spiritualized bonds within the community are kept from turning exclusive and the ensuing problems are avoided.

In addition to his warnings against factionalism, or political friendship,[262] within the community, Basil also warns against carnal friendships, and offers recourse to older members as the better alternative: "If you are youthful in body or mind, fly from intimate association with comrades of your own age and run away from them as from fire. … Have recourse to older men who make themselves difficult of access and in no way harm the young by their charm of countenance, but animate them to virtuous deeds."[263] Likewise, if any private matter is to be discussed between certain brethren, or with consecrated women, the parties should not themselves partake in the discussion but rather appoint representatives who are "of advanced age, venerable and grave of aspect and deportment," so that evil suspicions do not arise.[264] This is reminiscent of the Egyptian tradition's suspicion of friendships of equality while condoning relationships of hierarchy. Commenting on the argument that a monk appreciates what links him to

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[261] St. Basil, *Constitutiones Asceticae*, cap. 29, PG 31:1418-19 "Ac decet fratres charitatem quidem inter se mutuam habere, sed non ita tamen, ut duo aut tres simul conspirantes, sodalitates aliquas constituant. Non enim hoc charitas est, sed seditio, divisioque, et eorum, qui sic coeunt, improbitatis argumentum. Si enim commune bonum disciplinae diligerent, qui tales sunt, sine dubio communem aequalemque in omnes dilectionem haberent: si vero secantes ac separantes seipsos, aliqua communitas in communitate fiant, vitiosa est eiusmodi amicitiae coniunctio ... Quare oportet neque eiusmodi sodalitia permitti in conventibus, neque charitatis servandae causa quemquam fieri socium fratris, qui velit improbe agere ... sed quamdiu omnes in bono permanebunt, unusquisque cum caeteris omnibus sociari ac coniungi debet." The translation is mine. Cf. Horsiesios, *Doctrina atque tractatus*, ix (PL 103, 456 B).

[262] Political friendship is the term preferred Adèle M. Fiske in *Friends and Friendship in the Monastic Tradition* (Cuernavaca, Mex.: Centro Intercultural de Documentación, 1970), 3/5.

[263] St. Basil, "An Ascetical Discourse and Exhortation on the Renunciation of the World and Spiritual Perfection," in *Ascetical Works*, 23-24.

[264] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 298.

other people only in the absence of passions and worldly entanglement, Brian Patrick McGuire comments that "equal love of all one's neighbors in a monastic community made it easier to love God."[265] Therefore, if any kind of friendship arose within this community, it was not because such a relationship was sought after but rather because it was an outcome of the joined longing shared by all the members of the community. Friendship between the brethren was not a goal in itself but a help along the way that led to the ultimate end; while creating a hierarchy based on a spiritualization of kinship relations, coenobitic communities did not encourage personal bonds that would jeopardize the quest of one already struggling with leaving the world behind. This is reflected in the way John Cassian deals with personal relationships in the context of communal order, and can be attested later in the Rule of St Benedict.

4.3 St John Cassian on the Perfect Love

In addition to extensive influence on western monasticism and spiritual life, Cassian has been also influential over a large monastic space extending even to early modern Russia.[266] Cassian himself was in turn influenced by St Basil, and he claims in his preface to the *Institutes* that what he writes is at best supplementary to the teachings of Basil.[267] He was also familiar with other important texts such as the *Life of Antony*, Rufinus'

[265] McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, 33.
[266] See, for examples, chapter xlii of the Rule of Saint Benedict; Fiske, *Friends and Friendship*, 3/1*n*1; Columba Steward, *Cassian the Monk* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 25: "In the early sixth century one sees his mark on Caesarius' monastic legislation; the first section of the *Rule for Nuns* manifestly depends on book 4 of the *Institutes*. … Benedict's understanding of prayer, for example, is traceable directly to Cassian. … Gregory the Great used Cassian's mediation of the Egyptian tradition of the eight principal faults as the basis for his teaching on the seven deadly sins."
[267] Cassian, *Institutes*, pref. 5, 13.

translation of the *History of the Monks in Egypt*, and Pachomian texts.[268] However, despite his great debt to the teachings of Evagrius Ponticus, Cassian never mentions him by name in an effort to conceal his lasting association with the Origenists—sometimes even replacing controversial Evagrian terminology, such as *apatheia* with 'purity of heart'.[269] Little is known about Cassian's background, but it understood that, as a child, he had also acquired with the classics, so much so that they became a hindrance by interfering with his prayers and Christian thoughts.[270] Despite his efforts to conceal his ties with condemned groups, either by selective narration or by replacement of terminology, in the minds of some he remained a suspect; and despite the suspicions, his works were widely read and influential.[271]

Cassian's teachings on monasticism and its practice and desired ends, which would have a lasting influence, owed much to the teachings of Basil. His perception of human beings is reminiscent of Basil and his teaching of renunciation. Without refusing either spiritual or worldly existence, Cassian sees the inner man to be made up of two parts, or hands, which are earthly and divine, respectively (*duabus namque partibus et manibus ... interiorem hominem nostrum subsistere pervidemus*). The right hand represents the spiritual outcomes (*habet vir sanctus dexteram successus ... spiritales*), which can be so advanced that the person no longer believes themselves to exist in the flesh (*ut nequaquam se iam credat in carne consistere*), while the left hand is necessary

[268] Steward, *Cassian the Monk*, 36.
[269] Ibid., 4, 11, 87; Fiske, *Friends and Friendship*, 3/2-3.
[270] Steward, *Cassian the Monk*, 4; Cassian, *Collationum*, 974 C-979 A.
[271] Steward, *Cassian the Monk*, 21: "The late-fifth and early-sixth-century list of 'Books To Be Received and Not To Be Received' … includes Cassian's works among those considered suspect."

to show the perfection of virtue (*hac sinistra … in hoc virtus perfecta discernitur*).[272] One needs, therefore, to renounce the worldly part for the progress of the spiritual part, while still retaining a physical existence that is properly ordered in accordance with the fruits of virtue. According to Basil, this journey begins with the double commandment of love, while Cassian, following his master Evagrius, places love not at the beginning but at the end.

In the first conference, he uses the Evagrian distinction between aim (*skopos*) and ultimate end (*telos*) to explain that *caritas*, which consists only in the purity of heart (*caritas quae in sola cordis puritate consistit*), is the immediate aim as the thing that gives meaning to one's renunciation of the world, while the kingdom of heaven is the ultimate end of all the suffering a monk endures (*regni coelorum causa haec cuncta tolerari).* [273] Likewise, in Evagrian thought, the practice of virtue purifies the heart into a state of *apatheia*, its immediate aim, so that it can be led to God, the ultimate end.[274] This ultimate end is identified with the perfection of love. Cassian explains that "There are three [things] … which make people abstain from vice … either fear of hell … or hope and desire for heaven, or an affection for the good itself and love of virtues."[275] He then goes on to explain that there is a more sublime form of fear which belongs to love (*sublimior charitatis timor*), whereby the lover fears not the blows of the beloved, desires not the fruits of their affection, but fears, by the greatness of their love, lest the

[272] Cassian, *Collationum*, 657 A-658 B.
[273] Ibid., 488 B-C; See also ibid., 485 A.
[274] Fiske, *Friends and Friendship*, 3/3-4. In Steward, *Cassian the Monk*, 38, this distinction is discussed to be of Stoic origin.
[275] Cassian, *Collationum*, 852 A: "Tria sunt … quae faciunt homines a vitiis temperare … aut metus gehennae … aut spes atque desiderium regni coelorum, aut affectus boni ipsius amorque virtutum." The translation is mine.

slightest offense should blemish this love.[276] This fear, the treasure of God, is shared not by sinners but by saints; hence the verse: "Timete Dominum, omnes sancti eius, quia nihil deest timentibus eum."[277] Likewise, in the *Institutes*, Cassian writes that "The beginning of our salvation and the preserving of it is the fear of the Lord,"[278] to argue that such a fear inspires one to dread the world, forget about their family, and to have contempt for worldly things.[279] The first step to be taken toward perfect love is, then, renunciation of the world and all that belongs to it.

Humility follows this step of renunciation and contempt, and its signs are as follows: death of all desire; complete openness with the spiritual guide, elder; having no regard for one's opinions but instead taking into account the admonishments and orders of the elder and acting accordingly; maintaining obedience and patience; neither inflicting injury nor being hurt by any injury; following only the rule and the example of predecessors in one's actions; being content with simplicity and believing oneself to be inferior to everyone else and unworthy; being able to hold one's tongue and not being quick to laugh—the true possession of humility brings one "a step higher to love, which has no fear,"[280] and everything that was previously done for fear of punishment will be done "out of love for the good itself and out of pleasure in virtue."[281] All these signs that Cassian refers to can be identified as Evagrian virtues which constitute a state of *apatheia* and peacefulness undisturbed by the cares of the world. However, the spiritual implications aside, the signs also all have practical implications that reveal Cassian's

[276] Cassian, *Collationum*, 852 A.
[277] Ps. 33 (34):10.
[278] Cf. Prv. 9:10.
[279] Cassian, *Institutes*, 4:39, 99-100.
[280] Ibid.; Cf. 1 Jn. 4:18.
[281] Ibid., 4:39, 100; See also ibid., 4:43.

preoccupation with preserving order within the community. Obedience, patience, following the rule, and openness with the elder, are all practical measures; at the same time as preserving peace and harmony for the individual, they also preserve order between all the individuals who come together as a community under the supervision of their elders.

Regardless of his practical concerns while dealing with intercommunal relations, Cassian still understood friendship as playing an essential role by being a "formative or paideutic part of monastic life and the ascent to God."[282] The same can be argued of Classical, Pachomian, and Basilian teachings, in the sense that they all warn against the kind of close association which brings one not closer to but further away from virtue, while also condoning close associations which have an aim that transcends worldly pleasures that corrupt. The formative function is, therefore, twofold, one being at an individual level and the other at a communal level. The important thing to note here is that, like Basil's suggestion that young boys should have recourse to older members of the community, Cassian is also concerned especially with the young members and forbids them to "linger to chat" after the daily gathering, to leave their cells unless for an urgent task, to converse with one another instead of being "busied with spiritual meditation" while outside, to be seen "going off anywhere with someone else or holding hands."[283] If someone is found doing any of these forbidden things, "they may even be under suspicion of wickedly scheming and plotting."[284] Since it is only within a proper order of hierarchy and under strict supervision and guidance that close associations can

[282] Fiske, *Friends and Friendship*, 3/1.
[283] Cassian, *Institutes*, 4:39, 100 and 2:15.
[284] Ibid.

have positive outcomes, the potential danger that evil may arise from such associations is always present in these writings as a danger lurking in the midst of the community. Cassian's sixteenth conference on friendship, while seemingly concerned with the relationship among the individuals, offers insights both into his understanding of community relations and an individual's relationship with themselves.

4.4 St John Cassian on Friendship

The sixteenth conference, entitled "On friendship" (*de amicitia*), identifies the following ways whereby friendship can be generated: through recommendation; business relations; through similarity of profession, art or studies—which makes even the fierce people feel well-disposed to one another; and kinship—which makes not only humans but all animals prefer their kind, and, like similarity of profession making criminals be well-disposed, tames even the fiercest animal when it is faced with its own kind.[285] However, since these are all common both among the good and the bad, and between serpents and beasts (*sicut malis ac bonis, feris etiam atque serpentibus videmus esse communia*), and since they all depend on some condition—be it profit, desire, kinship, or necessities (*ex diversis, vel lucri, vel libidinis, vel consanguinitatis ac necessitudinum*)—they cannot last; they will dissolve once the condition that keeps them going disappears.[286] There is one type of friendship among the many types which is indissoluble, and it is based not on any of these things but on similarity of virtue (*similitudo virtutum*); no physical obstacle can dissolve it, and neither indeed can death (*sed ne mors quidem ipsa*

[285] Cassian, *Collationum*, 1013 A-1014 A.
[286] Ibid., 1014 A-B.

divellit).[287] There are those who believe themselves to be in such a relationship out of burning love for Christ (*pro charitate Christi flagrantissima*) but cannot maintain it beyond the initial spark, because their relationship is not maintained by the equal virtue of both but rather by the patience of one (*non aequali utriusque virtute, sed unius patientia servabatur*).[288] Unfortunately, it is not enough for one of them to be patient unless the other shares the same set of virtues, because the love that creates indissoluble friendship (*indissolubilis amicitia*) can be maintained only between those who have one purpose and will, and who want and refuse the same things.[289]

Cassian quotes Psalm 133, where the dwelling of brothers in unity is described as a joy, but clarifies that this union should be understood in spiritual terms and not in terms of space (*non localiter, sed spiritaliter oportet intelligi*); for it does no good if those who do not share the same morals and purposes share a dwelling, and, likewise, it is no hindrance to those who are together based on equal virtue that there is an interval of space between them.[290] Since lasting friendship cannot happen except among those who are perfect and of the same virtue (*nisi inter perfectos viros eiusdemque virtutis*) and who, thanks to their single will and purpose, never or very rarely disagree and, at any rate, never about issues concerning the progress of spiritual life (*in his quae ad profectum spiritalis pertinent vitae patitur dissidere*), submission to a friend's will is not an action that brings shame; it rather brings glory by being an action in imitation of

[287] Cassian, *Collationum*, 1015 A.
[288] Ibid., 1015 B.
[289] Ibid., 1018 A.
[290] Ibid., 1019 A.

Christ, who came to the world to perform not his own will but his father's.[291] Not believing oneself to be wise and therefore preferring to obey one's own will rather than that of one's neighbor (*suis malit quam proximi definitionibus obedire*) is, among other things, a prerequisite for perfect friendship.

Other virtues include contempt for worldly possessions (*contemptus substantiae mundialis*), for after a renunciation of the world and everything in it one should not still carry vain desires for things which are lower than the main goal, the precious love of brother (*pretiosissima fratris dilectio*); an understanding that everything that is deemed useful or necessary comes after the virtues of love and peace (*omnia postponenda bono charitatis ac pacis*); never to be angered for a just cause or an unjust cause (*nec iustis nec iniustis de causis penitus irascendum*); the will on the part of a brother to help another brother overcome his anger toward him, no matter how unreasonably he may have become angered; and lastly, that the brother believe that he may die any day (*ut se de hoc mundo credat quotidie migraturum*), because this not only prevents sadness from remaining in the heart, it also represses all sinful activity (*concupiscentiarum ac peccatorum omnium comprimet motus*).[292] All of these virtues, including submission to the friend's will in *imitatione Christi*, are Evagrian virtues that lead one to *apatheia* and beyond.[293] The importance of submission to a friend's will results from both the fact that

[291] Cassian, *Collationum*, 1019 B-1021 B; See also ibid., 1022 A: "Deind quemadmodum ab eo seminarium dissensionis exsurget, qui non suae, sed fratris serviens voluntati, Domini atque auctoris sui fuerit imitator effectus, qui loquens ex persona hominis quem gerebat, Non veni, inquit, ut facerem voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem eius qui me misit." Cf. Basil, letter 65 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series*, vol. 3, ed. Philip Schaff (New York: Cosimo, 2007), 163: "However, where friendship is involved, to be defeated is in my opinion to win … He who subjects himself to his neighbour in love can never be humiliated."
[292] Cassian, *Collationum*, 1021 A-1021 C.
[293] Fiske, *Friends and Friendship*, 3/11.

true friendship can exist only between perfect people and therefore the will of a true friend cannot be disagreeable or at odds with God's commandments, and from the fact that, since this is done in imitation of Christ, who obeyed the will of his father instead of his own, such a submission generates humility and obedience both to the superiors in a community and to God. The importance of other virtues, especially that of fighting anger both in oneself and in one's brother, comes from the fact that yielding to such excitements will break one's inner peace and stir up other passions and desires.[294] Instead of giving in to such a dangerous temptation, one must follow the will of a true friend who will excite the virtuous and moral part rather than passions and desires. Therefore, this submission has the twofold function of ensuring peace both within the individual and among the members of the community.

The different degrees of love are also discussed in the conference. The lowest degree, which is called *agape* (*quae dicitur ἀγάπη*), is shown to everyone, especially those of the same faith, but to such a degree that, following the commandment of the gospel, even one's enemy is included in this love.[295] The following, called *diathesis* or *affectio*, is shown to a few to whom one is bound by equality of character or by union of virtue (*vel parilitate morum vel virtutum societate connexi sunt*).[296] It is noted, in the same way as has been discussed earlier in relation to Basil (and Benedict), that sometimes one is loved more than the others; however, this does not mean tepidity of affection toward the rest but rather an abundance of love toward one who has gained this

[294] See Cassian, *Collationum*, 1041 B: "Nisi enim iracundia proximi humili statim satisfactione vincatur, provocat eam fugiens potius quam declinat."
[295] Ibid., 1027 B-1028 B.
[296] Ibid., 1028 B.

by virtue of their virtue—when, for example, Christ loved John by virtue of his virginity and purity of flesh, he did not love the rest of his disciples any less (*haec unius dilectio non erga reliquos discipulos teporem charitatis, sed largiorem erga hunc superabundantiam amoris expressit, quam ei virginitatis privilegium et carnis incorruptio conferebat*).[297] The most exalted kind of love is identified with God himself, following 1 John 4:16, and thus the importance of loving correctly is reiterated. It is not the kind of love that one shows every human being, including enemies, which Cassian envisions for the monastic community, nor is it the false kind that creates a separate community within the community; it is rather one that can be identified with God, characterized by *metanoia*, *continentia*, and *apatheia*, which functions in a way that peace and harmony is maintained both at an individual and at a communal level. Monastic friendship therefore becomes as much a spiritual exercise as it is an answer to the practical necessity of preserving order in a community.

[297] Cassian, *Collationum*, 1029 B.

CHAPTER V:

CONCLUSION: A Comparison of Classical and Monastics Ideals in Relation to Community Building

This chapter will compare and contrast the classical and monastic ideals discussed in the previous chapters. While highlighting points of convergence and divergence, the chapter will also relate these ideals of friendship to the ideals of and practical concerns about community building—however, the actual practice of these are outside the scope of the present work. There are three categories into which the discussions from previous chapter have been grouped. These categories are based on interrelated theme groups which are commonly found in association with the concept of friendship in relevant discussions from both classical and monastic sources in question. Such a categorization brings together the seemingly irreconcilable ideals from classical and monastic sources with reference to the similarity of the ways in which both groups of sources discussed these ideals—in terms of the functions they ascribed to friendship and the concepts they commonly associated with it.

5.1 Loving equally, loving based on absolute value/virtuousness, and the ensuing agreement of interests

Classical friendship is conceived as a subtype of desire, which, if it becomes intense, is called love.[298] However, unlike a lover and a beloved, whose relationship is also one of desire, friends are not supposed to have an asymmetrical relationship.[299] A lover desires the beloved for what they lack in themselves and for what the beloved has to offer, and therefore their relationship is one that is based on inequality. In such a relationship, where one is in a position of giving and the other taking, what one has but the other does not is what constitutes this asymmetrical relationship. Due to the unequal nature of such relationships, they can never last but will end once the object of desire is gone.[300] Drawing on the Pythagorean maxim that friends have all things in common, Socrates explains that there would be no private property in the ideal state—a state of equality extending even to wives and children.[301] The idea that friends should have everything in common is discussed elsewhere as a source of unity and harmony, so much so that such a practice would not only bring all the members of a community into a state of harmony, it would even make all the joy and grief shared by everyone.[302] Therefore, friendship is an influence that unites in harmony and order those elements which are otherwise separated from, or even at odds with, one another because their desires and possessions are not in agreement with the desires and possessions of the others.

[298] Plato, *Laws*, 837A.
[299] Plato, *Phdr.*, 238E-241D and 252D-E.
[300] Plato, *Laws*, 837B.
[301] Plato, *Rep.*, 450a; cf. 424A.
[302] Plato, *Laws*, 739C-E.

At a social level, or at the state level, the friendship of those elements that rule with those elements that are ruled brings harmony and justice.[303] Likewise, in an individual, peace and harmony is assured where all the different faculties have such a relationship that corresponds to their respective functions—reason governing, desires being governed, and so on. In such a situation, even though the friendship has the appearance of being based on inequality, the relationship is actually one that is based on each element acting in accordance with its proper function, for a shared goal, and receiving the same benefit—that is, for a functioning body.[304] Such a union of different elements, where they have different functions within the union, cannot be called a union based on equality, because what brings all the elements together is their shared ideal, purpose, and benefit. What is achieved is order, harmony and justice between the elements rather than equality. In monastic friendships as well, when friendships between equals, especially between young monks, are regarded with suspicion and discouraged, and when recourse to older members is advised as the better alternative; this is not because relations based on inequality are preferred but rather because relations based on a shared strife for virtue are being promoted.

The relationship between a young monk and his elder is one that takes its root from virtue at the same time as striving to arrive at virtue; it is therefore shaped by shared ideals, there is agreement in the relationship. What they possess and desires are brought into an agreement by means of friendship—as in Plato's ideal society. While in friendships between young people, desires rather than virtues may be excited and the

[303] Plato, *Rep.*, 441a-442c.
[304] Cf. St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 248.

relationship may become asymmetrical, in the relationship with one's elders, the virtuous side of a person is sure to be excited by an elder whose love of virtue has been tested and proven, and who is no longer seen as a possible object of carnal desire. The benefit is also shared, because while the relationship inspires the progress of the young monk toward virtue, it also contributes to the elder's love of virtue, because, loving virtue, the elder wants it to be as widespread within the community as possible.[305] Therefore, having a shared purpose as well as a shared benefit, both parties desire and—possibly—arrive at and possess virtue in the end.

A similar agreement is reached by Megillus and the Athenian, who define three types of friendship: one that is between opposites, which is unpleasant and cannot last; one that is based on similarity and is lasting and pleasant; and one that is a mixture of both, where one is torn between one's carnal desires and the desire for higher things.[306] The two agree in the end that the state should include only the kind of love that is based on virtue and that contributes to the progress of the youth.[307] This is a love that is absolute, not relational, as virtue is loved not for its value in relation to someone/thing but for being invariably good. Again, a twofold desire is in question: a desire for virtue, and an ensuing desire to make it as widespread as possible. In a state, and in any sort of community, such a twofold desire brings both the single individual and the whole community into a state of peace and harmony. It is because of this nature of the desire for virtue—that it wants virtue to be widespread—that similarity alone cannot be a basis

[305] Cf. Plato, *Laws*, 837D, where it is agreed that the state should involve "the kind of love which belongs to virtue and desires the young to be as good as possible," because a lover of virtue finds nothing to be more pleasant than virtue and therefore wants it to be as widespread as possible.
[306] Ibid., 837B.
[307] Ibid., 837D.

for true friendship in the *Lysis* but rather results in competition and discord.[308] Not any similarity, but resemblance regarding virtue is what lies at the root of true friendship, because it is in this way that friends desire each other's good while also desiring their own good—true friends being in agreement, what is good is the same for both of them.[309] It is a chaste, reciprocal, and lasting relationship, unlike the asymmetrical relationships where desires or lack of reciprocity create something unpleasant and ephemeral.

These different types of friendship are categorized into three by Aristotle: friendship that is based on utility, on pleasure, and on resemblance regarding virtue.[310] Whereas the first two types of friendship have a contingent nature, by virtue of being dependent on the friend being useful or pleasant and ceasing to last once the friend stops being either of those things, the last one is the true friendship that can take place only between good people. Since it is dependent not on a condition of utility or pleasure but on the character of the friend, such a friendship is lasting and, unlike the first two, does not dissolve once the friend stops being useful or pleasant.[311] Thus they remain good and virtuous together and their friendship lasts. While "what is good and pleasant for a person is loveable and desirable relatively to that person," good men who are friends are loveable and desirable both relatively, because they are this way to one another, and absolutely, because their goodness and virtue makes them a good that is desired for its

[308] Plato, *Lysis*, 215d; Cf. Cassian, *Collationum*, 1014 A-B.
[309] Cassian, *Collationum*, 1015 A and 1018 A.
[310] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1156a5-1156b5.
[311] Ibid., 1156b5-10.

sake.[312] The idea that a true friend is someone whose value is absolute by virtue of their being invariably good applies once again.

This is why, like Plato, who sees true friendship as flourishing not as a result of asymmetrical relationships but rather of friends sharing and striving for the same ultimate desire, Aristotle sees it as flourishing only between good people who resemble each other in respect of virtue.[313] Not just any similarity but similarity of virtue is requires once again. The reason for this is that the same end can constitute the *eudaimonia* of both friends and therefore there can be nothing that is not in agreement, no asymmetrical relationship. While in other (false) types of friendship the value of a friend is in relation to how useful or pleasant they are, the value of a good character—pleasant or useful it may be—is absolute and not relational.

The teleological ethical teaching of Aristotle conceives of human existence as having been given for a particular purpose, the fulfillment of which makes one realize one's full potential and become fully human, while failure to fulfill that purpose leaves one's existence without meaning and it is as if the person never existed.[314] This ultimate end, *telos*, is identified by Aristotle as *eudaimonia*, which is the point of ultimate fulfillment where no other desire remains and all that is good is attained at once within that final state of human fulfillment.[315] Being final and comprehensive, *eudaimonia* covers all goods and is therefore desired only for its own sake and never as a means to another end, whereas even virtues, despite being valuable in themselves, are chosen

[312] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1157b26-28.
[313] Ibid., 1156b7-11.
[314] Wadell, *Friendship and Moral Life*, 31-32.
[315] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1175b7-9, 1176a30-32.

partly as means to *eudaimonia*. Such an understanding is comparable to the monastic understanding of friendship whereby it is recognized that true, virtuous friendship is valuable in itself, but that it does not constitute an end in itself and is therefore not desired for its own sake. In a monastic context, virtuous friendship is a means that leads one closer to God, the ultimate end that is desired for its own sake rather than as a means. As long as care is taken about the moral significance of one's actions, friendships can flourish even under the least friendly circumstances (Pachomius and his master Palamon, for example), and the reason for this is that, as Julia Annas notes in relation to Aristotle, "goodness does not consist in avoiding pleasure in the interests of some higher ideal but in being right about what is truly pleasant."[316] One who has attained such an understanding can seek the ultimate end not only in the right way but also taking pleasure in it for the right reasons, whereby pleasure becomes a point of departure for higher thoughts and desires rather than base urges.

If friendship takes place between superior and inferior people, in order to reach a sort of equality, the superior must be loved more than they love, because it is only when the loving is proportional to the friend's worth that their difference of status is overcome.[317] The idea of loving the superior more, in a way that is proportional to their worth, resembles the Basilian call to have recourse to older men, or Cassian's call for complete transparency with and submission to one's elder at the expense of one's own self-will, or, in a more general sense, the monastic ideal's emphasis on the authority of the elder/abbot as the one who can keep the community in a state of harmony and

[316] Julia Annas, "Aristotle on Pleasure and Goodness," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980), 289.
[317] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1158b25-30.

order—unlike the younger, inexperienced members who may stir up not so virtuous desires.[318] After all, as Aristotle agrees, a very important function of true friendship is that such friends not only avoid erroneous conduct themselves, they also prevent their friends from such actions.[319] Therefore, they are virtuous both in themselves and to—and perhaps through—their friends, because, as has been discussed in relation to Plato, one who loves virtue wants it to be as widespread as possible. There is, for every person, an activity which is best suited to their character and which therefore seems the most desirable; for the virtuous man, this is virtue.[320]

Cassian identifies the following as reasons why friendships are struck up: recommendation, business relations, similarity of profession, and kinship; the last two can make even the fiercest people and wild animals have a friendly disposition toward their kind.[321] Further, these reasons are all common to good and bad people as well as among animals, and they all depend on a condition; therefore, like the false/asymmetrical relationships referred to by both Plato and Aristotle,[322] relationships based on these conditions can last only insofar as the condition is kept.[323] Again, like Plato and Aristotle, Cassian's indissoluble ideal of friendship depends on a similarity of virtue—such friends desire and despise the same things, and are therefore in

[318] Cassian, *Institutes*, 4:39, 99-100; St. Basil, "An Ascetical Discourse and Exhortation," 23-24; *First Greek Life*, 363, 369. Note that the classical ideal lacks the emphasis on renunciation while dealing with the relationship between superior and inferior friends in a similar way the monastic writers dealt with the relationship between young monks and elders—obedience is advised for one, guidance for the other.
[319] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1159b5-7.
[320] Ibid., 1176b24-27.
[321] Cassian, *Collationum*, 1013 A-1014 A.
[322] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1156a5-1156b5; Plato, *Laws*, 837B.
[323] Cassian, *Collationum*, 1014 A-B.

agreement.[324] Even though the classical emphasis on shared character, virtue, and being in agreement persists, individual friendships are no longer discussed in a monastic context as occupying a central position. It is possible to argue that for Plato and Aristotle as well friendship held societal significance, but still their arguments treat individual friendship as a central element rather than as an outcome of living in society, and neither is its importance overshadowed by the insistence on the master-disciple model, despite the presence of a higher principle underlying both ideals. The emphasis on equality and reciprocity fades as the ideal relationship takes the form of a master-disciple relationship. It survives in the form of *charitas*/*agape*, which needs to be maintained toward everyone. What prevails instead is a model based on renunciation which advocates humility and obedience for the brethren and *caritas* for the superiors, in an effort to keep peace and order both for the individual and the community. The next section concerns itself with the ways in which this new understanding was reflected in the way community relations were theorized.

5.2 Renunciation of the world and self-will leading to humility and obedience

There is a stark contrast between the Christian ideal and those of the late Empire concerning the place, sources, and function of friendship in society. While in Roman society such social bonds furthered the influence of a person or a kin group and were based on the parties' shared culture, the Christian ideal was based on a shared desire for God and envisaged a spiritualization of kinship and other social relationships.[325] Social

[324] Cassian, *Collationum*, 1015 A and 1018 A.
[325] McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, 1-2.

and political concerns that had hitherto shaped one's understanding of close personal associations were now replaced by a wish to be integrated into the mystical body, within which the new class of spiritualized bonds made sense. This meant a transformation of human relationships so that they lost their earthly character—by no longer aiming at ends that were earthly, with the end of an action being what defines it—and helped one toward salvation rather than impeding one's salvation by creating bonds with this world. However, this spiritualization of worldly bonds applies more to a monastic context where the practice is much more prominent and relevant—even in the organization of community into a father who presides over his sons, the brethren. It is true that all Christians share a spiritual relationship by virtue of their shared faith, but that bond is still of the lowest kind, or like the "inoperative friendship" of Aristotle's strangers who have goodwill for one another as citizens.[326] In the quest for becoming a friend to God, the ultimate aim of ascetic practices, all the other types of association are both secondary and dangerous and therefore must be avoided as things of this world that keep one attached to the world.[327] Whoever seeks to become a friend to God must stop being a friend to the world and renounce all association with it, including family and private property—a further spiritualization of bonds in a monastic context.[328]

Like Basil, Cassian teaches renunciation of the worldly to develop the spiritual side of an entity—be it a person or a community—but, unlike Basil, who sees the double commandment of love as being at the start of the process of spiritual development toward perfection, Cassian sees the highest kind of love, which he identifies with God,

[326] Cassian, *Collationum*, 1027 B-1028 B; Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1167a11-12.
[327] See McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, 5-6.
[328] See Jm. 4:4.

to be at the end of this process.[329] In Cassian's teaching, the kingdom of heaven is the ultimate end, *telos*, and charity is the immediate goal, *skopos*, which gives meaning to renunciation by leading one from an exclusive love to an all-inclusive love through the practice of renunciation.[330] Cassian here follows his teacher Evagrius, who teaches that one reaches *apatheia*, the immediate aim, by practicing virtue, and that this purification of the heart into a state of peaceful disengagement leads to God, the ultimate end.[331] This perfection of love is neither a simple fear of punishment nor an expectation of gain, but rather it springs out of a sublime form of fear, as in Basil's description,[332] which belongs to love and whereby one fears no punishment, expects no reward, but fears that such sublime a love may be blemished by the slightest offense; this is the love of saints, not of sinners.[333]

Nevertheless, the process of purification starts with fear, whereby one dreads the world and renounces it.[334] Then comes humility, which, according to Cassian, includes obedience and patience as well as adherence to the rule and the exemplary conduct of predecessors, believing oneself to be sinful and lower than everyone else; this brings one closer to the perfection of love, where "love for the good itself and … pleasure in virtue" will become the reasons for doing what was previously done out of fear.[335] This sublimation of fear and humility into a love for the good itself, and the fact that that love is one's point of departure to attend the perfection of love, has parallels not only in

[329] Cassian, *Collationum*, 657 A-658 B; Holmes, *A Life Pleasing to God*, 66.
[330] Ibid., 488 B-C; See also ibid., 485 A.
[331] Fiske, *Friends and Friendship*, 3/3-4.
[332] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 227.
[333] Cassian, *Collationum*, 852 A; Ps. 33 (34):10.
[334] Cassian, *Institutes*, 4:39, 99-100.
[335] Ibid., 4:39 and 4:43.

Pachomian and Basilian teachings but also in the Classical tradition.[336] The resulting understanding of monastic friendship is one where friendship with God is sought with that kind of loving feat and therefore obedience, being the outcome of such a love that involves fear, becomes important as an integral part of perfect friendship. Like Christ, who obeyed the will of the Father rather than his own, a friend should obey the will of a true friend, because true friendship can exist only between good people who have an equality of virtue, and therefore submission to a friend's will—an act of humility in *imitatione Christi*—brings glory rather than shame.[337] The spiritual leader/elder, being the preferred friend as the spiritual master and guide, the warnings by Pachomius and Basil about keeping humility and obedience, not believing oneself to be better than others, and submitting to the guidance and authority of elders apply. Both of them practices that lead to *apatheia*, humility and obedience are important both for the community and for the individual member, for they help the individual along the path that leads to *apatheia* and also help to bring peace and order to the community—which are two interdependent conditions for individual and communal wellbeing, harmony and development.

While preaching renunciation of worldly ties, Basil still orders charity toward all human beings.[338] Like Pachomius and Horsiesios, he warns against *prospatheia*, because, by nature, charity cannot be preferential, and preferential love and favoritism are both dangerous in a community. Therefore it is the duty of every member, but

[336] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1156b15-1157a15 and 1157b34-36; Plato, *Phdr.*, 255B-256E and 256C-D; *Instructions of Pachomius*, 16, 20; *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 145, 202; St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 227. Note that the element of sublimation of fear and humility is missing in the Classical sources, but love of virtue, or of the good itself, still constitutes the point of departure.
[337] Cassian, *Collationum*, 1019 B-1021 B and 1022 A.
[338] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 257.

especially of the superiors, to love equally within the community to maintain order and harmony.[339] Basil warns against the forming of close associations among the brethren as well, because such disruptive currents—separate communities within the community—make it impossible to maintain a bond of charity and are corrupt; unlike charity, whose outcome is good, these associations have evil, disruptive outcomes.[340] One must instead associate with elders who are spiritually more advanced and not physically desirable, because, instead of leading one to temptation, association with such people will lead to virtue as it is a bond of true friendship—like the friendship of those who are in heaven, as described by Horsiesios.[341]

Pachomius' reference to Abraham is significant in this connection. He points out that, by agreeing to sacrifice his own son in obedience to God, Abraham became a friend of God.[342] Again, to express it in Aristotelian terms, goodness consists in knowing what is truly pleasurable; for God is the totality of everything, including all of one's bonds, every bond is secondary compared to that totality, and, since the attainment of that ultimate aim would provide for one all the bonds in which they find pleasure in this world—including one so close as that between a father and his son—there is no reason why any one bond that is pleasant should be preferred over a totality of everything that pleases. This totality is Christianized *eudaimonia*, for the sake of which everything else—even virtues, which are valuable in themselves—becomes a means rather than an end in itself. This is why humility and obedience become sources not of shame but of

[339] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 299.
[340] St. Basil, *Constitutiones Asceticae*, cap. 29, PG 31:1418-19.
[341] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 298, and "An Ascetical Discourse and Exhortation," 23-24; *Instructions of Horsiesios*, 150.
[342] *Instructions of Pachomius*, 13.

glory; they are virtues which lead one to that ultimate end, and which, Pachomius instructs, should be carried like a "crown of victory."[343] In that same passage, Pachomius also urges the brethren to be friends with people who keep the commandments of the Lord in their hearts. Likewise, Horsiesios reiterates the importance of being friends with godly people because, while false friends harm and lead one into temptation, friendships which are like "the friendship of those from heaven" join people in perfect union and help them be closer to God.[344]

It is essential, therefore, that one makes such friends and submit their self-will to the will of their friend, because a true friend is necessarily a good and virtuous person whose value is absolute and whose will necessarily reflects the ultimate good that the friends strive for. Even though the elements involved here resemble the classical ideal, the emphasis on submission and renunciation is missing from the classical sources. Monastic writings on friendship involve all three theme groups, whereas the classical sources seem to involve the first and the third. As the second group of themes, relating to renunciation and obedience, is generally missing, the classical sources present a model where desire for the ultimate good plays a large part. In the monastic quest for friendship with God, however, there is also an element of fear—especially in Cassian—which, by also being part of perfect love, engenders renunciation, obedience and humility.[345] In the next section, the ways in which the classical and Christian writers in

[343] *Instructions of Pachomius*, 39.
[344] *Instructions of Horsiesios*, 150.
[345] It may be argued that the desire for good life must necessarily involve a fear or at least avoidance of the opposite.

question dealt with the themes of the final theme group will be compared in an effort to show how the two currents were reconciled in the teachings of Basil and Cassian.

5.3 Order, hierarchy, and achieving the good life in community

In accordance with the inclusive nature of the Greek term, *philia*, which does not restrict friendship to exclusive interpersonal bonds outside the bonds of love or family (which the present understanding of it seems to do), Aristotle seems to understand friendship as encompassing a large array of close human bonds—from personal to social to familial.[346] Just as it establishes trust between individuals on a smaller scale, friendship is also a two-person representation of the larger social contract and is therefore something to aspire to even for legislators.[347] It is, moreover, the bond of humanity at large. However, since it must be based on reciprocal goodwill and an inanimate object cannot reciprocate the goodwill of its owner even if the owner showed it goodwill for benefiting it, friendship is a bond that excludes soulless things. Even in the case of human beings, reciprocity alone is not enough but there must be an awareness, too. For, if a person showed goodwill to a stranger, even if their goodwill were reciprocated by the stranger, they would not be considered friends; friends must be aware of and acknowledge the presence of reciprocal goodwill.[348] It is because they are not aware of one another's disposition that the strangers in the example are not considered friends just by virtue of their reciprocal goodwill.

[346] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1155a1-20.
[347] Ibid., 1155a23-25.
[348] Ibid., 1155b29-34; 1156a1-5.

Since goodwill is not as intense a feeling as friendship, it does not engender the same responses as friendship—going out of one's way to do something for a friend, for example, in a basic sense—and it is for this reason that Aristotle calls goodwill "inoperative friendship," explaining that it may turn into friendship proper over time, but not the kind of friendship that is based on utility or pleasure because these are not feelings associated with goodwill.[349] Virtue, which is associated with goodwill even toward those one does not know, stems from one's moral excellence, and those who have this quality, when they come together to work for the benefit of all and strive for what is just, they create concord, which is "friendship between citizens."[350] Base people who have no such moral excellence, on the other hand, not only strive solely for their advantage but do so by also trying to prevent other from attaining the advantages that suit their needs and desires; the fruit their self-seeking work is "discord, everybody trying to make others do their duty but refusing to do it themselves."[351] It follows, therefore, that friendship in a social context, which is essentially the shared goodwill of citizens toward one another, is not friendship proper, but that it still includes, in accordance with the inclusive nature of the term *philia*, a sense of belonging together as well as a sense of *caritas* toward humanity at large, and it is therefore a form of—perhaps dormant—friendship.

Once this initial level is exceeded and actual friendship is achieved, it becomes desirable, even necessary, for friends to live together in community, so that they can express their feelings through actions. The reason actions and living together are thought

[349] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1167a11-12.
[350] Ibid., 1167b2-10.
[351] Ibid., 1167b10-15.

to be necessary is that, even though physical separation or lack of actions that express feelings cannot end the friendship itself, it can end the activity of friendship.[352] Since the political community seeks the advantage of the whole rather than the advantage of certain individuals—as does the monastic community, as opposed to a life of solitude—, it is considered to be the highest form of community. In the political community, friendship is, or must be, the relationship not only between the ruled, because it inspires them to just conduct, but also between the ruler and the ruled, so that the ruler acts to ensure the wellbeing of the whole—like a shepherd and his flock.[353] Friendship represents, in this sense, a tendency that preserves law, order and harmony both at an individual level and at the state level. When there is no friendship between the ruler and the ruled, and they have nothing in common, there is also little or no justice; likewise, if there is no such feeling between the ruled, there can be no harmony in society at large.[354]

In such a community, where different sides come together within a hierarchical order, the two parties must receive things in a way that corresponds to their worth and their needs, in such a way that they complement one another by receiving what they receive from the relationship; whereas the inferior, needy person must receive more profit, the superior one must receive more honor.[355] Here, the honor that is received is the reward for the virtue and beneficence of the superior, while the profit is received as the help needed by the inferior party. This is a different arrangement that should not be mistaken for a friendship that is based on utility, or on pleasure, because while the latter

[352] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1157b10-13.
[353] Ibid., 1160a21-30, 1161a10-15.
[354] Ibid., 1160a1-10, 1161a32-36; Cf. Plato, *Laws*, 739C-E and the description of the apostolic community in Acts 2:44 and 4:32.
[355] Ibid., 1163a26-b4.

types of friendship are formed based on an expectation of gain and end when there is no gain—either utility or pleasure—to be expected anymore, friendships where distribution corresponds to worth are relationships where whatever is provided is provided for the sake of the friend.[356] Such an arrangement within true friendship is true and lasting because the friendship itself is based on virtue—there is a lack of desire and a sense of virtue reflected in the division of things in relation to one's worth and needs—and the friends are loved qua friends; therefore what they each expect of the relationship is in agreement, because their ultimate aim is one and the same.

Since, according to both Aristotle and Basil, what defines an action is the end that corresponds to it, it follows naturally from here that, when action is based on a union of reason and desire, directed toward a virtuous end, the good person becomes pleasurable not only to others but also to themselves, while even their self-love becomes beneficial for all.[357] The reason for this is that, having attained virtue and concord in themselves, a good person will be absolutely and invariably good and therefore their actions, with which their whole existence can be identified, will constitute the *eudaimonia* both for themselves and their friends; this is why true friendship can flourish only between good people. Unlike the good person, a base person does not even have concord within themselves, and cannot even be friends with themselves.[358] This relationship that one has with their self is the model for their relationships with other people; just as there is agreement within the character of a good person, so will there be agreement and concord in their relationships with their friends and, resembling the

[356] *Aristotle, Nic. Eth.,* 1164a35-b1.
[357] Ibid., 1115b20-22, 1139b5-6, 1169a11-18, 1169a34-b2; St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 245.
[358] *Aristotle, Nic. Eth.,* 1166b6-29.

relationship they have with their selves, the relationship they share with one another will never be asymmetrical. The sayings Aristotle quotes in relation to this point, "'Amity is equality' and 'True friends have one spirit,'"[359] are compatible with the description of the apostolic community in Acts 4:32, with the monastic ideal which is constructed with reference to the biblical ideal, and with Plato's ideal state as described in the *Laws*, 739 C-E. In all three cases, one renounces all attachment and desires at a personal level, and this results in the creation of what has been described as the ideal of classical friendship: those who have attained virtue and concord within themselves being of one spirit by virtue of being in agreement also with one another, their actions create the *eudaimonia* for all parties involved—*singula omnium, omnia singulorum*.

A relationship based on the agreement of desires and similarity of virtue, in true friendship, the relationship a friend shares with the other friend is comparable to the relationship either shares with their own selves, and for this reason, it follows that friends want to share with one another the things which give meaning to their lives and so want to live together. However, since living in community and sharing with one another the important matters in one's life also means influencing one another, when base people come together and live in community they lead one another further into bad habits, whereas in the union of virtuous people the friends one another further toward virtue.[360] This again is related to the idea that virtue is the most pleasant thing for a virtuous person, and that therefore a virtuous person wants virtue to be as widespread as possible. Cassian also advocates living together, but his idea is rooted in the Scripture

[359] Aristotle, *Eudem. Eth.*, 1240b3-4.
[360] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1172a7-14.

and he understand this union in spiritual rather than physical terms.[361] It makes no difference if these people are separated by space, for they share virtue and purposes; however, as in the union of base people described by Aristotle, which gives way to discord rather than concord, it has no meaning according to Cassian if people whose morals and purposes are not in agreement.[362] Again, friendship is understood as flourishing only between those who have achieved moral excellence and goodness, and who therefore have agreement in their opinions, desires and purposes—this, again, is connected to the idea of submission to the will of a true friend.[363]

However, since friendship is no exception among the things of the world which trouble and distract a person's spirit and mind, it is essential to cultivate self-control along with physical absence from social life and its activities, so that absence from the world is not only in the flesh but also in the mind and spirit. Abba Arsenius, who had left the imperial court to become an anchorite, is recorded to have said that he "cannot life with God and with men," despite loving them.[364] Indeed, in desert communities, the most intimate bond to be allowed was the one between a monk and a spiritual guide, elder. Obedience and loving equally are key concepts here, because it by practicing these two that one achieves self-control in one's association with other people and avoids falling prey to another worldly temptation which has the form of friendship.

The practice of these is reiterated by Pachomius who allowed a brother to receive, or give, special attention only under such special circumstances as sickness, and

[361] Cassian, *Collationum*, 1019 A; cf. Ps. 133.
[362] Ibid., 1019 A.
[363] Ibid., 1019 B-1021 B; See also ibid., 1022 A; Cf. Basil, letter 65 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 163.
[364] *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 11.

even then only with the necessary permission or order to do so.[365] This is clearly a measure to keep the order of hierarchy and charity within the community, where no one was to love another exclusively or particularly. Pachomius' own relationship with his master, Palamon, presents an interesting case. Even though Palamon did not want anything to do with anyone of the world at first, the two developed a close relationship over time, whereby Pachomius became his "true son" and Palamon did not even feel joy upon hearing the news of Pachomius' calling but rather let him leave on the condition that they would visit one another and not be separated.[366] This story offers a good model that sheds light on Pachomius' incorporation of monastic friendship within the *koinonia*. Even though Pachomian monks lived in community, they were not to develop any personal intimacy with one another; however, if their close association was with a superior who could guide them, to whose will and authority they obeyed, then the relationship was condoned as being one that did not pose a danger but instead brought one nearer God—as did the relationship of Pachomius to Palamon.

Friendships of this world are allowed, therefore, only insofar as they can have such a higher function rather than turning into friendships *with* the world. It is for this reason that, in a monastic context, relationships which are based on a master-disciple model are preferred to the relationship between young, inexperienced monks. However, this is not to say that one must condemn the others and shun the rest of the world; while being a friend only to those who can guide properly, one must at the same time retain the

[365] *Rules of Pachomius*, 161.
[366] *First Greek Life*, 311-12.

bond of charity with everyone, because this is the way to become a friend of Jesus.[367] In keeping with the commandment to show special attention to someone from the community only under special circumstances and, even then, only with the necessary permission from superiors, the importance of humility and obedience as well as of loving equally is reiterated. For this is the way to achieve *hesychia* both individually and as a community. *Hesychia*, a central theme in the prayers of the desert Fathers, is not merely separation from the world and its distractions but further the state of having inner peace and quiet.[368] When the bond of charity is kept between the brethren, they can be in harmony with one another and practice the ideal of Christian love by loving their neighbor without becoming close enough to tempt or distract one another. By encouraging humility and obedience, order is preserved on a communal level—because the authority of those in charge is respected—but also for the individual who, through the guidance of the elders, keeps the commandments of the Lord and finds inner peace as well. Just like the brethren who do not love one another particularly in an effort to avoid temptation, the superiors who love everyone equally also practice the love of neighbor and also avoid *prospatheia*. Having achieved both interior and exterior peace and quiet, harmony and order, the community becomes a place where one can have true friendships and become a good person whose value is not relational—for in such a community, neither exterior nor interior relationships have anything asymmetrical and everything is in agreement thanks to that shared ultimate aim.

[367] See the Pachomian quote in White, *Christian Friendship*, 171; cf. 1 Jn. 4:7.
[368] *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 250.

A proponent of living in community, Basil sees the second the second part of the double commandment to love, which concerns love of neighbor, as a justification for community life. Like Aristotle, Basil sees people to be social animals who naturally desire to live with and depend on and love their kind.[369] In the *Politics,* Aristotle also argues that, as social animals, human beings have a natural desire to live together and depend on one another, even when there is no actual need for this, and that the chief of aim of any such union of people, be it a monastic community or a political society, is to provide both each member and the whole community with the "good life."[370] Likewise, in a monastic community, people come together to work for a similar shared aim—perhaps Christianized as the "life of piety"—and try to provide that for each member as well as for the whole community.

This desire for what is good, Basil teaches, should not be based on a desire for reward or on fear of punishment but rather should result from true love of God—love that is not based on utility or pleasure but on the absolute value of the good.[371] Just as *eudaimonia* is, to Aristotle, the fulfillment of human existence where all desires and their corresponding actions reach their ultimate aim, this love of God is, for Basil, the fulfillment of human nature; this is why, as social animals who need to love God and, for the love of God, one another, virtuous people coming together and helping each other reach a shared goal instead of being sources of distraction is the preferable alternative to life in solitude—like Aristotle's political community, the monastic community should concern itself with the salvation of all rather than of just one person.

[369] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 239.
[370] Aristotle, *Politics,* 1278b21-26.
[371] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 227.

Relationships between the members of the community are still a means to an end, but nonetheless preferable means.

Since one's actions must correspond to the desired end, *telos*, one cannot have the aim to please God and act in a way that is meant to please people and the world.[372] Therefore, in the monastic community envisaged by Basil, the spiritualized bonds are not substitutes for the worldly entanglements one must renounce. His vision of community relations in a monastic context is that these relations be based on a strict hierarchy within which every part plays its proper role under the guidance of a higher principle to create a fully functioning body which is compared to the description of the apostolic community in Acts 2:44 and 4:32.[373] As in the ideal state of Plato, members of this community share everything and are bound by a bond which unites everyone in harmony and agreement.[374] In addition to sharing virtues and interests—again, as in Plato's ideal state where even family members and feelings are shared—these members also share family members who are pious and can therefore be conducive to one's development in faith, while renouncing all kinship bonds otherwise, because it is said at Matt. 12:50 that "whosoever shall do the will of my Father that is in Heaven, he *is* my brother and sister and mother."[375] The individual bonds of kinship are thus renounced when the formerly exclusive family relations are expanded to involve the whole community.

[372] St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 245.
[373] Ibid., 252.
[374] Plato, *Rep.*, 450a; Plato, *Laws*, 739C-E.
[375] Quoted in St. Basil, "The Long Rules," 295.

In a way that is comparable to Classical, Pachomian and Basilian teachings, Cassian conceives of friendship as having a double function—to bring peace and order to the whole community and to do the same for every individual member as well. With these desired functions in mind, like Basil and Pachomius, he encourages friendship with the elders who can guide one properly toward the desired end, and he exhibits suspicion toward friendship between young members, who are more likely to tempt one another and cause worldly entanglement rather than spiritual development.[376] Again, the need for a strict hierarchy and supervision for close association to have positive outcomes persists. Further, as in the case of communal kinship bonds, the elders in question, who are equally available to every member of the community, have also renounced particular bonds.

In the absence of particular attachment, the love that ensues from such acts of renunciation, which Cassian calls *agape*, is discussed to be of the lowest degree because it is shown to everyone and extends even to one's enemies.[377] The two higher kinds are one that is shown to a few people by virtue of similarity of character and shared virtues, and a still higher one that is identified with God.[378] Cassian's vision for the monastic community is one where the first and lowest one is maintained as a principle, while the second one is practiced in the form of a master-disciple relationship to finally reach the last, highest kind of love. His model, sometimes criticized to be concerned more with behavior within the cloister than with the Christian ideal of love,[379] in fact presents a

[376] Cassian, *Institutes*, 4:39 and 2:15.
[377] Cassian, *Collationum*, 1027 B-1028 B.
[378] Ibid., 1028 B.
[379] See, for example, McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, 80-82, and Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 107.

model that takes into consideration spiritual as well as practical concerns. After all, the answer to spiritual development is peace and order within the self and among those who come together to constitute a community. *Apatheia* and purity of heart are needed both for the whole community and for the individual member, so that practical peace and order can be practiced and ultimately give way to spiritual perfection.

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