

Konstan, David
Correspondence about *Friendship*

ANAIS DE FILOSOFIA CLÁSSICA

Correspondence about *Friendship In The Classical World* review

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Dear Fernando,

Many thanks for sending me the fine article by Luiz Otavio de Figueiredo Mantovaneli, and for offering me the opportunity to reply to it. A response is hardly necessary, but since you have invited one, and above all since the Dr. Mantovaneli himself has expressed his satisfaction with the idea of inaugurating a dialogue, I am happy to provide a few brief comments.

Dr. Mantovaneli's main point is that the bonds that Hesiod approves are based on the appreciation of character – the virtues of hard work and honesty – and so my suggestion that Hesiod was merely looking to utility as the basis for friendship is too limited, even if cooperation is a basic social need. The point is well taken, and I do not object to it at all.

However, the Dr. Mantovaneli seems to have overlooked some of what I wrote concerning Hesiod, which would, perhaps, bring our views closer together. I quote from the English version:

There is, however, one passage in which Hesiod seems clearly to be speaking about friendship:

Do not make a hetairois equal to a brother [kasignêtos], but if you do, be not first to wrong him or lie with your tongue. If he begins by saying or doing something offensive, remember to pay him back double. If he accepts you again into his affection [philotês] and is willing to pay the penalty, receive him: base is the man who makes now one philos, now another (707-13).

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The term philos here, which occurs in the usual formula for making friends (with poieisthai), is likely to be substantival rather than an adjective; the context, moreover, suggests the deliberate acknowledgement of a special bond that can be broken for cause but must otherwise be cherished and respected. The friend here is in a category distinct from that of relative, neighbor, or comrade in general. To have made a friend of someone involves not just warm feelings but a sense of commitment to a relationship.

As you see, I think Hesiod recognizes real friends, not just neighbors. And I go on to state:

These are the elements that will provide the context for personal friendship in the classical city-state: the articulation of a sphere between individual household and civic society at large, regulated by conventions of sentiment rather than by the law of property and political rights, and betraying, at least in the early stages, a particular connection with class identity articulated around the collective feast or symposium.

So I certainly recognize genuine friendship as a value in Hesiod. What I perhaps failed to do, however, is to indicate that Hesiod has in mind virtues and character as the basis for such friendship, and thus deserves recognition for appreciating friendship in much the way Aristotle does.

Let me say again that I am delighted that Dr. Mantovaneli has been so gracious as to welcome my comments as a post scriptum to his fine paper.

With best wishes,

David