

THE BOUNDARIES OF
BYZANTINE FRIENDSHIP



A DUMBARTON OAKS COLLOQUIUM

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COLLOQUIARCHS:

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Friendship is a human connection which appears to be recognisable in many societies, indeed to be universal, but which has the capacity to surprise. It is also a subject of interest in many periods (the ancient world, the eighteenth century) and disciplines (anthropology, political science, philosophy, history). The debate over Byzantine friendship in the 1980s led to general agreement that it is a profoundly important social tie, though it may have taken very different forms at different times and in different milieux. There has been some agreement that it is important to examine friendship in a comparative context, and different schools and networks have used different comparators: the Freiburg Graduiertenkolleg looks at varieties of friendship from antiquity to the modern world; the Münster Exzellenzcluster sees it in the context of religion and politics; the British Academy Friendship network has looked comparatively at the nature of friendship in western medieval Europe, Byzantium and Scandinavia. The boundaries of Byzantine friendship will be investigated in two ways: first, how friendship differs in other medieval societies, and second, in terms of its difference from other similar personal relations, from biological and fictive kinship, from patronage and lordship, from teacher-pupil relationships and erotic dyads. The presence of the three projects and of significant American scholars of friendship will allow consideration of future agendas, as well as conclusions about personal relations in Byzantium and its neighbours.

Speakers

Stephen Jaeger: Friendship and education in St Augustine

Claudia Rapp: Friendship and brother-making in Late Antiquity

Gerd Althoff: Friendship and vassalage in Early Medieval Europe

Michael Grünbart: Friendship and ruler-subject relations in tenth-century Byzantium

Michael Cooperson: Friendship and alliance in the ninth-century Caliphate

Stratis Papaioannou: Friendship and desire in middle Byzantine writing

Jon Vidar Sigurdsson: Friendship and lordship in Viking Scandinavia

Manolis Bourbouhakis: Friendship and patronage in the late Byzantine period

Commentary

Commentary Julian Haseldine (British Academy); Christian Kühner (Freiburg); Sita Steckel (Münster)