

CICERO

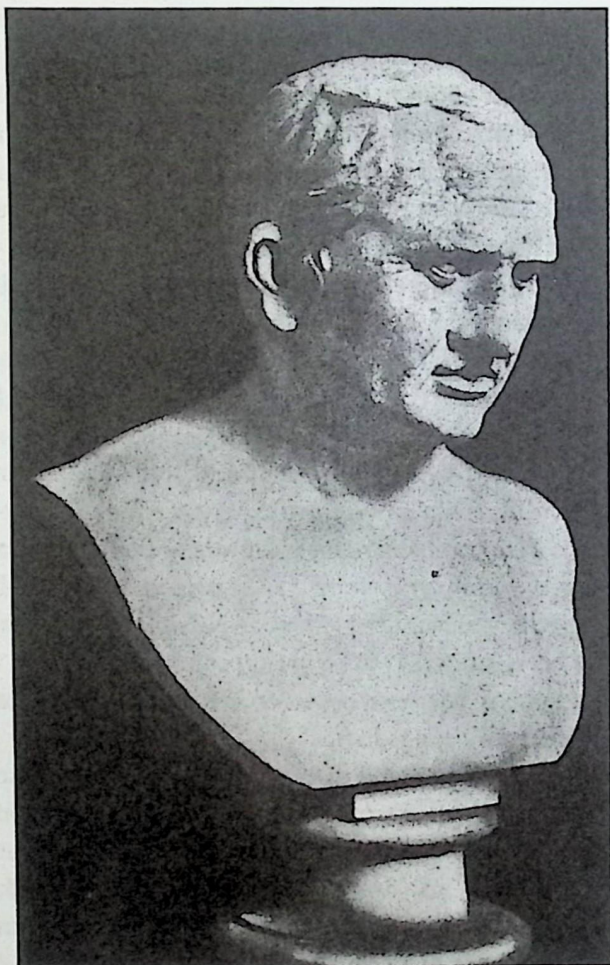


De Amicitia Selections

Patsy Rodden Ricks & Sheila K. Dickison

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CICERO.
From a bust in the Vatican.

Introduction

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF CICERO'S LIFE

We know more about Marcus Tullius Cicero than any other ancient Roman chiefly due to his voluminous outpouring of writing: his orations, his books on rhetoric, books on philosophical treatises, and his letters, over four hundred of which were written to his lifelong friend Atticus to whom he dedicates the *de Amicitia*.

Cicero was born in 106 BCE near the town of Arpinum. His father, a man of equestrian rank, brought Cicero and his brother Quintus to Rome to be educated. One of Cicero's teachers was the poet Archias, whose citizenship Cicero later defended in 62 BCE. After the Social War of 91–89 BCE, Cicero studied law with Q. Mucius Scaevola, the augur whom Cicero would later use as one of the speakers in the *de Amicitia*. One of Cicero's first orations was his *Pro Roscio Amerino* in which he defended the young Roscius, whose estate had been stolen by Chrysogonus, a favorite of Sulla. Cicero would again challenge Sulla's authority when he prosecuted his political friend Verres in 70 BCE for extortion as governor of Sicily. Cicero's bold daring and his oratorical skills established his reputation in Rome.



MODERN-DAY ARPINUM

Cicero was proud of the fact that he was elected to all the major offices in the Republic at the earliest age possible and with the most number of votes. In 69 BCE he became aedile, in 66 praetor, and in 63 consul. During his consulship he exposed Catiline as a conspirator, and captured and executed Catiline's followers without holding a trial. Although Rome honored Cicero by giving him the title *pater patriae* for saving the state, Cicero would later suffer for not following the letter of the law.

Publius Clodius, a powerful aristocrat, became Cicero's personal enemy; and in 58 BCE he pushed through a bill that called for the exile of anyone who had executed Roman citizens without a trial. Neither Pompey nor Caesar came to Cicero's aid, and he was forced into exile for 18 months until he was finally recalled in 57. Rejoicing crowds escorted Cicero from Brundisium to Rome, but political power was now in the hands of Pompey and Caesar. The Republic that Cicero loved and defended was past, although he never completely accepted its demise.

After his exile, Cicero devoted his time to writing such works as *de Oratore*, *de Re Publica*, *de Legibus*. His last public duty was in 51 BCE when he became governor of Cilicia. In 50 when Cicero returned, he found an Italy on the verge of civil war. Cicero took up Pompey's cause, but was later pardoned by the victorious Julius Caesar.

Cicero's unhappiness caused by Caesar's control of Rome and his own personal problems including divorce and the death of his beloved daughter drove him to a writing frenzy. In two years he wrote such works as *de Finibus*, *Brutus*, *Tusculanae Disputationes*, *de Natura Deorum*, *de Divinatione*, *de Senectute*, *de Amicitia*, and *de Officiis*.

Delighted by Caesar's assassination because he believed the Republic could be restored, Cicero was once again dejected by Antony's push to power. He returned to the public arena to deliver his scathing *Philippics*, a series of stinging speeches against Antony. The passion and daring he had exhibited in prosecuting Verres, in defending Roscius, in challenging Catiline had returned for this last moment of glory in the 63rd and last year of his life. When Antony and Augustus formed the Second Triumvirate, Cicero's fate was sealed. He was proscribed and then killed on December 7, 43 BCE, and his hands and head were nailed to the Rostra where he had known so many successes.

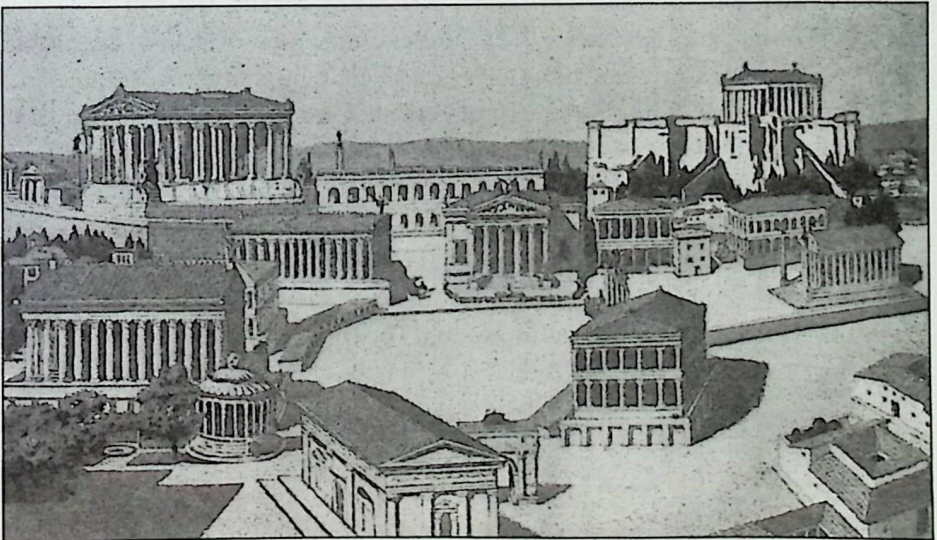
HISTORICAL SETTING OF THE *LAELIUS DE AMICITIA*

Cicero chose the friendship between Scipio Aemilianus and Gaius Laelius to serve as the backdrop for his writings about friendship. Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus Minor, the son of Lucius Aemilius Paulus and adopted son of Publius Scipio was born about 185 BCE. As a young man, he distinguished himself in the Battle of Pydna in 168, and later during the Third Punic War in 149. By 147 he was the consular commander in Africa and destroyed Carthage. In 134 he was again elected consul in his absence and destroyed Numantia in Spain.

When Scipio returned to Rome, he found the city in turmoil over the reforms of his adopted cousins and brothers-in-law, the Gracchi. Scipio took the side of the Senate, losing much popular support. He died mysteriously at 56 one night after returning home from a fierce debate in the Senate in which he opposed the popular reforms.

Gaius Laelius was the older of the pair by a few years. He was praetor in 145 BCE and consul five years later. He had served with Scipio in Africa and in Spain. Cicero describes him as having *lenitas*, gentleness. He was called *sapiens* for his wisdom.

Scipio and Laelius were part of an intellectual circle that included Roman aristocrats, poets, and learned Greeks such as Polybius, the historian; Panaetius, the philosopher; Terence and Pacuvius, Latin poets; and Lucilius, the satirist.



THE ROMAN FORUM IN CICERO'S TIME

THE CHARACTERS IN THE *DE AMICITIA*

A. PARTICIPANTS IN THE DIALOGUE

Gaius Laelius Sapiens, son of the elder Laelius, had a distinguished political career achieving the rank of consul in 140 BCE, a notable military career serving under Scipio Aemilianus in Carthage and Numantia, and was perhaps the greatest orator of his day. Due to his love of learning and philosophy he was called "the Wise." He is a great favorite of Cicero who often uses him as an example of a Roman man who is both intellectual and moral. Having been chosen for his erudition and his outstanding friendship with Scipio Aemilianus, Laelius is the persona through whom Cicero speaks in the *de Amicitia*.

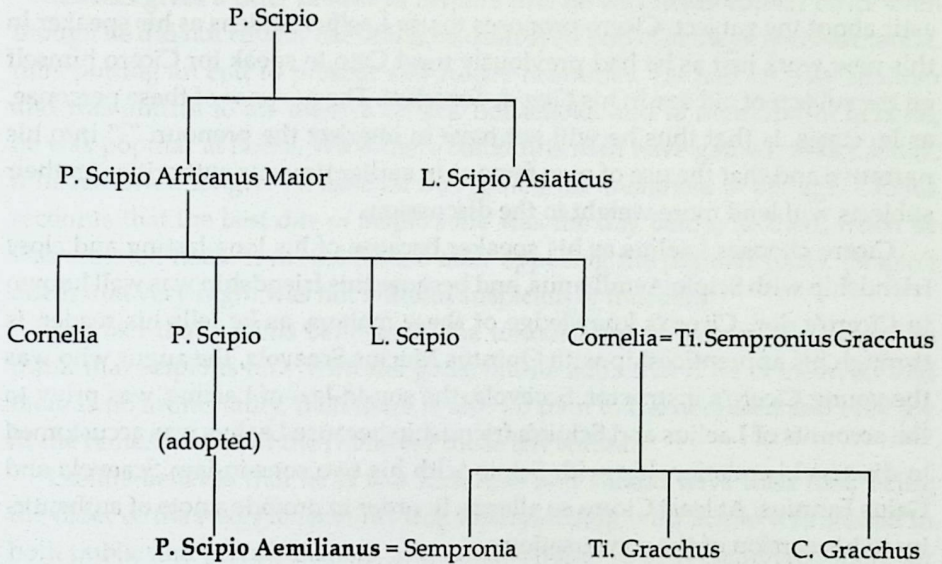
Quintus Mucius Scaevola the augur was the son-in-law of Laelius Sapiens and the tutor of Cicero in his youth. It is through Scaevola that Cicero had knowledge of Laelius and the younger Scipio.

Gaius Fannius, also Laelius' son-in-law. The role of both Scaevola and Fannius in the *de Amicitia* is to prompt Laelius to speak about the subject of friendship in general from his experience gained through a lifelong friendship with Scipio.

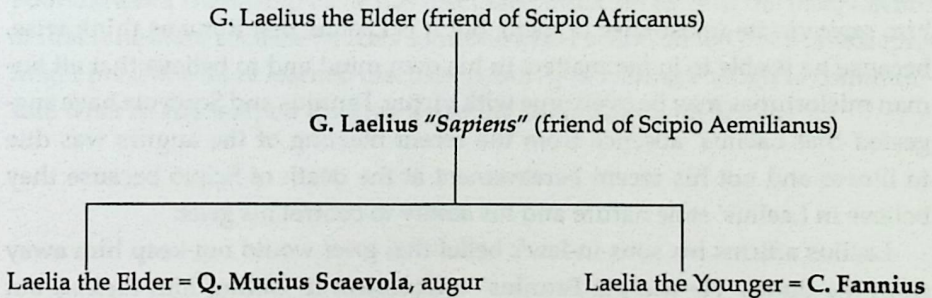
B. P. SCIPIO AEMILIANUS, LAELIUS' DEAR FRIEND (DISCUSSED IN THE DIALOGUE)

Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus Minor, the son of Lucius Aemilius Paulus and adopted son of Publius Scipio (son of Scipio Africanus). After his defeat of Carthage in the Third Punic War, he was given the surname of Africanus to which the name Minor was attached to distinguish him from his adopted grandfather, Scipio Africanus Maior. He and Laelius Sapiens were the chief members of a literary circle that included Terence, the famous Roman comedy playwright. Scipio Aemilianus died suddenly in his home after a day of fierce debate in the Senate in which Scipio stood firm in his views against the popular reforms pushed forward by Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus. Cicero and many others believed Scipio was murdered. The time period of the *de Amicitia* is only a few days after Scipio's death.

TREE OF THE SCIPIO AND LAELIUS FAMILY MEMBERS CENTRAL TO DE AMICITIA SCIPIO FAMILY



LAELIUS FAMILY



SUMMARY OF SECTIONS I.1–IV.16

OF DE AMICITIA

[1–5] In the introduction to the *de Amicitia*, Cicero tells us that Atticus, surely his closest friend, suggested to him the idea of writing about friendship. Enthusiastic about the subject, Cicero proposes to use Laelius Sapiens as his speaker in this new work just as he had previously used Cato to speak for Cicero himself on the subject of old age in his *Cato, de Senectute*. The purpose of these personae, as he states, is that thus he will not have to interject the pronoun “I” into his narrative and that the use of men famous in earlier times as authorities on their subjects will lend more weight to the discussion.

Cicero chooses Laelius as his speaker because of his long-lasting and close friendship with Scipio Aemilianus, and because this friendship was well known in Cicero’s day. Cicero’s knowledge of these matters, as he tells his reader, is through his apprenticeship with Quintus Mucius Scaevola, the augur who was the young Cicero’s instructor. Scaevola, the son-in-law of Laelius, was privy to the accounts of Laelius and Scipio’s friendship because Laelius was accustomed to discuss his relationship with Scipio with his two sons-in-law, Scaevola and Gaius Fannius. At least Cicero so alleges, in order to provide a note of authenticity to his version of the conversation.

[6–9] The *de Amicitia* begins in mid-conversation between Laelius and his sons-in-law as they contemplate the recent death of Scipio. Fannius states that men in Rome call Laelius *sapiens* (wise) because of his character and nature but also for his learning and intellectual abilities. He mentions that many before have called Cato wise and all have called Socrates wise as the oracle of Apollo named him *sapientissimum* (most wise of men). But it is Laelius that Romans think wise, because he is able to judge matters in his own mind and to believe that all human misfortunes may be overcome with virtue. Fannius and Scaevola have suggested that Laelius’ absence from the recent meeting of the augurs was due to illness and not his recent bereavement at the death of Scipio because they believe in Laelius’ stoic nature and his ability to control his grief.

Laelius affirms his sons-in-law’s belief that grief would not keep him away from his duties. He accepts Fannius’ compliment in calling him *sapiens*, but states his opinion that Cato was especially so and that Cato was very admirable in his ability to accept his own son’s death. Laelius then begins to explain his feeling about his friend Scipio and his death.

[10–15] Laelius affirms that Scipio was the best friend he ever had, but affirms that he has means to console himself after the loss of Scipio. Rather than believing that Scipio's death is a tragic event, he believes that whatever bad has happened grieves him personally, but to pity himself would be selfish.

Laelius gives a brief review of Scipio's life: he was made consul twice even though he did not run for the office; he destroyed both Carthage and Numantia, thus putting an end to present and future hostilities. He had an easy manner and was dutiful to his mother, sisters, household, and to mankind in general; he was popular at Rome. What more could this man have gained, asks Laelius, if he had lived longer? At least he was spared the weakness of old age. Laelius recounts that the best day of Scipio's life was the day before he died, when he was escorted home from the Senate after opposing the popular party. (Scipio's death that very night was not without suspicion of murder.)

The fact that Laelius believes in the immortality of the soul helps him to think that Scipio is now with the gods; but he adds that if he is incorrect and there is no immortality, then there is also no pain to the deceased and only joy in the remembrance of the friend for those left behind.

Laelius believes that he is less fortunate and should have died first, being the older of the two. He recounts that his friendship with Scipio was shared in both public and private matters, and Laelius hopes to be remembered more for sharing one of the truly deep friendships than for being called *sapiens*, a title he feels he does not deserve.

[16–17] On being asked by Scaevola and Fannius to discuss the nature and boundaries of friendship as he has discussed other subjects in the past, Laelius at first is hesitant because he feels someone better schooled in Greek philosophy might present a more learned discussion, but he is willing enough to communicate what he has learned through a lifelong friendship with Scipio.

Latin Text of *de Amicitia* with Commentary

HELP WITH USING THE COMMENTARY

A&G = *Allen and Greenough's New Latin Grammar* (Ginn & Company: New York, 1931). Grammatical points may also be checked in any other comprehensive grammar.

< = is from

A Latin word or phrase in parentheses indicates that the Latin is understood or implied from context.

When two translations are given, the first translation is literal, the second closer to acceptable English.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE COMMENTARY

adv. = adverb

m. = masculine

f. = feminine

n. = neuter

pl. = plural

conj. = conjunction

adj. = adjective

SMALL CAPS = a term found in the glossary of *Figures of Speech*

† = required on Advanced Placement exams

NUMBERING SYSTEM

Numbers in the commentary are listed by line numbers assigned for ease of reading in this text. The standard roman numerals and arabic numbers designating sections and subsections are given in brackets, both in the Latin text and in the commentary, as they occur. These are standard numerations for *de Amicitia* and allow for easy cross-reference to other texts.

SELECTION A: LINES 1–107 [SECTIONS V.17–VII.23]

PART 1: LINES 1–28

After urging his sons-in-law to put friendship before everything else, Laelius states that friendship cannot exist except between “good” men. Laelius then considers the difference between the philosophers’ definition of “good men” and the everyday definition.

1. [V. 17] *tantum*, adv.: only.
2. *anteponatis*: takes an accusative with the direct object (*amicitiam*) and a dative (*omnibus rebus humanis*) as a compound verb. The verb is subjunctive in an indirect command after *hortari*.
- 2–3. Note Cicero’s parallel constructions: *tam . . . aptum*, *tam conveniens* (TANAPHORA), *vel secundas vel adversas*, and his use of TASYNDETON here.
3. *aptum* < *aptus*, -a, -um: suitable, suited; takes the dative case (*naturae*).
conveniens, -venientis: adapted to, suited to; takes *ad* with the accusative. [The reader should think about why *amicitia* would be suited to both good times and bad.]
4. *secundas* < *secundus*, -a, -um: favorable.
5. [18] *hoc*: “this thing”; less literally, “this principle”; accusative, object of *sentio*.
primum: adv.
- 5–6. *nisi . . . amicitiam . . . esse non posse*: “that friendship can not exist except . . .”
Translate as in apposition to the *hoc* above: “I understand this principle (namely) that friendship is not able to exist except . . .”
[In the course of his discussion, Laelius refers several times to the belief of certain philosophers that only “good men” have the ability to maintain “good” relationships such as friendship.]
5. *bonis* < *boni*, *bonorum*, m. pl.: good men.
- 6–7. *neque id ad vivum reseco*: “nor am I pruning that thing (the definition) back to the quick”; (less literally) “I do not (want to) prune the definition back to the quick.”
Cicero uses figurative language here (the imagery of pruning a shrub or a fingernail back to its living core or quick) to suggest that he does not wish to delve deeply into these matters, splitting hairs in arguments, as the Stoics do.
Cicero may also be suggesting with this choice of imagery that if he adopted the idea of the philosophers who believe that only “good men” can have friendships, then there would be few if any friendships; therefore, he would be “cutting to the heart” of friendships by denying their existence among ordinary men who could never fit the philosopher’s esoteric definition of “good.”
6. *id*: accusative, direct object of *reseco*. *Id* refers to the idea that there are no good men; therefore no friendships.
7. *ut . . . disserunt*: “as . . .,” a parenthetical clause.
illi qui haec subtilius disserunt: Laelius has in mind the Stoics who split hairs in their discussions.
subtilius < *subtiliter*: precisely, exactly, accurately, in too much detail; comparative adv.
disserunt < *dissero*, *disserere*, *disserui*, *dissertum*: discuss, argue.

[V. 17] *Laelius*. Ego vos hortari tantum possum ut amicitiam omnibus rebus humanis anteponatis; nihil est enim tam naturae aptum, tam conveniens ad res vel secundas vel adversas.

- 5 [18] Sed hoc primum sentio nisi in bonis amicitiam esse non posse; neque id ad vivum re-
15 seco, ut illi qui haec subtilius disserunt, fortasse

8. **vere**, adv.: accurately, truthfully.
ad communem utilitatem: "to everyday interest; for ordinary usefulness"; i.e., the difference between a philosopher's discussion of friendship to a learned audience in which the topic is abstract and an ordinary person's discussion in a true group of friends. (Laelius does not intend to argue about who may be a good man, splitting hairs over the definition, but does intend to provide a common sense definition.)
parum, adv.: little, not enough, not sufficiently.
9. **quemquam . . . virum bonum esse**: accusative and infinitive dependent on **negant** in indirect statement.
10. **sit ita**: "let it be so, granted it is so." **Sit** is present jussive subjunctive. Note the **†AL-**LITERATION of **s** here.
sane: certainly, by all means.
eam: demonstrative adjective, modifying **sapientiam**.
interpretantur < interpretor, interpretari, interpretatus sum: explain, understand, call.
11. **quam**: relative pronoun; antecedent is **eam sapientiam**.
adhuc: yet, still.
mortalis: in apposition to **nemo** ("no one, a mortal that is").
est consecutus < consequor, consequi, consecutus sum: reach, attain.
- 8-13. The Stoics believed that the **vir sapiens** was an ideal that could not be attained by mortals although they allowed that a few men such as Socrates had come close to the ideal.
13. **ea**: accusative. pl. neuter, direct object of **spectare**.
funguntur < fingo, fingere, finxi, fictum: imagine, invent, devise.
14. **dicam**: potential subjunctive; "I would say."
- 14-15. Gaius Fabricius Luscinus, Manius Curius Dentatus, and Tiberius Coruncanius were all heroes of the Roman Republic who were known for their honesty, leadership, and duty to the state. They served as examples of men who lived honest and good lives.
C. Fabricium . . . fuisse sapientes: accusative and infinitive dependent on **dicam** in indirect statement.
15. **maiores, maiorum**, m. pl.: ancestors.
16. **ad istorum normam**: "to their (the Stoic) measure." **Norma** is a carpenter's square. Laelius continues to believe that men can be good even if not perfectly good, but allows that the Stoics would not consider these Romans so even allowing for their virtues.
17. **sibi . . . habeant**: jussive subjunctive. ("Let them keep for themselves").
- 17-18. **et invidiosum et obscurum**: "both unacceptable and incomprehensible."
18. **concedant**: jussive subjunctive. ("Let them grant").
ut . . . fuerint: substantive clause of purpose after **concedo** (verbs of permitting and granting may be followed by a subjunctive clause beginning with **ut**); translate as "grant that . . ." **boni viri** is the predicate nominative after **fuerint**.
- 18-19. **ne . . . quidem**: not even.
- 18-19. **Ne id . . . facient; negabunt . . . id**: note Cicero's use of **†ASYNDETON** between the two verbs in **†CHIASTIC** order.
19. **id . . . posse**: indirect statement after **negabunt**; **id** stands for the term "good."
sapienti: to a wise man; "they will deny that that (name) 'good' can be granted except to a wise man." The Stoics cling to their ideal that only the truly wise man can be good.

vere, sed ad communem utilitatem parum; negant enim quemquam virum bonum esse nisi sapientem.

10 Sit ita sane; sed eam sapientiam interpretantur quam adhuc mortalis nemo est consecutus. Nos autem ea quae sunt in usu vitaeque communi, non ea quae finguntur aut optantur, spectare debemus. Nunquam ego dicam C. Fabricium, M'. Curium, Ti.

15 Coruncanium, quos sapientes nostri maiores iudicabant, ad istorum normam fuisse sapientes. Quare sibi habeant sapientiae nomen et invidiosum et obscurum; concedant ut hi boni viri fuerint. Ne id quidem facient; negabunt id nisi sapienti posse

CICERO: De Amicitia Selections

In *de Amicitia* Cicero gives insights on the relationship between two historical persons, Laelius *sapiens* and Scipio Aemilianus, as well as on the meaning of true friendship. He bases his positions on readings in Greek philosophy as well as on his own personal relationships. His writing is thought-provoking and his reasoning at times seems startlingly modern.

The two passages in this edition were chosen for the Advanced Placement® Cicero syllabus and are also appropriate as a high school or college-level introduction to Cicero's essays.

Features of this edition include:

- Introduction to Cicero and the historical setting of *de Amicitia*
- Latin text of selected passages: V.17–VII.23 and XXVII.100b–104
- English summary of all other passages in *de Amicitia*
- Grammatical, literary, historical, and vocabulary notes on facing pages
- Glossary of Figures of Speech
- Bibliography
- Full Vocabulary

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