This book invites us to approach friendship not as something that simply is, but as something performed in and through language. Roman friendship is read across a wide spectrum of Latin texts, from Catullus’ poetry to Petronius’ Satyricon to the philosophical writings of Cicero and Seneca; from letters exchanged by the Emperor Marcus Aurelius and his beloved teacher Fronto, to those written by men and women at an outpost in northern Britain. One of the most innovative features of this study is the equal attention it pays to Latin literature and to inscriptions carved in stone across the Roman Empire. What emerges is a richly varied and perhaps surprising picture. Hundreds of epitaphs, commissioned by men and women, citizens and slaves, record the commemoration of friends, a phenomenon as important to the understanding of Roman friendship as Cicero’s influential essay De amicitia.

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READING ROMAN FRIENDSHIP

CRAIG A. WILLIAMS
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4 Stele with an inscription commissioned by the freedwoman Appia Faventina for herself, her husband, six of her freedmen and freedwomen, and her friends Gaius Atilius Prodocimus and Litania Secunda (CIL 5.6516, first century AD). Novara, Museo Civico. Courtesy of the Institute of Classical Studies Library and Ken Walton.

5 Altar with an inscription commissioned by Quintus Etvius Felix, Cassia Nice, and Lucius Ovius Privianus for their friends Marcus Claudius Nicostratus and Ovia Primula (CIL 5.1197, first–second century AD). Aquileia, Museo Archeologico Nazionale.

6 “The Sarcophagus of the Two Brothers,” fourth century AD. Vatican, Museo Pio Cristiano 31543, Lat. 183A. Courtesy of the Cologne Digital Archaeological Laboratory.
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7 The tomb commissioned by the freedman Publius Vesonianus Phileros for himself, his former owner Vesonia, and his friend Marcus Orfellius Faustus. Tomb 23 OS of the Porta Nocera necropolis at Pompeii, first century AD. Photograph by Craig Williams.  
8 Tombs 75 and 76 of the Isola Sacra necropolis, second century AD. Photograph by Craig Williams.  
9 Epitaph in tomb 75 of the Isola Sacra necropolis, commissioned by Cocceia Tyche for her friend Sextus Julius Armenianus, second century AD. Photograph by Craig Williams.  
12 Epitaph commissioned by Gaius Lucretius Genialis for his 18-year-old friend Gaius Catius Martialis; Martialis’ father, grandfather, and grandmother; and Genialis himself along with his wife Valeria (CIL 5.7430, first–second century AD). Novi Ligure, sede della Società Filarmonica. Courtesy of the Institute of Classical Studies Library and Ken Walton.  
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Abbreviations


The following abbreviations are used in the citations of Latin inscriptions in this book.

- **AE:** L’année épigraphique (year and item number)
- **CIL:** Corpus inscriptionum latinarum (volume and item number)
- **CLE:** Franz Bücheler and Ernst Lommatzsch, *Carmina latina epigraphica*, Leipzig 1930 (item number)
- **Helttula:** Anne Helttula, ed., *Le iscrizioni sepolcrali latine nell’Isola Sacra*, Rome 2007 (item number)
- **ILCV:** Ernst Diehl, *Inscriptiones latinae christianae veteres*, Berlin 1925–1967 (item number)
- **ILS:** Hermann Dessau, *Inscriptiones latinae selectae*, Berlin 1892–1916 (item number)
- **ISOstiense:** B. E. Thomasson, ed., *Iscrizioni del sepolcreto di via Ostiense. Opuscula Romana 1*, Rome 1954 (item number)
- **Reali:** Mauro Reali, *Il contributo dell’epigrafia latina allo studio dell’amicitia. Il caso della Cisalpina*, Florence 1997 (item number)

The following standard notation is used in transcriptions:

- `/` end of line in the text as carved on the stone
- `//` end of a column or side of the stone
Abbreviations

[abc] reconstruction of text which is missing or illegible on the stone
[---] missing or illegible letters which cannot be reconstructed
<abc> expansion by modern editors of text abbreviated on the stone
[abc] modern editorial additions or corrections to text on the stone
{abc} modern editorial deletion of text on the stone
[[abc]] stone carver’s deletion of text on the stone

For the dating of Latin inscriptions, most often a matter of approximation, see Chapter 4. If no date can be assigned in a specific case, readers should bear in mind that the great majority of Latin inscriptions were produced between the late first century AD and the beginning of the third century AD; hence the frequency of the label “first–second century AD.”