

PHILIPPE ROUSSELOT

OFFICIAL GREETINGS

Dear colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
And in line with the theme of this colloquium,
Dear Friends,

It is with great regret that I address you *in absentia*. I shall not indulge in excuses and justifications. As a magistrate, my duties demand time and patience, but sometimes I must adopt haste and urgency. Such is the case today. My circumstances deprive me of the pleasure of being with you today.

Was ist ein amicus? I am unable to anticipate the conclusions of your discussions. However, the state of the world today, victim of attacks and plots, civil wars, conflicts between cultures, obliges me to remind you that this question is urgent. The terrible events which shook France these last two years showed, through the reaction of my fellow countrymen, that *amicitia* is far more than a relation between individuals. It is also the common wealth and common property for which we are all responsible. *Amicitia* is, in fact, what our enemies hate the most, and it is what they want to destroy above all.

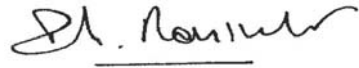
Was ist ein amicus? In one of my favourite chapters of the *Laelius* (23), Cicero offers a reflection on something that is difficult to express exactly: *quod difficilius dictu est, mortui vivunt*. Indeed, this phrase is vague, but it aims at a truth we feel deeply: *amicitia* is the timeless and transcendent link that unites the living and the dead. It is the reason why our Society gathers the *Friends of Cicero*. Among them, a great many specialists, experts and exegetes for whom the hard discipline of science is a rule of life. Beyond this commitment, lies another idea: Cicero is more than a subject of study. He can, against the mainstream and its prejudices, offers solutions – at least partially – to the problems we face. Jacques Derrida was

right to observe in *Politique de l'amitié* that Cicero's theory of *amicitia* is a useful philosophical concept at our disposal.

Was ist ein amicus? The fact of your assembly here today offers an actual and obvious answer. This meeting of our two institutions under the same banner is already a magnificent success. I am not a scholar, but I see in this academic meeting the living sign of an old idea: humanism never gives up. If my memory does not betray me, Giovanna Galimberti Biffino has been the first to launch the project of this colloquium. Let me thank her deeply from the heart, as well as both Ermanno Malaspina and Gregor Vogt-Spira. With determination they worked for several months to make this project possible.

I wish you full success in your work.

Philippe Rousselet
Conseiller maître – Cour des comptes, PARIS
Président de la Société Internationale des Amis de Cicéron

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ph. Rousselet', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is enclosed in a thin, light-colored rectangular border.