ROGER ASCHAM (1514/15-1568), TEACHER, SCHOLAR, AND WRITER. Educated at St John’s College, Cambridge (BA, 1534; MA, 1537), and a protégé of a number of famous English humanists, including John Cheke, Ascham became a fellow of Cambridge University, and spent much of his life in scholarly and university circles. Tutor to Princess Elizabeth, later queen, Ascham’s published works gained him important patrons and royal attention. He is perhaps most famous for his educational treatise The Schoolmaster (1570), which pioneered the system of double-translation as a method of learning to read, write, and speak Latin, the language of international scholarship and diplomacy.

EDITIONS:

FROM THE SCHOOLMASTER (1570)

THE SECOND BOOK

[...]

I had once a proof hereof, tried by good experience, by a dear friend of mine, when I came first from Cambridge to serve the Queen’s Majesty (then Lady Elizabeth), lying at worthy Sir Ant[hony] Denny’s in Cheston. John Whitney, a young gentleman, was my bedfellow, who willing by good nature and provoked by mine advice, began to learn the Latin tongue, after the order declared in this book. We began after Christmas. I read unto him Tully De Amicitia, which he did every day twice translate out of Latin into English, and out of English into Latin again. About St Laurence-tide after, to prove how he profited, I did choose out Torquatus’ talk De Amicitia, in the latter end of the first book de finib. because that place was the same in matter, like in words and phrases, nigh to the form and fashion of sentences as he had learned before in De Amicitia. I did translate it myself into plain English, and gave it him to turn into Latin, which he did so choicely, so orderly, so without any great miss in the hardest points of grammar, that some, in seven year[s] in grammar schools, and some in the universities too, cannot do half so well. This worthy young gentleman, to my greatest grief, to the great lamentation of that whole house, and specially to that most noble lady, now Queen Elizabeth herself, departed within a few days, out of this world.

And if in any cause a man may, without offense of God, speak somewhat ungodly, surely it was some grief unto me to see him hie so hastily to God as he did. A court full of such young gentlemen were rather a paradise than a court upon earth. And though I had never poetical head to make any verse in any tongue, yet either love or sorrow (or both) did wring out of me then certain careful thoughts of my goodwill towards him, which in my mourning

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1 a proof hereof i.e., of the efficacy of the pedagogical method of double-translation, where a student would translate a work from Latin into English and then back again into Latin.
2 Sir Ant[hony] Denny’s in Cheston At the house of the courtier Sir Anthony Denny (1501-1549) at Cheshunt.
3 Tully De Amicitia Marcus Tullius Cicero’s famous treatise on friendship: Laelius, or Of Friendship. See selections in the Online Companion.
4 About St Laurence-tide after i.e., after August 10th.
5 Torquatus’ talk ... de finib. The Italian poet Torquato Tasso (1544-1595) wrote Dialogue on Friendship.
6 hie go.
for him, fell forth more by chance than either by skill or use into this kind of misorderly\textsuperscript{7} meter:

Mine own John Whitney, now farewell, now death doth part us twain,
No death, but parting for a while, whom life shall join again.
Therefore, my heart, cease sighs and sobs, cease sorrow’s seed to sow,
Whereof no gain, but greater grief and hurtful care may grow.
Yet, when I think upon such gifts of grace as God him lent,
My loss, his gain, I must a while with joyful tears lament.
Young years to yield such fruit in court, where seed of vice is sown,
Is sometime read, in some place seen, amongst us seldom known.
His life he led Christ’s lore to learn, with will to work the same;
He read to know, and knew to live, and lived to praise his name.
So fast to friend, so foe to few, so good to every wight,\textsuperscript{8}
I may well wish, but scarcely hope, again to have in sight.
The greater joy his life to me, his death the greater pain,
His life in Christ so surely set doth glad my heart again.
His life too good, his death better, do mingle mirth with care,
My spirit with joy, my flesh with grief, so dear a friend to spare.
Thus God the good, while they be good, doth take and leaves us ill,
That we should men our sinful life in life to tarry still.
Thus we well left be better reft, in heaven to take his place,\textsuperscript{9}
That by like life and death at last we may obtain like grace.
Mine own John Whitney again farewell, a while thus part in twain,
Whom pain doth part in earth, in heaven great joy shall join again.

[...]

\textsuperscript{7} misorderly irregular in terms of its scansion.
\textsuperscript{8} fast loyal, steadfast. wight creature.
\textsuperscript{9} reft bereaved.