

CICERO

From the reading of Cicero's De Senectute

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Cicero, one of my favorites, has among his other qualities that of being very clear. And his treatises DE SENECTUTE and DE AMICITIA especially.

The central theme of DE SENECTUTE is the defence of old age in all its aspects. And as an argument of authority, Cicero brings us his best friends who at an advanced age are still clear-headed, Lelius, Cato and Scipio.

And without losing one iota of my enormous admiration for the author of the Hortensius and the Catilinaries, I would not say that DE SENECTUTE has a negative tone, but a defensive one, trying to convince us of the number of things that can be done when we grow up.

And I (75), already older than Cicero (64), would dare to go a step further, arguing that at this age one is still in much better condition than at previous ages, the optimum conditions for intellectual work. Reason, aided by memory, is capable of producing an enjoyment and a capacity for understanding never seen at a younger age.

I argue that studying at this age produces a much greater satisfaction because now you understand everything, or almost everything, much better.

The memory, as an indispensable instrument, and that we have filled conveniently over the years, now comes to help us with maximum efficiency. Of course, now it demands special attention and exercise, because jealous as it is, it abandons those who do not take enough care of it.

I defend that we are privileged to have reached this point, at this age, with the sensation that we are just beginning, but very well armed for this beautiful war that never ceases, which is intellectual life.