

Cicero De Officiis

it deals with the problems of the latin text taking account of michael winterbottom s new edition it delineates the work s structure and sometimes elusive train of thought clarifies the underlying greek and latin concepts and provides starting points for approaching the philosophical and historical problems that de officiis raises

de officiis on duties was cicero's last philosophical work in it he made use of greek thought to formulate the political and ethical values of roman republican society as he saw them revealing incidentally a great deal about actual practice writing at a time of political crisis after the assassination of julius caesar in 44bc when it was not clear how much of the old republican order would survive cicero here handed on the insights of an elder statesman adept at political theory and practice to his son and through him to the younger generation in general de officiis has often been treated merely as a key to the lost greek works that cicero used this volume aims to render de officiis which was such an important influence on later masterpieces of western political thought more intelligible by explaining its relation to its own time and place a wholly new translation is accompanied by a lucid

introduction and all the standard features of cambridge texts in the history of political thought including a chronology select bibliography and notes on the vocabulary and significant individuals mentioned in the text

in the *de officiis* we have save for the latter philippics the great orator s last contribution to literature the last sad troubled years of his busy life could not be given to his profession and he turned his never resting thoughts to the second love of his student days and made greek philosophy a possibility for roman readers the senate had been abolished the courts had been closed his occupation was gone but cicero could not surrender himself to idleness in those days of distraction 46 43 b c he produced for publication almost as much as in all his years of active life the liberators had been able to remove the tyrant but they could not restore the republic cicero s own life was in danger from the fury of mad antony and he left rome about the end of march 44 b c he dared not even stop permanently in any one of his various country estates but wretched wandered from one of his villas to another nearly all the summer and autumn through he would not suffer himself to become a prey to his overwhelming sorrow at the death of the republic and the final crushing of the hopes that had risen with caesar s downfall but worked at the highest tension on his philosophical studies the romans were not philosophical in 161 b c the senate passed a decree excluding all philosophers and teachers of rhetoric from the city they had no taste for philosophical speculation in which the greeks were the world s masters they were intensely narrowly practical and cicero was thoroughly x roman as a student in a greek university he had had to study philosophy his mind was broad enough and his soul great enough to give him a joy in following after the mighty masters socrates plato zeno cleanthes aristotle theophrastus and the rest but he pursued his study of it like a roman from a practical motive to promote thereby his power as an orator and to augment his success and happiness in life

de officiis on duties or on obligations is a treatise by marcus tullius cicero divided into three books in which cicero expounds his conception of the best way to live behave and observe moral obligations *de officiis* was written in october november 44 bc in under four weeks this was cicero s last year alive and he was 62 years of age cicero was at this time still active in politics trying to stop revolutionary forces from taking control of the roman republic despite his efforts the republican system failed to revive even upon the assassination of caesar and cicero was himself assassinated shortly thereafter the essay was written in the form of a letter to his son with the same name who studied philosophy in athens judging from its form it is nonetheless likely that cicero wrote with a broader audience in mind the essay was published posthumously *de officiis* has been characterized as an attempt to define ideals of public behavior it criticizes the recently overthrown dictator julius caesar in several places and his dictatorship as a whole although cicero was influenced by the academic peripatetic and stoic schools of greek philosophy this work shows the influence of the stoic philosopher panaetius the essay discusses what is honorable book i what is expedient or to one s advantage book ii and what to do when the honorable and expedient conflict book iii cicero says they are the same and that they only appear to be in conflict in book iii cicero expresses his own ideas michael grant tells us that cicero himself seems to have regarded this treatise as his spiritual testament and masterpiece cicero claims that the absence of political rights corrupts moral virtues cicero also speaks of a natural law that is said to govern both humans and gods alike cicero urged his son marcus to follow nature and wisdom as well as politics and warned against pleasure and indolence cicero s essay relies heavily on anecdotes much more than his other works and is written in a more leisurely and less formal style than his other writings perhaps because he wrote it hastily like the satires of juvenal cicero s *de officiis* refers frequently to current events of his time

on obligations composed by cicero in late 144 bc following the assassination of julius caesar recommends ideals of conduct to the young roman who aspires to a political career it

explores the apparent tensions between honorable conduct and expediency in public life the principles of honorable behavior are based on the stoic virtues of wisdom justice magnanimity and propriety the analysis of expediency explores the right and the wrong ways of attaining political leadership and cicero's conclusion is that the intrinsically useful is always identical with the honorable this treatise has played a seminal role in the formation of ethical values in western christendom it was adopted by the fourth century christian humanists notably ambrose and became transmuted into the moral code of the high middle ages thereafter in the renaissance from the time of petrarch and in the age of enlightenment that followed it was given central prominence in discussion of the government of states on obligations is of perennial concern in the establishment of basic principles of political and social life

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de officiis is a treatise by marcus tullius cicero divided into three books in which cicero expounds his conception of the best way to live behave and observe moral obligations the work discusses what is honorable what is to one's advantage and what to do when the honorable and private gain apparently conflict

i my dear son marcus you have now been studying a full year under cratippus and that too in athens and you should be fully equipped with the practical precepts and the principles of philosophy so much at least one might expect from the pre eminence not only of your teacher but also of the city the former is able to enrich you with learning the latter to supply you with models nevertheless just as i for my own improvement have always combined greek and latin studies and i have done this not only in the study of philosophy but also in the practice of oratory so i recommend that you should do the same so that you may have equal command of both languages and it is in this very direction that i have if i

mistake not rendered a great service to our countrymen so that not only those who are unacquainted with greek literature but even the cultured consider that they have gained much both in oratorical power and in mental training

ciceros de officiis geschrieben 44 v chr gehört zu den anerkannten klassikern der philosophie ist aber in seinen philosophischen dimensionen und gehalten bisher nicht hinreichend für ein breiter interessiertes fachpublikum im deutschsprachigen raum erschlossen die schrift behandelt zentrale themen der antiken moralphilosophie und ist eine der wichtigsten quellen zur stoischen ethik die konzepte des tugendhaften honestum und des nützlichen utile werden sowohl begrifflich als auch kausalistisch untersucht und ihr verhältnis genauer bestimmt so entwickelt cicero eine differenzierte pflichtenethik die im rahmen der berühmten vier personen lehre auch ein schlaglicht auf die philosophischen wurzeln des konzepts der menschenwürde wirft das werk ist eine gelenkstelle in der geschichte der ethik und hat nicht zuletzt die entwicklung der neuzeitlichen deontologie etwa bei ch garve und i kant entscheidend beeinflusst im rahmen dieses bandes erfährt de officiis zum ersten mal eine philosophisch orientierte kooperative kommentierung aus der feder renommierter fachleute die das werk sowohl für studierende und dozierende in philosophie sowie klassischer philologie als auch für interessierte laien zugänglich macht

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