

《论义务》

图书基本信息

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内容概要

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 44 BC, 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.

The work has often been treated merely as a key to the lost Greek works that Cicero used. This volume, containing a new annotated translation and an Introduction, as well as information on chronology, vocabulary, bibliography and persons mentioned in the text, aims to make De Officiis, which had such an important influence on later masterpieces of Western political thought, more intelligible by explaining its relation to its own time and place.

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章节摘录

In the first four chapters, at the end, and in the introduction to Book III(5-6), Cicero relates his choice of topic and his manner of treatment to the education of his twenty-one year old son to whom the essay is addressed. Letters to Atticus make it clear that Cicero planned the work with his son in mind: 'I am addressing the book to Marcus. From father to son what better theme? Young Marcus, Cicero's second child and only son, had been in Athens for a year studying both oratory and philosophy. and there is ample testimony in letters of the period to Cicero's concern with the progress of his education. He writes to Atticus about his son's well-written letters(XIV.7.2, XV.16-1 cf. Quint. I.7.34); he sends his teachers with requests for reports(XIV.16.3, XIV.18.4), and is clearly perceived by his friends, and by young Marcus himself as expecting a great deal of him(Fam. XII.16.2. XVI.25). An of this accords very well with what Cicero says in De Officiis: Marcus will be able to practise his Latin by reading Cicero's philosophical discussion(1.1, 1.2); he must satisfy the expectations created by his superior education and his illustrious parentage.

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