

**THE ESTIMATES OF  
MORAL VALUES  
EXPRESSED IN  
CICERO'S LETTERS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649448340

The Estimates of Moral Values Expressed in Cicero's Letters by Warren Stone Gordis

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**WARREN STONE GORDIS**

**THE ESTIMATES OF  
MORAL VALUES  
EXPRESSED IN  
CICERO'S LETTERS**



THE ESTIMATES OF  
MORAL VALUES EXPRESSED  
IN CICERO'S LETTERS

*A STUDY OF THE MOTIVES  
PROFESSED OR APPROVED*

BY

WARREN STONE GORDIS

---

CHICAGO  
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS  
1905

Lc 40.263.2  
✓

HARVARD  
UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY  
AUG 27 1963

62.769

COPYRIGHT 1905  
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

April, 1905

From  
Harzen Stone Goodis

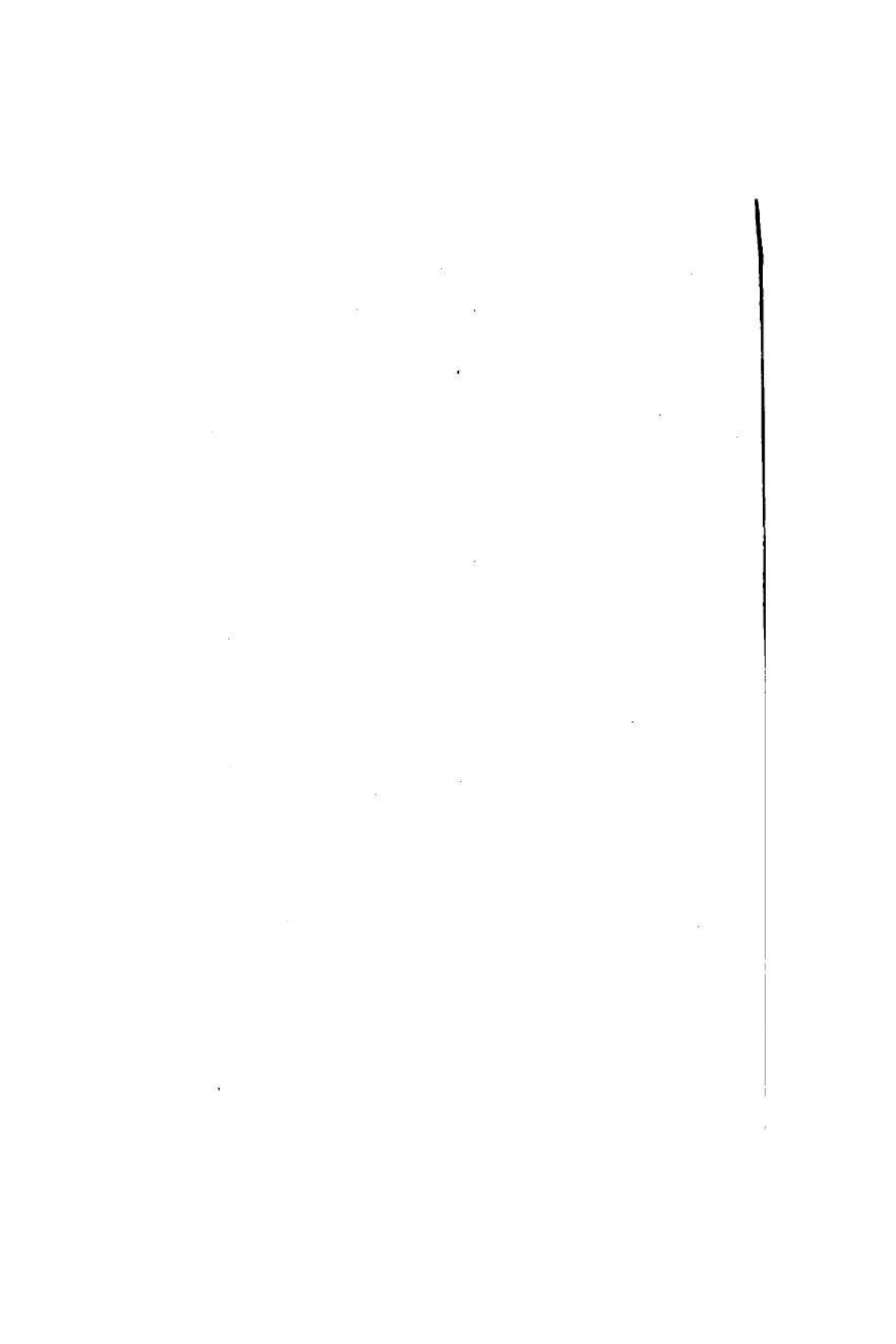
#### PREFACE

This study has grown out of the author's coincident interest in Cicero's letters and in ancient ethics. The question asked on approaching the correspondence has been simply: What does Cicero represent as being worth while? In view of what good or goods does he himself profess to act? On what does he base his appeals to others, and his approval or disapproval of others? An attempt has been made to present systematically the answers yielded by this examination of the letters, permitting the material itself, so far as possible, to suggest the categories and manner of treatment to be employed. The requirements of each case have determined the extent to which the treatment of the several topics should be chronological. The correspondence has been studied as a mirror of the Roman ethical consciousness, rather than as a source of evidence regarding the character or the consistency of Cicero. Still, no account has been taken of the letters addressed to Cicero. In general, the discussion has been limited to goods which are in the text presented as motives. This involves the deliberate exclusion of a considerable body of interesting incidental ethical judgments, which the author may make the subject of a supplementary paper. The question of the genuineness of the letters admitted to the editions of Müller and of Tyrrell has not been raised. References to passages cited, included within parentheses, have been placed in the body of the discussions, in the belief that they will there be of most service to the student of Cicero, while the general reader can readily pass by everything within the parentheses.

Acknowledgment is due Professors George L. Hendrickson and Frank F. Abbott, of the University of Chicago, for suggestions and criticisms made during the progress of the work.

W. S. G.

CHICAGO, APRIL, 1905.





## CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY. CICERO'S LETTERS AS MATERIAL FOR ETHICAL STUDY	7
CHAPTER I. ESTIMATES OF INDIVIDUAL GOOD	11
Personal Welfare and Safety in General	11
Estimate Shown by Attitude toward Danger	11
Estimates at Various Stages of Cicero's Career	11
Individual Life—Death Not the Greatest Evil	14
Life to be Yielded for Friends or Country	15
Is Suicide Justifiable? Is there Life after Death	15
Individual Possessions—Wealth; Villas and Their Equipment	17
Personal Satisfaction from Liberal Pursuits	18
Cicero's Devotion to Liberal Pursuits at Various Periods	18
Continuity and Vitality of This Interest	22
Practical Benefits Recognized but Liberal Arts Valued Chiefly as Pursuits	23
CHAPTER II. ESTIMATES OF SEMI-SOCIAL GOOD	25
The Approval of Others	25
Professed and Commended as a Motive	25
Distinctions and Grades—Genuine and Empty Glory	29
Ethical Supplements—Desire for Approval of Impartial Posterity; Glory Sought for Family; Preservation of Reputation	31
Approval of Others in Relation to Duty	33
Public Expressions of the Approval of Others	34
Official Compliments Desirable, but Not to be Sought Eagerly	34
Official Position a Highly Valued Good; Office-Seeking Not Disparaged	36
The Conception of <i>Dignitas</i>	37
Explicit Grounds of <i>Dignitas</i> —Services Approved, Official Compliments, Official Position	37
Provisional Definition; Related Uses; Ethical Aspects	40
The Series: <i>Salus, Dignitas, Officium</i> —Welfare, Distinction, Duty	41
CHAPTER III. ESTIMATES OF SOCIAL GOOD	43
Introductory—Source and Aspects of Social Good	43
The Family and the Motives Which it Supplies	44
Family Fellowship as a Good; Measured by Pain at Separation, Alienation, or Bereavement	44
Welfare of the Family a Good; Implied Duties	46
Duties of the Members of a Family	48
Friendship (Including Gratitude) as a Source of Motive	50
Friendship in General—Grounds, Satisfaction, Duties	50
Requests for Official Favor in the Interest of Friends	52
Friendship and Patriotism	54

	PAGE
Gratitude and Its Obligations . . . . .	54
Grateful Friendship (as Seen in Cicero's Relations with Pompey) . . . . .	56
Rank of Grateful Friendship as a Motive . . . . .	60
The State as a Source of Motive . . . . .	62
Survey of Points Already Incidentally Considered . . . . .	62
The State and the Citizen in General . . . . .	63
Terms for the Political Unit . . . . .	63
Duty of the Citizen; Duty Modified by Circumstances . . . . .	64
Advantage of the State Professed and Enjoyed as a Motive . . . . .	66
The Cause of Pompey and That of Caesar as Related to Public Welfare . . . . .	67
Peace as an Element of Public Welfare . . . . .	69
Constitutional versus Unconstitutional Rule . . . . .	72
Approval of the Assassination of Caesar . . . . .	73
General Advocacy of the Rule of Law . . . . .	73
Loyalty to Political Party . . . . .	74
Welfare of Subjects, Slaves, and Enemies . . . . .	75
Welfare of Provincials and the Policy of Provincial Governors . . . . .	75
Welfare of Slaves; Attitude toward Gladiatorial Contests . . . . .	78
Attitude toward Public Enemies . . . . .	79
CHAPTER IV. ESTIMATES OF ABSTRACT GOOD . . . . .	81
Character—The Proper Type a Desideratum . . . . .	81
Commendation of Stability Balanced by Gentleness . . . . .	81
<i>Gravitas, Constantia, and Leuitas</i> as Applied to Character . . . . .	82
Relation of the Idea of Stability to that of Consistency . . . . .	83
Applications of the Idea of Consistency . . . . .	85
Stability in Relation to the Virtues—Loyalty, Courage, Self-Control, Knowledge, and Gentleness . . . . .	88
Desirable Character Defined . . . . .	90
Self-Approval as a Desideratum . . . . .	90
Comparison of Earlier and Later Expressions . . . . .	91
Approval of Past Motives as Well as Deeds a Comfort . . . . .	92
Right or Duty Conceived Abstractly as a Desideratum . . . . .	93
<i>Officium</i> and <i>Honestum</i> —Meaning and Application . . . . .	93
Relation, in the Letters, of Abstract Right and Specific Duties . . . . .	94
Abstract Right without Indication of Supernatural Sanction . . . . .	94
Terms for Right Regularly Associated with Social Service . . . . .	95
Right, in the Letters, a Generalized Form of Social Duty . . . . .	96
Statements that Right is the Only Good Exceptional and Rhetorical . . . . .	97
The Good of the Letters as Manifest as Human Life . . . . .	98

## INTRODUCTORY

Rational human action springs from motive. Something immediate or remote, individualistic or social, specific or abstract, is thought or felt to be a good. Every such estimate of value is a factor in shaping conduct. In proportion as we understand the distinctive goods of a man, a people, or an epoch, will the conduct of that man, people, or epoch be intelligible and significant. Sometimes the conduct is itself the only clue to the goods, again, various artistic and literary expressions of life give glimpses of the ideals behind conduct. Some forms of art and literature may be said to reflect life. Others may more justly be characterized as segments from the life itself. To the latter class belongs in a peculiar sense a familiar correspondence such as Cicero has left us.

Historians, biographers, and antiquarians have pointed out the rare value of Cicero's correspondence for their several objects. For the history of the practical ethical consciousness this body of material is no less promising. Cicero's splendid talents and varied culture, the focal epoch during which he lived, and the genius and prominence of many of his contemporaries have often been emphasized. Furthermore, Cicero must have been, for a Roman, peculiarly inclined to ethical reflection, as is indicated by his unique service in popularizing for his fellow-countrymen so large a body of contemporary Greek philosophy, predominantly ethical. And surely no Roman could more clearly and adequately express his ethical reflections than this man to whom is due so much of the world's subsequent philosophical terminology.

Not only were the times in which Cicero lived focal for history, but they were exceedingly perplexing. Precedents and traditions supplied no solution for the problems that were arising—problems of which our author might well say that they were "baffling and insoluble; and yet a solution must be found" (*A.*, 8, 3, 6).<sup>1</sup> The strongest motives usually found cooperating would be directly opposed to each other. These were surely circumstances adapted to stimulate the balancing of values, the examination of the goods in view of which choices are made.

No alleged characteristic of Cicero, save vanity, has brought upon him a greater amount of hostile criticism than his indecision, his vacillation.

<sup>1</sup> In this discussion, *A.* designates the collection of letters *Ad Atticum*; *F.*, those *Ad Familiares*; *B.*, those *Ad Brutum*; and *Q. F.*, those *Ad Quintum Fratrem*.