

# Virgil's Aeneid

## The Great Augustan Epic for The Empire Without End

**10-week Course** with 'The Muddy Archaeologist', Gillian Hovell

**£100 for eight 2-hour richly illustrated sessions** (with a refreshment break)

**Christ Church, Harrogate 10-12 noon / North Stainley Village Hall 1.15-3.15pm Mondays**

Dates: 14, 21 & 28 January 2019, 4, 11 February; (NO sessions 19 & 25 February or 4 March); 11, 18 & 25 March; Spare(s) 1 & 8 April

**Gillian Hovell 'The Muddy Archaeologist'**

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This tale of a Trojan fleeing from the destruction in Homer's Trojan war is so much more than a (brilliant) story, epic themes and arguably the best Latin verse ever written (although we shall, of course, look at all these).

Here is rich mythology & a powerful pantheon of gods, the values and dreams of Augustus and his new Augustan Rome, and the re-marketing of Rome's past. The *Aeneid* tells us so much about the Roman psyche; yet it also owes so much to the literature of the Greeks whom Aeneas, Virgil's Trojan hero, had been fighting.

Myths, history, politics, personalities, wonderful poetry, guidance with superb Latin, and a great story of Greece and Rome and its legacy. Illustrations abound, as usual. It's all here. And it will prepare us for the British Museum's exhibition of Troy (which I believe is scheduled for 2019).



**This richly illustrated course will reveal the power and beauty of this great work.**

**We shall enjoy the history, mythology, poetry and legacy of Ancient Rome. Please join us.**

### Dates & brief details of the proposed topics to be covered each week

#### **Week 1 Virgil, Life and Times**

The Roman world that Virgil lived in was exceptional: as the Republic died, Augustus rose to sole power. A new Golden age had begun and not just in literature. We explore the new world through Virgil's *Aeneid* and we meet the poet himself and his works. We look at the plot of the *Aeneid*

#### **Week 2 Books 1 & 2 : Epic Poetry**

The Greek poet, Homer, established the genre of epic poetry. We discover how this shapes Virgil's *Aeneid*, its style, length, themes and scope. In what ways was Virgil a traditional epic poet and how does he make the *Aeneid* into a truly distinctive Roman epic poem?

#### **Week 3 Books 3 & 4 : Themes**

Virgil's poem echoes the themes in Homer's epics but he creates new ones that are distinctive for Rome and her new imperial age. Here we can read just what a good Roman should be like, just how Romans should behave and what they expected from life.

#### **Week 4 Books 5 & 6: Funeral Games & the Underworld - Dead Centre**

At the heart of the *Aeneid* is the remarkable Book 6, in which Aeneas travels, guided by the Sibyl, down to the Underworld and received the prophecies of Rome's destiny. The experience changes him – and Rome – for ever. It is one of the greatest Latin books ever written. We explore it fully in this special session.

#### **Week 5 Books 7 & 8 : War, and the Future Site of Rome - History: Real and Imagined**

Rome already had a traditional foundation story. We explore how Virgil's poetic history takes other traditional tales and weaves them into a new history, one fit for the blossoming Empire. Is his story supported by any of Rome's archaeological history and how does it conflict or match Rome's traditional history.

#### **Week 6 Books 9 & 10 : Myths & The Divine**

Virgil peopled his tale with gods and goddesses. We find out who's who in this Pantheon of gods. And we discover why and how Virgil uses such characters to bring out the full depth and meaning of his epic tale.

#### **Week 7 Books 11 & 12: War & Victory/Vengeance: Humanity: Aeneas, hero or flawed human?**

The *Aeneid* is a tale of the suffering of wanderers, their search for identity, the importance of family and origin. Such themes provide us with timeless insights into human life and a metaphor for life's journey. How should humans face their destiny, their challenges and their relationship with the powerful forces that shape our lives? Is Aeneas a great Roman hero, or is he a flawed human? And can you be both?

#### **Week 8 Conclusion and Legacy**

Virgil's *Aeneid* remained a school text for centuries, it was even used to prophecy the future. Its literary impact is vast, inspiring Dante in Italian and Milton in English among many others and it continues to be a fantastic tale that we can relate to, even in our modern lives today. We follow its route through the two millennia since it was written and consider its legacy.

**Aims:** Gain an understanding of Roman history and early Imperial life through Virgil's *Aeneid*.

Appreciate the themes woven through the *Aeneid* and what these themes and motifs tell us about Roman values sources of our knowledge of the Roman Empire, the personalities within it and

Read and appreciate short selections of Virgil's works & other texts in the original Latin (no experience necessary) and in translation.

Gillian Hovell BA(Hons)

**BOOK NOW!** Email: [gillian@muddyarchaeologist.co.uk](mailto:gillian@muddyarchaeologist.co.uk) Tel: 01423 203516 Mob. 07860 637301

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