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The *Aeneid* of Virgil

Course Guidebook

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University of Maryland



PUBLISHED BY:

THE GREAT COURSES

Corporate Headquarters

4840 Westfields Boulevard, Suite 500

Chantilly, Virginia 20151-2299

Phone: 1-800-832-2412

Fax: 703-378-3819

www.thegreatcourses.com

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Printed in the United States of America

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Elizabeth Vandiver did her undergraduate work at Shimer College, Mt. Carroll, Illinois, where she matriculated in 1972 as a 16-year-old “early entrant.” After receiving her B.A. in 1975, she spent several years working as a librarian before deciding to pursue graduate work in Classics at the University of Texas at Austin. She received her M.A. in 1984 and her Ph.D. in 1990.

In addition to her current position at the University of Maryland (flagship campus at College Park), Professor Vandiver has held visiting professorships at Northwestern University, the University of Georgia, The Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies (Rome, Italy), Loyola University (New Orleans) and Utah State University.

In 1998 Dr. Vandiver received the American Philological Association’s Excellence in Teaching Award, the most prestigious teaching award available to American classicists. Other awards include the Northwestern University Department of Classics Excellence in Teaching award for 1998 and the University of Georgia’s Outstanding Honors Professor award in 1993 and 1994.

Dr. Vandiver has published a book, *Heroes in Herodotus: The Interaction of Myth and History*, and several articles, as well as delivering numerous papers at national and international conferences. She is currently working on a second book, examining the influence of the classical tradition on the British poets of World War I.

Dr. Vandiver is married to Franklin J. Hildy, Ph.D., Professor and Chair, Department of Theatre, at the University of Maryland.

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The *Aeneid* of Virgil

Scope:

This set of twelve lectures introduces the student to the great epic of ancient Rome, the *Aeneid*. The lectures provide careful, detailed examinations of the most important episodes in each epic, address various critical and interpretative issues, and give background information on the cultural assumptions contained in the epic.

The first lecture sets the stage for our reading of the *Aeneid* by providing an introduction to the *Aeneid* and to the plan of the course. Lecture Two covers two types of background material, mythic and literary; it provides a brief summary of the legends of the Trojan War and of Romulus and Remus, and then discusses the *Aeneid*'s literary antecedents. Lecture Three discusses the historical context in which the *Aeneid* was written, giving a brief description of Augustus' rule and the wars that led up to it.

Lectures Four through Twelve discuss the *Aeneid* itself. Lecture Four looks in detail at Book I, particularly at the crucial concepts and characters that are introduced in that book. Lecture Five covers Aeneas' own description of the Sack of Troy and his subsequent wanderings, as he recounts them in Books II and III. Lecture Six discusses the love affair between Aeneas and Dido, Queen of Carthage, in Book IV and pays special attention to the critical question of how we should interpret Aeneas' actions in that book. Lecture Seven takes us from Carthage to Sicily in Book V and begins our discussion of Book VI and Aeneas' journey to the Underworld. In Lecture Eight, we continue our discussion of Aeneas in the Underworld, focusing on his encounters with the ghosts of Dido, Deiphobus, and his father, Anchises. This lecture also covers Books VII–VIII of the *Aeneid*, which bring Aeneas to Latium, introduce several crucial characters such as Latinus and Turnus, and begin the Trojans' war with the Latins. Lecture Nine discusses Books IX and X, the most "Iliadic" section of the *Aeneid*, and pays close attention to Aeneas' character in those books. In Lecture Ten, we analyze the last two books of the epic, noticing how the narrative builds inexorably toward Turnus' death at Aeneas' hands. Lecture Eleven analyzes the role of the gods in the *Aeneid*, and discusses how the gods interact with fate. Finally, Lecture Twelve looks in detail at one of the most important scholarly issues of the *Aeneid*, whether Aeneas is justified in his actions at the end of the epic; the lecture then concludes with a brief overview of the *Aeneid*'s influence on later western literature.