



The Aeneid

Virgil

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The Aeneid Virgil

The Aeneid - Virgil. A translation into English prose by **A. S. Kline**. Illustrated edition.

In the *Aeneid*, Virgil retells, and partially invents, the story of Aeneas, the son of Anchises and the goddess Venus-Aphrodite who, fleeing the ruins of Troy carrying his father on his shoulders, and bearing his household gods, journeyed to Italy. In doing so Virgil consciously creates the national epic of Rome, posits a semi-divine lineage for the Imperial house of Augustus Caesar, and provides an origin for the Roman people. Full of powerful and evocative passages, for example those describing Aeneas' desertion of Dido, Queen of Carthage, and those describing his visit to the Underworld, the *Aeneid* ensured Virgil's literary fame.

Aeneas embodies the Roman virtues of steadfastness, and loyalty, coupled with a sense of destiny, which Virgil reinforces with pseudo-prophetic elements implying that the founding of Rome was a fated consequence of the destruction of Troy. From a literary viewpoint, Aeneas provides continuity between the epics of Greece, where he appears as a character in the *Iliad*, and the epics of Rome where he is portrayed as an ancestor of Romulus, Rome's founder.

Virgil's work had a wide influence on later Roman epic and on European literature in general. Dante in particular employed Virgil as guide to his journey through the Inferno and Purgatory of the *Divine Comedy*, seeing him as a proponent of Empire, a master of the poetic tradition, and a prophet of the advent of Christianity.

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