

Aeneas

The central character of Vergil's "*Aeneid*" seems to elude readers. To some, he is unlikable; to others, he seems unreal, a figure on which to hang a plot. "*Aeneas*" discovers a tragic figure whose defining virtue depends on a past that has been stripped from him, and whose destiny blocks him from the knowledge of the future that gives meaning to his life. His choices, silences, tears, and anger reflect an existential struggle that, in the end, he loses. Aeneas is a hero of the Trojan War, a time as distant from Vergil as Vergil is from us, but he is also a literary character created in response to political chaos and civil strife as the Roman Republic gave way to the Augustan empire. Lee T. Percy's book creates an Aeneas for our time: an age of liquid modernity, when identities seem fungible and precarious, amid a moment of political conflict and collapsing institutions. This volume gives readers new translations and close readings of important passages, and it restores Aeneas to the center of Rome's most important poem.

Lee T. Percy retired from the Lounsbury Chair in Classics at the Episcopal Academy, Newtown Square, PA, in 2013. He is Research Associate in Classics at Bryn Mawr College.

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Lee T. Percy

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