

Death and the Optimistic Prophecy in Vergil's AENEID

JAMES J. O'HARA

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Here James O'Hara shows how the deceptive nature of prophecy in the *Aeneid* complicates assessment of the poem's attitude toward its hero's achievement and toward the future of Rome under Augustus Caesar. This close study of the language and rhetorical context of the prophecies reveals that they regularly suppress discouraging material: the gods send promising messages to Aeneas and others to spur them on in their struggles, but these struggles often lead to untimely deaths or other disasters only darkly hinted at by the prophecies. O'Hara finds in these prophecies a persistent subtext that both stresses the human cost of Aeneas' mission and casts doubt on Jupiter's promise to Venus of an "endless empire" for the Romans. O'Hara considers the major prophecies that look confidently toward Augustus' Rome from the standpoint of Vergil's readers, who, like the characters within the poem, must struggle with the possibility that the optimism of the prophecies of Rome is undercut by darker material partially suppressed. The study shows that Vergil links the deception of his characters to the deceptiveness of Roman oratory, politics, and religion, and to the artifice of poetry itself. In response to recent debates about whether the *Aeneid* is optimistic or pessimistic, O'Hara argues that Vergil expresses both the Romans' hope for the peace of a Golden Age under Augustus and their fear that this hope might be illusory. Originally published in 1990. The Princeton Legacy Library uses the latest print-on-demand technology to again make available previously out-of-print books from the distinguished backlist of Princeton University Press. These editions preserve the original texts of these important books while presenting them in durable paperback and hardcover editions. The goal of the Princeton Legacy Library is to vastly increase access to the rich scholarly heritage found in the thousands of books published by Princeton University Press since its founding in 1905.

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目录:

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标签

Virgil

Prophecy

DPT

Aeneid

评论

1993的书，重印确有必要。主要观点：史诗中所有光明的预言，都很有问题。或者前后不一，或者隐瞒灾难消息，所以这些预言的字面意思不可信据，而隐没的消息、说预言的当下的目的，才是重点。这书被引用还挺多，属于要把维吉尔解释成地下党、dissident这一派。优点是，集中在prophecy一件事，将全诗大大小小所有关于罗马的光辉预言，全部讨论，应检尽检。非常适合熟悉文本，读完之后对预言所有段落都门儿清。适合教学。缺点是，方法不严格，有些短短几行的预言，楞要说人家没有展现全部信息。比如卷二Creusa卷三Celaeno，本就是一带而过的文字。所以有些教条。最重要的问题是，预言之间的细节不相吻合，能确定是作者有意为之吗？有偶然的discrepancy，也有故意的，不作区分的话，就凿之过深了。

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书评

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