



THE POET IN QUESTION
VIRGIL
TUESDAY 21 FEBRUARY

In the 'Inferno', Dante chose Virgil to guide him through the horrors of hell and purgatory. This is just one instance of the vast influence Virgil (70BC-19BC) has had on Western culture. He gave Rome its founding myth through the Aeneid, and through his Eclogues and Georgics he gave the English their founding myth in the romance of the countryside. It was Virgil who invented Arcadia. Once he had become part of the circle of Maecenas, greatest patron of the Arts in the reign of Augustus, he met Horace, in whose poetry he is often mentioned. The Georgics, from the Greek for 'On Working the Earth', was immensely influential on the story of European farming, and also included the tale of Orpheus in the Underworld. The Aeneid, a poem of tremendous narrative drive, is, along with the Iliad and the Odyssey, one of the great epics of Western civilisation, stirring in its descriptions and humane in its sympathies. When Virgil died of fever off the harbour of Brindisi, his body was taken back to his villa outside Naples where it has been the object of veneration by such figures as Petrarch and Boccaccio as well as modern tourists. Virgil was regarded as a magician, as aiding divination, as having forecast the coming of Jesus Christ, and as giving his name to the Welsh word for 'pharmacist'.

Unless otherwise stated, lecture study days start and end at the Art Workers Guild, Bloomsbury. Please join us for coffee at 10.30 (optional), the first lecture at 11, a light lunch with wine at 1pm, and a concluding lecture and discussion ending at 3.30 pm.

£85 INSCAPE members, £95 non-members. First time participants are welcome at no cost.