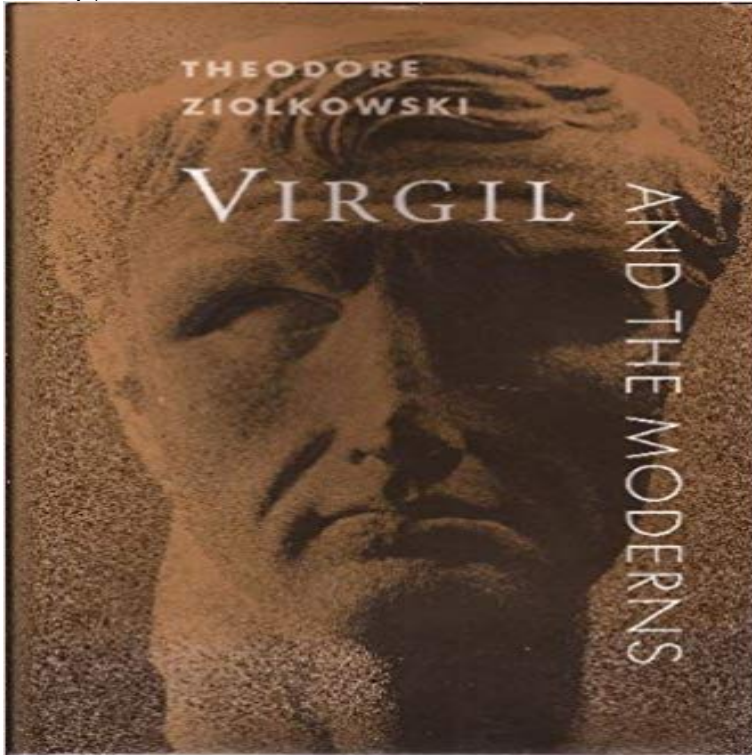


## Virgil and the Moderns



Virgil has permeated modern culture like no other icon of Western civilization. In the United States, for example, three of his phrases appear on the dollar bill, and his Aeneid was often cited as a model for the nation's westward expansion. Theodore Ziolkowski traces the impact of the Roman poet into the twentieth century, showing how the Aeneid, the Eclogues, and the Georgics supplied the patterns, images, values, and often the very words used in key works of modern literature. Focusing on American and European writing produced between 1914 and 1945--when Virgil figured prominently in works by Auden, Broch, Eliot, Frost, and Gide, and by Tate, Ungaretti, Valery, and Wilder--this comparative analysis reveals a major cultural period in a fascinating new light. Ziolkowski argues that after World War I people came to understand Virgil in a new way: exposed to the rhetoric of totalitarian dictators, and having experienced social upheaval and economic disaster, they recognized in his poetry similar stresses and noted in it a dark aspect not received by earlier generations. Exploring a wide range of modern works, the author demonstrates how preferences for Virgil's poems varied significantly among countries and individuals and how these texts provided a mirror in which readers found what they wished: populism or elitism, fascism or democracy, commitment or escapism. In his closing thoughts, Ziolkowski addresses the current decline of classical learning in the United States and encourages us to reclaim Virgil as an invaluable cultural possession.

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