

history. Virgil's Roman reader, removed from the world of Augustus from a broader and more detached perspective towards the historyless passages that give an Augustan by cease to be Homeric.

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*Aeneas as ancestor of Augustus*

*Summary of the Aeneid*

would thus be connected by genealogy with Romulus, the founder of the city. This permitted Roman culture to claim a kind of independent equality with the Greeks precisely at the time when Rome was securing hegemony over the Greek Mediterranean. The Trojans were confirmed as great antagonists of the Greeks by the Homeric myth. Their revenge would be carried out by Rome. (The third great power of the Mediterranean, Carthage, was also opportunely linked to the legend of Aeneas through its queen Dido.) Rome thus legitimized its new power by means of a deep historical background. Another factor in Aeneas's popularity depends on a circumstance of internal politics. Through the figure of Aeneas's son Ascanius/Iulus, the *gens Iulia*, a noble Roman family, claimed very noble origins for itself. A member of this clan, Julius Caesar, and later his adoptive son Octavian Augustus found themselves masters of Rome's worldwide empire. Here, then, the circle is formed that joins together Virgil, Augustus, and the epic hero.

The *Aeneid* traces the legend of Aeneas from the last day of Troy up to Aeneas's victory and the fusion of Trojans and Latins into a single people. The plan of the work is as follows:

Book 1. Juno cannot forget her hatred towards what remains of the Trojan people. A storm, provoked by the goddess, shatters Aeneas's ships and compels him to put ashore in Africa, near Carthage. Aided by his mother Venus, the hero finds a warm welcome with the queen of the Phoenician city, the widow Dido. The queen, also an exile, asks her guest to recount the end of Troy.

Book 2. Aeneas's account: during the destruction of the city the hero, with divine protection, succeeds in fleeing along with his aged father, his little son, and the penates, the symbol of a race's continuity; his wife Creusa, however, is lost to him.

Book 3. Aeneas's account: leaving the Troad, the Trojans realize, after various uncertainties and puzzlements, that a new country awaits them in the west. After describing several miraculous happenings, the retrospective account concludes with the death of the aged Anchises.

Book 4. The tragic story of Dido's love. The Carthaginian queen, abandoned by Aeneas, who must follow the course intended by fate, kills herself, cursing Aeneas and prophesying eternal hatred between Carthage and the descendants of the Trojans.

Book 5. The Trojans make a stop in Sicily. Nearly the whole book is taken up with the funeral games in honor of Anchises.

Book 6. Arriving at Cumae, in Campania, Aeneas is obliged to consult the Sibyl and to gain access to the world of the dead. There he meets persons from his past: Deiphobus, fallen at Troy, Dido, dead on his account, the unfortunate pilot Palinurus, and especially his father Anchises. Anchises reveals to him the distant future. The world of the dead contains the heroes of the future too, the leaders who will make Roman history.

Book 7. Strengthened by this vision and by his father's advice, Aeneas disembarks at the mouth of the Tiber and, on the basis of signs foretold, recognizes the promised land. He now makes a pact with king Latinus. Juno launches Allecto, the

demon of discord, against the pact; assailed by Allecto, Latinus's wife Amata and the Rutulian prince Turnus, the man betrothed to Latinus's daughter, stir up the war. With the first incident the pact with Aeneas is broken, and the dynastic marriage between Aeneas and Latinus's daughter Lavinia is off. A powerful coalition of Italian peoples marches on the Trojan camp. Lavinia, a new Helen, stands at the center of the discord.

Book 8. In great difficulty, Aeneas, upon divine advice, sails up the Tiber with a small detachment. Here, in the place where Rome will rise, he finds the support of Evander, the king of a small nation of Arcadians. Along with Evander's son Pallas, Aeneas next secures a powerful ally: the Etruscan coalition that has risen up against Mezentius, the cruel tyrant of Caere, now expelled, and an ally of Turnus. The divine aid for Aeneas culminates in the gift of a set of armor made by Vulcan; the shield is adorned with scenes from future Roman history.

Book 9. In Aeneas's absence, the Trojan camp finds itself in a critical situation. Turnus and his allies obtain partial successes. The courageous sacrifice of the young Trojans Nisus and Euryalus during a nocturnal expedition leads to no results.

Book 10. Aeneas, together with his allies, bursts upon the scene and tips the balance of the war. But Turnus in single combat kills the young Pallas, Aeneas's ally and protégé, and strips him of his sword belt; he puts on the sword belt as a reminder of his proud victory. Aeneas in exchange kills Mezentius, Turnus's strongest ally.

Book 11. After his first victory, Aeneas mourns the dead Pallas. His peace offerings lead to no result. Turnus again tries the luck of battle. In a great cavalry engagement another hero from the Latin side perishes, the virgin warrior Camilla.

Book 12. Wearing by his failures, Turnus must accept a decisive duel with Aeneas. The nymph Juturna, at Juno's urging, causes this truce also to fail. The battle starts again. When the victory of the Trojans is certain, Juno is reconciled with Jupiter and obtains his agreement that there will remain no trace of the Trojan name in the new people. Aeneas defeats Turnus in a duel; he hesitates over whether to spare his life, but when he catches sight of the young Pallas's sword belt, which Turnus is wearing, he kills him in a burst of indignation.

*Reworking of  
the historical-  
antiquarian sources*

From what we know of the historical-antiquarian sources used by Virgil, it is evident that the poet has thoroughly restructured the traditional data about Aeneas's arrival in Latium. The varying notices about a war with the Latins, or with a part of them, followed by the formation of an alliance, have been fused into a new, single war sequence, concluded by a historic conciliation. The war has been represented by Virgil as an encounter between Trojans and Latins. The latter form a coalition with numerous Italian peoples, many of whom, significantly, boast Greek ancestry; the former form a coalition with the Etruscans and with a small Greek population settled on the soil of the future Rome. In the effort to create a true Roman national epic, Virgil sets in motion, already in the period of the origins, all the great forces from which "modern" Italy will be born. No people is completely excluded from making a *positive* contribution to the genesis of Rome. The Latins themselves, after many sacrifices, will be reconciled and