

Aeneas As A Leader

The Beginning of Rome

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The hero Aeneas had a rather interesting life, starting with being born to a mortal father and the goddess Venus as his mother. His birth brought with it a plan the gods had devised for Aeneas to carry out throughout his days on Earth. Every action for the rest of his life would be predetermined and scrutinized carefully by the ones above. The scheme of the gods placed Aeneas as the one who would lay a foundation for Rome, but only after many sorrows beginning with the fall of Troy and the loss of his wife. The destruction of his homeland by the Greeks put into motion the god's plans for Aeneas to lead the few remaining Trojans to Italy to fulfill his destiny. Despite countless setbacks against Aeneas and his people of Troy, the fortitude, values, and natural born leadership granted to him by the gods turned him into a great leader in search of a place to plant the seed for the greatest empire this world had ever seen.

There are numerous qualities that Aeneas embodies as a leader to this small band of refugees in search of a new home. One strong quality is his dedication to his family seen when he said to his father, "Come, dear father, on to my shoulders now. You will not weigh me down, and come what may we will face it together, peril or salvation". (P.50) Aeneas had come back to his father's house where his wife and son also were, and broke in and rescued them from the burning home, carrying his father on his back and holding his young boy's hand. His mother Venus had protected the family until Aeneas could arrive and cloaked him so that he may arrive safely, once again demonstrating the strong family values this leader was born into. Aeneas also has a quality that never lets him give up no matter what the challenge. Vergil describes him as "A man battered on land and sea by the powers above in the face of Juno's relentless wrath; A man who also suffered greatly in the war until he could found his city and bring his gods into Latium". (P.1) Aeneas and his men roam the lands and seas for what seems like forever while

being rejected at every place they make port, without this quality to carry on through adversity the Trojans may have given up and Rome may have never been founded. These lines written by Vergil also highlight how much the gods above are in a struggle to prevent him on one side, or aid him on the other side, in succeeding in his destiny. A third quality Aeneas embodies is the warrior fighting spirit, as seen when a great storm was swallowing the ships he led and he exclaimed, "Three times, four times luckier were those who died before their parents' eyes under Troy's high walls! O Diomedes, Bravest of Greeks, if only I had been killed by your right hand on Ilium's plain". (P.4) It was an honor to die on the battlefield, and in contrast, one of the worst ways to die for a hero was to go down at sea. He believes that this is where he will die and is disappointed by the disgraceful end. All of these qualities seen in Aeneas can also be seen in the Roman people that eventually thrived from his long struggle of a life.

For the most part, Aeneas is consistent in his actions, behaviors and attitudes. The thought of founding Rome never leaves his mind, even when the gods manipulate him into informally marrying Dido, the queen of Carthage. His destiny forces him to move on however, and "Aeneas, loyal and true, yearns to comfort her, soothe her grief, and say the words that will turn aside her sorrow. He sighs heavily, and although great love has shaken his soul, he obeys the gods' will and returns to the fleet". (P.90) Despite being in love more or less with Dido, his people look to him to lead them to a new future and provide a promised inheritance to his son, so he must press on. Aeneas is consistent in his feelings towards his people and every reminder he is given including the artwork in Carthage depicting the fall of Troy causes him to weep. His actions, behaviors, and attitudes are a constant longing to lead the remnants of Troy to a better life in Italy.

Aeneas should be seen as an extremely loyal leader to his followers. After the storms nearly destroyed their ships and killed them off, he brought up their morale by stating, "Trojans! This is not our first taste of trouble. You have suffered worse than this, my friends, And God will grant an end to this also" (P.7) Aeneas needed to boost their morale by reminding them that they are a strong race and have certainly faced worse adversity, but if they continued on they would certainly attain the main goal for all of them. Another aspect of his great leadership can be seen again when he put the group before himself, Vergil said, "Though he was sick with worry, he put on a good face and pushed his anguish deep into his heart" (P.8) It is very important for a leader to be able to suppress his feelings to make his followers more confident in him. People follow leaders by example, so if their leader is confident and strong through trying times, the people will follow behind and have that same confidence. A third example of his great leadership was when he announced himself to the queen of Carthage, stating, "I am Aeneas, devoted to my city's gods, refugees I rescued from enemy hands and my ships most precious cargo. My fame has reached the heavens above. My quest is for Italy to be our fatherland and to found a race descended from Jove most high". (P.14) He says this in front of a great queen and in front of his followers after revealing himself from under a cloak and appearing godlike to the people in the room. He once again shows his dedication to his people and his main goal of attaining a kingdom in Italy, while giving a morale boost to his people with his sudden appearance.

There is no such thing as a perfect leader, as there is no such thing as a perfect person. Aeneas was obviously very important to his people, seen when they mention how devoted and great in battle he is when first encountering queen Dido. It matters not what people on the outside think of a person, but rather what the people he is closest to think. Aeneas' followers

were as devoted to him as he was to them and it is clear he would do whatever it took to obtain their goal in order to give his people the life they deserve. Things could have been different if there wasn't so much interference from the gods, but from what happened it's obvious that Aeneas is a great leader. He maintains all of the qualities coveted by the Roman people centuries later, and demonstrates his consistent feelings towards attaining the promised future on every page.