ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΜΕΙΖΟΝΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΜΟΥ

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Summary :

Aeneas, a mythical hero and son of Anchises and Aphrodite, was the bravest hero of the Trojans besides Hector. Information about his origin and his action can be found in Homer as well as later poets, such as Virgil, and folklorists. Although he participated in the Trojan war, the narrations of his voyages to Greece, Italy and Sicily are more common. His name has been associated with the establishment of several cities, such as Lavinium and Rome.

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1. Genealogy

Aeneas was the son of Anchises and Aphrodite.[1] He was descended from a trojan noble family and his family tree, according to the Iliad, goes back to Zeus.[2] According to one version, he was brought up by his sister's husband.[3] According to another version, Aphrodite gave him away to the mountain nymphs until his 5th year of age, before handing him over to his father.[4] According to a third version, Aeneas was Chiron's pupil.[5]

2. Aeneas in Homer

Aeneas participated in several phases of the Trojan war. He was the leader of the Dardanians, the second most important tribe besides the Trojans. Homer regards him and Hector, his cousin, as the best warriors and advisers. According to Homer, the Trojans worshiped him as a god. The adjectives that accompany him are most indicative: Τρώων αγός, βουληφόρος, μήστωρ φόβοιο, άναξ ανδρών, μεγαλήτωρ, ατάλαντος Άρη, πόδας ταχύς. Even his enemies acknowledge his might. However, if we examine the actions that justify these adjectives, we will discover that none of them were complete although he is usually referred to as the most important hero of the Trojans. When he found himself in danger, he was saved not by his own efforts, but by godly intervention, namely Aphrodite's, Apollo's and Poseidon's. According to the Iliad, Aeneas was the hero most protected by gods, destined for higher calling. According to the Homeric Hymn, Aeneas is presented as the future leader of the Trojans (verses 196-197). Bearing in mind the Homeric Hymn and Poseidon's words in the Iliad, according to which no one is going to kill Aeneas (Y339), the future leader of the Trojans after Priam's death and inheritor of the Dardanian lineage (Y307 onwards), we can deduce that the way Aeneas is presented in the Iliad had to be consistent with the words of the gods, therefore the hero had to be protected from danger. Thus, Priam's attitude towards Aeneas, causing the hero's anger, can also be explained. However, we cannot overlook the view that Homer wanted to highlight Hector, therefore he did not want another hero of the same calibre next to him.

3. Aeneas in other sources

The *Cypria*, according to Proclus, mentions that Aphrodite ordered Aeneas to accompany Paris on his voyage to Greece, a piece of information also found in the latin works of Dictys Cretensis and Dares of Phrygia.[6] The *Cypria* also mentions Achilles' charge against Aeneas' herd of sheep, which led Aeneas to participate in the Trojan war (the same incident is described in the Iliad), as well as the name of Aeneas' wife, Eurydice, an information also found in Lesches' *Little Iliad*. Arctinus' *Iliu Persis* (Sack of Troy) mentions the incident of the Trojan Horse. According to Arctinus' version, several Trojans suggested throwing the wooden horse into the sea, but they were not heard. Two snakes appeared out of nowhere and strangled Laocoon and one of his sons. Upon seeing Laocoon's death, Aeneas and his people left Troy and moved to mount Ida. According to Arctinus' version, the incident occurred before the sack of Troy, therefore Aeneas did not leave the land.

All the references to Aeneas in the sources resemble the Iliad. The view that Aeneas was the champion and adviser of the Trojans survived over the following centuries.

4. Aeneas and the fate of Troy

Sophocles' tragedy Laocoon also refers to Aeneas' exodus from Troy before its sack.[7]Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who refers to

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Sophocles' tragedy, mentions that Aeneas moved to mount Ida, ordered by his father, who remembered Aphrodite's piece of advice, and propelled by Laocoon's death, which he believed to be an omen of the impending sack of Troy. Thus, the hero stood among his people and next to his father in front of the gate, followed by a crowd of Trojans. The myth that Aeneas abandoned the besieged city was common both in written sources and coin depictions. The most detailed description is compiled by Hellanicus (5th century BC).[8]

Xenophon refers to an alternative version of the myth. According to him, Aeneas acquired a reputation for being pious and devout because he salvaged the images of the gods and his father. Thus, his enemies allowed him out of all the Trojans to keep his fortune.[9] Several other Greek and Roman writers adopt Xenophon's version.

According to an alternative version, Aeneas did not leave the land and remained in Dardania as its ruler. It is also believed that it was not Aeneas who travelled to Italy, but some other Aeneas or even his son, Ascanius. Several cities in Phrygia attributed their establishment to Aeneas' children (Ascania, Arisbe, Gentinus),[10] whereas Berecynthia prided itself on being the site of the hero's tomb.[11]

The myth that Aeneas assumed power after Priam's death and that he was a dangerous rival of the royal family in general, as already presented in the Iliad (Y180, N460), is consistent with the myth that Paris excluded Aeneas of all honourary offices, which led Aeneas to overthrow Priam and betray Troy to the Achaeans. That was the reason why the Achaeans allowed him to save his family and keep his fortune.[12]

5. Aeneas' voyage

According to the Tabula Iliaca Capitolina (15 BC),[13] the oldest source of Aeneas' migration to the West is The Sack of Troy, written by Stesichorus of Himera (Sicily) (630-556 BC). Aeneas is depicted climbing aboard a ship in Sigeum, holding little Ascanius by the hand and followed by his trumpeter, Misenus, and Anchises, who carries the Palladium. The scene is described as follows: "Aeneas with his people in Hesperia ".[14] There has been much scholarly scepticism since the 19th century as to whether the Tabula Iliaca Capitolina depicts scenes described by Stesichorus or not.[15] However, the fact that Stesichorus wrote the poem "The Sack of Troy" indicates that the homeric epics had already spread in the west as a result of the earlier wave of colonization. Both Hellanicus and Dionysius mention that Aeneas travelled to Italy (with Odysseus) and founded Rome, naming it after a woman from Illyria who urged her female companions to burn the ships because she was tired of wandering.[16] The same motif is repeated in Dictys and Dares. As the years passed, the myth of Aeneas' voyage was created, having as its main sources Dionysius of Halicarnassus' Roman Antiquities and Virgil's Aeneid.

5.1 Aeneas in Greece

According to the two aforementioned sources, Aeneas' voyage to the West started with his arrival in Pallene of Chalcidice,[17] to the south of the city of Aeneia,[18] and ended with his arrival in Drepanum of Sicily (modern-day Trapani). During his voyage, Aeneas visited 14 regions or cities in Greece. He visited Samothrace, Delos (where, according to a version of the story, he slept with soothsayer Anius' daughter and had a son named Andros who settled on the aegean island which took his name), Crete (where he built a small city named Pergamon near Cydonia) and Cythera (where he built a temple of Aphrodite). He built 2 cities named Aphrodisias and Etis (the name of his daughter) on the laconian coast opposite Cythera and established relationships with the Arcadians, having settled in their land for some time.[19] On route to Italy, Aeneas and his Trojans wintered in Zacynthus, where they organized teenage races in honour of the newly-established temple of Aphrodite. Wooden idols were also dedicated to Aphrodite and Aeneas. They moved on to Leucas, where they built a temple in honour of Aphrodite Aeneias.[20] Their route included Actium and Ambracia (there was a temple of Aphrodite Aineias in Actium and a temple of Aphrodite and monument of Aeneas in Ambracia) on the way to Bouthroton. Aeneas and a few select companions went to the oracle of Dodona in order to receive advice. When they returned, Aeneas and his Trojans crossed the sea and arrived on the opposite coast, using the Arcadians as navigators.

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5.2 Aeneas in Italy and Sicily

Aeneas and his retinue arrived in Athenaion (castrum Minervae) and stayed in southern Italy for a long time. Aeneas even met Diomedes in Calabria.[21] According to local traditions, Aeneas remained in the region where both he and Anchises died and were buried. Aeneas' voyage ended in Drepanum of Sicily (modern-day Trapani).[22] He met two Trojans named Elymus and Aegestus and helped them build two new cities, Egesta and Elama.[23] According to Virgil, Aeneas visited Drepanum twice: he arrived at the foothills of mount Aetna after escaping from the Cyclopes and saving one of Odysseus' companions, he circumnavigated the island and ended in Drepanum, where Anchises died. He then travelled to Carthage and returned to Drepanum, where he met the two Trojans.

5.3 Aeneas in Carthage

The myth can be mainly found in Virgil.[24] The Carthage adventure is placed between the hero's two stays in Drepanum. While the fleet was sailing the Tyrrhenian sea, Hera (Juno) sent a storm that washed the ships on the Africa coast. Dido, the queen of the land, welcomed the castaways in Carthage. Following Aphrodite's (Venus) advice, Dido fell in love with Aeneas. Hera and Aphrodite had already made plans to marry Dido and Aeneas in order to unite their people. When the news was heard, Iarbas, son of Zeus (Jupiter) and Dido's scorned suitor, begged his father to intervene and cancel the plan. Zeus sent Hermes (Mercur) and ordered Aeneas to abandon Carthage. The grief-stricken hero obeyed. Dido threw herself on Aeneas' sword and died in despair.[25]

5.4 Aeneas on the western italian coast

From Drepanum, Aeneas moved on to the port of Palinurus of Lucania, which was named after one of Aeneas' companions who died there. Aeneas then arrived on an island near Paestum, which was named Leucasia or Leucosia (modern-day Piana) after the hero's female cousin who died there, and moved on to the port of the land of the Opici, which was named Misenus after a Trojan nobleman. A nearby island was named Prochyta after one of Aeneas' relatives and a nearby cape was named Caieta after Aeneas' wet nurse. Aeneas finally arrived in Laurentum, the capital city of Latium and seat of king Latinus, according to a number of ancient writers.[26]

Contrary to Dionysius, Virgil sent the hero from Palinurus to the coast of Cumae. Aeneas visited Apollo's temple and Sibyl Deiphobe's cave in Hecate's sacred grove and begged Sibyl Deiphobe, who had prophesied difficult battles in Latium, to send him to Hades in order to meet his father. Deiphobe agreed on the condition that Aeneas buried his companion who lay dead near his fleet. The hero returned to his fleet, heard the news about Misenus' death and buried him. Aided by pigeons, he found the golden bough that the sibyl had asked for and handed it to her. Accompanied by the sibyl, he descended to Hades. When he returned to the land of the living, he sailed to Caieta and moved on, past mount Circeo, to the estuary of the Tiber (Virg., Aen., 6.13-7.36).

5.5 Aeneas on the estuary of the Tiber and Latium[27]

Upon arriving in Laurentum, the Trojans set a camp with walls and ditches approximately 4 stadia from the coast. The region was named Troy.[28] There are different versions of the story concerning the selection of the site. According to Varro, Aeneas had been observing the morning star, Aprhodite's star, every morning since he left Troy. When he arrived at Latium, he noticed that the light of the star had faded and realized that he had reached the promised land.[29] The Trojans then built the city of Lavinium on a neighbouring hill. The natives under king Lavinus originally tried to hold back the Trojans, but they soon made peace with them and Aeneas married Lavinia, the king's daughter. The two tribes were united and constituted the Latins. Aeneas ruled for 3 years. During the fourth year of his reign, he was forced to fight Tyrrhenus (a nephew of Lavinus' wife) and Mesentius (the leader of the Tyrrhenians). During the battle, Aeneas was killed or rather ascended to the sky as a god (Indiges).[30]

5.6 Aeneas and Rome

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According to one version of the story, Aeneas met Odysseus and founded Rome.[31] According to a different version of the story, he and Evander renamed the existing colony of Valentia to Rome. The most common version of the story is as follows: Iulus, son of Aeneas, established Alba Longa, the metropolis of Rome. The Iulian family of Rome and a number of prominent Romans bearing the name Iulius, such as Julius Caesar, traced their lineage to Iulus. Silvius, Aeneas' second son, succeeded his brother as the ruler of Alba Longa. Thus, all the kings of Alba Longa bore the cognomen Silvius. Romulus and Remus, the twins who finally founded Rome, descended either from Iulus or Silvius.[32] One way or another, Aeneas came to be considered the leader of the Roman people.

6. Interpretation of the myth of Aeneas

The majority of the sources referring to Aeneas' adventures are apparently greek. The roman sources are later. Bearing in mind the greek sources, we can interpret the myth of Aeneas as follows:

When the Greeks arrived at Ionia, they found the myth of Aeneas and hellenized it. Through Homer, the myth of Aeneas was incorporated into the epic cycle and became very popular, before "travelling" with the Greeks to the West during the 2nd wave of colonization. Loyal to the mythical origins, Aeneas settled in places with nearby temples of Aphrodite. In many cases, the cult of Aphrodite had replaced the cult of the Phoenician goddess Astarte, therefore Aeneas must have replaced the local heroes. The various cities that Aeneas built must be integrated into the network of trade posts built by the Greeks during their voyages. However, the aforementioned interpretation is incomplete because the myth of Aeneas did not evolve linearly. Let's not forget that, according to one version of the story, Aeneas died in Thrace! According to recent scientific research, the myth of Aeneas played a political and social role. Aeneas founded cities and temples, fulfilling the need of the older generations of the cities to trace their lineage to the hero or his people (his children or his companions) in order to assert their rights and gain privileges. It seems that the myth arrived at Latium during the 6th century BC, but it took several centuries until it was incorporated into the roman myth. The detail that prevailed was Aeneas' (son of Aphrodite) transport of the Palladium and the Penates to Latium. From then on, several writers contributed to the creation of the myth associating the hero with Rome: Timaeus and Cato, Varro's De familiis Troianis (the first writer who traces the lineage of the old roman families to the Trojans), Virgil's Aeneid and Dionysius of Halicarnassus' Roman Antiquities. Varro's attempt to link Rome and Troy was not coincidental. In 129 BC, coins issued by Julius Caesar depicted the head of Aphrodite, Aeneas' mother. Varro was the first to trace the lineage of the Julian family to Aeneas. Thus, politicians started exploiting the myth of Aeneas.[33]

7. Aeneas in art

The ancient sources refer to a bronze statue in the agora of Argos (Pausanias, 2.21.2), a statue, as part of a group of statues, in Olympia (Pausanias, 2.22.2), a picture of Aeneas with Castor and Pollux painted by Parrhasius (Plin. NH, 35.71), a relief on a fountain in Alba Longa,[34] a statue in Forum Augustum (Ovid, Fasti, 5.563) and another statue with a surviving inscription in the agora of Pompeii.

There are also surviving depictions of Aeneas and his adventures on statues, reliefs, mosaics, precious stones, vessels and coins. Their themes derive from the entire epic cycle, starting from the Trojan war and ending to his voyages. The most common motif is the depiction of Aeneas carrying his old father and another person, usually a little child. In many cases, he is followed by one or two female figures, Creusa and Aprhodite.

Aeneas' adventures, mainly through Aeneid, inspired later artists. As a result, a number of important works of literature, opera, theatre and visual arts were inspired by them.

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1. Hom., *Il.*, B820, E247, Hom. *Hymns*, To Aphrodite, 191ff., Hesiod, *Theogony*, 1008ff.

2. Hom., *Il.*, Y215-240.

3. Hom., Il., N428.

4. Hom. *Hymns*, To Aphrodite, 257ff.

5. Xenoph., *Cynegeticus (On Hunting)*, 1.2.

6. They are pseudonyms. The first is associated with a fourth-century six-volume narrative named *Ephemeris belli Troiani*, supposedly based on the account of a cretan follower of Idomeneus named Dictys, who tells the story of the Trojan war from the greek viewpoint. Dares, on the other hand, was, according to Homer, a Trojan priest of Hephaestus who wrote the narrative *Daretis Phrygii de excidio Trojae historia*, a fifth-century history of the Trojan war from the trojan viewpoint.

7. Dioysius of. Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 1.48.

8. Dionysius.of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 1.45.4-48.1. It is worth noting that Dionysius (1st century BC), who refers to several other circumstances of Aeneas' life, mentions that his wife was Creusa, daughter of Priam. Let's not forget that Dionysius compiled a history of Rome and tried to present the greek and roman tradition as closely connected as possible.

9. Xenoph., *Cynegeticus (On Hunting)*, 1.15.

10. Steph. Byz., *Ethnica*, 119.3, 132.11, 203.3.

11. Erskine, A., *Troy between Greece and Rome: Local Tradition and Imperial Power* (Oxford 2003), p. 110 and footnote 79.

12. Dioysius of. Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 1.48. For a brief account of the chapter, see Horsfall, N., "The Aeneas Legend from Homer to Virgil", in Bremmer, J.N. – Horsfall, N., *Roman Myth and Mythography* (Groningen 2005), pp. 12-24.

13. Tabulae Iliacae: marble tablets of the 1st cent. AD featuring scenes from the epic cycle, including pictorial representations and descriptions of the Trojan war. Tabula Iliaca Capitolina, one of the best-preserved samples, was found near the italian city of Bovillae and is currently kept in the Capitoline Museum. The central scene bears the inscription ΙΛΙΟΥ ΠΕΡΣΙΣ ΚΑΤΑ CTHCIXOPON.

14. Roscher, W.-H., "Aineias", in *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (Leipzig 1886), p. 166.

15. Seeliger, F., *Die Überlieferung der griechischen Heldensage bei Stesichoros* (Meissen 1886), pp. 32-34. Horsfall, N., "The Aeneas Legend from Homer to Virgil", in Bremmer, J.N. – Horsfall, N., *Roman Myth and Mythography* (Groningen 2005), pp. 12-24.

16. Dioysius of. Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 1.72.

17. For more details about Aeneas' voyage to Greece and its different versions, see Κακριδής, Ι.Θ., "Οι πλάνες του Αινεία στην Ελλάδα", in Κακριδής, Ι.Θ. (ed.), *Ελληνική Μυθολογία*, Τ. 5 (Athens 1987), pp. 332-339; Roscher, W.-H., "Aineias", in *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (Leipzig 1886), pp. 166-170.

18. Apart from the characteristic name, a coin of the city dating back to 490-480 BC depicts Aeneas' departure from Troy. The myth describing the establishment of the city is as follows: When Hector's children, Oxynius and Scamandrus, drove Aeneas away from mount Ida, he took his father and as many refugees as he could and followed the path of the sun. He was followed by a cow, sent by Aphrodite in order to show him where to settle. Aeneas and his retinue crossed the Hellespont, passed Thrace and arrived at the Thermaic gulf, where his father died. Despite the natives' pleas to settle there, he moved on and arrived in Brousias, where the cow mooed for the first time. Thus, Aeneas decided to settle there and built a city named Aeneia (Conon, *FGrHist* 26 F 1.46).

19. According to Strabo, the city of Capyai was established by Aeneas. According to Strabo, Dionysius and Pausanias, Anchises died in Orchomenus of Arcadia and was buried at the foothills of mount Anchisia.

20. Coins from Leucas depict Aeneas on the front and the two skull caps of the Dioscuri on the verso.

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21. For the different versions of the story, see Roscher, W.-H., "Aineias", in *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (Leipzig 1886), pp. 170-171.

22. Another city claiming to be the site of Anchises' tomb (Virg., *Aen*., 3.710).

23. Thucydides (6.2.3) mentions a different version of the story. For all the different versions of the story, see Roscher, W.-H., "Aineias", in *Ausfuhrliches Lexicon der griechischen und romischen Mythologie* (Leipzig 1886), pp. 171-172.

24. Before Virgil, there are references in epic poet Gnaeus Naevius' (circa 270-201 BC) work *Bellum Punicum* and scholar/writer Terrentius Varro's (116-27 BC) work *De familiis Troianis.*

25. On Virgil's sources, see Roscher, W.-H., "Aineias", in *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (Leipzig 1886), pp. 172-173.

26. Dioysius of. Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 1.45.1 and 5.54.1. On the capital city of Latium, see Strabo 5.3.2.

27. There are also references to Aeneas' voyage to Etruria (Virgil) and Sardenia (Pausanias).

28. Dioysius of. Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 1.53.3; Virg., *Aen*., 7.25.157.

29. For the different versions of the story, see Roscher, W.-H., "Aineias", in *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (Leipzig 1886), p. 175. For Varro's version, see Serv., *Virg. Aen*., 1.382. It seems that many traders chose the site as a place to stay. It is no coincidence that the first trade deal between Rome and Carthage forbade the construction of a permanent camp in Latium (Polyb., *The Histories*, 3.22.13).

30. For the sources and the different versions of the story, see Roscher, W.-H., "Aineias", in *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (Leipzig 1886), pp. 176-181.

31. Dioysius of. Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 1.72.

32. For the sources and the different versions of the story, see Roscher, W.-H., "Aineias", in *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (Leipzig 1886), pp. 182-183.

33. For more details, see Roscher, W.-H., "Aineias", in *Ausfuhrliches Lexicon der griechischen und romischen Mythologie* (Leipzig 1886), pp. 188-190; Horsfall, N., "The Aeneas Legend from Homer to Virgil", in Bremmer, J.N. – Horsfall, N., *Roman Myth and Mythography* (Groningen 2005), pp. 12-24.

34. Varro describes Aeneas based on the particular relief (John the Lydian, *De Magistratibus reipublicae Romanae*, 1.12.5-10: "ιδών αυτού (Αινεία) την εικόνα, ως είπεν, εκ λίθου λευκού εξεσμένην επί κρήνης εν τη Άλβη").

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