

***Aeneid*: Literary Background**

Who is Aeneas?

(see Aeneas's genealogy)

- Aeneas appears in the *Iliad*: a Trojan hero, the son of Anchises and Aphrodite (Venus), the cousin of Hector
 - *Iliad* prophecy: survive, rule
 - Literary tradition has him fleeing to Italy
- Long before Virgil, Aeneas appears in legends connecting him genealogically to Rome's founding race; allows Rome to claim independent equality with Greeks around the time they are becoming the major power in the Mediterranean

Homer's epics and the *Aeneid*

(compare *Aeneid* proem and proems of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*)

- *Aeneid* 1-6: *Odyssey*
- *Aeneid* 7-12: *Iliad*
- (Reversal of order)

Odysseus and Aeneas

- Storm because of the anger of a divinity
- Aeolus' winds
- Patron goddess beseeches Zeus/Jupiter on his behalf
- Shipwrecked/landed in unknown place
- Meet a young maiden (or "young maiden") who tells them about the ruler of the nearby city (goddess appears in a disguise)
- Go to the city—which is connected to the very god who is against them—while enveloped in a mist
- Weep at an artistic rendition of the Trojan War
- See the queen (mist suddenly gone)
- Receive hospitality
- Tell their story about sailing around (the epic has begun by launching us *in medias res*; now we get the backstory)
- (*Aeneid*, Book 4: hero & woman; *Aeneid*, Book 6: underworld)