

Following the instructions of the Cumaean Sibyl, Aeneas decides to pursue an unlikely alliance with Evander, a Greek exile, to oppose Turnus and the Rutulians (Book 8). Instead of sending Ilioneus, who arranges the initial treaties with Dido (Book 1) and Latinus (Book 7), Aeneas decides to go in person, perhaps owing to the difficulty and importance of this particular task. After a lengthy speech, in which he stresses their history of shared kinship (8.134-142) and their common enemy (8.146-9), Aeneas appears to be a capable diplomat, as he secures the desired alliance with Evander.

Most scholars attribute Aeneas' success either to his effective use of rhetoric (e.g., Hight [1972] 50) or to the pre-existing tie of hospitality between Evander and Anchises (e.g., Wiltshire [1989] 96-8). Although both conclusions contribute to our understanding of the episode, neither accounts for Vergil's inclusion of a prophecy (revealed by Evander, 8.499-503) or allusions to the Homeric epics (catalogued by Knauer [1964] 239-65). In this presentation, I will examine the speeches of Ilioneus and Aeneas – the only formal Trojan diplomatic speeches in the *Aeneid* – to demonstrate that Aeneas' success as a diplomat (1) is the result of a prophecy (and not simply a pre-existing tie of hospitality) and (2) reinforces his position in the poem as a “man of destiny” (Camps [1969] 27) rather than as a uniquely effective public speaker (Feeney [1990] 184).

I will begin with a comparison of Ilioneus and Aeneas' speeches, which exhibit many similarities of form and content, and their equally successful outcomes, which are shaped by divine intervention: for example, Mercury predisposes Dido to the Trojans (1.302-4); omens (7.64-80) and a prophecy (7.96-101) influence Latinus; and a prophecy influences Evander (8.499-503). I will also consider the function of allusions to Homer's *Odyssey* in Aeneas' speech to Evander. Although scholars routinely emphasize Iliadic parallels in discussing *Aeneid* 8 (e.g., Gransden [1984] 87-96), I will argue that references to Telemachus' visits to Pylos (*Odyssey* 3) and Sparta (*Odyssey* 4) are meaningful models for Aeneas' visit to Pallanteum. In particular, Telemachus' recognition by Nestor, Helen, and Menelaus anticipates Aeneas' recognition by Evander and suggests that it is Aeneas' relationship to Anchises – and not necessarily his rhetorical skills – that plays a crucial role in his success.

That Aeneas' speech to Evander and Ilioneus' speeches to Dido and to Latinus succeed only in conjunction with divine assistance reinforces the central role played by fate and the gods in the *Aeneid* and the fact that the majority of the *Aeneid's* characters exhibit only an incomplete understanding of that role. A careful analysis of these speeches reveals that Aeneas and Ilioneus are effective diplomats largely because of divine influences – and, in the case of Aeneas, a pre-existing tie of hospitality – about which they know nothing.