

Key figures, places, events, and themes in the *Aeneid* and their analogues in the modern Israel-Palestine conflict

## 1. Characters & Peoples

<i>Aeneid</i> Element	Modern Analogue	Commonality
Greeks	Nazis	Genocidal persecutors
Trojans	Jews of Europe, 1. after the Holocaust 2. before the Holocaust	1. Displaced Persons (urbanized, unwilling emigrants) 2. Religious/ethnic ideologues (urbanized, militarized, persecuted, mostly unmarried young men)
Lavinia & Latium	Palestine	Homeland, the Promised Land (allegedly empty')
Italians (Latins)	Palestinians (Arabs)	Indigenous population (simple, peasant, tribal, feudal; only one big city; “easily fanaticized,” “noble savages”)
Latinus	The ruling British in Palestine	Weak imperial rule, accommodating to the newcomers
Turnus	Hamas	Asymmetric native armed resistance
Arcadians	Yishuv	Native minority reluctantly pulled into war as allies of the newcomers ( <i>not a perfect analogy</i> )
Etruscans	Lebanese Phalange militia	Allied militias just over the border of the disputed land
Diomedes	Escaped German SS	Former persecutors

## 2. Places & Territories

<i>Aeneid</i> Element	Modern Analogue	Commonality
Troy	Jewish communities in Europe	Destroyed homeland, site of genocide
Buthrotum, Agesta	Uganda, Madagascar	Alternative new homelands considered and rejected
Latium & Lavinia	Palestine (the land, the Promised land)	Ancestral Homeland, the Promised Land
Dardanus	Moses	Legendary/historical national ancestor ( <i>oecist</i> )
Corythus	Biblical Kingdom of Israel	Legendary/historical homeland (?)
Laurentum	Gaza; Jerusalem	Seaside strip of land; main native city
Trojan camp	Zionist settlement(s)	Newcomer enclave(s)
Tiber River	Jordan River	“The river” (border)
Mediterranean	Mediterranean	“The sea” (border)

<sup>1</sup> Surrounded by Trojans and Carthaginians, Aeneas tells Dido (not necessarily entirely truthfully) (3.3-7), “All Neptune’s Troy lay razed to the ground: ashes smoking. Forced to pursue, by what we divined of the gods’ will (*auguriis agimur divum*), our different, far-off places of exile, deserted (*desertas*) lands, we constructed...ships, though we’d no idea where fate would take us or where we’d settle.”

### 3. Events & Wartime Parallels

<i>Aeneid</i> Event	Modern Analogue	Commonality
Destruction of Troy	The Holocaust	Systematic national destruction
War in books 7-12	The 1948 Arab–Israeli War, AKA Israel’s War of Independence; every other war since then	War for statehood (newcomer)/colonial war of independence (native)
Trojan army	Israeli Haganah (Jewish conventional army, precursor to the IDF)	Conventional armed forces
Italian army (catalogued in book 7)	Arab forces (Egypt, Transjordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Arab Liberation Army)	Conventional armed forces, a coalition assembled from surrounding lands
Deer incident in book 7	Battle of Tel Hai 1920; Hebron 1929 massacre	Flash-point killings; trigger events
Nisus & Euryalus night raid in book 9	Irgun & Stern Gang night raid on Deir Yassin (4:30 a.m. April 9, 1948)	Nighttime terrorist massacre by paramilitary units of the newcomer army

### 4. Ideological & Divine Forces

<i>Aeneid</i> Element	Modern Analogue	Commonality
Juno	Anti-Semitism in Europe	Enduring racial animus
Dido & Carthage	Jewish immigration to USA, USSR, and elsewhere	The lure of assimilation (cultural dissolution) <sup>2</sup>
Allecto	Anti-Zionist agitators in Palestine	Radicalizing force
Jupiter	United Nations	International law, nominally impartial
The Olympian gods (e.g. Venus vs. Juno)	Divided world opinion (pro- vs. anti-Israel)	Divided world opinion
Ilioneus	Zionist diplomacy	Newcomer diplomacy
His speech in book 7	Israeli Declaration of Independence	Newcomer declaration of intent to stay
Venus	Arab diplomatic missions seeking Nazi support	Native diplomacy
Penates	Judaism, Torah, Talmud	Newcomer religion
Saturn	Allah	Native god

<sup>2</sup> In front of her courtiers, Dido makes the newly arrived Trojans a tempting offer (1.572-4): “Or, you can stay here with me upon equal terms in this kingdom, should you so wish. For the city I’m founding is yours. Beach your vessels. Trojan and Tyrian: both shall be one and the same in my judgments.”

<i>Aeneid</i> Element	Modern Analogue	Commonality
<b>Jupiter</b>	Yahweh as supreme God	Newcomer god
<b>Apollo</b>	Yahweh as divine revelator	God who promises the Land
<b>Vulcan’s armor</b>	Zionist weaponry (foreign-supplied)	Superior newcomer weaponry <sup>3</sup>
<b>Juturna</b>	Hamas sympathizers among Palestinian civilians	Ideology

### 5. Possible Solutions/Resolutions

<i>Aeneid</i> Element	Modern Analogue	Commonality
<b>Latinus’ solution</b>	Balfour Declaration	Reserve a small area of settlement for newcomers within the natives’ land
<b>Jupiter’s solution</b>	One-state solution (“Israstine”)	A single, binational state
<b>Aeneas’ 1<sup>st</sup> solution: Burn Laurentum</b>	2023- War on Hamas-ruled Gaza	Genocide (?)
<b>Aeneas’ 2<sup>nd</sup> solution: kill Turnus without mercy, claim Lavinia</b>	Defeat of Hamas, annexation of Gaza	Conquest of the land by the newcomers

A bonus (unrelated) aside: “*La conquista la hicieron los indios...*”

<i>Aeneid</i> Element	Modern Analogue	Commonality
<b>Aeneas leading a massive Etruscan army against Laurentum</b>	Cortés leading a massive (200k) Tlaxcala army against (Aztec) Tenochtitlan in 1521	A “conquistador” and his tiny band exploit regional antagonisms to take command of one indigenous force and overthrow another the empire of another indigenous group

This fact—that “the (Etruscan) natives did the conquest”—is so little appreciated by readers of the *Aeneid* that it often goes right over their heads. Aeneas and his Trojan band are trivially tiny; it’s the Etruscan auxiliaries that do most of the fighting. Interestingly, Virgil himself gives their contribution minimal emphasis—in fact, their entire mobilization is explained only in a brief flashback (10.148-56)! Maybe that’s a perpetual feature of the colonizer’s perspective...

<sup>3</sup> When Turnus is accused of turning Latium into a meatgrinder by refusing a fair fight, he angrily replies (11.438-9), “I’ll face [Aeneas] bravely, though he may be playing the great role, Achilles, armed with equipment that’s equally fine, handcrafted by Vulcan.”