Chapter 1
Values-Based Leadership: Enduring Lessons from the Aeneid

Mark Ahn and Larry Ettner

Abstract This paper explored the *Aeneid,* Virgil's foundation epic of the Latin cannon, from a values-based leadership perspective, which is defined as the moral foundation underlying stewardship decisions and actions of leaders. Specifically, we juxtaposed the resonant leadership elements of vision, culture and values – and their corresponding equivalent Roman themes of *fatum, pietas, and virtus*. Using a thematic analysis approach, we coded the following eight values: integrity, good judgment, leadership by example, decision-making, trust, justice/fairness, humility, and sense of urgency. We found that while the *Aeneid* extols prototypical values, the epic instructs that truly effective leadership is not about being a monochromatic prototype. Rather, the epic reveals that the essence and privilege of effective leadership demands reflection on the dynamic relationship between the leader and the led towards a better, envisioned future.

1.1 Introduction

As societies have evolved from tribal communities to nation-states to modern global, multinational enterprises and multilateral institutions, the study of leaders and leadership has been a perennial source of abiding interest and inquiry (Leebaert 2006; MacGregor Burns 1978). The narrative depicting the heroic traits and human flaws of the "good king" have evinced timeless characters in the Western epic tradition – from Sumerian Gilgamesh to Achilles of Homeric fame who displayed immortal heroism and creativity, despite a fatal flaw – and beyond (Bagshaw 1995; Garaventa 1998; Moss Reimers and Barbuto 2002). In these contexts, literature serves as a metronome for the values of society (Moerk 1998). These and countless other narratives fill the pantheon of great literature and biography, and continue to inspire new generations of audiences and aspiring leaders alike.

M. Ahn (✉) • L. Ettner
Atkinson Graduate School of Management, Willamette University, Salem, OR, USA
e-mail: mark@pukanapartners.com; lettner@willamette.edu

G.P. Prastacos et al. (eds.), *Leadership through the Classics*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-642-32445-1_1, © Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg 2012

This paper focuses on exploring Virgil's (70–19 BCE) Latin epic poem the *Aeneid* from a values-based leadership perspective in its original context as a founding myth, as well as its relevance and implications for the demands of modern leadership.[1] It will juxtapose the resonant leadership elements of vision, culture and values – and their corresponding equivalent Roman themes of *fatum, pietas, and virtus* – found in the *Aeneid* to the demands of modern leadership.

1.2 Literature

Originally written to enhance the political legitimacy of the Augustan regime (Bell 1999; Cairns 1989; Korfmacher 1956), the Aeneid was also aimed to extol and glorify values-based leadership captured in traditional Roman virtues (e.g., *pietas* – reasoned judgment and performance of one's duties towards followers and family) which were deemed critical to the peace, prosperity and effectiveness of the Roman imperium (Earl 1967; Edwards 1960; Galinsky 1996; Hahn 1931; Hammond 1933; Holland 2004). Publius Virgilius Maro, hereafter Virgil, wrote his epic in the wake of a century of turmoil. Rome was weary after three generations of civil war and internal struggle had ravaged Italy and the Mediterranean. A final round of civil wars ended at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE and the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra in the following year. Augustus now dominated affairs and like others before him had set about reorganization and reconciliation of the war torn world he ruled (Galinsky 1996).

Augustus needed a cohesive Roman world view to remind his countrymen of their past triumphs and traditions, as well as to fortify their manifest destiny or *fatum*, which was ultimately channelled through the vision of Virgil (Galinsky 1996; Hammond 1933). Bloom (2001) noted: "The emperor Augustus needed the poem because it gave his era an idea of order and greatness, an achieved foundation of authority; Aeneas always looked towards the future, to the rise of a new Troy in Rome, which will end exile and inaugurate justice" (p. 76). It was Virgil who would capture this resonating common worldview in the *Aenied* and whose "success as a panegyrist is partly because he did believe in the value of what Augustus was doing" (West 1994, p. 61).

[1] The *Aeneid*, which chronicles the story of Aeneas and his followers from their exodus after the fall of Troy in the *Iliad* to the founding of Rome, is composed of twelve books written in dactylic hexameter and was first published shortly after Virgil's death in 19 BCE. The hero Aeneas was already known to Greco-Roman legend and myth, having been a minor character in the *Iliad*. Virgil took the disconnected tales of Aeneas' wanderings, his vague association with the establishment of Rome, and shaped a profound national epic which established the founding myth of Rome and tied it to the legends of Troy and manifest destiny, glorified traditional Roman values which became the basis of socio-political reforms, and established unassailable legitimacy for the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

1.2.1 The Aeneid from a Leadership Lens

The focus of leadership studies is to explore: "What is good leadership? The use of the word good here has two connotations, morally good or technically good or effective. . .The question of what constitutes a good leader lies at the heart of the public debate on leadership" (Ciulla 1998, p. 13). From a leadership lens, Virgil endows Aeneas with human qualities, portraying him as a heroic yet flawed mortal man who overcomes his doubts and setbacks to ultimately realize his fate. Within the genre of epic poetry, one of the more unique and innovative conventions developed by Virgil was to allow Aeneas to transform from an indecisive, self-doubting victim of circumstance (i.e., literally driven from one thing to another, well illustrated in his diversion to Carthage and his soul-searching emotional decisions as to whether or not he should remain with Dido) into a supremely confident, charismatic leader who selflessly risks single combat with Turnus to spare others suffering (Fuhrer 1989). As MacKay (1963) posited, the *Aeneid* represents:

> *Virgil's comment on the human condition: that great leaders are necessary, but that they have a bit of the scoundrel in them; he can appreciate their admirable qualities without shutting their eyes to their unlovable qualities, and he is not sentimental enough to make their failings lovable failings. We are meant to be shocked—shocked into opening our eyes (p. 165).*

1.2.2 Values-Based Leadership

While the *Aeneid* has been explored from many and varied perspectives including poetry, political propaganda, social control, religious conformity, and the arts (e.g., music, opera, theatre) (e.g., Galinsky 1996), this paper explores Virgil's work from a values-based leadership perspective. While leadership theories and definitions proliferate, the following definition is adopted: "leadership over human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the needs of followers" (MacGregor Burns 1978, p. 69). Building on this construct, values-based leadership is defined as the moral foundation underlying stewardship decisions and actions of leaders (O'Toole 1995).

In leadership terms, values provide rationale towards conceptions of desirable objects and objectives – and influence the degree to which a leader's actions are viewed as legitimate, acceptable and effective. As MacGregor Burns (1995) defined "leadership as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations – the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations – of both leaders and followers" (p. 100). This rationale provides a 'binding effect' to draw certain people who have similar aspirations and goals to cooperate together, and form the basis of an organization (Buchko 2006). Without similar or corresponding value sets, starting or managing an organization will be difficult as

transformational leadership is linked to virtue and moral character (Bass and Steidlmeier 1999). As Gardner (1995) noted, "shared values are the bedrock on which leaders build the edifice of group achievement. No examination of leadership would be complete without attention to the decay and possible regeneration of the value framework" (p. 5).

It is the development of Aeneas' *virtus* or values that is a central tension throughout the narrative that resonates to the challenges of modern leadership. Despite their widely varied contexts throughout time, common bases on which leaders are consistently evaluated, embraced or rejected are their values. Notwithstanding, given the pressure and immediacy of modern demands, there can be a tendency to believe that the "prevailing" challenge or crisis at hand is fundamentally different than all others in the past. From one perspective, some leadership experts have asserted that lessons from the past have little to offer contemporary leaders (Accenture 2001; Khilji et al. 2010; Martin and Ernst 2005) in a modern world of information overload, high-speed communications, and global capital markets driving interdependence:

> *The leadership models of the past provide little guidance for the business context of the future…Many factors are transforming the context of leadership today: globalization and technological change lead to heightened competition, which in turn leads to new organizational models* (Accenture 2001, p. 1).

A competing perspective, however, is that the perennial leadership challenge for governing our institutions remains constant from antiquity to today: to build the good society which balances the necessity of tension between liberty, equality, community and efficiency (Bagshaw 1995; O'Toole 1995). In this context, the palette of epic poetry generally, and the *Aeneid* specifically, provides a useful lens to imaginatively examine timeless opportunities and tensions as "poetry asks for accountability to a human community, for rootedness and responsibility even as it changes" (Whyte 1994, p. 10). In this context, we propose that juxtaposing the resonant leadership elements of vision, culture and values – and their corresponding equivalent Roman themes of *fatum, pietas, and virtus* – found in the *Aeneid* to the demands of modern leadership would provide robust insights and support practical contemporary relevance of the epic (Fig. 1.1).

1.3 Methodology and Values-Based Leadership Themes

Our methodology used the principles of thematic analysis, which is a systematic process for fracturing, reorganizing and categorizing the content of text and identifying relationships among data (Berg 1995; Maxwell 1996) that promotes the collection and use of qualitative information in a manner which facilitates communication with a broad audience (Auerbach and Silverstein 2000; Boyatzis 1998; Braun and Clarke 2006), and is regularly used by scholars and researchers in literature, social sciences, and many other fields (Crabtree and Miller 1999; Denzin

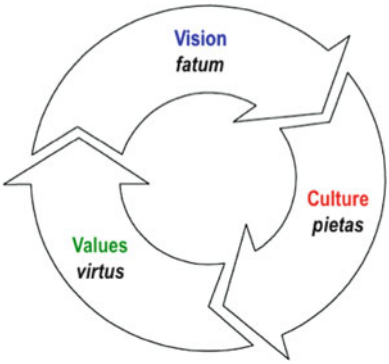

Fig. 1.1 Leadership elements and *Roman Themes* in the Aeneid

and Lincoln 1994; Marshall and Rossman 1989; Silverman 1993). In other words, thematic analysis is a process of encoding qualitative data, which involves developing an explicit code and the identification of patterns within the information (Boyatzis 1998; Crabtree and Miller 1999).

In this case, the deductive thematic analysis (Crabtree and Miller 1999; Braun and Clarke 2006) proceeded in four stages. First, the *Aeneid* was coded to identify manifest and latent themes that emerged from the Virgil's primary (Fitzgerald 1981) and critical reviews of the text (for example, see: Bell 1999; Bowra 1933; Cairns 1989; Hahn 1931; Smiley 1948; Toll 1997; Wilson 1969). Second, insights were coded at a meta-level to identify over-arching themes. Third, the data were coded based on the values-based leadership literature (Conchie 2004; Garg and Krishnan 2003; Majer 2005; O'Toole 1995; Maxwell 1996; Van Lee et al. 2005) to compare the underlying themes of the *Aeneid* to modern leadership literature. Fourth, the identified codes were grouped into the resonant leadership themes of vision, culture, and values, and analyzed for conclusions and implications relative to our model (Fig. 1.1). The theme of culture was further subdivided into symbolism and ritual, while values were coded into the following eight themes: integrity, good judgment, leadership by example, decision-making, trust, justice/fairness, humility, and sense of urgency.

1.4 Results and Key Values-Based Leadership Themes

1.4.1 Vision

A compelling vision, larger than any individual, is necessary for organizational success and sustainability. Virgil uses *fatum* to "justify the ways of God to men" and establish the divine providence through which the mighty Roman imperium "was to be established in the world to show [the] great, foreordained mission of [the] nation" (Miller 1928, p. 29). Aeneas' steadfast vision to found a new homeland (the future Rome) and opportunity for peace and prosperity for his

displaced people of Troy, while overcoming a series of obstacles and making great personal sacrifices, is an arching theme throughout the epic:

> *A man apart, devoted to his mission/To undergo so many perilous days/And enter so many trials. . .For years/They wandered as their destiny drove them on/From one sea to the next: so hard and huge/A task that was to found the Roman people (trans. Fitzgerald 1983: Book I, 16–18, 46–49)*[2]

Vision requires imagination, courage and resilience precisely because it is an envisioned future and requires change from the status quo. Aeneas' "Rome does not exist, but even so he has to show what it is like to be Roman. He needs to display dogged selfless endurance. . .Rome is not a real city of bricks and mortar, but a state of mind" Morwood, J. (1991).

From a modern leadership perspective, establishing a clear and compelling vision is a distinguishing characteristic of successful organizations throughout history from proscribed manifest destiny (Quint 1989) to prosaic modern leadership studies (Collins and Porras 1996; Gouillart and Kelly 1995; Kay 1995). As Senge (1990) noted, "if any one idea about leadership has inspired organizations for thousands of years, it's the capacity to hold a shared picture of the future we seek to create" (p. 9). An organization's vision may be characterized as what a firm will become if it successfully and repeatedly completes its mission (Thomas 1993). Collins and Porras (1996) have noted, "to create an effective envisioned future requires a certain level of unreasonable confidence and commitment" (p. 75). As an example, Cisco Systems became the global leader in network computing with $36 billion in 2009 revenues principally through acquisitions and attendant integration risk, despite overwhelming empirical evidence that 60–80 % of mergers fail (Tetenbaum 1999). Their clear mission has kept the company focused on building on their core strength: "Cisco hardware, software, and service offerings are used to create the Internet solutions that make networks possible – providing easy access to information anywhere, at any time." Vision statements also work across sectors. NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), for example, provides a succinct and compelling vision statement: "To improve life here, To extend life to there, To find life beyond." Thus, we posit (P):

P1: A compelling vision, larger than any individual, is necessary for organizational success and sustainability.

1.4.2 Culture

The *Aeneid* may also be interpreted as a conscious attempt to shape the sociopolitical discourse and cultural norms of Rome. Political power and cultural creativity are not often related, but the age of Augustus was intrinsically different (Galinsky 1996).

[2] All primary quotes of the Aeneid from: Virgil (1983). *The Aeneid*. (R. Fitzgerald, Trans.). New York, NY: Random House. (Original work published c. 20 B.C.). Hereafter, only book and lines numbers will be cited.

> *[The] poem not only helped to cast Augustus' seemingly inevitable power as heroic but also to make that heroic power comprehensible in the contemporary idioms of communication in the Res Republica. . .[who] would have had little difficulty in understanding the roles of Aeneas and Augustus, the two heroic leaders positioned at the opposite poles of the fated trajectory of the national history* (Bell 1999, *p. 264*).

In other words, from the Fall of Troy to the founding of Rome and the promise of an empire without end as Jupiter ordained their *fatum* to: ". . .call by his own name his people Romans/For these I set no limits, world or time/But make the gift of empire without end" (Book I, Lines 355–375). As Cicero (54 B.C) presaged ". . .our own commonwealth was based on the genius, not of one man, but of many; it was founded, not in one generation, but in a long period of several centuries and many ages of men" (*trans.* Keyes 1928, p. 113).

By comparison, Augustus in the *Res Gestae* emphasized that his political actions were wholly consistent with traditional Roman values which, if adhered to, would provide the basis for sustainable imperial growth and prosperity: "By the passage of new laws I restored many traditions of our ancestors which were then falling into disuse, and I myself set precedents in many things for posterity to imitate" (trans. Cooley 2009, p. 66). Indeed, a critical aspect of Augustan policy was shaping culture and behavioral norms, and avoiding dangerous practices that could undermine social stability.

Corporate culture in modern leadership terms refers to norms of behavior and shared values among a group, anchoring distributed decision-making, and allowing the firm to direct behaviors towards a common vision. Corporate culture manifests itself in powerful, shared values that shape group behavior and persists despite changes in group membership. Kotter (1996) found that corporate culture strongly influences performance because culture provides selection criteria for hiring and indoctrination, exerts itself through the actions of nearly all employees continuously, and influences behavior without conscious intent. Most large companies have codified their value systems to align corporate culture and provide a benchmark for behavior. For example, nurturing a values-based corporate culture has been critical to the success and sustainability of Johnson & Johnson (J&J). General Robert Wood Johnson, former chairman from 1932 to 1963 and a member of the Company's founding family, crafted *Our Credo* himself in 1943, just before J&J became a publicly traded company. Long before the term "corporate social responsibility" was popularized, *Our Credo* was created as a one-page document to outline the operating principles that continue to guide the company decades later. Thus, we posit:

P2: A founding story is important to communicating and influencing organizational culture.

1.4.2.1 Symbolism and Ritual

Symbols and rituals, which are important in creating a cohesive organizational culture, are used extensively throughout the *Aeneid* to invoke images such as Augustus as leader, religious piety, symbolic works of art, and the relentless

march of Roman history (Richmond 1976). An evocative and powerful symbol found in the *Aeneid* is the Vulcan shield given to Aeneas by his mother Venus (Gale 1997). Quint (1989) noted that:

> *. . .the shield of Aeneas is an ideology of empire that informs the Aeneid. . ..and the advantage of ideology is its capacity to simplify, to make hard and fast distinctions and draw up sides. . .[and] to project a foreign "otherness" upon the vanquished enemies of Augustus and of a Rome identified exclusively with her new master (pp. 1–3).*

Modeled after the Shield of Achilles in the *Iliad* and alluding to the Shield of Heracles by Pseudo-Hesiod (Hardie 1985; Faber 2000), the shield of Aeneas provides great symbolism and purpose by depicting a lengthy ecphrasis of the entire history of Rome from its founding by Romulus through to the future Battle of Actium where Augustus defeated Marc Antony's "unholy alliance" with Cleopatra and her Egyptian forces (Book VIII). The battle on the shield symbolizes the values of Augustan leadership, set against the chaos of Antony and Cleopatra's forces, which "successfully vindicates his claim to be a world-ruler" (Hardie 1985, p. 31). We see the unity of Italians and Romans, households and state all under one man, a vision of order, of virtue and steady leadership. That is, when "Aeneas lifts his shield, he takes upon himself the responsibility for the glory and destiny of his descendants" (Eichholz 1968, p. 105) and evokes: "All these images on Vulcan's shield/His mother's gift, were wonders to Aeneas/Knowing nothing of the events themselves/He felt joy in their pictures, taking up/Upon his shoulder all the destined acts/And fame of his descendants" (Book VIII, Lines 987–992).

In contemporary leadership terms, symbols and rituals can have resonant effects on organizational and cultural development. Symbolic messages are used by individuals to understand their environment and create a social reality (Blumer 1962, 1969; Faules and Alexander 1978; Mills 2002). For example, company logos can communicate across languages and cultures to prospective customers and employees (Aaker 1994). The Coca-Cola, McDonalds or Fedex brand lettering, for example, maintains their identical physical appearance worldwide and provides ubiquitous messaging to customers. Thus, we posit:

P3: Symbols and/or rituals are important to creating a cohesive organizational culture.

1.4.3 Values

1.4.3.1 Integrity

Integrity may be defined as the steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code. Whether through positive reinforcement or negative punishment, the importance of integrity in the form of *pietas* towards the anthropomorphic gods is a central feature of the *Aeneid* (Hahn 1931; Coleman 1982). We know that contemporary Romans valued this kind of integrity. Ovid noted that: "No man can purchase his virtue too

dear. . .Our integrity is never worth so much as when we have parted with our all to keep it" (Ovid 1916, p. 117).

By comparison, Augustus in the *Res Gestae* prominently emphasized his *pietas* by way of adherence to the letter and spirit of collective rule. Of note, he underlines that those who adhere to these traditional values should be admired and rewarded (Earl 1967). For example, he eschewed the offer of absolute power and instead aligned himself with the people and traditional republican values and "in listing these honors he more than once stresses that they were bestowed by the people as well as the senate, and emphasizes that he was unwilling to accept untraditional, i.e. unrepublican, honours and powers" (Brunt and Moore 1967, p. 5). As Augustus wrote:

> *When I had extinguished the flames of civil war, after receiving by universal consent the absolute control of affairs, I transferred the republic from my own control to the will of the senate and the Roman people. . .After that time I took precedence of all in rank, but of power I possessed no more than those who were my colleagues in any magistracy (trans.* Cooley 2009*, p. 98).*

Integrity is likewise central to modern leadership studies, which is viewed as "commitment in action to a morally justifiable set of principles" (Becker 1998, pp. 157–158) and is a prerequisite to transformational leadership. Building on the foundations of transformational leader which takes purposeful action to achieve desirable end-states beyond personal interests and limitations (MacGregor Burns 1978), Parry and Proctor-Thompson (2002) found a positive correlation between perceived integrity and leadership behaviors – or the ability to motivate, encourage and induce people to be aware of how they feel. Similarly, another study of leaders across 62 countries found that integrity-based leadership – defined as just, honest and trustworthy – was a superordinate, universal value (House et al. 2004). That is, beyond a focus on individual behavior and legal compliance, leaders can have a significant effect on organizational performance. As Paine (1994) posits, "an integrity-based approach to ethics management combines a concern for the law with an emphasis on managerial responsibility for ethical behavior. . .and to instill a sense of shared accountability among employees" (p. 106). Thus, we posit:

P4$_1$ Integrity, defined as the steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code, has a significant impact on a leader's ability to transform an organization.

1.4.3.2 Good Judgment

Good judgment, tempered by flexibility and situational awareness, may significantly influence performance (Bowers and Seashore 1966; Tetlock 1992; Tichy and Bennis 2007). The development and transformation of Aeneas is a striking example of a leader being forged by tests of character through a series of judgment calls. What makes the character of Aeneas so compelling and timeless is his struggle to be moral despite missteps, challenges and temptations. For example, in Aeneas' passion for Dido "his sin lies not in his love, but in the abandonment of his god-given mission" (p. 188).

By comparison in the political realm of the *Res Gestae,* Augustus exercises good judgment not to overreach his power and learns from the enmity that his predecessor Julius Caesar injured after becoming *dictator perpetuo* (dictator in perpetuity). For example, Augustus emphasized that while the people and senate bestowed many accolades and titles upon him, he was always unwilling to accept honors and powers that were not in the republican tradition:

> *The dictatorship offered me by the people and the Roman Senate, in my absence and later when present, in the consulship of Marcus Marcellus and Lucius Arruntius I did not accept. . .I freed the entire people, at my own expense, from the fear and danger in which they were. The consulship, either yearly or for life, then offered me I did not accept (trans.* Cooley 2009*, p. 62).*

In modern leadership, organizational success strongly depends on the quality of judgments made by key decision makers (Tichy and Bennis 2010). Good judgment is illustrated through Procter & Gamble CEO A.G. Lafley's appointment of Deb Henretta to lead the baby care segment of operations. This particular segment was struggling, and Lafley made the tough call of bringing in Henretta to turn the division around. The reaction to Henretta's appointment was "almost a revolt" and Lafley had to quickly adjust his approach. He realized that without support from her new colleagues, Henretta was doomed to fail. Therefore, Lafley met with his team to listen to their complaints and explain the reasoning behind his action. As a result, he soothed the opposition and Henretta was able to successfully transform the baby care division (Tichy and Bennis 2007). Thus, we posit:

P4$_2$ Good judgment, tempered by flexibility and situational awareness, significantly influences performance.

1.4.3.3 Leadership by Example

Leadership by example may be defined as the collective actions, decisions and general deportment of leaders (e.g., personal sacrifice, servant leadership). After suffering a great loss of men and material in their opening voyage, Aeneas' first action after landing in Libya was to climb a peak to assess their strategic situation and to benefit the welfare of his people, as well as to reassure them of their safety and secure food:

> *Aeneas climbed one of the peaks*
> *For a long seaward view. . .*
> *He found no ship in sight, but on the shore*
> *Three wandering stags. Behind them whole gerds followed. . .*
> *Next he routed the whole herd. . .*
> *A number equal to his ships. Then back*
> *To port he went and parceled out the game*
> *To his ships' companies (Book I, 256–258; 263–264)*

From a modern leadership perspective, leadership by example plays a powerful role in enhancing the motivation and performance of followers (Bass and Avolio

1993; Hesselbein 2010; Kotter 1990). For example, Gerald Grinstein, former CEO of Delta Airlines, has embodied these principles through selfless dedication to his company. In 2007, he refused over $10 million in compensation promised to him after guiding the airline through bankruptcy. Instead, he contributed the money to Delta scholarships and hardship assistance for employees and their families. This action "almost singlehandedly defused employee resentment and regained employee trust and confidence in Delta management" (Citrin 2009). In other words, leadership by example creates a multiplier effect throughout the organization that significantly strengthens culture, cohesion, and enhances efficiency. Thus, we posit:

P4$_3$ Leadership by Example, defined as the collective actions, decisions and general deportment of leaders (e.g., personal sacrifice), substantially impacts the motivations of followers.

1.4.3.4 Decision-Making

Good decision-making involves the steadfast adherence and support of directives that follow the chain of command, unless requested actions are immoral, illegal or unethical (Kotter 1990; Messick and Bazerman 2001; Trevino 1986). The exercise of effective decision-making in uncertainty faces Aeneas throughout his journey. After great sacrifice and heroism, for example, Aeneas could have dictated peace on his own terms, which would have been more costly to enforce and potentially threaten sustainable administration after successful prosecution of military action. Instead, as Drances recognized "in war there is no salvation" (Book XI, 493); and finally in Book XII Aeneas declares: "If on the hand the day is ours/Let both nations, both unconquered, both/Subject to equal laws, commit themselves/To an eternal union. I shall give/Rituals and gods to both" (Book XII, 252–62).

In modern leadership, the capacity to make and commit to decisions with imperfect information becomes paramount, particularly when faced with time and resource constraints. Leaders must not only assess the consequences of their decisions for all stakeholders involved, but they must also strive to avoid internal biases that affect rational decision-making (Messick and Bazerman 1996). Ultimately, executives must confront the reality that the decisions they make will leave some stakeholders unsatisfied. As Larry Bossidy, CEO, of mutlinational Allied Signal advised: "Decisiveness isn't useful if it isn't timely. People should expect me to make decisions as soon as I have the information I need, and not to be careless or impetuous but to give clear, unambiguous answers" (2007, p. 64). Thus, we posit:

P4$_4$ Decision-Making **involving** the steadfast adherence and support of directives that follow the chain of command, unless requested actions are immoral, illegal or unethical, enables leaders to take action effectively despite time and resource constraints.

1.4.3.5 Trust

Trust is defined as a relationship of reliance between leaders and followers. The presence of trust allows for the full commitment of followers, enables organizational cohesion, and enhances performance. In this case, Aeneas builds trust by showing mercy to those conquered (Book XII, 252–261), as well as his alliance with the Arcadians: "Trust us as we trust you. We have the stamina/For warfare, and have the spirit for it/In difficulties our men have proved themselves" (Book VIII, Lines 201–203). As Cicero (54 BCE) noted:

> *. . .citizens must necessarily enjoy the greatest happiness, being freed from all cares and worries, when once they have entrusted the preservation of their tranquility to others, whose duty it is to guard it vigilantly and never to allow the people to think that their interests are being neglected by their rulers (Cicero 1928, p. 204).*

In modern leadership, trust is crucial in organizations. Mayer et al. (1995) attributed this trend to the emergence of a largely diversified workforce that prevents workers from relying on interpersonal similarities to form working relationships; and the implementation of self-directed work teams which leads to an increase in worker interaction, and a decrease in control and monitoring mechanisms. According to Dirks and Ferrin (2002), elevated levels of trust in an organization's leadership enhances (in order of magnitude) work attitudes, citizenship behaviors, and job performance, which is ultimately linked to worker effectiveness and productivity. Thus, we posit:

P4$_5$ Trust is defined as a relationship of reliance between leaders and followers, and enhances workers attitudes and increases overall organizational productivity.

1.4.3.6 Justice/Fairness

Justice and fairness defined as the perceived level of impartiality and equal treatment is a prerequisite for ensuring maximum effort and sacrifice from followers. The *Aenied* illustrates that committing a nation's treasure and blood takes much more than issuing orders, as King Evander hailed the justification of fighting to restore peace:

> *Saturn came here in flight from Jove in arms*
> *An exile from a kingdom lost; he brought*
> *These unschooled men together from the hills*
> *Where they were scattered, gave them laws*
> *In his reign were the golden centuries*
> *Men tell of still, so peacefully he ruled (Book VIII, Lines 424–428; 430–433)*

Similarly, Augustus in the *Res Gestae* underscores the primary focus of imperial war is peace and security; and that magnanimity and mercy should be extended to conquered peoples whenever possible:

> *Wars, both civil and foreign, I undertook throughout the world, on sea and land, and when victorious I spared all citizens who sued for pardon. The foreign nations which could with safety be pardoned I preferred to save rather than to destroy (trans.* Cooley 2009*, p. 60).*

From a modern leadership perspective, justice has been linked to work commitment, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Moorman et al. 1993).

An organization that benefits from elevated employee perceptions of fairness is Costco. With an average wage of $19 per hour, zero layoffs during the recession, and 86 % of employees receiving healthcare and benefits (though half of the workforce is part-time), there is a strong incentive for employees to reciprocate by remaining productive and loyal to the company. CEO Jim Sinegal explains, "When you hire good people, and you provide good jobs and good wages and a career, good things are going to happen". These good things have translated into a $1.3 billion profit for Costco in fiscal 2008 (Ruggeri 2009).

Thus, we posit:

P4$_6$ Justice/Fairness, defined as the perceived level of fairness in the organization, increases employee job satisfaction and commitment to the organization.

1.4.3.7 Humility

Humility is a lack of arrogance, capacity to listen carefully, and without ego – which strengthens leadership competence and performance (Collins 2001; Tichy and Ulrich 1984). As a leader, Aeneas was "always thoughtful of his men, comforting them when they were downcast, though he is himself steeped in sorrow, or is grieving because of the burning of his boats and the prospective separation of many of his comrades" (Hahn 1931, p. 665). Another illustrative example occurs when Aeneas was sailing from Carthage to Italy to fulfill his destiny. When severe weather threatened their progress, he was warned by Palinurus, a lowly helmsman who called from the high deck that they were in grave danger and needed to change course for Sicily. Instead of fighting the helmsmen's logic and loyal advice, Aeneas reassures: "Change course/Haul yards and sails around. Could any soil/Be more agreeable to me, or any/Where I would moor these tired ships/Than Sicily, home of my Darden friend/Acestes, and the ashes of my father?" (Book V, Lines 35–42).

In modern leadership, the presence of humility is a key factor in transforming a company from good to great. Jeffrey Immelt, CEO, General Electric exemplified this trait in their stumbles during the recession in 2008. Instead of blaming economic conditions for their poor performance, Immelt reflected that the crisis made the multinational giant:

> *Humbler and hungrier. . .I needed to be a better listener coming out of the crisis. I should have done more to anticipate the radical changes that occurred. [I] did things I never thought I would have to do. I'm sure that my board and investors frequently wondered what in the heck I was doing (*Glader 2009*).*

Thus, we posit:

P4$_7$ Humility, defined as the lack of arrogance, capacity to listen carefully, and egolessness, strengthens leadership competence and performance.

1.4.3.8 Sense of Urgency

A sense of urgency is the capacity to instill an immediacy or action-orientation to achieve results (Kotter 1990, 1996; Thomas et al. 2004). As Cicero bluntly observed: "Advice is judged by results, not by intentions" (Cicero 1928, p. 213). A critical theme in the *Aeneid* is that "true courage, not the honors of politics, courage takes by storm that immortality which is denied to me" (McGushin 1964, p. 246): ". . .But by their deeds to make/Their fame last: that is the labor for the brave" (Book X, 653–654).

From a modern leadership lens, establishing a sense of urgency has become an essential component of enacting organizational change in an ever-changing environment. In order for change to occur, employees must be convinced that immediate action is necessary for the benefit of the organization. An example of urgent leadership is shown through the government appointed chief executive of General Motors, Edward Whitacre. Whitacre was charged with the monumental task of returning the company to profitability and repaying billions of dollars in federal bailout money. Zealously, he began cutting and shortening meetings, casting aside stacks of Powerpoint slides, and decentralizing decision-making. He proclaimed, "We need to hurry every chance we get. This is about a turnaround, this is not business as usual. This is about a new GM, a new way of doing business" (Green 2009, p. 1). Thus, we posit:

P4$_8$ Sense of urgency, defined as the capacity to instill a sense of urgency or action-orientation to achieve results, enables a leader to efficiently enact organizational change.

1.5 Conclusion

In juxtaposition to the assertion by some modern leadership experts that contemporary demands, wrought by forces such as globalization and telecommunication, reduces the value of studying the past, this paper examined and presented the relevance of the *Aeneid* to the demands of modern leadership. This study reviewed the *Aeneid,* the foundation work of the Latin cannon, in its historical context, coded the themes of its key leadership lessons, juxtaposed the leadership lessons identified to the demands of modern leadership, and provided implications for practitioners and researchers. Using a social systems approach within the context of values-based leadership, the *Aeneid* was analyzed to juxtapose the resonant leadership elements of vision, culture and values – and their corresponding equivalent Roman themes of *fatum, pietas, and virtus* – relative to the demands of modern leadership.

Leadership Element	Vision	Culture	Values
Roman Theme	*Fatum*	*Pietas*	*Virtus*
Leadership Frameworks	A compelling vision, larger than any individual, is necessary for organizational success and sustainability.	• A founding story is important to communicating and influencing organizational culture. • Symbols and/or rituals are important to creating a cohesive organizational culture	Values are the moral foundation underlying stewardship decisions and actions of leaders, comprised of the following eight elements: • Integrity, • Good judgment, • Leadership by example, • Decision-making, • Trust, • Justice/fairness, • Humility, and • Sense of urgency
Practical Implications	Are we doing the right things?	How do we do things?	Are we doing things right?

Fig. 1.2 Leadership themes and Roman elements, leadership frameworks and practical management implications from the *Aeneid*

First, a compelling vision, larger than any individual, was found to be necessary for organizational success and sustainability in the *Aeneid*, contemporary first century BCE Rome, and modern organizations. Second, nurturing the culture or the prevailing attitudes, beliefs and preferences through multiple approaches, including symbols and rituals, was affirmed to be a critical aspect of organizational leadership that is likewise shared by ancient and modern leaders. Third, the *Aeneid* was coded into the following eight values (seen in relation to the Roman ideal of *virtus*) in order of importance: integrity, good judgment, leadership by example, decision-making, trust, justice/fairness, humility, and sense of urgency. Of note, integrity appears to be the most important, essential and resonant value by far and superordinate – without which the other values are severely lessened in worth. In practical terms, each of these leadership elements and Roman themes can be reduced to three essential management questions: (1) Are we doing the right things (i.e., Do we have the right strategic vision?), (2) How do we do things (i.e., Are we nurturing a cohesive culture?), and (3) Are we doing things right (i.e., Are we abiding to a steadfast set of values which informs decision-making and actions?) A summary of the leadership themes and Roman elements, leadership frameworks and practical management implications from the *Aeneid* are summarized in Fig. 1.2.

In sum, while the *Aeneid* extols prototypical values, the epic also instructs that truly effective leadership is not about being a monochromatic prototype. Rather, the epic reveals that the essence and privilege of effective leadership demands reflection on the dynamic relationship between the leader and the led towards a better,

envisioned future. After two millennia, the *Aenied* continues to hold an abiding interest whether viewed through the lens of a classicist seeking the nature of things, the romanticist drawn to the unknown where the truth is to be found, or the determined leader seeking timeless insight into the human condition amidst the relentless storms of turbulent change.

References

Aaker, D. (1994). Building a brand: The Saturn story. *California Management Review, 36*(2), 114–133.

Accenture. (2001). *The evolving role of executive leadership*. Retrieved from http://www.accenture.com

Auerbach, C. F., & Silverstein, L. B. (2000). *Qualitative data: An introduction to coding and analysis*. New York: NY University Press.

Bagshaw, M. (1995). Liberating the liberal arts through leadership studies: An essay. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, 2*(1), 93–109.

Bass, B., & Avolio, B. (1993). Transformational leadership and organizational culture. *Public Administration Quarterly, 17*(1), 112–121.

Bass, B. M., & Steidlmeier, P. (1999). Ethics, character, and the authentic transformational leadership behavior. *The Leadership Quarterly, 10*(2), 181–217.

Becker, T. (1998). Integrity in organizations: Beyond honesty and conscientiousness. *The Academy of Management Review, 23*(1), 154–161.

Bell, A. J. E. (1999). The popular poetics and politics of the Aeneid. *Transactions of the American Philological Association, 129*, 263–279.

Berg, B. L. (1995). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Bloom, H. (2001). A Conversation with literary critic Harold Bloom. *Harvard Business Review, 79* (5), pp. 63–68.

Blumer, H. (1962). Society as symbolic interaction. In A. M. Rose (Ed.), *Human behavior and social process: An interactionist approach*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bossidy, L. (2007). What your leader expects of you and what you should expect in return. *Harvard Business Review, 85*(4), 58–65.

Bowers, D. G., & Seashore, S. (1966). Predicting organizational effectiveness with a four-factor theory of leadership. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 11*(2), 38–263.

Bowra, C. M. (1933). Aeneas and the stoic ideal. *Greece and Rome, 3*, 8–21.

Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*, 77–102.

Brunt, P. A., & Moore, J. M. (1967). *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: The achievements of the divine Augustus*. London: Oxford Press.

Buchko, A. A. (2007). The effect of leadership on values-based management. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *28*(1), 36–50.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.

Burns, J. M. (1995). Transactional and transforming leadership. In J. T. Wren (Ed.), *The leader's companion* (pp. 100–101). New York: The Free Press.

Cairns, F. (1989). *Virgil's Augustan epic*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Cicero. (1928). *On the Republic (54 BCE)* and *On the Laws (52 BCE)* (trans: Keyes C.W.). Suffolk: St. Edmundsury Press.

Citrin, J. (2009) Apr. 10. Learning from great leaders. *Yahoo! Finance*. Retrieved from http://finance.yahoo.com
Ciulla, J. (1998). Leadership ethics: Mapping the territory. In J. Cillua (Ed.), *Ethics, the heart of leadership* (pp. 3–24). Westport: Quorum Books.
Coleman, R. (1982). The gods in the Aeneid. *Greece and Rome, 29*(2), 143–168.
Collins, J. (2001). Level 5 leadership. *Harvard Business Review, 79*(1), 66–76.
Collins, J., & Porras, J. (1996). Building your company's vision. *Harvard Business Review, 74*(4), 65–77.
Conchie, B. (2004). The demands of executive leadership. *The Gallup Management Journal*. Retrieved from http://gmj.gallup.com
Cooley, A. (2009). *Res Gestae divi Augusti*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Crabtree, B., & Miller, W. (1999). A template approach to text analysis: Developing and using codebooks. In B. Crabtree & W. Miller (Eds.), *Doing qualitative research* (pp. 163–177). Newbury Park: Sage.
Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
Dirks, K. T., & Ferrin, D. L. (2002). Trust in leadership: Meta-analytic findings and implications for research and practice. *The Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*(4), 611–628.
Earl, D. (1967). *The moral and political tradition of Rome*. New York: Cornell University Press.
Edwards, M. W. (1960). The expression of stoic ideas in the Aeneid. *Phoenix, 14*(3), 151–165.
Eichholz, D. E. (1968). Symbol and contrast in the Aeneid. *Greece & Rome*, *15*(2), 105–112.
Faber, R. (2000). Vergil's 'Shield of Aeneas' and the "Shield of Heracles". *Mnemosyne, 53*(1), 49–57.
Faules, D. F., & Alexander, D. C. (1978). *Communication and social behavior: A symbolic interaction perspective*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.
Fuhrer, T. (1989). Aeneas: A study in character development. *Greece and Rome, 36*(1), 63–72.
Gale, M. R. (1997). The shield of Turnus. *Greece and Rome, 44*(2), 176–196.
Galinsky, K. (1996). *August culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Garaventa, E. (1998). Shakespeare's Henry V: Fifteenth century Monarch, twentieth century leader. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, 4*(3), 162–171.
Gardner, J. (1995). The cry for leadership. In J. T. Wren (Ed.), *The leader's companion* (pp. 3–7). New York: The Free Press.
Garg, G., & Krishnan, V. R. (2003). Transformational leadership and organizational structure: The role of value-based leadership. In S. Bhargava (Ed.), *Transformational leadership: Value-based management for Indian organizations* (pp. 82–100). New Delhi: Sage.
Glader, P. (2009). December 14. GE's Immelt to cite lessons learned. *The Wall Street Journal*. p. B2.
Gouillart, F., & Kelly, J. (1995). *Transforming the organization*. New York: McGraw Hill.
Green, J. (2009). November 11. Whitacre, critical of GM change pace, pressures CEO. *Bloomberg*. Retrieved from http://www.bloomberg.com
Hahn, E. A. (1931). Pietas versus violentia in the Aeneid. *The Classical Weekly, 25*(2), 9–13.
Hammond, M. (1933). *The Augustan principate in theory and practice during the Julio-Claudian period*. New York: Russell & Russell.
Hardie, P. R. (1985). Imago mundi: Cosmological and ideological aspects of the shield of Achilles. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies, 105*, 11–31.
Hesselbein, F. (2010). Leadership by example. *Leader to Leader, 59*, 4–7. Winter.
Holland, R. (2004). *Augustus: Godfather of Europe*. Gloucestershire: Sutton.
House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (2004). *Culture, leadership, and organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 societies: Global leadership and organizational behavior effectiveness research program*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
Kay, J. (1995). *Why firms succeed*. London: Oxford University Press.
Khilji, S., Davis, E., & Cseh, M. (2010). Building competitive advantage in a global environment: Leadership and the mindset. In T. Devinney, T. Pedersen, & L. Tihanyi (Eds.), *The past,*

present and future of international business & management (Advances in international management, Vol. 23, pp. 353–373). Bingley: Emerald Group.
Korfmacher, W. C. (1956). Vergil, spokesman for the Augustan reforms. *The Classical Journal, 51*(7), 329–334.
Kotter, J. (1990). *A force for change: How leadership differs from management*. New York: The Free Press.
Kotter, J. (1996). *Leading change*. Boston: Free Press.
Leebaert, D. (2006). *To dare & conquer*. New York: Little, Brown & Co.
MacKay, L. A. (1963). Hero and theme in the Aeneid. *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, 94*, 157–166.
Majer, K. (2005). Values-based leadership: A revolutionary approach to business success and personal prosperity. *Journal of Business Ethics and Organization Studies, 10*(1), 42–43.
Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1989). *Designing qualitative research*. Newbury Park: Sage.
Martin, A., & Ernst, C. (2005). Exploring leadership in times of paradox and complexity. *Corporate Governance, 5*(3), 82–94.
Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interpretive approach*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., & Schoorman, F. D. (1995). An integrative model of organizational trust. *The Academy of Management Review, 20*(3), 709–734.
McGushin, P. (1964). Virgil and the spirit of endurance. *American Journal of Philology, 85*(3), 225–253.
Messick, D. M., & Bazerman, M. H. (1996). Ethical leadership and the psychology of decision making. *Sloan Management Review, 37*(2), 9–22.
Messick, D., & Bazerman, M. (2001). Ethical leadership and the psychology of decision making. *Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations, 3*, 213–238.
Miller, F. J. (1928). Vergil's motivation of the Aeneid. *The Classical Journal, 24*(1), 28–44.
Mills, C. (2002). The hidden dimension of blue-collar sense-making about workplace communication. *Journal of Business Communication, 39*(1), 288–313.
Moerk, E. L. (1998). From war-hero to villain: Reversal of the symbolic value of war and a warrior king. *Journal of Peace Research, 35*(4), 453–469.
Moorman, R. H., Niehoff, B. P., & Organ, D. W. (1993). Treating employees fairly and organizational citizenship behavior: Sorting the effects of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and procedural justice. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal, 6*, 209–225.
Morwood, J. (1991). Aeneas, Augustus, and the theme of the city. *Greece & Rome*, *38*(2), 212–223.
Moss Reimers, J., & Barbuto, J. E. (2002). A framework exploring the effects of the Machiavellian disposition on the relationship between motivation and influence tactics. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, 9*(2), 29–41.
O'Toole, J. (1995). *The executive's compass: Business and the good society*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
Ovid. (1916). *Metamorphoses* (trans: Miller, F.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Paine, L. S. (1994). Managing for organizational integrity. *Harvard Business Review, 72*(2), 106–117.
Parry, K. W., & Proctor-Thomson, S. B. (2002). Perceived integrity of transformational leaders in organizational settings. *Journal of Business Ethics, 35*(2), 75–96.
Quint, D. (1989). Epic and empire. *Comparative Literature, 41*(1), 1–32.
Richmond, J. A. (1976). Symbolism in Virgil: Skeleton key or will-o'-the-wisp? *Greece and Rome, 23*(2), 142–158.
Ruggeri, A. (2009). Jim Senergal: Costco CEO focuses on employees. US New & World Report. Retreived from http://www.usnews.com.
Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art & practice of the learning organization*. New York: Double Day.

Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analysing talk, text and interaction*. London: Sage.
Smiley, P. O. R. (1948). In the steps of Aeneas. *Greece and Rome, 17*(51), 97–103.
Tetenbaum, T. J. (1999). Beating the odds of merger and acquisition failure: Seven key practices that improve the chance for expected integration and synergies. *Organizational Dynamics*, *28*(2), 22–36.
Tetlock, P. E. (1992). Good judgment in international politics: Three psychological perspectives. *Political Psychology, 13*(3), 517–539.
Thomas, D. (1993). *Business sense: Exercising management's five freedoms*. New York: Free Press.
Thomas, T., Schermerhorn, J., & Dienhart, J. W. (2004). Strategic leadership of ethical behavior in business. *The Academy of Management Executive, 18*(2), 56–66.
Tichy, N. & Bennis, W. (2007). Making the tough call. *Inc*, *29*, 36–38.
Tichy, N., & Bennis, W. (2010). Wise judgment. *Leadership Excellence, 27*(5), 5–6.
Tichy, N. M., & Ulrich, D. O. (1984). The leadership challenge–A call for the transformational leader. *Sloan Management Review, 26*, 59–58.
Toll, K. (1997). Making Roman-Ness and the "Aeneid". *Classical Antiquity, 16*(1), 34–56.
Trevino, L. K. (1986). Ethical decision making in organizations: A person-situation interactionist model. *The Academy of Management Review, 11*(3), 601–617.
Van Lee, R., Fabish, L., & McGaw, N. (2005). The value of corporate values. *Strategy Business, 39*, 1–14.
Virgil (1983). *The Aeneid*. (R. Fitzgerald, Trans.). New York: Random House. (Original work published c. 20 BCE).
West, D. (1994). In the wake of Aeneas. *Greece and Rome, 41*(1), 57–61.
Whyte, D. (1994). *The heart aroused*. New York: Random House.
Wilson, J. R. (1969). Action and emotion in Aeneas. *Greece and Rome, 16*(1), 67–75.