Aeneid Essay, Research Paper

The Greek and Roman spirit influenced the book Aeneid in many ways. Virgil made Aeneas’ behavior such that he was fully qualified to be called a Roman hero. Aeneas reflected very few Greek traits. He was very much the “Roman hero.”Greek heroes were very different from Roman heroes. Will Durant, author of Caesar and Christ says, “It (the Aeneid) would also show the role of Roman character in these achievements and seek to make ancient virtues popular, it would picture its hero as reverent of the gods and guided by them and would fall in as Augusta reformation of morals and faith” (239).Greek heroes were well rounded. Greeks would study music, dancing, rhetoric, philosophy, mathematics, physical training, and military science. Studying rhetoric, philosophy, and mathematics made Greeks more useful citizens. The Greeks two main beliefs were: know thyself, and nothing in excess. Greeks strove for arete`. According to Hastings “arete` is excellence”. Roman heroes were considered great because of their achievements on the battle field. Even though the Roman and Greek minds are greatly different they have a few similarities. Both the Romans and Greeks had 1polis. They did, however, have different definitions of home. The one thing remains constant is that they would both risk their lives to reach home. Aeneas had to risk his life to journey from Troy to reach Italy where Rome was established. To the Romans, the state had to be placed above ones needs. The Greek definition of home is more family. Both the Roman and the Greeks respected and feared their gods. Aeneas had gods helping and hindering him. The goddess Juno was Aeneas’ enemy. Juno often interfered with Aeneas’ life. Juno tried to prevent Aeneas from reaching his goal. Aeneas’ goal was to establish Rome. The Greeks believed that anything that was pointless was like punishment. Like the Greeks, the Romans could see little sense in doing something that had no definite conclusion.As said before, Greeks had a strong dedication to their city-state. Aeneas had to reach Italy where Rome was established. Greeks believed in nothing in excess. This is shown in the Aeneid when Aeneas and his crew landed on the island, they found a Greek who was accidentally left behind. Instead of killing him, Aeneas treated him fairly. Aeneas showed self-control.Romans preferred war. It was in their nature to fight. They were raised to battle. Romans were not well rounded, their main or only study growing up was physical training and military science. Aeneas was very much Roman in this way. Aeneas was very skilled on the battle field. Unlike a Greek hero, a Roman hero could not be overcome by emotion or lack of self-control. Aeneas lost his best friend, Pallas, during the war to the enemy, Turnus. However, he was not overcome by thoughts of revenge as he continued fighting (Harris, 291). He tried to call a truce and he offered to conclude the war by challenging Turnus. He did not make this offer because Turnus killed Pallas, but because Turnus started the war.Roman spirit was the major influence of the Aeneid. Unlike the Greek heroes, Aeneas did not let is emotions interfere with his goals. This trait helped him to accomplish his goal even though Aeneas did not get to see Rome after all his sacrifices.