Form speaks: 
Imagery and politics in the Aeneid

- We will unpick a few lines from Aeneid 10

- We will connect with passages from Aeneid 8 (mainly), 3, and 2

- We will be reminded of the intricate webs of interconnected images with which Virgil offered his subtle messages

- Subtle humanity and hesitation walking hand in hand with the proud, patriotic messages of future (and past) glory

- So, we will finish with … ‘a question mark and not a full stop’, mindful of the multiple messages woven in the fabric of the epic
The return of the leader

Aeneid, 10

- [With Aeneas absent, a big assault by the Latins in Aeneid 9 has almost brought the destruction of the Trojan camp.]
- Aeneas sails down the Tiber returning from his visit to Pallanteum (Aeneid 8),
- having made an alliance with king Evander,
- He brings re-inforcements (a mix of local, Etruscan, even Greek troops)
- Next to him stands young Pallas, Evander’s own son.
Aeneas reaching the Trojan camp: Aeneid 10. 260ff

- *Iamque in conspectu Teucros habet et sua castra* 260
  *stans celsa in puppi*, *clipeum cum deinde sinistra extulit ardentem. clamorem ad sidera tollunt Dardanidae e muris, spes addita suscitat iras, tela manu iaciunt,*

- Now, standing on the high stern, he held the Trojans and his fort in view, and at once lifted high the blazing shield, in his left hand.
  The Trojans on the walls raised a shout to the sky, new hope freshened their fury

[All translations are from www.poetryintranslation.com (A.S. Kline) with some changes]
There is a good leader
Anchises, leaving Buthrotum and Andromache, Aeneid 3

Then my father Anchises took up a large bowl, filled it with wine, and standing in the high stern, called to the heavens:
And the best one (Aeneid 8): Augustus on the shield

in medio classis aeratas, Actia bella,
cernere erat, ....

8. 675

... hinc Augustus agens Italos in proelia Caesar
cum patribus populoque, penatibus et magnis dis,
**stans celsa in puppi**, geminas cui tempora flammamas
laeta vomunt patriumque aperitur vertice sidus.

8. 680

In the centre bronze ships could be seen, the Battle of Actium,
....

On one side Augustus Caesar stands on the high stern,
leading the Italians to the conflict, with him the Senate,
the People, the household gods, the great gods, his happy brow
shoots out twin flames, and his father's star is shown on his head.
Aeneas and Augustus united in joyful luminescence

Augustus on the shield (Aeneid 8)

stans celsa in puppi, geminas cui tempora flammatis 
laeta vomunt patriumque aperitur vertice sidus.

[Augustus Caesar] stands on the high stern, his happy brow 
shoots out twin flames, and his father’s star is shown on his head.

Aeneas returning from Evander’s Pallantium (Aeneid 10)

ardet apex capiti cristiisque a vertice flamma 
funditur

[Aeneas’s] top of the head blazes, and a flame streams from the crested top
See, the floaty crest at the top of Iulus’s head seemed to pour out light and a soft flame, harmless in its touch, licked at his hair … Terrified, [we start] to tremble with fear, … But Anchises, my father, lifts his eyes to the heavens, in delight, … ‘now give us help, Father, and confirm your present omen’.
But can light turn sinister?

Back with a returning Aeneas (Aeneid 10)

et vastos umbo vomit aureus ignis:

non secus ac liquida si quando nocte cometae
sanguinei lugubre rubent, aut Sirius ardor
ille sitim morbosque ferens mortalibus aegris
nascitur et laevo contristat lumine caelum.

and the shield's gold boss spouted floods of fire:

Not otherwise than when comets glow, blood-red and ominously in
the clear night, or when fiery Sirius, bringer of drought and plague
to frail mortals, rises and saddens the sky with unfavourable light.
The fumes of fury
Cacus and Hercules, Aeneid 8

Raging Cacus trapped in the cave

ille autem, … 8. 251
faucibus ingentem fumum (mirabile dictu)
evomit involvitque domum caligine caeca
prospectum eripiens oculis, glomeratque sub antro
fumiferam noctem commixtis igne tenebris. 8.255

[Cacus] … belched thick smoke from his throat
(marvellous to tell) and enveloped the place in blind darkness,
blotting the view from sight, and gathering
smoke-laden night in the cave, a darkness mixed with fire.
Fire is might.

Aeneas and Augustus: figures of righteous might.

Enemies will be defeated and Roman imperium will prevail.

Fire is also terrible: cf. Venus delivering to Aeneas ‘a terrifying helmet spewing flames from the crest’: terribilem cristis galeam flammamasque vomentem 8. 620

So might too close to fury too (remember Cacus?).

Aeneas and Augustus engulfed in the fire of war:

- Exalted, elevated, isolated, terrifying.
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