

**ELEVENTH SESSION****Roman Studies****Maria do Rosário Monteiro**

CHAM, FCSH, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Portugal

**TITLE****Virgil and Le Guin; the dead poet and the silent Lavinia****KEYWORDS**

Ursula Le Guin, Virgil, Lavinia, Eneid, Empire, Fantasy, Gender, Antiquity reception

**ABSTRACT**

In this paper, I will try to analyse the direct and indirect influences of Virgil's *Eneide* on Ursula Le Guin's *Lavinia*. Le Guin states her fascination for Virgil to the point of learning Latin, in her mid-fifties, in order to read Virgil's epic in the original language. From this work she recreates a dying poet, making him a main character, a guide to lead the silent Lavinia on the path to understanding the new world that was about to be born and whose creation would rest on the shoulders of this silent Latin girl. Through the leading female character, Ursula Le Guin recreates Virgil epic from the point of view of a girl/woman, that has to deal with a new invading culture, adjust to it without losing her identity as a Latin. However, she as also to understand that she has a key role to play that will determine the Latium destiny in the following centuries.

The constant deliberate intertextuality produces an exceptional example of Roman Antiquity reception by a contemporary writer who mixes mainstream literature and fantasy in a unique, innovative and poetic novel that defies definitions.