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Welcome, everybody to the podcast series Acient world new voices. Each episode discusses the research of a postgraduate student on an exciting aspect of the Ancient world, brought to you by Mateen Arghandapour, Giovanna DiMartino and Sofia Bongiovanni, I have here with me, Melissa Pires de Silva, welcome. She, she's a PhD student at UCL. And as completed the MA in classical reception at UCL, and a BA in English literature of Warwick. She is also one of the Lyceum seminar co chairs along myself, and so, welcome. Let's start with our discussion. Thank you. It's our pleasure. So first question I wanted to ask you is of course, what are you working on in your PhD thesis? Yes, so

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my thesis is actually a reception study of human virtues epics, which means that I am specifically looking at a theme and analyzing how it has been received. The theme I am looking at is family and how it has been received by Herrmann Paul, a 20th century German writer, and by zhangjiajie, a 20th century French writer. So the words that I'm analyzing, specifically the death of Virgil bipoc, and the Trojan War will take place and how they work with Homer and Virgil's depiction of family. Well, that

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sounds very interesting. Can you tell me a little bit more about two works by the the French and German authors, so about the death of bergeaud and the Trojan War would not take place?

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Yes, of course. So, let me start perhaps with Herrmann, Boss work, come on boss work is a reception piece written about Virgil. So urges immediate, more specifically, I'd say. It actually narrates the last hours of Virgil's life, he arrives at the port of palm museum. And that's actually where the action to election takes place. He's very ill. And the novel actually simply recounts the last hours of his life and how he's struggling with his illness and how he's also struggling with his piece that he's been writing, which is the need and he is actually battling his writing because Augustus, the Emperor, asked him to write the vignette. But now that he's back in realism, and actually sees the people, he sees that there is a big discrepancy between the population he describes in his book and the actual, rather corrupt and really poor population that he sees in real society. So yeah, it's basically about the last hours of Virgil's life. Whereas john shadows play, the Trojan War will not take place is kind of more such a piece of Homer, I argue, cuz the title already, the Trojan War will not take place as some kind of statement or an answer he makes to Homer who recounts the Trojan War. So Homer narrates the last year of the Trojan War, and it's ending, it's the normal, and Giorgio Badu sort of positions himself before Homer. And he shows us a scenario where the Trojan War is kind of impending, but where characters try to stop it. So we have Hector, and Paris as the two main figures of these play it, but also their family. We have the parents we have prime we have Hecuba. And we have also Cassandra, the sister of both Hector and Paris, and we have two camps. We are Paris's camp, who wants to actually wants this What happened? Who wants to continue, like with the current situation where the Greeks and the T is only furthered and Hector, on the other hand, he wants to stop the Trojan War. So it's all about conflicting political standpoints.

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Oh, well. Oh, interesting. It makes me want to read them. Great. So I wanted to ask you in relation to those two pieces, first to tell us a little bit more about Virgil, the author and about his, his work in it, and then move on to Alma and Delia.

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Okay, so Berto is an ancient Roman poet, he lived from 70 bc to 19 BC. He is a writer from the augustan period. So he wrote under the Emperor Augustus, which is very important, I am focusing on the need, because one part is kind of responding back to the need, but he also wrote the clocks and the georgics. Those pens also very major pieces from him. What is important about Virgil as a writer is this whole debate about him writing the vignette as kind of almost a propaganda texts or not. So the propagandists tendencies in the image are very much debated still today. So and that is very important, because politics plays also a big role in how unbox novel, since we have Virgil writing the need, but also struggling with the whole writing process, because focus has asked him to write it but he is almost reticent, not all of us here is really reticent to write the actual book when he sees that it does not correspond to the society to the real society, he's trying to depict. So just to give a little bit of info also on Augustus, Augustus, his reign as the period where he also lived. So Augustus was the first Roman Emperor, he rose from 2077 bc to 1480. And it's actually a very interesting and ambivalent figure because he restored the, the Republic, right, but a republic normally is a system where the supreme power is held by the people, and the representatives elected by the people. But we also know that Augustus was a very influential Chief, who had a lot to say about the representatives that were elected. So, especially in case in the case of the appointments to the console ships, for example, he had a lot of influence in this area. So he is a very ambivalent political figure. And that's really important for him. And this idea of having a political ideal and writing about a political ideal in the media, but also like having a social reality that is corrupt. So yeah, that's for virtual and his context.

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Can you tell me about what happens Indian?

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Yes, of course. So the lineage checks itself, is about in Yes, the main protagonist, we have the book opening with India's experiencing the fall of Troy. So the Trojan War against the Greeks has ended, and Troy is in flames. So what he is has to do at this moment is just clean cast escape, or try to escape with his family, his father, his son, his mother, his wife, unfortunately, does not manage to rescue all of them. But he does manage to sail away with his companions and his family. And his aim is to Well, he is destined to sail to Italy, and found Rome there, because his mission is a cultural mission, he has to found the new Rome to enable the Trojan line to be further developed to continue and not to become extinct. So that is his mission. And the image is similarly structured. If we have Yeah, if we look at it a bit more closely, because it has a similar structure as the Odyssey, because it is about journeying. So in Yes, just like this, yes, experiences a lot of petit britania. The need is structured in a similar way, as the Odyssey because it's about journeying in, yes, has to create a new home for the children line, but he encounters a lot of difficulties on his way. So for example, when he sets out to Italy, he lands at first in Carthage where you need to Dido, and there, he meets this woman whom he actually almost falls in love with. And that is a big problem, because his destiny is to found Rome and to eventually marry Lavinia who is latinus his daughter, and that will enable him to found them, but when he encounters Dido, he already develops a love relationship. So we can see that it's all about journeying and about encountering many problems and having to overcome this problems to fulfill one's destiny, one's political, cultural destiny, just like in the Odyssey as well, where this has to overcome a lot of dangers at sea to eventually come back home and fulfill his journey.

10:19

Thank you very much that gives really good insight into how Brock took character of Virgil into his work. And now can you tell me for your book about oma The Iliad, more in specific?

10:38

Yes. So yeah, so Homer, an ancient Greek poet, right from the eighth century BC, he wrote the Iliad and the Odyssey, which are considered to be foundational works for Western civilization. They are written in dactylic hexameter. And they use very archaic language. The Iliad is very interesting, because it's about the 10th and last year of the Trojan War, and we have one major character, his Achilles, and he actually does not want to fight that war, he doesn't really find a purpose in fighting with his fellow Greeks, because he is offended by the leader of the Greeks, Agamemnon. So the chief, they are in a very long and like, yeah, important conflict with one another, because Agamemnon stole Achilles, his war price, which is actually a woman received. So there's a lot of conflict between them. And Achilles, therefore, doesn't want to fight this war with Agamemnon. So we have the story recounted in this way, it starts with that main figure Achilles. But then eventually, I don't want to well, spoiler alert, eventually, he does. Get back into the fight, because he feels like it is his moment to fight now, he has friend patroclus has been killed. So that incites a new rage in him, and incite him to fight for His glory as a Greek hero, and he goes and kills Hector at the end. So that's the Iliad. And yeah, what is very important is that both Homer and Virgil are considered to be foundational works of Western civilization. So that's partly also reason why I'm on both. And God, we're so invested in these texts, I think, especially in moments like lightning 35, which was the moment where she will do wrote his play, and 1945, which is the moment where Alan Bach wrote his novel, since we are in complex war

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as well.

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That is, that is a very interesting connection. Thank you. Great, thank you for laying the grounds of these works. In your introduction, they'll be about how you're focusing on the theme of family. And you tell me more about that. How is that involved? In your research?

13:12

Yes, so I basically divide my thesis into three thematic chapters. So in the first analyze the social political meaning of family, in Houma, and geotools, reception of home, then in the second chapter, I focus on the cultural stakes of family and Virgil, this time and Bob's reception of Virgil. And then the third chapter, I analyzed another meaning of family and other significance of family, which is the abstract philosophical meaning of family in both shoulders and pocks perceptions. So here, I bring the two modern authors together in the last chapter. So to clarify what that actually means, why am I looking at these three different meanings of family? Well, I think that family is a very tricky idea, because of course, we have our modern understanding of family and the ancients did not have that same corresponding definition of family as we have. But I do think that family is a valid idea. That is important. And that can also mean a lot of things for the ancients. In my thesis, I focus on three definitions and meanings of family that to me are striking in home and Virgil, as well as in their receptions by shoe and ball. First Family is a social and political unit. So what does that mean? I argue that family is basically a community, which always has individuals who form one collective. The collective is very social and political, in Houma, and also in general. What is important to me is that the individual is embedded in that community. Excellent criticism tends to kind of separate the individual Homeric hero from the community he is living in, be it the domestic community, or the social community or the politics. But what I tried to do is to bring them back together and to see how their interaction really ties them together. Yes. So that is the first analysis of family that I'm trying to bring forward is that family is a community and a community of interactions. The second meaning of family is that it's a vehicle for culture. What does that mean? Well, I think that family helps transmit cultural values. And at the same time, it also helps us problematize the transmission of culture, because we ask ourselves, what do we have to pass on? Or what do we want to pass on from our cultural past, to the present and future generations. And family plays a very important role in that, because it's often the elder generations which pass on cultural knowledge to the present and future ones. The third dimension of family, which I'm analyzing Lastly, is the metaphysical, philosophical notions that family brings with it, because family is a human reference point which all human beings have in common. So I think that family is a very important reference point for asking metaphysical questions like, where does man belong? Where does man comes from? So yeah, it has a lot to do with the different layers of family, and also the different layers of identity to social cultural, part of identity, the human part of identity, the philosophical part of identity. Yeah. So given these three meanings of family that I find in Homer, Virgil and their 20th century receptions, I argue that family becomes a very important analytical tool in the study of ancient texts and their modern receptions, because it helps us unwrap both ancient and modern workings of politics, culture and philosophy.

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Well, thank you so much for this explanation. You research songs, truly foundational. To this you're looking at. And in relation to that, since is a fundamental part of your work and what you're doing. wanted to ask you more about reception? How does one go about reception? What is it? What What does it mean for you? And your work? Yes,

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so um, reception is, well, the entire methodology that I'm trying to apply in my thesis, and it's really about analyzing, for example, a modern texts, as she would lose the Trojan War, not a place or how unbox the death of Virgil, and looking at how they respond to ancient material that they might be, indirectly or directly referring to. So how do they position themselves as responses or as, yeah, as responses to those ancient texts? So what do they say about ancient texts? But also, how do they incorporate elements of those ancient texts to create something maybe different, maybe entirely new, or maybe something similar? So it's a lot about imitation, but also a lot about reappropriation. And answering back. And the idea of reappropriation is very sensible to the context of the modern work. So the modern work has to be situated in its period of time. So for children 1935 for both 1945 and we have to consider why these authors would go back to ancient texts like Homer's and Virgil's at those specific moments in time in time. So what are the points that they have in common? What are the points of interest that they could find?

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Oh, well, thank you. Thank you for shedding light on reception. Thank you, Melissa, for coming on talking about your research. And, yes, my pleasure. Thank you so much for having me. Thank you for listening to this episode of ancient world new voices, you can drop your comments in the feedback form on the podcast web page. We look forward to welcoming you back for the next episode in a month's time. You can find more information about this podcast guest speakers, hosts and materials. UCL department of Greek and lodging website at h TTP s colon double slash www.ucl.ac.uk slash classics slash ancient darsh world that new voices dosh podcast I'm going to stop