

**Eighteenth Century Representation of Collective Identity in Tuscany –  
Content Analysis of Traveller Testimonies about England,**

Master's Thesis, Prague, Catania, Budapest 2014, 120 p.

**Oldřiška Prokopová**

The presented thesis focused on the representation of collective identification in travelogues of the eighteenth century. The studied cases are Italian/Tuscan travelers to England. The hypothesis is based on expectation that in the period of awakening national sentiments and nation building movement the travelers construct an image of the country on the basis of seen and visited places, on the basis of previously read images created by their predecessors. In their writings they express their own identification with a larger collectivity, while they discover and describe the visited country. The question is what constitutes the larger collectivity? Is it their native city, the region, or the emerging modern nation? The thesis is organized into three parts. The first part explains the theoretical background in the identity research, the concept of anglophilia (anglomania) in Tuscany of the period, and contents and semiotic analysis of travelogues. The second part is focused on the analysis of the travelogue of Luigi Angiolini and his thematization of English otherness. The third part takes on board yet five other Tuscan travelers and through their analysis and comparison the author attempts to understand the strategies of othering, and forms of identification.

The choice of the focus is very interesting, as the usual optics of the study of the grand tour is reversed – it is not the grand tour of a British aristocrat to Italy, but of an Italian (Tuscan) to England. This perspective has so far very much stayed out of the spotlight.

The interest of Oldřiška Prokopová derived from her previous study, which devoted to the analysis of diplomatic correspondence of Luigi Angiolini. Then she met his travelogue, and became inspired for her master's thesis. During the research she has extended the corpus of texts by five other Tuscan travelers. The travelogue of Angiolini

was however very exceptional, that is the reason, why a specific format of asymmetric comparison was chosen. The author works with imagination with the concept of construction of space through its use by M. De Certeau and K. Lynch, when exploring the places where Italians met in London, the countryside they saw, the landscape they appreciated, and the concept of Englishness they drew out of their experience. The second thread is build on the appreciation of the political organization of British society, and social life.

The research was carried within the Master's program Erasmus Mundus, while the student completed one semester at the University of Catania and one at Eötvös Lorand University in Budapest. Both stays played important role - in Italy she focused on assembling the corpus of texts and travelogues, while in Budapest she worked on her theoretical chapter and profited from the excellent library at CEU. I was very pleased by her performance. Oldřiška was very well organized, independent in search of sources and literature. She did not lose dynamics, always kept in touch with supervisor, while she had to change universities. During the two years Oldřiška professionally matured, perfected in writing in English. The resulting text is precisely formulated, readable. The work is sophisticated, methodologically solid and very interesting. Oldřiška Prokopova has presented an original piece of research which goes beyond the requirements. I strongly recommend it for successful defense. I am even convinced that it can be recommended as a rigorous work. I propose to grade it A in ECTS scale (výborně in Czech grading, 30+ in Italian).

Prague, 31.8. 2014

Prof. PhDr. Luďa Klusáková, CSc.