

TALLINNA ÜLIKOO
HUMANITAARTEADUSTE DISSERTATSIOONID

TALLINN UNIVERSITY
DISSERTATIONS ON HUMANITIES

21

Anneli Kõvamees

**ITALY IN ESTONIAN TRAVELOGUES:
“ITALIAN CAPRICCIO” BY KARL RISTIKIVI
AND “MADONNA WITH A PLASTIC HEART”
BY AIMÉE BEEKMAN**

Abstract

 **TLÜ KIRJASTUS**

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Abstract

Institute of Estonian Language and Culture, Tallinn University, Tallinn, Estonia.

The dissertation is accepted for the commencement of the degree of Doctor philosophiae in literary studies by the Doctoral Committee of Humanities of Tallinn University.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

- I. Anneli Kõvamees 2006. Reiskirjandusest ja imagoloogiast. – *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 8, 656–668.
- II. Anneli Kõvamees 2005. Karl Ristikivi reiskiri “Itaalia capriccio”. – *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 11, 901–912.

INTRODUCTION

The PhD thesis “Italy in Estonian Travelogues: “Italian Capriccio” by Karl Ristikivi and “Madonna with a Plastic Heart” by Aimée Beekman” is the first deeper insight into the rather unknown imagology in Estonian literary landscape. Additionally another rather poorly researched genre in Estonia – a travelogue – has been dealt with and some clarification into the vague terminology was attempted to bring with the present thesis. For the first time there have been researched Italian travelogues by Estonian authors.

The PhD thesis has set the aim to research the depiction of Italy on the basis of imagology in the travelogues “Italian Capriccio” (1958) and “Madonna with a Plastic Heart” (1963) by Estonian writers Karl Ristikivi (1912–1977), who lived in Sweden and Aimée Beekman (born 1933), who lived in Soviet Estonia. The travelogues are linked by their timeline context, as they belong to the same era. This fact enables to demonstrate how Italy has been depicted in different ways – at the same epoch, but under different ideological conditions.

The thesis consists of three chapters: the chapter discussing imagology, a travelogue in general and Estonian travelogue, and the chapter concentrating on travelogues of Italy by Estonian authors, which is followed by the analysis of “Italian Capriccio” and “Madonna with a Plastic Heart”.

1. THEORY

The methodological basis for the thesis is imagology (or image studies), which deals with the research of national images and their manifestations in literature. One of the most important principles is that in research of the countries and the people there is no aim to make clear, whether the very thing claimed by the author in the text could correspond to the reality or not. “There is no saying how such-and-such a nation ‘really’ is, one can only study what other people have said upon that subject” (Leerssen 1991: 128). The emphasis lies on the question how and why the authors use the national stereotypes, which texts have influenced them on it, whether they use the stereotype in an ironical or a serious way, etc (Moyle 2004: 11). At the same time as the verbal text is under attention, the historical context is also considered.

One of the basic terms in imagology is image: “The mental or discursive representation or reputation of a person, group, ethnicity or ‘nation’. [---] A fundamental distinction is the one between *auto-image* (or ‘self-image’) and *hetero-image*: the referring to a characterological reputation current within and shared by a group, the latter to the opinion that others have about a group’s purported character. Thomas Mann writing, as a German, about German culture expresses a German auto-image; Madame de Staël’s *De l’Allemagne* expresses an outside view or hetero-image” (Leerssen 2007: 342–343).

The image may change but not because the character of the nation changes, but because the attitude towards the nation changes (Leerssen *s.a*). In that way new or other aspects are noticed and stressed throughout the times. (In addition to that imagology gets in touch with national stereotypes, which are also discussed in the thesis.)

“In actual literary-historical research, this means that a given “image”, for instance “the German in English literature”, is charted in its discursive typology as it can be followed from text to text: what is more, this study of such a “hetero-image” is performed with continuous attention to the underlying English auto-image, i.e. the set of values and assumptions of “Englishness” against which the “German” is silhouetted in his foreignness. [---] A full-blown

imagological analysis of the German-English relationship would therefore involve (a) the interplay between English self-images and images of Germany in English texts; (b) the interplay between German self-images and images of England in German texts; and (c) the interplay between (a) and (b)” (Leerssen 1995: 211).

While doing the research on Estonian writers depicting Italy it must, however, be mentioned that it is impossible to study the reciprocal effect of Estonian and Italian images in the above-mentioned way, as the Italians have not written about Estonians to that extent as the English have written about the Germans or the Germans about the English. The accent is laid here on the Estonian authors describing Italy as there happen to be more material available. I will map a certain image – Italy in Estonian travelogues – such as it is possible to be traced from text to text.

2. ABOUT TRAVELOGUE

In comparison with other genres the travelogue has got less attention on the literary landscape of Estonia. The aim of the thesis is also to summarise the material published in Estonian concerning the travelogues and also to systemise the data. One of the results I achieved in the course of my research is that in Estonian terminology we could obtain the same principle as in German, French and English: to use the term travel literature in a wider sphere and a travelogue in a narrower meaning and genre.

3. ITALIAN TRAVELOGUES BY ESTONIAN AUTHORS

Besides the genre-theoretical questions I give a review of Estonian travelogues, separately concentrating on the travelogues being published as separate books as well as the works written on the basis of trips outside Estonia. I touch more thoroughly the travelogues of Estonian authors to Italy by observing the following travelogues: Eduard Bornhöhe’s “Usurändajate radadel” (1899), Ants Laikmaa’s “Teelt” (1996), Friedebert Tuglas’ “Esimene välisreis” (1945), Eduard Vilde’s “Üle suure vee” (1935), Johannes Semper’s “Risti-rästi läbi Euroopa” (1935), Valev Uibopuu’s “Lõuna poole” (1958), Voldemar Panso’s “Laevaga Leningradist Odessasse ehk Miks otse minna, kui ringi saab” (1957), Max Laosson’s “NATO blokk turisti blokknoodis” (1962), Debora Vaarandi’s “Välja õuest ja väravast” (1970), Juhan Kakk’s “Alpide taga on moonpunane Itaalia” (1967), Artur Vader’s “Itaalia päikese all” (1973), Olev Remsu’s “Roomas hõiskab süda” (1997), Haljand Udam’s “Itaalia kiri” (1998), Viivi Luik’s “Esimene tervitus Roomast” (2005), Kalev Kesküla’s “Unistus Toscanast” (2005) and Harry Liivrand’s “Tintorettoga Veneetsias” (2005). The aim of the review concerning the Italian travelogues is also to look for the possible common features and structures as well as the stereotypical pictures being repeated from book to book being published in different times. In the travelogues we can observe the following aspects characterizing auto- and hetero-image.

The authors did not visit Italy *tabula rasa*, they had preliminary knowledge, mind images of the places to be visited. “There is something like a literary topography, with its own aura of moods and associations and with an emotional allure that is stronger in literature than in historical reality” (Syndram 1991: 187). Literary topography is so powerful that according to it the travellers may make decisions about a place visited, the discussions about the real or true Italy are derived from those.

Concerning the real or true Italy the travelogues published in Soviet Estonia can be clearly distinguished. For the Soviet-oriented authors inclined negatively towards capitalism the true essence of the country lies in everything concerning the working-class, their living conditions, wages, etc. The travelogues are full of statistics. The historical-political context has strongly influenced the depiction of Italy. The Soviet travelogues are especially loaded with ideology.

In nearly all the travelogues the oppositions of the North and the South, i.e. climatic and temperamental differences are more or less clearly underlined. The geographical contradictions closely accompany the contrasts in history, social and cultural spheres. As a stereotype, a northern person is depicted as a sad, serious, orderly and melancholic person (here we can also notice the auto-image of the author) whereas the southern person is free and joyful (the relation between the hetero-image and the auto-image is brought out).

The opposition of Catholicism and Protestantism can also be brought out. St. Peter's church in Rome is often compared to a royal palace, religious services – to theatrical performances. (Theatre/theatricality is a reference-word characterising Italy on a larger extent, it is not limited to the aspects related to religion. It has been said that the tourists have always experienced Italy (Venice especially) as a full set and described it as a spectacular and theatrical play (Pfister 1999: 19).) The above-mentioned cases include the alienating method; moreover, in the travelogues written by the Soviet-inclined writers one can find more or less rhetorically decorated speeches devoted to the negative effect of religion on a person and of Vatican being the centre of clerical machinations. The non-Soviet authors generally stress the opposition of Catholicism and Protestantism, and yet it does not always mean a negative attitude towards the first, but merely drawing of parallels and the alienation occurring from there; the Soviet authors stress the opposition of religiousness versus atheism.

The majority of the travelogue-writers mentioned here move in Italy as tourists – they mainly visit the well-known and famous places (e.g. Colosseum, St. Peter's Church in Rome), and seldom happen to be in the so-called everyday world, they move on foot only in the area of tourist attractions. As a result the majority of travelogues described here depict similar objects – especially by those writers who have had a relatively short stay in Italy and have only visited the main sights.

The way you get acquainted with a country (alone or in a group) affects the picture you receive and the image formed. The means of transportation either favours or hinders the social touch with the country – i.e. whether only important and central places (tourist traps) or also some remote corners are also visited (Pfister 1996: 7). In the earlier centuries it was common for travellers to spend months and years in Italy. In the 20th and 21st centuries the possibilities of travelling have improved a lot but the travelling itself at the same time has become more superficial – now people only spend some weeks in one country, and mostly with a tourist group. Therefore the view of the country has been changed and turned into a more metropolitan-centred one. While reading the Estonian travelogues of Italy, we can see that the descriptions of big cities dominate, and we rarely get a hint of small villages or remote areas.

4. “ITALIAN CAPRICCIO” BY KARL RISTIKIVI AND “MADONNA WITH A PLASTIC HEART” BY AIMÉE BEEKMAN

The main stress of the thesis lies on “Italian Capriccio” by Karl Ristikivi and “Madonna with a Plastic Heart” by Aimée Beekman. In the chapter discussing the travelogues there are sub-chapters of the towns Ristikivi and Beekman have described in their travelogues. In the thesis I also try to bring forth the aspects Ristikivi and Beekman have read out and written into the towns visited and which associations the text arises in the reader. At the end of each subchapter there is the summarising scheme of the keywords related to the town visited. In short, the following aspects of describing Italy and Italians can be brought out.

Both Ristikivi and Beekman have written their travelogue on the experience of the so-called novice discoverer of Italy, i.e. the preference in description mainly lies on the well-known cities and objects, and both the writers describe Venice, Rome (including Vatican), Florence, Capri, in addition Ristikivi has added Naples, Sicily and Milan. However, the smaller and less well-known places are not reached by the writers. Both the writers mainly move in the public city-space: museums, churches, hotels, etc. The rural and more faraway and private places, like the homes of the Italians, they do not reach.

In the travelogues one can find several stereotypes and stereotypical constructions concerning Italy. Ristikivi observes Italy with a glance of a Nordic person, whereas the basic motive is the contrast between cold and warm (both the temperature and the temperament); North and South. In Beekman’s writings one can also find the traditional contrasts like cold-warm and North-South, but they remain mono-levelled. In the stereotypical contrasting of Ristikivi there can also be found contrasts like Catholicism versus Lutheranism. Italian church is rather a royal palace, the services are characterised as theatrical, etc. Beekman has not brought forth the contrasting of Catholicism versus Lutheranism, however, in her writings we can find a totally different stereotype connected with religion which is evident in travelogues by Soviet authors, that is religion versus atheism.

Both Ristikivi as well as Beekman keep their contact with Italians on the tourist level: they are the hotel staff, waiters, tourist guides, officials, etc. Whereas Ristikivi lies the stress on objects, Beekman has two main characters – the waiter Angelo and the tour-guide Grazia. The waiter Angelo has been depicted as a stereotypical Italian: handsome and with a good voice. The former opera singer Angelo must show the reader of the travelogue the inconsolable fate of the Italian people, the fact that for earning money one has to give up arts. This is the part on the text where from behind the hetero-image clearly faces the auto-image of the writer, the way how the writer shows the attitude towards her own culture: in the Soviet society which the writer identifies herself with, the situation of the nation is not so inconsolable. Another Italian Grazia, who has been described more thoroughly in Beekman’s travelogue, is charming and attractive (as the Italian women stereotypically are described) but she is constantly accompanied by an ironical glance.

Ristikivi has also one of the stereotypes connected with the Italians good looks. When the Venice gondoliers are stereotypically described as handsome young men for example, then Ristikivi quite the opposite finds wrinkled old men, and he does not find any gondola romance. At the same time he has depicted an elevator-boy with “candy-prince looks”. Ristikivi also hints on different rooted images, but he often shows that the stereotype is not true or gives a hint that the image emerged can only be an image.

For Ristikivi Italy on the whole is a special space, into which one has to enter in the proper way to grasp the specific nature of it. One of the most significant terms is connected with Ristikivi’s travelogue – the real-seeing, which refers to proper entering and travelling

(Ristikivi 1958: 221). It means to get the full lot of everything, by concentrating not only on getting acquainted with well-known objects, but to have adventures on side-streets, travelling with the locals side by side, etc. The best and the deepest experiences has Ristikivi got from travelling on foot and alone. Ristikivi finds the deeper experiences from the less-known objects. In the travelogue the most impressive place for Ristikivi becomes Monte Pincio in Rome. In the process of Monte Pincio becoming the peak-event of the Italian trip has a lot of Ristikivi-like: from one side this is not a sight in the tourist meaning, at a glance it is quite an ordinary place, which becomes something special through his personality and the way of thinking.

Beekman's vision on Italy is less poetical and less felt and sensed; it is more practical, and Italy, according to her opinion, is externally shiny and polished whereas in reality it is hiding the problems of everyday life. The writer makes the generalisation also expressed by the title: "Although they tried to present us Italy as a Madonna who has got the contemporary, modern and well-working plastic heart, we sensed with our senses and wit the a-rhythmic heart of the real and living Italy" (Beekman 1963: 16). In Beekman's experience an important role is played by the fact that in the similar way to the Soviet authors, she conveys with the evident pleasure of reporting the fact that she has guessed the created glancy picture, i.e. she sees how the things "really" are. At the same time the writer does not admit in the travelogue that the very thing she sees is only her own created image.

As a conclusion it can be said that Ristikivi's "Italian Capriccio" and Beekman's "Madonna with a Plastic Heart" are vivid examples of how in the texts created at the same period of time can be created in so many various texts of the same object and make them serve different ideologies. Beekman as a Soviet author writes to the Soviet people, for her it is significant to bring out the problematic aspects of the capitalist society and the travelogue has been combined by following these principles accordingly. In Ristikivi's travelogue the problem of an exile is left more undiscovered. Opposite to Beekman, who has very few references to other literary works, Ristikivi relies on a wide basis, by offering the text characteristic of him, whereas the auditorium is not so homogeneously distinctive as in case of Beekman's travelogue.

Ristikivi continues the Tuglas-like tradition¹ of the travelogue: entwined are the history- and art-books he has read as well as the literature and personal impressions. The travelogue is both educative and enjoyable to read. At the same time, what makes the "Italian Capriccio" outstanding from other travelogues is just the characteristic view on seeing the world and the connections of mind. The topic, what is written about remains the same, but what is written is always changing and depends on the writer, his personality and the way he sees the world. Ristikivi has succeeded in putting that something down so that his travelogue is at the same time a trip to a foreign country (one can read about the country, the people and the buildings, etc.), the thoughts of the writer (the course of thoughts which arise from everything seen, the character) as well as into the reader itself (developments of thought, wonderings which emerge in the reader while reading the text). (See also Fussell 2001: 106.)

The travelogue by Beekman has been written in the tradition of the Soviet travelogues, i.e. the significant position is held by the topic of work, everyday life, etc. The Soviet ideology strongly influences the text written. The travelogue remains a one-sided description of the places seen; it does not reach deeper into the twists of mind and developments of topics. No history- or art-books or the literature read and personal impressions do entwine and in this meaning the travelogue does not belong into the tradition of the Tuglas-like travelogues. The triple travelogue like Ristikivi wrote, Beekman with her travelogue could not offer.

¹ F. Tuglas was the first to write artistic travelogues in Estonian literature "Teekond Hispaania" (1918) and "Teekond Põhja-Aafrika" (I-III, 1928–1930) (Eelmäe 2000: 616).

CONCLUSION

The present PhD thesis is the first deeper insight into the rather unknown imagology in Estonian literary landscape. Additionally another rather poorly researched genre in Estonia – a travelogue – has been dealt with and some clarification into the vague terminology was attempted to bring with the present thesis. For the first time there have been researched two Estonian travelogues – Beekman's "Madonna with a Plastic Heart" and Ristikivi's "Italian Capriccio" – on the basis of imagology, which have also remained in periphery in the terms of literary observance. The thesis could be the basis for the future researches on imagology and travelogue.

ITAALIA EESTI REISIKIRJADES: KARL RISTIKIVI "ITAALIA CAPRICCIO" JA AIMÉE BEEKMANI "PLASTMASSIST SÜDAMEGA MADONNA"

Kokkuvõte

Doktoritöö "Itaalia eesti reisikirjades: Karl Ristikivi "Itaalia capriccio" ja Aimée Beekmani "Plastmassist südamega madonna" uurib imagoloogiale toetudes Itaalia kujutamist Karl Ristikivi reisikirjas "Itaalia capriccio" (1958) ja Aimée Beekmani reisikirjas "Plastmassist südamega madonna" (1963). Doktoritöö koosneb kolmest osast: imagoloogiat käsitlevast peatükist, reisikirja üldiselt ja eesti reisikirja ning eesti autorite Itaalia-teemalisi reisikirju käsitlevast peatükist, millele järgneb "Itaalia capriccio" ja "Plastmassist südamega madonna" lähivaatlus ja analüüs.

Imagoloogia uurib maade ja rahvaste kujutamist kirjanduses. Seejuures on üks olulisemaid põhimõtteid, et eesmärk ei ole kindlaks teha, kas see, mida autor tekstis väidab, vastab tegelikkusele või mitte. Põhirõhk on sellel, kuidas ja miks autor kasutab nt rahvuslikke stereotüüpe, millised tekstid on teda seejuures mõjutanud, kas ta kasutab stereotüüpi tõsiselt või irooniliselt jms. Ühtaegu on tähelepanu all nii teksti verbaalne külg kui ka ajalooline kontekst. Imagoloogias käibivad kaks põhimõistet: endapilt ja võõrapilt; esimene märgib suhtumist oma kultuuri, teine suhtumist teise kultuuri. Endapilt mängib alati teataval määral rolli teise kultuuri kirjeldamisel.

Reisikiri on eesti kirjandusmaastikul pälvinud seni suhteliselt vähe tähelepanu, üks töö eesmärke oli süstematiseerida seni ilmunud materjal. Üks tulemeid, milleni jõudsin, on see, et eestikeelses terminoloogias võiks lähtuda samast põhimõttest, mis saksa, prantsuse ja inglise keeles: laiemas tähenduses kasutada reisimist käsitlevate teoste puhul reisikirjanduse mõistet, kitsamas (ja žanri) tähenduses reisikirja.

Žanriteoreetiliste küsimuste kõrval annan ülevaate ka eesti reisikirjadest. Pikemalt peatun eesti autorite Itaalia-teemalistel reisikirjadel, vaatluse all on Eduard Bornhöhe, Ants Laikmaa, Friedebert Tuglase, Eduard Vilde, Johannes Semperi, Valev Uibopuu, Voldemar Panso, Max Laossoni, Debora Vaarandi, Juhan Kahki, Artur Vaderi, Olev Remsu, Haljand Udami, Viivi Luige, Kalev Kesküla ja Harry Liivranna Itaalia-reisikirjad. Itaalia-reisikirjade puhul on lisaks ülevaatele eesmärk otsida erinevatel aegadel ilmunud teostes võimalikke ühisjooni ja struktuure, teosest teosesse korduvaid stereotüüpeid pilte jm.

Töö põhirõhk on Karl Ristikivi "Itaalia capricciol" ja Aimée Beekmani "Plastmassist südamega madonnal". Vaatlen alapeatükkide kaupa linnu, mida Ristikivi ja Beekman on oma reisikirjades käsitlenud. Töös püüan lähivaatlustes esile tuua, mida on Ristikivi ja Beekman külastatavatest

linnadest välja lugenud ja mida neisse sisse kirjutatud, milliseid assotsiatsioone tekitab kirjutatu lugejas. Iga linna käsitleva alapeatüki lõpus on kokkuvõttev skeem märksõnadest, mis reisikirjas selle linnaga seostuvad.

Kokkuvõtvalt võib Itaalia ja itaallaste kujutamises välja tuua järgmised aspektid. Nii Ristikivi kui Beekmani reisikiri on kirjutatud n-ö algaja Itaalia-avastaja kogemuse põhjal, s.t käsitletud on eeskätt tuntumaid linnu ja objekte. Väiksematesse ja vähemtuntud kohtadesse need reisikirjad ei jõua. Mõlemad kirjutajad liiguvad enamasti avalikus linnaruumis, maapiirkondadesse ja privaatsemasse ruumi, nt itaallaste koju, ei jõua. Nii Ristikivi kui ka Beekmani kontaktid itaallastega jäävad turistlikule tasandile. Kui Ristikivil on kandvam osa objektidel, siis Beekmanil on kaks läbivat itaallasest tegelast – kelner Angelo ja reisisaatja Grazia. Reisikirjadest leiab mitmeid Itaalia kohta käibivaid stereotüüpe ja stereotüüpseid konstruktsioone, nt vastandus külm-kuum (nii kliima kui temperamendi mõttes), põhi-lõuna.

Kokkuvõtvalt võib öelda, et Ristikivi “Itaalia capriccio” ja Beekmani “Plastmassist südamega madonna” on ilmekad näited sellest, kuidas samal ajajärgul loodud tekstides on ühest objektist võimalik luua väga erinevaid tekste ning panna need teenima erinevaid ideoloogiaid.

Ristikivi jätkab tuglasliku reisikirja traditsiooni, s.t põimuvad loetud raamatud ja isiklikud kogemused. Reisikiri on ühtaegu nii hariv kui ka lugemisnaudingut pakkuv. Beekmani reisikiri on kirjutatud nõukogude reisikirjade traditsioonis, s.t olulisel kohal on töolistemaatika, kommunism, olmeküsimused jms. Nõukogude ideoloogia toonib tugevalt kirjutatut. Reisikiri jääb ühetasandiliseks kirjelduseks nähtust, see ei jõua sügavamate mõttekäikude või teemaarendusteni nagu Ristikivi reisikiri.

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