

## **Abstract of the PhD dissertation**

*Portraits of Polish ladies from their travels through Italy in the second half of the 18th century*

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The subject of the doctoral dissertation is the portraits of Polish ladies made during their travels through Italy in the second half of the 18th century. The scope of research is limited to the portraits made using painting techniques and does not include the portraits made with the use of other techniques, e.g., sculptural portraits, miniatures, or gems. My research refers to the phenomenon of European culture known as the *Grand Tour*. It is worth evoking that the second half of the 18th century is considered to be the golden age of the *Grand Tour*, its heyday. Although the *Grand Tour* phenomenon enjoys great interest among researchers and has received numerous contributions (also in the field of art history), there are still important issues that have not been sufficiently investigated. One of them is the issue of the portraits of Polish ladies created during their Italian journeys.

There is no doubt that the portraits created during the travels played a commemorative role. They served as material evidence of the travel and confirmed the sitter's social and economic status. The aim of my research was to answer the question why the Polish female travellers whose portraits were created during their travels through Italy in the second half of the 18th century, made the decisions to be depicted in a specific way.

The doctoral thesis consists of four chapters, introduction, conclusion, and compilation of the pictures. The first chapter is devoted to female travellers. The presentation of women's profiles is closely related to the travels carried out and is kept in chronological order. The catalogue of the Polish ladies travelling through Italy in the second half of the 18th century is based on the analysis of the information about foreigners visiting Rome published in the 18th century Italian press. The data obtained from the Roman press was supplemented with the information from other source documents, in particular travel journals and correspondence. The second chapter of the dissertation contains a list of all known (preserved and not preserved) portraits of Polish women that were painted during their travels around Italy in the second half of the 18th century. Like in the first chapter, the information contained in this part is also kept in chronological

order. And, as in the case of the previous chapter, the analysis of the source documents was of key importance for the compilation of the portraits database. The documents prepared by the artists themselves were of particular importance. The second chapter of the dissertation answers the questions about where the portraits were painted, which artists the portraits were commissioned from, what stages of the artists' careers the orders were placed at, how many paintings were painted and how many of them have survived to the present day. This chapter also contains information about the iconography of portraits and the circumstances of their creation. Synergy of the data described in chapters one and two allows for an attempt to answer the question about the quantity of Polish women travellers who became the subjects of the portraits commissioned in Italy. The following chapter investigates the attitudes of travelling Polish women towards art and particularly to portrait painting. It should be emphasised that the analysis of this chapter is based on documentary sources created by travelling women – their correspondence and travel journals. The last, fourth chapter of the dissertation embraces case studies of portrait painting strategies. Thanks to the analysis of the factors such as the circumstances related to the creation of a given portrait, histories of lives of the portrayed women, it was possible to identify how Polish women travelling around Italy used their portraits to express their personalities and values important for them.