

Traveling Words, the Words of Traveling: 17th Century English Travelogues of Italy

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1. Introduction

English travelers on the Grand Tour undoubtedly hoped to visit as many European countries as possible, but if they could not see them all, they would certainly not leave out either France or Italy. Italy was one of the privileged destinations for the Grand Tour and the expression itself became a synonym of “Italienische Reise” well before Goethe used it in 1813 (Brilli 1998: 101). The reasons why the English upper and middle classes undertook such journeys may be manifold, but one seems to prevail: the Grand Tour was considered a very important educational experience, especially for the younger members of ranking society. Young people could acquire the skills of observation and analysis on such travels, building up the intrepidity and initiative essential for a successful future career. It was the best way for them to learn foreign languages, as well as to acquaint themselves with the customs, laws, economic interests, and governmental ways of other countries, enabling them to gain confidence and security when back on English soil. In sum, traveling offered the uninterrupted learning of lessons needed to build the “honnête homme” (Monga 1996:19).

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. tour 3a), the expression Grand Tour appears in English literature from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, and shows that, even though English travel to Italy reached its height in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was already important in the seventeenth century. This is indicated by the number of English travelogues issued in the 1600s that describe Italy.

In this essay thirty-seven seventeenth-century English travelogues of Italy will be presented and lexically analysed, as a first step in a project that aims to account for and exhaustively examine from a linguistic point of view all the travelogues issued in English about Italy in the seventeenth century. While eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travelogues about Italy seem to have been the focus of more consistent scholarly attention over the decades, especially in literary studies (Batten (1978), Black (1996), Black (2003), Espey (2004), Glendenning (1997), Kirby (1952)), seventeenth-century travel literature still seems to have much to reveal, despite the work that has already appeared (for example, Lafouge 1989). The project will seek to offer insight into the ideological and socio-cultural mindset of the seventeenth-century travel writers under observation as well as to try and determine the characteristics that distinguish the seventeenth-century travelogues from the eighteenth and nineteenth-century ones. This will be carried out by carefully examining the structural aspects of the texts as well as the textual and lexical elements that compose them, employing corpus linguistics tools. Considerations on recurring lexical items regarding English travel in Italy should serve to contribute interesting data for the analysis of the social and cultural status of Italy in Stuart England.

In this essay a tentative list of English seventeenth-century travelogues concerning Italy will be drawn up, retrieved from the computerized archives *Early English Books Online* (from now on EEBO). An overview of the travelogues will, firstly, provide the reader with an idea of the number and dates of the works located, along with the names of their authors. Secondly, following further observation, a summative idea of the structure and contents of these travelogues will be offered in order to commence outlining the characteristic typology of this written product. Thirdly and lastly, the closer examination of a restricted and exemplary number of travelogues will disclose the most frequent lexical elements used by the English travelers to describe Italy, which in those days was seen as both the cherished heir to classical antiquity and the abhorred land of popery.

2. The number and typology of travelogues

Thirty-seven travelogues were located using the computerized archive EEBO. The dates of publication range from the year 1575 with Jerome Turler's *The traueiler of Ierome Turler* to 1700 with Sir Andrew Balfour's *Letters write [sic] to a friend*; showing that the flow of production remained steady throughout the seventeenth century. While the travelogues retrieved on EEBO are thirty-seven, the writers involved are only twenty-one, three of whom are anonymous (Anon (1660); Anon (1674); 'English Gentleman' (1696)).

Table 1. Authors and works

Author	Nationality	Dates of work/s	No. of works
Jerome Turler	German	1575	1
Robert Dallington	British	1605	1
John Raymond	British	1648	1
Henry Cogan	British	1654	1
Anon.	?	1660	1
Franciscus Schottus	Italian	1660	1
Anon.	?	1674	1
John Clenche	British	1676	1
Giacomo Barri	Italian	1679	1
William Acton	British	1691	1
Antonio Gabin	French	1691	1
Giacomo Bromley	British	1693	1
Nicolas de Fer	French	1694	1
'English Gentleman'	British	1696	1
Monsieur de S. Desdier	French	1699	1
Andrew Balfour	British	1700	1
Maximilien Misson	French	1695, 1699	2
Justus Lipsius	Belgian	16-?, 1692, 1698	3
Richard Lassels	French	1670, 1686, 1698	3
Gilbert Burnet	British	1686, 1687, 1688a, 1688b, 1689	5
George Sandys	British	1615, 1621, 1627, 1632, 1637, 1652, 1670, 1673	8

As can be seen from table 1, the writers who contributed to this field with one work only were Jerome Turler, Robert Dallington, John Raymond, Henry Cogan, Franciscus Schottus, John Clenche, Giacomo Barri, William Acton, Antonio Gabin, Giacomo Bromley, Nicolas de Fer, Monsieur de S. Desdier, and Andrew Balfour. Maximilien Misson produced two works; Justus Lipsius and Richard Lassels produced three works. Gilbert Burnet wrote five travelogues, while George Sandys wrote eight.

While the majority of these authors were of British nationality, some of them were born on the continent. Of French birth were Nicolas de Fer, Antonio Gabin, Richard Lassels, Maximilien Misson, and presumably Monsieur de S. Desdier; of Italian birth were Giacomo Barri and Franciscus Schottus; whereas Justus Lipsius was Belgian and Jerome Turler (whose real name was Hieronymus Turlerus) was German (see Howard 1914).¹ Apart from that by Lipsius, all these travelogues are written in English.²

¹ Time and space constraints will not permit an investigation into the lives of these travelogue writers here, although it will be a feature of the final project.

² Being in Latin, the travelogues by Lipsius will not be examined. Moreover, whereas for the final project all editions of the same travelogue will be examined, here only one for each will. More precisely, of the numerous editions, Misson (1695), Burnet (1688a), Lassels (1670), and Sandys (1670) will be analysed. It is to be noted that de Fer (1694) and 'English Gentleman' (1696) will not be examined because, although they appear on EEBO, they are not accessible.

As far as the typology of the travelogue is concerned, two main text-types exist, the letter and the narrative. Three authors' works belong to the first type: Burnet's, Balfour's, and Misson's works are letters, as the titles of each endorse, except for Misson's works in whose titles the word "letter" does not appear. All the other travelogues are narratives with titles that comprise one of two kinds of noun. One kind is related to the idea of and is synonymous with the lexeme "journey", such as the lexemes "itinerary" (in Raymond), "tour" (in Clenche), "travel" (in de Fer, and Sandys), "voyage" (in Lassels); the other in connection with the idea of and synonymous with the lexeme "report", such as the lexemes "discourse" (in Anon (1674) and Turler), "journal" (in Acton), "observation" (in 'English Gentleman', and Gabin), "relation" (in Sandys), "remark" (in Bromley), and "survey" (in Dallington and Schottus). Whether letter or narrative, these travelogues are characterized by long and elaborate titles that give readers a quite precise idea of their contents.

As regards their contents, some travelogues are not devoted to Italy alone.

Table 2. Countries and cities visited

Author	Country/ies visited	Italian cities given descriptive prominence
Acton	Italy, France, and Switzerland	Naples
Anon (1660)	Italy	
Anon (1674)	Italy	Modena
Balfour	Italy and France	
Barri	Italy	
Bromley	Italy and France	
Burnet	Italy, Switzerland, Germany	
Clenche	Italy and France	
Cogan	Italy	Rome
Dallington	Italy	Region of Tuscany
de Fer	Italy	Rome
'English Gentleman'	Italy and France	
Gabin	Italy	Naples
Lassels	Italy	
Lipsius	Italy	Rome
Misson	Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Flanders, Holland,	
Monsieur de S. Desdier	Italy	Venice
Raymond	Italy	
Sandys	Italy, Turkey, Egypt, Palestine, Jerusalem, and Greece	
Schottus	Italy and Malta	
Turler	Italy	Naples

As table 2 shows, many of these writers also visited France, Switzerland, Germany, Flanders, Holland, Turkey, Greece, Malta, Egypt, Palestine, and Jerusalem on their way to or back from Italy. After all, seventeenth-century travelers would often set out on long journeys taking them around as many European countries as possible besides Italy, which nevertheless remained their privileged destination in which to spend most of their time.

In their description of Italy, some of these travelogues are devoted to particular cities. Rome is the main attraction of Cogan's (1654), de Fer's (1694) and Lipsius' (16-?, 1692, 1698) works, Naples that of Acton's (1691), Gabin's (1691) and Turler's (1575) works, Venice is the focus of S. Desdier's (1699) work, Modena of the anonymous writer's (1674) work, and the region of Tuscany of Dallington's (1605) work. Anon (1660), Balfour (1700), Barri (1679), Bromley (1693), Burnet (1688b; 1689), Clenche (1676), 'English Gentleman' (1696), Lassels (1670, 1686, 1698), Misson (1695), Raymond (1648), and Schottus (1660) visit most Italian towns and cities, even though the descriptions of Venice, Milan, Florence, Naples, and Rome tend on the whole to be the longest and the most detailed. In seventeenth-century Italy, these were the cities that were commercially most important, while politically and culturally most intriguing (Burckhardt 1945).

Turning to the descriptions offered in these travelogues, there are two main types. There are descriptions that are more positive reports of Italy, characterized by titles including lexemes that indicate a journey made through Italy. Travelogues of this kind are exemplified by Barri (1679) and Balfour (1700). There are, however, more negative critiques, distinguished by the title lexemes "discourse, observation, remark, survey," as the works of Anon (1660) and Misson (1695) might illustrate. However, apart from Acton (1691) and Gabin (1691), which represent the two ends of the spectrum in that Acton provides a wholly positive account and Gabin a negative one, all the other travelogues show varying degrees of positivity and negativity. This is probably because travelogues in the seventeenth century already constituted a well-established typology of work in which claims of positivity and negativity are irrelevant. After all, if Batten (1978: 4) recognizes that eighteenth-century travel writers followed certain conventions when writing, it is only legitimate to assume that seventeenth-century travel writers also did. And even though eighteenth-century literary scholars and reviewers denied the existence of anything "literary" about any travelogue written before the eighteenth-century (Batten 1978: 5), one cannot but surmise the existence of a literary equivalent as early as the seventeenth century, owing to the acknowledgement that recurring formal and substantial features among these travelogues exist.

3. The structure and contents of the travelogues

That the English travelogues of Italy have similar structures and contents cannot be denied. As far as the structure is concerned, we can identify six components: the front cover, the dedication, the preface to the reader, the table of contents, the text, and the index. It is the case of Lassels's (1670) work that includes all these parts—albeit not in that order (the preface follows the table of contents). However, not all the travelogues are always so complete. Not all include a table of contents (see, for instance, Acton (1691); Anon (1660); Anon (1674); Balfour (1700)), and even fewer have an index; moreover, confusion between the two sometimes occurs because what is labeled as a table of contents is in actual fact an index (see Barri (1679) and Bromley (1693)).

What almost all the travelogues do contain is a dedication and a preface, usually placed in that order. In these sections, the writers have the opportunity to reveal who they are and the reasons that have led them to write their work. Two interesting examples of dedication can be found in Acton (1691) and in Gabin (1691). Although these works were issued in the same year, the dedications are very different, illustrative of two differing attitudes.

Acton addresses his work to his most worthy friend and master Edward Harvey of Surrey, who he had accompanied on his journey through Rome, Naples, and Savoy. Acton states that the purpose of this work is to serve as a future travel guide should Harvey "meet with private inducement, or obligation of publick trust to carry [himself] again into those parts" (Acton 1691: the Epistle Dedicatory). He points out that this travelogue will relate the routes and distances they covered, as well as include observations regarding the architectural features of the cities and towns visited. Already from this introduction, one can perceive the positivity of the observations that will be made. Acton makes use of the nouns "beauty" and "strength", when he refers to the places and situations he will describe, and employs the adjective "best" in relation to the paintings, the carvings, and all the other curiosities he will report. As Acton ((1691): the Epistle Dedicatory) quite clearly announces, this travelogue intends

to be a positive reminder of “the most remarkable things [Harvey] took notice of” on his journey through parts of Italy.

In the same year the French priest Antonio Gabin publishes *Observations on a journey to Naples, wherein the frauds of romish monks and priests are farther discover'd*. The title clearly announces that this travelogue, unlike Acton's, will be a critique of Roman Catholic customs and habits. It is thus not so much a descriptive account of Italy as it is an anti-Catholic manifesto patronized by the Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, John Tillotson, to whom the work is dedicated. Gabin declares that the purpose of his work is to endorse the Protestant beliefs of his patron, by exposing the negative practices of Roman Catholicism in those countries where Catholics “act without disguise, and look upon themselves to be the truest and most zealous observers of it” (Gabin (1691): Dedication). Consequently, this work is also addressed to the Roman Catholic readership in England who, by still believing in the primacy of the Roman Catholic religion, fail to see the shortcomings that the Protestant Church has over the years been drawing attention to.

While in the dedications both writers have an understandably subservient attitude in order to please their benefactors, they have opposing attitudes in relation to what they will recount. On the one hand, Acton forecasts a descriptive account of Italy that will be supported principally by positive evaluations; on the other, Gabin promises a negatively-connoted and thus fierce critique of Italian religious customs. As mentioned earlier, these two works exemplify the two furthest ends of a continuum of travelogues whose stylistic structure consists of descriptions and evaluations that are on the whole balanced. When they are not so balanced, they tend to be either very positively inclined (besides Acton (1691), see also Anon (1674) and Barri (1679)) or very negatively inclined (besides Gabin (1691), see also Anon (1660) and Misson (1695)).

Acton (1691) and Gabin (1691) are also representative of two extremities as far as contents are concerned. Acton's work is a relatively short text, made up of 78 pages. In diary form, Acton describes his journey around Italy that starts in Switzerland and ends in France. Even though he spends more time in Savoy, Naples, and Rome, he also stops off in cities that belong to the regions of Tuscany and Veneto too, such as Pisa, Livorno, Florence, Venice, and Padua. His account mainly features the buildings and sites that characterize the cities he visits, which like Barri's (1679) is thus principally devoted to the antiquities that reside in Italy. Little, if no attention at all, is given to the inhabitants of the Italian peninsula and their behavior.

At the other end of the spectrum lies Gabin (1691) that, on the contrary, is a much longer work, composed of 324 pages, almost exclusively devoted to the Italians, both ecclesiastical and lay, and their behavior in relation to religious beliefs and practices. The work in fact opens with a detailed list of contents describing what Gabin experienced on his five-day journey in the kingdom of Naples. The contents of the first day relate to the inadequate learning of the clergy (pp. 1–71); the contents of the second day deal with the superstitious practices regarding bells (pp. 72–134); the contents of the third day feature the misdemeanor of nuns and priests (pp. 135–194); the contents of the fourth day focus on other superstitious phenomena in the kingdom of Naples (pp. 195–257); and, lastly, the fifth day is devoted to describing the relics found in little chapels, as well as the practices of fasting and confession (pp. 258–324). Similar to this, but not exactly the same, is Cogan (1654), which also focuses on one particular aspect of Italian customs and behavior, and that is the politics of the Court of Rome. In between these works come all the other travelogues that dedicate time and space to six prevailing topics: the Italian landscape, Italian cities and their artistic and architectural landmarks, the Italian people and their customs, featuring religious and political practices especially.

In sum, it is possible to recognize similar formal and substantial structures in all these travelogues. The aim of this type of work was to inform, but probably also to entertain, seventeenth-century English readers about a geographical area that at the time in England was still considered as being exotic and representative of the “other” (Bailey-Goldschmidt & Martin Kalfatovic 1993; Bideaux 1996). Just like best-sellers nowadays, the English travelogue of Italy in the seventeenth-century had to have a certain set of features that would make it appealing to readers. One of these was undoubtedly that of finely describing and critically evaluating the beauty and ugliness of that remote country, Italy.

4. The lexical features of the travelogues

A close examination of all the travelogues not only reveals a similar formal structure, but also similar lexical elements. The travelogues examined are, in fact, difficult to distinguish from a lexical point of view. Apart from the contents that in each may vary slightly, according to the importance placed on one topic rather than another, the manner in which the more beautiful or the uglier aspects of Italy are described is expressed using recurring lexemes.

Although for the time being this cannot be verified empirically in all the travelogues, a sample examination seems to confirm this impression. An analysis of the most frequent words in five travelogues covering forty years of the century at intervals of approximately one decade offers interesting results.

Table 3. The 50 most recurring words

	Schottus (1660)	Sandys (1670)	Barri (1679)	Burnet (1688a)	Balfour (1700)
1	GREAT	CITY	HAND	ONE	HAVE
2	MANY	NOW	CHURCH	GREAT	ALL
3	CITY	ROCK	GREAT	MANY	MAY
4	CALLED	CALLED	WORK	MORE	GREAT
5	PART	FAR	SEE	SOME	WAS
6	CHURCH	SIDE	ALTAR	MADE	PLACE
7	ROME	TIME	PIECE	TWO	TOWN
8	SAINT	DAY	SQUARE	ONLY	SEE
9	BUILT	GREAT	TWO	WELL	VERY
10	TIME	HIGH	PAINTED	BEING	MANY
11	PLACE	LITTLE	WORKS	TOWN	WAY
12	RIVER	SEA	RIGHT	LITTLE	CALLED
13	MILES	TWO	DOOR	CAN	MOST
14	POPE	ANCIENT	LITTLE	COULD	WELL
15	TEMPLE	CUT	VIRGIN	CHURCH	TWO
16	NOBLE	LIFE	ONE	HUNDRED	TIME
17	WELL	LONG	LEFT	NOW	TAKE
18	MARBLE	NORTH	MOST	TIME	BEING
19	OLD	OLD	SIDE	ARC	SOME
20	STANDS	ONE	ENTER	FOUND	LITTLE
21	HAND	PARTHENOPE	VOIAGE	AMONG	MUCH
22	ITALY	PERHAPS	VERONES	SEE	FIND
23	PEOPLE	PLACE	FOUR	LONG	WERE
24	SANTA	SOUTH	JOHN	MAN	SIDE
24	WAY	TEMPLE	SAME	DO	MUST
26	GOOD	ART	CHAPEL	WAY	GO
27	LIES	BIRTH	MADONNA	WHOLE	THINGS
28	SEA	COUNTRY	CITY	SAW	PART
29	FAMOUS	END	MANY	ALSO	WATER
30	PALACE	SAID	SQUARES	PLACE	CITY
31	PASS	SAY	SAID	FOOT	MAKE
32	THINGS	GOODLY	FOLLOWS	PEOPLE	MORE
33	KING	HELD	PAINTER	PLACES	ONLY
34	NAME	IMAGE	CHRIST	THREE	HAD
35	LITTLE	KING	DONE	MEN	BEST
36	ANCIENT	LATE	FIGURES	MAKE	PLACES
37	LONG	MADE	ITALY	AFTER	DO
38	YEAR	MOUNTAIN	ROOF	NOBLE	BUILT

39	DAY	MUCH	SEEN	FOUR	GOOD
40	FOOT	NAME	THREE	YEARS	HOUSE
41	THREE	NAPLES	FIRST	BEFORE	RIVER
42	TIMES	NARROW	SAINTS	GOOD	CHURCH
43	ROMAN	NATURE	ANGELS	THING	NEAR
44	FOUR	NEAR	BEAUTIFUL	TOLD	FIRST
45	FAIR	NOTHING	CHAMBER	SIDE	SEA
46	SAY	ONLY	DIVERSE	GIVE	DID
47	HIGH	REST	FATHERS	UNDER	HILL
48	PLACES	THREE	REPRESENTS	CAME	MILES
49	WATER	TIMES	FAIR	THOUSAND	USE
50	WATERS	WATER	SAINT	TRUE	STANDS

Looking closely at table 3, which contains the fifty most frequent categorematic words³ obtained from Schottus (1660), Sandys (1670), Barri (1679), Burnet (1688a), and Balfour (1700), and listed in decreasing order of frequency, there is no doubt that a series of recurring lexemes exist.⁴ However, because these works vary in length and the extent to which themes are treated, the frequency of words could not be considered truly comparable. In fact, the five texts analyzed consist of Schottus (1660), a 328-page-long geographical and historical account of many towns and cities in Italy, including Sicily and Malta; Sandys (1670), a 36-page long account of Italy only; Barri (1679), a 159-page-long description of Italian art and paintings mainly found in churches; Burnet (1688a) a 232-page-long epistolary report of towns and cities mainly in Italy, but in Switzerland and in Germany too; and Balfour (1700), a 274-page-long guide around Italy and France. To try and obtain more reliable lexical data, a word count was carried out on all five texts put together. The data produced seems to neatly condense the information held in the five individual wordlists.

Table 4. The 250 most recurring words

1–50	51–100	101–150	151–200	201–250
GREAT	FOUR	WORKS	HALL	RED
MANY	STANDS	ANCIENT	ENTER	ADORNED
CHURCH	SEA	HILL	CHIEF	ART
CITY	LONG	YEAR	HONOUR	GIVEN
CALLED	FOOT	END	NUMBER	HANDS
MAY	WATER	SECOND	DOOR	NAMED
BEING	BOTH	BOOK	EMPEROR	REST
PART	ALTAR	HOLY	PLACED	BETTER
MOST	HIGH	PAINTED	DONE	LIBRARY
TWO	HAVING	ARC	MONTE	THUS
HAND	WOULD	CARDINAL	GAVE	YEARS
MUCH	DAY	FIVE	LIFE	TAKEN
SOME	FIND	ORDER	MOUNTAINS	GARDEN
HAD	RIGHT	MIGHT	FORM	READ
PLACE	PASS	CASTLE	FULL	EACH
VERY	KING	VENICE	GOLD	SAW
TIME	MEN	TOGETHER	MANNER	FRENCH
NEAR	HOUSE	BROUGHT	PILLARS	TOOK
MORE	LEFT	VIA	PLAIN	TREES

³ Like all wordlists, the most frequent words were found to be the syncategorematic ones, which have not been taken into consideration.

⁴ These wordlists were obtained by means of the lexical analysis software Wordsmith Tools, which can only be applied to material in Text and not in PDF format. The five travelogues examined were the only ones available in Text format.

ALSO	NAME	WATERS	BRIDGE	WINE
SEE	GO	COUNTRY	CITIES	CANNOT
ROME	LIKE	MILAN	GARDENS	FOUNTAINS
NOW	MAKE	ROUND	SAINTS	STATUES
LITTLE	LIES	BOOKS	LORD	CROWNS
WELL	MAN	RICH	PUT	TRUE
BUILT	SAY	ROMANS	EARTH	AIR
MADE	HUNDRED	SQUARE	SON	ARMS
WAY	CAN	YEARS	AGAINFT	CITIZENS
SAINT	LARGE	GIVE	HALF	DEDICATED
MILES	SANTA	NEW	CUT	KNOWN
WORK	DO	SEVERAL	FIGURES	PALACES
RIVER	FAIR	ARCH	FORT	WORTHY
FIRST	FOUND	COME	GATE	BATHS
SIDE	THING	MARIA	LAKE	STONE
NOBLE	PIECE	CHURCHES	PARTS	AGE
OLD	TIMES	DUKE	PRINCE	APPEAR
ITALY	SEEN	WHITE	THEREOF	HISTORY
THINGS	TAKE	GOD	USE	JOHN
SAME	WHOLE	THOUSAND	NOTHING	PRESENT
TOWN	HEAD	BODY	ANCIENT	TWELVE
GOOD	WORLD	EVER	APPEARS	BEYOND
THREE	EXCELLENT	GROUND	CAME	EVEN
POPE	MUST	HILLS	MOUNTAIN	JOURNEY
SAID	COULD	NAPLES	TEN	FIRE
PEOPLE	ROMAN	POPES	GIOVANNI	ILL
PALACE	TOP	BEST	KEPT	LET
FAMOUS	THIRD	FAMILY	PORT	PRINCES
TEMPLE	WALLS	FORTS	BISHOP	RARE
MARBLE	DIVERSE	PERSONS	COURT	VIEW
PLACES	VIRGIN	SMALL	MEET	WORDS

Table 4 holds the 250 most frequent words in all five travelogues. It is interesting to see that the most frequently used adjectives are “great” and “little”. Based on the analysis of the concordances, the term “great” is principally employed to emphasize the quantity of elements observed, as in “a great plenty of fruit”, “a great number of members”, and secondly, the imposing nature of things, such as in “the great Door”, “the great Altar-piece”. “Little” is deployed to denote the limited size of things as in the “little church”. It is not a matter of chance that both “great” and “little” are very often collocated with items that are connected with the church, as the three latter examples illustrate. The lexeme “church”, along with other references to the ecclesiastical environment, such as “altar”, is in fact one of the most commonly used nouns in the travelogues. Being travelogues, all thirty-seven works devote a great amount of attention to the architectural aspects of Italy—which along with sculpture and painting “were the arts appreciated by tourists that made the most impact on the development of British culture” (Black 2003: 174)—and especially to churches, owing to the numbers present in each town and city.

In all the travelogues, the writers describe their journeys and impressions, passing from one city to the next, which explains why “city” and “place” are the next most frequent nouns in the wordlists, with “Rome” being the most mentioned, followed by “Venice”, “Milan”, and “Naples”. While travelers tended not to stay very long in Milan, they would spend the six winter months in Rome, excluding Carnival week, which had to be spent in Venice (Brilli 1995: 65). That most descriptions in the travelogues include spatial and temporal information is supported by the fact that the terms “left/right hand side”, used to indicate the location of things, are also very frequent, as well as the lexemes “miles” and “time”, providing spatial and temporal distances.

As mentioned above, the travelers wrote about what they saw and experienced in both positive and negative terms. However, since the majority of the travelogues give major space to the description of the places rather than the people in Italy, it is no surprise that positive evaluative adjectives are much more frequent. There are numerous occurrences in the five travelogues of the ameliorative adjectives “excellent”, “good”, “noble” and “fair” used to describe the artistic elements of Italy. As to the people cited, the most frequent are “pope(s)”, “cardinal(s)”, and “saint(s)”. Even though these lexemes are not found to combine closely with negative evaluative adjectives, they do nonetheless carry a negative semantic aura, owing to their being symbols of the Catholic Church, which for seventeenth-century British travelers was everything that the esteemed Protestant Church was not (Brilli 2006b: 279), exciting fear and unease in them.

The most frequently occurring words in the five travelogues seem to point to two major foci of attention, the sites of Italy and Roman Catholicism. To get an insight into how these two topics are lexically handled in all the travelogues examined, we will return to the works of Acton (1691) and Gabin (1691). As mentioned above, Acton represents the more descriptive side of all the travelogues. Attention is in fact placed upon “houses”, “gardens”, “convents”, “chapels”, “bastions”, “garrisons”, “fortifications”, “picture galleries”, and especially “churches”. And within these, upon “statues” and “paintings”, “pictures”, “waterworks”. These are the common nouns that occur over and over again in the pages of his journal, frequently qualified by the adjectives “fine” and “noble”, or by the phrases “worth taking notice of”; “worth your observation”. Acton’s evaluation is thus always positive and, on the whole, unbiased. It coincides with the attitude assumed by all the travel writers when describing the antiquities of Italy.

Definitely not positive are the travel writers’ descriptions and comments regarding the religious practices in Italy, and Gabin undoubtedly exemplifies the most extreme. As the contents of Gabin’s fourth day in the kingdom of Naples disclose, the recurring lexemes describe the superstitious practices that the Roman Catholic Church encourages, and which Gabin does not approve of. Gabin refers to the “kissing” or “touching” of priests’ boots, cassocks or habits by people he considers poor and simple, induced to do so through fear. Fear, declares Gabin, is one of the major forces that pushes believers to perform other superstitious acts, such as go on pilgrimages in order to obtain indulgences, pay alms to the Church and its clergy, worship relics, and believe in miracles, which he states are all “contrary to all reason” (Gabin 1691: 232). The lexemes that revolve around the semantic sphere of fear occur over and over again in these pages, not only in relation to the fear of God that coerces so many superstitious acts, but also in relation to the writer’s feelings when traveling around Naples. On his arrival in Capua on the fourth day, Gabin writes that he and his fellow travelers are extremely frightened of running into bandits, who might rob and take them as prisoners. It is not just to highway robbers that Gabin refers, however, but also to clergymen and hermits.

Gabin devotes most of this fourth-day account to relating stories about hermits and hermitages, the latter of which he defines as “dens of robbers and murderers” (Gabin 1691: 224). If in the past hermits were considered men of learning and piety, they are now considered as being miserable wretches leading disorderly and scandalous lives. Contrary to what Roman Catholics in England believed, he declares that hermits use the proceeds of alms to dress meat perfectly and to be able to drink much wine. Moreover, they are dressed in short tunics with cowls upon their heads, and mantles about their shoulders only “to make a terrible impression on the senses” (Gabin 1691: 222) so that people might conceive esteem and veneration for them. The heremitic state, writes Gabin (1691: 225), is “corrupted and degenerated”: it is a “company of hypocrites” (Gabin 1691: 224). Hypocrisy is what Gabin criticizes the Papists of, disdaining the fact that they profess to be what they really are not. They emphasize the pomp and pride of the Church of Rome, when in reality the Church of Rome has “renounced all virtues, whether civil, moral, or Christian” (Gabin 1691: 228).

The highly negative evaluation of these ecclesiastical customs is duly compensated by the positive description of the Italian land and its landmarks. Although Gabin does not devote much time to describing the buildings and sites he visits, when he does, he does so in combination with ameliorative adjectives, such as “lovely” and “great”. When he arrives at the Rock of Caieta, for example, he exclaims that “it was one of the most lovely places, and greatest curiosities that can be seen” (Gabin 1691: 202). Gabin describes how the rock forms a cape in the sea, and that there is a chapel erected on a

stone that sits in the cleft in between this rock. This positive description of nature's way contrasts with the commonly-believed miracle whereby the stone ended up where it is in answer to a hermit's prayers. In relation to this religious story, in fact, Gabin associates the pejorative terms "falseness" and "doubt":

The Roman Catholicks have been so often convinced of falseness, in regard of the miracles they attribute to themselves, that we have reason to doubt of all those they have a mind to make us believe (Gabin 1691: 203).

Even if they are particularly harsh, Gabin's words reflect the general attitude that all the travel writers have when describing religious phenomena in Italy. Even the much more tolerant Acton, whose travelogue lies at the other end of the spectrum, is bewildered by such unusual religious customs. In fact, he skeptically refers to the miracle of the bleeding statue of the Virgin Mary as a story that "they report to you for a great truth" (1691: 10), and witnesses the adoration of statues during processions with "great astonishment" (1691: 7). Although Acton (1691) does not openly criticize the Roman Catholic customs, he is nonetheless much perplexed by them.

5. Conclusion

What is interesting is that while both Acton and Gabin use the word "observations" in the titles of their works, the observations they make upon Italy are quite different. Acton's observations are focused on the uncontested beauty of Italy's landscapes, architectural, and artistic creations that are not only lexically specified, but positively evaluated by means of adjectives and phrases. Gabin's observations are centered upon the scorned practices of Roman Catholicism. These two travelogues—it has been said—exemplify the two extremities of a literary product that focuses on the Italian peninsula in the seventeenth century. In the middle lie a series of other works that tend to host both attitudes, confirmed by a modest and limited lexical analysis of five exemplary travelogues. In fact, the most frequently occurring lexical items paint an ambivalent picture of Italy: Eden in terms of its classical antiquity; Hell in terms of the religious situation. This was, after all, the view that influential British circles at court and the universities had of Italy from the sixteenth century onwards (Bartlett 1996: 493), and probably the view that certain social ranks in England wanted to maintain.

Many have pondered about the truthfulness of the experiences reported in travel writing and many have wondered whether some were not actually written from home (Stubseid 1993: 99). After all, the same stereotypical images and lexical structures, which are likely to have been borrowed from one account to another rather than directly experienced, are repeatedly encountered. Little matter, for the time being, if these travelogues were not all directly experienced accounts or if the historical facts were not true. What might be a first tentative conclusion is that they constitute a typology of text that had defined rules in order to be communicative and worth reading.

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