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Paula Wydziałkowska-Stawiska MA

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Summary of the doctoral thesis

Doctoral dissertation entitled *Illness and health as viewed and experienced by eighteenth-century travelers from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth* is an attempt to answer the question of how health and illness were written about, both observed and experienced. The topic fits in with the attempts made by historians of culture to recreate the old Polish image of the world. The presented dissertation is the result of the queries in Polish and foreign (Lithuanian, Ukrainian) archives and manuscript departments of libraries, as well as analysis of the sources already published by historians. Research in this field is part of the history of culture, social history of medicine and the anthropology of medicine and the anthropology of the body. In the first chapter, I introduce the reader to the issue that is the subject of the dissertation, presenting the methodology, typology of travel and profiles of selected authors and the specificity of the ego-documentary sources on which I base my research, for example diaries, letters and travel accounts. Thanks to this, it is possible to understand who the voyagers who made their notes were, what motives guided them on their numerous domestic and foreign trips, and for what purpose they wrote about their voyages in general, including their illnesses and health. Most of the analyzed travelers were magnates and clergymen, who belonged to the elite of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Many of them were also people with broad horizons. In the second chapter, I focus on presenting the health and medical awareness of 18th-century Polish and Lithuanian voyagers. The purpose of this chapter is to present their knowledge and experience related to the topic of health and illness. An important part of it is the analysis of travel instructions given to young travelers by their parents. After all, these advices were an expression of the knowledge and experiences of the people from that time. In the third chapter, I focus on the travelers' observations on illnesses and health. I analyze their observations on climate, diseases, local treatment methods, animal diseases and finally hospitals. Visiting of the hospitals – that were in that period rather almshouses than clinics – was an important element of the 18th-century journeys, that is often forgotten by historians. I also emphasize the female perspective on the illness, which is important because women's travels were one of the distinguished types of

travel. The fourth chapter presents the travelers as sick. In this chapter, I focus on the types of symptoms suffered by the voyagers, methods of treatment and psychological reactions to the illness. Thanks to this chapter, we learn how they experienced their own illness while traveling, when away from loved ones and their own home. I also see empathy shown to sick companions on the road, which indicates that poor health was not only an obstacle in the implementation of travel plans, but also a vivid experience that aroused emotions. The last chapter deals with the problem of the two types of healing travels – religious and spa. I try to present each of them and show why people resorted to medicine and religion at the same time in the face of illnesses. This part of the work discusses the extremely important dimension of the fight against illness – religious and magical – practiced by not only the patients, but also by the medics. It is strictly connected to the old mentality and their image of the world. Trips to the places with mineral spa in the 18th century were much different. They were not only a way to fight illnesses, but also an opportunity to rest from the problems of everyday life and have a lively social life that was not necessarily in line with the norms of life taught by Catholic Church. The poor state of medical knowledge and the shortage of really helpful healing methods were the reason why people were forced to use these both methods for the sake of health.

Keywords: health, illness, travel, 18th century, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, history of mentalities, hospital

Paula Wysocka-Stawishe