

## Research Trip in Italy

With the assistance of the Travel Award, I was able to undertake a research trip to Italy that has constituted an invaluable step towards the completion of my PhD thesis. My dissertation, whose title is *Criminology, Gothic, and the Supernatural. The Origins of Italian Crime Fiction 1861-1914*, provides the first extensive exploration of the diverse and complex panorama of crime narratives in Italy in the years that span between national unification in 1861 and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. In Italy, I spent six full days of research in three different Italian libraries (the National Library of Florence, the Biblioteca comunale Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi in Livorno, and the Biblioteca comunale Bozzi-Morgetti of Macerata) in order to view a variety of key texts that have been instrumental in writing the fourth chapter of my dissertation, which looks specifically at the development of the literary sleuth in late nineteenth-century Italian literature.

In Florence, one of the most beautiful cities in the world, I had the chance to read for the first time popular yet extremely rare volumes featuring early female investigators. Two of them – Carolina Invernizio's *Nina la poliziotta dilettante* (1909) and Franco Bello's *Anna Stephenson. La donna poliziotto* (1909) – have never been reprinted since their first appearance and are exclusively held in this library. In Livorno, I examined the only surviving edition of the seven-volume Italian translation of Eugene Vidocq's *Les vrais mystères de Paris* (1844), a French *feuilleton* which appeared in Italy as *I veri misteri parigini* (1845). This enormous piece of work, whose existence has barely been acknowledged by Italian scholars, contains excerpts from Vidocq's *Memoirs* (1828), a fundamental text for the dissemination of the figure of the investigator in Western crime literature. The *Memoirs* have never been fully translated into Italian in the nineteenth century, so its presence, although in disguise, in such an obscure book has proven crucial for my research. In Livorno I also viewed one of the first recollections of an Italian policeman, the *Misteri della polizia austriaca in Italia narrati dal conte L. B. ex commissario superiore di polizia*, originally published in 1863. Finally, in Macerata, I spent two days of research at the Biblioteca comunale Bozzi-Morgetti to view various nineteenth-century criminological and anthropological studies on male and female criminality, including Enrico Morselli's *Contributo alla psicologia dell'uomo delinquente: note statistiche ed antropologiche sui delinquenti suicidi* (1877) and Vito Antonio Berardi's *Sulla donna delinquente* (1887). These scientific works represented a key starting point from which to examine the parallels between the literary detective and the physician as theorized by Michel Foucault, an authority figure who reads the human body, identifies and categorizes 'diseases' (or, in the detective's case, clues), and finally declares what will become accepted as 'natural truth' about the individual.

The Travel and Research Award that was offered to me by Royal Holloway, University of

London enabled me to undertake this research project. The award covered the cost of my travel and almost seven days of food – an aspect that cannot be overlooked in Italy. Without funding, I would have never been able to cover the expenses associated with this project and, most likely, I would have not completed my PhD thesis in three years. This is why I am truly grateful to the University for generously funding my research trip and I would also like to encourage others to make every effort to apply for the Royal Holloway Travel Award.

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