

Statement prepared by the supervisor of Martina Vacková Reiterová relating to her studies and dissertation entitled

“Revivalist Movements in Brittany, Ireland, Scotland and Wales around 1900: Discursive Strategies of Self-representation and Relationship to Celtic Identity”

submitted in 2024 at the Institute of World History

I. Overall evaluation of PhD studies

Overall, I can state with joy that Martina Vacková Reiterová's studies was truly excellent and rewarding experience. It was a real pleasure to work with Martina during the last six years. Martina was in regular contact with me as supervisor, frequently consulted her progress and duly participated in the doctoral seminars. In spite of many challenges related to doctoral studies, Martina remained extremely focused and strongly determined to finish her studies. I also need to highlight Martina's personal investment, such as the willingness to learn new languages, especially the basics of Welsh, or to delve in the digital humanities methods and tools, such as mastering the Atlas.ti software.

Fulfilment of study requirements during the entire period of study

Study requirements were fulfilled duly and in most cases in accordance with the individual study plan, despite some unexpected challenges such as Covid-19 pandemics that limited travels abroad. These external factors have partly led to the prolongation of studies, next to some other reasons, such as the very scope and ambition of the thesis, and huge workload in Martina's employment at the Faculty of Arts as the administrative or technical staff member, which is nevertheless one of the prices to be paid for the low stipends of PhD students in the Czech Republic.

Student exchanges and study visits (especially abroad)

During her studies, Martina undertook several medium-term research trips to France and UK, mainly to collect sources. In October and November 2018, she had research-oriented internship at the Center de recherche bretonne et celtique at Université de Bretagne occidentale in Brest (France) with the financial support of Campus France. In May 2019, she conducted archival research at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. In October and November 2019, she spent two months as the research intern at the School of History, Classics and Archeology at the University of Edinburgh with the financial support of the Anglo-Czech Educational Fund. In July and August 2021, she had research internship at the National Library of Ireland, Dublin. Besides, she also participated in the GRAINES Summer School in Reims, 2018.

Active participation in prestigious conferences, workshops, colloquia

Over the course of her studies, Martina presented her research on various congresses and workshops, mostly international and focused on Celtic studies, Scottish studies. Amongst the most important were 11th Congress of Czech Historians in Olomouc, 2017, with the paper The role of cultural heritage in the regional representation on the example of Brittany at the beginning of the 20th century; 3rd Poznań Conference of Celtic Studies at the University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań, 2018, with the paper The Discourse Strategies of the Breton Regionalists around 1900; St Magnus Conference at the University of the Highlands and Islands, Kirkwall, 2018, with the poster Self-representation and Identification Strategies of Breton Regionalists; The XVIth International Congress of Celtic Studies at Bangor University, 2019, with the paper The Czech national revival: a source of inspiration for Gaelic revivalists?; 3rd World Congress of Scottish Literatures in Prague, 2022, with the paper: An Comunn Gaidhealach and PanCelticism at the turn of the 19th century; and most recently, the International Workshop Central Europe and the Nordics: bilateral relations and views on Europe from semi-peripheries, Prague, 2024, with the paper Celtic Nations around 1900: relations and mutual inspirations. Besides, she also co-organized the workshop Mapping the Scenes: Digital Humanities in Cultural Studies in Central and Central Eastern Europe, Prague and Vienna (supported by Visegrad Fund) in Prague, 2022.

Publication activities

Martina Vacková Reiterová has so far published four articles, out of which three appeared in academic journals, including one study which was published in the high-rank international journal *International Review of Scottish Studies*, published by Edinburgh University Press (see the list below). While the list of the publication may not look impressive in terms of quantity or length of texts, I really appreciate that Martina tends to focus on high quality of her outputs, as well as reputation of the outlets in which she aims to publish her results. It is also laudable that that to such strategy, Martina has got invaluable experience with rigorous review process, especially in the IRSS.

VACKOVÁ REITEROVÁ, Martina. Scottish Gaelic Movement and Celtic Identity: An Comunn Gaidhealach at the Turn of the Twentieth Century. *International Review of Scottish Studies*. 48(2), 2023, 94-123.

REITEROVÁ, Martina. "Une Arme de Premier Ordre": Representation of Breton and Welsh In Revivalist Discourse Around 1900. *Litteraria Pragensia*. 30 (59), July 2020, 62-76.

REITEROVÁ, Martina. Základní kameny bretonského regionalismu. Jeho vznik a vývoj do roku 1914. *Historická sociologie*. (2), 2018, 101-117.

REITEROVÁ, Martina. Internationalism in Science: Case of Revue celtique. *Obscura*. 3(5), 2016/2017, 39-44.

Any awards or other activity relating to their studies and dissertation work (grants, etc.).

During her studies, Martina succeeded in receiving support in a highly competitive grant scheme by Charles University Grant Agency, for the project Revivalist movements in Brittany, Ireland, Scotland and Wales at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries: Celticism as a tool of collective identification and its transnational scope. The two-year project (1/1/2020 - 31/12/2021) was completed successfully and yielded two studies in respected academic journals

Contribution to instruction and academic or organizational activities relating to a workplace or subject area.

Martina has got involved in several courses offered at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University during her studies. In 2024 she co-taught the course Introduction to Digital Humanities. In 2020, she taught a course in English for US students, Construction of Czech National Identity and its Symbols, within the ECES program. Furthermore, she also taught a semester-long seminar in English for Erasmus Mundus students, Modern Social and Intellectual Framework in 2020. Martina also delivered several individual presentations and led a couple of seminars in various other courses of her supervisor, both in Czech and in English. Beyond teaching activities, Martina often helped with other agendas of the Seminar of General and Comparative History, and the projects and programs in which its members have been involved, such as helping with organization and promotion of workshops and other events in various projects or assistance to international students of TEMA Erasmus Mundus joint master degree, as well as with agenda of the Institute of World History (managing Facebook profile of the Institute). In her employed positions, she also enormously contributed to various agendas at the Faculty level, first as coordinator of Erasmus+ and EEF funds at the Office of International Relations, and later as data specialist at the Division of Information Systems.

II. Overall evaluation of the dissertation

Martina was well prepared for the PhD topic from her previous master studies, which she completed within Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree TEMA+, an international and interdisciplinary program, and within which she wrote a master thesis on Breton movement at late nineteenth century. The PhD research project was therefore to some degree a follow-up project, but substantially enlarged thanks to inclusion of three Celtic revivalist movements of the British Isles. Furthermore, Martina made the best of her previous studies in terms of adopting the approaches that were taught at the programme, such as comparative history, transnational history or entangled history, as well as core concepts and thematic pillars of the TEMA curriculum, which included nations-nationalism-national identities and regions-regionalism-regional identities.

The thesis as such is an ambitious and methodologically rigorous attempt at comparative study of four revivalist movements, combined with transnational perspective. The thesis thus builds on the tradition of large-scale and comparative studies of nations and nationalism, such as those by Miroslav Hroch, Eric Hobsbawm, or Anthony Smith, while also reflecting some of the recent turns in historical research of national and regional identities, such as transnational perspective and stronger emphasis on cultural aspects, both represented, for instance, by Joep Leerssen and Eric Storm, the renewed interest in pan-nationalisms and macro-regional identities (e.g. Peter Stadius), and so forth.

III. Comments relating to the dissertation

I have commented on the dissertation several times throughout research and writing and Martina did her best to implement many of my suggestions and critical remarks along the way and in the final text. That said, there are of course several points that can still be improved or further developed, especially should Martina intend to rework the thesis into a book manuscript to be published with a recognized and international academic publisher. Some of the lacunae and imperfections stem from deliberate and pragmatic self-limitation that was necessitated by the pressing time, and Martina is well aware of the need to come back to them in the future. For instance, and given the overall ambition of the thesis,

I would really appreciate a much stronger embedment of the topic, approach and results in the recent research on modern regionalism and nationalism, which now looks a bit superficial at some points, and generally a somewhat wider scope of secondary literature related to various aspects touched upon in the thesis, such as the uses of the past or folklore. But notwithstanding these and other remarks, one needs to keep in mind the challenges posed by the comparatively designed project with four different cases to compare, such as immensity of data, several historical contexts to learn, the apprehension of several languages needed to conduct the research, accessibility of sources, and last but not least, the pitfalls of writing of the thesis in author's non-native language.

IV. Any questions for the defence

There has been much debate during the studies about usefulness or not of the digital humanities tools for conducting the research, and namely processing the primary sources and analysing the data. Now, upon the completion of the thesis and having an overall experience, can Martina briefly assess in what sense, in her opinion, implementation of the software tools helped in her research – or made the thesis better than otherwise it would be – and in which aspects, to the contrary, it posed limits to the research or quality of the thesis?

V. Conclusion

Considering the overall quality, rigour and further potential of the thesis, which in my view fully meets standards of the successful PhD thesis, as well as the immense workload invested in the research and completion of the final thesis, I provisionally classify the submitted dissertation as **passed**.

[25. 11. 2024]

[Mgr. Jaroslav Ira, Ph.D.]