

## Summary

### THE INSURMOUNTABILITY OF THE GREEK NATION IN THE CONCEPT OF ALOIS KLAR (1806)

The article focuses on Alois Klar's inaugural speech as Professor of Greek Philology and Classical Literature at the University of Prague in 1806 and his statement that the Greeks were "the nation with the finest taste that has ever been and the like of which will hardly ever be again". The article asks a question as to what exactly Klar meant by this statement and what consequences he drew from it for the present, especially with regard to the conclusion of the lecture, where he denied the above thesis about the insurmountability of the Greeks by stating that today's Christians are better than the Greeks and Romans. Analysing the inaugural speech and other published works by Klar, the article comes to these conclusions: 1) Klar's starting point was the thesis of the relationship between the quality and complexity of speech on the one hand and the culture of the nation on the other. This was in a situation where German became a literary language only during the eighteenth century and Greek was its role model. 2) Klar espoused Enlightenment sentimentalism. In the field of morality, he clung to the Enlightenment morality of "bourgeois sentiment" (Ch. F. Gellert), and in the field of poetry he expressed admiration for the sentimental poetry of poets associated in the Göttinger Hain group. 3) Klar was a convinced Catholic, basing on the teachings of the Czech Catholic Enlightenment and its emphasis on active love of one's neighbour. He unified these moments in his concept of a world in which the Greeks deserved admiration for the fact that selected individuals among them managed to reveal – guided by reason – the highest truths (especially truths about the duties of virtue, gentility and love, which were fully revealed by Christianity) and above all for the fact that they were able to express them in their literary works with an extraordinary degree of influence on human feelings, thus remaining a permanent model for us.

Keywords: Alois Klar (1763–1833); insurmountability of Greek culture;  
University of Prague; Czech catholic enlightenment; sentimentalism

MARTIN Z. POKORNÝ  
Filosofický ústav AV ČR  
Jilská 1, 110 00 Praha 1, Česká republika  
pokorny@flu.cas.cz