

The aim of this thesis is to introduce the popular puppet theatre called *Opera dei Pupi*, which was developed mainly in Sicily in the second half of the 19th century. The first part describes literary influences that nourished this tradition, from which puppeteers derived topics for their repertoire. These stories were primarily about the French king Charlemagne and his knights and were called paladins. I am trying to map the form of an adaptation of this topic for *Opera dei Pupi* needs and the way of connection with oral tradition. Furthermore I am going to mention the secondary repertoire of the theatre for example farce. Next chapter focuses on a formal side of the *Opera dei Pupi* including puppeteer's personality, his work and activities, structure of the theatre itself, characteristics of puppets and handling them. Furthermore this section also describes a specific concept of everyday's performances „to be continued“ and how were these performances organized in practice. The analytical part focuses on a process of putting plot on a scene, which includes both improvisation and fixed rules approach. The principal theme of this part is the so-called *copione*, which are the puppeteer's own handwritten notes, on which the show was based. This section also includes numerous excerpts not only from *copione* but also from the played performance. On that base the reader will be able to understand the function of *copione* in the process of performance creation. The penultimate section explains the ideology of the *Opera dei Pupi* and its main ideas which were passed on spectators and its reflection in folk literature and applied arts. The final part is dedicated to the current situation of the *Opera dei Pupi* and initiatives towards its sustainability for the future.