

Constantine

Curious Travellers

Writing the Welsh Tour, 1760-1820

Curious Travellers: Writing the Welsh Tour, 1760-1820 provides the first extensive literary study of British tours of Wales in the Romantic period (c.1760-1820). It examines writers' responses to Welsh landscapes and communities at a time of drastic economic, environmental, and political change. Opening with an overview of Welsh tours up to the early 1700s, Mary-Ann Constantine shows how the intensely intertextual nature of the genre imbued particular sites and locations with meaning. She next draws upon a range of manuscript and published sources to trace a circular tour of the country, unpicking moments of cultural entanglement and revealing how travel-writing shaped understanding of Wales and Welshness within the wider British polity. Wales became a popular destination for visitors following the publication of Thomas Pennant's Tours in Wales in the late 1770s. Hundreds of travel-accounts from the period are extant, yet few (particularly those by women) have been studied in depth. Wales proves, in these narratives, as much a place of disturbance as a picturesque haven--a potent mixture of medieval past and industrial present, exposed down its west coast to the threat of invasion during the Napoleonic Wars. From castles to copper-mines, Constantine explores the full potential of tour writing as an idiosyncratic genre at the interface of literature and history, arguing for its vital importance to broader cultural and environmental studies.

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