

## CFP: “Landscape and Language: Romantic Travelers in the Celtic Nations”

**Editors:** Mary-Ann Constantine, Nigel Leask, Finola O’Kane

**Proposal Submission Deadline:** March 30th

**Length of Final Submissions:** 9,000 words, or 3–5000 words

**Projected Publication Date:** Summer 2024

In the last decade or so, critical interest has focused on the home tour of Britain and Ireland, considered in the light of (to name some salient themes), improvement, picturesque aesthetics, gender, “natures in translation,” the European grand tour, and British identities. Yet although the Romantic-era tour of Wales, Scotland, Ireland was strictly speaking ‘domestic,’ the term is problematic when ‘home’ represented a place of multiple, sometimes conflicting identities. The Celtic languages remained largely unintelligible to English, Continental, or urban-based visitors, as well as to those from further afield, participating in the ‘pluricultural’ and multiracial Britain of the long 18th century. That very unintelligibility played its part in how these countries were experienced and described. Michael Cronin criticizes a tendency in recent scholarship to ignore the traveler’s “interlingual” situation, the role of language and translation in giving meaning to people and places encountered. Wordsworth’s demand of the “Solitary Reaper’s” Gaelic song “Will no one tell me what she sings?” underscores the experiences of many Romantic tourists roaming “in a strange land, and far from home.”

As new critiques of Celtic identities have demonstrated, all parts of the archipelago were drawn into, and many profited from, the orbit of British colonial expansion. Nonetheless, at a time of consolidating Britishness, the counter-hegemonic power of the Celtic-speaking cultures often constituted “dangerous histories” (e.g. Ossian, Owen Glyndŵr, Brian Boru) that disrupted larger narratives of British and imperial identity. In this special issue, we seek to explore how those other voices impacted on the growing numbers of tourists and travelers flocking to visit Wales, Scotland, and Ireland—and (since many influential Romantic writers were among them) upon the wider culture of Romanticism.

A proper investigation of cultural entanglements requires a dual (or multiple) perspective. Reading an Anglophone tour of, for example, the Scottish Highlands with a ‘native’ understanding of place (local histories and stories, naming practices, sites of memory) enriches our understanding of both. How did visitors negotiate their ‘interlinguistic’ situation, and how were they received by local hosts and tourist entrepreneurs? How did the period’s notions of indigeneity, often derived from encounters in the colonial contact zone, shape encounters with people and landscapes in the British and Irish archipelago? What is said, and, crucially, *not* said about those encounters? Does knowing the Welsh or Gaelic name of a mountain—and the meaning of that name—change one’s experience of climbing it, or viewing it as a sublime spectacle? What implications did local knowledge have for the development of environmental consciousness in the period?

Since 2014, Mary-Ann Constantine and Nigel Leask have directed the “Curious Travellers” project, focusing on the Scottish and Welsh tours of Thomas Pennant and their legacy in the decades 1760–1820 (<https://curioustravellers.ac.uk/en/>). In partnership with Irish landscape historian Finola O’Kane, we now invite contributions for our special issue, taking the multi-

lingual nature of the 'home' tour as a starting point for a wider engagement, across a range of genres, with Celtic languages and landscapes in the Romantic period.

We invite contributions of either full-length scholarly essays (9000 words), or shorter pieces (3–5000 words) which might focus on specific case studies. Please submit proposals by March 30<sup>th</sup>, and completed essays by November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Authors will be contacted by April 30<sup>th</sup> with a decision about their proposals.

Please send proposals to [Nigel.Leask@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Nigel.Leask@glasgow.ac.uk).