



**University of Guelph
Department of History**

MA Thesis Defence

Student: James Rubino

Date: Friday, April 25, 2025

Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm

Place: Hybrid (contact histaacademic@uoguelph.ca for location/virtual link)

**“Canvases of Expression: Tourist Performances in Travel
Manuscripts 1800-1850”**

Abstract

In the late summer and early fall of 1818, 1823, and 1849 respectively, three different groups of travelers visited Scotland with the intention of performing an aesthetic tour there. Over the course of the tour, and in the travel journals they produced, the three groups each attempted to embody a different traveler persona. The methods used to evoke these archetypes, that of the Romantic pedestrian, elite traveler, and tourist, differed greatly despite covering similar ground and using similar language. The exercise was largely rhetorical and subjective, but it also factored in other features, personal handicaps, or hobby interests which shaped both the tour and manuscript. The end result is three similar tours with three distinct voices, personalities, and conclusions.

This thesis explores three separate travel manuscripts to document a small section of the personalities members of polite society hoped to embody in their travels for the cultivation of status in the early nineteenth century. This is done through a close reading and comparative analysis of the three sources, illustrating their key difference and similarities. By centering on the performance of travel and the personas presented, this thesis turns the focus from popularizers and originators to the enthusiasts who hoped to translate and copy their methods and voices into a style of their own. Through a combination of signals, references, comments, motifs, and tropes, travelers from this period could connect themselves in the eyes of their peers to the likes of Pennant, Wordsworth, Scott, and other such celebrities and elevate their social standing.

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