



Impressions of Southern Italy: British Travel Writing from Henry Swinburne to Norman Douglas (Routledge Research in Travel Writing)

Sharon Ouditt

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Naples was conventionally the southernmost stop of the Grand Tour beyond which, it was assumed, lay violent disorder: earthquakes, malaria, bandits, inhospitable inns, few roads and appalling food. On the other hand, Southern Italy lay at the heart of Magna Graecia, whose legends were hard-wired into the cultural imaginations of the educated.

This book studies the British travellers who visited Italy's Southern territories. Spanning the late eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, the author considers what these travellers discovered, not in the form of a survey, but as a series of unfolding impressions disclosing multiple Southern Italies. Of the numerous travellers analysed within this volume, the central figures are Henry Swinburne, Craufurd Tait Ramage and Norman Douglas, whose *Old Calabria* (1915) remains in print. Their appeal is that they take the region seriously: Southern Italy wasn't simply a testing ground for their superior sensibilities, it was a vibrant curiosity, unknown but within reach. Was the South simply behind on the road to European integration; or was it beyond a fault line, representing a viable alternative to Northern neuroses? The travelogues analysed in this book address a wide variety of themes which continue to shape discussions about European identity today.

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