

A painting of Thomas Jefferson in Italy, wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a white coat, looking out over a landscape with ancient ruins and Mount Vesuvius in the background.

Journey to Italy

September 14, 2021

The Grand Tour

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- The custom — which flourished from about 1660 until the advent of large-scale rail transport in the 1840s and was associated with a standard itinerary — served as an educational rite of passage. Though the Grand Tour was primarily associated with the British nobility and wealthy landed gentry, similar trips were made by wealthy young men of other Protestant Northern European nations, and, from the second half of the 18th century, by some South and North Americans. (Wikipedia)



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The Goals of the Grand Tour

- “An educational rite of passage”
- What did young elite men learn through travel on the Grand Tour?
 - Exposure to Classical Antiquity and Medieval and Renaissance cultural productions
 - Specifically, it was the only way, at this period, to *see* important works of art from the Renaissance and, to some extent, architectural monuments from Antiquity
 - There was also an interest in the recently excavated sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum
- The Grand Tour, in many ways, was supposed to teach travelers about their own history and cultural precedents and it was supposed to teach them to ‘see’

The Goals of the Grand Tour

- Exposure to Classical Antiquity and Medieval and Renaissance cultural productions



Ruins from the Roman Republic and Empire



The Renaissance period in Italy was important for technical innovations in the arts, such as the use of perspective/vanishing points, such as seen here in the 'Ideal City' in Urbino (~1490).



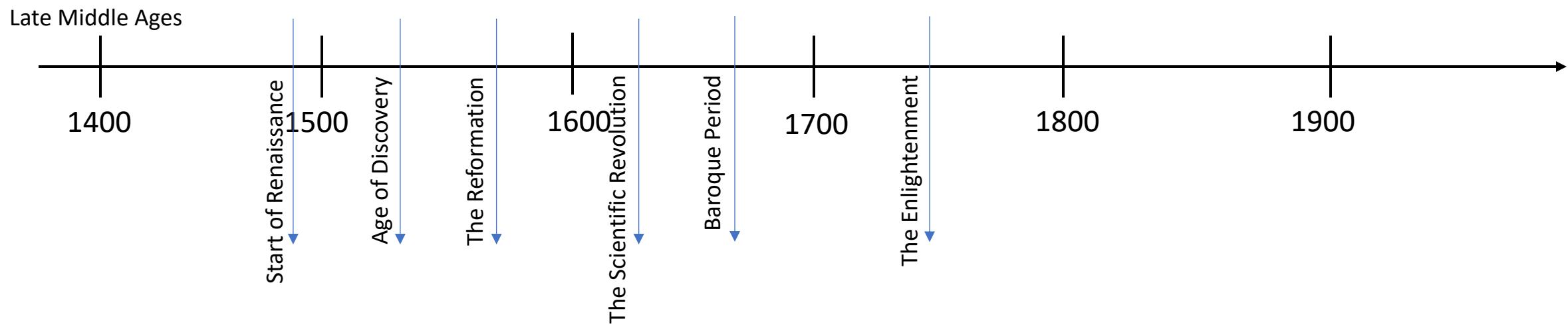
Medieval (Gothic) Cathedrals, such as St. Mark's in Venice and the Cathedrals of Orvieto (above) and Siena.

The Goals of the Grand Tour

- Exposure to Classical Antiquity and Renaissance cultural productions
- What did Italy have to offer in these regards?
 - Roman monuments
 - The Colosseum
 - The Pantheon
 - The Baths of Caracalla
 - The Roman Forum
 - Circus Maximus and the Palatine Ruins
 - The Flaminio obelisk (completed by Ramesses II by 1213 BC and brought to Rome in 10 BC by the order of Augustus)
 - Renaissance and Baroque art and architecture
 - The Duomo of Santa Maria del Fiore (Florence, Brunelleschi, 1436)
 - The *pietà* (Rome, Michelangelo, 1498)
 - Statue of David (Florence, Michelangelo, 1501-1504)
 - The Sistine Chapel fresco (Rome, Michelangelo 1508-1512)
 - Saint Jerome Writing (Rome, Caravaggio, 1605)
 - Ecstasy of Saint Theresa (Rome, Bernini, 1647-52)
 - *Fontana dei quattro fiumi* (Rome, Bernini, 1651)
 - St. Peter's Basilica (Renaissance and Baroque (Michelangelo, Bernini, etc.)



European History Timeline





The Goals of the Grand Tour

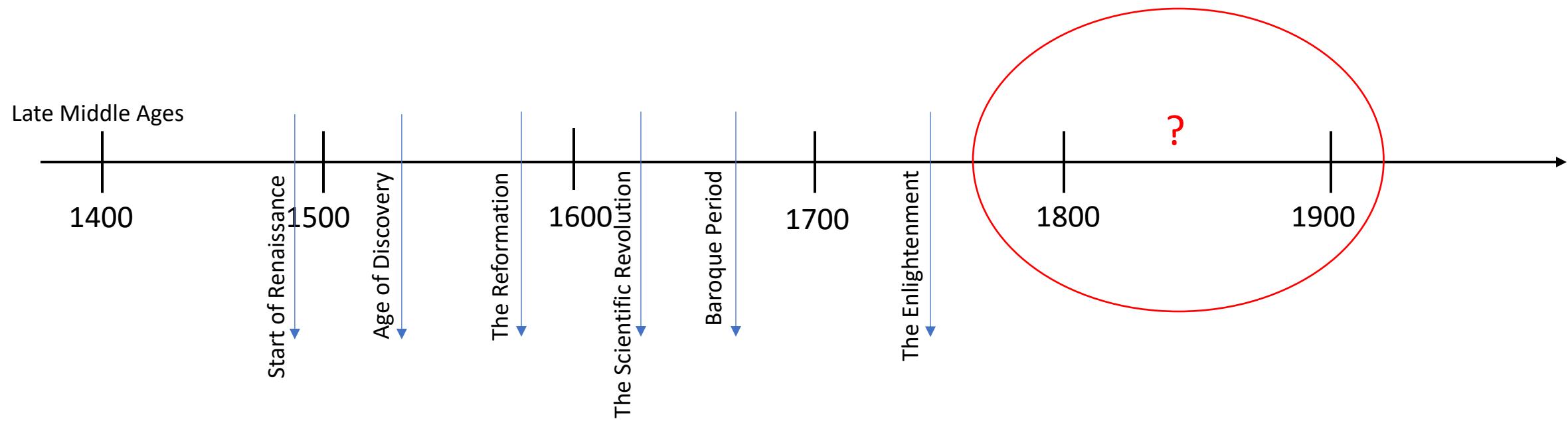
- “An educational rite of passage” and the effects of the Enlightenment
- The idea of traveling for the sake of curiosity and learning was a developing idea in the 17th century. With John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) it became widely accepted that **knowledge comes entirely from the external senses**, that what one knows comes from the physical stimuli to which one has been exposed.



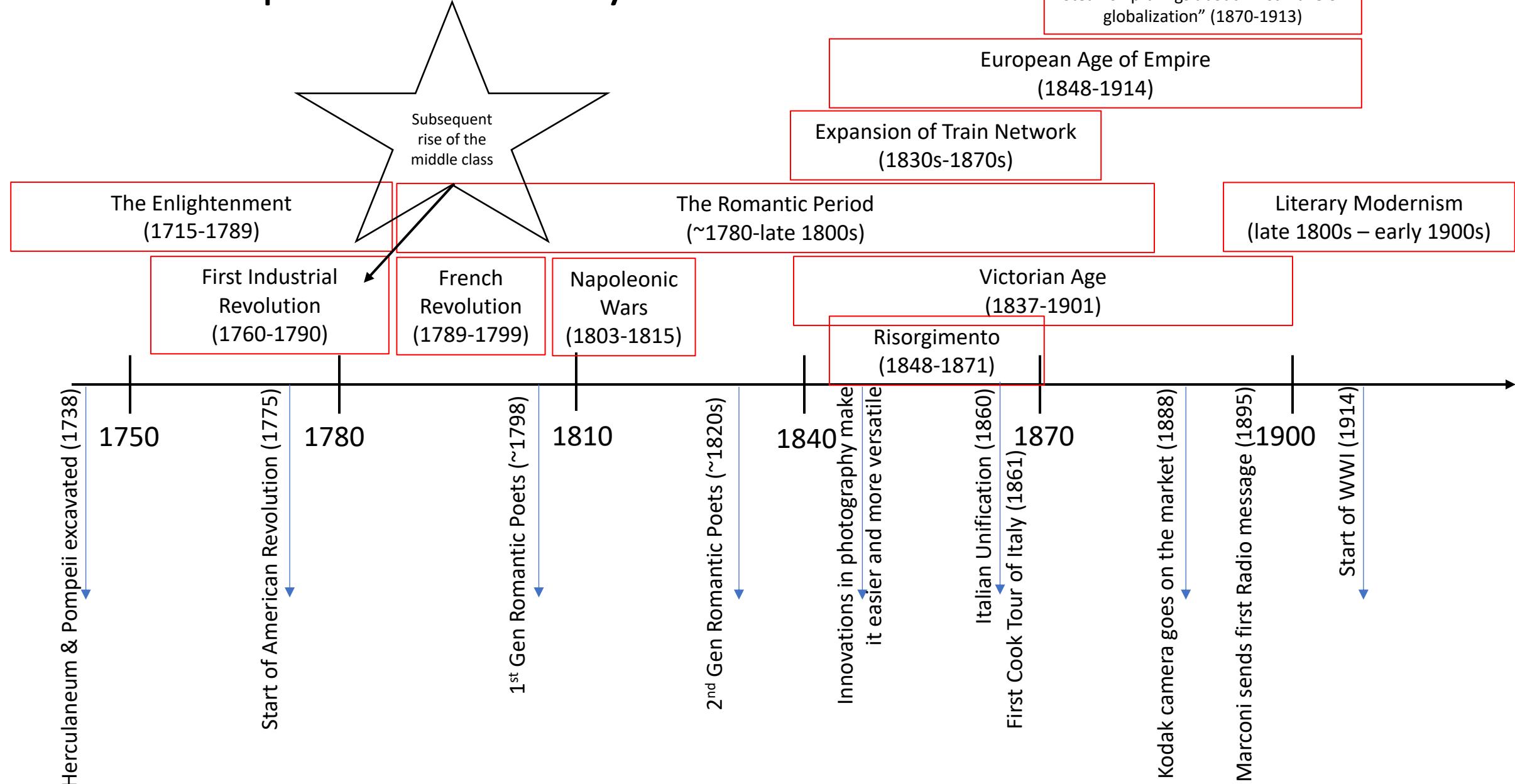
The Goals of the Grand Tour

- The Grand Tour, in many ways, was the first model for travel as we still experience it (though changed chiefly through technology) today
 - Travelers (tourists) came back with collections of art, scientific instruments, books, natural artefacts, etc. Etchings such as Piranesi's *vedute* were inexpensive and popular.
 - -> souvenirs
 - Travelers often recounted their journeys in publications that would first function informally as tour guides and would transition by the end of the 1700s into the first formal tour guides.
 - Expectations of the destination cities and countryside were discursively developed and reified in writing (poetry, tour guides, memoires) and imagination rather than in the destination locale itself.
 - Beginning with the Grand Tour and cultural trends born out of it, as David Crouch says, "The landscape is [no longer] 'out there' [...]. It emerges in our relationship, in feeling, in what we do, in how we approach it, physically, mentally, that landscape occurs."

European History Timeline



European History Timeline



Course Inquiries

- How did travel during this time period (long 19th century) influence literature?
 - The development of the novel
 - The development of Romantic poetry
 - The development of tour guides
 - Literary Modernism and its discontents
- How did travel and travel literature during this time period create greater agency for certain writers (women, for example)?
- How did travel influence the field of aesthetic inquiry (the beautiful, sublime, picturesque)?
- What is the relationship between travel for pleasure and travel for empire during the 19th century?
 - For example, what is the relationship between the author/narrator and the Other in travel literature as compared to colonial or postcolonial literature?
- What has been the effect of travel/tourism on the destinations and citizens on those destinations?

Course Inquiries

- In order to consider these questions, we will read:
 - Travel literature set in Italy
 - Goethe (also important as a proto-Romantic *Sturm und Drang*)
 - Chateaubriand
 - Stendhal
 - Mark Twain
 - Gothic novels set in Italy (Ann Radcliffe, *Sicilian Romance*)
 - Romantic poetry set in Italy
 - Second Generation British poets (Byron, Shelley)
 - Women Romantic poets (Hemans, LEL)
 - Italian Romantic poet (Leopardi)
 - Victorian and Modernist poetry and novels set in Italy
 - Christina Rossetti
 - Henry James
 - E.M. Forster
 - Postmodern and contemporary travel literature and poetry set in Italy
 - Auden
 - Brodksy
 - Lahiri

But why focus on Italy?

- Quite simply, because travel, and literature about travel, during this time focused on Italy.
 - Aside from the proto-Romantic and Romantic Grand Tourists and later tourists
 - Goethe, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Chateaubriand, Stendhal, Twain, James, Forster, Auden, etc.
 - There were the self-described expats/exiles in Italy
 - Byron, Shelley, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Browning, Joseph Brodsky, Jhumpa Lahiri, etc.
 - There were the convalescents in Italy
 - Keats
 - There were those who never left their home country (often women) but wrote about Italy because everyone was writing about Italy
 - Ann Radcliffe, LEL, Felicia Hemans, Emily Dickinson
 - There were the Italians themselves
 - Leopardi, Rossetti, etc.

But why focus on Italy?

- We will focus on Italy because *they* focused on Italy. So to get to the heart of the question, we must ask "Why did 18th 19th and early 20th century writers focus on Italy?"
 - We will begin by considering the legacy of Enlightenment aesthetics left to the 19th century individual and how these philosophical concepts were nearly perfectly visually on display in Italy.
- Important Keywords for this aspect of the course inquiry:
 - Beautiful
 - Sublime
 - Picturesque
 - Landscapes
 - Ruins
 - Monuments

Meet and Greet

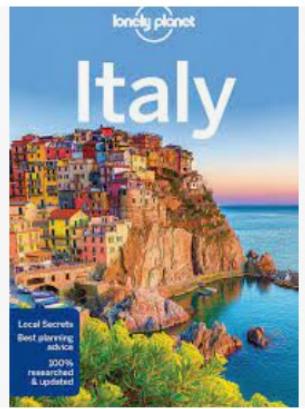
- Dr. VanWagenen (Dr. V)
- PhD in Italian Studies

- What does travel mean to you and why is it important?
- What do you do to prepare to travel?
- Describe Italy as you imagine it or as you have heard of it. Have you been? If so, how did your idea change after going? If not, on what have you based your idea of Italy?

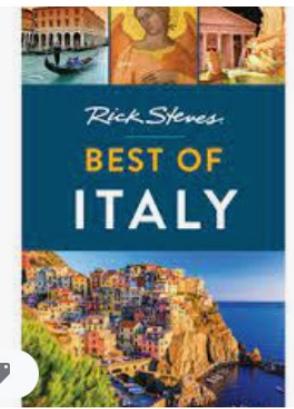
Syllabus

Travel Literature and Tour Guides

- Travel in Europe wasn't seen as a means of personal adventure or growth until the mid/late 1600s.
- “The century from 1814 to 1914 was arguably the golden age of cultural tourism because it was the time when bridges were made between the cultural aesthetes and ‘Grand Tourists’ on the one hand, and the recognisably ‘modern’ group (mass) tourists on the other; these bridges were the guidebook writers; their independent (middle-class) traveller users were those who crossed over.” (David Bruce)



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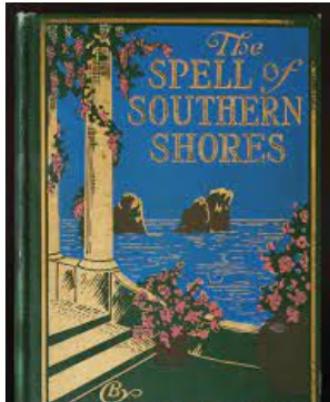
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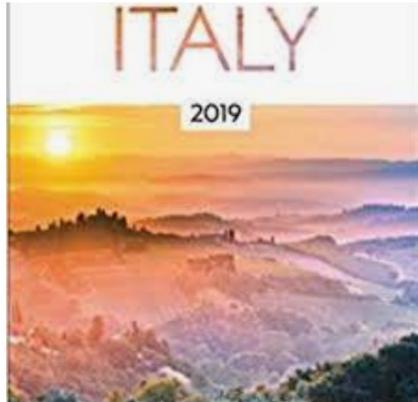
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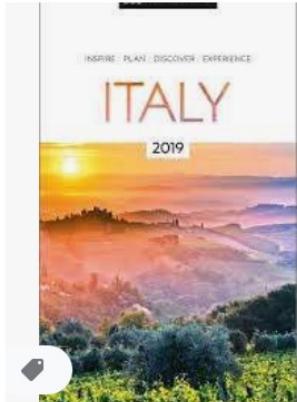
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How did the guidebook evolve?

Early proto-tour guidebooks

- By the late 1700s, the rise of the middle class and technological improvements allowed for the first European 'trends'. The very first of which was in literature. Specifically, many travelers wrote letters home while traveling on the Grand Tour and kept journals with the express purpose of hoping to publish what came to be known as a 'Tour'.
- As we will see in Goethe's *Journey to Italy* (1780s), there is a murkiness between the public and private in these publications, which seek at once to be 'journals', 'letters', and 'guides'.

Where does this leave us for the first week's reading?

- We will begin the course by looking at travel writers in Italy who were specifically engaging in the kinds of books and themes discussed in this lecture.
 - Goethe's *Journey to Italy* (Italienische Reise, 1786-8/1816) is a collection of curated letters put together decades after his actual journey
 - Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774, epistolary) was extremely influential to Romantics, but he himself was a proto-Romantic
 - Chateaubriand's *Travels in Italy* (Voyage en Italie, 1804) is one of many works he produced about travel (*Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem*, 1811; *Voyage en Amérique*, 1827).
 - Chateaubriand is considered an important French Romantic author.
 - We will begin to notice trends of description and imagery in Romantic descriptions of Italy and particularly of Rome.
 - Stendhal's *Roman Journal* (Promenades dans Rome, 1829) was a bestseller when it was published in Paris, and yet, it is already a departure from previous 'tours', such as Goethe's and Chateaubriand.
 - Stendhal, too, is an important exponent of French Romantic literature.
 - He is also well known for what is now known as Stendhal Syndrome.
- Additionally, we will see a first example of Romantic poetry set in Italy
 - LEL's (Letitia Elizabeth Landon) poem, "Rome," was published in 1820 by a British woman who had never traveled to Italy.
 - This short poem will help us conceive of just how 'trendy' Italy was in England during/just after the peak of Romantic writing. It will also help us understand how Italy began to be 'imagined' for what was written about it, what it had been, what it symbolized to foreigners, etc., rather than was it was.

Reading Questions

- What seems to be the ultimate goal of Goethe's tour of Italy?
- What does Goethe spend his time in Italy doing?
- How is Goethe engaging with aesthetics?
- What do Goethe's letters and Chateaubriand's have in common?
- According to LEL, in what precisely does Rome's value lie in the 19th century? And for whom does she imply that value is accessible?
- What does the author seek to emphasize in his Preface?
- What is the tone of Stendhal's journal?
- How is Stendhal's journal similar to/different from Goethe's?