

Keith Crook, *The Imprisoned Traveler: Joseph Forsyth and Napoleon's Italy*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2019. Pp. 266. \$34.95 (pb). ISBN 9781684481620.

The title of Keith Crook's recent book anticipates three of the four main actants of the life and deeds of the Scotch traveller and art connoisseur Joseph Forsyth (1763-1815): his long imprisonment of eleven years in France, from 1803 to 1814; his travels in Italy (1802-3); and the consequences of Napoleon's war in the Italian Peninsula. The fourth actant, art, a great protagonist of Forsyth's perception of Italy in his travels, is not mentioned in Crook's book title, but a perceptive reader would easily assume that any Grand Tour travelling in Italy during the Romantic period would unquestionably enjoy art as an unavoidable magnet, especially if Forsyth's travel account is the main theme.

Crook's initial interest in Forsyth and his travel account on Italy dates back to 2001, when he authored a scholarly edition of *Forsyth's Italy* (University of Delaware Press). In his canonical travel book, *Remarks on Antiquities, Arts, and Letters during an Excursion in Italy* (1813), known as *Forsyth's Italy* for short. Forsyth wrote many of his 'remarks' as a therapeutic way to combat his isolation, his frustration, and his depression throughout his unfair imprisonment. In the first edition, Forsyth omitted his most critical remarks in order to appear in the eyes of the Napoleonic authorities as a mere scholar who was visiting the artistic feasts of Italy and thus be granted the freedom that might be expected from Napoleon's posing role as patron of the arts for France and Italy. Forsyth's brother Isaac made sure that the second edition of *Forsyth's Italy* (John Murray, 1816) included the author's early unguarded impressions of his travels in Italy, the hatred that the Italians felt for France, and his seclusion in France, as well as his critical impressions of Napoleon's artistic mass plundering of Tuscany, Venice, and Rome. Crook dedicates six well-informed chapters to different key aspects of *Forsyth's Italy*, namely, the historical context in which the travel account was written; the odyssey of Forsyth's imprisonment in various jails in France and the living conditions of the prisoners; the traveller's scholarly and well-respected knowledge of Italian classical, Renaissance and Baroque art and literature; a detailed analysis of both editions of Forsyth's travel account; and to the writer's favourable account of the Italians, so deeply hurt in their national pride under the French occupation. Crook pays special attention to the illustrious British and Italian scholars, politicians, scientists, and literati that Forsyth met in Italy (Count Vargas, Cardinal Duke of York, Prince Ernest Augustus, Angelica Kauffmann, Signora Fantastici, etc.), and to the veritable intention of Forsyth's 'remarks', considering that he was not fully free to write about his real self and perceptions of French-ruled Italy. These chapters are followed by a number of fully annotated letters that the two brothers wrote to each other, though many others must have been lost along the way, especially after Napoleon's 1806 prohibition of any post. Written between 1801 and 1815, these letters give a more humane view of a restrained Forsyth. He was doing his best to disguise his suffering and ill health from his family but enjoyed any petty information and gossip offered by his brother in times of loneliness and separation. Crook's monograph on Forsyth's travel book also includes two useful appendices for any researcher on Italian art or on literary travel in nineteenth-century Italy: one consisting of an annotated list of works of art that Forsyth saw and wrote about (his artistic critiques were much valued by nineteenth-century travellers in Italy) and the other consisting of the sequence of passages that were omitted in the self-censored 1813 edition of *Forsyth's Italy*. Apart from the long bibliography cited by both Crook and Forsyth in their respective works, special praise must also be granted to the inclusion of numerous high-quality colour photographs of the main artistic masterpieces commented on by the Scottish traveller and a number of black-and-white period illustrations of the main historical events.

Byron and Hobhouse did not refrain from praising Forsyth's travel account, preferring it to even Rev. John Chetwode Eustace's popular art guide *A Classical Tour Through Italy* (1802). Apart from various laudatory reviews of Forsyth's book, other knowledgeable travellers in Italy – Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Shelley, and Leigh Hunt among them – spoke of it appreciatively. Alas, Forsyth did not get to see the second edition of his work, which saw the light thanks to his brother, for he died soon after his liberation in 1815. Crook has assumed the privileged role of updating the twenty-first-century scholarly appreciation of Forsyth's seminal account of Napoleonic Italy, and Crook's book is a must on any shelf of specialised Romantic travel writing on Italy.

José Ruiz Mas
Universidad de Granada