Travels in Sicily

Bacon advised travellers to write a diary; but the travellers did not write only diaries.

In fact, at the end of 1700, traveller ARTHUR YOUNG in his book "Travels In France" wrote that an author could write a diary or he could also write an essay, in which he could talk about the impressions of his travel.

Doctor Johnson said that the historical information or other topics, were usually copied from other books, while diaries talked about personal experiences.

In the past, in the literature of travels could be found writings of authors who had mixed different genres.

In 1700 all information about a country could be put in books dealing only with travel.

Nowadays, we find that writings about travel have created the image of a country.

But which historical period should we start examining when we want to read about travels in Sicily?

We have to exclude the Middle Age because in that period travellers crossed Sicily only to reach other destinations.

It is in the second half of 1500 that travellers start arriving in Sicily.

Among the most important travellers we must remember: Robert Langton, Thomas Hoby and Andrew Borde.

Thomas Hoby arrived in the island in 1550, first he visited Messina, then he crossed Taormina and Catania to arrive in Siracusa and then he returned back to Messina and Napoli.

He wrote some detailed observations about the island. He was very interested in local way of living.

Less useful for our study are the vague impressions of Andrew Borde, who in a European tour he stayed in the island only for a short time.

After 1500 interesting and varied news can be found about Sicily.

The most important for us are geographical subjects and the description of local use and manners.

A True Description and Direction of what is most worthy to be seen in all Italy was written in 1584/1610, it was published in London in 1744.

It can be found in the travel collection called Harleian Miscellany.