

Preface

Between 1600 and 1700 the Grand Tour included not only education travel, but also different kinds of travel: to study the laws of the places visited, to learn about costumes, science and geography.

In 1664, John Ray, as part of his European tour for a botanic research came to Sicily too.

In the 1700 philosophic, romantic and picturesque travellers began visiting Europe too.

John Ray

London 1673

April 29th

In the same vessel which brought them to Naples, they began their voyage to Messina, where they arrived on May 2nd.

They sailed to Vulcano Island. It was difficult to enter at the mouth of the strait by the Faro of Messina because the current here runs violently. So the sailors who have not often sailed this strait are forced to hire a pilot to conduct them in.

And for this reason their Captain was forced to hire a guide.

May 5th

They hired a Feluca to carry them to Malta and back again. The first day they had a gale which brought them into Catania. There they bought all the provisions of bread, meat and drink.

Catania was a mean town, according to them, there were only some good Cloisters, and there they heard much of St. Agatha.

May 7th

They proceeded as far as Siracusa, but they intended to go to Augusta, famous for the goodness of the wine made there.

May 8th

The wind being contrary they were forced to make use of their oars and rowed us far as Capo Passero, where there is a garrison.

As there was a strong gale, they were forced to remain there for two nights.

May 10th

They started their voyage again, but the wind still continued to be contrary, so they were forced to take shelter at a little Cove called the harbour of Punto Cerciolo, where they were forced to remain for 3 more days because of the bad weather.

May 13th

When the wind ceased they started their voyage once again, and had a very good passage to Malta.

(Commento tradotto dall'italiano)

John Ray arrived in Messina in 1664 and he left us his observations about the local flora, and his impressions about what he saw in Messina, Catania and Siracusa, before going to Malta.

His visit lasted a month.

About Messina he said that it had a very comfortable harbour, and coming from the sea, the city looked beautiful, but the streets were narrow and not well paved.

Messina pretended to be more important than Palermo, and so there was enmity between the inhabitants of the two cities.

Sicilian inhabitants are not very civil but they are extraordinary proud.

When Ray visited Siracusa he made a short tour visiting the anfiteatro, Dionisio's ear and the Catacombs.

With the industrial revolution travel became an activity of pleasure and leisure, and not an educational activity, as BACON said.