

Miscellany

Messina

This city has a large and safe port where there is a lot of traffic by all nations.

In the city there are wonderful palaces and buildings, around the city there are strong walls and ramparts.

The easiest way to go there is by water, from Naples, and then from Messina you can go to Malta.

Palermo lies by the sea, around the city there are walls and there is an excellent harbour.

One of the most important streets is "il cassare" or "La Strada d'Austria", at the end of which there is a very important building "The Viceroy's Palace".

In this palace there are Spaniards in garrison and a Swiss guard.

There is also a warehouse with all kinds of wares brought from foreign countries..

(Il paragrafo che segue è stato tradotto dall'italiano)

Another text that was successful in all Europe was *Itinerari Italiae rerumquae Romanorum libri tres*, published in Anversa in 1600, translated into English by Edmund Warcupp and published in London in 1660 with the name of *Italy in its Original Glory, Ruine and Revival*.

Italy in its Original Glory, Ruins and Revival (1660)

Sicily is an island in the Mediterranean Sea, situated between Italy and Africa. The island is separated from Italy by the sea.

Its form reminds us of a delta in Greek, in fact it has three corners, each one makes a promontory: Peloro, Pachino, Lilibeo, now called Capo Faro, Capo Passero, Capo Boco.

It was called: Trinacria (either for its three promontories or from the king Trinaco, or from the three points of the triangle).

It was also called Sirania from the Sirani, and Sicilia from the Siculi.

Sicily is divided into three provinces (which they call Valli or Vales).

The Val di Demino starts from the Peloro Promontory.

The Val di Noto begins at the River Teria and it descends with the River Gela, and ends at the city of Alicata.

The Val di Mazara comprehends (is made up of) all the remaining parts of Sicily.

The land is very rich and offers its people all the things necessary to them.

The soil of Sicily is considered one of the best in the whole of Italy.

It produces corn in abundance, very good wine and olive oil.

In Sicily they also produce sugar cane and honey.

They have all kinds of fruit trees and medicinal herbs.

Their saffron is the best in Italy.

On the Aeri mountains there is plenty of sweet water. There are also fountains, and fruit trees.

Other mountains produce salt, as Enna, Nicosia, Camerata and Platanim. They also make silk.

Sicily is rich of Metals and Mines, having minerals such as gold, silver and iron.

On the banks of the River Acate precious stones are found, such as Emerald and Agate stone.

They get Beril from sea water stone in great quantities.

In the sea of Messina and Drepano they grow corals.

Sicily is also famous for the hunting of the goat and the wild bore, and for all kinds of birds.

The fishing is very abundant.

In many places of the island there are several baths of hot, cool, sulphurous and other sorts of water, that are very good for the health.

Sicily is famous for Mount Etna (which is permanently sending forth fires, even when its head is covered by snow).

It is also famous for Matharuca, near Agrigento, for its veins of water that send forth a certain ash coloured earth.

In Menemino there is Lake Nastia, where you can see boiling water.

There are also many other interesting places.

Sicily was inhabited by the Cyclopes that were succeeded by the Sicani, and then by the Siculi or Sicilians.

Sicily has been inhabited by a lot of populations: the Trojans, the Phoenicians, the Greeks, the Normans, the Germans, the French, the Spaniards; until the Emperor Charles the fifth took the crown that he then left it to the Turks.

Sicilian people are of acute and quick wit and industrious, they are considered to be very loquacious too.

They are by nature suspicious and badly spoken.

They speak the Italian language, but roughly, and without the least sweetness, but in their habits and other customs they live like Italians.

(Il brano che segue è stato tradotto dall'italiano)

The two Harleian Miscellany texts are in volume VII, between a description of Naples and Malta.

The description is very realistic.

These writings show us that in England they already knew about Sicily. For the reader, the importance of these writings is that they show the relation between description and reality.

In the second passage the author, starting from true geographical and historical data, created a new abstract reality, but what he wrote was not the Sicilian reality of the 16th and 17th century, but only an imaginary representation of stories and legends about the Island.

The reader, though, will easily understand the difference between reality and the writer's imagination.

In the first lines the author translated the opera *De Rebus Siculis* by Tommaso Fazello, he then resumed what had mostly struck his imagination.