

Fynes Moryson's Travel Destinations And a Brief Look Into His Unpublished Chapters

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The narratives of English travellers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century made contributions to the travel agenda of their successors. The sixteenth century travellers who travelled with the motive of expanding their knowledge metamorphosed the old Norman-French meaning of "travail" which signified hard work and labour into the more commonly understood present day meaning of "travel" used today. In this light, Joan Parkes stated that travel in England at the time,

...became, if not an experience to be enjoyed for its own sake, at least a tolerable means of seeking enjoyment far away from home. The word gained value; adventure, allurements, came within its compass...All trace of the original meaning of the word had gone. (xv)

Elizabethan England was a period that gave an impetus to travel. More people were on the move unlike the earlier ages when people mainly travelled on pilgrimages. This age also ushered a new style of travel. In the sense that it witnessed the transition from travail, to travel followed by tourism. It was travellers like Fynes Moryson, Thomas Coryat, William Lithgow that brought the world they traversed through their accounts ready for consumption on a platter for the audience back home. Furthermore, their narratives contributed to connecting the people of England with those of continental Europe and the areas that lay further east. This new form of infotainment kept the readers engaged. At the same time literary works like Shakespeare's plays, accounts of voyages to the new lands, and stories of sailors returning from voyages kept various classes of people connected with the outer world.

Detailed information about new or distant areas during this time was not readily available for reference in a compiled form. Thus, the traveller who authored travel accounts knew well that the response of the audience at home would be an influential driving force in determining how successful the enterprise was. Fynes Moryson too left behind a legacy in book form published as

The *Itinerary*.¹⁾ This lengthy compilation had seismic effects on different social groups of the time and also on travellers that followed. The narratives of his travels catered to an audience that was keen and curious to read about things from far off lands. Mancall states,

The publication of Moryson's *Itinerary* in 1617 came at a decisive moment in the larger European intellectual project. Narratives of journeys had been popular in Europe at least since manuscripts describing Mandeville's fabulous account spread across the continent in the fifteenth century. (4)

In order to provide an entry point into understanding Moryson's travel agenda, this paper will look at Moryson's unpublished chapters which were later compiled by Charles Hughes in 1903 and enlist various destinations Moryson chose for his extensive journeys, which ushered the process of them being plotted on a map for future travellers.

Background:

Fynes Moryson was born in 1566. His father Thomas Moryson of Cadeby, Lincolnshire held the advantageous post of Clerk of the Pipe. Furthermore, he was also the Member of Parliament (M.P.) for Grimsby in the Parliaments of 1572, 1584, 1586, 1588-89.²⁾ (Hughes i-ii) Moryson enrolled as a student of Peterhouse, Cambridge on March 13, 1586³⁾ and was conferred his Bachelor's degree when he was eighteen. Hughes reveals,

Moryson had for some years had an ambition to be a traveller, and the statutes of Peterhouse permitted two of the Fellows to travel. (iii)

According to Hughes, Fynes was all set for embarking on the journey and for this,

His parents had given their consent, and he deliberately prepared himself for the task of surveying the different countries of Europe. (iii)

Further, Hughes mentions that several young affluent Englishmen had the passion to travel abroad in those days and for this it was customary to attend Italian Universities. In the case of Moryson however, it was not so simple. He did not just follow the trend but decided to dive into the world of travel with a specific purpose. Moryson, according to Hughes, at that time

...seems to have special aims, and to have resolved to write an account of Europe, to make, in fact a sociological survey of the civilised world of his time. (iii)

As a preparatory first step, Moryson had acquired an *ad eundem* M.A. degree from Oxford University as it was considered more prominent and influential than Cambridge University. The privilege of offering an *ed eundem* M.A. courtesy degree was usually given to graduate students of Leyden, Cambridge and other universities. (iii)

Fynes Moryson's travels:

Moryson obtained the necessary license for travel in 1589 and finally set sail from Leigh on May 1, 1591 passing Heligoland and commencing his continental journey from Stade. The next four years Moryson peregrinated over Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Poland reaching Italy around the end of October 1593. Further, from the winter of 1593 to early spring of 1595, Moryson traversed different parts of the Italian peninsula only to return to England around May 1595.

Moryson commenced his second journey around the end of 1596 accompanied by his brother. On this second journey, Moryson travelled all the way to Constantinople. However, to his ill luck, Moryson's brother Henry died of dysentery when they arrived in Antioch. This incident gave Moryson a jolt. Thereafter, Moryson himself fell ill and after recovering reached Constantinople somewhere around Christmas. On 10 July, of the following year Moryson arrived at the Cock, Aldersgate Street.

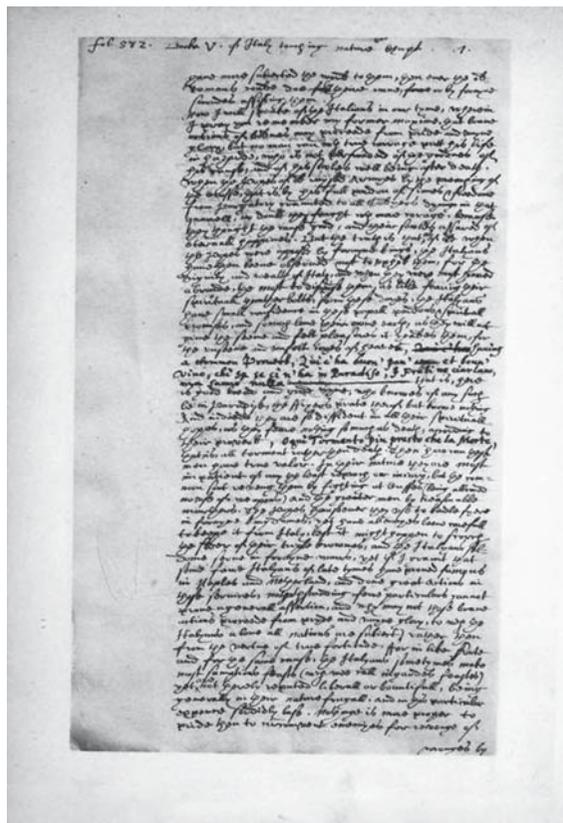


Fig:1 Moryson's handwritten text as seen in the unpublished chapters compiled by Charles Hughes, 1903.

Compilation and publication of the *Itinerary*:

Moryson's first journey around Europe from 1591 to 1595, his first journey and a second journey from 1596 to 1597 were both penned down and took the form of a travel account. Moryson decided to publish his experiences and observations into a four part *Itinerary*. However, although the fourth part had obtained the required sanction in 1626, it was left unpublished in manuscript form. The existence of this manuscript, and its location as Corpus Christi College, Oxford came to light in 1697.

Moryson wrote long sentences and possessed a distinct style of writing which was rather extensive and detailed. This typical style reflects his keen eye for minute detail. Boies Penrose describes Moryson as one of the "quite uncritical, although conscientious and widely read" (37) among other travellers of the similar period. Charles Hughes calls attention to,

The places where Moryson settled down, and took up his residence because his descriptions of their social life are much more valuable than his discourses of the countries where he merely passed through as an intelligent tourist and note-taker...thus, Moryson writes of Germany and its people with much more life and interest than about France and the French, and his words are more valuable about Venice and Florence than about Rome and Naples. (vii)

Thus, Moryson in his instructions to young travellers stresses that they should take notes twice daily and transfer the contents at leisure into a paper book. In this regard Moryson reveals,

I wrote at leisure giving (like a free and unhired workman) much time to pleasure, to necessary affaires, and to diurse and long distractions. If you consider this, and withal remember that the work was first written in Latine, then translated into English, and that in diurse Copies, no man being able by the first Copie to put so large a worke in good fashion. (Hughes xxxviii)

Further stating that,

And if you will please also take knowledge from me that to saue expences, I wrote the greatest part with my owne hand, and almost all the rest with the slowe pen of my servant: then I hope the loss of time shall not be imputed to me. (Hughes xxxviii)

Moryson's choice of writing his first draft in Latin could probably reveal that he had a certain target audience in mind. Perhaps Moryson thought that the usage of Latin was novel as well as the readership of his book would thus not be confined just to England but other parts of continental Europe as well. This wider readership which Moryson aimed was the elite intelligentsia belonging to other mainland universities at par with universities such as Oxford and Cambridge. Such reasons quite hampered the progress of the book until its publication, because only when

Moryson finally returned to England in 1606 could he devote himself completely to the publication. Moryson spent another three years working on the manuscript at the end of which it had grown in a voluminous piece which he decided to abandon, as he wanted to refrain from making the 'gate larger than his city.' Moryson worked diligently to compile his travels with the help of his servant, however, he was faced with certain delays and this delay could be one of the reasons why his work did not receive the sort of attention and limelight it should have. One of the reasons attributable to the delay says Moryson was,

By the entreaty of my brother, Sir Richard Moryson (Vice-President of Munster), and out of my desire to see his children God had given him in Ireland, where (besides some occasions of my private estate), I was drawne over again into Ireland....(Hughes xxxix)

Once more Moryson settled down to compile his notes in Latin, but at the insistence of the publisher went on to spend another few years translating the entire work into English. It was not until April 4, 1617 that the English translation was entered into the *Registers* of the Stationers' Company. This version Hughes states,

Probably the 1617 folio had not been a great pecuniary success, and possibly Mr. John Beale, or any other expert who was consulted in the matter suggested that large omissions or excisions were desirable. Moryson was in his sixtieth year and belonged to the past age. Perhaps he felt that Germany, which he had so sympathetically described, was passing away in the welter of frightful wars...(xii)

Thus, we notice how certain delays had damaged the true value of such a great literary work.

Moryson's Travels:

Moryson's set out on his first journey on May 1, 1591. He departed from the mouth of the Thames, via Heligoland reached Stade from where he embarked upon his continental journey. Then over land he went to Hamburg, Lubeck, Luneburg, returning to Hamburg moved onto Magedeburg and then to Leipzig. At Wittenberg he spent the summer and thence moved to Leipzig where he spent the winter.

In the spring of 1592, Moryson moved from Dresden to Prague where he spent two months. After which he travelled for six days to reach Nurnberg, then via Augsburg, Ulm, Lindau, Schaffhausen, Zurich, and Baden to Bazill, Strassburg and Heidelberg. In Heidelberg Moryson spent the summer. From Heidelberg he moved to Frankfurt, Cassel, Brunswick, Luneburg, Hamburg and onwards to Stade. It was at Stade that Moryson disguised himself as a servant for he was to pass through an area that was packed with Spanish troops. It was around 21 October that Moryson reached Emden, from where he travelled to Dockam, Lewerdan, Froniken, to

Amsterdam. That winter Moryson spent in Leiden.

The following year of 1593, Moryson toured Delph, Sluse, Brill, then to Rotterdam, Dort, Middleberg, Bergen op Zoom, Vlissingh, back to Rotterdam, Delft, Hague, to Leyden. In June of the same year Moryson travelled to Utrecht and Amsterdam and in July moved to Emden, Stade, Hamburg and Lubeck. After sailing to Copenhagen he went to Roschild, and then to Elsinore from where he sailed further onto Dantzke landing at Melvin. After spending a few weeks here, on September 9, Moryson travelled by coach to Cracow, after which he rode all the way to Vienna, where he arrived by the end of October. After his arrival here he decided to spend the winter in Padua and Venice.

The following year of 1594, Moryson toured Ferrara, Bologna, Imola, Ravenna, Rimini, Pesaro, Ancona, Loreto, Spoleto. Around March 12, he was in Rome from where he moved further onto Naples, Velletri, Ferrocina, Nola and Capua. After visiting Baiae, Moryson returned to Rome. After spending a few days observing Rome, he travelled to Sienna. It was in Florence that Moryson spent the entire summer and then returned to Sienna. On November 18, Moryson moved to Lucca, Pisa, Carrara, Lirigi and then sailed to Genoa and then to Pavia, Milan, Cremona, Mantua and in December arrived at Padua.

In 1595, Moryson travelled to Vicenza, Verona, Peschiera, Brescia, Bergamo, then onto Chur, Zurich, Solothurn, Losanna, Geneva, Berne, Strasburg, Saverne, Nanzi, Metz, Chalons, Paris, Fontainebleau. Finally it was via Roanne and Dieppe that Moryson went to Dover and then arrived in London on May 13. (Hughes iv-vi)

It was on Moryson's first journey when he was touring Prague that he dreamt of his father's death. This dream became reality when an acquaintance of Moryson, weeks later conveyed the news that his father had passed away two months earlier.

Moryson's second journey

It was barely six months since he had arrived from his first travel of Continental Europe that Moryson set out on his second journey at the insistence of his brother Henry, who accompanied him. After waiting for favourable wind at Margate, the two eventually set sail on December, 7, and arrived at Vlissingh two days later on December 9, and made their way to Hague and then to Amsterdam. It was via West Friesland that Moryson travelled to Emden and then onto Oldenburg and Breme from where he went Stoad. Again returning to Oldenburg, he traversed through Brunswick, Mansfeld, Erfurt, Coburg, Nurnberg and Augusburg. Here he hired a carrier that took him further to Innsbruck to Bolzena onto Trent and finally to Venice.

Moryson on April 21 sailed the Adriatic Sea and via the Ionian Islands to Cyprus and landed at

Larnaca. From here, he hired a ship to Joppa. Around June 21, Moryson reached Jerusalem and then sailed to Tripoli and took the land route to Haleppo. This journey was cumbersome and tiring. It was around June 30, from Haleppo he and his brother travelled to Antioch where Moryson's brother Henry died. Moryson himself suffered bad-health and around October 10, sailed from Scanderoon to Crete and moved onto Candia. On December 20, sailed via Naxos to Gallipoli and then to Constantinople.

In April of 1597, Moryson rode all the way from Venice to Stade where he arrived on July 4 and then he travelled directly to England reaching the Cock, Aldersgate on July 10. (Hughes vi-vii) Moryson's father was actually hoping that he assumes responsibility of the church, and it was with this intention that he was sent to study at Cambridge. Fynes sacrificed his comfortable position at the church to satiate his passion for travel. (Hughes ix) Furthermore, a reading of his experiences shall reveal the anthropological tone in which he has described the customs, manners, cultural and religious ceremonies, and institutions like colleges and churches. There also was a demand for travel accounts as the information included therein was valuable as a pre read preparation for travellers before setting out, especially the precepts which Moryson included in the third part.

The Fourth part and the travels contained therein

A portion of the fourth part transcribed by Charles Hughes published in 1903, was divided by him into five books. The first book contains eight chapters and opens with a historical introduction of Turkey. He explains the capture of Turkey by the Mahometan Saracens, or the Muslims as were referred to by the Europeans in the early days. Right from the physical features of the Sultan or king, Moryson touches upon topics related to the general history of Turkey, to the chief officers, princes, ambassadors, and issues related to Queen Elizabeth. At the time when Moryson, began his journey Turkey was ruled by Murad III who is described as,

He was of a meane stature, of a cleare complexion white and ruddy, a chearefull Countenance, and corpulent or fatt in the body. He greatly delighted in Jewells which he bought at high rates, and wore rich apparel. (Hughes, 4)

Moryson also describes how the Sultan had a keen interest in various histories which he got translated into the local language. The Sultan, a lover of music, was also an excellent poet himself. Ceremonies like the circumcision of his son Mahomet in 1580 which was performed ostentatiously has also been described by Moryson. The death of Murad III, and ascension, of Mehmed III have also been explained beginning with the procedure of ascension and followed by the immediate action taken by the new king to secure his position within the kingdom. A description by Moryson of the Turkish state of affairs at the time and how the ownership of the immovable properties and

goods lie with the Sultan, reveal the political and legal issues that interested Moryson. About the slaves Moryson notes,

The Merchants or bawds following the Camp, to buy slaues, sell them againe to any buyer whatsoever, at great prices, vsing no Compassion to noble, or aged persons, or to tender wemen, and children, neither doth nobility make any man worth a peny more then another, nor learning, or wisdom, or witt, which the buyers value not, but only respect beuty in women, or strnght in men, except they have skill in some manual art, being Smiths, or Sadlers (of whom they have great vse for their horses) or Jewellers (whom they esteeme desiring to have all their riches portable and easy to be hidden) or be skillfull in nauigation, for at this tyme they greatly wanted Saylor. And these kinds of captiues, as they are better vsed then others, so are they morewarily kept, and more hardly redeemed. (Hughes 14)

This selling and buying of slaves covered quite a portion of Moryson's description of Turkey as it was something he was seeing and experiencing for the first time. Then another aspect that caught his attention in Turkey was the eunuch community of whom Moryson expresses,

There may be Eunuches in the Court, as well as blackmoores, as other with white skinnes, but all the black harts, having forsaken the faith of Christ, to become Mahometans, and these haue the charge of keeping the treasure, and the women. (Hughes 20)

The information system in Turkey at the time was quite active in gathering data pertaining to foreign lands that could be a possible threat to the Sultan. In the case of England and its monarch Moryson writes,

Touching Forrayne Princes, England was so faarr remoued from Turkye as from the forces thereof the Turkes could expect neither good nor ill, and when the Emperor beheld England in a Mapp, he wondered that the King of Spaine dig it with mattocks, and cast it into the Sea. But the heroic vertues of Queene Elizabeth, her great actions in Christendome, and especially her peruailing against the Pope and king of Spaine, her professed enemyes, made her much admired of the Emperor, of his mother, and of all the great men of that Court, which did appeare by the letters and guiftes sent to her Maiestie from thence, and by the consent of all strangers that liued in that tyme at Constantinople. (Hughes 31)

From the above, the impression of Queen Elizabeth created in Turkey, was one of strength and admiration. Besides England, Moryson provides details of the information collected by the Turkish government regarding Poland, Venice, Germany and Spaine. Further, the unpublished chapters dwell into the personal experiences and accounts of Poland, the Commonwealth of Italy

where Moryson speaks generally about the history and his overall impression of the governmental issues. After providing a brief overview of Italy Moryson delves deeper into Venice, Florence and Genoa. Finally, Moryson closes with a general account of Italy. In Book Two of Moryson's unpublished Part Four, Hughes then transcribes the section related to France, Denmark, England, Scotland, and Ireland. The Third Book of the unpublished Part four touches upon religious aspects, arts, sciences, manners, universities, language, ceremonies, sports, customs of Germany, Bohemia, Sweitzers, Netherlands, Danes, Polonians, Turkes, Italians, French, English, Scottish and the Irish. The Fourth Book of the unpublished Part four turns to the cultural aspects and manners of countries like Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, Bohemia, Denmark, Poland and Turkey. The Fifth, last Book speaks about the nature, manners, wits, arts, sciences, and ceremonies of Italy, France, England, Scotland, Ireland and finally a short and general discourse about Jews and Greeks.

Conclusion:

Moryson thus, in his account, included a broad spectrum of issues in order to inform, educate and entertain his audience about the history, customs, and cultural aspects of the various countries that he travelled. Hughes when treating Moryson's unpublished manuscript compiled it in chapters by selecting general issues in small parts so as to avoid cumbersome reading. Overall the aspects that Moryson touches upon are well balanced to provide a broad grasp of the structure of the society with equal mention to politics, art, literature and culture. Hence, it can be said that the guide books available today are nothing but a modern and edited version of what the travellers of the late fifteenth and sixteenth century compiled. Moryson relates every place he visited with a flair that encourages the newer generations to travel as a medium of education.

Notes:

- 1) Part I to III were published by Moryson under the title *An Itinerary Containing His Ten Yeeres Travell through the Twelve Dominions of Germany, Bohmerland, Switzerland, Netherland, Denmarke, Poland, Italy, Turky, France, England, Scotland & Ireland* in 1617; Charles Hughes reprinted these with an additional compilation of Chapter IV which was left in manuscript form in the year 1903.
- 2) For a detailed family background of Fynes Moryson See Hughes, Charles *Shakespeare's Europe* (Sherratt & Hughes, London, 1903)
- 3) According to Hughes, the actual date in the books of Peterhouse must show the year of enrolment as 1587 as the New Year in England at the time commenced on 25 March.
- 4) Original place names used by Moryson have been maintained throughout and not changed to their modern equivalents.

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