Noël Coypel’s educational journey to Rome at the end of 1672 and the beginning of 1673
Podróż dydaktyczna Noëla Coypela do Rzymu na przełomie lat 1672/1673

Abstract
The aim of this article is to present the circumstances of Noël Coypel’s appointment as rector of the French Academy in Rome and to trace the route of his didactic journey from Paris to Rome with the Prix de Rome scholars entrusted to him. The paper is an attempt to answer the following questions: why a more difficult route through the Alps was chosen (and not, for example, a river and sea route), in what way was the journey educational, and what role did the documents given to Coypel play in securing the expedition.

The article is based on an analysis of administrative records during the reign of Louis XIV, lists of superintendents and directors of the French Academy in Rome, accounts of royal buildings, and minutes of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in Paris. The paper uses the analytical method, the comparative method, the synthetic method, source criticism, argumentum ex silentio inference, and the geographical method when discussing the itinerary.
Although the trip was purposeful and related to Coypel’s new position, he designed it in such a way as to not so much get to the destination quickly, but to show his students as much as possible. Coypel introduced the royal scholars to masterpieces of painting and sculpture at centers along a route through Dijon, Lyon, Chambéry, the Mont Cenis Pass, Turin, Milan, Bologna and Florence. The crossing of the Alps, though dangerous, was most often chosen because of the artistic reputation of the cities there. The trip was educational at the expense of comfort or safety. Coypel, as a guide and teacher (paidagōgós – παιδαγωγός) led his charges by overseeing their learning during and through the journey. Wandering to the Eternal City was part of a painter’s education (paideía – παιδεία) in the seventeenth century and was part of Coypel’s didactic work allowing young people to be inspired by direct exposure to masterpieces. The journey had an eminently didactic and artistic character, but also an initiatory one, as it gradually initiated and prepared the students for the experience of Rome, the center of artistic life at that time.

Keywords: Noël Coypel, didactic journey, Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, French Academy, Rome, Paris

Abstrakt

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie okoliczności mianowania Noëla Coypela na stanowisko rektora Akademii Francuskiej w Rzymie oraz prześledzenie trasy jego dydaktycznej podróży z Paryża do Rzymu, którą przemierzał wraz z powierzonymi sobie stypendystami Prix de Rome. Tekst jest próbą odpowiedzi na pytania: dlaczego obrano trudniejszą trasę przez Alpy (a nie np. rzeczno-morską), na czym polegał edukacyjny charakter wędrówki, jaką rolę w zabezpieczeniu wyprawy odgrywały przekazane Coypelowi dokumenty. Artykuł bazuje na analizie dokumentacji administracyjnej za panowania Ludwika XIV, listach nadintedntentów i dyrektorów Akademii Francuskiej w Rzymie, rachunkach budynków królewskich, protokołach Królewskiej Akademii Malarstwa i Rzeźby w Paryżu. W artykule zastosowano metodę analityczną, porównawczą, syntetyczną, krytykę źródeł, wnioskowanie argumentum ex silentio, a przy omawianiu trasy podróży – metodę geograficzną. Choć podróż była celowa, związana z objęciem stanowiska, to jednak Coypel tak ją poprowadził, by nie tyle szybko znaleźć się u celu, ale by jak najwięcej pokazać swoim studentom. Coypel zapoznawał królewskich stypendystów z arcydziełami malarstwa i rzeźby w ośrodkach na trasie wiodącej przez Dijon, Lyon, Chambéry, przełęcz Mont Cenis, Turyn, Mediolan, Bolonię i Florencję. Przeprawa przez Alpy, mimo iż niebezpieczna, była najczęściej obierana ze względu na renomę artystyczną tamtejszych miast. Podróż była edukacyjna, kosztem komfortu czy bezpieczeństwa. Coypel jako przewodnik i nauczyciel (paidagōgós) prowadził swoich podopiecznych
All roads followed by the 17th-century artists, especially those connected with academic art, led to Rome. The Eternal City was a particular magnet for young artists, so it is not surprising that the city on the Tiber was the main destination for artistic journeys in the modern era.¹ The need to educate artists in Rome, the city teeming with both ancient and modern works of art, was also acknowledged by art patrons, including Louis XIV, King of France, who—in 1666—established the French Academy in Rome (Académie de France à Rome). Charles Errard (1606–1689), its first rector, for over 6 years was responsible for the work of young Roman artists who had been awarded the scholarship in this city.

¹ This issue is discussed in extensive subject literature, e.g.: Ludwig Schudt, *Italienreisen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Römische Forschungen der Bibliotheca Hertziana, Band 15 (Wien, München: Schroll, 1959); Attilio Brilli, *Le voyage d’Italie: histoire d’une grande tradition culturelle du XVI e au XIX e siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1989); Jean Boutier, “Le Grand Tour: Une pratique d’éducation des noblesses européennes (XVIe – XVIIIe siècles),” in *Le Voyage à l’époque moderne, préface Lucien Bély* (Paris: Presses de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2004), 7–22; Vito Castiglione Minischetti, Giovanni Dotoli, Roger Musnik, *Le voyage français en Italie des origines au XVIIIe siècle: bibliographie analytique*, Bibliothèque du voyage français en Italie, 1 (Fasano, Paris: Schena, Lanore, 2006); Laurent Bolard, *Le voyage des peintres en Italie au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2012). The impact of printed guidebooks on travels to Italy is discussed in: François Brizay, “Peut-on mesurer l’influence qu’eurent en France les guides et récits de voyage en Italie du milieu du XVIIe siècle à la fin du XVIIIe siècle?”, in *La culture du voyage: pratiques et discours de la Renaissance à l’aube du Xxe siècle*, sous la direction de Gilles Bertrand (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2004), 121–146. The French guidebooks to Italy from the 17th century are discussed in: *idem*, “La présentation de l’Italie dans les guides imprimés en français au XVIIe siècle,” in *Les guides imprimés du XVie au Xxe siècle. Villes, paysages, voyages. Actes du colloque tenu à Paris VII-Denis Diderot, les 3–5 décembre 1998*, sous la direction de Gilles Chabaud, Évelyne Cohen, Natacha Coquery, Jérôme Penez (Paris: Belin, 2000), 359–376. The method of writing guidebooks for travellers is described in: *idem*, *Touristes du Grand Siècle. Le voyage d’Italie au XVIIème siècle* (Paris: Belin, 2006).
1672, at the age of 66, he asked for permission to resign from this post and nominated his 44-year-old friend Noël Coypel (1628–1707) as his successor [Fig. 1]. However, Errard’s choice was not binding, as the final decision belonged to Charles Le Brun, at that time both Chancellor and Rector of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in Paris. Coypel, a man of great talent and great ambition, was in his element in court circles and enjoyed the favour of First Painter to the King. Undoubtedly, this was a decisive factor in appointing him to the position of a new rector of the Academy in Rome; this appointment was a direct reason of his taking a leave of absence from his duties at the Academy in Paris (29 October). The winners of the *Prix de Rome* competition – Alexander Ubeleski, Jean Jouvenet, Charles-François Poerson, Michel Monnier and Jean Tortebat – were entrusted to his care during the journey.

While preparing for the journey to Rome, Coypel did not fail to show his gratitude to Le Brun, the Academy’s main decision-maker. A convenient opportunity for it came with his name day falling on 4 November. The day before, Coypel had exotic orange trees transported to the estate of

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2 His request was motivated by the deteriorating state of his health and difficulties in maintaining discipline at the Academy: *Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert* publiés par Pierre Clément, vol. 5, *Fortifications, Sciences, Lettres, Beaux-Arts, Bâtiments* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1868), 280, 293, 313–314; Albert Lecoy de La Marche, *L’Académie de France à Rome. Correspondance inédite de ses directeurs, précédée d’une étude historique* (Paris: Didier, 1874), 9–10.

3 Lecoy de La Marche, *L’Académie de France à Rome*, 10; Auguste Castan, “Les premières installations de l’Académie de France à Rome d’après le plus ancien inventaire du mobilier et des travaux de cette institution,” *Mémoires de la Société d’émulation du Doubs*, 4 (1889): 159; Henry Lapauze, *Histoire de l’Académie de France à Rome*, vol. 1 (1666–1801) (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1924), 25.

4 Coypel’s personality is discussed in: Lapauze, *Histoire de l’Académie de France*, 36; Jean-Paul Alaux, *L’Académie de France à Rome. Ses directeurs, ses pensionnaires* (Paris: Duchartre, 1933), 28.

5 “Ce mesme jour [29 Octobre 1672] Monsieur Coypel a prix congé de la Compagnie pour le voyage de Rome, où il est envoyé du Roy pour la conduite de l’Académie Française estable en ceste ville là”: Paris, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Ms. 1, *Procès-verbaux de l’Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture*, vol. 1, [29 Octobre 1672]. Cf.: *Procès-verbaux de l’Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture 1648–1792*, publiés pour la Société de l’Histoire de l’Art français d’après les registres originaux conservés à l’École des Beaux-Arts par Anatole de Montaiglon, vol. 1, 1648–1672 (Paris: J. Baur, 1875), 400–401; *Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome avec les Surintendants des Bâtiments*, publiée par Anatole de Montaiglon, vol. 1, 1666–1694 (Paris: Charavay Frères, 1887), 38. This issue is also discussed in: Lapauze, *Histoire de l’Académie de France*, 37.

6 On the certificates confirming being awarded the Royal prize: Paris, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Ms. 480, *L’Etablissement de l’Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture [Du 29 iour d’Octobre 1672, unnumbered pages].*
First Painter to the King in Montmorency and arranged them along the path in the garden so that on the morning of St. Charles’ day, Le Brun’s patron saint, he could walk down the alley flanked by orange trees. Following Jean Rou’s account, this courtly gesture has been erroneously interpreted in subject literature as a kind of a bribe Coypel offered to Le Brun to secure his new position in Rome. This is contradicted by the fact that the painter’s appointment took place earlier, i.e. in October, and Coypel presented his elaborate gift to Le Brun in November, which should, therefore, be treated as a token of his gratitude, and not a bribe. The only thing that Coypel might have possibly hoped to obtain by this ostentatious and extravagant gift was the permission to take his 12-year-old son Antoine and his two brothers-in-law, Louis Henri Hérault and Charles Antoine Hérault, to Rome. Apart from the family members of the newly appointed rector, the passport issued on 9 November 1672 by Jean Baptiste Colbert listed: Simon Chupini, an architect, Benoît Farjat, an engraver, de Voulan, a sculptor, together with the five above mentioned Prix de Rome awardees; the group was accompanied by servants carrying luggage, who were called valets in the passport.

The document stated that their journey was undertaken by the order of Louis XIV, who requested the local authorities to facilitate the artists’ journey, to exempt them from customs, toll, and any other charges.

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7 “Un matin, qui était le 4 novembre, jour de sa fête, Le Brun put se promener, dans son domaine de Montmorency, entre deux rangées d’orangers que Coypel y avait fait transporter de la veille au lendemain”: Lapauze, Histoire de l’Académie de France, 36.
8 Mémoires inédits et opuscules de Jean Rou (1638–1711), publiés pour la Société de l’histoire du protestantisme français, d’après le manuscrit conservé aux archives de l’État à La Haye par Francis Waddington, (Paris: Agence centrale de la société, 1857), 21–22. Cf.: Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome, vol. 1, 36–37.
9 Alaux, L’Académie de France à Rome, 28; Lapauze, Histoire de l’Académie de France, 36; Mickaël Szanto, Le dessin ou la couleur? Une exposition de peinture sous le règne de Louis XIV, préface d’Antoine Schnapper (Genève: Droz, 2008), 27.
10 They were listed in the passport, and mentioned by: Lapauze, Histoire de l’Académie de France, 39–40. See also: Franchi-Verney della Valetta, L’Académie de France à Rome, 1666–1903 (Paris: Fischbacher, 1904), 35.
11 “Envoyant à Rome le Sieur Coypel, l’un de nos Peintres ordinaires, avec les nommés Antoine Coypel, son fils, Charles Hérault, Louis-Henri Hérault, Simon Chupini, Farjat, Charles Poerson, Alexandre, Tortebat, Pierre Monnier, Voulan et Jouvenet”: Paris, Archives Nationale de France, Archives de la Marine, Dépêches concernant le commerce, 1672, fol. 329. Cf.: Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome, vol. 1, 39; Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert, 541–542; Lapauze, Histoire de l’Académie de France, 30, 37; Alaux, L’Académie de France à Rome, 28; Castan, "Les premières installations de l’Académie," 167, note 1.
and, should the need arise, to provide assistance to them.\textsuperscript{12} The ruler’s authority guaranteed the bearer of the passport a safe journey across the country, although it applied only to France. After the travellers crossed its borders, this role was to be taken over by letters of recommendation. The royal minister provided Noël Coypel with recommendations addressed to Ennemond Servien, the French envoy at the court of the Duke of Savoy, Charles Emanuel II in Turin,\textsuperscript{13} and to Abbot Luigi Strozzi, the representative of the King of France at the court of Cosimo III de Medici in Florence.\textsuperscript{14}

On 11 November 1672, Coypel collected 500 livres from the royal treasury to cover the travel expenses,\textsuperscript{15} and left Paris as the head of a group of artists who either walked, rode a horse, or travelled on a cart. The pace of the journey was set by the \textit{valets} carrying the luggage.\textsuperscript{16} The size of the group,\textsuperscript{17} an experienced painter as its leader, and the documents issued by the royal chancery were to ensure a successful expedition. The fact

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Accommodation and dangers awaiting travellers, e.g. highwaymen, are described in: Bolard, \textit{Le voyage des peintres}, 54–62.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} We learn of the existence of Colbert’s letter to Ennemond Servien, the French Ambassador in the Duchy of Savoy, from the latter’s reply of 15 December 1672. \textit{Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome}, vol. 1, 40–42.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Paris, Archives Nationale de France, Archives de la Marine, \textit{Depêches concernant le commerce}, 1672, fol. 330. Cf.: \textit{Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome}, vol. 1, 40; \textit{Correspondance administrative sous le règne de Louis XIV entre le cabinet du roi, les secrétaires d’Etat, le chancelier de France et les intendants et gouverneurs des provinces, les présidents, procureurs et avocats généraux des parlements et autres Cours de Justice}, par Georges Bernard Depping, vol. 4 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1855), 592; \textit{Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert}, 341; Lapauze, \textit{Histoire de l’Académie de France}, 37.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} \textit{Comptes des Bâtiments du Roi sous le règne de Louis XIV}, publiées par Jules Guiffrey, vol. 1, \textit{Colbert}, 1664–1680 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1881), 648; \textit{Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome}, vol. 1, 40; \textit{Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome avec les surintendants des bâtiments}, publiée par Anatole de Montaiglon et Jules Guiffrey, vol. 6, 1721–1724 (Paris: Charavay Frères, 1896), 432; Lecoy de La Marche, \textit{L’Académie de France à Rome}, 17; Lapauze, \textit{Histoire de l’Académie de France}, 37.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} More on travelling: \textit{La culture du voyage: pratiques et discours de la Renaissance à l’aube du XXe siècle}, sous la direction de Gilles Bertrand (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2004). On material aspects of travelling, dangers, hardships, accommodation, and meals: Bolard, \textit{Le voyage des peintres}, 49–54.
  \item \textsuperscript{17} Artists heading for Italy often travelled in groups of similar size, i.e. over ten: Bolard, \textit{Le voyage des peintres}, 26–27. More on French artists travelling to Rome in: Jacques Thuillier, “«Il se rendit en Italie». Notes sur le voyage à Rome des artistes français au XVI\textsuperscript{e} siècle”, in \textit{«Il se rendit en Italie». Etudes offertes à André Chastel} (Rome–Paris: Elephante-Flammarion, 1987), 321–336; Gilles Montègre, “Artistes et voyageurs français à Rome à l’apogée du Grand Tour: les raisons d’être d’une dépendance réciproque,” in \textit{Voyage d’artistes en Italie du Nord XVIe-XIXe siècles}, sous la direction de Véronique


that the group included the students’ supervisor and teacher additionally emphasised its educational character.

As Dijon and Lyon were located on their route, the artists most probably visited them [Fig. 2]. From Lyon they could have taken one of two possible routes: down the Rhone and then by sea or through the mountains, which, again, opened up several possibilities of the further travel, e.g. from Marseille to Genoa or Pisa. After leaving Lyon, Coypel’s group most probably went to Chambéry and crossed the Alps through the Mont Cenis Pass.

The first documented point of their journey was Turin, where they were received by Ennemond Servien, the French envoy at the Savoyard court. On Monday, 12 December 1672, the ambassador’s relative showed the artists around the capital of Piedmont. Taking into consideration who the guide was, the French artists most probably visited the residences belonging to the House of Savoy ruling dynasty, including the royal palace (Palazzo Reale) erected between 1646 and 1658, with its collection of engravings based on the works by Giovanni Bellini, Leonardo da Vinci, and Raphael, which – through its west wing – was connected to the Renaissance Cathedral and Chapel of the Holy Shroud designed by the court architect Guarino Guarini and built between 1667 and 1668. They visited not only the city but also the suburban palace Venaria Reale, built during the reign of Charles Emanuel II as a residence for courtly entertainment and hunting. From the ambassador’s account we know

Meyer et Marie-Luce Pujalte-Fraysse (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2010), 33–44.

18 More on the issue in: René Crozet, *La vie artistique en France au XVIIe siècle (1598–1661). Les artistes et la société* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1954), 10; Bolard, *Le voyage des peintres*, 31, 43.

19 It was the only road leading to Turin. See: Bolard, *Le voyage des peintres*, 37, 43–44.

20 This information comes from the response to Colbert’s letter written by Ennemond Servien, the French Ambassador to the Duchy of Savoy, of 15 December 1672. It states that on 9 November 1672 Colbert wrote a letter to Servien in which he asked him to take care of a group of artists, e.g. to show them around Turin. *Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome*, vol. 1, 40–41; Lapauze, *Histoire de l’Académie de France*, 37.

21 In his guidebook from 1656, Pierre Du Val recommended visiting the gallery in the palace with precious paintings and sculptures: Pierre Du Val, *Le Voyage et la Description d’Italie montrant exactement les raretés & choses remarquables qui se trouvent en Provinces & en chaque Villes, les distances d’icelles; Avec un dénombrement des Places & Champs de Batailles qui s’y sont données* (Paris: Chez Gervais Clozvier, 1656), 59–60. On the role of this first Italian city o the artistic route see: Bolard, *Le voyage des peintres*, 66.

22 Ennemond Servien’s letter to Colbert of 15 December 1672: *Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome*, vol. 1, 40–42.
how important it was for them to see “all the places in this city where there is something interesting connected with painting and sculpture”\(^{23}\) during their stay in the capital of the Duchy of Savoy. As the French were painters and sculptors, these very aspects were of the greatest interest to them. Before their departure, Ennemond Servien gave Coypel two letters: one to his son, Rev. Hugues-Humbert Servien (d. 1723), who lived in Rome,\(^ {24}\) and the other to the Milanese Jesuit Giampietro Graneri (born in Turin in 1633), the brother of the chief treasurer of the Duchy of Savoy. This letter was particularly valuable, as Colbert had not sent any letter to Milan, probably because there was no representative of the King of France in this town, which was ruled by the House of Habsburgs at that time. It might be speculated that during one of their conversations, Coypel voiced his concerns about this point on their itinerary and that was why Servien resorted to his private contacts in order to help the artists. On the other hand, his letter of recommendation addressed to Graneri indirectly reveals how valuable Milan was for them: they craved to admire Milanese works of art despite the unfavourable political situation in this town. Numerous sources confirm that Lombardy was highly appreciated among academics, and art students were frequently sent there.\(^ {25}\) It is worth emphasising that a dense network of roads connected Turin and Milan, and travellers had different options regarding the choice of the means of transport, which included horses, carriages, carts, or an alternative river trip.\(^ {26}\)

The artists arrived in Milan in the second half of December and were greeted by Giampietro Graneri, who – probably meeting the request of Ennemondo Servien – personally showed them the monuments of the city.\(^ {27}\) It can be assumed that the Jesuit also offered them accommoda-

\(^{23}\) “ainsy que tous ceux qui sont avec luy [Sr Coypel], dans tous les lieux de cette ville où il y a quelque chose de curieux en peinture ou en sculpture”: the quotation from Ennemond Servien’s response to Colbert’s letter of 9 November 1672: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des manuscrits, Colbert, Volumes verts, C. Cf.: Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome, vol. 1, 40–41.

\(^{24}\) He is also mentioned in: L’Italie en 1671. Relation d’un voyage du Marquis de Seignelay, suivie de lettres inédites à Vivonne, Du Quesne, Tourville, Fénelon et précédée d’une étude historique par Pierre Clément (Paris: Librairie Académique, 1867), 98.

\(^{25}\) For example, in 1675 Noël Coypel’s son – Antoine – was sent to Lombardy to study the works of Correggio, Titian, and Veronese: Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome, vol. 1, 51–52. It was also usually a mandatory point on the journey to Rome or on the return journey to Paris: Lapauze, Histoire de l’Académie de France, 38, 51–52.

\(^{26}\) Bolard, Le voyage des peintres, 43–45.

\(^{27}\) On the importance of the capital of Lombardy in the artists’ travels see: ibidem, 67–68.
tion: they might have stayed in the monastery at Santa Maria della Scala in San Fedele, which at that time was the main seat of the Order in the city, or in the Jesuit college, located in the building of the present Pinacoteca di Brera.

Although there are no documents confirming that the French stayed in Bologna, it is almost certain that they visited this town because it was located on the Roman route through the Apennines [Fig. 2]. How crucial, especially for painters, Bologna – famous for its Academy founded by the Carracci family – was is evidenced by its description in Pierre Du Val’s French guidebook to Italy published in the 17th century,\(^{28}\) which contained a lot of information about Bologna’s masterpieces of painting and sculpture.

The next place on their itinerary, this time confirmed by written sources, was Florence. Tuscany was a mandatory point on the artistic journey of all young artists travelling to Rome, which is stated in the correspondence between Colbert and Abbot Luigi Strozzi, who offered hospitality to Coypel and his companions in late December or early January.\(^{29}\) Artists usually stayed longer in the capital of Tuscany, with its works of art in abundance, as they found both the town and its surroundings exceptionally beautiful.\(^{30}\) In Colbert’s letter to Strozzi, the Minister of Finances explicitly requested that the artists be free to see “everything that is beautiful and unusual in painting and sculpture”\(^{31}\) in this town. Because Noël Coypel and most of his companions were painters, it can be assumed that they were mostly interested in paintings, which included the works of Renaissance painters displayed in the Galleria degli Uffizi (opened to the public as early as 1591) and a number of paintings in churches and palaces. In the aforementioned letter, Colbert also asked

\(^{28}\) Du Val, *Le Voyage et la Description d’Italie*, 305–310.

\(^{29}\) *Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome*, vol. 1, passim; Alaux, *L’Académie de France à Rome*, 28. More on Luigi Strozzi: Jean Alazard, *L’abbé Luigi Strozzi, correspondant artistique de Mazarin, de Colbert, de Louvois et de La Teulière. Contribution à l’étude des relations artistiques entre la France et l’Italie au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: E. Champion, 1924). The Duchy of Tuscany maintained good relations with the French court. More on this subject: *L’Italie en 1671. Relation d’un voyage*, 99–100. The approximate time of arrival in Florence was determined on the basis of the date given in the aforementioned letter from Ennemond Servien to Colbert of 15 December 1672.

\(^{30}\) On the importance of Florence in artistic journeys see: Bolard, *Le voyage des peintres*, 83–86.

\(^{31}\) “Comme il sera bien ayez de voir, et les François qui l’accompagnent, tout ce qu’il peut y avoir de beau et de rare en peinture et sculpture à Florence, je vous prie de leur faciliter l’entrée dans tous les lieux où leur curiosité les pourra porter”: Paris, Archives Nationale de France, Archives de la Marine, *Dépêches concernant le commerce, 1672*, fol. 330. Cf.: *Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome*, vol. 1, 40.
for allowing them to visit monuments usually inaccessible to outsiders. One can venture a guess that these were private Florentine palaces housing valuable works of art. Admiring all of them was to “teach them what was necessary to carry out the orders that were given to them.”32 In these words, the superintendent clearly indicated the need for artists to perfect themselves in their arts, so that they could serve the King better by reflecting his glory with their works.

After leaving Florence, the travellers headed towards their destination, the Eternal City, where they arrived before the end of January 167333 [Fig. 2]. The journey from the French capital took them about two and a half months. They were accommodated in the seat of the French Academy in Rome, on the Janiculum Hill, near the monastery of Sant’Onofrio.34 Upon arrival, the artists might have been guided around Rome by Rev. Hugues-Humbert Servien, who received such an order in a letter from his father.35 At that time the former chamberlain of Pope Clement IX (1667–1669) lived in Palazzo Farnese and probably showed them the paintings in his seat, including the famous frescoes of Annibale Carracci.

After reaching the city on the Tiber, Noël Coypel wrote a report detailing the course of their educational journey, which he sent to Paris. The report was read by an engraver Guillaume Château during the meeting of the Paris Academy held on 29 April 1673.36 The fact that Coypel was required to submit such a report testifies to the great importance attached to a journey to Rome. It was usually treated as an excellent opportunity to visit the towns along the route, especially the Italian ones, and to gain first-hand experience of the works collected there, and, consequently, to develop one’s artistic skills. The specificity and fame of particular cultural centres on the Apennine Peninsula motivated artists to take the route

32 “afin d’en tirer les lumières nécessaires pour l’exécution des ordres qui leur ont esté donnés”: ibidem.
33 The source of this information is a letter from Errard to Colbert of 31 January 1673: Lecoy de La Marche, L’Académie de France à Rome, 12, 60. It is confirmed by Colbert’s response of 24 February 1673: Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome, vol. 1, 43–44; Lapauze, Histoire de l’Académie de France, 36; Alaux, L’Académie de France à Rome, 28.
34 Castan, “Les premières installations de l’Académie,” 161–162. On the inventory of Sarac’s house from 1673: Lapauze, Histoire de l’Académie de France, 17–19, 39–41.
35 Information on this topic is found in Ennemond Servien’s response to Colbert’s letter: Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome, vol. 1, 40–42.
36 Correspondance des directeurs de l’Académie de France à Rome, vol. 1, 46; Procès-verbaux de l’Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture 1648–1792, publiés pour la Société de l’Histoire de l’Art français d’apres les registres originaux conservés à l’École des Beaux-Arts par Anatole de Montaiglon, vol. 2, 1673–1688, (Paris: J. Baur, 1878), 5.
through the Alps, although it was more difficult (because of the terrain), more dangerous (because of highwaymen), and more time-consuming than travelling by boat. Additional problems were caused by the cold and humid climate, acutely unpleasant during the winter. And it was in winter when Coypel and his companions travelled to Rome. The route they took – longer and more difficult – was chosen due to its educational and artistic value provided by the works of art in the towns along the way. The possibility to appreciate them was the reason why the route through the Alps was the one most frequently chosen by artists travelling from France to the Eternal City. Their artistic journey, first of all, was to be educational, even at the expense of comfort or safety.

The desire to admire the masterpieces of the towns along this demanding route was sufficient justification for Coypel for choosing it. The main aim of the journey was to extend the artistic education received by students at the Paris Academy. The extant correspondence reveals that during the trip Coypel's companions were mostly interested in painting and sculpture, which directly stemmed from their artistic specialization. The letters of recommendation that Coypel had received proved beneficial, as they allowed the artists not only to visit the towns located on their route, but also to visit places usually inaccessible to outsiders. Thanks to this, the journey itself became a source of artistic inspiration. Journeying was an important element of the artistic education of young people, offering them a direct contact with masterpieces: it shaped artistic inventiveness, enriched the repertoire of the patterns they were familiar with, and introduced them to Italy's invaluable artistic heritage.

Although this journey was directly connected with his new post, Noël Coypel planned in a way that allowed him to see and show to his students as much as possible rather than to reach the final destination as quickly as possible. As a guide and teacher (paidagōgos – παιδαγωγός), Coypel led his students and supervised their educational process during and through the journey. In the 17th century, the journey to the Eternal City was a part of painters' education (paideía – παιδεία). Coypel used this journey as an opportunity to demonstrate to his students the vital role played by a direct contact with a work of art and by experiencing it first-hand. The journey included sightseeing cities, churches and palaces, and admiring great art collections usually inaccessible to the public, access to which was granted to Coypel thanks to reference letters from important persons both in Paris and in Italy. Although the journey had

37 Bolard, *Le voyage des peintres*, 36, 38.
38 *Ibidem*, 47.
primarily educational and artistic nature, it also served as a rite of passage, as it gradually prepared students for the experience of Rome – the centre of artistic life at that time.

[Fig. 1]. Noël Coypel, *Self-portrait*, black stone and white chalk, Museum of Fine Arts of Rennes, Inv.794.1.2585, photo by Pymouss
[Fig. 2]. Noël Coypel’s journey to Rome (1672–1673)

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