

The Image of Travelling

Travel Paintings and Writings by the Danish Golden Age Painter Martinus Rørbye¹

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Abstract

The Danish painter Martinus Rørbye was one of the Danish artists to reinvent the traditions of the genre of travel painting in the 1830s. His development of a new complex pictorial strategy was in many ways an answer to the changes in society, especially the advent of tourism. The new travel image had its focus on concurrency, everyday life and the secular world, resulting in images that anticipated the photographic travel image, the snapshot and the travel postcard. The advent of this new strategy proved to have a very long after-life, as tourists and travellers of today still lean a great deal on the image codes that Rørbye and his fellow artists of the 1830s invented. The aim of the article is to elaborate on Rørbye's first European sojourn in 1834-1837, and it is my intention to frame the conditions of doing such a trip with attention to what Rørbye saw and experienced and how he interpreted this knowledge, visually and in words. Rørbye is my primary research focus, but his artistic struggles are very similar to other artists travelling in Italy at the time. I therefore use Martinus Rørbye's Italian sojourn as a prism of interpretation.

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Revisiting Italy

Exit: Rørbye's travel painting

Martinus Rørbye's Italian sojourn as a prism of interpretation

[1] In May 1834, the Danish painter Martinus Rørbye left Copenhagen for his first southern sojourn. Ahead of him lay three years of intensive studies of European culture and art. During his travels he filled several sketchbooks with drawings in pencil and sketches in watercolour in various sizes, and he completed numerous oil paintings thematising the south. On a daily basis, he wrote to his family and friends in Denmark, and in addition he kept a personal diary with records of his numerous experiences of all the places he visited. Rørbye's travel diary from the years 1834-1837 is loaded with interesting information, and although its style is very private, concise and brief, as it was not intended for publication,² it contains unique and unfiltered records of great relevance for the reader interested in art history and cultural history of the early nineteenth century.

[2] When we compare Rørbye's diary entries with his paintings and drawings, it is striking that they are far from corresponding in their message: They almost give the impression that the visual universe portrayed in Rørbye's pictures reflects another journey than the written word in his diary. These differences between word and image are the subject of this article, and the aim is to investigate the nature of these dissimilarities and to analyse the results in relation to innovative changes in the pictorial vocabulary and concept of travel images as a genre.³

[3] By focusing on Rørbye's first trip to the South in 1834-1837, it is my intention to frame the conditions of undertaking such a tour in the 1830s with attention to what Rørbye saw and experienced and how he interpreted this knowledge, visually and in words. Rørbye is my primary research focus, but his artistic battles were indeed similar

² At the time, it was very popular to publish one's travel experiences after returning from long journeys abroad. For Danish references see: C. H. Pram, "Noget om Lystreiser, med Anviisning til en saadan", in: *Det skandinaviske Litteraturselskabs Skrifter*, 2nd ed., Copenhagen 1806, 359-443; Jens Baggesen, *Labyrinten eller Reise gjennem Tydskland, Schweiz og Frankrig*, 2 vols., Copenhagen 1792-1793, and reprint, Copenhagen 2005; N. T. Bruun (trans./ed.), *Magazin for de allernyeste og interessanteste Reisebeskrivelser*, Copenhagen 1817-1820.

³ For more information on the existing traditions compared with the new traditions, see: Karina Lykke Grand, "Rejsebilleder - Turist i Arkadien", in: *GULD - Skatte fra den danske guldalder*, eds. Karina Lykke Grand and Lise Pennington, Aarhus 2013, 200-239; Karina Lykke Grand, "På rejse med Thorald Brendstrup. Landskabsbilleder fra det kendte og ukendte Europa", in: *Thorald Brendstrup. I guldalderens skygge*, eds. Gertrud Oelsner and Ingeborg Bugge, Aarhus 2012, 77-104; Karina Lykke Grand, "Turist i guldalderen - på rejse med Martinus Rørbye", in: *Passepartout* 29, n. 15 (2009), 95-112 (Temanummer: *Dansk guldalder i nyt lys*, eds. Karina Lykke Grand et al.); Karina Lykke Grand, "Udsigt til Italien. På rejse med P. C. Skovgaard", in: *P. C. Skovgaard. Dansk guldalder revurderet*, eds. Karina Lykke Grand and Gertrud Oelsner, Aarhus 2010, 123-166; Karina Lykke Grand, *Dansk guldalder. Rejsebilleder*, Aarhus 2012.

to those facing the majority of other artists travelling in Italy at the time. I therefore use Martinus Rørbye's Italian sojourn as a prism of my interpretation.

New modes of travelling

[4] Viewed in the wider perspective of the history of mentalities, Rørbye's sojourn took place at a time of great change, with travelling conditions as well as travel culture being transformed rapidly due to changes in societies, mentalities and technology. From the late 1820s, the newly invented steamship made it possible to travel to a number of destinations by sea; and from the mid-1830s onwards railway lines were under construction on the continent. New opportunities for travelling were becoming available, and travelling times were being reduced. Sea and rail travel started to be regulated by timetables following increasingly fixed routes, and this changed the image of the unique, lonely traveller on the continent. One of the positive consequences of these new collective, effective routes by sea and land was that prices fell – it was cheaper to take a number of passengers to the same destinations than to transport people individually. In addition to this, more and more people from various parts of society got the opportunity to travel.

[5] The classical Grand Tour, which was once the exclusive privilege of the nobility in search of cultural education abroad, was now within the reach of the upper bourgeoisie as well. In this perspective it becomes important to mention that the group of Danish artists at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts who were just about to travel to Italy, all belonged to the bourgeoisie, including Rørbye. As revealed in this article, the clashes between the nobility travelling first class and the bourgeoisie travelling second or third class had some conceptual and ideological implications with regard to what were perceived as correct and incorrect ways of travelling.

[6] It is also important to mention that with regard to the rise of tourism, the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 had an enormous impact on the numbers of travellers on continental Europe. During these wars British travellers had been isolated; but they could now go on the Grand Tour to Italy again, and this led to a stream of Englishmen on the continent. In the field of tourism research, this event is also known as the "English invasion",⁴ and the experience of the many English travellers gave rise to many comments in Danish artists' travel diaries and letters, as we will see below.

The artistic idea of travelling

[7] All in all, the changes in travel patterns and ways of travelling in Europe had the consequence that travellers like Rørbye experienced a flourishing tourism – for instance in certain parts of Italy and in Switzerland. To many of the artists, these experiences came as a surprise because they had expected to encounter a pure Arcadia untouched by other travellers. But their expectations were clearly out of touch with current realities.

⁴ James Buzard, *The Beaten Track – European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918*, New York 1993.

[8] One of the reasons why the artists, for instance Rørbye, but also his Danish fellow artists Wilhelm Bendz, J. Th. Lundbye (1818-1848), Wilhelm Marstrand (1810-1873), Christen Købke (1810-1848), Constantin Hansen, P. C. Skovgaard (1817-1875) and Jørgen Sonne (1801-1890) among others, were uncomfortable with the unexpected occurrences of tourism abroad was probably the lack of a narrative and visual recognition of the sites visited compared to the master narrative of sojourning in Italy. Nobody had ever told them, that travelling to Italy often felt like being on a beaten high way. Typically, the Danish artists had become familiar with the idea of travelling through the travel paintings and images produced by the professors and teachers at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, who had been on their Italian sojourn at the beginning of the nineteenth century – for instance C. W. Eckersberg (1793-1853) and J. L. Lund (1777-1867). And during the years at the Academy the artists had often been involved in copying the paintings of their teacher's travel images as well as travel paintings by the great old masters like Claude Lorrain. And all of these paintings displayed Italy as an Arcadia, certainly showing no traces of tourism.

[9] Travel conditions had changed much since Rørbye's teacher Eckersberg had been abroad during the years 1810-1816, as he travelled in a period ahead of the steamship routes and the railway lines.⁵ His experiences were no longer timely, and therefore Rørbye and other contemporary artists could not lean on nor use the narratives produced by Eckersberg and Lund.

[10] As a consequence, the new generation of travelling artists had to redefine the highly traditional genre of travel paintings and decide whether to depict the changes that were occurring (including features of tourism), or whether to camouflage these modern phenomena. The results of this artistic struggle had a powerful impact on the genre, and the effect was so durable that even today travellers, artists and photographers still adopt the pictorial codes and new ways of depicting famous attractions and landscape views invented by artists around the 1830s.

Going south by steam ship and horse-drawn vehicles – heading for Paris

[11] 1834. Monday 19 May.

With the steamship Frederik the 6th to Lübeck. Danish people on board including Doctor Thorsen and Count Schulenburg. Bad mood. Only minor details kept me from going back to Rose straight away, because it made me so sorry to see her, my mother and my sisters cry; but I tried to be brave and let none notice my feelings.⁶

Rørbye's journey to Italy started in Copenhagen, travelling by steamship to Lübeck in Schleswig-Holstein. This was one of the strategic and frequent routes used for trade

⁵ For further information on transport and travelling: Grand, Karina Lykke, *Dansk guldalder. Rejsebilleder*, Aarhus 2012; for information on Eckersberg, 68-69.

⁶ Martinus Rørbye, Travel Diary, 1834-1837, in: The Royal Library, Copenhagen, Håndskriftsamlingen, 19 May 1834. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are mine.

and passengers as Schleswig-Holstein was part of the Danish Kingdom back then. According to Rørbye's diary, he had to change to more traditional forms of transport on his way through some of the German cities, using for instance horse-drawn vehicles like the *Extra Posten* and the stagecoach, while in Holland he could use the steamer again in the coastal areas down to France.

[12] It was a characteristic feature for travelling in the 1830s-1860s that the travellers had to make many changes between the various methods of transportation. Moreover, they even had to walk some distances, carrying their own luggage (or using servants) where no other means of horse-drawn or steam-driven vehicles could be deployed, for instance when crossing the Alps. This indicates that it could be an extremely exhausting and dangerous experience to travel in those days, and this is one of the reasons why the artists' fiancées, wives and children often stayed at home, waiting years for the men to return.

[13] On July 6, 1834, Rørbye arrived in Paris. The decision to visit Paris on the way to Italy was presumably inspired by Eckersberg, who, on his way to Italy, had a long stay in the French capital from 1810-1813 taking lessons from the French painter J. L. David (1748-1825).

[14] Eckersberg had a travel scholarship enabling him to travel for six years, whereas Rørbye only had a grant for three years, which was the new standard for scholarships given to the most gifted students of the Academy. Both of their scholarships came from the foundation called *Fonden ad Usus Publicos*, which was one of the king's and the Academy's sources of funding.⁷ Due to the reduced grant given to Rørbye, his stay in Paris only lasted for one and a half months.

[15] In Paris he met Eckersberg's son, the professional engraver Erling Eckersberg (1808-1889), who had arrived in Paris in January 1834, also with a three-year scholarship. Erling and Rørbye visited many attractions and places together; particularly churches and parks were common points of interest. In addition, they visited the Louvre many times as well as the opera and the city's natural history collection. Among the more curious attractions worth mentioning was "Doctor Anjoux's artificial anatomical figures" and a balloon carrying 17 people.⁸ Rørbye also met the exiled Danish philologist, social critic and author P. A. Heiberg (1758-1841) as well as the ballet dancer and later royal ballet master Auguste Bournonville (1808-1879). He also paid a few visits to the studio of the French artist Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867).

⁷ Rigsarkivet, *Fonden ad Usus Publicos, aktmæssige bidrag til belysning af dens virksomhed*, vol. 1: 1765-1800, ed. C. F. Bricka, Copenhagen 1897; vol. 2: 1801-1826, ed. C. F. Bricka, Copenhagen 1902; vol. 3: 1827-1842, ed. H. Glarbo, Copenhagen 1947.

⁸ Rørbye, *Travel Diary*, 17 August 1834.

The popular mountains

[16] On August 28, 1834, Rørbye left Paris and travelled through Switzerland passing the Jura Mountains on the French border. The descriptions in the diary contain a number of interesting markers of change in this area, seen from the perspective of tourism. Generally, Rørbye's travel diary is very brief, sharing short descriptions of the travel destinations, information on whom he travelled with, and cities and places visited. So it is worth paying special attention to the passages where he elaborates on his experiences, as he does when passing the Jura Mountains. Here, Rørbye reports that the bad behaviour of many British travellers influenced the area, and says that they even manipulated the local people and culture in a negative direction. On September 9, 1834, Rørbye reports the following from the area of Chamonix: "[...] a nice place, but it's almost like the highway, people constantly come and go."⁹ On 13 September he comments as follows in his diary: "The valley is exceedingly beautiful, it just makes an unpleasant impression to see the rich travellers arriving in this peaceful part of the country with their big luggage and many servants, whose inhabitants they blight with their money."¹⁰

[17] Judging from the context, the travellers mentioned in the quotation are presumably the English gentry, who are blamed for having deprived the locals. It is also worth noting that Rørbye indicates that the nobility are the ones behaving badly, without mentioning how the bourgeois travellers behaved. This feature was common among the bourgeois artist travellers, putting the blame on others and never themselves. As we will see, a certain rhetorical difference between the two classes of society emerged in the written word as well as in the pictures, with the bourgeois artists portraying themselves as the true travellers and labelling the nobility as tourists or "untrue travellers". In some respects, Rørbye was quite surprised that travelling south already felt like walking on a beaten track, sharing the same locations with lots of other travellers. Certainly this did not match his expectations before setting out and a feeling of discrepancy between the narratives heard at home and the actual reality observed while travelling emerged.

[18] One of the most significant writers influencing the Danish artists back then was the Danish writer Jens Baggesen (1764-1826), who travelled in the same Swiss area as Rørbye, only 30-40 years earlier. In Baggesen's much read travel novel, *The Labyrinth*, based on his own experiences, Baggesen indicated that he had a unique experience of the area: "[...] everywhere one detects honesty, self-esteem, industriousness, and, in consequence, happiness, peace."¹¹ These were not exactly the same descriptive words used by Rørbye or his fellow travellers, which shows that much seemed to have changed in the decades since Baggesen had been there.

⁹ Rørbye, *Travel Diary*, 6 September 1834.

¹⁰ Rørbye, *Travel Diary*, 13 September 1834.

¹¹ Jens Baggesen, *Labyrinten eller Reise giennem Tydskland, Schweitz og Frankerig*, 2 vols., Copenhagen 1792/1793, quoted from: *Mægtige Schweiz - Inspirationer fra Schweiz 1750-1850*, ed. Dyveke Helsted, exh. cat., Thorvaldsen Museum, Copenhagen 1973, 17.

[19] From the touristic area of the Jura Mountains Rørbye produced a drawing with no traces of tourists (fig. 1). Instead, this drawing shows a man, perhaps Rørbye himself, wandering all alone through the magnificent scenery of the mountain pass. The novelty of Rørbye's image is that he strives to give the impression that what he had drawn was exactly what he had seen and experienced. He also manages to give the impression that the spectator is invited into the same pictorial space as he is in and to believe in the universe depicted by looking over the artist's shoulder. In this regard something new is going on, compared with how the previous generation of painters constructed their travel paintings.



1 Martinus Rørbye, *Bjerglandskab med vandrer/ Mountain Landscape*, 1834, sketch, pen on paper, 13.1 x 20.8 cm. Kobberstiksamlingen, The National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen (Public Domain)

[20] Most of the drawings and paintings done in the late eighteenth century depicted the scenery from a higher point of view, giving the impression of not being in the same space and time as the contemporary spectator, but in a more distant, everlasting dreamlike universe maintaining the idea of travelling in Arcadia. This tradition originated from the earlier masters' drawings and paintings, for instance from the seventeenth-century French painters Claude Lorrain (1600-1682) and Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), which indicates that the tradition of producing travel paintings in a certain way was long and lasting. One achievement by Rørbye and his fellow contemporary artists in terms of reinventing the travel painting genre was to depict Switzerland and Italy in a visual mode that did not challenge the traditions too much as the art market's demand for travel paintings was a place for regular and necessary income. However, the artists of the 1830s managed to do this by replacing the sfumato-blurred landscape-look by bright daylight, often enlivened with contemporary people rather than ancient-looking people.¹² Reinventing the travel- painting genre also meant eliminating signs of tourism in their images, maintaining the impression that society had not changed much since Lorrain and his contemporaries had done their Grand Tour. Had Rørbye's drawing (fig. 1) been enlarged into the media of oil on

¹² For instance, Christen Købke, Constantin Hansen, Jørgen Roed, Carl Blechen and many more.

canvas, many buyers would certainly have reacted positively. But if tourists had been depicted in the painting, the deviation from tradition would have alarmed the art market, leaving Rørbye's painting potentially unsold. Although it was a delicate balance, Rørbye was very well aware of the unspoken rules that existed. So far, it was only in the private written word that there was an opportunity to describe the real changes that were occurring in Europe.

The transcription of Martinus Rørbye's travel diary

[21] In my research on travel culture in the nineteenth century, I discovered that art historical research dealing with topics like the Grand Tour and the southern sojourn in general focused much more on the final destinations, for instance Rome, than paying attention to the actual travelling itself. The way in which artists managed to get to Rome was of little interest, and in many cases the choice of transport used on the journey was not even mentioned. Most often the process of transcribing the artists' letters or diaries resulted in summarising the actual travelling in only a few sentences.

[22] This was the case when the Danish journalist and author Georg Nygaard (1871-1942) transcribed Rørbye's diary in 1931. All of Rørbye's reports from Copenhagen to Paris, and from Paris to Rome were summed up in this sentence: "The first sections of the diary, the journey from Copenhagen to Italy, are of less interest, and I have therefore summarised these parts of the reports."¹³ Regarding Rørbye's journey in Switzerland, he summed up: "Rørbye makes some excursions in the mountains, where he paints and draws."¹⁴ This extremely sparse, neutral information shows that all evidence of a flourishing tourism and the negative influence of the many travellers on the local culture has been weeded out. This has prevented future researchers or readers from making their own judgements of the material's relevance or importance. Nygaard's transcription from 1931 is still the only one available.

[23] One of the reasons why nobody has had any doubts concerning the validity or neutrality of the transcription probably relates to the fact that Rørbye did not portray his experiences of the flourishing tourism in any way, nor did he depict any tourists in his sketches or paintings.¹⁵ They were simply not part of his visual vocabulary, but only

¹³ Letter from Georg Nygaard to the seller of the transcripts, Director Aage R. Angelo, Overgaden under the water 37, Copenhagen K, 11 November 1931, copied at the end of volume 1 of Nygaard's handwritten, and not paginated, transcription. See: Georg Nygaard, *Maleren Martinus Rørbyes Rejsedagbøger 1834-1837*, 3 vols., in: The Royal Library, Copenhagen, D 57.823:1-3. Nygaard's transcription is also accessible at http://www.kunstabib.dk/objekter/KAB01/D57823_1.pdf, http://www.kunstabib.dk/objekter/KAB01/D57823_2.pdf and http://www.kunstabib.dk/objekter/KAB01/D57823_3.pdf. – Aage Rørbye Angelo (1875-1966) was the son of Therese Rørbye (1843-1929), Martinus and Rose Rørbye's second daughter.

¹⁴ Nygaard, *Maleren Martinus Rørbyes Rejsedagbøger*, vol. 1, n. pag., 6-20 September 1834.

¹⁵ For more information on Rørbye's travel paintings see: Lykke Grand, "Turist i guldalderen – på rejse med Martinus Rørbye", and id., "Dannelsesrejsen til Italien. Det nye rejsebillede".

part of his written vocabulary, as his diary was not produced with the intention of being shared publicly. So it would be natural to conclude that the images of his travels contain the same story as the official transcription, and that a balance between the word and the image was maintained. However, this is far from the case.

The written experience of Rome and the life in Rome

[24] From Switzerland, Rørbye travelled through Austria, where he got on board the *vettura* or hackney coach to Milan, from where he travelled by steamship to Livorno, arriving there on October 4, 1834. He had short stops in Pisa, Florence, Perugia and Spoleto, and on October 22 Rørbye finally made it to Rome:

*"October 22, 1834 [...] arriving in Rome in beautiful weather. [...] I was happy to receive letters from Rose. [...] Thursday, 23 October 1834. Had my coffee for the first time in the Caffè Greco. Together with [Ditlev] Blunck I visited [Bertel] Thorvaldsen, who was in a very good mood; after which I searched in vain for vacant rooms. Saw three paintings by [Horace] Vernet, exhibited at the French Academy [...]."*¹⁶

Rørbye's expectations of the Roman scenery and attractions were very high, as he had studied many paintings of Rome and had heard and read a lot about this glorious, ancient city. But in the event, Rome did not live up to his expectations:

*"I cannot exactly say that the sight of Rome has pleased me; I had imagined everything much prettier, and I never imagined that this city would be so full of narrow and filthy streets. The ruins, with the exception of the Colosseum, I had thought would be more gorgeous, and I can truly say that only Piazza del Popolo and Peter's Basilica did not disappoint me. The Capitol did not meet my expectations at all, as I had imagined it exalted on a rock dominating the whole city."*¹⁷

During his first week or two he also went to see the Villa Borghese, the Vesta temple, the Pantheon, the Villa Medici and the Sistine Chapel, as they were the city's iconic sights, then as now.

[25] At first, Rørbye's experience of Rome was influenced a great deal by the deeply rooted impression that he brought with him from home, though these biased feelings were normal when compared with other artists' reactions.¹⁸ However, the question was what he should do with these mixed emotions and experiences. Should he paint the attractions as he had imagined they would be, or in a more realistic way and size?

¹⁶ Nygaard, *Maleren Martinus Rørbyes Rejsedagbøger*, vol. 1, n. pag., 22 October 1834, 23 October 1834.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 25 October 1834.

¹⁸ For more information on Rome as the final destination of the Grand Tour see: Hannemarie Ragn Jensen et al., eds., *Inspirationens skatkammer – Rom og skandinaviske kunstnere i 1800-tallet*, Copenhagen 2003; Hans Edvard Nørregård-Nielsen, *Dengang i Italien – H. C. Andersen og guldaldermalerne*, Copenhagen 2005.

[26] All the Nordic travellers usually gathered at the Caffè Greco on a daily basis, with the internationally recognised Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1844) in the centre. He lived in Rome for more than 38 years, and had a large studio in the city with popes and emperors as clients. In the cafés the Danish, German, Norwegian and Swedish artists and other travellers – including counts and consuls – met to eat and socialise; and in the Caffè Greco the artists also received letters from home by poste restante. So in many ways this place was a natural meeting point for Rørbye and his fellow artists.

[27] In my research I discovered that the concept of the *tourist colony* unintentionally arose during these social gatherings among fellow countrymen, since the Nordic travellers did not interact with the locals but preferred to mix with their compatriots. However, Rørbye did not approve of this excluding behaviour, as I will show later.

[28] The artists who Rørbye frequently visited and saw in the café included the flower painter J. L. Jensen (1800-1856), the architect Michael Bindesbøll (1800-1856), Ditlev Blunck (1798-1854), Albert Kuchler (1803-1886), Jørgen Sonne (1801-1890), Fritz Petzholdt (1805-1838), Constantin Hansen (1804-1880), the Norwegian painter Thomas Fearnley (1802-1842), the Swedish painter Valgren, the German painter Johann Baptist Kirner (1806-1860), and the Danish painter Ernst Meyer (1797-1861), who lived in Rome on a regular basis. Furthermore, Rørbye paid daily visits to Peter (1808-1881) and Henriette Wulff (1804-1858) – siblings from Copenhagen with close relations to the Danish writer H. C. Andersen (1805-1875). Often with very mixed feelings, he also participated in more official events, the so-called *Tuesday visits to the Princess*, at which Danish travellers had the opportunity of paying a visit to princess Charlotte Frederikke (1784-1840), formerly married to King Frederik VI, and now living in exile in Rome.

[29] After nearly two weeks in Rome, Rørbye evaluates his stay again. However, the mood is still not optimistic:

“I am not to judge, but I do not like the artists’ way of life so much. Each one of them lives so to speak for himself and frowns on everyone else. Everyone wants to be the master, and no one has come to learn; on Art they seldom utter; only few visit each other; only in the filthy tavern and in the café do they see each other.”¹⁹

His bad mood was probably influenced by the fact that he missed Rose Frederikke Schiøtt (1810-1859), with whom he had become engaged just before departure, and to whom he wrote daily letters during his three and a half years abroad. However, the more positive side of this long engagement was that they got to know each other through all these letters. Homesickness was a common feature in Rørbye’s diary, although he got more used to it during his months away, as expressed in this passage from March 1835, when he had been away from home for about ten months:

“Wednesday, March 11. In the forenoon I painted a small study at the Colosseum. In the evening I went to the Wulffs for a while. This evening I also had to go to bed early,

¹⁹ Nygaard, *Maleren Martinus Rørbyes Rejsedagbøger*, vol. 1, n. pag., 1 November 1834.

as I was not well; I am bored and long for home. However, it is clear to me that I can now cope with this feeling much better than I could at the start of my journey, when it gave me many dark thoughts. Therefore I am more in peace with myself and am able to do justice to everything I experience here."²⁰

The passage indicates that Rørbye had a sensitive nature, and that he did not approve of superficial acquaintances. He only made friends with a few people on the entire journey, in particular with the Wulff family and Blunck and Kückler.

[30] On an ordinary day in Rome Rørbye often did sketches in the countryside or city, all by himself. In the evening he often visited his few regular friends, and then returned to his lodging for the night. Here is a typical description of a day's work and events, in a passage from December 1834:

*"Monday December 15. First thing in the morning, I walked out of Porta St. Sebastian and got rather near Cecilia Metella's tomb on the road to Roma Veccia [sic]. I crossed the Campagna on my way to the route for Naples; drew a little bit and then returned. All day long the weather was very beautiful; on the road I have seen several motifs for paintings. Visited the Wulffs and Blunck in the dusk and in the evening I went to Fearnley; I was not well."*²¹

[31] During his years of travelling, Rørbye focused a good deal on collecting study material as well as finding good motifs for his paintings and doing detailed studies in colour that could later serve as puzzle pieces for the composition of larger paintings. In his diary, he gives us a glimpse of this artistic approach:

*"During the forenoon I went on a tour with Kückler [...] seeking cactuses, and later on we went to Vinea Barberina [i.e. Vigna Barberini], where there is a very beautiful aloe with flowers just now. In and around Rome you will find almost all sorts of motifs needed, if you know where to go."*²²

This passage conveys precisely the essence of Rørbye's working process, as he was in many ways very pragmatic when it came to building up a big archive of study material for use in larger paintings. In this way, cactuses sketched in Rome in 1836 could very well be used years later in paintings seemingly showing cactuses from Palermo, and cypress trees sketched in Rome could be reused in paintings of scenes in Constantinople.²³

²⁰ Ibid., 11 March 1834.

²¹ Ibid., 15 December 1834.

²² Ibid., vol. 2, n. pag., 4 August 1836.

²³ The painting *Brønden på Pladsen St. Sophie ved Seraillets Port i Konstantinopel* from 1846 (ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum) reuses cypresses sketched in Rome. See: Kristian Jakobsen, *Rørbye ved Seraillets mur - Omkring et maleri*, Aarhus 1982, 31.

Tourists in Naples and off the beaten track to Procida

[32] After six months in Rome, it was time for Rørbye to visit other cities. According to the diary he went to Naples, Pompeii, Sorrento and Procida. In Naples and Pompeii Rørbye found that there was too much noise and too many tourists, although he also described the area as beautiful:

“May 19 [...] every minute you are being disrupted; everywhere it is crowded with people. [...] May 20, 1835 [...] But what a city. Nature really appears to have overloaded this singular place with all its beauty. Naples is like the pearl of the precious jewellery that surrounds it, and to complete everything, the impressive sight of Vesuvius comes in addition. [...] It is very amusing to notice how the guides lead the Englishmen.”²⁴

[33] In addition to Rørbye’s concluding remarks on the tourist guides, it is relevant to mention that he also noticed the massive English presence in Rome; especially around the Colosseum.²⁵ This indicates that there was a market for serving the many rich English tourists, probably the nobility, and that the presence of these masses of tourists was one of the most obvious markers of change indicating both the reality of tourism in Italy in the 1830s and the reality of the “English invasion” on the continent.

[34] Getting away from the masses of the many English travellers, Rørbye moved on to the less busy cities of Sorrento and Procida, which enabled him to draw and paint in a peaceful atmosphere. On June 20 he reports the following from his arrival in Procida: “Today I got a nice room with a balcony and a lovely view of the sea. It seems to me that I am among good people. I have been doing a lot of drawing today [...].”²⁶

[35] Considering the location and time here, it almost seems as if Rørbye is talking about the painting *En Loggia fra Procida/ A loggia from Procida*, which has a lovely view of the sea (fig. 2). This painting was completed by Rørbye in 1835, and shows a terrace with grapes giving shade, terracotta pots with plants, dried garlic tendrils, a birdcage and a dark glazed jar balancing on the terrace’s balustrade. The right side of the painting shows a half-open door that lets one’s eyes wander into the shade and then back to the deep blue sea in the background again, where Rørbye also found place for a sailing ship.

²⁴ Nygaard, *Maleren Martinus Rørbyes Rejsedagbøger*, vol. 1, n. pag., 19 May 1834, 20 May 1834.

²⁵ Ibid., 13 April 1835.

²⁶ Ibid., 20 June 1835.



2 Martinus Rørbye, *En Loggia fra Procida/ A loggia from Procida*, 1835, oil on canvas, 37.8 x 55.4 cm. Aros Aarhus Kunstmuseum (photograph © Ole Hein Pedersen)

[36] Although the painting has many details, it looks almost like a snapshot taken on the day of arriving in Procida, in the room with a view mentioned in his diary. However, when doing some more research into the specific motif, the painting turns out to be anything but that. In fact, it is a rather carefully composed painting, and Rørbye might have used sketches from his archive to draw on completely different locations, places and years. The original sketch, or at least a model for the painting, seemingly originates from another artist's work. In many ways there seems to be a close pictorial reference between an oil sketch done by the Norwegian artist Thomas Fearnley and Rørbye's painting. Rørbye spent much time with him during his first six months in Rome, and we know that Fearnley had been in Procida three years earlier, in 1832, and from his visit on the island there is a painting (fig. 3) that is more or less identical with Rørbye's painting done in 1835.



3 Thomas Fearnley, *Terrace in Procida*, 1832, oil on paper on canvas, 30 x 44.5 cm. Private collection (photograph © O. Væring)

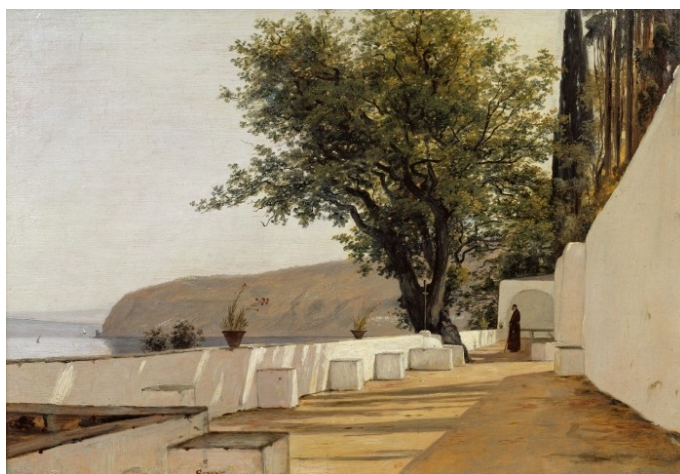
[37] Though Fearnley's painting is far sketchier and less detailed, the striking similarities between the two images are interesting and hardly accidental. However, the question is whether Rørbye rediscovered the same place where Fearnley lived and painted back in 1832, or whether Rørbye just painted Fearnley's view from Procida from memory and imagination regardless of his own geographical time and place. We know that Fearnley sold many of his paintings during his journey in Italy, but we do not know whether this particular painting was for sale. Nevertheless, Rørbye must have been acquainted with it. Therefore, the most likely scenario must be that Fearnley kept this painting in his room or studio in Rome for some years, and that Rørbye became familiar with the painting during his many visits to Fearnley prior to his own southern Italian sojourn in May 1835.

[38] The similarities between the two pictures may say something fundamental about artistic practice and indeed about Rørbye's working process: He did not only use his own study material as inspiration, but also used other artists' paintings as models for his motifs. However, the question is whether our assessment of Rørbye's painting should change, as his version is clearly a copy even though it involved much more work than Fearnley's oil sketch. I would say, on the contrary. The relation between the two paintings is almost like the relation between a study and a finished work, and in the 1830s – and up until the late 1840s – a study was always looked upon as a private image, and was therefore not for sale. And in addition it was a very common practice among artists to be inspired by other artists' studies. Seen from the perspective of tourism, both artistic statements were spot-on with regard to how a true traveller wanted to stage his journey to Italy, and also with regard to what other travellers wanted to buy as an exclusive souvenir in memory of their Italian sojourn. Sunshine, scenery with no tourists, serenity and peacefulness were the artistic watchwords for producing sought-after sales products for the art market, and the fact that there were other variations on the same motif in circulation does not apparently reduce the value of Rørbye's painting.

Picturesque Sorrento

[39] From the peacefulness of Procida, Rørbye went back to noisy Naples, but only for a single day with the practical purpose of sending letters to Rose and the family and buying more paint. Then he went to Sorrento, a small city with a monastery which was still popular among artists owing to its picturesque qualities and its quietness (not least compared with Naples). In Rørbye's diary there are many fascinating observations of the monks living an isolated life in the monastery, and we know of many sketches from around the monastery.

[40] Not surprisingly, Fearnley had already been in Sorrento, and Rørbye followed his example once more. Fearnley went there in August 1833, whereas Rørbye stayed there the year after. But even though the two were not in Sorrento at the same time, there are some striking similarities between at least one of their paintings. An often repeated motif from this city was the monastery of San Francesco with its distinctive white terrace overlooking the Bay of Naples, and Fearnley and Rørbye also repeated this scene, but in their own – new– pictorial way as we shall see (fig. 4-5).²⁷ Though both of them stuck to the white terrace, they composed their paintings with a lower point of view compared to paintings produced by previous generations of painters.



4 Martinus Rørbye, *Parti i nærheden af Sorrento med udsigt til havet* / *Prospect near Sorrento with a view of the sea*, 1835, oil on paper on canvas, 32 x 46.5 cm. Nivaagaards Malerisamling, Nivaa (photograph © Torben Christensen)

²⁷ Other artists painting the same motif are: Salomon Corrodi, Ercole Gigante, Johann Joachim Faber, Achille Vianelli, William Wyld, Johann Heinrich Schilbach, Karl Wilhelm Gotzloff and Silvester Schedrin.



5 Thomas Fearnley, *Terrace with oak*, 1834, oil on canvas, 54 x 39.5 cm. The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo (© The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo)

This feature made the scenery look as if the spectator was situated in the same space as the painter. In this way Fearnley's and Rørbye's paintings minimised the gap in space and time between the spectator and the scenery, encouraging the spectator to feel that they could actually walk onto the terrace, take a view of the sea and eventually study the monk in the background. These were some of the new pictorial features in trying to reinvent the travel image as a genre. No idyllic sfumato was used to load the air with mystery, no narrative was installed, and no unnecessary picturesque elements were integrated – in contrast to the older, traditional paintings, which often added narrative details to the scenery. Furthermore, the new pictorial strategy never included the presence of other groups of travellers, but gave the impression of having had a unique experience. Especially in Rørbye's painting, the contemplative monk gazing at the sea imbues the potential buyer with a sense of being a true traveller, for the first time discovering a monastery untouched by other travellers. Hence, the message of the painting is clear: This is the true and authentic Italy which few travellers got the chance to experience, and by purchasing the picture the buyer could acquire the image of being a true traveller himself.

[41] Elaborating on why Rørbye was so clearly inspired by another artist's compositions on several occasions, as was the case with Fearnley, one must search for an answer in the contemporary art market in Rome. On the Roman art market Fearnley clearly profited from his paintings, whereas Rørbye at first did not produce paintings for sale. However, as time went by Rørbye's reluctant approach seemed to change as his financial situation became less convenient. From the summer of 1836, it was clear that he had to follow up on art inquiries from potential buyers to get some income: "June 25, 1836. Today I was finally able to post my letters to London and Paris; had I not received Baron Rouen's address from the French legation, I would have had to give

up on the order or waited until he eventually realised his forgetfulness.”²⁸ Nonetheless, in Rørbye’s travel diary there are clear indications that he did not understand artists who spent all their time chasing potential buyers or producing paintings for the art market.

[42] What Rørbye strove to achieve during his first Italian sojourn was a certain balance between collecting sufficient study material and occasionally producing paintings:

*“The Bavarian painter [Philipp] Foltz visited me today; he is said to be boastful and brutal; but with him you can discuss art; my good countrymen never have any opinion. His opinion about the right way to study here in Rome seems correct to me. There is no doubt that if you are only in Rome for a short stay, it is exceedingly wrong to spend your time earning money.”*²⁹

[43] In the autumn of 1835 Rørbye sailed by steamer to Greece and Turkey, which at the time was a very unusual destination as only a few Danish travellers had been there before. The Danish writer H. C. Andersen, who became a close friend of Rørbye, went there some years later in 1840-1841, perhaps inspired by the enthusiastic reports from Rørbye. Rørbye’s stay in Greece and the Ottoman Empire had a duration of more than seven months and made a deep impression on him, which lasted for many years resulting in several paintings produced after his return to Rome and also after returning to Denmark. In Turkey in particular he had the feeling of being off the beaten track, discovering significant motifs never depicted before. Back in Rome in May 1836, he started producing works inspired by his oriental experiences, and now and then study material and details from his paintings produced in Italy in the first year found their way into the canvases reflecting his latest journey.

[44] If we look at the picture *Agterdelen af et græsk fartøj/ The stern of a Greek vessel* (fig. 6), we see the shiny dark glazed jar previously used in the painting *Loggia fra Procida/ Loggia from Procida* from 1835 (fig. 2). The same jar is used once again in another painting from 1841, showing the same loggia from Procida, but now with local people added to the scenery: *Loggia from Procida with people* (fig. 7).

²⁸ Nygaard, *Maleren Martinus Rørbyes Rejsedagbøger*, vol. 2, n. pag., 25 June 1836.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 30 July 1836.



6 Martinus Rørbye, *Agterdelen af et græsk fartøj/ The stern of a Greek vessel*, 1836, oil on canvas, 27 x 35 cm. Fuglsang Kunstmuseum, Toreby (photograph © Tage Jensen)



7 Martinus Rørbye, *Loggia i Procida med figurer/ Loggia from Procida with people*, 1841, oil on canvas, 60 x 62 cm. Private collection

This sampling process of structuring a composition by means of details from different geographical locations and years became Rørbye's brand, and continued to be part of his artistic practice for his remaining years. Although the painting from 1841 is quite conventional in its narration and conservative in its composition, which means that it was not playing a part in the reinvention strategy of the travel image, it was nonetheless a popular genre for the Italian art market, easy to sell.

[45] According to Rørbye's diary, he was very homesick before leaving for Turkey, with many passages expressing his longing for Rose, his fiancée. However, the trip to the Near East made these feelings change for a time. In July 1836, he explicitly noted in

his diary that had it not been for Rose, he would have stayed away forever, never returning to Denmark.

Subiaco

[46] In late August 1836 Rørbye left the city of Rome, this time heading east to Olevano and Subiaco with the aim of collecting new study material. Both places belong to the classical route of the Grand Tour because of the area's distinctive and beautiful vistas of valleys and peaks. On this particular trip, the landscape and prospects of nature were no longer Rørbye's first priorities in his sketches. Instead, his focus was to register the culture and customs of the local communities, especially the Catholic clergy. Rørbye had probably realised that he needed more figures and models for his larger canvases than his study material could provide, nevertheless these new studies had some ethnographical artistic qualities in addition.

[47] In the later reception of the Danish artists travelling in Italy, one of the most influential art historians of the late nineteenth century, Emil Hannover (1864-1923), pointed out that the artists of the first half of the nineteenth century committed themselves to depicting all the extraordinary events they experienced on their journey, as the world was about to change: "It was felt that they [the artists] had come to Rome at the eleventh hour; and this feeling became natural to the Nordic painters; they were like artistic ethnographers, entrusted with giving posterity an idea of the most remarkable events they discovered on their way."³⁰

[48] In his paintings, Rørbye did indeed notice and register the ways in which the Catholic clergy dressed, behaved and interacted with secular society, so his paintings have intentionally provided posterity with these special visual details of their lives, as seen through the gaze of an artistic ethnographer. Doing sketches with the eye of an ethnographer was completely in line with Rørbye's aim of being a true traveller, staging himself as discovering the authentic, extraordinary Italy.

[49] At Procida he had been very surprised that the novices of the Benedictine Abbey of S. Michele Arcangelo were not allowed to have any contact with the surrounding secular society, but had to live an isolated life in the monastery – so much that Rørbye described them as being in prison.³¹ However, in the monastery of St. Benedetto in Subiaco the conditions were slightly different, although Rørbye was occasionally denied permission to draw inside the church on Sundays due to ceremonial rites. In Subiaco Rørbye paid particular attention to the younger monks: one of his recurring subjects was the motif of a so-called young abbot reading the bible (fig. 8) – though the clergyman depicted is rather an "abbé" and not an abbot.

³⁰ Emil Hannover, *Maleren Christen Købke – En Studie i dansk kunsthistorie*, Copenhagen 1893, 100-101.

³¹ Nygaard, *Maleren Martinus Rørbyes Rejsedagbøger*, vol. 2, n. pag., 25 July 1836.



8 Martinus Rørbye, *Den læsende Abate/ Reading Abbot*, 1836, oil on canvas, 39 x 28 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago (© Galerie Michel Descours)

In his diary Rørbye wrote on September 9, 1836: “Today the sun finally broke through, enabling me to continue my work; I managed to finish my little abbot, and in the afternoon I began to improve my landscape study.”³²

[50] The first painting we know of with the young “abbot” as a motif was made in 1836, and it shows a young man standing with his legs crossed.³³ He is leaning against a rather tall, unmade bed, with a cross on the wall, while focusing closely on reading the bible that he is holding in his hands. He is wearing the characteristic clothes of a clergyman: a long black coat, a hat with a large, curved brim, knickerbockers and long socks. His clothing is slightly worn and the chamber is equipped very simply. In addition, one striking feature is that the painting displays a very private and everyday scene, which is very rare in paintings of the clergy. Rørbye probably wanted to give us a unique impression of the daily routines of a clergyman before the making of his bed and before the more official beginning of the day. Another aesthetic feature worth mentioning is that Rørbye depicted the young man as being so absorbed in his reading of the bible that the spectator’s attention is inevitably drawn to the view of the open window letting nature entering the chamber. The view from the window is almost like a picturesque image within the painting, thereby giving the painting an extra aesthetic value.

³² Ibid., 9 September 1836.

³³ See for instance an almost identical painting at Ny Carlsberg Glyptoteket, Copenhagen, from 1842.

[51] All in all, the composition of this painting was so successful – and in addition a perfect item for the art market – that Rørbye made more than five variations of the motif. Later on, the painting became so popular that it encouraged many other painters to copy the motif; and in 1862 the art association of Copenhagen reproduced the painting in the form of copperplate engravings for sale (fig. 9).³⁴



9 Joel Ballin, *Læsende abate/ Reading Abbot*, 1862, copperplate engraving after a painting by Martinus Rørbye from 1838, 50 x 38.8 cm. Fuglsang Kunstmuseum, Toreby (photograph © Tage Jensen)

[52] The fact that Rørbye produced copies in the media of oil on canvas was not unusual, since many artists did the same thing in order to earn more money. After all, the most expensive aspect of producing paintings with a narrative (instead of producing landscape paintings) was the need to use models. Models could be relatively expensive in relation to the potential income generated by a single painting, so many artists repeated the same motif a number of times. There is no doubt that Rørbye used a stand-in model while painting the first version of the *Reading Abbot* in 1836, with the intention of getting the spectator to believe that this was a real (and true) snapshot of the scene.

[53] The use of a clergyman's life as a subject was not new. For instance, on the Danish art scene Ernst Meyer and Albert Kuchler were very fond of depicting this kind of motif. In fact, Kuchler converted to Catholicism later. On the German art scene, it is

³⁴ *Martinus Rørbye 1803-1848*, ed. Dyveke Helsted et al., exh. cat., Thorvaldsen Museum, Copenhagen 1981, 118.

relevant to mention Carl Blechen who travelled to Subiaco in 1829.³⁵ However, the lives of clergymen were often depicted with a certain sense of irony, whereas Rørbye showed the spiritual, introverted side of their lives in a much friendlier and devoted tone. The new way in which Rørbye integrated clergymen as motifs into his paintings reveals that he had a clear awareness of the past and present ways in which they were portrayed. He was fascinated by clergymen as motifs, and once again managed to come up with a new strategy for depicting this traditional theme in the genre of travel images.

[54] According to Rørbye's diary, his stay in Subiaco was one of the most pleasant periods of his journey. On the day of his departure (23 October 1836) he wrote: "The last day in Subiaco. It feels as if I am leaving a home, so pleasant has my stay been [...] and the feeling of actually being in a family contributed a lot to that."³⁶ Back in Rome, in early November, Rørbye began painting Turkish motifs – and he was given a number of orders during the winter. For the rest of his stay he only went on short trips, for instance to the Alban Hills, and in the summer of 1837 he left Rome with the aim of travelling north and returning to Denmark before winter.

Status of the first journey

[55] According to Rørbye's diary, it was surprisingly not the stay in Rome that made a great impact on him. In a letter sent to C. W. Eckersberg, Rørbye formulated and expressed his mixed feelings:

*I think, dear Eckersberg, that Rome apparently is and always will be the main point where artists will strive to go; but it is a great mistake to believe that going to Rome will make you an artist. Indeed, I believe that one could be a very virtuous artist without ever having seen Rome [...].*³⁷

In line with this statement, Rørbye had indeed experienced many other places than Rome. For instance, he had been to France on his way to Italy as well as studying other places in Italy. Finally, his journey to Greece and Turkey was very rare among artists and travellers at that time. Overall, he was not satisfied with just staying in Rome, and his view of the Danish colony of artists and fellow countrymen was not positive: on the contrary, he regarded the colony as a tourist enclave in which his fellow countrymen isolated themselves from the Italians and indeed all other non-Nordic nationalities. In the diary he stated that it was always the Danes and the Germans who spent all their

³⁵ For references see: <http://www.artnet.com/artists/albert-kuchler/a-young-abbate-read-his-homework-loud-to-his-v1FjMXeSi-6khwjoy1vcgA2>; <http://www.artnet.com/artists/ernst-meyer/den-lille-abbate-og-bedstemoderen-TgjyMAwnDILeAISptOM0Q2>;
http://www.smb.museum/museen-und-einrichtungen/kupferstichkabinett/veranstaltungen/detail.html?tx_smb_pi1%5Bevent_id%5D=94872&cHash=1e716255f0cdb73a57dbec3c70bc1e78.

³⁶ Nygaard, *Maleren Martinus Rørbyes Rejsedagbøger*, vol. 2, n. pag., 23 October 1836.

³⁷ Quoted from *Martinus Rørbye 1803-1848*, ed. Helsted et al., 78.

time together: “In relation to my countrymen, they live the usual life, always Danish and German together.”³⁸

[56] Roughly speaking, there were two kinds of travellers: the true traveller and the tourist. One of the characteristics of the true traveller was that he claimed he was behaving correctly, seeking the company of the locals although not to such an extent that he disturbed their culture and routines. This correct way of travelling generated authentic and unique experiences, whereas tourists only sought familiar company and spent all their time with other kindred spirits.³⁹ Rørbye not only belonged to the first category, he also sought to persuade us that he was a true traveller staging his visual expressions in line with this strategy. It is only in his diary that we get the full story of the presence of tourism, as well as evidence of the fact that Rørbye also spent a lot of time with his fellow countrymen.

On November 20, 1837 Rørbye arrived in Copenhagen having spent three and a half years abroad. He was loaded with experiences and a suitcase full of sketches and study material ready for him to start painting in his studio.

Revisiting Italy

[57] After having spent less than two years in Denmark, Rørbye went to Italy again. But this time it was only for two years, and he was accompanied by Rose, who was no longer his fiancée but his wife. The main purpose of the journey was to produce and collect new study material for use in the many travel paintings that he was producing in his studio. This second trip to Italy started in late August 1839. On Rørbye’s first Italian sojourn he did not get the chance to visit Capri and Sicily, probably due to the presence of cholera, but on this second journey he and Rose did manage to go there. According to his diary, he was particularly fascinated with Palermo.⁴⁰ On the second journey we know that H. C. Andersen was a frequent guest of the couple, as he knew Rørbye from life in Copenhagen. Rose also gave birth to the couple’s first child, and all of these new circumstances meant that life in Italy was radically different from what it had been during the first trip, something which pleased Rørbye a great deal.⁴¹

³⁸ Nygaard, *Maleren Martinus Rørbyes Rejsedagbøger*, vol. 2, n. pag., 14 June 1836.

³⁹ For theoretical reflections on tourism see: Buzard 1993; John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 2nd ed. London 2005; Orvar Löfgren, *On holiday: A History of Vacationing*, Berkeley/London 1999.

⁴⁰ Martinus Rørbye, *Travel Diary*, 1839-1841. The handwritten diary is in the archives of the Kobberstiksamlingen, Statens Museum for Kunst (SMK), Copenhagen.

⁴¹ Although we know a lot about Rørbye’s first journey thanks to his diary, which Nygaard (partly) transcribed in 1931, we know only little about the second journey, as this diary has not yet been transcribed and published and the original manuscript is very hard to read. Hopefully a renewed focus on Rørbye will strengthen the interest in this artist’s oeuvre, encouraging art historians to look deeper into the undiscovered diary and letters from the second journey, to get the full picture of Rørbye’s travel activities.

[58] Back in Denmark in 1841 Rørbye began working on several monumental paintings with motifs from Turkey, Greece and Italy. The genre of travel painting suited him very well, and it was a genre (and indeed a brand) that he adopted for the rest of his life. In addition, travel paintings were popular with the king, the nobility and the bourgeoisie – so they could be sold to generate an income.

Exit: Rørbye's travel painting

[59] Rørbye produced a great number of travel drawings, sketches and paintings while travelling as well as after returning to his studio in Denmark. These images vary from immediate experiences created hastily 'on location' – primarily drawings and oil sketches – to careful, detailed compositions (primarily oil paintings). The immediate, impasto studies have a 'here and now' feeling, while the studio paintings summarise many different expressions and narrations in *one* painting (fig. 10).



10 Martinus Rørbye, *Brønden på pladsen St. Sophie ved Seraillets port i Constantinopel. Til venstre i billedet ser man murene om Seraillets haver, i baggrunden Bosporus og kysten af Lilleasien. På pladsen folk af forskellige østerlandske nationer. Eftermiddagsbelysning/ Well on St Sophie's Square near the Gate of the Seraglio in Constantinople, 1846, oil on canvas, 112.5 x 159.1 cm. Aros Aarhus Kunstmuseum (photograph © Ole Hein Pedersen)*

[60] However, for a long time the reception of Rørbye's oeuvre has given preference to the drawings and sketches and neglected the studio paintings. For instance, during the last thirty years there has only been one large exhibition of Rørbye's paintings, and in the exhibition catalogue the authors stated that his paintings were a little boring, whereas his sketches were much better and livelier.⁴² I think it is time to reconsider this statement; and in fact in a recent exhibition and additional research publication Rørbye was given much more credit for his large canvases.⁴³

⁴² *Martinus Rørbye 1803-1848*, ed. Dyveke Helsted et al., 75.

⁴³ Folsach and Søndergaard 2014; see my article "Dannelsesrejsen til Italien. Det nye rejsebillede," 160-192, in the above mentioned publication.

[61] In the reassessment of Rørbye's first Italian sojourn, I have focused on the artist's written expressions – the travel diaries and letters – exploring this material for factors of change. This reinterpretation of the artist's *words* has been related to the visual artistic production. Having focused on the written word in this way, it is clear that there seem to be some general limits to what Rørbye was able to write and what he was able to depict on canvas. Hence, Rørbye both watched and commented on the changes he saw on his sojourn, but he only managed to describe the major changes in travel culture in the written word. In his paintings and drawings, he made a conscious choice to refrain from including tourism and tourists. For these reasons, the diaries have become even more important with regard to the interpretations and reassessment of the artist. Focusing on Rørbye's choices enables us to discover the strategic considerations behind the absence of tourists in his paintings. These considerations are related to the staging of the sojourn as well as the staging of the artist himself. In this respect, it is very important for posterity to have better access to Rørbye's diaries – and the diaries of other artists – in their full versions and not only short summaries, as it was the case of the transcription of Rørbye's diary. As we have seen above, it was in the omitted passages that the evidence of changes and tourism occurred, and this discovery revealed a difference between word and image.

[62] Seen in a broader perspective, Rørbye was one of the first Danish artists to reinvent the traditions of the genre of travel painting. His changes and development of a new complex pictorial strategy were in many ways an answer to the changes in society, especially the advent of tourism. The new travel image had its focus on concurrency, everyday life and the secular world, resulting in images that anticipated the photographic travel image, the snapshot and the travel postcard. The advent of this new strategy proved to have a very long after-life, as tourists and travellers of today still lean a great deal on the image codes that Rørbye and his fellow artists of the 1830s invented. Travel photos today are very similar to Rørbye's travel sketching and paintings, since the absence of tourists and non-aesthetic settings are still key words in our strategies of taking pictures. Many of us have tried waiting to press the button until all the tourists are out of sight, and many of us want to make a journey look like a special and unique trip by identifying ourselves as true travellers off the beaten track instead of ordinary tourists on the highway of tourism. These patterns of anti-tourism were founded in the 1830s, after which many artists staged their journeys as a trip to Arcadia, despite the fact that many of their travel diaries reported a different narrative.

[63] Having focused on Martinus Rørbye's first trip to Italy in 1834-1837, trying to analyse the visual and written statements from the perspective of tourism, it is clear that research into the reservoir of unread material, especially his second trip to Italy, still needs to be done. Hopefully, this article will encourage new researchers to embark on this exciting topic.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Jesper Svenningsen from the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen has recently begun this work, see research projects „Kilder til Dansk Kunsthistorie“ financed by Ny Carlsbergfondet.

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