

URN: urn:nbn:de:bsz:16-artdok-61850

URL: <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/volltexte/2018/6185>

DOI: 10.11588/artdok.00006185

## *The Romantic Rhine: marketing with images*

Sabine Gertrud Cremer

The marketing of a region is not an invention of our time but has a history of more than two hundred years.<sup>1</sup> In this article above all two aspects of the Romantic Rhine - in this case the area of the Middle Rhine Valley between Mainz and Bonn - are more near lit up. First for the explanation of the background general remarks are placed in front over the origin of the Romantic Rhine. In the second section is about the marketing of the Rhine landscape with images. The dissemination of numerous Rhine views in complete Europe was an important advertising medium, that led to the development of the first mass tourism in Europe in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In our time, where the picture comes in the form of social media a special meaning as advertising medium, is worthwhile itself a look into the beginnings of the Rhine tourism.

### **Origin of the Romantic Rhine**

Since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Englishmen went on tour in the Rhine Valley within the so-called “*Grand Tour*” on their way to Italy. Young noble ones traveled at that time through Europe with the intention to extend their general education horizon. By literary travel descriptions - as for example of the Reverend John Gardnor<sup>2</sup>- stimulated, became at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the range of the Middle Rhine between Mainz and Cologne for educated travelers increasingly to the actual destination.

The year 1802 is regarded traditionally as the year of birth of the Romantic Rhine, whereby this date refers to the journey of different German poets to the Rhine, who discovered the wild, unaffected and beautiful area for themselves: Are called Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano as well as Friedrich Schlegel. Nevertheless, Englishmen are to be called the actual pioneers of the Romantic Rhine, those already end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in novels and reports on a travel described the pictorial attraction of the river landscape. The Middle Rhine with its medieval castle ruins fulfilled the conceptions of the Englishmen of a picturesque landscape.

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<sup>1</sup> Most information refers to travel tips with die indication of addresses and dates: <https://www.romantischer-rhein.de/en/#start> [05.11.2018]. This Website is from the Romantischer Rhein Tourismus GmbH, An der Königsbach 8, D-56075 Koblenz. See also [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhine\\_romanticism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhine_romanticism) [19.11.2018].

<sup>2</sup> John Gardnor: Views taken on and near the river Rhine. London 1788.

Enthusiasm for rugged nature, ruins and „vine-clad expanses” inspired countless many artists from all over Europe. When that largest PR expert of its time for the beautifulness of Middle Rhine Lord Byron designated, which 1816 on the way to Geneva lake the Rhine Valley toured. His poem „Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage” became probably the most successful advertising text of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup>

For the beginning of the systematic Rhine tourism the traffic-technical development of the region was decisive. The industrial revolution in England provided tourism a new, undreamt-of speed into the passenger traffic. From England came in 1816 the first steamboats. Later the first German navigation company their line enterprise between Cologne and Mainz took up ten years. Owing to the new steamboats one could experience a „speed rush” “for the first time on the travel from Cologne to Mainz and achieve in 83 hours its destination. This development strengthened still, when by the opening of the railroad line between Cologne and Bonn itself the travel time shortened of far. With the more comfortable and faster traffic connection the number of the travelers, above all Englishman, reached dimensions of the mass tourism. The statistics tell that there were already in 1856 more than one million tourists on the Rhine steamboat.

### **Marketing of the Rhine landscape with images**

A further aspect, which contributed to the large popularity of the Rhine landscape, was the marketing of the Rhine landscape with images. The Rhine views were multiplied in the form of graphic arts in large number. In 19<sup>th</sup> century new printing techniques - above all the lithography<sup>4</sup> and the steel engraving<sup>5</sup> - made possible a larger edition, whereby the reproduced views could be attractive offer and thus a larger dissemination found.

Pressure graphics developed in the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century for the most important medium of the Romantic Rhine and the Rhine tourism beginning. „*You were information means and tendency carrier in the public, and it aroused*

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<sup>3</sup> See Elmar Scheuren: „*The Castled Crag of Drachenfels*“. Lord Byrons Rheinreise und ihre Wirkungen. In: Rheinreise 2002. Der Drachenfels als romantisches Reiseziel (Ausstellungskatalog, Siebengebirgsmuseum Königswinter, 14.04.-13.10.2002). Bonn 2002, S. 28-35.

<sup>4</sup> Alois Senefelder developed between 1798 and 1798 the technology of the lithography. With the lithography on a before prepared flag, the motive is noted directly with a fatty pin. The plate is covered afterwards with an acid, so that the printing-ink transfers only the drawing with printing to the paper.

<sup>5</sup> The steel engraving is related as gravure techniques closely to the copperplate engraving. In contrast to the copper engraving as material for the pressure plate steel is used. By the technology of the „decarbonization“ (with drawl of carbon) it is possible to make the surface of the steel for the working softer. An engraver can scratch afterwards as with a copper plate the lines with a grave burin. Before the pressure the plate is again hardened. According to contemporary literature up to 40.000 respectively 50.000 prints were manufactured by a steel engraving plate. The Americans Jacob Perkins and Gideon Fairman were first, those already end of the 18. century steel plates used. For approximately 1820 the steel engraving in England was commercially used.

*interest, longing and enthusiasm*".<sup>6</sup> Parallel with the increasing touristic development the number of the Rhine views constantly increased. Usually they found as illustration of Rhine travel guides use. Besides they were offered in albums or also as single sheet for the purchase. From the contemporaries as „*souvenirs*” selectively „*memory sheets*” designated, they pleased themselves large popularity.

Owing to the large demand numerous artists from all over Europe moved to the Rhine, in order to hold the landscape and its cities in drawings, watercolours and paintings. The outside occasion was frequently an order to the illustration of a Rhine travel guide. The views were multiplied accordingly as pressure graphics. Thus, the draughtsman and painter Nicolas Marie Joseph Chapuy set for French Rhine travel guide “*Les bords du Rhin*” (Paris around 1835) in a distant view of Rolandseck to Drachenfels sentimental in scene.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond that the artists Rhine views used as motive for picture for their paintings and continued to be met with great interest of buyers. When example of the internationality of the artists, whom the Rhine pulled into the spell, is pointed to a painting of the Danish painter Frederik Hansen Sødring with a view to the Siebengebirge, which originated in to 1840 during his four years Germany stay.<sup>8</sup>

The most famous painter among them was sure Joseph Mallord William Turner. On his tours through Europe he visited between 1817 and 1844 several times the Middle Rhine.<sup>9</sup> In August 1817 - one year after Lord Byron - he recorded his first travel in spontaneous and rapidly drawn pencil sketches. In England they served him as pattern for a series of altogether fifty small size Rhine views in watercolours and body-colours. Subsequently, Turner sold the views series at his friend and orderer Walter Fawkes. Beyond that was originally intended to reproduce selected motives of the watercolour series as pressure graphics. This plan was however not carried out. Only into the 1830er years appeared some these views as steel engraving.

Turners watercolour series of 1817 Loreley rock shows by different locations and distances usually vapor-masked.<sup>10</sup> His watercolours differ from the remaining

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<sup>6</sup> Quotation out: Michael Schmitt, *Die illustrierten Rhein-Beschreibungen*. Köln/Weimar/Wien 1996, S. 47.

<sup>7</sup> Sabine Gertrud Cremer: „*Grabstichel in Bewegung*“. Der Drachenfels in der Druckgraphik. In: *Rheinreise 2002. Der Drachenfels als romantisches Reiseziel* (Ausstellungskatalog, Siebengebirgsmuseum Königswinter, 14.04.-13.10.2002). Bonn 2002, S. 103-104.

<sup>8</sup> Wasser, Wolken, Licht und Steine. Die Entdeckung der Landschaft in der europäischen Malerei um 1800. Hrsg. von Klaus Weschenfelder und Urs Roeber (Ausstellungskatalog, Mittelrhein-Museum Koblenz, 25.08.-03.11.2002). Koblenz 2002, S. 164, Kat.-Nr. 59.

<sup>9</sup> Cecilia Powell: *William Turner in Deutschland*. Hrsg. von Manfred Fath (Ausstellungskatalog, Kunsthalle Mannheim, 24.09.1995-14.01.1996). München 1995, S. 75.

<sup>10</sup> Kat. Koblenz [8], S. 162, Kat.-Nr. 57.

work of his contemporaries, by using the colour consciously for the enhancement of the atmospheric effect.

Due to the favorable situation concerning orders selected some artists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Rhine landscape to a center of their work. They can be called actual painters of the Romantic Rhine. Among the landscape painters of the academy of art in Düsseldorf above all Caspar Johann Nepomuk Scheuren (1810-1887) was occupied intensively with the Siebengebirge. His numerous Rhine views, which were multiplied partially as pressure graphics, enjoyed of large popularity. He painted the *“Funny Rhine travel”* in different variations, about which an oil-painting is from the year 1839 in the possession of the city museum Bonn.<sup>11</sup> The representation shows a funny group of students, which crosses into coloured costume on the Rhine in a rowing boat. These as *“Geusen travels”* designated celebrations were under Bonn students much like. Scheuren showed the romantic life feeling of the funny society before the scenery of Drachenfels and the island of the Nonnenwerth in his oil-painting splendid.

The upswing of the Rhine tourism brought with itself that in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century some regionally active artists in the cities Cologne, Bonn and Koblenz established themselves, which specialized mainly in Rhine views. These artists worked on behalf of different publishing houses and supplied copies for topographic pressure graphics. Besides they painted numerous paintings with views of the Siebengebirge of quite different quality. As preferential motive for picture they selected usually the distant view of the south of Rolandsbogen, island of the Nonnenwerth and Drachenfels. Appropriate views like the painting from the university drawing teacher in Bonn, Nicolaus Christian Hohe, are in many public and private collections.<sup>12</sup> The preference of this certain landscape section has its origin in pressure graphics. It concerns the most popular motive for picture of the Romantic Rhine, so that of a commercialization can be spoken without reservation.

Altogether paintings and graphic arts have contributed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the cultivation of the conceptions over the typical Middle Rhine landscape crucially and were important advertising media for the Rhine tourism beginning. Beyond that they coined the image of the Middle Rhine Valley with its rock, wooded slopes, wine terraces, castles and medieval towns, its effect into the today's marketing of the region lets which feel.

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<sup>11</sup> Stadtmuseum Bonn. Gemälde. Hrsg. Ingrid Bodsch. Bonn 1996, S. 163-164, Farbabb. 4.

<sup>12</sup> Sabine Gertrud Cremer: „*Rheinlandschaft mit Burg*“. Der Drachenfels in der Malerei. In: Rheinreise 2002. Der Drachenfels als romantisches Reiseziel (Ausstellungskatalog, Siebengebirgsmuseum Königswinter, 14.04.-13.10.2002). Bonn 2002, S. 94.