



Portrait de Pascal Griener. © Photo : Léa Crespi.

Pèlerin sans frontières

Mélanges en l'honneur de Pascal Griener

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the early Italian painters, not at all fashionable at the time.³⁸ Masaccio “a un très beau style”, Orcagna painted works of the “plus belle expression” and Ghirlandaio’s paintings impress because of the “beauté” and the figures which “paraissent animées et originales”.³⁹ He had also planned to visit Assisi just to see the paintings by Giotto, but never managed to get there...

Maximilien’s de Meuron’s notes and letters offer a revealing insight into the aspiring artist’s life in Italy, and more especially into his artistic education. Travel, study, discussions, debates, hours spent in galleries or studios – all of these experiences contributed to forging his artistic temperament and identity, and to the development of his artist’s eye. Even these would not, however, have sufficed had he not been willing to strengthen his resolve. When recalling the lengthy hours he had spent studying, sketching and working, Meuron was forced to admit that it was not until he had learned to open his eyes and to see, that he could at long last profit from his Italian journeys:

Je me rappelais les longues matinées que j’avais passées ici ce printemps, exposé au soleil, à la poussière et à la curiosité des passants. Ce travail qui était alors pour moi un effort de patience et de courage, serait aujourd’hui une vraie jouissance. Toutes ces ruines qui m’attristaient parce que dans la fâcheuse disposition où j’étais, je n’avais plus la faculté ni de voir ni d’admirer, toutes ces ruines dis-je montaient mon imagination. Chacune d’elles m’offrait un sujet de tableau superbe. Je m’étonnais que mes yeux eussent été fascinés au point où ils l’ont été. Enfin, ma chère, je me sentais un autre être. Je ne voyais devant moi que des trésors mais une autre idée est venue m’attrister. C’est que j’étais à la veille de quitter Rome sans les emporter.⁴⁰

³⁸ For an English connoisseur of early Italian art at this time, see Pascal Griener, “For a connoisseurship without frontiers: the new function of old master drawings and the facsimile in eighteenth-century England”, in *Klassizismen und Kosmopolitismus: Programm oder Problem?*, eds Pascal Griener and Kornelia Imesch, Zurich, SIK-ISEA, 2004, p. 179-192.

³⁹ AEN Meuron, 40/2, vol. 3, p. 25-27 (18 May 1813).

⁴⁰ AEN Meuron, 41/1, vol. 2, p. 24 (24 November 1811).

BETWEEN A BLESSING AND A CURSE: JOHN RUSKIN AND NEUCHÂTEL

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*Round by Neufchâtel we came,
By ancient Granson’s towers of fame.*
John Ruskin, “A Letter from Abroad” (1835)¹

Ruskin’s first visit to Switzerland at age fourteen, recorded fifty years later in *Praeterita*,² marked him for life: the painter and critic returned to the Alps twenty-five more times,³ completing his last tour in 1888. As a young man, he wanted to view *in situ* the scenes illustrated in J.M.W. Turner’s and Samuel Prout’s picturesque engravings, at Burford’s Leicester Square panorama, and in the poetry of Lord Byron and Samuel Rogers. A decade later, he was mainly interested in alpine geology, which he interpreted as a manifestation of divine providence. During the 1850s, he turned toward Swiss peasant life and architecture, aiming to write a history of Swiss towns illustrated with his own sketches, many of them based on the drawings in the 1851 Turner bequest. Around 1860, Ruskin turned from art criticism to social criticism, associating industrialization and tourism with the social and ecological destruction wrought by modernity.⁴ All these diverse and

¹ John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds Edward T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009 [1903-1912], vol. 2, p. 433.

² John Ruskin, *Praeterita: The Autobiography of John Ruskin*, ed. Kenneth Clark, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1949, p. 101-104.

³ For a useful chronology of all the Swiss tours, see Stephen Wildman (ed.), *Ruskin and Switzerland*, exhibition catalogue, Lancaster, Ruskin Library, 2001, p. 3-4.

⁴ This is what he would later call “the storm-cloud of the nineteenth century”. See John Ruskin, *Works, op. cit.*, vol. 34; Brian J. Day, “The Moral Intuition of Ruskin’s ‘Storm Cloud’”, *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 45/4 (2005), p. 917-933, and Patrick Vincent, “The Moral of Landscape: John Ruskin and John Muir in the Swiss Alps”, in *Literature, Ethics, Morality: American Studies Perspectives*, eds Ridvan Askin and Philip Schweighauser, Tubingen, Gunter Narr, 2015, p. 53-71.

seemingly dilettantish interests contributed to Ruskin's magnum opus, *Modern Painters* (1843-1860): intended as a defense of Turner's imagination built upon the distinction between "simple" and "Turnerian" topography,⁵ its celebration of nature as a manifestation of divinity but actualized to accommodate art and science makes it one of the great examples of natural theology and a searing attack on modern life, which casts Switzerland as a last Eden on the point of extinction. If Ruskin's project was motivated by his belief in the moral power of landscape, it also derived from the realization that the Swiss scenes discovered in his youth and illustrated by Turner were fast being ruined, and hence needed to be preserved.⁶

Among the hundreds of topographical drawings and daguerreotypes that Ruskin brought back with an increasing sense of urgency from Switzerland as a way to study and safeguard its endangered landscapes are twenty-eight sketches we have been able to identify of Neuchâtel and its region.⁷ Neuchâtel never was listed as part of the "Swiss Towns Project" that Ruskin imagined in 1854, and unlike Fribourg, for instance, whose many Ruskinian affiliations

⁵ John Hayman, *John Ruskin and Switzerland*, Waterloo/Ontario, Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1990, p. 8.

⁶ For his project on Swiss history, see John Ruskin, *Praeterita*, *op. cit.*, p. 449 *passim*. John Hayman cites an 1856 letter to Pauline Trevelyan (Virginia Surtees (ed.), *Reflections of a Friendship: John Ruskin's Letters to Pauline Trevelyan 1848-1866*, London, G. Allen and Unwin, 1979, n° 114) in which Ruskin outlines "a plan for etching views of seven Swiss towns, and bequeathing them to foolish posterity, that it may mourn and gnash its teeth in its Hotels." He includes Basel, Schaffhausen, Lucerne, Thun, Fribourg, Sion, and Bellinzona, noting that Geneva and Berne are "too much spoilt to be worth much notice." Four years later, he would add several towns on the Rhine to his list, then became primarily interested in the Catholic cantons of Central Switzerland. John Hayman, *John Ruskin and Switzerland*, *op. cit.*, p. 4-5. See, also, Paul H. Walton, *The Drawings of John Ruskin*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972, p. 85-87.

⁷ The catalogue was based on the following sources: John Ruskin, "Neuchâtel". Catalogue of Drawings", in John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds Edward T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009 [1903-1912], vol. 38, p. 270; Stephen Wildman (ed.), *Ruskin, Switzerland, and the Alps: A Loan Exhibition of Watercolours and Drawings from the Ruskin Foundation*, exhibition catalogue, Lancaster, Ruskin Library, 2002; Paul H. Walton, *Master Drawings by John Ruskin: Selections from the David Thomson Collection*, London, Pilkington Press, 2000; Lot 530: "A SKETCHBOOK Drawings from the 1866 Swiss Tour", Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century British Drawings and Watercolours, New York, Sotheby's, 14 April 1994. See, also, John Hayman, *John Ruskin and Switzerland*, *op. cit.*, p. 10, and Ken and Jenny Jacobson, *Carrying Off the Palaces: John Ruskin's Lost Daguerreotypes*, London, Bernard Quaritch, 2012.

Pascal Griener has discussed in a fine essay,⁸ it is unclear what the artist saw in this town on the geographical and historical periphery of Switzerland. Turner did not sketch Neuchâtel, its countryside was not distinctly alpine, and its view of the Alps fifty kilometers to the south, although frequently mentioned in guidebooks and travelogues, was more picturesque than sublime. Furthermore, while Neuchâtel's castle and cathedral, known as the Collégiale, date back like those in Bellinzona or Fribourg to the twelfth century, they were significantly modified in the late Renaissance, and its architectural ensemble is clearly not gothic. Finally, Neuchâtel's Reformed Church, patrician heritage, and shared allegiance until 1848 both to the Swiss Confederation and to Prussia made it very different from the peasant culture of alpine Switzerland that Ruskin idealized via the novels of Jeremias Gotthelf. Nevertheless, the drawings, diary entries, and letters addressing Neuchâtel all suggest that the town held a special significance for the critic, who particularly liked to return to places he had already visited and who may also have seen a resemblance between the fells of Cumberland and the modest mountains of this Swiss Lake District. First drawn to its panorama of the Alps then to its architecture, Ruskin associated Neuchâtel after 1866 with a deeply personal feeling of loss following the death of his friend Pauline Trevelyan. This feeling was generalized and projected onto the town, whose transformations, as elsewhere, came to symbolize modernity's environmental and moral corruption.

Ruskin and his parents first passed through Neuchâtel at the end of their 1833 tour, then again in 1835 and 1841. Two sketches dating from 1835 are listed in the Ruskin Library edition but are today lost (Appendix n° 1 and 2).⁹ They presumably represent the Maison des Halles, one of the town's most recognizable sites built around 1570 in a distinctly late Renaissance style, with polygonal towers and an ornamented frieze. During the same tour, the sixteen-year-old Ruskin also wrote a short satirical verse entitled "A Letter from Abroad", in which he briefly mentions Neuchâtel, as well as a longer Byronic poem, "A Tour Through France to Chamonix", which describes the Jura range from Dôle.¹⁰ Because of his interest in geology but also their position as a belvedere on the Alps, Neuchâtel and the Jura immediately became important to Ruskin. In a diary that he started keeping during this

⁸ Pascal Griener, «1835-1860: Ruskin, de l'anecdote à l'invisible», dans *L'image de Fribourg*, eds Hermann Schöpfer *et al.*, Fribourg, Société d'histoire du canton de Fribourg, 2007, p. 79-92.

⁹ John Ruskin, *Works*, *op. cit.*, vol. 38, p. 270.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 405-412, 433.

second tour, for example, he praises the view of the Alps from Neuchâtel and “more especially the hills above it”, then on his third tour in June 1841, notes that the Jura “is so purely and grandly pastoral [...] so abounding in all associations peculiarly Swiss, and yet keeping itself so modestly subordinate, so entirely free from all affectation of high mountain form, that you always feel yourself only in the vestibule of a greater scene, plunged into an overture to the Alps, but only an overture.”¹¹ Despite the cold and rain and the fact that he had only visited the town twice beforehand, he writes on 11 June 1841 with affectionate familiarity that he “Ran out in the morning to look at my old Neuchatel subject: very good” then gives a fine verbal sketch of the stormy Lake that anticipates later drawings: “The Lake was coming in like a sea – green, foamy and grand, with sharp, cutting, oceanic horizon, low, purple, storm-coloured hills on opposite side, and fragments of lurid snow through rain cloud. Sweepy masses of grey Jura under shower on the right. Very fine, but too cold to stand.”¹²

Thanks to his diaries, we know that in his middle years between 1854 and 1866, the critic came six more times to Neuchâtel and brought back at least twenty-one sketches, thirteen of these composed during his longest and most significant visit in 1866. According to John Hayman, “The drawings made between roughly 1854 and 1866 form Ruskin’s most persistent attempt to account for Swiss civilization.”¹³ The critic’s nine topographical drawings of Neuchâtel’s castle and Collégiale in this period resemble his obsessive representations of other Swiss buildings, suggesting that they also belonged to his “Swiss Towns Project” even if he did not include Neuchâtel in his list of historical towns.

The first of these is a watercolour misleadingly titled *Mountain Village, Switzerland* (Appendix n° 3, Pl. II), dated 1854, which clearly shows the castle’s distinctive towers, modified between 1867 and 1875; it looks very similar to *Chateau of Neuchâtel* (Appendix n° 6) drawn in 1859 or 1863 and today at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

Another favorite Neuchâtel site for Ruskin was an erratic rock located a kilometer above the town on the hillside of Chaumont called the Pierre-à-Bot, made famous by the Swiss geologist Louis Agassiz. On 13 September 1859,

¹¹ John Ruskin, *The Diaries of John Ruskin*, eds Joan Evans and John Howard Whitehouse, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1956, vol. 1, p. 34, 202-203. On Ruskin and the Jura, see also his lecture “The Alps and the Jura”, in John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds Edward T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009 [1903-1912], vol. 26, p. 104.

¹² John Ruskin, *Diaries, op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 202.

¹³ John Hayman, *John Ruskin and Switzerland, op. cit.*, p. 8.

Ruskin picnicked with the American writer Harriet Beecher Stowe by Valangin castle, just north of Neuchâtel, where they discussed the “immoveable articles of faith.” Then, on their way back, they stopped by the rock: “rested under the, as immoveable, Pierre à Bot, with the great ramparts of Swiss liberty glittering to their outmost bastions beyond the blue Lake at our feet.”¹⁴ It may be from the same spot that he drew a panorama on two notebook sheets of the Lake of Neuchâtel (Appendix n° 4). He also produced a sketch in pencil and wash of the Tour de Chavannes (Appendix n° 5, Pl. III), a building destroyed in 1867, and perhaps also the previously cited inked drawing of Neuchâtel castle surrounded by an atmospheric wash that leaves out the surrounding old town (Appendix n° 6).

Ruskin passed through Neuchâtel again in 1860, where he wrote a letter to his friend the American scholar Charles Eliot Norton on 12 July,¹⁵ then twice in 1863. That year he sketched three connected drawings of Neuchâtel castle that he lettered A, B, and C, a common practice for Ruskin, according to Stephen Wildman. The first of these, entitled *Old Neuchâtel, seen from the North* (Appendix n° 7, Fig. 5) and misattributed by the Chicago Art Institute to the American painter Emil Armin, is in fact a view of the castle and the old town taken from the hill of the Mail to the northeast.¹⁶

The second, representing the same scene from the east and closer up (Appendix n° 8, Fig. 6), is inscribed: “Neuchatel B sketched 1863. I think invaluable now for the lines of roof of old town (call this Neuchatel B. and see C.” As John Hayman has noted, the commentary “illustrates the documentary and historical value that he attached to his drawings.”¹⁷

According to historian Jacques Bujard, however, it was not the line of the old town that was significantly modified in this decade, but rather the Collégiale, where the southern tower was rebuilt and a northern tower added in 1869.¹⁸ It is very likely that Ruskin associated these changes with the loss of his friend in 1866, hence the “invaluable” quality of these images that served the critic as a memento. It is unclear which drawing corresponds to “Neuchatel C”: it might be the Boston Museum of Fine Arts’ *Chateau of*

¹⁴ John Ruskin, *Works, op. cit.*, vol. 17, p. 476 and John Ruskin, *Diaries, op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 549. See, also, the footnote in John Ruskin, *Praeterita, op. cit.*, p. 487. Although he states in the letter that the picnic took place in 1856, there is no indication of this in his diary.

¹⁵ John Ruskin, *Works, op. cit.*, vol. 36, p. 338-339.

¹⁶ Email correspondence with Stephen Wildman of 15 December 2015. I am grateful to Stephen Wildman for drawing my attention to this work.

¹⁷ See John Hayman, *John Ruskin and Switzerland, op. cit.*, p. 111.

¹⁸ Email correspondence with Jacques Bujard of 19 December 2015.

Neuchâtel, or else a sketch that went missing in 1996 entitled *Neuchâtel. To Lake from Castle* (Appendix n° 9), which shows the southern tower and some of the old town, or possibly even a third, unknown drawing.

The critic's 1866 holiday with his twenty-year-old cousin Joan Agnew, his dear friends Sir Walter and Pauline Trevelyan, their thirteen-year old niece Constance ("Connie") Hilliard, and two servants was meant to be a happy one despite Lady Trevelyan's poor health. It was Ruskin's first continental trip in three years, he was escaping from his engagement with Rose La Touche, and he had two charges that he could enjoy treating as young girls. Because of Pauline Trevelyan's death in Neuchâtel on 13 May, but also because of the critic's Carlylean sense of historical crisis that emerged around this period, which may have been an epiphenomenon of his own declining mental health, it "turned out to be the most unhappy of all Ruskin's continental tours", according to biographer Tim Hilton.¹⁹ This death seared Neuchâtel in Ruskin's memory as a place of bitter loss, helping explain why he never completed the chapter of his autobiographical *Praeterita* titled "The Rainbows of Giessbach", meant to recount the 1866 trip.²⁰

After meeting up with the Trevelyans in Dijon on 6 May,²¹ Ruskin and his party took the next day's 6 a.m. train to Neuchâtel, allowing him enough time to row on the Lake "by rocks and caves" and to "Sketch town from north."²² Although the diary editors identify this drawing with the missing Cat. 1201 (Appendix n° 10), it may very well correspond to one his most striking watercolours of the region, *The Château of Neuchâtel at Dusk with Jura Mountains Beyond* (Appendix n° 11). Indeed, the location and time when this was painted correspond to the above diary entry. Ruskin possibly drafted up to six other views of the town toward the beginning of his stay in 1866, indicating his continued interest in the town's topography. These include another watercolour, *Houses at Neuchâtel* (Appendix n° 12), that appears to

¹⁹ Tim Hilton, *John Ruskin*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2002, p. 388.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 463. For an imaginary reconstitution of this chapter, see Bernard Richards, *The Rainbows of Giessbach*, Oxford, [B.A. Richards], 2010.

²¹ In addition to his diary and letters, I have based myself on the weather reports in the *Feuille d'Avis de Neuchâtel et du Vignoble Neuchâtelois*, available at: <http://www.arcinfo.ch/pages/archives-de-l-express-et-l-impartial-437575>, accessed 21 April 2017. I unfortunately did not have time to consult the diaries of Pauline Trevelyan and Constance Hilliard, both in private collections.

²² John Ruskin, *Diaries, op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 587. The most likely site of this rowing expedition, according to Jacques Bujard, are the Pierre-à-Mazel and Saars sections of Neuchâtel (close to the actual Maladière stadium), where large blocks and cliffs lined the Lake before its level was corrected.

represent houses on the western side of the castle; *Neuchâtel, Tower of the Old Church* (Appendix n° 13), lettered F in possible continuation of the 1863 drawings, and with an inscription suggesting the existence of two other lettered pictures, E and G, now missing; *Panorama of Neuchâtel Lake* (Appendix n° 14), which has the unfinished *Panorama of the Jura, near Neuchâtel* on the verso (Appendix n° 15, Fig. 7)²³; *Sketch of the Shore of the Lake, with Trees* (Appendix n° 16), used as part of his "Rudimentary Series" in Teaching Collection at Oxford and now lost; and perhaps also the undated *Chimney at Neuchâtel* (Appendix n° 27), which shows the tower at the southeastern end of the castle.

On the morning of 8 May 1866, Ruskin wrote to his mother, describing their train trip in an exalted mood, but also expressing his regret "to be at places my father delighted in so much" and prophetically comparing himself to Jean-Jacques Rousseau: "the intense resemblance between me and Rousseau, in mind, and even in many of the chances of life, increases upon my mind more and more; and as I look this morning through the bright sunshine to the Lake of Bienne, or rather to the woods above it, I cannot help wondering if the end of my life is to be in seclusion or in ill temper like his."²⁴ With Rousseau undoubtedly a topic of conversation, the party drove on a botanizing and sketching expedition to the Val-de-Travers, taking the wrong road to Colombier, a village seven kilometers to the west of Neuchâtel, and picnicking by the Lake before returning to town in time for an evening sail.²⁵ Ruskin began a sketchbook on that day in which he composed three pen and ink drawings in the vicinity of Colombier.²⁶ These include a very precise

²³ Bujard has identified the view as that looking onto the Vallon of the Ecluse and the Vauseyon from the hill of the Boine, close to the Collégiale. The big house in the centre could be the present one at Petit-Pontarlier 5, to the southwest of the castle.

²⁴ John Ruskin, *Works, op. cit.*, vol. 18, p. xxxvii-xxxviii.

²⁵ John Ruskin, *Diaries, op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 587.

²⁶ The Swiss Sketchbook of 1866, measuring 13.5 by 21 cm, was given as a gift to Constance Hilliard. After being purchased by Spink and Son as lot 530 at a Sotheby's auction on 14 April 1994, it was broken up. Part of it was purchased by the David Thomson Collection in 1995. I have unfortunately not been able to obtain information from the curators regarding its present state. According to the auction catalogue, it contained the following: 1. *A Bridge across a River*, pencil; 2. *Dawn, Neuchâtel 9th May 1866*, inscribed with the title on verso, watercolour; 3. *Dijon, Sunday. 6th May 1866*, inscribed with the title, coloured inks over pencil; 4. *A sketch of Mountain tops*, pencil; 5. *A view of a town, possibly Colombiers from the lac de Neuchâtel*, watercolour over pencil heightened with white; 6. *The chateau of Colombier*, inscribed l.r.: "Colombier/8th May/J.R.", black and blue ink over pencil; 7. *A view of a town, possibly Colombier*, pencil; 8. *Part of an Alpine valley*, pencil; 9. *View across a Lake, possibly the lac de Neuchâtel*, pencil; 10. *Portrait studies of a young girl*,

outline sketch taken from the Avenue de Longueville of that village's castle, rebuilt in the early sixteenth century, with its crenellated town gate that stands unchanged today (Appendix n° 17).

After an evening sail on the 8th, Ruskin woke early the next day to take advantage of the clear sky and to draw a fine watercolour titled *Dawn. Neuchâtel 9th May. 1866* (Appendix n° 19) on the second page of his sketchbook.²⁷ It represents the northeastern end of the Lake of Neuchâtel, with the Chasseral to the left, the low-lying hill of the Jolimont at the center, and the Vully to the right of the picture.²⁸ Walton suggests that this was painted from the quay in front of his hotel, most likely the Grand Hôtel Bellevue,²⁹ and compares the sketch to Caspar David Friedrich's own airy renditions even though the German artist was unknown to him.³⁰ That afternoon his party set off up the "ravine" of the Seyon, where a road was built in 1854, and from Valangin back to the Pierre-à-Bot, where they picnicked "at the edge of wood – superb." He then, went to "find my little valley" closer to the level of the railroad, most likely the Vallon de l'Hermitage, where he "drew tree sketch." The next afternoon, on 10 May, despite a change in the weather,³¹ Connie who fell ill, and his servant Crawley who came back from Pontarlier with news of Pauline Trevelyan's health, Ruskin returned with Joan "to see valley, climbed rock, and finished Lake background of sketch."³² The diary editors attribute this to the aforementioned *Sketch of the Shore of the Lake*,

pencil; 11. *Portrait studies of a young lady*, pencil; 12. *Portrait studies of two girls*, pencil; 13. *A study of a young girl, asleep*, pen and black ink with pencil; 14. *A portrait study of a girl*, inscribed l.r.: "Shaky rail, and a/breeze in hair", pencil; 15. *A portrait study of a young girl*, inscribed l.l.: "On good behaviour. Between Creil and Amiens, pencil Fifteen, with, elsewhere in the book, three outline sketches of a girl and a dog, possibly by a later hand". The most complete discussion of the Sketchbook can be found in Paul H. Walton, *Master Drawings*, *op. cit.*, p. 134-141.

²⁷ John Ruskin, *Diaries*, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 587.

²⁸ Both Walton and Newall identify the view correctly. See Paul H. Walton, *Master Drawings*, *op. cit.*, p. 134, and Christopher Newall, *John Ruskin: Artist and Observer*, London, Paul Holberton, 2014, p. 305.

²⁹ The Grand Hôtel Bellevue, located in the same place as the actual Hôtel Touring, was built in 1861 to accommodate the increasing number of tourists. Other hotels included the Hôtel du Soleil on the Rue du Seyon and the Faucon on the Rue de l'Hôpital. The Jardin Anglais, built in 1865 with a zoo, was a likely spot for Ruskin's walks with his young wards.

³⁰ Paul H. Walton, *Master Drawings*, *op. cit.*, p. 134-135.

³¹ The weather became overcast, windy and cold during the next six days.

³² John Ruskin, *Diaries*, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 587-588. The rock is probably not the Pierre-à-Bot, but a large rock outcrop close to the actual Chemin du Pertuis-du-Sault and behind the Dürrenmatt Center that overlooks the Lake.

with Trees. The only available evidence we have is the catalogue description that indicates a detailed rendering of rocks and natural vegetation, the sort of painstakingly controlled study that Christopher Newall has identified with the critic's "moods of manic despair."³³ But it is also possible that the picture he drew that afternoon may have been *View across a Lake, possibly the Lac de Neuchâtel* (Appendix n° 20), currently in the Thomson Collection.

On 11 May, Ruskin wrote a letter to his mother describing the previous day's expedition in a manner revelatory of his bipolar extremes:

We had (the children and I) a delightful day yesterday at the Pierre à Bot, gathering vetches and lilies of the valley in the woods, and picnic afterwards on the lovely mossy grass, in view of all the Alps, Jungfrau, Eigers, Blumlis Alp, Altels, and the rest with intermediate Lake and farms-treads and apple-blossom. Very heavenly, the people only showing, every year, steadier march to decline, and the youth of the towns, cigar in mouth and haggard-faced, and sullen-mouthed and evil-eyed, frightful to think of and anticipate the future of.³⁴

In a sort of urban analogue of the *Modern Painters* chapters tellingly titled "Mountain Gloom" and "Mountain Glory", Ruskin projects on Neuchâtel a mixture of heavenly hope, identified with the panorama of the Bernese Alps, and satanic despair, associated with the town's corrupt youth.

This duality can be seen in the artist's best known work composed during this stay, *Dawn at Neuchâtel* (Appendix n° 21, Pl. IV), bequeathed to Harvard's Fogg Museum in 1919. Ruskin writes in his diary that he woke up at 4.30 a.m. on 11 May to sketch the summits he had admired the day before. Anticipating the arrival that same morning of a special train conveying the Trevelyans to Neuchâtel, however, death was obviously on his mind.³⁵ Walton writes that the critic associated sunsets in a commonplace way with death but also with God's love, while sunrises signified the renewal of life: he needed "consoling influence of the dawn" because of the approaching death of Lady Trevelyan.³⁶ Indeed, the supernal whiteness of the mountains expresses hope. On the other hand, it is hard not to see in the intense orange of the sky, a color highly unusual in his work, or in the purple cloud spread ominously over the mountain range, a reference to those evil, haggard-faced youth and the apocalyptic future they presaged. According to the Library edition catalogue,

³³ Christopher Newall, *John Ruskin: Artist and Observer*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

³⁴ John Ruskin, *Works*, *op. cit.*, vol. 18, p. xxxviii.

³⁵ John Ruskin, *Diaries*, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 588.

³⁶ Paul H. Walton, *Master Drawings*, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

Ruskin is meant to have painted another sunrise drawing (Cat. 1193) on the morning of Pauline Trevelyan's death on 13 May that has never been located, although this seems unlikely for several reasons.³⁷

On 16 May 1866, Ruskin's friend was buried with an English service at the Mail cemetery;³⁸ her death was announced in the local newspaper on the 19th. The critic briefly mentions in his diary on 15 May that he went for a walk in the Seyon, on the 17th that he "stayed in nearly all day, but went for a row on the Lake", and the next day that he went with Constance's father, who had arrived in town, up to the "little quiet valley" of the Hermitage then caught a cold rowing on the Lake.³⁹ He also found time on either the 17th or the 18th to draw the precisely rendered *Lady Trevelyan's Grave and Cemetery* (Appendix n° 23), a picture that exists in two copies, including one made for Sir Walter (Appendix n° 25). In the foreground is the gravestone inscribed with a quote from Sir Thomas More's *Supplication of the Souls* (1529), "Time tryeth Troth", while in the background is the familiar mass of Neuchâtel castle, Ruskin's Lakeside hotel, and the mountain of Boudry in the distance. Hayman notes that Ruskin did not usually finish his drawings as completely, so that it should be seen as "tribute to this friend."⁴⁰

From Thun, where he escaped with his two wards on 19 May, Ruskin wrote to his friend Charles Howell:

I've had a rather bad time of it at Neuchatel; what with Death and the North Wind; both devil's inventions as far as I can make out. But things are looking a little better now, and I had a lovely three hours' walk by the Lake shore, in cloudless calm, from five to eight this morning, under hawthorn and chestnut here just in full blossom and among other pleasantnesses too good for mortals, as the North Wind and the rest of it are too bad. We don't deserve either such blessing or cursing, it seems to poor moth me.⁴¹

³⁷ This is unlikely given that the weather was rainy and overcast on the 13th, and that Ruskin wrote almost nothing in his journal between the 12th and the 16th, suggesting he was probably not in the right state of mind to draw. Stephen Wildman, in an email of 17 December 2015, has also challenged the likelihood of the third sunset's existence, pointing to the fact that it is unlikely that Connie owned two Neuchâtel sunrises and that Ruskin did not draw on Sundays. He argues that Cat. 1193 is probably that in David Thomson's Collection.

³⁸ The Mail cemetery was closed in 2008, and Lady Trevelyan's gravestone was unfortunately not preserved, unlike several others.

³⁹ John Ruskin, *Diaries, op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 588.

⁴⁰ John Hayman, *John Ruskin and Switzerland, op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁴¹ John Ruskin, *Works, op. cit.*, vol. 18, p. xxxix.

The critic draws on similar imagery as in his letter of 10 May to his mother, oscillating between the two extremes of heavenly bliss, rediscovered in the "cloudless calm" of the Thunersee, and the satanic curse of Neuchâtel, with its cold northern *bise* and Lady Trevelyan's death. Unlike that town, the Bernese Alps he had painted pristine white and where he would soon meet and idealize Marie of the Giessbach, daughter of a hotel owner in Brienz, continued to feed his Romantic idealism.

Ruskin nevertheless stopped in Neuchâtel one last time in late April 1869. On the 29th, he writes in his diary that he visited the square tower of Rochefort castle above Colombier, where archeological research had begun in 1862. The day after, he visited Lady Trevelyan's grave, where he collected a leaf and sent it in a letter to Joan Agnew before leaving for Vevey.⁴² On one or the other of these two days he painted a bracing view of the wind-tossed Lake and Fribourgeois Alps behind, *Afternoon in Spring, with south Wind, at Neuchâtel* (Appendix n° 26, Pl. V), today at the Ashmolean.

While it was the south wind, and not the *bise* that was blowing that day, Ruskin still seems to have regretted his time in town. On 13 June, he wrote to Norton who was in Vevey: "I did not forget you at Neuchâtel. But they had built a modern church at the castle – and made me sick – and I wouldn't have you go there."⁴³ Referring to the restoration work undertaken at the Collégiale between 1867 and 1870, Ruskin very likely objected to the addition of a second tower and to the replacement of the original roof and gargoyles. But he may also have been disturbed by the addition of neo-gothic elements, inspired by the work of Viollet-le-Duc, and, indirectly, by his own writings!

It was with these changes in mind that the critic wrote his Preface to *The Queen of the Air* on 1 May in Vevey, one of his most celebrated philippics against modern progress:

The light, the air, the waters, all defiled! How of the earth itself? Take this one fact for a type of honour done by the modern Swiss to the earth of his native land. There used to be a little rock at the end of the avenue by the port of Neuchâtel; there, the last marble of the foot of the Jura, sloping to the blue water, and (at this time of year) covered with bright pink tufts of Saponaria. I went, three days since, to gather a blossom of the place. The goodly native rock and its flowers were covered with dust and refuse of the town; but, in the middle of the avenue, was a newly-constructed artificial rockery, with a fountain twisted through a spinning spout, and an inscription on one of its loose-tumbled stones. –

"Aux botanistes
Le club Jurassique."

⁴² John Ruskin, *Diaries, op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 667.

⁴³ John Ruskin, *Works, op. cit.*, vol. 36, p. 569.

Ah, masters of modern science, give me back my Athena out of your vials, and seal, if it may be, once more, Asmodeus therein. You have divided the elements, and united them; enslaved them upon the earth, and discerned them in the stars.⁴⁴

Like the rock at the end of the avenue, John Ruskin's romance with Neuchâtel reached its end point in 1869. The town he had once admired as a balcony onto the Alps then as an example of Swiss historical topography came to stand for the moral and physical blight he believed was spreading to all of Switzerland. Ruskin imagined Neuchâtel as particularly vulnerable to the storm clouds of the nineteenth century not just because of Lady Trevelyan's death, but also because of the town's association with several modern geologists, including Agassiz and Edouard Desor, because of the many changes to its architecture during the 1860s, and above all because of its position on the periphery of the Alps and of Swiss history, which the critic had always idealized as a bulwark against progress. Caught between the blessing of Swiss civilization and the curse of modern life, Neuchâtel thus played a minor but not negligible role in the development of John Ruskin's remarkably prescient environmental and social critique of modernity.

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⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 19, p. 293-294.

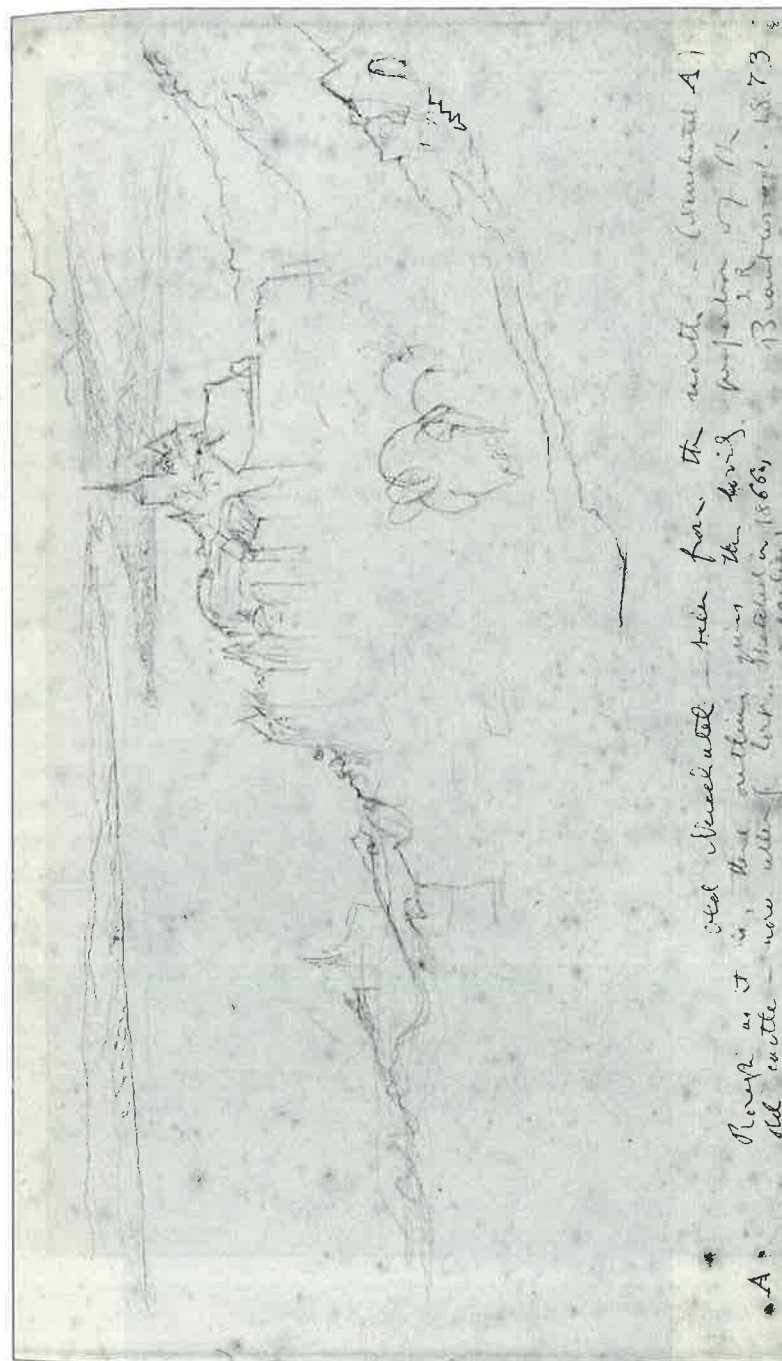


Fig. 5. John Ruskin, *Old Neuchâtel, seen from the North*, c. 1863, pen and brown ink, over graphite, on tan laid paper, laid down on gray wove paper, 17.5 x 25.8 cm, Chicago, The Art Institute, inv. 1942.190. © Chicago, The Art Institute/New York, Art Resource/Florence, Scala.



Fig. 6. John Ruskin, *Neuchâtel - View*, c. 1863, pencil, dimensions unknown, Lancaster, Ruskin Library, inv. RF 965. © Lancaster, Ruskin Library.



Fig. 7. John Ruskin, *Panorama of the Jura, near Neuchâtel*, 1866, pencil, black and brown ink, 28 x 50.8 cm, Lancaster, Ruskin Library, inv. RF 1429. © Lancaster, Ruskin Library.

APPENDIX:
CATALOGUE OF JOHN RUSKIN'S DRAWINGS OF NEUCHÂTEL

Abbreviations:

- Cat. "Catalogue of Ruskin's Drawings", in John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds Edward T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009 [1903-1912], vol. 68, p. 215-306.
RF. Lancaster, Ruskin Library
ConRM. Coniston, Ruskin Museum

n° 1. *La Halle*

1835, pencil, 23 x 15.25 cm

Current location: No known location

Catalogue number: Cat. 1194

n° 2. *The Same Subject, Redrawn (La Halle)*

1835, pen, 23 x 15.25 cm

Inscribed: "The pen copy of the preceding, made on his return home. Of the drawings dated 1835, those in pencil are the original sketches; the pendrawings, much inferior in spirit, were done afterwards to illustrate a poetical tour-book" – *Manchester Catal.*

Current location: No known location

Catalogue number: Cat. 1195

n° 3. *Mountain Village, Switzerland*

1854, watercolour, dimensions unknown

Inscribed: "On old backboard: Watercolour Drawing by John Ruskin/Given to us by himself/I give it to my Phil, his godson/[...] 1901 Rottingdean"

Current location: Lancaster, Ruskin Library, inv. RF 0958

n° 4. *Lake of Neuchâtel*

1859, pencil and watercolour, double sheet from notebook, 51 x 7.6 cm

Current location: Lancaster, Ruskin Library, inv. RF 1427

n° 5. *Neuchâtel, Sketch of Buildings and Tower*

1859, pencil and wash, 32.4 x 24.7 cm

Inscribed: "Neuchatel J.R. 1859"

Current location: Lancaster, Ruskin Library, inv. RF 1412

n° 6. *Chateau of Neuchâtel*

1859 or 1863, pencil, pen, and wash, 37.5 x 53 cm

Inscribed: "Beginning, Neuchatel. Ink. ran too much to go on. Alps over the [...] (ill.), meant to be"

Current location: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 35.1215 (Bequest of Mrs. Henry Lee Higginson, 1935)
Reproduced in John Hayman, *John Ruskin and Switzerland*, *op. cit.*, p. 111

n° 7. *Old Neuchâtel, seen from the North*

c. 1863, pen and brown ink, over graphite, on tan laid paper, laid down on gray wove paper, 17.5 x 25.8 cm

Inscribed: "Old Neuchatel, seen from the north (Neuchatel A). Sketched in 1866 (or earlier)/JR, Brantwood 1873"

Current location: Chicago, The Art Institute, inv. 1942.190

Misattributed to Emil Armin

Catalogue number: Possibly Cat. 1201, *View (from the North)*n° 8. *Neuchâtel – View*

c. 1863, pencil, dimensions unknown

Inscribed: "Neuchatel B sketched 1863. I think invaluable now for the lines of roof of old town (call this Neuchatel B. and see C." Verso, in ink: "[...] ast. sky in the east. changing quickly. 8 o'clock evening June 7th 1861. All fog below/[...] should be deeper in town throwing out more brightly the rosy light in the top angle"

Current location: Lancaster, Ruskin Library, inv. RF 965

n° 9. *Neuchâtel. To Lake from Castle*

1863, pencil, dimensions unknown

Inscribed: "Neuchatel. To Lake from castle." Verso: pencil drawing of a line of trees

Current location: No longer in Ruskin Library (went missing in 1996, only a small image available), inv. RF 964

n° 10. *View (from the North)*1866 (*Diary* editors link it to 6 May), technique and dimensions unknown

Current location: No known location

Catalogue number: Cat. 1201

n° 11. *The Château of Neuchâtel at Dusk with Jura Mountains Beyond*

1866 (6 May?), pencil and watercolour, 13.3 x 21 cm

Current location: Private Collection

Reproduced in Robert Hewison, Ian Warrell and Stephen Wildman, *Ruskin, Turner, and the Pre-Raphaelites*, exhibition catalogue, London, Tate Gallery, 2000, p. 163

n° 12. *Houses at Neuchâtel*

1866, watercolour over pencil heightened with touches of white on buff laid paper, 17.5 x 12.5 cm

Signed l.r.: "JR", and inscribed l.l.: "neuchatel"

Current location: Private Collection, sold by Sotheby's, London, 26 March 2004

n° 13. *Neuchâtel, Tower of the Old Church*

1866, pencil, 16.5 x 11 cm

Inscribed: "Tower of the old church in castle. Seen to the right in E but this drawn from the south, opposite side. See G."

Current location: Coniston, Ruskin Museum, inv. ConRM 1989.550

Catalogue number: Cat. 1199

n° 14. *Panorama of Neuchâtel Lake*

1866, pencil and watercolour, 28 x 50.8 cm

Current location: Lancaster, Ruskin Library, inv. RF 1428

n° 15. *Panorama of the Jura, near Neuchâtel* (verso of previous drawing, n° 14)

1866, pencil, black and brown ink, 28 x 50.8 cm

Current location: Lancaster, Ruskin Library, inv. RF 1429

n° 16. *Sketch of the Shore of the Lake, with Trees*

1866, technique and dimensions unknown

Inscribed: "The upper subject is a sketch of my own on the shore of the Lake of Neufchatel, more or less faithfully rendering the forms of trees falling into irregular groups among the clefts of Jura limestone. Now, as compared with Richard Wilson, I am a mere baby in artistic faculty, but I was taught by Turner faithfully to follow the contour of vegetation, and I believe the student will at once see the difference between fallacy and truth of Landscape-form in the sense in which these words were used throughout the First Volume of *Modern Painters*, which was occupied exclusively in the assertion of the unveracity of the then existing school of Landscape, as opposed to Turner's. And I give my own work, instead of Turner's, here, because I can vouch for the actual existence of every bough that I drew, having myself no power of composition; whereas in a Turner's sketch (such as Educational Series 131.) there are always additions R. or subtractions of branches, here or there, as Turner chose, and even some vestige, in the earliest examples, of the pitch-fork botany of his Masters: while I, being taught by him only, have really in this sketch got a little closer to literal ligneous form than he did himself till later times."

Current location: No known location. Was part of "Rudimentary Series" in Teaching Collection at Oxford (inv. RUD 277.a)

Catalogue number: Cat. 1197

Description in John Ruskin, *Works, op. cit.*, vol. 21, p. 229n° 17. *Château of Colombier, Neuchâtel, Switzerland*

1866 (probably 8 May), pen and brown and blue ink over pencil, 13.5 x 21 cm

Signed with initials and inscribed twice: "Colombier/8th May"

Current location: Toronto, David Thomson Collection, 1866 Sketchbook

n° 18. *A View of a Town, possibly Colombier*

1866 (probably 8 May), pencil, 13.5 x 21 cm

Current location: Toronto, David Thomson Collection, 1866 Sketchbook

n° 19. *Dawn. Neuchâtel, 9th May. 1866*

9 May 1866, watercolour over pencil, 13.5 x 21 cm

Inscribed with the title on verso and with: "Vermilion darken/blue green stripe/shades to purple on left [deleted] right/relieving stripe/down into green"

Current location: Toronto, David Thomson Collection, 1866 Sketchbook

Reproduced in Paul H. Walton, *Master Drawings by John Ruskin, op. cit.*, p. 135 and in Christopher Newall, *John Ruskin: Artist and Observer, op. cit.*, p. 304n° 20. *View across a Lake, possibly the Lac de Neuchâtel*

1866 (probably 10 May), pencil, 13.5 x 21 cm

Current location: Toronto, David Thomson Collection, 1866 Sketchbook

n° 21. *Dawn at Neuchâtel*

11 May 1866, watercolour and white gouache on cream wove paper, darkened to brown, 17.5 x 25 cm

Current location: Cambridge, Harvard Art Museums, Fogg Museum, inv. 1919.49, Gift of Samuel Sachs

Catalogue number: Cat. 1192

Reproduced in John Ruskin, *Works, op. cit.*, vol. 18, p. xxxviii (plate 1) and in John Hayman, *John Ruskin and Switzerland, op. cit.*, p. 135n° 22. *Dawn at Neuchâtel*

Engraving, published by [George] Allen & co, from the original in the Fogg

Current location: Coniston, Ruskin Museum, inv. ConRM 1989.683

n° 23. *Lady Trevelyan's Grave and Cemetery*

1866, pen, black ink wash, and bodycolour, 20 x 28 cm

Gravestone inscribed: "Time tryeth Troth"

Current location: Lancaster, Ruskin Library, inv. RF 1413

Catalogue number: Cat. 1196

n° 24. *Unidentified* (drawn on verso of n° 23)

1866, pen, black ink, and bodycolour, 20 x 28 cm

Current location: Lancaster, Ruskin Library, inv. RF 1413

n° 25. *Sketch of Lake with Mountains, Lady Trevelyan's Grave in the foreground*

1866, pen and wash, 20 x 28 cm

Signed, dated and inscribed: "J.R. Neufchatel 30 June 1866"

Current location: Morphet/Cambo, Wallington Hall (copy given by Ruskin to Sir Walter Trevelyan)

Catalogue number: Cat. 1198

Reproduced in John Ruskin, *Works, op. cit.*, vol. 37, p. 422 (plate 11) and in John Hayman, *John Ruskin and Switzerland, op. cit.*, p. 112

n° 26. *Afternoon in Spring, with south Wind, at Neuchâtel*

30 April 1869, watercolour and bodycolour over graphite on pale grey wove paper, 17.3 x 25.2 cm

Current location: Oxford, Western Art Print Room, Ashmolean Museum, inv. WA.RS.ED.298.a

Presented by John Ruskin to the Ruskin Drawing School (University of Oxford), 1875; transferred from the Ruskin Drawing School (inv. ED 298.a) to the Ashmolean Museum, c. 1949

n° 27. *Chimney at Neuchâtel, Dent du Midi and Mont Blanc in the distance*

Undated, technique and dimensions unknown

Current location: No known location

Catalogue number: Cat. 1191

Reproduced in John Ruskin, *The Poetry of Architecture*, London, George Allen, 1893 and in John Ruskin, *Works, op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 64 (plate 8)

n° 28. *View*

Undated, technique and dimensions unknown

Current location: No known location

Catalogue number: Cat. 1200 (listed under "Neuchâtel")

BÜCHER SIND SIRENEN. ÜBER NORMAN DOUGLAS UND CAPRI

Achatz VON MÜLLER

Eine schamrote Eule auf dem Flug nach Athen macht eine Zwischenlandung auf Capri und trifft dort Norman Douglas, obwohl sie doch hofft, Pascal Griener zu treffen. Das ist es, worüber ich berichten möchte:

Norman Douglas kam 1888 zum ersten Mal nach Capri, um die azurblauen Eidechsen der Faraglioni-Felsen zu bewundern. Er war recht genau zwanzig Jahre alt, also in der besten Verfassung zur Verklärung des Schönen und Seltenen. Und es war ihm von diesem Augenblick an klar, dass diese graziösen und bezaubernden Geschöpfe nichts anderes sein konnten als Metamorphosen der Sirenen. *Siren Land* (1911) nannte er seine meisterhafte analytisch-mythische Beschreibung der Inseln und Küstenstriche um die Stadt der Parthenope, jener Sirene, die einst Neapel gründete. Douglas stand deutlich vor Augen, dass die Sirenen von Capri und Neapel keine in Scheinschönheit gehüllten Menschenfresserinnen waren, wie es der archaische griechische Mythos wollte, sondern „hellenistisch“ zivilisierte Botinnen der Kultur:

The „chaste Parthenope“ found a resting-place and a honoured tomb on the spot where now stands Naples. For a thousand years she dominated its social and religious institutions. She dominates them still. Is Parthenope dead? Who, then, is Santa Lucia? The madonnas of Naples are all sea-queens whose crowns shine with a borrowed lustre; the Madonna della Libera, the Stella di Mare – they are all reincarnations of antique shapes, of the Sirens [...].¹

In Capri lockten sie Kaiser Augustus zu sich auf die Insel und verstanden es seinen Stiefsohn und Nachfolger Tiberius in hohem Alter so zu fesseln, dass dieser Capri nie wieder verlassen wollte. Tiberius überbaute die Insel zu einem einzigen Palast aus unzähligen weiteren Palästen, schuf ein neuartiges System aus Signalen und Boten, das es ihm ermöglichte von Capri aus die Welt zu regieren. Dabei verwandelte er sich für die Nachwelt

¹ Norman Douglas, *Siren Land*, London, M. Secker, 1929, S. 16.