Comparing Digital Images Online

Velson Horie

Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Manchester Museum

The Fighting Temeraire (1838)

- J M W Turner 1775-1851

- His "Fighting Temeraire" was voted Britain's "greatest painting" in 2005. Turner left it to the nation.

- At least 3 different engravings were made.

The new £20 note (to be issued 20th February 2020) celebrates his life and this picture.

Ehrenbreitstein (1835)

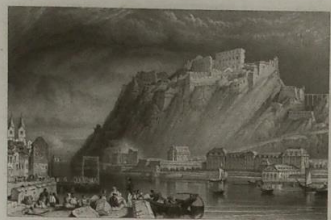Oil painting, 93x123 cm. Sold at Sotheby's 2017 for £18,533,750

https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/light-landscape-j-m-w-turners-ehrenbreitstein

Ehrenbreitstein (1832), W.1051, Bury Museum

Ehrenbreitstein (1819-20) 17.7x28.6 cm, W.687, Bury Museum
Value of watercolours ca £500,000 each.
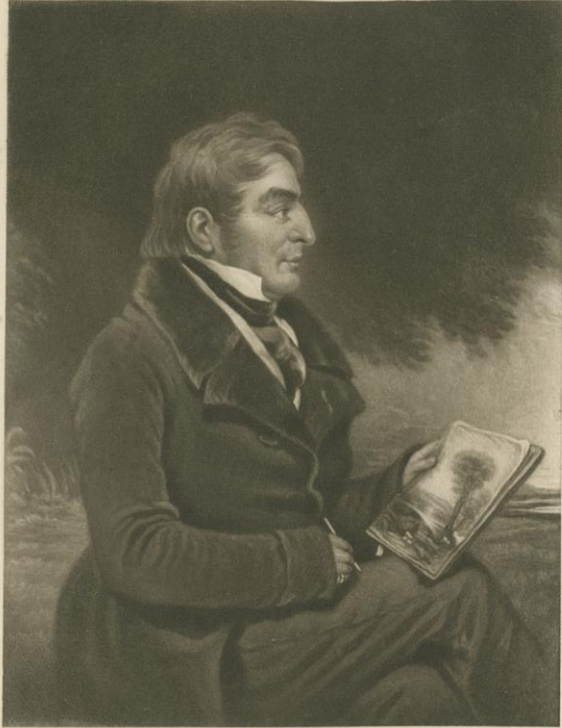
Portrait of J M W Turner in the Print Room of The British Museum (late 1820s), drawn by J T Smith, Lithograph by L Haghe [1830s]

J. M. W. Turner, R.A. in middle life
From a mezzotint engraving by Charles Turner. A.R.A.

THE ENGRAVED WORK

OF

J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.

BY

W. G. RAWLINSON

AUTHOR OF "TURNER'S LIBER STUDIORUM, A DESCRIPTION
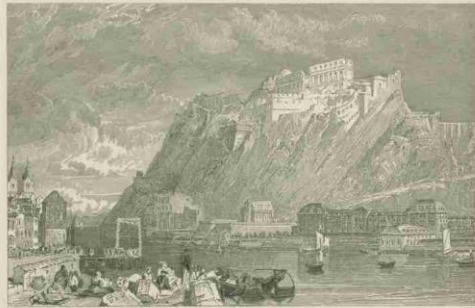AND A CATALOGUE"

VOL. II

LINE ENGRAVINGS ON STEEL
MEZZOTINTS
AQUATINTS, PLAIN AND COLOURED
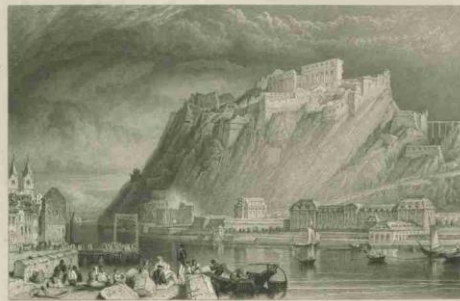LITHOGRAPHS AND CHROMO-LITHOGRAPHS

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1913

Rawlinson started working on Turner's prints from the 1870s, amassing a comprehensive collection. This was dispersed with large parts now in the USA-Yale and Boston museums.
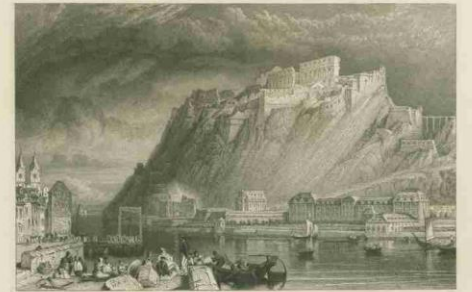
Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, R.A. Engraved by John Pye

EHRENBREITSTEIN

"Here Ehrenbreitstein with her shatter'd wall
———————— upon her height
"Yet shows of what she was when shell and ball
"Rebounding idly on her strength did light:
"A tower of victory! from whence the flight
"Of baffled foes was watch'd along the plain:
"But Peace destroy'd what War could never blight,
"And laid those proud roofs bare to Summer's rain—
"On which the iron shower for years had pour'd in vain."

Childe Harold Canto III
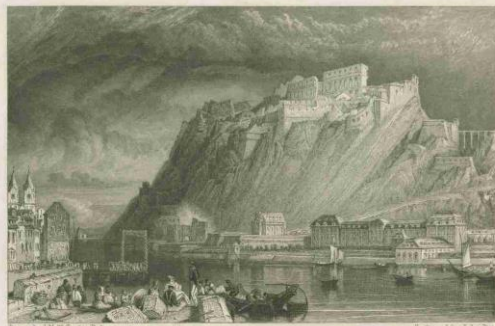
* Blown clean up by the French in the tower of Sedan.

Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, R.A. Engraved by J. Pye

EHRENBREITSTEIN.

Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, R.A. Engraved by John Pye.

EHRENBREITSTEIN.

Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, R.A. Engraved by John Pye.

EHRENBREITSTEIN.

Published by Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown & Green, Oct.7.1832. Printed by McQueen.

The impression above is the only one I have ever seen, but the plate appears in Mr. Stokes's List in the Appendix to Thornbury's 'Life of Turner.'

317a. EHRENBREITSTEIN. (Pl. VIII.) 1829.[1]
Engraved by J. Pye. $4\frac{1}{4}$ *by* $2\frac{3}{4}$.

Fortress high on cliff above Rhine; smoke rising from explosion below. Many figures on quays to left.

Engraver's Proofs. (*a*) Completed. Printed on upright sheet. "John Pye, 1828," in minute ital. writing, low in centre. Below, lines from 'Childe Harold,' from separate plate. *R.* (*b*) Printed in usual form. Title in centre in ital. caps. Art. names to left and right in ital. writing. *R.* (*c*) Without Title. Art. names in small Rom. type. *BM., Ward.*
First Pub. State. India. Title in open caps. Below, " Published by Longman, etc., Oct[r] 1828."
Later States. Plain paper; same lettering.

This plate is a small replica of No. 202.

318. THE TOWER OF LONDON. (Pl. VIII.) 1832.
Engraved by W. Miller. $4\frac{9}{16}$ *by* 3.

The Tower in centre above river, which is covered with shipping. Steamboat in centre.

Engraver's Proofs. India. Before Title. Left, "J. M. W. Turner R.A."; right, "W. Miller, 1831," both in itals. *R., Th.*
First Pub. State. India. Title in centre in open caps. Art. names in small Rom. type. Below, "Published by Longman etc., Nov. 1831."
Later States. Plain paper. Same lettering.
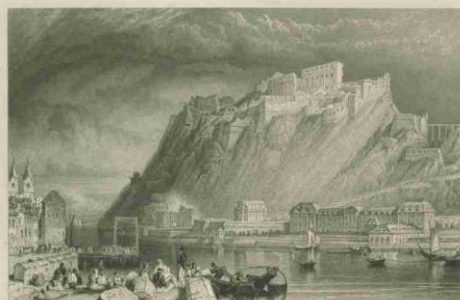*Reprinted* in 'Lays and Legends,' Jeremiah How, 132 Fleet Street, 1843. Title and Pub. line removed.

The Drawing was at Christie's in 1890. It was formerly in the Birchall Collection, where it was known as "The First Steamer on the Thames."
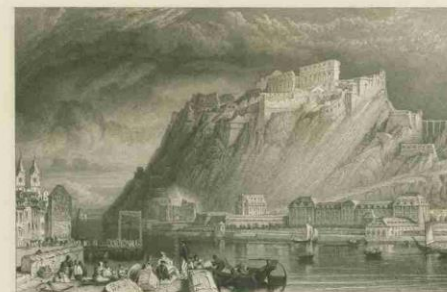
R317a_etc_hg_hg0574

R317a_epb_cvh_cvh0130

R317a_epb_YCBA_B1977.14.7152

R317a_epc_hg_hg0577

R317a_i_hg_hg1865

R317a_ii_Tate_T06136

What catalogues are available?

Victoria and Albert Museum has one of the largest collections of Turner's prints in the UK

PYE, J.

Ehrenbreitstein   after J.M.W. Turner, R.A. (R. 317 A)
('The Literary Souvenir' 1826 Pl. VIII) A small replica of R. 202
The Etching   On India paper Before Letters   E. 3537 –1946
Engraver's proof. Two impressions   On India paper   Lettered in small
    type,   Drawn by J.M.W Turner, RA   Engraved by J. Pye
                                                    E. 3538, 3539 – 1946
First Published State   On India paper   Lettered with artists' names, & above,
    title in open capitals; in small type, Published by Longman Rees Orme Brown
    & Green Oct.r 1828 and in italics, Printed by McQueen   E. 3540 –1946
A Later State,   On India paper   Lettered as First State, but Publication line re-effaced and
    date deleted.
Engraving. (4 13/16 x 7 1/2)   Given by Sir Horace A. Mummery
                                                    E. 3541 –1946

Drawn by J.M.W. Turner, R.A   Engraved by John Pye.

Published by Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown &Green. Oct.1 1832.

The Tate Gallery is the UK designated repository for Turner's art, but has a relatively poor holdings of his prints.

IN TATE BRITAIN

Prints and Drawings Room

VIEW BY APPOINTMENT

ARTIST	After Joseph Mallord William Turner 1775–1851
MEDIUM	Engraving on paper
DIMENSIONS	None
COLLECTION	Tate
ACQUISITION	Transferred from the British Museum 1988
REFERENCE	T06135

https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-ehrenbreitstein-engraved-by-j-pye-t06135

The YCBA has the best collection, and best curated, of Turner's prints, based on Rawlinson's collection. But its listing deals with only its internal collection.

Search Results

Print
Ehrenbreitstein
John Pye, 1782–1874, Bri...
Line engraving, engraver'...

Print
Ehrenbreitstein
John Pye, 1782–1874, Bri...
Line engraving, engraver'...

Print
Ehrenbreitstein
John Pye, 1782–1874, Bri...
Line egraving, engraver's ...

Print
Ehrenbreitstein
Print made by John Pye, 1...
Etching and line engravin...

Print
Ehrenbreitstein
John Pye, 1782–1874, Bri...
Line engraving, engraver'...

Probably the best collection in private hands. The owner
has an enormous amount of knowledge that remains in
his head until someone asks a question.

792	XLIIB. 'The Literary Souvenir', 1826-32											
793	Goodall, E	Richmond Hill	314. li.	1826	314x385	139x228	70x112	ii-i	hg0569			
794	Goodall, E	Richmond Hill	314. li.	1826	223x228		70x111	i-i	hg1878		india stuck on backing paper?	
795	Finden, E	Bolton Abbey Wharfdale	315. i.	1826	222x289	124x202	74x104	i-i	hg1864		Henry Theobald, CM512	
796	Finden, E	Bolton Abbey Wharfdale	315. i.	1826	208x288		74x105	i-i	hg1877		india stuck on backing paper?	
797	Finden, E	Bolton Abbey Wharfdale	315. i.	1826					hg0570		J. E. Taylor	
798	Wallis,R	Buckfastleigh Abbey	316. i.	1827	262x384	137x188	73x105	i-i	hg0568			
799	Wallis,R	Buckfastleigh Abbey	316. i.	1827	279x386	136x189	73x106	i-i	hg0571		CM219	
800	Wallis,R	Buckfastleigh Abbey	316. e.p.	1827	309x436	137x188	74x106	ep-i	hg0572	TSS		
801	Heath, P	Norham Castle	317. e.p.c.	1827					hg0573			
802	Pye, J	Ehrenbreitstein	317. a. etching.	1828					hg0574		J. E. Taylor	
803	Pye, J	Ehrenbreitstein	317. a. e.p a.	1828					hg0575		J. E. Taylor	
804	Pye, J	Ehrenbreitstein	317. a. e.p.b.	1828					hg0576	Engraver's choic	J. E. Taylor	
805	Pye, J	Ehrenbreitstein	317. a. e.p.c.	1828	302x425	127x192	70x108	epc-i	hg0577	Engraver's choice proof		
806	Pye, J	Ehrenbreitstein	317a	1828	192x279	96x134	70x108	i-i	hg1865			
807	Pye, J	Ehrenbreitstein	317a	1828	122x191		70x107	i-i	hg1896			
808	Miller, W.	The Tower of London	318. e.p.	1831	296x441	124x188	76x117	ep-i	hg0578	Engravers choic	Henry Theobald, CM224	
809	Miller, W.	The Tower of London	318	1831	288x382	124x188	76x117	i-i	hg1866			
810												
811	XLIIC. 'The Keepsake', 1828-1837											
812	Goodall, E	Florence	319. etching.	1828	291x440	148x212	87x130	etc-i	hg0581		Henry Theobald, CM527	
813	Goodall, E	Florence	319. e.p.	1828	294x443	150x215	87x132	ep-i	hg1874		Henry Theobald 12th May 1925, C	
814	Goodall, E	Florence	319. e.p.	1828	302x393	149x212	87x130	ep-i	hg0582	TSS	CM225	
815	Goodall, E	Florence	319. i.	1828	278x440	150x214	87x131	i-i	hg0583	TSS	Henry Theobald, CM514	
816	Wallis,R	Lake of Albano	320. e.p.b.	1829	301x432	153x215	91x133	epb-i	hg0584		Rawlinson.	
817	Wallis,R	Lake of Albano	320. i.	1829	307x391	149x214	90x133	i-i	hg0585	TSS	CM226	
818	Smith, WR	Lago Maggiore	321. etching.	1829	292x445	152x215	88x132	etc-i	hg0586	Unrecorded in R	Theobald	

A copy of Rawlinson, *Engraved work of JMW Turner*, annotations by Luke Herrmann, the author of *Turner's Prints* (1990), not recorded elsewhere.

317a. EHRENBREITSTEIN. (Pl. VIII.) 1829.[1]

Engraved by J. Pye. 4¼ by 2¾.

Fortress high on cliff above Rhine; smoke rising from explosion below. Many figures on quays to left.

Engraver's Proofs. (a) Completed. Printed on upright sheet. "John Pye, 1828," in minute ital. writing, low in centre. Below, lines from 'Childe Harold,' from separate plate. R. (b) Printed in usual form. Title in centre in ital. caps. Art. names to left and right in ital. writing. R. (c) Without Title. Art. names in small Rom. type. *BM., Ward.*

First Pub. State. India. Title in open caps. Below, "Published by Longman, etc., Oct[r] 1828."

Later States. Plain paper; same lettering.

This plate is a small replica of No. 202.

[handwritten annotations in margins:]
text (ann) about
E. good, will q lines
from Byron's Childe Harold
V&A Proof
presented to John Sheepshanks & other progress proofs
"1829 opened will pretty lively competition among these annual books". (Life of W Sutt 1884, p 305)
✓ will and lively especially on water clouds of smoke.

318. THE TOWER OF LONDON. (Pl. VIII.) 1832.

Engraved by W. Miller. 4⁰⁄₁₆ by 3.

The Tower in centre above river, which is covered with shipping. Steamboat in centre.

[handwritten:] Superb detail

Engraver's Proofs. India. Before Title. Left, "J. M. W. Turner R.A."; right, "W. Miller, 1831," both in itals. R., *Th.*

First Pub. State. India. Title in centre in open caps. Art. names *[handwritten:] and lovely light effects*
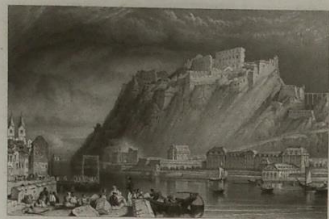
How can these un-identified prints be fitted into the database of Turner's prints?

Stages :

1. – discover all the comparative examples
2. – gather them together
3. – compare them
4. – put them into a sequence
5. – slot the un-identified prints into the sequence
6. – establish if they are new to science, or an example of something known
7. – provide a new identification + label
8. – make this new knowledge widely available

1 – Discover the examples, R317a

- UK public collections - There are 2 in the British Museum, 5 in the Victoria and Albert Museum, 3 in the Tate Gallery

- USA public collections – 4 in the Yale Collection of British Art (YCBA)

- UK private collections – 3 collections investigated: 5, 8 and 2 examples.

- If there are publicly available pictures, they are mostly thumbnails. And specially taken photographs (at considerable cost) have poor resolution. Only the YCBA website shows enough detail, ca 450 dpi, to distinguish between differing examples, but individual engraved lines are not clear.

2 – Gather them together

- It is not possible to borrow from the institutions and bring the examples together. But these usually hold the best examples.

- Private collectors are more accommodating, so it is possible to bring these pieces of paper into a room and lay them out for comparison – which is what Rawlinson did 100 years ago.

- So "gathering" a full selection of the physical impressions does not work.

2 – Gather them together - Virtually

- The first stage is an [online catalogue](). Anja Le Blanc of our local IT Research support led and did most of the work I am describing.

- This catalogue provides us with the ability to add [data and images]() without limit. As techniques to use graphics online improve, there is no restriction on the details that can be transmitted and displayed. The limit is now our ability to capture the detail.

- The current size of the (off-line) image data base is ca 2.4 TB. A tentative target size is 4 TB. Most of these are of items in private collections, scanned at 1200 dpi.

3 – Compare them

- Anja Le Blanc went further. She developed a Python program that made a comparison between two similar impressions.

- The lines added to the left image are red, the blue ones removed.

- So we can now demonstrate, quantitatively, the difference (or not) between two impressions.

- More than that, the scanning resolution now available allows us to compare detail.

3 – Compare the detail

- In the C19th, an engraver went through a number of delicate stages
- etc – etching. a metal plate was etched to provide the base structure
- epa – engraver's proof (a). fine details were carved into the metal, using a graver
- epb – using a pencil, Turner marked an impression with changes
- epc – the image was finalised
- i – first published state. publication data (artists' names etc) were added to the plate
- ii – the plate was used to print cheaper editions, and repaired when worn out
- - Then the paper reacted to 150 years of changes and neglect.
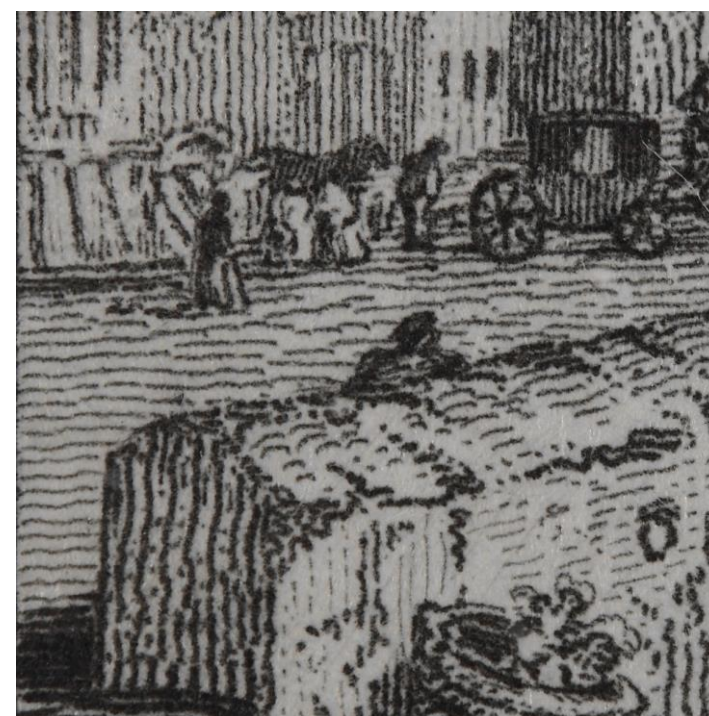
etc

epa

epb

epc

i

ii

4-7 - Put them into a sequence …

- So the sequence derived from Rawlinson's text in the previous slide is wrong.

- The order of these impressions should be etc, epb, epa, epc, i, ii. These results have been published.

- This prompted research into the historical records.

- According to the publisher's accounts, the book sold 12,000 copies so the plate became worn and had to be repaired by re-engraving.

- Surprisingly few of these copies are now available, and books do not lend themselves to scanning at high resolution.

R317a ii (image at 3600 dpi)

Drawn by J. M. W. Turner, R.A.

Engraved by John Pye.

EHRENBREITSTEIN.

R662 281x387 mm

R631 75x75 mm

Conclusions

- J M W Turner is important – he is still influencing life and art in the world.

- There is much to capture and share, about this art: its transmission, appropriation, the contribution of engravers, publishers, critics.

- Technical details about capture and sharing are still developing and are being tested in this website.

- The lessons learned from examining the effect of this major, complex, entrepreneurial, artist can be applied to other artists and the material world.