

LE CLAIRE KUNST SEIT 1982

ERNST FRIES

1801 Heidelberg - Karlsruhe 1833

Cape Miseno with Lake Averno on the Gulf of Naples

Pencil on laid paper with watermark (part extant): initials *PM* / 1822.¹

With colour annotations at the right: *blau* / *grünlich* / *grüngelb*; inscribed by another hand upper right: 30.
426 x 572 mm

PROVENANCE: Hans Geller – Galerie zur Mühle, Siegfried Billesberger, Moosinning nr. Munich –
Walter Bareiss, Stamford, Connecticut

This drawing was executed by Ernst Fries during his sojourn in Italy in the years 1823-27 when he was at the height of his artistic powers. He set off for Italy in the autumn of 1823 in the company of Heinrich Schilbach and the brothers Gottfried and Johann Christoph Rist. Fries spent the first few years of his stay in Rome, where he produced an important body of sketches. These focus on the monuments of antiquity and the natural beauty of the Roman countryside.

Fries spent early June to late August 1826 in the Gulf of Naples area, visiting Sorrento, Amalfi and Capri. The present sketch was made on this tour. It is a north-westerly view looking towards the Gulf of Pozzuoli and the cliffs of Cape Miseno. There is a distant glimpse of Lake Averno. A Fries drawing now in the collection of the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin depicts a south-easterly view of Cape Miseno with Lake Averno and the Castello di Baia.² It was very probably executed much at the same time as the present drawing (fig. 1).

Sigrid Wechsler comments on the present sheet: *This pencil drawing belongs to an important body of sketches executed by Ernst Fries when he visited the Gulf of Naples on his journey to Naples and Sorrento in the summer of 1826.*³ *The ductus is confident and the clear notational style captures the essential features Fries might demand of a study intended for later preparatory use on his return from Italy. The artist has thought it important to include the brief colour annotations as a preparatory aide in the possible execution of a painting on his return.*⁴

In spring 1833 – only a few months before his early death – Fries executed an oil painting based on preparatory studies he had made in Italy (fig. 2). The oil depicts the Gulf of Pozzuoli with Cape Miseno and a distant view of Ischia.⁵ However a painting directly based on the present drawing is not recorded.

Fries broke his journey to Naples in Capri in early August 1826. Here, he and his friend August Kopisch, a writer and painter, took lodgings and spent several days exploring the island. The two men had themselves guided by a local fisherman to the legendary and, at the time, intimidating sea

¹ Ernst Fries used Italian laid paper with this watermark for a number of drawings executed between 1824 and the summer of 1827. See Sigrid Wechsler, *Ernst Fries (1801-1833), Monographie und Werkverzeichnis*, Heidelberg 2000, p. 390, watermark no. 15, repr.

² Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, [inv. SZ 95]. – S. Wechsler, op. cit., no. 354, repr.

³ Comparable drawings are listed in Wechsler's catalogue raisonné (op. cit.) under nos. 335-55.

⁴ Sigrid Wechsler in a written communication dated 7.8.2012.

⁵ S. Wechsler (op. cit.), no. 706, colour plate LXXI.

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cave on the north coast of the island – the Blue Grotto. They swam into the heart of the grotto and set up their folding stools and lanterns on dry ground to make drawings, intending to work these up later as paintings. It was Kopisch's report on the rediscovery of the grotto that was to turn it into an attraction for artists and tourists.

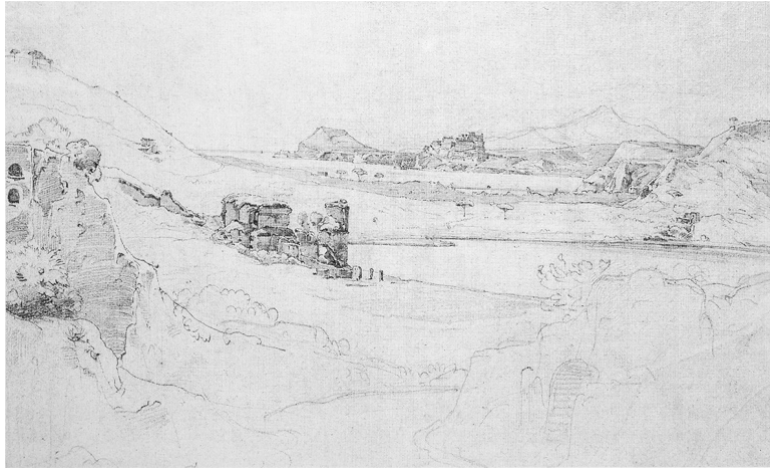


Fig. 1: *View of Cape Miseno with Lake Averno and the Castello di Baia*, 1826, pencil, 269 x 459 mm. Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin



Fig. 2: *The Gulf of Baia, View of Ischia with Pozzuoli and the Castello di Baia*, 1833, oil on canvas, 54.6 x 70.0 cm. Private collection