4

Sociology of the Middle Distance

Between Wilderness and Tilled Field in Images from the Neolithic Period to the Middle Ages

Introduction

IN THIS CHAPTER I will put an intensified sociological slant to my earlier deliberations on the relationship of the landscape image vis-à-vis cultural evolution. My empirical fulcrum is, in a way, the same as in chapter 2 – the rocky grounds in post-Egyptian pre-modern images – but rather than drilling deep into the material of these grounds, I will now focus on their surfaces and, on the one hand, look at everything that apparently bounces off them, which, as discussed in chapter 2, could be described as a *cultivated, divided-up and consumed nature*, in sum: the *territory*. On the other hand, I will be unearthing those occupations which are nonetheless still permissible – pastoralism, hunting, fruit picking, etc. – pointing out that it is these occupations that actually allow the ground on which they take place to remain virgin *terra*.

The absence of territory in this epoch by no way includes every form of cultivated nature, but rather nature that is specifically aimed at utilitarian purposes, thus comprising phenomena such as fields, hedges, fences, tracks, roads, canals, bridges and quarries. Unlike modifications of nature such as gardens and shrines, these phenomena can be said to enter a human everyday sphere in which physical efforts – work – are a necessity in order to extract the benefits of nature. Moreover, they are not restricted to local impact on nature, but are concerned with control of larger stretches of its surface: mastery of terrain.

In its way, this is just another manner of phrasing an observation I made in chapter 1: that *mapping gaze* in this period cleaves off from *panoramic gaze*. Rather than being oriented from above and downwards, toward the neighbouring divided-up territory of the urban state (mapping gaze), the pictorial gaze is directed exclusively

outwards, where it – as the price paid for the depth of field's inclusion of background formations: rocks – is anchored in *terra*, the distant wilderness (panoramic gaze). As would be anticipated from this model, we can also establish that all the territorial phenomena which are taboo on the rocky grounds are actually permissible in the pre-Mesopotamian evolutionary stages: the Neolithic and Egyptian cultures. Similarly, the emergence of the perspectival pictorial view with its flexible re-integration of the mapping gaze in the 1420s, means that the territory's ingredients again manifest themselves – a paradigmatic breakthrough that has significant iconographical forerunners in images from the Middle Ages and late antiquity (more about this in chapter 7 and volume II).

Traces of cultivation and division are obviously broad categories, which can be linked with many types of *fields* in the surrounding culture. In addition to the *field* around the manual work and the *field* around the culture's territorial control, mention should also be made of the *field* around the exploitation of nature and also the *field* around *geomancy*, the pre-modern forms of knowledge concerning culture's accommodation within the terrain and the cosmic whole. In addition to such *fields*, we have to involve considerations of the identity of image elements as regards the specifically visual part of the changing image paradigms. For example, a river that winds its way diagonally from the foreground to the furthest background will also be a problematic entity in the classical pictorial vision, whether this watercourse is culturally modified or not. This can obviously not be attributed to a property of the river itself, but rather the identity with which it is imbued when it is looked at from a distance and is transformed perspectivally into a pictorial background: an identity that, from this vantage point, endows it with a measuring quality akin to that of the canal or fence. The river's identity in its pictorial representation can thus be ascribed neither to the river as physical object nor the beholder alone, but is rather related to the communal image culture – the *field* – of which they are both a part.

If we now want to connect the methodological approach of the middle distance – the presence or absence of traces of cultivation in the landscape images – with the two other methodological approaches in my model of analysis – on the one hand, the pole of vantage point: self-consciousness; on the other, the pole of remoteness: the world picture – the *field* around work nonetheless proves to be central. Encroachment on nature involves physical power – work – and assessment of this power is dependent on, among other things, the idea of the power of conception and thereby also on the evolution of self-consciousness and the changing world picture. Is work an inseparable part of every phase in the creative enterprise of the power of conception, or does it realise a concept that exists independently of physical exertion? Does work thereby belong in nature or is it fundamentally an activity that is alien to nature?

I will here apply the thesis that, inasmuch as Mother Earth appears as a macroscopic version of the female body, work is conceived in close connection with sexuality. Every cultivation of matter – be it agriculture (tilling and sowing of soil in the fields), mine-work (quarrying and refinement of bedrock) or craft in general (the hand shaping the material) – is thus a parallel to the woman's fertilisation, from penetration to conception to delivery. If all these processes are seen as a genesis of form in material, the crucial question is then: to what extent is the exertion – the toil of the hand, tilling, sacrifice, marital work, labour pains – an inevitable part of the creative enterprise of the power of conception?[1] Is it absolutely necessary for the coulter to wound the earth's body before she yields her goods? Does the sculptor have to force the chisel into the block of marble before the divinity's image is born? Is the man compelled to penetrate the woman's hymen before life is created inside her body?

These deliberations lead to the overarching model of evolution that to those in power work is acceptable – and depictable – at the preoperational stage, when the power of conception is still born cyclically by the body of the earth, but that it becomes an inferior act – and pictorially displaced – in connection with the development of the concrete operational stage, i.e. at the same time as self-consciousness and power of conception break away from the cycle of nature and are instead dispersed between an interior soul and a celestial beyond (cf. chapter 1). If we move from Palaeolithic to Neolithic we observe, as mentioned, a displacement of the power of conception from the woman alone to the woman and man in union. In the still work-free Palaeolithic culture, life stems exclusively from Mother Earth – a circumstance determined by the fact that it is here, at the very earliest, that the male contribution to reproduction is discovered. In the advanced primitive stage of the Neolithic, when the cosmos is in the process of splitting into the feminine earth and the masculine heavens, the body of the earth still fertilises itself autochthonically, albeit the celestial and masculine semen has now become an active part of the cyclic sequence. For the village community based on the slash-and-burn method it is therefore legitimate that the earth has to be fertilised, cultivated and offered sacrifices before it bears fruit. Pictorially the consequence of this is that work activities and accompanying traces in the landscape – not least from the Neolithic source of food: agriculture – are permissible as motifs up until the final phase of the preoperational stage: Egypt (FIGS. 16, 1.11 and 4.2-4.9).

As ploughing culture, metal working and urban state develop in the advanced intermediate stage, and society splits into urban-based upper class and rural-based lower class, the power of conception is meanwhile displaced a further tad: to the concrete operational stage of phylogenesis, where it is the exclusive realm of the male sperm – the extension of the celestial spirit – which fertilises, shapes and controls the

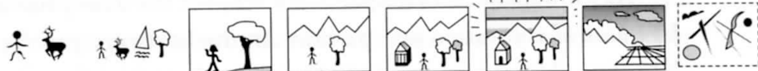
matter of earth, and to which the urban elites have privileged access. In this detachment of the spirit from the earthly cycle - beginning in Mesopotamia, culminating in the Greco-Roman culture and finding a long afterlife in the Middle Ages - work and sexuality are transformed from indispensable actor in the activities of the power of conception to problematic burden constraining this power to the toil of matter. The primordial ideal is here the spirit's unimpeded and unforced - graceful - impact on matter (Paradise and Golden Age), albeit the contemporaneous split world prescribes that spirit has to cultivate matter indirectly through the intervention of sexuality and work (the Fall and the decline to Silver, Bronze and Iron Ages), the two forms of practice which were actually first experienced as a shaping reality in the Neolithic period. It is only at the centre of society (the spirit-mediating power) and at its periphery (the virginal wilderness) that the paradisiacal state - the work-free presence - can be restored, albeit conditions at the periphery always threaten to boil over into the opposite of Paradise: inferno.

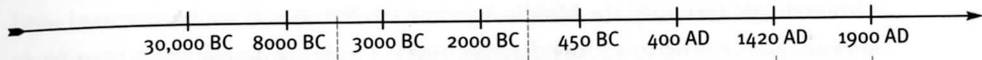
This development in the power elite's evaluation of work also seems to correspond closely with the development within the landscape paradigms' traces of cultivation and partition, plus the iconographically-determined actions that cause them. As the spirit is gradually isolated in an incorruptible heaven, work devalued and the depth of field of the image expanded with land formations, these land formations become devoid of traces of cultivation, which vanish out of the landscape image and are instead isolated in a separate genre: the topographical map (FIGS. 4.50-4.54 and PLATE 12). At the same time, we can note that the iconographic activities now permissible in this virgin terrain are no longer associated with the encroachment of civilisation in the earth - agriculture and mine-work - but tend to be paradise-connoting and thereby more surface-related activities, such as pastoralism, fruit picking, hunting and fishing (FIGS. 18, 4.11-4.13 and 4.25-4.39). To look *out* towards a painted landscape is here identical with looking *back* towards the uncultivated and paradisiacal nature that was assumed to have existed before the invention of civilisation. As it is not only the mountain grounds and absence of traces of cultivation, but also the timelessness and relative closedness of the landscape images that can be linked with the mythical state of Paradise or the Golden Age, I will explain them all by means of the overarching epistemic *field* I have referred to as the *Golden Age field* - a *field* which, in the images, deposits the associated paradigm,

Fig. 4.1. The evolution of work traces in pictorial landscapes and their relation to ruling class appreciation of physical work and the gender-determined power of conception.

WORLD PICTURE

PICTORIAL LANDSCAPE SPACE





EVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND PICTORIAL SPACE
(PIAGET – HABERMAS (– GABLIK – BLATT – MARCUSSEN))

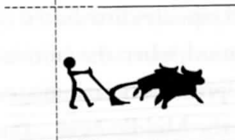
Sensorimotor stage:
no symbolism; no self-consciousness

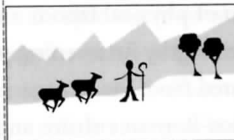
Preoperational stage:
mythical universe with no fundamental distinction between symbols and nature; undeveloped self-consciousness

Concrete operational stage:
universal religion with distinction between an ideal celestial beyond and a worldly nature; semi-developed self-consciousness

Formal operational stage:
symbolic world transferred to inner consciousness detached from nature; fully-developed self-consciousness

PICTORIAL LANDSCAPE PARADIGM AND WORK



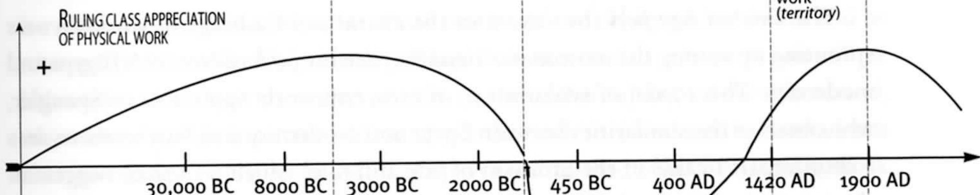


Neolithic period and Egypt:
pictorial landscape paradigm includes work (*territory*)

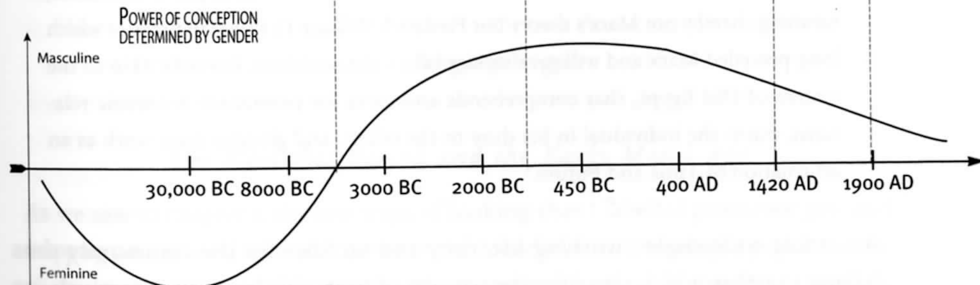
Golden Age *field*:
pictorial landscape paradigms are work-free; terrains dominated by rocks and mountains (*terra*)

Modernity:
pictorial landscape paradigm again includes work (*territory*)

RULING CLASS APPRECIATION OF PHYSICAL WORK



POWER OF CONCEPTION DETERMINED BY GENDER



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the *Golden Age paradigm*. Thus, the opening of post-Egyptian pictorial space towards the distant, albeit not infinitely distant, mountains implies an evolutionary stage in which culture has for the first time become primitivistic.

The chronological correspondence between the three parameters in question – [1] traces of cultivation and partition in the landscape paradigms of the images; [2] ruling class appreciation of physical work; and [3] the power of conception's correlation with the two genders – can be described diagrammatically (cf. FIG. 4.1). Although late antiquity, the Middle Ages and modernity will not be discussed until later chapters (7 and 10-12), the diagram covers the entire development in order to give an overall reading.

From the graphs it can be seen that the territorial division of the landscape images occurs in the periods when physical labour enjoys the highest esteem among the ruling class: on the one hand, the Neolithic period and Egypt; on the other, modernity after 1420. Of these periods it can additionally be said that in the Western consensus a certain balance prevails between the sexes' contribution to reproduction, so that appreciation of physical labour and equally-distributed conjugal labour go hand in hand. In the lengthy intervening period, when the cultivation and partition of territory are ousted from landscapes in presentational images – the late Mesopotamian era, the Greco-Roman culture and the Middle Ages – the power of conception has meanwhile shifted to the masculine side, so that work and reproduction become a defiling of the indestructible spirit. This is the period of the Golden Age *field*: the time when elites yearn from territory towards *terra*, the lost Paradise.

The Golden Age *field* thus assumes the character of a bulge of work-shyness sprouting up among the more work-friendly epistemic *fields* of Neolithic/Egypt and modernity. This model of evolution is, in turn, eminently applicable to Spengler, who observes the similarities between Egypt and modernity and, furthermore, sees a counterpart to this in the Stoicism of late antiquity which, as I shall suggest in chapter 7, prepares the foundation for the incipient work ethic of the Middle Ages:

> Of this economic Stoicism of the Classical world the exact counterpart is Socialism, meaning thereby not Marx's theory but Frederick William I's Prussian practice which long preceded Marx and will yet displace him – the socialism, inwardly akin to the system of Old Egypt, that comprehends and cares for permanent economic relations, trains the individual in his duty to the whole, and glorifies hard work as an affirmation of Time and Future.[2]

According to Spengler, working life, duty and sacrifice for the community thus belong together with a sense for the passage of time: this being a sense which, we can add, is repressed in the Golden Age *field*'s orientation towards the eternal.

This part of my model of evolution can also be more specifically bound together with the track pertaining to evolution of consciousness. For, if we turn to Hegel and his exegete Alexandre Kojève,[3] we will see that here one of the characteristics of the evolution of self-consciousness is the parameter: the subject's struggle for recognition. In culture's earliest times, this struggle is won by risking one's own life and, by means of force, reducing one's neighbour to slave. However, as recognition from a subjugated person feels, in the long run, insufficient, the slave then takes on the further evolutionary enterprise, which involves recognition of him and *his* competence: work. Although this model does not function at all well if earliest time is identified with the work-friendly agrarian culture of the Neolithic, the morphological correspondences do fall into place if earliest time is understood as the Golden Age *field* with its polarised social order and repressed traces of work in images. Hence, the gradual conquest of the post-antique landscape image by traces of work becomes a response to a culture in which the former slave and his work attain ever-increasing recognition. Development of the last part of the argument will, however, have to wait until chapters 7, 10 and 11, which will explore post-antique traces of work.

Claiming that agriculture's encroachment in the earth is traumatic for the primitivistic tendency that affects the advanced intermediate civilisations of ancient times is not to allege that this is where such a trauma first emerges. In fact, it would seem traceable to the first hesitant beginnings of agriculture: the advanced primitive stage. Eliade refers to, for example, a prophet from the Umatilla tribe in North America, Smoholla, who resists agriculture because it would entail him cutting into his mother's breast, and thus he would not be able to return to her womb and be reborn.[4] However, as this outlook belongs to a matriarchal culture, it can still be balanced out through the collective cult. In classical antiquity, on the other hand, where the situation has made a U-turn from the earth's self-induced birth to a birth that should preferably be the result of spirit's unimpeded impact on matter, work loses its connection with nature and community, and thus encroachment in the earth becomes, in its way, doubly traumatic.

4.1 Beginnings

The Neolithic Period and the Early Metal Age

As we saw in chapter 1, the two ways of looking that I labelled *panoramic gaze* and *mapping gaze* thrived on equal terms in the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods, since there was as yet no pictorial frame – the metaphor for field of vision – to regulate the relation of the image elements to the beholder. I have referred to the way in

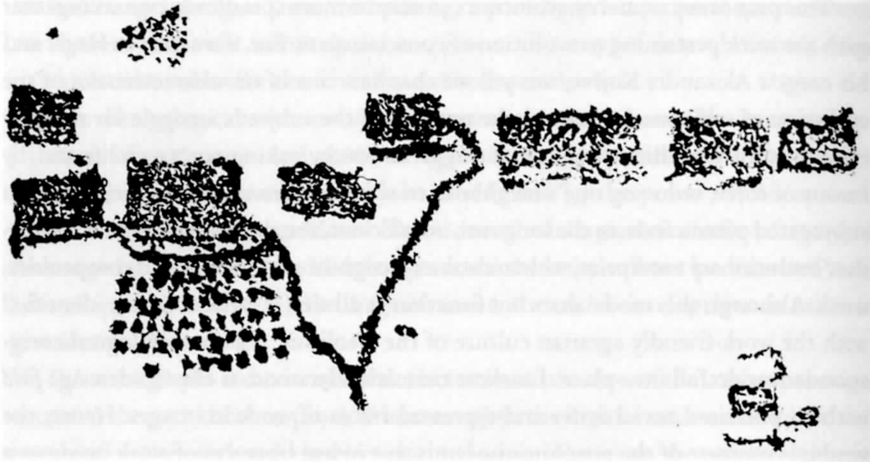


Fig. 4.2. 'Pictogrammatic map' with fields, tracks and houses (11th century BC), rock engraving. Valcamonica.

which hoof-marks left by game began to divide up the rock surfaces in the Eastern Spanish Group, and I referred to Çatal Hüyük's map-like representation of a village and what might well be a nearby cultivated field. In Valcamonica, near Bergamo in the Italian Alps, we encounter what is apparently a late offshoot of the same form of representation.[5] Among the twenty thousand images that have been engraved into the rock here over the last two millennia BC, approximately four percent are devoted to pictograms of fields, houses, canals and tracks, often in combination with humans and animals.[6] While the fields and the networks of tracks and canals that link them are seen from the breadth of the mapping gaze, the humans, houses and animals are shown in panoramic gaze profile (FIGS. 16 and 4.2). The kinship between these images and the 'map' in Çatal Hüyük is not least corroborated by the fact that Valcamonica's fields as well as the rectangle outside the Anatolian village are filled with small dots (a symbol of sowing grain?).

Even though these pictogram-like images extend into a culture that has made the acquaintance of metal extraction in the Bronze and Iron Ages – including the plough – the style of the images suggests a way of life that carries on in the manner of the Neolithic. Despite lack of information about the social structure,[7] it would seem likely that we are dealing with advanced primitive slash-and-burn users organised in small local communities, in which the political body is comprised of the cultivators of the soil themselves. In this tribal culture, the territory – the network

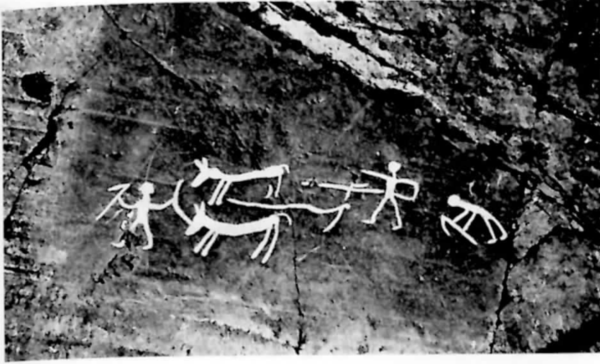


Fig. 4.3. *Peasants at the Plough* (1st millennium BC), painted rock engraving. Valcamonica, Ponte di San Rocco.

Fig. 4.4. *Peasant at the Plough and Animals* (*c.* 900 BC), rock engraving. Sweden, Bohuslän, Asperberget at Tanum.

of fields, canals, tracks and houses – is a collective basis of existence and can therefore be included in the pictorial culture. Cultivated nature is worthy of depiction, firstly, because the plough's scratching of the earth is just as cultically legitimate as the man's participation in the female fertility cycle. As the power of conception has yet to break away from the embrace of Mother Earth, we could, secondly, bring in Habermas' observation on the preoperational stage of phylogenesis: that it has not established a distinction between the social world and the world as a whole.[8] Inasmuch as cultivated and uncultivated thus merge conceptually, nor would it make sense in Neolithic images to keep the culture's territory out of the surrounding wilderness for this reason.

This hypothesis is corroborated by the fact that, in addition to Valcamonica's predominant hunting scenes, there are also many images of farmers with ploughs drawn by oxen – a motif which is also seen in related Scandinavian rock carvings (FIGS. 4.3-4.4).[9] Representation of the networks of fields is thus inextricably linked with the concept of the work that has to be done to create them.

If this explanatory model is lacking in archaeological evidence, it can at least be

corroborated through anthropological observations of the horticultural societies of our day. As Marvin Harris, a sociologist of evolutionist persuasion, has pointed out, in these societies (Melanesia and New Guinea, for example) prestige is won through hard farming work. By working hard enough – and also by getting others to work for you – you become a so-called Big Man who can hold celebrations at which the fruits of the exertion are distributed to everyone in the community. In some, but not all, cases, the Big Man eventually becomes a chieftain, elevated above the other villagers; and so the seeds of social hierarchy have been sown.[10] These societies thus confirm that the route to power is still through physical labour and not, as in the later advanced intermediate state formations of antiquity, by circumventing it.

Egypt

It would be reasonable to assume that it is rudiments from this type of culture – both in terms of visuals and work ideology – that are still to be found frozen in Egypt, the one of the two Western cultures to take agriculture down into the river valleys. As we will recall from chapter 1, Egypt, despite its archaic intermediate social hierarchy, maintains many characteristics of village society – including the clan and communal solidarity with the societal body – and I can here show that veneration of work on the land is correspondingly conspicuous. At the same time, even though it promotes framed images, Egypt basically never leaves the Neolithic combination of mapping and panoramic gaze. Egypt zooms in, as it were, to selected parts of the space depicted in the Valcalmonica images – and then frames them.

That Egypt was not pressed further in terms of cultural evolution is quite comprehensible when we compare its geographic circumstances with those of Mesopotamia. The flat plains between the Euphrates and Tigris only became fertile through carefully controlled irrigation, for the flooding rhythm of the rivers is the opposite to that of agriculture. At the thirsty sowing time in the autumn, the water level is at its lowest after the dry summer; on the other hand, it threatens to wash away the plants during their springtime ripening period when the snow melts up in the mountains. Furthermore, the earth of the area is saline, and salinity is easily increased on flat plains where the water mostly vanishes through evaporation. Harriet Crawford concludes: "The regimes of the two rivers, unlike that of the Nile, are not well adapted to cereal cultivation."[11] That Egypt is in a more fortunate position is partly because flooding of the Nile occurs in unison with the agricultural cycle, and partly because it has a high manurial value. The circumstances are so favourable that it is still an open question as to what the Egyptians knew about irrigation at all before the Hellenic period.[12] The result is apparently that, although Egyptian mythology abounds in references to life-giving water, the water never seems to be

attributed to a *beyond*, a distant paradisiacal source as identified in Mesopotamia and Judeo-Christian culture.[13] Why go to the sources of the Nile when its fertility is already to be found along its banks?

In accordance with this absence of an outside power of conception, Egypt never seems to have systemised the disdain for physical labour that characterised Mesopotamia and Greco-Roman antiquity. As a consequence of the cyclical view of nature, which is handed on from the Neolithic period, the cultivation of Mother Earth – assisting the self-fertilisation of the earth – is still a collective imperative.[14] Furthermore, predynastic village society had not been acquainted with sophisticated specialisation and class division, and even though Egypt was more stratified and increasingly based on slave work, conservatism prevented an existential distinction being made between activities such as crafts, priestly duties and war. All members of the population were therefore obliged to participate in manual work, and this obligation could only be annulled by special royal decree. Nonetheless, a resigned hatred of manual work developed, which in the Middle Kingdom (2040-1640 BC) was given its own derogatory term. Work on the land was considered to be especially hard and was therefore used in punishment for crimes.[15]

That this scepticism of work still did not overshadow the Egyptians' acceptance of work as a basic condition for all, would seem to be reflected in the many paintings and reliefs dealing with activities in nature. Even though garden scenes such as *Sennefer and His Sister* (FIG. 1) often signify freedom from work, there would seem to be a flexible spectrum from garden to farm. Be it grape picking, fig picking, fishing, fowling, bull hunting, rhinoceros hunting, cattle herding, milking, hyena fattening or agricultural activities such as tilling, sowing, harvesting, stacking or threshing (FIGS. 4.5-4.7),[16] all are depicted impartially as an indispensable part of life on earth. An early relief on the head of King Selk's sceptre (*c.* 2900 BC) even depicts a common ceremony: the King striking the earth with a plough before the field hands set to work (FIG. 4.8).[17]

The Egyptians' resigned attitude to work was displayed particularly strikingly in their afterlife landscapes, which, unlike the later Western notions of Paradise and Golden Age, were by no means work-free domains. If the deceased did not go directly to heaven, he or she ended up in the *fields of Earu*, a kind of Egyptian Paradise, which had to be cultivated by the residents. One text states: "The gates of heaven open for you, so that you can approach the fields of Earu and there cultivate the barley and harvest the spelt."[18] And another: "I know the field of reeds of Re [...], the height of its barley [...]; the dwellers of the horizon reap it beside the Eastern Souls." This rebirth did not only apply to the chosen one, but to "millions of millions [...]; there is not one who fails to reach that place [...]; they say 'Welcome, safe and sound' to him who reaches the West."[19] Therefore, a strip of fruit trees placed under scenes in

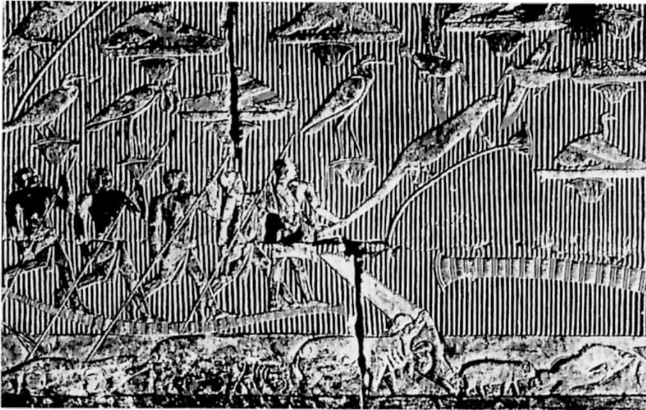


Fig. 4.5. *Fowling in Marshland* (6th Dynasty, 2530-2475 BC), relief. Saqqara, tomb of Mereruwka.

Fig. 4.6. *Herdsman Driving Calves;* and pastoral scenes of, for example, milking, corn stacking, goats trampling newly-sown seed (5th Dynasty, 2630-2600 BC), reliefs. Thebes, tomb of Queen Tiy.

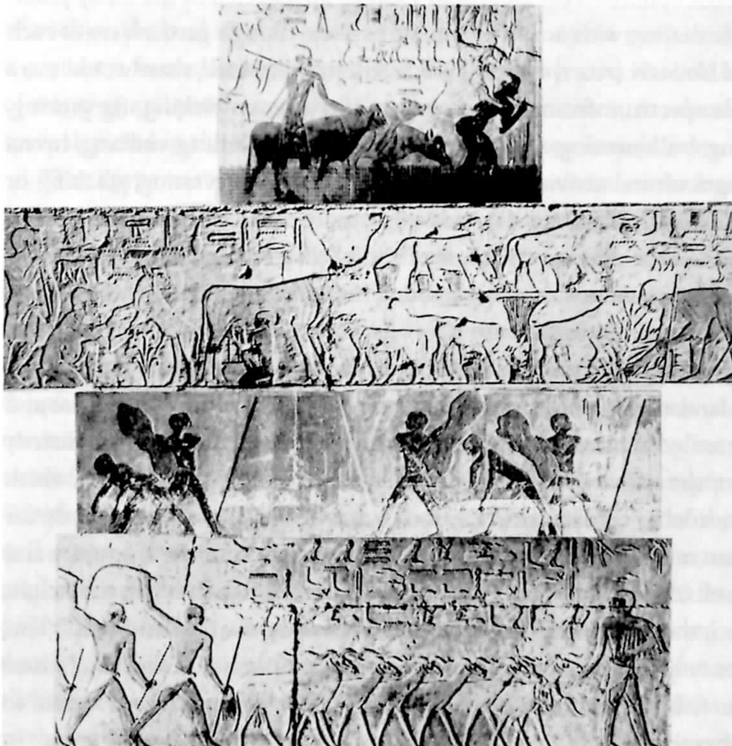


Fig. 4.7. *Fattening of Hyena and Geese* (6th Dynasty, 2530-2475), relief. Saqqara, tomb of Gemneka.

Fig. 4.8. *King Selk Ploughing the Land* (*c.* 2900 BC), fragment, the head of King Selk's sceptre, found in Hieraconpolis. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.

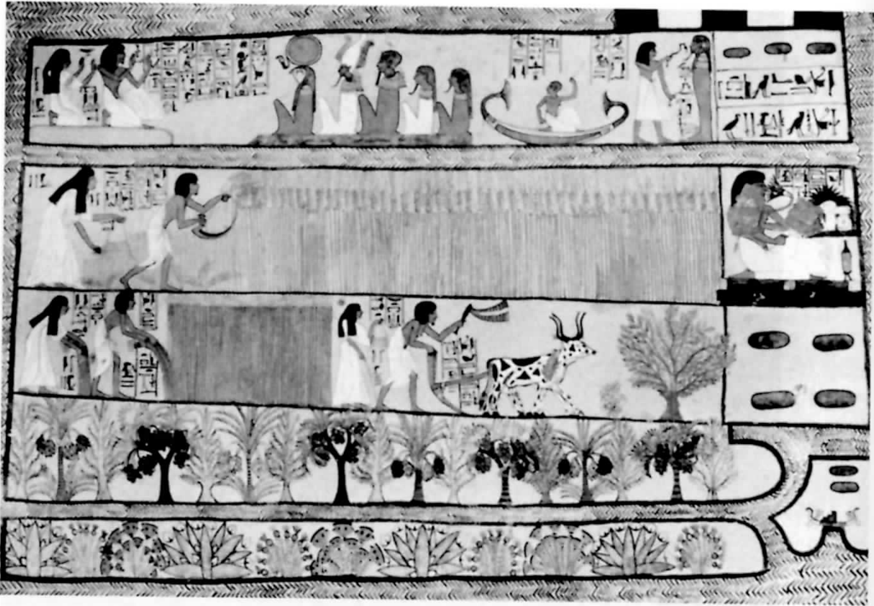


Fig. 4.9. *Fields of Earu* (*c.* 1300 BC), fresco.
Thebes, tomb no. 1 (Sennedjem).

which husband and wife personally plough, sow and harvest in the fields of Earu, as we see in the tomb of Sennedjem (Thebes, *c.* 1300 BC) (FIG. 4.9), is unlikely to signify a distinction between agriculture and Paradise, but rather that both are just as natural ingredients of the afterlife as they had been of the worldly life.

Nevertheless, the afterlife had a hierarchy too, for a version of the first of the two texts modifies the sentence to: "the barley is cultivated for you, and the spelt is harvested for you." This modification was made because the tombs of wealthy persons would also house small servant figurines, *ushabtis*, whose role was to perform all manual work in the afterlife, as the slave had done in the worldly life. 'Ushabti' means 'answerer', as "[w]hen I [the master] am called to tend my land, then you, *ushabti*, give ear and answer 'Here I am.'"[20] The everyday practice that is here carried on after death is depicted, for example, in a fresco from Nakht's burial chamber (1420-1411 BC), where Nakht, a scribe of the granaries, sits watching over his men as they clear and plough the soil (FIG. 1.11).[21] Despite work having been shifted to the ushabtis, the fact that work is an unavoidable condition even in the afterlife is a key Egyptian characteristic, which distinguishes Earu's fields from the work-free Paradise of later ancient cultures.

In relation to the more drastic interventions in the earth, mine-work and quarrying, the Egyptians commissioning images were, however, more discreet. There is indeed the occasional tomb illustration of metal smelting and quarrying, but mining – metal ore hewn from the bedrock – is seemingly not considered a pictorial subject in Egypt. As a subject it is actually completely absent in the early Metal Age up until the Greek Archaic era.[22] How much this is due to archaeological chance or mechanisms in the culture itself is as yet uncertain, but the fact that mining in the pre-modern period was a harrowing enterprise would seem to indicate the latter. As Eliade has so evocatively demonstrated, mining, unlike farming, did not merely involve scoring the surface of Mother Earth, but an intrusion into her most holy interior – the womb and entrails – and consequently the earth had to be cleansed through sacrifices, sacred rituals, fasting, cleanliness and sexual abstinence.[23] Furthermore, mine-work was undoubtedly civilisation's toughest and most physically debilitating activity, and as such would be, more than any other, reliant on slavery. It must have been factors like these that made mine-work the least suitable of all pre-modern forms of labour for pictorial representation – and yet Egyptian veneration of work was still strong enough that some testimony to it made its way into aristocratic tomb art.

Of physical work as pictorial motif in Egypt, we can therefore sum up by saying that there might be a noticeable incipient aversion to the upper classes being themselves in charge of work, but that the predynastic structure – extension of the advanced primitive stage – is, however, so strong that work still constitutes a vigorous and collectively appealing subject, whether it is undertaken on earth or in the afterlife. This merging of circumstances in the world and in the afterlife also leads us to an insight into the Egyptians' concept of time, because although images from the tomb culture, along with its mummies and multifarious equipment for survival, testify to the desire for eternal life, this is still a life on earthly terms. In this Egypt is again shown to be an offshoot of phylogenesis' preoperational stage, where everything that the world contains is created by cyclic generation from the body of the earth, and where consequently there is no space left for an actual *beyond*, an indestructible domain detached from requirements of the prosaic world. All life – 'beyond' and well as 'earthly' – was thus embraced in a temporal cycle that was divided into three sections: sowing time, harvest and flood. How this functions can be seen, for example, from the reliefs in the Abu Gurob sun temple, where personifications of the 'seasons' (two survive today) are linked with seasonal work such as grain harvest, fig picking and grape harvest.[24] Scenes such as these provide specific evidence of Spengler's observation about how time in Egypt was connected with work and the sense of community.

We can, finally, make a structural synthesis between the pictorial space and the work-friendly aspects of Egypt's epistemic *field*. Just as the upper social classes never

developed a complete distinction between physical and spiritual activity, between manual cultivation and celestial conception, so the pictorial view never developed a distinction between inside and outside, between the civilisatory *here* and the primitive, original *there*. In accordance with the boundaries of the preoperational stage, culture and nature, sociality and world, form an invincible totality into which humankind is submerged and which it contains under the grace of the gods; and consequently the depth of field of the image must be restricted to an inner space, which might indeed be framed, but which cannot have land formations as the background to figures.

Mesopotamia

While the Mesopotamian city-states move from the archaic towards the advanced intermediate stage, and the distinction between upper and lower class sharpens in parallel with this, however, the beginnings of a new historical *field* develop: the Golden Age *field*, which culminates in classical antiquity and is then overlaid with modernity's *field* in the Late Middle Ages. In this *field* – equivalent to ontogenesis' concrete operational stage – the power of conception is transferred to a celestial beyond, which brings about a distinction between physical and spiritual activity and between civilisation and original state. At the same time as pictorial space is expanded by backgrounds of virgin nature, and agriculture – the most important source of nourishment and the most common occupation in the Mesopotamian culture – vanishes from monumental pictorial art, we see the emergence of various concepts of an unspoilt wilderness: the work-free Paradise. The Neolithic umbilical cord between the societal world and nature is hereby in the process of being worn to shreds.

It must be stressed, however, that the Golden Age *field* in Mesopotamia is only partly developed and that it continues to be mixed with an ideology of work and viewing suggestive of the Egyptian. The combined ploughing and reproductive act can thus be vehemently celebrated in Mesopotamian religious literature. The ploughshare as a penis that impregnates the vulva of the soil furrows is to be found, for example, in the Sumerian discourse on hierogamy – the sacred coupling – between the god Dumuzi (=Tammuz) and the goddess Inanna. The Queen begins by saying: "As for me, my vulva,/ For me the piled-high billock,/ Me – the maid, who will plow it for me?/ My vulva, the water ground – for me,/ Me, the Queen, who will station the ox there?" The answer to her question is: "Oh Lordly Lady, the king will plow it for you,/ Dumuzi, the king, will plow it for you." Then she joyfully responds: "Plow my vulva, man of my heart." During the subsequent act of sexual intercourse, plants sprout up all around them.[25]

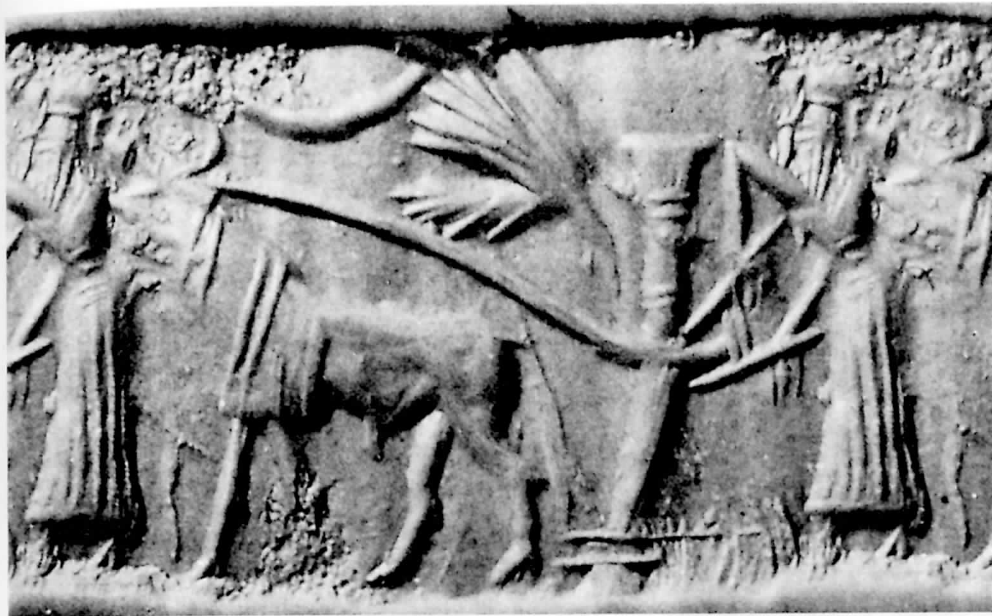


Fig. 4.10. *Two Men Leading a Cattle-drawn Plough* (late 3rd millennium BC), Mesopotamian cylinder seal. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.

The moderate development of the Golden Age *field* is also corroborated by the pictorial evidence. Even though the many mountains on the cylinder seals represent an expansion of space in relation to Egyptian art, they seldom form actual backgrounds to the figures and, correspondingly, the cereal culture is a recurrent feature of the small reliefs. Several cylinder seals depict the Great Mother receiving a goddess of corn encircled by corn beams, and occasionally the ploughshare might also feature (FIG. 4.10).[26] Nevertheless, of Near Eastern work scenes generally, Holly Pittman remarks: "In contrast to the art of ancient Egypt, this type of portrayal was unusual in the Near East and is rarely found in large-scale works of art."[27]

Mesopotamia's transitional position is confirmed by the still embryonic form of its particular Golden Age myth: the myth of *Atrahasis*, alias Utnapishtim, the Akkadian Noah. Even though the upper classes of the city-states have placed themselves at a reassuring distance from everyday contact with the earth, the myth is still based on the understanding that *someone* has to toil. In this originally Sumerian myth, work is described as a heavy yoke initially borne by the gods:

When the gods instead of man
Did the work, bore the loads,
The gods' load was too great,
The work too hard, the trouble too much [...].
The gods had to dig out canals,
[...] the lifelines of the land.

[...]

For 3,600 years they bore the excess,
Hard work, night and day.
They groaned and blamed each other,
Grumbled over the masses of excavated soil.

However, the gods hit upon an idea: they would create the human race to take over this burden. And, indeed, humankind "Made new picks and spades,/ Made big canals/ To feed people and sustain the gods."[28] The myth thus still has some roots in an archaic, non-nostalgic level equivalent to the Egyptian, as work is still taken for granted. Unlike their later Greek colleagues, the Mesopotamian gods are not yet born without work, they have to free themselves from it. And yet the Golden Age pattern has advanced, for 600 years after humankind took over the toil "the country became too wide, the people too numerous. The country was as noisy as a bellowing bull." Having sought in vain to combat this disorder, through disease, famine and saline saturation of the fields, the gods finally send the Flood.

To compensate for their toning-down of agriculture in pictorial art, the Mesopotamians turn to untamed nature instead – or to its extension within civilisation: the garden. From the very earliest times we find seals with hunting scenes, pastoral scenes, sacrificial scenes taking place in nature, and single animals surrounded by trees and mountains: motifs emanating a very different, almost transcendental mood in comparison with their more familiar everyday and enterprising Egyptian parallels. On a cylinder seal from 3000-2700 BC, the shepherd-god Tammuz is seen feeding Inanna's (Ishtar's) sacred sheep with two symmetrically placed branches (FIG. 4.11), and on a fragmented basalt stele from Uruk (same period) two men are fighting lions with a spear and a bow and arrow (FIG. 4.12).

The hunt thematics reaches almost eco-violating heights in the Neo-Assyrian reliefs (*c.* 900-600 BC) in which everything animal is hunted, from lions to deer to fish (FIG. 4.13).[29] Even Sennacherib's defeat of the enemy (7th century BC) turns into a perverted hunt, taking place, as it does, in the reed-filled marshes with their abundant underwater life (FIG. 4.14). Animal life is also displayed in dense Paradises

Fig. 4.11. *Tammuz Feeding Inanna's Sacred Sheep* (*c.* 3000-2700 BC). Drawing after Mesopotamian cylinder seal impression.

Fig. 4.12. *Lion Hunt* (*c.* 3000-2700 BC), fragmented basalt stele from Uruk. Baghdad, National Museum.

Fig. 4.13. *Fishing* (7th century BC), Neo-Assyrian relief. London, British Museum.

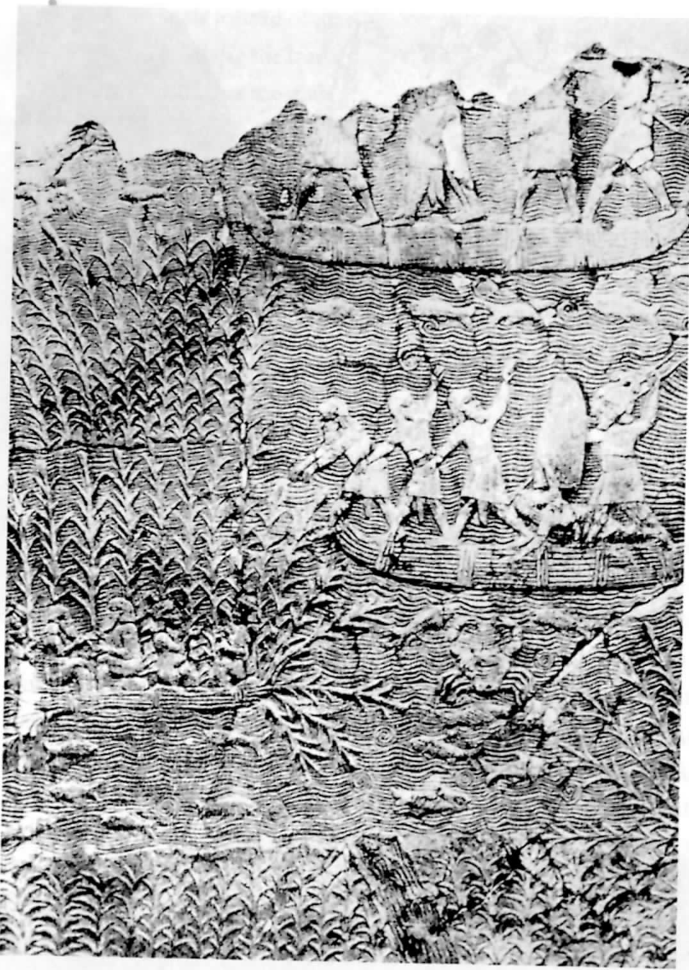


Fig. 4.14. *Battle Scene in the Marshes* (7th century BC), alabaster relief from Sennacherib's Palace at Nineveh. London, British Museum.

such as the one in Ashurbanipal's Palace at Nineveh (661-31 BC), where lions mix with palms, vines and flowers. The same luxuriant shrubbery vegetation is also used as the background for Ashurbanipal's victory toast with his wife, where the enemy's head is discreetly impaled on a branch to the left (FIG. 4.15).[30] Faced with such scenes we realise the special status – totally unlike that in Egypt and the Neolithic – of garden culture in comparison with agriculture. As Erich Ebeling

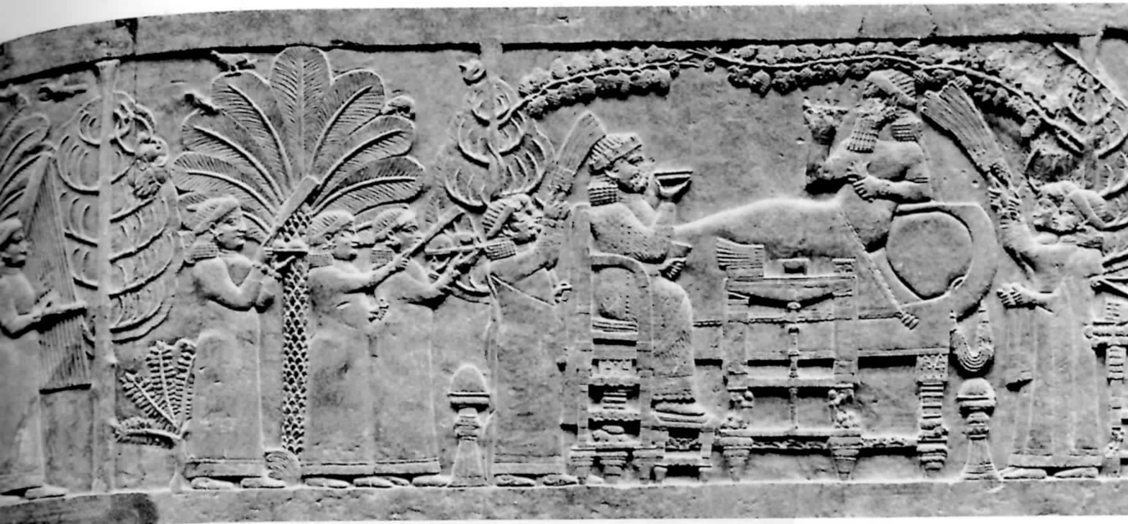


Fig. 4.15. *Ashurbanipal's Victory Toast with His Wife* (661-31 BC), relief from Ashurbanipal's Palace at Nineveh. London, British Museum, No. 124920.

remarks of the Babylonians and the Assyrians in relation to their predecessors the Sumerians: "Above all, a strict distinction between agriculture and gardening was still maintained there too."[31]

The Mesopotamians' incipient aversion to agriculture was harboured in particular by the primitive pastoral culture of the mountains. Herdsmen were evidently an important section of the population, living in symbiosis with the settled farmers; the former supplied dairy products and meat, the latter supplied grain.[32] Nevertheless, herdsmen were regarded with ambivalent tension. On the one hand, they were coarse barbarians – Tammuz was predominantly a shepherd-god and divinity of the underworld and was in dispute with Enkimdu, the god of irrigation and cultivation[33] – on the other hand, they were representatives of unspoilt nature and thereby an ideal for the ruling class. The king is often called shepherd and, when he is corrupted by the temptations of urban life, renewal is obtained from the wilderness.

When Gilgamesh, the "shepherd of Uruk", is giving way to sexual appetite and arrogance, the gods thus send him Enkidu, a savage from the mountains, as an exemplary alter ego. Enkidu is superior to the shepherd and the hunter, born of the clay and "innocent of mankind; he knew nothing of the cultivated land". Just like Samuqan, the god of cattle, he has hair all over his body, grazes and drinks

water with the wild beasts, is supernaturally strong and brave, and appears to be immortal. In short, he is identical with the later Western wild man (cf. chapter 2). Unfortunately, Gilgamesh meets Enkidu at a time when the latter's vitality has been undermined: he was lured to the city by the attractions of a harlot who – suggestive of the Fall – drains him of his power and his bond with the beasts.[34]

To sum up, we can therefore conclude that although Mesopotamia carries forward some of the work-venerating traits from Egypt, the structures of the later Western Paradise and Golden Age myths – the same structures that form the epistemic Golden Age *field* – are here, nonetheless, in a state of development. In the virgin mountains, the source of expansion in the depth of field, there are forces to be tapped which are diluted in the river valley with its hard-won cultivated agricultural land, and if the sovereign is not to degenerate, he must resume the lost identity of savage.

The mapping gaze in Egypt and Mesopotamia and its partial appearance in the Assyrian pictorial view

In the later forms of high cultures, the area of civilisation – territory – is associated with parameters such as work, control, possession, conquest, location specificity. All these entities point in the direction of humankind taking control of nature. The term *secularisation* could also be applied, as the subjugation of the terrain occurs at a distance from the divine, which is thereby entrusted to the wilderness.

In both Egypt and Mesopotamia, depiction of territory gets its own genre: the topographical map. The earliest known, and already rather developed, example was the Hurritic clay tablet from Nuzi (2500-2300 BC), which showed a river valley with cities (FIG. 1.17). More diagrammatic maps are known from Egyptian papyri, which can depict subjects such as the course of the Nile or road routes between gold mines and the sea (FIG. 4.16).[35] Despite difficulties of interpretation in the gold mine map, the world's oldest extant plan concerning mining (*c.* 1250 BC), it can be established that we are looking across a mountain region, possibly in Nubia, where a network of traffic arteries – three parallel main roads plus an intersecting road – facilitate transport of the gold. The parallel roads run from the mining area on the right to what the inscriptions identify as the sea, probably the Red Sea. Those of the jagged mountains that are dark coloured, are labelled "gold mountains"; the urban area in the upper right corner (i.e. towards south-west) is labelled "goldminers' dwellings". As in the Nuzi map – and as will actually be the practice right up until the Late Middle Ages – we are again dealing with a fusion of mapping gaze and panoramic gaze. It is only where civilisation's hunger for information becomes urgent, i.e. along the valley gold traffic routes, that the pictorial gaze is effectively displaced from

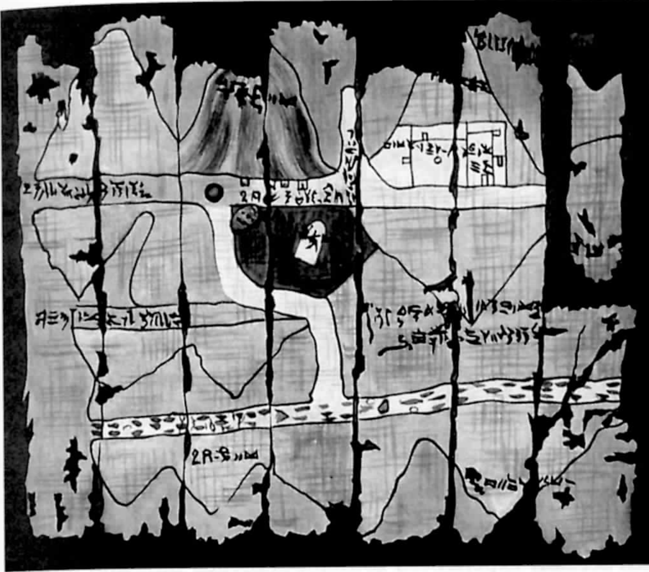


Fig. 4.16. *Map of Gold Mine Area* (*c.* 1250 BC), watercolour of Egyptian papyrus. Turin, Accademia delle Scienze.

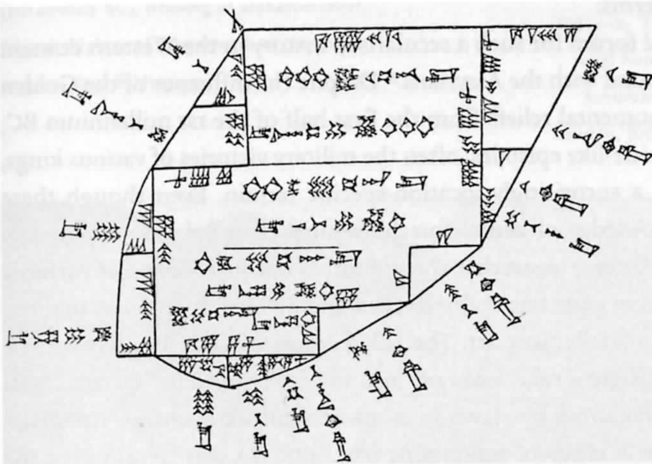


Fig. 4.17. Babylonian agricultural map (2nd millennium BC).

an indefinite – albeit Egyptian close – panoramic gaze towards the wilderness to a surveying mapping gaze across the territory. Another forum for archaic cartography, which is similarly found in Egypt and Mesopotamia, is the agricultural map. In Mesopotamia, from earliest times, every built-on and cultivated plot of land was measured, and this practice gave rise to a new branch of knowledge, *geometry* (Greek=earth measuring). The Mesopotamian agricultural maps are thus made up of very complicated accumulations of rectangles and triangles (FIG. 4.17).[36]

As all Egyptian images potentially combine mapping gaze and panoramic gaze, the map genre in Egypt can still be said to appear patchily within other pictorial genres. From Mesopotamia and up until the Late Middle Ages, however, the two ways of viewing are definitively split from one another – a split that thus involves each having an affiliation to a specific domain defined by pictorial ideology: mapping gaze to practical maps; panoramic gaze to images with a religious-representational purpose. To be precise: cartography as in the Nuzi map will be based on mapping gaze, and yet is able routinely to include occasional elements of panoramic gaze, whereas the representative images will be principally *devoted exclusively to panoramic gaze.* If the image dominated by the panoramic gaze is henceforward to absorb some of the territorial elements of the mapping gaze, this will only be possible through themes that are *markedly secularised.* One option is images relating to location-specific, historical events. Should that be the case, then history – like space – has to have been liberated from a mythical state in which humankind lives in direct contact with the gods, and must instead represent a time in continuity with actually experienced contemporaneous time and on this contemporaneity's terms.

The first pictorial forum for such a secularised history in the Western domain is apparently to be found with the Assyrians.[37] Despite the influence of the Golden Age *field* on the monumental reliefs from the first half of the 1st millennium BC, they also show chronicle-like episodes, often the military victories of various kings, which take place in a surprisingly location-specific terrain. Even though these images show no knowledge of actual foreshortening, their subject – the depiction of specific territories – mean that the ground is not just looked at within a depth-inducing slanting gaze, but is also levelled and divided up in a way that has no equal in Greek and Hellenistic art. The felled cedars of Lebanon may here be sailed to a seashore where a road leads off into the rocky terrain.[38] Or a colossal sculpture can be transported by slaves in front of a hitherto unseen flat plain, closed at the back by a range of mountains (FIG. 4.18). In this terrain even the king becomes completely insignificant, surveying the operation as he does from a little hill on the left.

Similarly, the relief of Ashurbanipal's capture of the city of Madaktu (661-31 BC) not only has a panoramic gaze across the walled city and its suburbs with palm trees and buildings, but also across the two rivers full of fish that encircle the isthmus on which they are situated (FIG. 1.16). The peculiar slanting and sideways arrangement could at first sight seem like a reversion to the Egyptian pictorial space, but it is a sign of the opposite: a sophisticated attempt to survey a territory with its concomitant division of terrain. This pictorial view's sporadic development of mapping gaze in a pictorial space still unfamiliar with perspectival foreshortening does not yet,

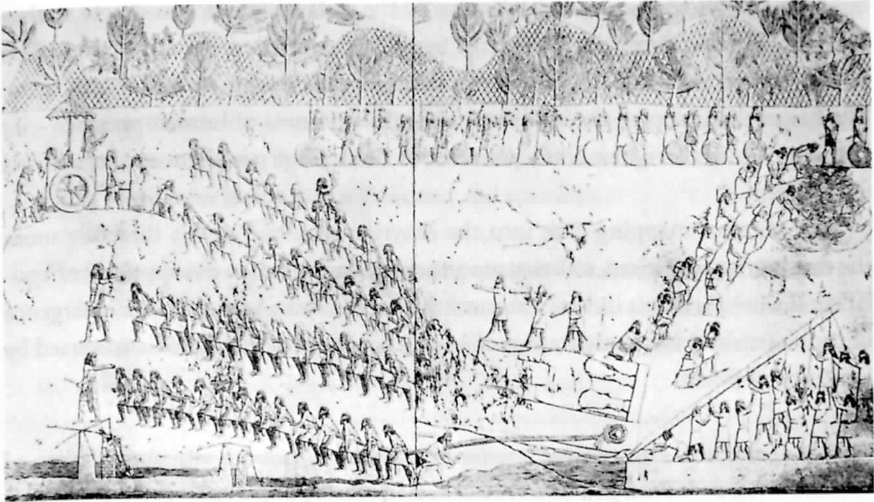
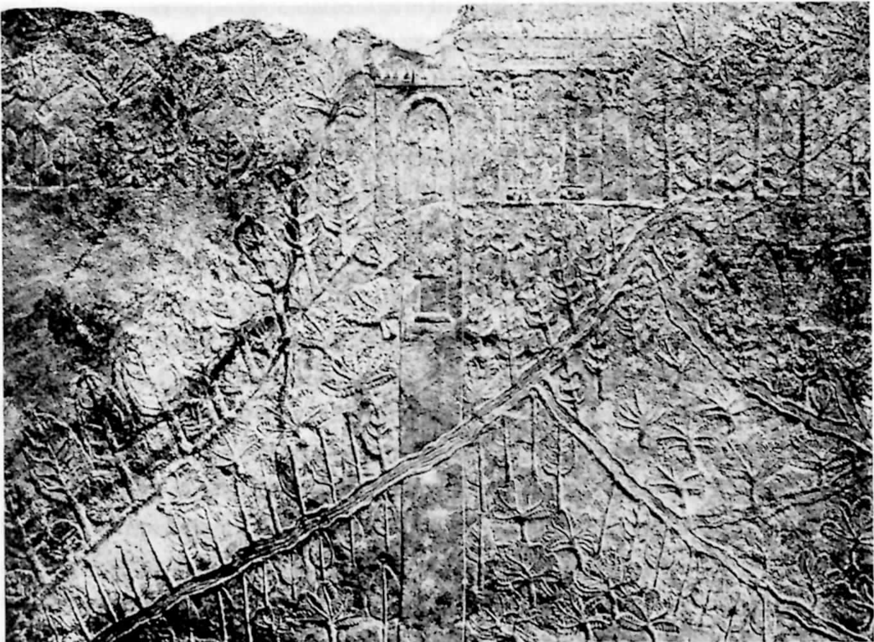


Fig. 4.18. *Transportation of Bull Colossus for Gate* (7th century BC), drawing of alabaster relief from the Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh. London, British Museum.

Fig. 4.19. *Temple Garden with Aqueduct*, relief from Nineveh, North Palace of Ashurbanipal (661-31 BC), Room H. London, British Museum, No. 124939A.



however, involve the agricultural division of the terrain. The closest we get to that is a relief of a statue alcove in a deserted temple garden, where the terrain is divided up by rows of trees and a network of canals supplied by an aqueduct (FIG. 4.19). The forces that support the landscape image's emptiness of human presence – its autonomy – thus here stem from a mixture of Golden Age paradigm and secularised topography.

The entry of mapping gaze into the Assyrian pictorial view is therefore more the result of a secularised, military monitoring of nature than a reappraisal of agricultural work. And it is indeed not until the Late Middle Ages, with the emergence of capitalism and its rehabilitation of work, that the pictorial space is traversed by agricultural fields.

4.2 Triumph of the Golden Age paradigm: classical antiquity – with a view to the Middle Ages

The Golden Age paradigm

The work-shy Golden Age *field* generated in Mesopotamia does not, as already mentioned, come under serious challenge until the Late Middle Ages. Even though the Greco-Roman upper class develops a democratic form of government for its own rank – corresponding to Parsons' advanced intermediate stage – power is nonetheless kept strictly separate from the working lower classes; and this polarisation carries on far into the Middle Ages, even though the feudal form of government involves a closer relationship between landowners and peasants. In this tenacious epistemic *field*, agriculture, mine-work and any kind of territory at all are conspicuous by their absence in pictorial art, at the same time as horticulture, hunting and pastoralism create an appropriately primitivist framework.

If we now aim to take a more comprehensive look at the imprints of the Golden Age *field* in the pictorial culture – what I call the Golden Age paradigm – we have to couple this observation concerning the absent territory with findings from chapters 1, 2 and 3: namely, that the post-Egyptian pre-modern landscape images transpire in a space that is expanded with the middle distance of the land formations, but does not reach infinity; that these images are never fully marked by the passage of time; and finally that they are dominated by rocky grounds. If I make a slight adjustment to the order of these factors we then have a total of four limits with respect to the following parameters: [1] *space*, [2] *time*, [3] *cultivation* and [4] *earth*.

That these limits can be put under the same umbrella term – Golden Age paradigm – is because structurally they can be matched with the Western myth of the

genesis of civilisation par excellence: the Greco-Roman myth of the Golden Age and its Judeo-Christian counterpart, the Paradise myth. Thus, firstly, we can observe:

- *that the limits surrounding the post-Egyptian pre-modern pictorial space are structurally equivalent to the limits that mark out the first state of the Golden Age and Paradise myths, the period before the initiation of civilisation;* and secondly:

- *that the breakthrough of the modern landscape image in the 1420s can be described as a bursting of these very same limits, so that here we encounter a structural equivalent to the second state of the Golden Age and Paradise myths, the period after the emergence of civilisation.*

In other words, the modern landscape paradigm appears as a space that has assumed the work, time and expanded territories of the Fall (cf. volume II), whereas its pre-modern, post-Egyptian forerunner is fixed in a state where the outward gaze towards land formations in the middle distance is conditioned by a yearning for the virginal, timeless and closed *terra*. The development of the landscape image from antiquity and Middle Ages to modernity thus describes a movement: [1] from a restricted to an unrestricted space; [2] from perpetual springtime to variable time; [3] from a work-free to a work-marked nature; and [4] from mountain grounds to a plain-based multiplicity of terrains.

In a narrower sense the Golden Age myth appears as the Greco-Roman variant of the Paradise myth. The structure of the myths is, however, not limited to the explicit stories about Paradise and the Golden Age, but occurs in all sorts of contexts – poetry, natural philosophy, religious, political and historical writings – and usually without any specific label. As is apparent from Lovejoy and Boas's monumental work, *A Documentary History of Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (New York, 1935), yearning for an unspoilt natural state is a characteristic that permeates all aspects of, not least, the thinking of antiquity. Every topic that touches on distant regions and times, the development of humankind or just untamed nature, will be coloured by one or more ingredients of the Golden Age myth. In the following I will therefore allow myself an eclectic strategy, synthesising traits from many different literary sources.

The Golden Age and Paradise myths deal with humankind's expulsion from nature. In the primordial state of nature – the Golden Age or Paradise – humankind lives in unity with the divine. Here humankind is immortal and nature is so abundantly fertile that no one has to work. But following a form of degeneration – the Fall, or the decline to Silver, Bronze and Iron Ages – humankind has become distanced from its source. The degeneration, which can be seen as structurally

equivalent with the world picture's chasm between material and spirit (and thereby also with the concrete operational stage of phylogenesis), instils in humankind and nature alike the prospect of death. In order to surmount the chasm, humankind has to resort to new aids: sexuality, which by a penetration of the female body reconstructs the lost cosmic unity, thus procreating life; and agriculture and metalwork, which, by similar penetrations of nature's body, force new yields from her. In performing these acts, however, humankind also becomes greedy and violent. The question of the necessity of this development is therefore the eternally recurrent dilemma. Is culture the way to improved nature, surmounting the chaos of the mortal wilderness, or does it, on the contrary, create unnatural needs: greedy passions that corrupt the primordial, paradisiacal state and lead to aggression?

Of the Golden Age myth's topoi (cf. the four points above), the following are of direct significance vis-à-vis the pre-modern, post-Egyptian landscape image:

[1] *Absence of infinity*. Paradise is more or less isolated and enclosed, a structure that corroborates the cosmic unity. In Genesis, Paradise is referred to as a garden and that it is a case of a *hortus conclusus* is confirmed by the Persian root of the word Paradise: *pairidaeza*, the enclosed hunting park. As *pairi* is associated with the Greek *peri*, meaning around, and *daeza*, which is a sticky mass (clay or dung), the word suggests a ground surrounded by a clay wall. The same line of thought lies behind different words for *garden* – Hebrew *gan*, French *jardin*, for example – which are all derived from verbs for *protect* (such as *guard* leading to *garden*).[39] When Paradise is ascribed a contemporaneous existence it is also placed, as we will see in more detail in chapter 5, as a sacrosanct entity at the end of the world. This applies, for example, to the garden in Gilgamesh beyond the underworld, Hesiod's Isle of the Blessed in the West, or the medieval Paradise mountain far away towards the East.

That Paradise is enclosed ensures that the benefits of nature are within an accessible range. Even though the Golden Age is not explicitly fenced in, it is characterised by the same contained form as, according to Ovid: "Not yet had the pine-tree, felled on its native mountains, descended thence into the watery plain to visit other lands."[40] And in *Eclogue 4*, Virgil promises of the coming Augustan Golden Age: "even the trader will quit the sea, nor will the ship of pine exchange wares; every land will bear all fruits." But as humankind is driven out of the locked Paradise, so too the Golden Age seal is broken after the emergence of civilisation: "Men now spread sails to the winds, though the sailor as yet scarce knew them; and keels of pine which long had stood upon high mountain-sides, now leaped insolently over unknown waves."[41] While the Golden Age is thus an ideal state of self-sufficiency, the Iron Age is characterised by dispersal, with humankind moving materials away from their place of origin, heading for foreign shores and engaging in trade.[42]

It is now tempting to translate this paradisiacal enclosure into visual terms and see it structurally reflected in the reluctance of the pictorial space to open up towards infinity. The enclosure is most pronounced in the actual Paradise images – garden thickets such as that of Livia's House (PLATE 5) and Sant'Apollinare in Classe (FIG. 2.5) – but the rock landscape's resistance to give in to infinitely distant horizons – its blocking of the field of vision and protection of corporeal condensations in Riegl's normal view – should also be seen as a result of the impact of the Golden Age *field*. The world picture might well be cloven in two, but the shapeless material core is still encircled by the celestial sphere. The Pillars of Heracles at the entrance to the Strait of Gibraltar thus appear, considered in terms of structure, to be a triple barrier: they afford protection from the seriously "unknown waves" – the Atlantic Ocean – which hold the potential for modernity's world trade; they afford protection from the Copernican opening up of the world picture and the unification of the hitherto separate regions of the globe; and finally they afford protection from the pictorial space expanding towards perspectival infinity: the infinity which first breaks through after 1420 (cf. chapter 8).

[2] *Absence of time.* Closely connected with the first topos is the additional factor that Paradise has *no seasonal change*. Having just created the heavens and earth "the Lord had not caused it to rain upon the earth" (Genesis 2: 5). For, as Ovid clarifies, "spring was everlasting, and gentle zephyrs with warm breath played with the flowers that sprang unplanted." Similarly, Homer writes of Elysium: "No snow is there, nor heavy storm, nor ever rain, but always Ocean sends up blasts of the shrillblowing West Wind that they may give cooling to men".[43] This eternal springtime is the visible sign of immortality, or at least the extended youth which also characterises the inhabitants of Paradise. As Hesiod, the first to testify to an actual Golden Age myth, writes in *Works and Days* (7th century BC): "[...] miserable age rested not on them; but with legs and arms never failing they made merry with feasting beyond the reach of all evils."[44]

But, following the Expulsion, the changeableness of time comes into play. As a manifestation of the blind spot in the Golden Age *field* itself, there is no actual reference to the post-paradisiacal weather in the early accounts, but Ovid leaves us in no doubt:

> Jove now shortened the bounds of the old-time spring, and through winter, summer, variable autumn, and brief spring completed the year in four seasons. Then first the parched air glared white with burning heat, and icicles hung down congealed by freezing winds.[45]

This topos is also corroborated in the pre-modern landscape image. If the heavens here were indefinably summer-like and timeless, and the air had no rain, snow, icicles or heavy storms, so too are the plants depicted in landscape images always seemingly clad in their most favourable attire, with a full complement of leaves, fruit or flowers. That, for example, all the plants in the gardens of Roman wall paintings come into flower at the same time (**PLATE 5**) is not simply because they depict a paradisiacal, eternal springtime. Even without the paradisiacal intention, we could hardly imagine them otherwise. Here the paradigm comes before the motif, the iconology ahead of the iconography. A garden in a Mesopotamian, Roman or medieval image is not filled with budding spring flowers or autumn-yellow foliage. It is particularly free of withered, dead or rotting plants. On occasion a Roman wall painting will indeed show trees without leaves,[46] but this lack of leaves does not kindle associations to time – as if these trees would have been leafier at an earlier point in time. The bareness is rather an indication – like misty air and the open, yet not boundless expanses – of an area that the landscape image might well approach, but cannot really capture.

We only get beyond the perpetual blossoming when specifically required to do so by the theme. This occurs primarily in depictions of the *Seasons* and the *Labours of the Months*, two themes introduced in late antiquity and developed intensely over the course of the Middle Ages (cf. Chapter 7). They can actually be seen as the seeds to the modern landscape image: phenomena which are first used in a limited way, but which later, after 1420, spread to the space as a whole (cf. Chapters 10-11). Beyond concerns of the *Seasons* and the *Labours of the Months*, however, it takes heavy narrative pressure to challenge the paradisiacal blossoming. One such case is, for example, the 6th-century fragment of a Gospel Book from Sinope, in which there is an illustration of the story of Christ and the withering of the fig tree (**FIG. 4.20**). When Christ comes across the fig tree with no fruit, he says to it: "May no fruit ever come from you again." (Matthew 21: 18-19) The withering which then infects the tree is illustrated in the miniature by means of a few green leaves turning brown and dropping off.

[3] *Absence of work*. In the paradisiacal state, *the earth produces its fruit spontaneously* so that humankind does not have to engage in hard work. Although Adam is put into the Garden of Eden to "till it and keep it" (Genesis 2: 15), we also learn that "[t] he Lord made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food." (Genesis 2: 9) And in *Works and Days* Hesiod tells us that "the fruitful earth unforced bare them fruit abundantly and without stint. They dwelt in ease and peace upon their lands with many good things, rich in flocks and loved by the blessed gods."[47] In a more fulsome account, Ovid writes that:

Fig. 4.20. *Christ and the Withering of the Fig Tree* (6th century), miniature in fragment of a Gospel Book from Sinope. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms suppl. gr. 1286, f. 30v.

> The earth herself, without compulsion, untouched by hoe or plowshare, of herself gave all things needful. And men, content with food which came with no one's seeking, gathered the arbute fruit, strawberries from the mountain-sides, cornel-cherries, berries hanging thick upon the prickly bramble, and acorns fallen from the spreading tree of Jove. [...] Streams of milk and streams of sweet nectar flowed, and yellow honey was distilled from the verdant oak.[48]

However, after the Fall, or during the Silver, Bronze and Iron Ages, the earth loses its abundant fertility and humankind is forced to live under harsher conditions. First, although it can often be confused with the actual Golden Age stage, there is the suggestion of a period during which humankind lives a primitive existence as hunter-gatherers or shepherds. Lucretius refers to a Silver Age in which robust, earth-born people of the forest know nothing of ploughing, planting or tree pruning.[49] And, of the Bronze Age people, Hesiod writes moreover that "they ate no bread".[50] Even in Genesis (4: 8), the shepherd Abel is slain by the crop-grower Cain as indication of a generational change in terms of the history of civilisation.

But soon life, at all events, feels the impact of the hardships of agriculture: "Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life" (Genesis 3: 17). And in Ovid's Silver Age "the seeds of grain were planted in long furrows, and bullocks groaned beneath the heavy yoke." It is no great distance from this wounding of the surface of the earth to the more abstract divisions of land surveying. Of the Iron Age, Ovid writes that "the ground, which had hitherto been a common possession like the sunlight and the air, the careful surveyor now marked out with long-drawn boundary-line."[51] Or, in the more negative conclusion

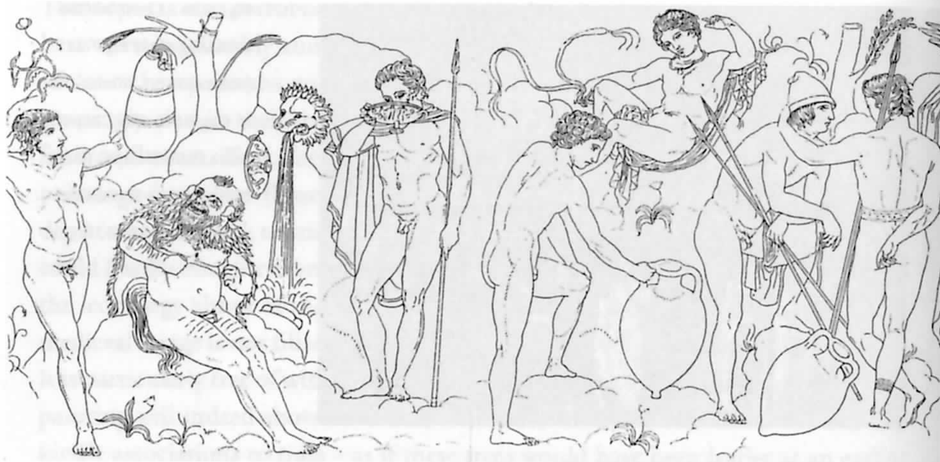


Fig. 4.21. *Argonaut Scene* (*c.* 300 BC), engraved on the *Ficoroni Casket*. Rome, Museo Nazionale di Villa Giulia.

reached in Virgil: "Before the time of Jupiter no farmer worked the fields: it was not even right to mark off or to divide the land with boundaries."[52]

These topoi agree, then, structurally with the observations that: firstly, *farmed* nature is absent in the pre-modern, post-Egyptian landscape images; secondly, they are altogether free of measured out and divided up terrains. The images are based in *terra*, not in territory. As is the case with traces of time, work gradually begins to have an impact on pictorial nature in the Middle Ages, but again only within defined themes. As in the possibly North African 7th-century *Ashburnham Pentateuch*, Adam and Cain can be shown ploughing their fields while a fully ripe cornfield is growing in the bottom right-hand corner of the miniature (**PLATE 23**); but such fields cannot spread across the landscape for no reason at all, beyond the agricultural undertaking. The landscape of the pre-modern image remains, in essence, wild and unmarked by the measuring hand of culture. It is not until after 1420, and now with surprising swiftness, that pictorial art absorbs all the scratches, fences and measured grids which are part of the post-paradisiacal agricultural reality (more about this in chapters 8 and 10-11).

Another structural parallel to the Golden Age myth's topos of work-free nature is found in the *trees* of pre-modern images. In landscape images from antiquity and the Middle Ages, it is indeed not unusual for the trees to show indications of *pruning* in the shape of branch stumps with sharp surfaces. Just to mention two

Fig. 4.22. *Moses on Mount Sinai* (*c.* 940), detail of miniature in the *Bible of the Patrician Leo*, executed in Constantinople. Rome, Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms Reg. gr. I, f. 155v.

of the countless examples: this kind of half branch can be seen in the Argonaut scene on the *Ficoroni Casket* (*c.* 300 BC) and later in the miniature of *Moses on Mount Sinai* in the *Bible of the Patrician Leo* (*c.* 940) (FIGS. 4.21-22; see also FIGS. 1.43, 2.5A, 2.9, 2.93, 2.100, 2.101, 2.104, 3.22 and PLATE 16). These traces represent the Golden Age paradigm, because they can be seen as a result of gardening, a gentle shaping of the trees, which are allowed to carry on growing in a natural way. The evidence of the extensive Iron Age felling that took timber out onto the ocean's unknown waves, the *tree stump*, does thus not appear in the common pictorial space until the modern period (see chapters 10-11).

But civilisation's decadent traces of work do not only relate to the torment of the surface of the earth – in the form of agricultural activity, construction of frontiers

and tree felling – because in the Iron Age human greed finally leads to the internal regions of the earth. In Ovid's version:

> Not only did men demand of the bounteous fields the crops and sustenance they owed, but they delved as well into the very bowels of the earth; and the wealth which the creator had hidden away and buried deep amidst the very Stygian shades, was brought to light, wealth that pricks men on to crime. And now baneful iron had come, and gold more baneful than iron; war came, which fights with both, and brandished in its bloody hands the clashing arms.[53]

In this topos, variants of the Golden Age myth protest that the earth contains materials never intended for humankind, and exposure of them is symptomatic of crime. The materials comprise metals in particular, but can also include types of stone, as in the Book of Job (28: 9-22):

> Man puts his hand to flinty rock and overturns mountains by the roots. He cuts out channels in the rocks and his eye sees every precious thing. [...] But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? [...] It is hidden from the eyes of all living and concealed from the birds of the air. Abaddon and Death say, 'We have heard a rumour of it with our ears.'[54]

This widespread aversion to the subversive operations of mine-work thus finds its pictorial equivalent in the fact that by far the majority of rocks in pre-modern images show no sign of lesion perpetrated by greedy human penetration. Even though the landscape images are full of the processed results of mine-work and quarrying – temples, churches, cities, etc. – there is no indication whatsoever of their origin in the earth; an earth that is not only free of the superficial marks from the ploughshare, but also from the deep cut of the mattock. So, again, in the terrains of the Golden Age paradigm it is not what has been processed as such that is taboo, but rather the work *process*, the utilitarian exploitation of nature prior to the polished result.

However, as with the two aforementioned topoi, we see that mine-work too becomes part of the post-1420 repertoire of the paradigm of modernity; albeit, in the preliminary phases of the paradigm in 15th-century painting, mine-work and quarrying are shown in an ambivalent and idiosyncratic way, which testifies to their continuing problematic status within civilisation (cf. chapter 12).

[4] *Absence of the plains.* As we have already seen, Paradise was usually placed beyond the civilisation of the plains. Paradise was a pocket in the wilderness, whether it featured as island in the chaos of the ocean or as garden in the mountains. In the

mountains it could flourish on an inaccessible peak, as on the Paradise mountain of the Middle Ages, or it could grow from the womb of the underworld, as in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and then later the *Aeneid* in which Elysium is deposited in the depths of the earth. Paradise could also just spread across the mountains in general, as in the Golden Age myth when pinewood is brought down from the mountain peaks and berries are picked in the mountain forests.

This, then, is the structural equivalent to the pre-modern pictorial foundation in the rocks of the wilderness that I described in chapter 2. The pre-modern viewpoint might well rise from the dense Paradise thickets and pan across the surrounding wilderness, but it never reaches so great a distance from the rocks that it sees the remote horizon, the vanishing axis for the plains of civilisation. The flattening out of this undulation also has to await its pictorial visualisation until after 1420 (cf. chapter 11).

Between time and space: Golden Age myth and evolution, Golden Age field *and geography*

It cannot be stressed enough that the Golden Age myth is not pure fiction, but by all accounts is reflective of an actual evolutionary process: the development from the Palaeolithic period to the advanced intermediate culture. According to recent estimates, between 60 and 90 percent of all humans who have ever lived have been hunter-gatherers.[55] In the post-glacial period, if not before, gathering would have supplied the main part of the diet, as in contemporary non-arctic hunter-gatherer societies 60-70 percent of food intake is composed of vegetables, fruit, nuts, berries, leaves, stalks, bark, fungi, and so forth. Observations of contemporary tribal societies also indicate that vegetable food in particular was gathered by women, while the men took care of the hunting, especially of big game. As the woman had knowledge of plants, it was also she who initiated the Fall: the development of the first agriculture *c.* 10-8000 BC. This advanced primitive slash-and-burn method – horticulture – was carried out solely with hoes and, as can still be observed in half of the advanced primitive societies in Africa and New Guinea today, was attended to by women alone.[56] As mentioned in chapter 2, there was no knowledge of ploughs, draught animals or irrigation, and so for quite a long time communities remained in the uplands and plateaus, where cereals grew wild anyway.[57] It was not until the fifth millennium BC that the move was made down into the river valleys, where farming was physically more arduous and was therefore taken over by the men. At the same time, the first complex – and patriarchal – societies emerged, with written language, carts and metalwork.

The change to an agrarian way of life constitutes a revolution – possibly the biggest until the advent of the computer and genetic engineering – in the

few-hundred-thousand-year-long history of human existence. Humans settled down in communities. The population multiplied, as the energy stored up in farming can provide for vastly more people than a hunter-gatherer culture. And the communities became hierarchical and warlike, as there was now property to fight over.

Although the basic structure of the Golden Age myth is possibly above and beyond being culturally datable, it must surely, in terms of grain-growing, sexuality, violence and use of metal, find its most striking occasion in the agrarian revolution. As vegetable food – especially tree fruit – formed the most substantial part of the pre-agrarian diet, it is natural that it should be seen as a nobler and more original food than the cereal food obtained through hard work. And with the Neolithic realisation that woman and field alike have to be fertilised in order to bear fruit, ideas about the genesis of creation itself must have been correspondingly affected. In the advanced intermediate society in which the power of conception was transferred to the spiritual heavens, sexual reproduction was therefore seen as comparable with a fall in relation to an original condition in which celestial immortality rather than the Great Mother's autochthonic cycle thrived.

Leslie White, who is in no doubt as to the Golden Age myth's reference to the historical process, concludes definitively of the primitive pre-agrarian revolution way of life:

> The type of social system developed during the human energy era was unquestionably the most satisfying kind of social environment that man has ever lived in. [...] In primitive society all men were brothers, or kinsmen. All were free. Everyone had free access to the resources of nature. And all were equal; no one held another in servitude or bondage. Mutual aid characterized these primitive societies. Production was carried on for use, and human rights and welfare placed above property rights and institutions.[58]

Even if White is depicting the pre-civilisation idyll in rather rosy tones, recent anthropological studies do actually suggest that social evils such as acquisitiveness, oppression, violence and war might not have been generated by, but certainly escalated significantly with, the development of class society.[59] And in this the technological innovation, use of metal, became both an instrument of violent subjugation (weapons) and an object of desire (costly metals). So here, too, the Golden Age myth refers to actual experience.

The correlation between Golden Age myth and painted landscape therefore involves, in a very real way, a connection between space and time: to look at a landscape that is blossoming, has not been surveyed into portions, has not been cultivated and is spatially delimited is the same as conjuring up an early stage in the

history of humankind: a stage which, refracted in the Golden Age lens, looks away from Iron Age seasons, land surveying, grain-growing, mine-work and open space. The movement from outside and inward constitutes a movement from wilderness to civilisation, from Golden Age to present, from Palaeolithic to age of metal.

On a number of interpretative levels, however, this also signifies a movement from mountain to valley, meaning a shift in register from evolution to geography. For the emergence of the Mediterranean civilisation cannot merely be described as a descent to the river valley; following the triumph of civilisation, mountains continue to be a sanctuary for the pre-civilisation ways of life. The lowlands are the domicile of farming and communication; the mountains are their cessation.

The more undulating the terrain, the more difficult it is to establish ploughed fields. Moreover, the main crops in classical antiquity were wheat and barley, which cannot grow at any great height above sea level (at 1,000 metres the growing season lasts for 170 days a year, at 2,000 metres it is reduced to 95 days). That mountains dominate pre-modern pictorial space is therefore in itself a safeguard against cereal farming, which seems to have little chance of becoming established in the hard, undulating terrain. Higher up, on the lower mountain slopes, the farmers of antiquity mainly grew fruit such as grape, fig, olive, walnut and chestnut.[60] Regardless of the ideological connotations of fruit growing, we thus here find that domesticated fruit, simply as a consequence of mountain physiognomy, grows in close proximity to its wild kin in the mountain forests: garden and wilderness become one. And on the whole it was in the mountains that the best trees were to be found. The cedars and cypresses in the mountains of Lebanon supplied both Solomon's temple and the Assyrian palaces. As King Sennacherib declares: "With my many chariots I have gone up the heights of the mountains, to the far recesses of Lebanon; I felled its tallest cedars, its choicest cypresses. I came to its remotest height, its densest forest."[61]

Furthermore, the mountains provide pasture, which is another aspect of the ideas surrounding humankind's first and simple lifestyle. Larger herds can only be put to graze arable land in the winter. In the spring and summer, when the corn ripens and the grass is burnt off, the herds have to be led to the outskirts of civilisation, usually the mountains where the grazing ground is lush.[62] Some herdsmen – the nomads – stay consistently on the hilly periphery of civilisation; others practice *transhumance*, a semi-nomadic transference of livestock from plain to mountain. The discussion continues as to whether pastoral culture is actually more 'natural' than agriculture: if it has roots back in the advanced primitive slash-and-burn method, *c.* 11th-6th millenium BC, or even back in the Palaeolithic period, or if it first emerged simultaneously and in close interaction with the more advanced agriculture of 5th-millenium BC agriculture.[63] In support of the latter, the advanced primitive Indians of North America have no knowledge of herding.[64] If the shepherds constitute a more civilised

phenomenon than might be immediately thought, they however become pre-civilised through their peripatetic way of life. Besides herds living from the springs, pastures and forest fruit of the mountains, livestock grazing was also combined with organised fruit growing, especially grapes and olives. The livestock was then brought down from the hills in the winter.[65] All in all, Augustine can therefore conclude that good soil is found in three places: on high mountains (green grass), gentle hills (vines) and on level fields (fruits of the fields).[66]

Whether they are approached in the actual terrain (as barriers to the civilisation of the plains) or in the imprint (as the ground for the gaze that recreates this terrain in images), the mountains can thus be said to stabilise the Golden Age *field*. In so doing, they are a significant ingredient in an attractor: a macrohistorical structure that shapes cultural evolution.

A parameter that also participates in the interaction with this terrain-influenced attractor is the condition of the earth itself: whether it is plant soil or sowing soil. If this distinction was fully active in Mesopotamian culture, it is, as H. Jeanmaire and Jean-Pierre Vernant note, no less conspicuous in its Greek successor.[67] As conveyed by the word *erga*, which means 'field', 'work' and also 'coitus', corn culture was a laborious affair. Tree culture, on the other hand – grapevine, olive, fig, almond, and so forth – is easier to carry out and is therefore considered to be a gift from the deities of vegetation such as the *Horai* (later, the seasons), the *Charities* (Graces) and the *Dinotropes*. In order to satisfy these patrons, human participation is exercised less through work than through periodically recurrent festivals and feasts. According to Hesiod's *Works and Days* – one of the few Greek texts devoted to agriculture – the exact opposite is the case with corn cultivation, which lacks festivals, but on the other hand is full of fixed seasonal activities, which have to be carried out in certain ways and at certain times. Only once – and grudgingly – are the Charities and Horai invoked by Hesiod; otherwise corn cultivation is controlled by the strict and ungraceful Demeter.

As Vernant points out, these differences are in turn due to the perpetuation by tree culture of primitive food-gathering activities, whereas cereal cultivation belongs to the stage after Prometheus has stolen fire from the gods and the curses from Pandora's vessel have been released. Tree culture is thus an extension of the wilderness, whereas agriculture incarnates civilisation. Of course, this is just a tendency, not an absolute division. Ovid distinguishes, for example, between the flowers of his time and those of the Golden Age, which "sprang unplanted", and at the same time his Golden Age also includes unploughed and self-sown cornfields. Nevertheless, I will show that grain never completely loses its work connotations, while fruit trees and flowers tend to be a reminder of the Paradise beyond the field. Therefore, in his poem on farming, the *Georgics*, Virgil can still, in the present tense, invoke

"[...] gods and goddesses all, whose love guards our fields – both you who nurse the young fruits springing up unsown, and you who on the seedlings send down from heaven plenteous rain!"[68]

The same confirmation with reservations can be made when we compare pastoralism and agriculture. Like agriculture in the Mediterranean region today, its antique forerunners were often of the mixed variety, encompassing grain and trees, grape, olive and fig, as well as livestock such as cows, pigs, sheep and goats, and bees. This extensive spectrum is discussed in the Roman accounts of farming written by Cato, Varro and Columella, as well as in Virgil's *Georgics*. When an antique writer refers to a 'rustic' (Latin *rusticus*), the person in question could be everything from a field hand or grape picker to a shepherd, and a Latin *colonus* (=cultivator, lit. colonist) could be engaged in both cereal and tree cultivation.

Nevertheless, to a large extent pastoralism and agriculture denote two divergent cultures. Livestock on the farms of antiquity were usually few in number and existed in ecological balance with the fields – they manured, grazed, and consumed the early shoots of corn. As soon as the herds grew in size, they had to be controlled by shepherds who, if they did not live permanently in the mountains, would take the herds there in the springtime or summer, when the corn ripened in the valleys. In Varro's *De re rustica* (*c.* 37 BC) a sharp distinction is made between agriculture in the valleys and transhumant pastoralism, which alternates between highland and lowland depending on season.[69]

Through their joint affiliation to the mountains and similarly joint conflict of interests with agriculture – temporally as well as spatially – tree culture and pastoralism become related. The kinship is substantiated by, for example, Triptolemus, the inventor of agriculture, being distinct from Aristaeus, the son of Apollo and the nymph Cyrene, who taught humankind about cattle breeding, olive culture and bee-keeping: that is, put another way, pastoralism and tree culture plus a third, semi-primitive activity.[70] Like pastoralism, bee-keeping had its fulcrum in the wilderness: besides bees being found naturally in caves, the domesticated beehives were taken to the wilderness at the same time as the herds in the springtime.[71]

The kinship between pastoralism and tree culture is also attested to by the fact that many deities of wild nature – Diana, Silvanus, Dionysus – were equally deities for the extension of wilderness inwards into civilisation, for the fruits of plant culture and for the domesticated animals living in the wilderness. As he is also the protector of gardens, Sylvanus' attribute is a small cypress, which he is pulling up by the roots.[72] Dionysus was a particularly favoured deity of tree cultivators and he protected a wealth of fruits: grapevines, ivy, pines, apples, figs, nuts, bayberry, acorn. On the other hand, he is only rarely, and mainly in late antiquity, associated with corn.[73] Diodorus Siculus, for example, writes:

> The most ancient Dionysus was an Indian, and since his country, because of the excellent climate, produced the vine in abundance without cultivation, he was the first to press out the clusters of grapes and to devise the use of wine as a natural product, likewise to give the proper care to the figs and other fruits which grow upon trees, and, speaking generally, to devise whatever pertains to the harvesting and storing of these fruits.[74]

Diana is similarly a tutelary spirit for shepherds and hunters, as well as fruit growers. The connection from mountain and forest to fruit growing is demonstrated in Catullus' tribute to Juno Lucina, one of Diana's many names:

> O child of Latona, great offspring of greatest Jove, whom thy mother bore by the Delian olive-tree, that thou mightest be the lady of mountains and green woods, and sequestered glens and sounding rivers; thou art called Juno Lucina by mothers in pains of travail, thou art called mighty Trivia and Moon with counterfeit light. Thou, goddess, measurest out by monthly course the circuit of the year, thou fillest full with goodly fruits the rustic home of the husbandman.[75]

That tree culture belongs to a period before the invention of agriculture and thereby involves a more unspoilt way of life, is made quite clear by Pliny:

> The riches of earth's bounty were for a long time hidden, and the trees and forests were supposed to be the supreme gift bestowed by her on man. These fast provided him with food, their foliage carpeted his cave and their bark served him for raiment; there are still races which practise this mode of life. This inspires us with ever greater and greater wonder that starting from these beginnings man has come to quarry the mountains for marbles, to go as far as China for raiment, and to explore the depths of the Red Sea for the pearl and the bowels of the earth for the emerald. [...] Subsequently it was the trees with juices more succulent than corn that gave mellowness to man; for from trees are obtained olive oil to refresh the limbs and draughts of wine to restore the strength, and in fine all the savours that come by the spontaneous generosity of the year [...].[76]

Besides tree culture denoting a versatile self-sufficiency, we should note that Pliny considers its juices to be "more succulent than corn". This succulence produces energy and strength and thereby points in the direction of Golden Age immortality in contrast to civilisation's weakened vigour.[77]

In further concurrence with the structure of the Golden Age myth, Pliny not only contrasts tree culture with cereal cultivation, the scratching of the surface of

the earth, but also with mine-work, the Iron Age penetration into the bowels of the earth. Elsewhere, he elaborates on this:

> Water, iron, wood, fire, stone, growing crops, are employed to torture her at all hours, and much more to make her minister to our luxuries than our sustenance. Yet in order to make the sufferings inflicted on her surface and mere outer skin seem endurable, we probe her entrails, digging into her veins of gold and silver and mines of copper and lead [...].[78]

Here, mine-work is portrayed as so painful for the body of the earth that it actually stifles the torments inflicted by agriculture. To be relieved of this dilemma, there would seem to be three possible routes: first, a primitivism that displaces these encroachments in the earth; second, a technophilia that makes them part of nature's project; and third, a desacralisation of nature that legitimises them in their own right. The first way is that of the Golden Age *field*; the second that of alchemy; and the third the path towards modernity that is broached by the Judeo-Christian tradition (cf. chapter 12).

The highlands between hard primitivism and demonism

As discussed in chapter 2, a recurring dilemma with the Western notion of Paradise and Golden Age is that it cannot be isolated absolutely from its opposite, the chaotic underworld. Both notions are branches from the basic Palaeolithic figure: Mother Earth as cyclic creator and destroyer, and demonism constantly threatens to undermine the idyll. Therefore, we often find that the actual Golden Age – what Lovejoy and Boas call *soft* primitivism – is supplemented by or ousted by a harsher and more chaotic variant: *hard* primitivism. Representatives of hard primitivism – civilisation's own ancestors or distant peoples such as Scythians, Teutons or simply mountain dwellers – were rugged and rough and lived in a stormy natural environment where they had to wrestle with wild beasts and take refuge in caves and bowers. Of mountain dwellers, for example, Strabo states that they lead a simple life, drink water, sleep on the ground, let their hair grow without restraint and eat goat meat and acorns.[79]

If this existence seems less gentle than that of civilisation, it is nonetheless often highlighted as having precisely the same qualities characteristic of its soft counterpart, the Golden Age: frugality, naturalness, strength.[80] As regards mountain dwellers, their strength was dependent on the rocky ground that supported them for, as Plato explains in the *Laws*, our ancestors could be survivors of a flood that caused "total destruction of the cities situated in the lowlands and on the seacoast". The only survivors were therefore "mountain shepherds, mere scanty embers of humanity left

unextinguished among their high peaks."[81] The mountains hereby function not just as defence against the corn-based civilisation in the lowlands, but also against the danger of flooding that attends the source of nutrition for corn growing: irrigation.

Even though not everyone believed in a primordial Golden Age nature with special fertile powers, the chronology proceeded, as a rule, from gatherer to shepherd to farmer.[82] The last two stages of the development are discernible, for example, in the Greek version of the Cain and Abel myth, in which the swineherd Eubouleus and his pigs are swallowed up by the earth immediately before the gods entrust his brother Triptolemus with the secrets of agriculture and the plough. As in the Bible, the generational change is considered to be a sacrifice of the first stage in favour of the second, for Eubouleus is related to Kore and the pigs that were sacrificed in Kore's and Demeter's chasms prior to *Thesmophoria*, the annual Greek sowing and tilling festival.[83]

The extreme consequence of this sacrificial line of thought was that the wilderness and its ways of life switched into the absolute opposite of Paradise – chthonic chaos – and that urban elites thereby came to wreathe the same area, the wilderness, with the utmost ambivalence. At the same time as urban elites idealised shepherds and longed back to their unspoilt way of life, shepherds were seen as barbarians, primitive beings with no home, cities, laws or work. In his commentary to the *Aeneid*, Servius (*c.* 400 AD) emphasises just how closely law-bound society is connected with cereal culture: "[...] before grain was discovered by Ceres, men used to wander here and there without law. This savagery was broken off when the use of grains was discovered, after laws were born from the division of the fields."[84]

Herodotus is an important advocate of this demonisation of the primitive ways of life. In his descriptions of foreign peoples he makes a sharp distinction between *aroteres* (ploughmen) and *nomades* (shepherds). His opinion of the latter is apparent from his comments on the nomadic Scythians, a people living alongside the shores of the Black Sea, who "sow nothing, nor plough" and "who have no cities anywhere to dwell in": "the Scythians blind all prisoners whom they take; for they are not tillers of the soil, but wandering graziers." Or: "The Man-eaters [the northernmost Scythians] are of all men the most savage in their manner of life; they know no justice and obey no law. They are nomads [...]."[85] Herodotus also thinks that a barbaric trait of the Greeks such as drinking unmixed wine was due to influence from the nomadic Scythians.[86]

Seen from this viewpoint, civilisation's Iron Age no longer looked like coarse decadence but, on the contrary, as a bulwark against inferno. The culture of antiquity therefore also has a myth that reverses the Golden Age myth: the Myth of Prometheus. As interpreted by Aeschylus in his drama, the early existence of humankind was darkened in a Platonic sense. The man who stole fire from the gods and gave it to humankind says of the first people:

> [...] though they had eyes to see, they saw to no avail; [...] but, just as shapes in dreams, throughout their length of days, without purpose they wrought all things in confusion. [...] [They] dwelt beneath the ground like swarming ants, in sunless caves. They had no sign either of winter or of flowery spring or of fruitful summer, on which they could depend but managed everything without judgment, until I taught them to discern the risings of the stars and their settings, which are difficult to distinguish.[87]

So, before: a dark, purposeless life spent in the cavity of the earth; later: an illuminated, hard-working life with celestial bodies and seasons in view. Although the starting point is the Platonic world cave, the route to the place of awareness does not now go via Plato's unchangeable heavens but, on the other hand, via the more down-to-earth seasons. What is seen in the Golden Age myth as a sign of the decay of nature – the changeable seasons – is here, in a more modernistic fashion, the salvation of humankind.

My hypothesis, however, is still that the experience of Iron Age changeability, expansion and work remained such an alien entity in the culture of antiquity that this experience never gained access to the epistemic *field*'s controlling structures. Rather than letting the Iron Age surmount the at all times threatening chaos, one reinterpreted this chaos as a primordial Golden Age and endeavoured to reconstruct it in the present.

4.3 Displacement of rural work in classical images, I: visual evidence and poetic parallels

Primitivism

The aspects of antique culture I have described so far, including its landscape images, amount to the forces that are effective *from the outside and in*, i.e. which are manifested in the epistemic *field* or, in the case of the image, in the iconology. In the image, these are forces which, in other words, make themselves visible in that paradigm – the Golden Age paradigm – by means of which the pictorial space is controlled. In antiquity, a pictorial scene taking place out in the open will thus automatically and irrespective of its genre be set in an uncultivated or garden-like nature made up of rocks, water and trees. Every kind of outdoor scene can be supplied, without iconographic justification, with a solitary tree or a rocky outcrop. When, for example, the Edinburgh Painter places the abduction of Europa in front

Fig. 4.23. Edinburgh Painter, *Abduction of Europa* (*c.* 550-500 BC), motif on Attic black-figure vase. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 76.42.

of one of the black-figure vases' typical vine-like trees, it is not because the tree is mentioned in the literary source or plays a part in the story, but simply because it represents wilderness in general (FIG. 4.23).

But, of equal importance, work-free nature is also evoked *from the inside and out*, i.e. in the iconography, the actual figurative repertoire of motifs. During the culmination of the Golden Age *field* – from classical Greece and Etruria to Hellenism and on to the republican and early imperial Rome – art rarely alludes to arduous work, especially work in nature. The mythological, ritual, military, historical, genre-like and other kinds of occurrences that take place under 'open' skies are more likely to invoke qualities beyond the utilitarian: heroic, pathetic, pleasurable, ecstatic, gracefully didactic, and so forth. Prior to imperial Rome, classical pictorial art also seldom refers to a secularised history, a history beyond the timeless space of mythology. Even the move from mythology to historical events makes no appreciable change to the visual strategy. When the Greeks battle with the Persians on the *Alexander Sarcophagus* (FIG. 4.24), the figures appear as timeless demigods in an extremely shallow space. This kind of depiction contrasts conspicuously with the neo-Assyrian war scenes which, in addition to expanding the space and marking it with territorial divisions, goes into nauseatingly realistic detail in depicting the narrative scenes (captives impaled on stakes, piles of chopped-off heads, and so forth).

Observation of the absence of utilitarian aspects is corroborated by images in

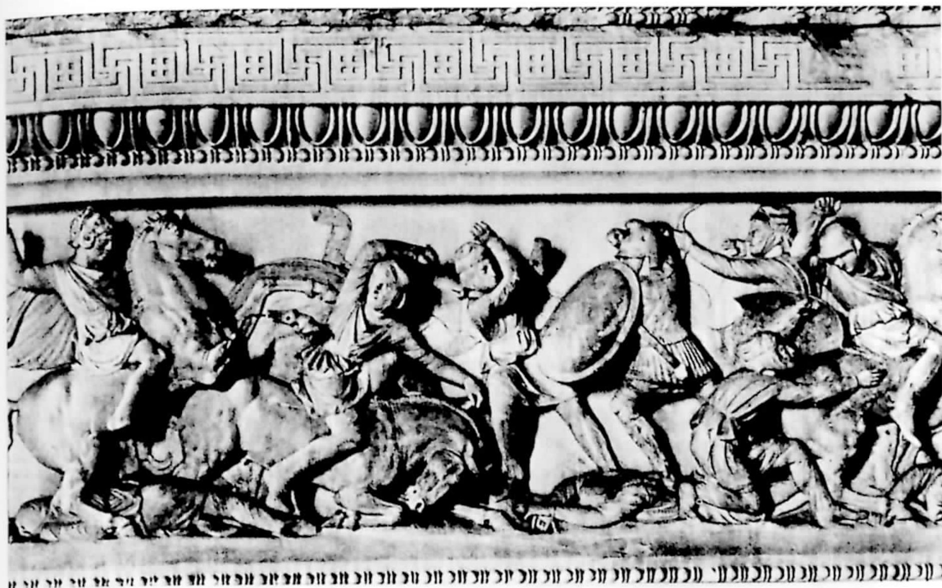


Fig. 4.24. *The Greeks' Battle with the Persians* (*c.* 310-300 BC). Polychrome marble relief on the *Alexander Sarcophagus*. Istanbul, Archaeological Museum.

which the figurative motif relates directly to the surroundings: nature as an element of the story. This is the case, for example, in countless Dionysian scenes involving grapes. Vines might shoot up in the background like trees in a wilderness (FIG. 4.25); they might feature as branches spreading in a tree-like manner between Dionysus' hands and his *thiasos* (FIG. 4.26);[88] they might hang pergola-like stretched above drinking men lounging between pipe-playing maenads (FIG. 4.27); or they can be picked, carried and trodden on in the course of wine-making, be it conducted by satyrs or cupids (FIGS. 4.28-30).[89]

That it was possible to move so comfortably not merely from wilderness through rite to garden, but also on to processing, is because the last stage is closer to the sphere of sacrifice than to that of production. As god of vegetation, Dionysus was also god of the underworld, and his passion, sacrifice and resurrection found striking manifestation in the blood-red grapes, which are first crushed and then, by a natural process, fermented and transformed into upward-striving spirits.[90] In primitive cultures the grapes were prepared in cavities in the rocks, a method that is reflected in Nonnus' late antique *Dionysiaca*. As Dionysus had been raised

Fig. 4.25. Marathon Painter, *Woman Dancing in front of a Bust of Dionysus* (*c.* 490 BC), motif on Attic black-figure vase. New York, Metropolitan Museum. All rights reserved, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Fig. 4.26. *Dionysus and His* Thiasos (*c.* 550-500 BC), motif on Attic black-figure amphora. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional.

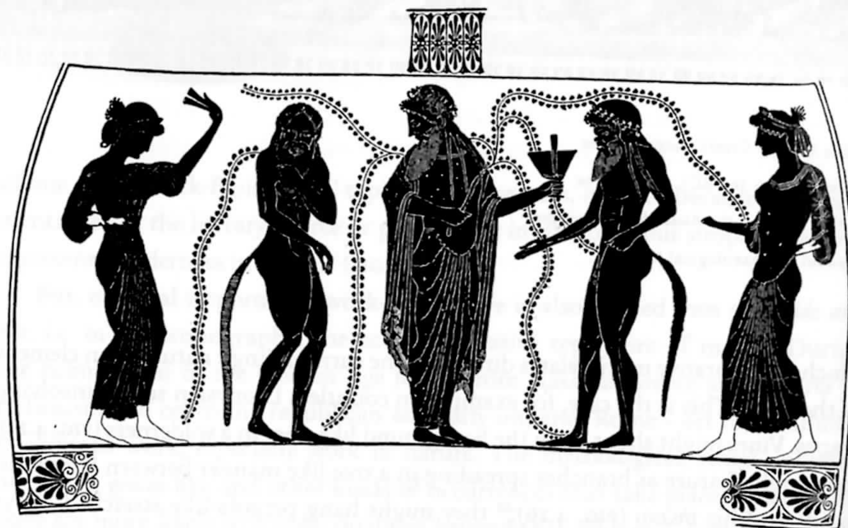


Fig. 4.27. Krokotos Painter, *Man in Vineyard* (*c.* 550-500 BC), Attic black-figure skyphos. Heidelberg, University Museum.

Fig. 4.28. *Satyrs Picking and Treading Grapes* (*c.* 550-500 BC), Attic black-figure kylix. Paris, Cabinet des Medailles.

Fig. 4.29. *Satyrs Picking Grapes* (*c.* 100 AD?), drawing after Roman relief from Campania. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

Fig. 4.30. *Cupids Pick* *Grapes* (3rd century AD drawing after relief on Rom sarcophagus. Narbonne, Mus

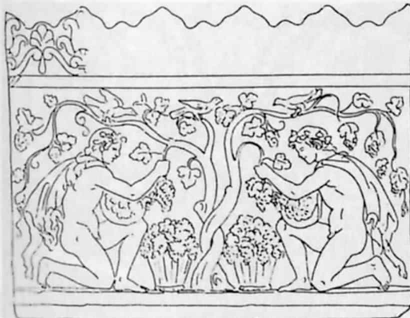


Fig. 4.31. *Cupids Harvesting and Treading Grapes around a Portrait Bust (of Flavius Hannibalianus?)* (320s), mosaic. Rome, Mausoleo di Santa Costanza.

Fig. 4.32. *Grape-Picking Putti, with Ram and Peacocks* (4th century), relief from Constantina's sarcophagus. Rome, Vatican, Musei Vaticani.

Fig. 4.33. *Olive Picking* (*c.* 550-500 BC), Attic black-figure amphora. London, British Museum.

Fig. 4.34. *Selling Olive Oil* (*c.* 550-500 BC), black-figure pelike. Rome, Vatican, Musei Vaticani, 413.

by the Great Mother in the Cybelean cave, his attention was caught by the vine that grew "among the rocks selfgrown, untended." He then digs out a hole in the rock, picks the fruit from the vine and has the satyrs tread it down in the hole.[91] As a result of this crushing and subsequent fermentation in the hole in the rock, sarcophagi - the underworld's containers - were often shaped like wine vats, and the Greek word for wine vat - *lenos* - could also mean sarcophagus.[92] We can safely associate this resurrection symbolism with that of the Tree of Life, as it continues undaunted in the early Christian mosaics and sarcophagi, adorned as they often are with vines and cupids making wine (FIGS. 4.31-32). This demonstrates that Christ - and no longer Dionysus - is "the true vine" and the believers are its branches (St John 15: 1-8).[93]

But even when they have no associations to sacrifice, antique representations of activities in nature keep at a distance from the arduous work and correspondingly close to the reserves of the wilderness or the garden. Working with grapevines is thus part of a larger category covering work with fruit. This could, for example, be picking olives or selling olive oil, as on two black-figure vases (FIGS. 4.33-34), or quince picking

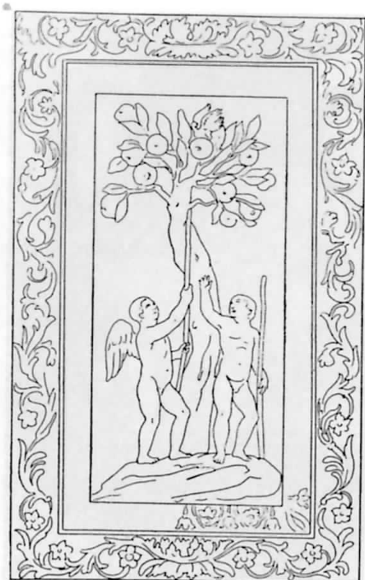


Fig. 4.35. *Cupids Picking Quinces* (3rd century AD?), drawing after Roman relief. Liverpool Museum, Ince Blundell Collection.

Fig. 4.37. *Wild Boar Hunt* (4th century BC), drawing after relief on the funeral stele of the hunter Artemidorus. Athens, National Museum.

Fig. 4.36. *Fowling and Fishing* (6th century BC), Etruscan fresco from the *Fowling and Fishing Tomb*. Tarquinia.

Fig. 4.38. *Horses and Bulls between Two Shepherds* (*c.* 190-210 AD), relief on the back of an Endymion sarcophagus. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. All rights reserved, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

carried out by cupids, as on a Roman relief (FIG. 4.35). Another important genre of activity directly linked with the wilderness is found in hunting motifs: hunting wild boar, lions and deer, fishing and fowling. The last two can be seen, for example, on a fresco in an Etruscan tomb in Tarquinia (6th century BC; FIG. 4.36). The fresco's wide expanses of sky and sea highlight the freedom of the animals before they are defeated by the fowler on the rock and the fishermen in the boat. Hunting big game is usually exemplified by the hunter Endymion. An Athenian funeral stele for his mortal counterpart, Artemidorus, shows the spear-carrying hero between wild boar, dogs and sheep in the omnipresent mountain landscape (FIG. 4.37).[94]

As Endymion's double-role of hunter and shepherd might suggest, it is but a minimal step from the hunt to the other wilderness category: pastoralism. Pastoralism permeates Greco-Roman art and, like the vine, it is under Dionysus' favour. As is the case with tree culture, the boundaries are extremely vague between explicit shepherd scenes to settings where pastoral culture is merely a discreet framework. As, for example, the Dionysian followers Pan, sileni and satyrs are all wilderness deities half composed of the animals they protect, every scene in which they appear will have a pastoral element.[95] It must furthermore be noted that pastoral scenes are often closely interlinked with tree culture. In a Roman relief in the Louvre, the

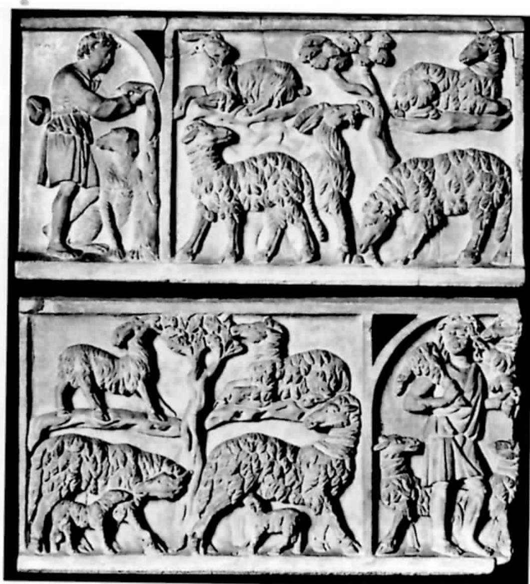


Fig. 4.39. *Shepherds with Sheep and Goats* (4th century AD?), reliefs from fragments of a Roman sarcophagus. Berlin, Staatliche Museen.

young Dionysus is to be found sleeping on the rocks between two mountain goats, while clusters of grapes hang enticingly from two flanking trees (FIG. 18). And in a good many reliefs – for example, the back of an Endymion sarcophagus in which horses and bulls are grouped between two shepherds, and two fragments from a Christian sarcophagus with shepherds, sheep and goats (FIGS. 4.38-39) – the trees serve explicitly as food for the hungry livestock. Here we are again unmistakeably close to the Tree of Life topos. In a 5th-century BC Greek play by Eupolis, a chorus of goats celebrate this nutritious function:

> On arbutus, oak, and fir we feed, all sorts and conditions of trees,
> Nibbling off the soft young green of these, and of these, and of these;
> Olives tame and olives wild are theirs and thine and mine
> Cytisus, mastich, salvia sweet and many-leaved eglantine,
> Ivy and holm-oak, poplar and ash, buckthorn, willow and heather,
> Asphodel, mullein, cistus, thyme and savory all together.[96]

Absence of agriculture

In return for these 'original' occupations, which comfortably reap the surplus of the wilderness or the garden, in classical, Hellenistic, Etruscan and early Roman pictorial art there is an almost total absence of cereal culture. An illustrative domain

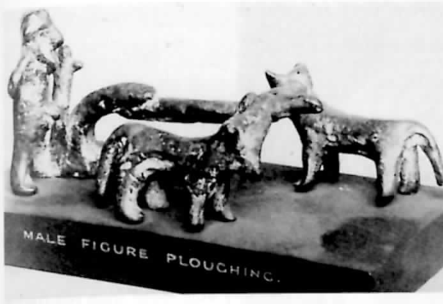


Fig. 4.40. *Man Ploughing* (6th century BC), Anatolian bronze statuettes. London, British Museum.

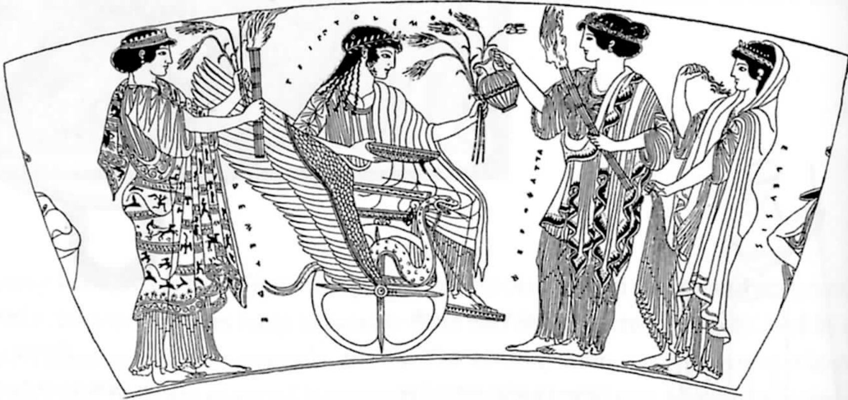
Fig. 4.. Nikosthene *Scenes of Hunting a Farming* (6th century BC Attic black-figure bowl found Vulci. Berlin, Staatliche Musee

Fig. 4.42. *Goddess with Plough* (5th century BC), drawing after detail from red-figure vase.

for the absence of agriculture in art is that of Greek images of ploughs and ploughing. If Marie-Claire Amouretti's catalogue is to be believed, among the thousands of extant Greek pictorial works from the 2nd millennium to the 3rd century BC only a little over a score deal with this subject.[97] The greater part of these works, all with depictions of the actual act of ploughing, come from a brief heyday in the 6th century BC: a terracotta statuette from Tanagra, eight Anatolian bronze statuettes (FIG. 4.40), four Attic black-figure vases and bowls. On one of these bowls, decorated by the Attic Nikosthenes but found in Vulci in Italy, we see, for example, a man in the act of sowing, three workers ploughing with their oxen, two lizards plus two hunters and their deer (FIG. 4.41). Pre-6th century BC we have to go back a long way to come across relevant subjects: a Cypriot statuette group from *c.* 2000 BC with a pair of ploughing oxen, and a Cretan ideogram of a plough.[98] And if we turn to the three subsequent centuries, the act of ploughing is only represented in a single extant work (a 5th-century red-figure vase; FIG. 4.42), while the rest (four red-figure

Fig. 4.43. *Spike of Grain and a Plough* (4th century BC), detail on coin from Metapontum.

Fig. 4.44. *Triptolemus in His Carriage* (4th century BC), motif from red-figure kotylos from Capua. London, British Museum.



vases, a seal imprint on a 5th-century amphora from Thasos and three Hellenic coins (FIG. 4.43)) limit themselves to depictions of the plough alone.[99]

However, the absence of agriculture in classical art not only applies to specific work themes such as ploughing and sowing, but to cereal culture as a whole.[100] While trees and plants already feature in vase painting and reliefs as a consequence of the paradigm, corn only appears in limited thematic contexts, usually from the mythology around Demeter. A typical example is that of an Attic red-figure painting of Triptolemus flanked by Demeter, Persephone and Eleusis (FIG. 4.44);[101] in this image, Demeter, goddess of corn, and Triptolemus, the founder of agriculture in his snake-drawn carriage, are each holding a bunch of corn in their left hand.[102] A sheaf of corn could also be an attribute of Persephone, as seen in, for example, a terracotta relief from Locri, a centre of the Persephone cult in Magna Graecia (*c.* 470-60 BC; FIG. 4.45).[103] The goddess is here enthroned next to her abductor - Hades, stalk of mint in hand - in the underworld. Apart from that, however, we mainly have to look in the marginal zones of pictorial culture to find corn in Greek

Fig. 4.45. *Hades and Persephone on Throne* (*c.* 470-460 BC), relief on terracotta pinax from Locri. Reggio Calabria, Museo Nazionale Archeologico.

and Hellenic images; for example, as one of many types of fruit in a cornucopia or a mixed garland, or on some Hellenic coins (FIG. 4.43).[104]

By all accounts, this widespread classical aversion to the pictorial depiction of agriculture is part of a broader work-shunning pictorial *field*. As Maria Pipili summarises the situation in Greece: "Representations of men at work - craftsmen or tradesmen in town, and manual laborers in the countryside - are relatively rare in ancient Greek art."[105] If we take the evidence of vase paintings depicting artisans - potters, blacksmiths, carpenters, sculptors and cobblers - we find that by far the majority are executed during a brief highpoint from *c.* 520 to *c.* 480 BC, a period during which Greek genre scenes in general reach a culmination.[106] As the majority of the vases are still devoted to the favourite activities of well-to-do citizens - such as

hunting, riding, athletics, combat and eating – it is likely that the scenes of artisans are partly brought about by the vase painters' own pride as craftsmen (especially applicable to scenes with potters and sculptors) in an era when craftsmen were still of a somewhat modest political and financial standing.[107]

To make a more detailed reconstruction of the sociological background to the brief prosperity of agriculture – and other craft work – in 6th-century BC and early 5th-century BC extant images, we must turn to the following part of my overarching model of cultural evolution: after the fall of the Minoan-Mycenaean culture, the Greek culture rises from an advanced primitive-archaic intermediate stage (cf. the geometric style of the vases), in which the ruling class, as in Egypt, has a certain veneration for physical work, including farming. In support of this we can note that, unlike the Minoan-Mycenaean culture, pre-classical Greek arable land would seem to have consisted of independent smallholdings.[108] As narrative art develops on the black-figure vases, this appreciation is given its first visual manifestation. This is also demonstrated in the more primitive statuettes, which were presumably used in a votive capacity by a lower-class public. As Greek society matures and is stratified during the advanced intermediate stage, and thereby in terms of cultural evolution gains on and out-distances its Middle Eastern neighbours in the 5th century BC, these tendencies are, however, broken up by an aristocratic attitude – the classical – that looks down on manual labour. This ousts agriculture from the monumental scenes of pictorial culture in favour of marginal zones such as coins and ornaments. It is not until a change in the epistemic *field* and the emergence of new iconographic frames – labours of the months and seasons – that agriculture re-appears as a pictorial motif around the time of the birth of Christ and then develops in late antiquity and the Middle Ages.

Evidence of the accuracy of this explanation is found in correlation with the pictorial space. Like Egyptian art, the black-figure vases – the key medium for agricultural episodes – are devoid of land formations that could serve as background scenery for the figures. It is not until the introduction of red-figure vases and the disappearance of agriculture that these kinds of formation emerge and with them a new, perspectival depth effect. In terms of work ideology, early Greek art thus also goes through the evolution that is observed from Egyptian to Mesopotamian art. Expanding the depth of field towards a landscape background involves a longing back to the Golden Age, the virgin nature with rocky ground that is lost on the plough.

Other evidence for this explanation is found in the striking silence surrounding agriculture in later Greek literature. In Robin Osborne's words: "No ancient Greek writer ever describes for us the nature of the countryside, the tasks of the farmer or the lot of the agricultural labourer."[109] Alison Burford is of the same mind:

> There are irreparable gaps in our knowledge of even the best-documented areas of antiquity; the land and its use are not included among them, so that the landowners and laborers appear only fleetingly, the half-glimpsed shadows of an ancient people known better in other roles.[110]

It is only in the earliest Greek literature that agriculture is taken more seriously.[111] Hesiod's didactic poem *Works and Days* (7th century BC) is the prime example of this, depicting agriculture as a fundamental lot of existence. Unlike the later writers of antiquity who touch on the subject, Hesiod was not an intellectual urban-dweller but a Boeotian peasant who had personal experience of farm labour. Even though Hesiod is his own master and makes use of assistants – slaves as well as free men – he works hard all day long, following precise guidelines,[112] because "between us and Goodness the gods have placed the sweat of our brows". In contrast to the city-dwelling landowners of a later period, we are told that "gods and men are angry with a man who lives idle, for in nature he is like the stingless drones who waste the labour of the bees, eating without working".[113]

In addition, it should be said that Hephaestus' shield in the *Iliad* (8th-7th century BC) glints with a suite of farming landscapes, the visual equivalence of which is not seen until Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Effects of Good Government in the Countryside* two thousand years later (**PLATE 13**).[114] The activities – ploughing, harvesting, vine growing and pastoralism – are not merely of interest to the peasant community, for at a harvest swath the King himself is seen standing, staff in hand, gladdened by the work. Nor is Odysseus above working the land, for when one of Penelope's suitors accuses him of laziness, Odysseus suggests that they have a ploughing competition.[115] And yet Homer will also lament work on the land[116] and dream of Elysian places where it is rendered superfluous. Of the Cyclopes, a lawless people who put their trust in the gods alone, it is said that they "[...] plant nothing with their hands, nor plow; but all these things spring up for them; without sowing or plowing, wheat, and barley, and vines, which bear the rich clusters of wine, and Zeus's rain makes these grow for them."[117] Although the plant and sowing cultures are here considered jointly, cereal culture is shortly afterwards identified with the more advanced stages of civilisation, as the Cyclops does not look "like a man that lives by bread".[118] Similarly, the mighty Ajax in the *Illiad* will not yield "to any man that is mortal and eats the grain of Demeter and may be cut with the bronze or crushed with great stones".[119] Homer thus places cereal culture in an interesting halfway stage where the Greek 'Middle Ages' might well have endowed it with some of its lost collective appeal, but where accelerating class division is already on the way to dissolving this appeal again.

Not even the Hellenic sculptures of people on the land – shepherds, old

Fig. 4.46. *Old Market Woman* (*c.* 14-68 AD), Roman marble copy of Hellenistic original from 3rd-2nd century BC. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. All rights reserved, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

fishermen, boys wringing the necks of geese and plucking out thorns, drunken women, peasant women on the way to market - allow us to approach the cereal culture of the plains. These sculptures are actually the closest that the Greco-Roman art gets to large-scale genre descriptions.[120] Startlingly realistic measures are used to show, for example, the consequences of hard toil, poverty and age. The portrait of life on the land is, however, no more searching than that its major by-product, cereal agriculture, is absent. Looking into the baskets carried by the most peasant-like of the sculptures - the Metropolitan Museum's old market woman (Roman copy of a Hellenistic original from 3rd-2nd century BC) - we do not find grain products, but chickens and, as far as we can tell from the damaged state of the statue, fruit

and vegetables (FIG. 4.46). The choice of subject for the sculptures is thus the same as we have observed throughout: primitivistic occupations, slightly removed from the hardships of civilisation. Although those pursuing these occupations might be older and poorer, they are seen to respect the boundaries of grace. The woman in the Metropolitan is even shown elegantly dressed and adorned with ivy leaves, as if she is on her way to a Dionysian festival.[121]

The sculptures' link to the perception of nature is demonstrated quite plainly by their location. Even though they could all serve as votive offerings at shrines,[122] their function – in Roman times, at least – had taken a turn towards the scenic. All the figures would seem to have been erected in natural or semi-natural surroundings: the headless shepherd of the Conservator's Palace was dug up in a Roman *hortus* (garden immediately beyond the city wall), and the fishermen's documented places of discovery are made up of a bath (in Aphrodisias), a nymphaeum (in Byblos) and a villa (in Chiragan near Toulouse), all places that could represent fishing ponds in nature. As we can see from finds in Roman *horti* and villa grounds, the natural scenery is elaborated by means of pasture and forest animals in sculptural form: sheep, goats, dogs, hare, wild boar, deer.[123] The figures would have looked like 'real' elements in a 'wild' nature made up of *horti* or villa parks.

The literary parallel to these kinds of sculptures is not georgic poetry in continuation of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, but pastoral poetry as instituted by the Alexandrian poet Theocritus (*c.* 300-260 BC). Even though Theocritus's twenty or so *Idylls* do not deal exclusively with shepherds, this occupational group represents the absolute fulcrum and the genre is therefore also called *bucolic*, from *bukólos*, herdsman (the etymological origin of *idyll* itself is uncertain, but it is possibly derived from *eidyllon*, a diminutive form of *eidos*, image).[124] Bucolic poetry is intended for a city-weary elite and deals with the sorrows, yearnings, joys and machinations that can be cultivated in the surplus time and energy afforded by abundant freedom in the open air.[125] If the idylls resemble pictorial art in their depiction of shepherds, fishermen and vine workers, they differ, however, by also making the occasional reference to cereal culture. One of the idylls – no. 10 – even takes place in a field being harvested.[126] Again, this divergence can probably only be explained in that literature is less marked by specifics than images (cf. *Interlude*, VI).

Absence of mine-work

The final evidence that the Golden Age myth reflects fundamental structures in Western cultural evolution is the observation that just as the Golden Age is innocently ignorant of mining – the Iron Age rape of Mother Earth – so, too, the post-Egyptian pre-modern pictorial grounds are also unmarked by this form of

industrial exploitation. Without too many conceptual contortions, this topos could, as mentioned, cover both quarrying and metal mining, and in Greco-Roman time Hercules Saxanus is indeed protector of both occupations.[127]

If the mine's penetration of the earth could be said to be a trauma from the very beginnings of civilisation, the scruples intensified greatly in the Roman period when use of slaves invalidated the compensatory rituals, while Iron Age ruthless exploitation of the earth's treasures actually swelled to alarming dimensions. Again in accordance with the basic structure of the Golden Age myth, towards the end of his *Natural History* Pliny lashes out at humankind's voracious use of marble:

> It remains for us to deal with the nature of stones or, in other words, the prime folly [*morum insania*] in our behaviour [...]. For everything that we have investigated up to the present volume may be deemed to have been created for the benefit of mankind. Mountains, however, were made by Nature for herself to serve as a kind of framework for holding firmly together the inner parts of the earth [*telluris visceribus*], and at the same time to enable her to subdue the violence of rivers, to break the force of heavy seas and so to curb her most restless elements with the hardest material of which she is made. We quarry these mountains and haul them away for a mere whim; and yet there was a time when it seemed remarkable even to have succeeded in crossing them. Our forefathers considered the scaling of the Alps by Hannibal and later by the Cimbri to be almost unnatural. Now these selfsame Alps are quarried into marble of a thousand varieties.[128]

This kind of mountain landscape, disfigured in order to satiate the city elites with their insatiable thirst for luxury, is as distant as is conceivable from the rocky ground of pre-modern images. Until the 15th-century paradigm shift, which triggered a territorial requirement stretching all the way from grain farming in the valleys to the inner-earth of the surrounding mountains (more about this in chapter 12), the minerals in the rocky ground are shown in all their fertile virginity.

Here I am describing the paradigm – the state of affairs in the semantically indeterminate outer edges of the pictorial space – but, as was the case with agriculture, the mine-work theme will also demonstrate very occasional exceptions from the continuous absence of territory: i.e. in acute situations of the iconography. We find these examples – exactly as in the case of agriculture – at the outer edges of the classical period: at its archaic entrance in the 7th-6th centuries BC and at its Late Roman exit in the 3rd-5th centuries AD (as regards the exit, see chapter 7).

The archaic mine-work images – the very earliest Western depictions of any kind of metal ore extraction – are all condensed in a brief illustrative case story: a series of painted clay tablets found in 1879 in Penteskuphia near Corinth and

Fig. 4.47. *Miner at Work* (*c.* 600 BC), painted clay tablet from Penteskuphia near Corinth. Berlin, Staatliche Museen.

Fig. 4.48. *Miners at Work* (*c.* 600 BC), painted clay tablet from Penteskuphia near Corinth. Berlin, Staatliche Museen.

later distributed to, among other places, Paris and Berlin.[129] Alongside the usual dramatis personae such as Poseidon and other gods, warriors, hunters and sailors, a conspicuously leading role is taken by craftsmen: especially potters, smelters and miners at their work in the underground cavities (FIGS. 4.47-48). Consideration of the strikingly organic profiles of these mines, and the often violent manner in which their materials are wrested from them, provides an evocative insight into pre-modern concepts of the life and vulnerability of the subterranean world.

Judging by the place of discovery – Poseidon's pine grove – the tablets presumably served as votive offerings to this god; we can still see holes in the sides and corners by which the tablets were hung on tree branches. The key to the tablets' significance within the ideology of work is also found in this function, because in the classical slave system – including mining in Greece, especially as structured with the use of Balkan and Anatolian captives – cultic votive offerings were forbidden. The Corinthian miners on the clay tablets must therefore have been free men. This assumption is partly substantiated by the men's long hair, partly by the fact that according to tradition the Corinthian ruler Periander (*c.* 625-585 BC) actually opposed slavery and promoted independent work by the citizens of his state. And so here we have further evidence of the brief 'Egyptian' phase in the Greek sequence of cultural evolution: a phase during which manual work, including its most demanding aspect, mining, was imbued with both pride and cultic significance.

4.4 Displacement of rural work in classical images, II: cultic, philosophical and political parallels

The displacement of cereal culture from the centre of power

The displacement of rural work in pictorial art cannot, of course, be interpreted as indicative of a 'typical' attitude in antique culture. As most people in antiquity toiled in the fields, and it has been estimated that 65-75 percent of everyone's daily food was based on grain,[130] cereal culture must have had a pressing cultic significance. An etymological testimony to cereal culture's continued connection to reproduction is found, for example, in the fact that the Greek verb *aroo* can mean to till and also to procreate children. And, in Lucretius' description of sexual intercourse, "[...] Venus is on the point of sowing the woman's field [...]".[131]

The deity who, more than any other, brought out the comparison between cultivated soil and fertilised woman was the Greek goddess of corn Demeter or her Roman counterpart Ceres. Demeter is called *kourotrophos* or *paidotrophos* ('child-feeder') and thereby represented the mature mother as opposed to the unconsumed virgin, a figure embodied in Persephone, Demeter's daughter. In Roman culture, marriage and weddings also fell within Ceres' sphere of favour, as the primary objective of marriage was reproduction.[132] But, again, there were blurred boundaries between Ceres and the Great Mother altogether. Augustine was still writing about wild festivals in honour of Magna Mater, during which the fields were fertilised by male semen, if not with severed sexual organs – a tribute supplied by the men known as *Galli*, servants of the Great Mother.[133]

That Pamela Berger gives her study of the history of the corn goddess the title *The Goddess Obscured* is, nonetheless, an indication that the cereal cult did not have a free and open outlet in post-Egyptian culture.[134] Barbara Spaeth thus remarks, in passing, on"[t]he limited mythology of the goddess [Ceres] in Latin literature".[135] As far as I am aware, however, the mechanisms behind this kind of displacement have never been the object of systematic treatment, so what I am here adducing can only be a hypothetical proposal supported by scattered evidence from earlier studies of partial contexts. The basic idea is, as already indicated, that work is shifted from the power centre of culture, in line with society becoming hierarchic and spirit withdrawing to the heavens. As cereal culture represents work par excellence, the fulcrum of the cereal cult is therefore displaced to the underclass working in the fields, at which point its visual evidence is consigned to oblivion.

This hypothesis is corroborated by Spaeth, who notes a special affiliation between Ceres and *plebs*, the Roman underclass. From its very foundation during

the early Republic in 494/93 BC, the temple of Ceres and Liber, her partner, was a symbolic centre for the Roman plebeians. As such, this clarifies the contrast between Ceres, the consumed, and Magna Mater, the eternally virginal, as the temple of Magna Mater, alias Cybele, on the Palatine Hill was similarly a centre for the patricians. This social clash of interests was not, however, without its chinks because, along with her link to the plebeians, Ceres was also the tutelary spirit for women of the Roman upper class.[136]

However, apart from the cult in these urban centres, it is notoriously difficult to ascertain the underclass's relationship with cereal culture - and especially so when considering the pictorial evidence. Firstly, the very narrative genre in which so many of the antique pictorial concepts are manifested is a relatively advanced medium bearing testimony to time and energy for reflection. Rather than producing narrative images of their ideal life world, working peasants will make votive offerings, which promote the fertility of the earth. In addition to this, the rural underclass has been consigned to primitive means of representation, often in perishable materials such as straw, clay and wood. If one of these works should happen to survive, it does not reveal much about the thoughts of its maker. Lastly, but certainly not least, agricultural labourers were often slaves: a class of people who, as we will see in chapter 6, was unlikely to have been permitted to develop deep religious feelings for their work - and especially to give these feelings cultic expression.

Agriculture and work in classical thinking

The aristocratic aversion to consumption, as manifest in Ceres' affiliation to the Roman underclass, goes straight to the heart of the antique epistemic *field* and its superstructure, the Golden Age *field*. For, as the power of conception and its two components, spirit and the erotic power of fertilisation, are shifted to the heavens during the emergence of the concrete operational stage, the same power's fertilisation, dynamisation and shaping of the earthly material should preferably happen in such a way that it is not defiled by this: i.e. lose its celestial indestructibility. This enterprise depends on an organic, effortless production that has nature - or rather: a spiritually improved nature, as the ideal. That both the Greek and the Latin word for nature, *fysis* and *natura* respectively, are derived from the term *to give birth*, is because that which is natural was compared with that which is born organically - generated by the womb of the earth - and the desired ennobled nature was thus a womb in which the spirit could be manifested in a, so to speak, transparent manner.[137] In contrast to this were the post-paradisiacal means of production - sexuality and work - both of which wear down and consume the body and its spiritual power.

Sexuality's fundamental alienation from classical culture is succinctly summed

Fig. 4.49. *Capitoline Aphrodite* (2nd century AD?), Roman marble copy of Hellenistic original from *c.* 250 BC. Rome, Musei Capitolini.

up by the ageing Goethe: "The sexual act destroys beauty, but nothing is more beautiful than what precedes this moment. Only in ancient art is eternal youth captured and depicted. And what does eternal youth mean other than never to have known a man or a woman."[138] Classical art thus represents an eroticism that infinitely approaches the unity of the sexual act, but strangely without being defiled – i.e. consumed – by the Fall. Therefore, the eroticism expressed in sculptures such as the *Capitoline Aphrodite* (FIG. 4.49) is fundamentally of a virginal kind: the breasts are small and delicate, the vulva unseen and hairless. The idealism of classical pictorial art, then, refers to a Golden Age in which immortality thrives because the gender is undefiled.

That work and its instrument art (Greek *techné*, Latin *ars*) are also difficult entities to integrate in classical culture is due to almost the same reasons as those applying to sexuality; and this pertains even though Aristotle goes to great lengths to amalgamate nature and art: for example, in a comparison between the development of an embryo and a carpenter's treatment of timber.[139] In both cases, two contributions are made: the passive, female *material* and the active, male *principle of movement*, which transfers nature's form to the material. While the principle of movement in the embryo is supplied by the semen, in carpentry it is caused by the

carpenter moving his tools and thereby imparting the form from his soul to the receptive wood.

But where, then, does art differ from nature? Even though Aristotle does not believe in an actual past Golden Age, he nonetheless operates with a Golden Age-like concept of a weakened but continually purposeful nature.[140] He therefore concludes teleologically that when the arts do not imitate nature they "carry things further than Nature can".[141] But although works of art thus perfect nature, they are still not on a par with the virginal works of nature. The reason for this is again determined by the Golden Age-like idea that *logos* or the ultimate objective for the process of creation is further from the material in art than it is from that in nature. Whereas a work of art has always to surmount a distance between form and material - as the form is first transferred to the material via the work of the hand - works of nature, for example, embryos, are created in the most intimate relationship between form and material. Art construes, nature gives birth. Therefore, Aristotle states that "the Good (Beautiful) is more fully present in the works of nature than in the works of Art."[142]

This cosmological divide between the creative spirit and the materials it puts together was then further extended by the social divide that developed with the maturation of the advanced intermediate stage: the divide between those who governed and those who worked. As the formers' unimpeded activities of the spirit were based on leisure time, they had a preference for images devoid of inappropriate sweat and toil, signs of a lessening of the Beautiful. In particular, when they turned their gaze towards the distance, they had to look past peasants, roads and cornfields in order to reach the sight of those who had just as much leisure time as themselves, the primitive peoples in the mountains.

Interestingly, the rural work of the images therefore also finds a parallel in Aristotle's list of *bioi*: simple modes of life springing directly from nature and not from trade and barter.[143] Among these primary pursuits - pastoralism, hunting, brigandage (theft of slaves, for example), fishing, fowling, farming and fruit growing - only farming is conspicuous as alien to the rural activities in pictorial art. The explanation for both connection and difference has to be looked for in the Greco-Roman upper-class ideals of leisure time and dignified action.

The very finest pursuit was that of pure leisure: the prerequisite for philosophy and politics, which were both undefiled by exertion and contact with the material world.[144] This was closely followed by *praxis*, actions which were their own objectives, as opposed to *poiesis*, activities subordinate to external objectives.[145] That work on the land in pictorial art shares space with Aristotle's primary pursuits is because it is located in a comfortable zone between leisure and *praxis*. For Aristotle, pastoralism even constitutes the most inactive *bios*:

> for to procure food from domesticated animals involves no toil or industry, but as it is necessary for the herds to move from place to place because of the pastures, the people themselves are forced to follow along with them, as though they were farming a live farm [...].[146]

The inclusion of brigandage in the primary pursuits also becomes more comprehensible when considered in the light of *praxis*. The violent acquisition of the property of others is an action that has itself as objective, especially when slaves are involved. As Aristotle adduces:

> Hence even the art of war will by nature be in a manner an art of acquisition (for the art of hunting is a part of it) that is properly employed both against wild animals and against such of mankind as though designed by nature for subjection refuse to submit to it, inasmuch as this warfare is by nature just.[147]

What we are thus seeing here is that war, violence and hunting are still considered to be phenomena belonging both to nature and to *praxis*. Even though violence, like work, belongs to the period after the end of the Golden Age, it is inscribed in a considerably nobler stage than work. For violence can be understood as a masculine compensation for the earth's lost power of growth. When the earth, after the Golden Age, grows wild and ceases production of its spontaneous yield, violence intervenes in order to tame it and force food and artefacts from it. As violence is, however, only heroic and graceful if it is separated from toil and drudgery, it seems logical that work has to be carried out by slaves, a group which – like wild beasts – is controlled through force. The outcome of this perception of violence for the art of antiquity is that humans, to the same extent as wild beasts, feature as hunted objects. As is well known, battle scenes comprise a noble motif for pictorial representation (FIG. 4.24).

But why does pictorial art now shut off the most common of the Aristotelian primary pursuits: farming? In fact, farming could also be *praxis* provided the farmer was his own master and only produced grain for his own needs. This ideal in particular, however, was difficult to maintain from and including the developed Greek city-state, *polis*, the incarnation of the advanced intermediate stage. Politics, an occupation in which all free citizens may participate, requires leisure time, and that can be in short supply if one also has to take care single-handedly of a farm outside the city wall.[148] Even though surprisingly little is still known about the details of the Greek social structure,[149] it is certain, in keeping with the theory of cultural evolution, that many farmers in the classical period had become distanced from the political life of the city. If they were not day-labourers or subjects such as slaves who cultivated

the city-dwellers' soil (Marx's antique means of production), they were often hard-working independent farmers whose only contact with the city was the sale of their goods at market.[150] As it says in Euripides' (*c.* 485-406 BC) *Suppliants*: "Now the poor farmer, even if he is no fool, has no chance, because of his labor, to attend to the city's business."[151] As we will see in chapter 6, this development is only reinforced in the Hellenistic and Republican Roman periods, when land is usually gathered in *latifundia*: large agricultural estates owned by city-dwelling landowners. The workers on these estates, including the farm manager (*vilicus*), are usually slaves.[152]

At the same time as land and power are concentrated in the hands of city-dwellers, the farmers come to resemble, at least from an urban point of view, craftsmen: the practitioners par excellence of *poiesis*. The craftsman makes his items for the sake of the user, not for his own needs. According to Aristotle, *praxis* first enters the craftsman/user relationship at the point when the latter uses the product. As it is the needs of the user that are being fulfilled, he is also the one who best understands the product's *eidos*: its formal cause or ideal model.[153] The craftsman is merely the moving cause of *eidos* and Aristotle therefore places him in the category of 'tools'. As the Socratics saw it, nature had simply preordained the craftsman to his *techné*.[154] Unlike the citizen who is superior to manual labour and has enough leisure time to avoid specialisation, the craftsman is bound to his *techné* and is thereby just as unfree as the slave.

Although the craftsmen were often regarded as the absolute underclass, they were not placed below farmers in the social theories of Plato and Aristotle. As Aristotle states in no uncertain terms: "[...] nor yet must those who are to be citizens in the best state be tillers of the soil (for leisure is needed both for the development of virtue and for active participation in politics)."[155] Furthermore, the farmers' full-time pursuit in itself guaranteed that the free citizen had enough leisure time for the requisite politics. Plato therefore has no hesitation in claiming that farmers in the ideal state should be slaves or serfs.[156]

There has to be a direct lifeline from the craftsman via *techné* to the user – self-sufficiency – because without it we end up, according to Plato, in the "fevered" state, a luxurious city, which produces decoration, music, poems, plays, women, cakes and last, but not least, illusionist images with subjectively-determined and therefore truth-distorting viewpoints: in brief, a wealth of illusory entertainment that no one has any use for.[157] Therefore, trade and the making of money in large quantities are also unnatural, as both break the lifeline between producer and consumer.[158] This lifeline stretches all the way to the horizon of the Golden Age, where it becomes structurally isomorphous with the boundary that hinders the pictorial space from opening out towards infinity and instead ensures that it is kept focussed on well-defined bodies.

The Golden Age might well have been a thing of the past, but its freedom from work and its self-sufficiency – i.e. closedness – continued to be the highest social ideals. As Plato states in the *Laws*:

> So the story teaches us today, and teaches us truly, that when a community is ruled not by God but by man, its members have no refuge from evil and misery. We should do our utmost – this is the moral – to reproduce the life of the age of Cronus [i.e. the Golden Age] [...].[159]

As, however, the earth no longer surrenders its goods spontaneously, slaves step in as compensation for the lost Golden Age energy. Rather than the ideal – nature which feeds its goods in an autochthonic way – culture's substitute is now instituted: goods forced out by slaves subdued by legitimate violence. Even though theories propounded by Plato and Aristotle were ideal concepts of social organisation, they were worked out in close interaction with the actual conditions.[160] On the one hand, they conceived an aristocratic development that was already advanced in classical time; on the other hand, the conception could be used as justification for the consummation of the development in Hellenist and Roman time.

This picture, which here emerges as the result of a structuralist comparison between key features from the landscape image and classical philosophy, can also be extended via some perspectives from the philosophy of history: those of Hegel and Kojève. As mentioned in the introduction to the present chapter, Hegel regards the first phase of history as determined by a contest, in which risking one's own life generates the respect of one's neighbour and with it a higher stage of spiritual freedom. But as it is not possible to win respect from the dead, the vanquished party is not killed, but is rather deprived of his autonomy and made a slave.[161] Even though, as mentioned, this dynamic eludes the Neolithic advanced primitive stage in which respect can apparently be won by work rather than by combat (cf. chapter 4.1), it has become epistemic in the advanced intermediate stage, the epoch of the Golden Age *field*, as here "[t]his Work is placed between the Master and Nature. The Slave transforms the *given* conditions of existence so as to make them *conform* to the Master's demands. Nature, transformed by the Slave's Work, *serves* the Master, without his needing to serve it in turn."[162] [Kojève's italics] This is an exact description of the conversion of the weakened, post-Golden Age nature to a reconstructed Golden Age that nourishes the master, without the master having to work. Kojève sums up in particular that "the enjoyment that one obtains without making effort is *Lust*, Pleasure. The life of the Masters, to the extent that it is not bloody Fighting, Fighting for prestige with human beings, is a life of pleasure."[163] [Kojève's italics] This again emphasises the strange duality that the non-violent

state – the reconstruction of the pleasure-filled Golden Age – is created precisely through violence.

Despite the aversion to work, particularly rural work, it did not prove possible to overcome a survivor from pre-classical time: the myth that farming was an admirable pursuit for the free citizen. In the Greek period this point of view was most comprehensively articulated in Xenophon's *Economist* (4th century BC), where it is put into the mouth of Socrates – a philosopher not exactly famous for his interest in farming.[164] Presumably this is due to two motives: one to do with realpolitik, the other more nostalgic. The realpolitik motive was that antique aristocracy was actually founded on land ownership. Vernant estimates that in classical Athens only one fourth of the city's 20,000 citizens did not have any land at all.[165] Ownership showed that the free citizen had roots in the surrounding land and was thereby, at least in theory, self-sufficient. The more nostalgic reason was that neither the Greeks nor the Romans could forget the time when agriculture was still free action, *praxis*.

As a consequence of the differences in the two motives, there is often a strange ambiguity as to the actual meaning of 'being a farmer' in antiquity. Does it mean working single-handedly in the soil, supervising others doing so, or simply owning the land where the effort is taking place? The *Economist* covers the whole spectrum. Although manual labour with the soil is claimed to give increased strength (5, 4), it is not exactly performed by the city-dwelling landowner, but by his slaves and farm manager. The landowner must merely be familiar with the functions of agriculture and ensure that they are carried out dutifully. Nonetheless, it is alleged – with rather wonderful arguments – that farming is also healthy for the landowner. For in order to supervise the work – and supervise the supervision of that work – properly, he has to rise early from his city bed and, moreover, he can take exercise en route as he rides his horse to and from the farm! The difficult ideal in the *Economist* is thus not tilling the soil oneself, but being able to "maintain [one's] own estate" and yet at the same time "adorn the city".[166]

Pictorial space and territory: evidence of the agrimensores

That the Greco-Roman upper class looked down on agriculture, and manual work in general, was because its thinking was limited by the same Golden Age horizon which expanded the pictorial space and yet hindered it in opening up towards infinity.

Were we to translate this Golden Age *field* blindness vis-à-vis work into terms more specific to terrain, we could, as mentioned, say that this *field*'s pictorial view bypasses the city-state upland, the *territory*, and instead lets the gaze continue out into *terra*, the virgin soil. In classical antiquity, territory is not depicted in images – horizontal panoramic views, directed out into or slanting down over the

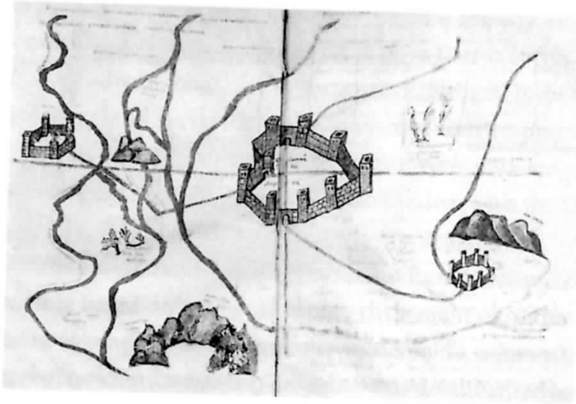


Fig. 4.53. Augusta Taurinorum (modern Turin, centre) and Hasta (modern Asti, right) with mountains, rivers and roads (9th century), miniature from manuscript of Hyginus Gromaticus' *Constitutio limitum* (early 2nd century AD). Rome, Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms Pal. lat. 1564.

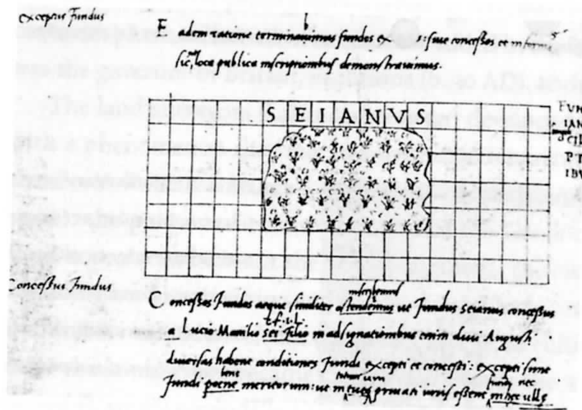


Fig. 4.54. Farm area exempt from the surrounding centuriation (13th century?), miniature from manuscript with part of *Corpus agrimensorum* (*c.* 100 AD; assembled *c.* 500 AD).

As we can see from the late antique illustrations in *Corpus agrimensorum*, this axis system was probably about the closest antiquity got to representation of a homogeneous space. The miniatures show the square grids from the viewpoints of both the strict verticality of the mapping gaze and the more pictorial, semi-perspectival horizontality of the panoramic gaze. In addition, they include more naturalistic depictions of cities, roads, rivers, mountains, and so forth (FIG. 4.53). Here – as in reality – the rivers, lakes, forests and especially mountains account for the natural boundaries of the *agrimensores*' sphere of operations: areas where the square grids and civilisation alike must give way (PLATE 12 and FIG. 4.54). This un-surveyed land is tellingly called *arcifinius*, a term which, according to Varro, is derived from *arceo* ("keeping off the enemy").

Arcifinius, however, also accounts for the borders between two ways of seeing, which are not reconciled again before modernity: panoramic gaze and mapping gaze.

Fig. 4.55. *Anglo-Saxon World Map* (*c.* 1025-50), miniature from Britain. London, British Library, ms Cotton Tiberius B.V., f. 56v.

The fields may well be depicted cartographically, but not as a convincing pictorial whole. They remain strictly on the plane, and if they are shown in perspective it is only in a sectional way, which does not really extend the plane out into the infinity of the space. The mountains emerge exactly at the point where the gaze is unable to continue. When the depth therefore becomes more pronounced, as happens in the horizontal view of the actual images, the fields, roads and rivers must logically vanish and the whole range of vision will in return be taken over by the mountains. This is exactly what happens in the Golden Age paradigm's space: a nostalgic space that replaces territory with *terra*. It is not until the moment when the territory is

rehabilitated as a purchasable commodity, as universal capitalist merchandise, that it can become part of a pictorial vision which ploughs down the mountains and reaches out to infinity. This moment presupposes that the square grid has accomplished the process that was only launched in antiquity: to break away from its attachment to the soil and instead to transfer to unbounded abstraction, the total incorporeality that characterises modern geometry. As was the case with sculpture, the ideal for antique geometry was still the corporeal closed form: earth conquered by the Apollonian sharp-sightedness.

That the square grid has to glance off mountains and wilderness is also substantiated by the fact that it was never a part of the macroscopic terrain survey: the world map. In his *Geography*, Ptolemy had indeed introduced coordinates – degrees of latitude and longitude – as specification of places in the known world all the way to the Far East. But judging by the extant evidence – 10th-11th-century medieval *mappae mundi* such as the *Anglo-Saxon,* or *Cottonian, World Map* – this principle was not converted into visual practice (FIG. 4.55).[168] The world map had specification of places and some rough and fragmented land divisions, but antiquity seemingly never got as far as making a grid spanning the world together with its oceans, mountains and cities. Moreover, its map-vision did not stretch further than to Eurasia and North Africa. A grid spanning the world only emerges when Europeans set out to conquer its total surface and begin to view it under an overall perspective.

Comparison between maps and images thus demonstrates clearly that the territory could only be visualised if there was a specific ideological reason for this visualisation. On the whole – i.e. under the regime of the Golden Age paradigm, from Mesopotamia to the Late Middle Ages – we have to confirm the basic observation that the pre-modern landscape image ground is devoid of traces of use.

Jacob Wamberg

Landscape as World Picture

Tracing Cultural Evolution in Images

VOLUME I

From the Palaeolithic Period to the Middle Ages

Translated by Gaye Kynoch

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