

Time, Territory and Wilderness in Early Modern Landscape Images, I

Before the Paradigm Shift 1420

Introduction

FROM THE PREVIOUS TWO CHAPTERS, the following observations, *inter alia*, should now appear quite clearly: within the perspectival pictorial space of modernity, a boundlessness is released which not only bursts the shallow spatial depth of medieval pictorial art but also impedes the return of antique pictorial culture, the reawakening of the plastic-bound forms. It has been shown, moreover, that this expansion of space is structurally equivalent to a two-sided cosmological breach of boundaries: the Copernican world picture's transgression of geocentricity; and the geographical and colonial conquest of land areas beyond the European continent.

If we again compare these expansive movements with our fundamental mythological framework – the Golden Age and Paradise myth – we will recall (cf. chapters 4 and 8) that they correspond structurally with the spatial disruption that occurs during, respectively, the Fall and the fall to the Silver, Bronze and Iron Ages. In the post-paradisiacal world, humankind is no longer encircled by a womb-like garden nature, but is scattered to the winds in cultures which are compelled to make use of agriculture, territorial divisions, tree felling, mine-work, shipping and trade in order to procure the necessary – or superfluous – natural goods. This opening-up of the world was both pre-empted and displaced by the pre-modern epistemic *field*, the Golden Age *field*, inasmuch as this *field* nominated the substitute Paradise as its ideal society: the bipartite and yet closed social body with an unbroken lifeline between place of production and consumer, whereas the post-paradisiacal circulation of goods was encompassed by the antique horror-concept: infinity.

While I have so far illuminated the spatial expansions of modernity from mainly natural-philosophical and aesthetic angles – corresponding to the pole of

remoteness: world picture; and the pole of vantage point: self-consciousness – in this and the next chapter I shall demonstrate that these expansions also redeem the sociological dimensions of the Fall, the focus area of the middle distance. As Plato cautioned, the society that produces the new hyper-illusionist images is precisely a society that has submitted itself to the free market: from the 12th-15th centuries a proto-capitalist economy was developed in Europe, the proliferation of which can already be seen as a structural equivalent to the contemporaneous development of perspective and infinite universe alike. The sociology of the Fall is more specifically paralleled if we zoom in from the pole of remoteness to the middle distance of the image, for here the Golden Age paradigm's *terra*, the primordial virginal rocks, is displaced by a new combination: partly the 'Iron Age paradigm's' *territory*, civilisation's controlled terrain, which from plains to mountains is scored with controlling indicators such as roads, cornfields, fences, hedges, watercourses, bridges and mines; partly by a wilderness which has been left untouched, in a more radical sense than formerly, by human hand. The emergence of the cultivated part of this terrain in monumental art is dependent on a pervasive rehabilitation of an ethic of work – the one which, as Max Weber has demonstrated, is catalysed by capitalism.

As was the case in chapter 7, dealing with the medieval prelude to modernity, I shall also here deal with the last aspect to disband the Golden Age *field: time* and its pictorial traces in connection with work. For at the same time as the pictorial view admits cultivation of the landscape, it also allows for a viewing determined by the moment – a temporality manifested in weather, diurnal fluctuations and seasons. In the cultural practice – waged work – time is also interwoven with the notion of labour and it can be argued in general that time, in diametrical opposition to the understanding of classical antiquity, is a fundamental component in modernity's perception of existence: in changeability as the basic condition of life. Two phenomena from the complex of concepts applying to time and work, namely the *ruin* and *mine-work*, will however be left until chapter 12, when the gaze will sink below the landscape's newly-eroded soil – to its hard and in many ways still archaic foundation: the rock.

My examination of the thematic cluster of time, territory and wilderness will be divided into two chronologically separate chapters, because that which has its breakthrough in the overall landscape paradigm around 1420 was first introduced in contexts requiring specific thematic justification: labours of the months, health compendia, topographic studies, patriotic landscape portraits, and so forth. These iconographic currents, which eventually flow together in a paradigmatic high tide, are the subject, then, to be studied in this chapter.

10.1 Capitalism, work and pictorial space

The period that prepares the way for the new landscape paradigm of the 1420s is one of the most revolutionary in the evolution of Western culture. In the three centuries before the gaze is directed towards a cultivated landscape in painting, actual landscape is exposed to what today would be called an ecological rape. At the end of the 11th century the greater part of Europe was still covered with forest and marshland. It is estimated that in the Low Countries and Germany two-thirds of the land was uncultivated, in the British Isles four-fifths, in France half or more. But from the 11th century onwards, chiefly at the instigation of monastic orders such as the Benedictines and their offshoots, the Cluniac order and the Cistercians, large-scale clearance and drainage projects were started during which the greater part of the continent's wilderness was transformed into agricultural land. The old farm lands were extended; moors drained; plains irrigated; and, above all, vast tracts of forest were felled to make way for new ploughed fields with attendant villages.¹ During this transformation of nature, which had already reached its saturation point by the 14th century, many of the landscape contours laid down stayed intact until the 19th century. This terrain, structured around the cornfield, thus comprises the physical framework both for the modern epistemic *field* and its complementary pictorial paradigm – a paradigm that precisely exposes the intervention of work in the surface of the earth.

Environmental change was, on the face of it, determined by a population that doubled or tripled in the period from the beginning of the 11th to the middle of the 14th century – the infamous plagues of the time were possibly triggered by overpopulation and the consequent famine and deterioration in standards of sanitation. But as is always the case in cultural evolution, no change can be traced to a single cause, but interacts with a larger ensemble of transformations. Both the extension of arable land and the population explosion would accordingly be inconceivable without the concurrent technological and economic revolutions. The centuries following year 1000 see the development of technological innovations such as the three-field system, wheeled ploughs, spinning wheels, better carts, improved harnesses and, in particular, water- and windmills which, besides milling grain could also tan, full, irrigate, saw and produce the new underlay for writing and drawing: paper.² The economic historian Wilhelm Abel concludes that the 13th and 14th centuries witnessed Europe's first industrialisation: "The only analogous occasion was during the 'second industrialization' in the nineteenth century – admittedly on a very different scale."³ The new technology and exploitation of water- and wind-power makes for a radically more effective relationship between work input and results achieved than was possible in antiquity. For that reason alone, the slave

labour which shored up antique society and was part of its theoretical justification would seem to be rendered superfluous.⁴

The technology therefore fits hand-in-glove with the other new development of the time, *capitalism*, which provides labourers and peasant farmers with the beginnings of economic freedom. Even though the feudal system continued to be widespread for a long time, by the end of the 12th century Europe already has an international economy with banks, financial loans and letters of credit. The word *capitale* emerges around year 1200 in Italy, the late medieval stronghold of capitalism, and by the 14th century the term is commonly used by many writers, such as Boccaccio, Giovanni Villani and Donato Velluti.⁵ It is in this economy that the modern division between employer and wage earner is established. Even though the system of hiring labour is thus a child of the capitalist economy, we must still agree with Heitland that it would be inconceivable without the intervention of the Middle Ages, when labourers enjoyed an embryonic freedom.⁶

Despite their position at the bottom of society, even peasant farmers thus became players in this new market economy. Whereas previously they had only had dealings with the lord of the manor, whom they paid in kind and in service, they now also began to do business with the citizens in capitalism's new control centres, the cities. This leads to a reduction of the services paid in debt to the feudal lord and an increase of payment made by money, which gives the peasant farmers greater autonomy.⁷ While regretting the continuation of serfdom, Eike von Repgow praises this new trend in *Spiegel der Sachsen* (c. 1220), the first German document to deal with the legal rights of peasant farmers.⁸ Of the peasantry between the 12th and 14th centuries, F. Lütge even goes so far as to remark: "Its economic and social position had never been better, and would never be better thereafter."⁹

That it is worth mentioning these new economic and work-related developments in our nature-representational context is, firstly, because capitalism could be said to be structurally equivalent to the incipient perspectival image.¹⁰ From the chief medium of antiquity, sculpture, to the medieval ditto, the icon, to modernity's perspectival depiction, the image could be said in Hegelian fashion to be increasingly incorporeal. At the same time as its representational space is extended from local surroundings (sculpture) across a flat middle distance (icon) to infinity (perspectival image), so the artistic material phases out any kind of magic or divine environmental trace, index, in favour of pure, abstract reference. If any index has been left in this final evolutionary phase, it is at most from the painting subject that deposits its gestural traces on the wood or canvas.

A similar separation between sign and reality can also be deciphered in the capitalist economy. While the purchasing power of money in the early Middle Ages was dependent on the metal value of the coins, the early days of capitalism saw the

introduction of trading in securities, with purchasing power solely dependent on the value to which they refer. In this respect, securities are just as devoid of value per se as the perspectival image is vis-à-vis environmental influence. And, like the image, this value shrinkage is dependent on increased depth of space, i.e. in the way that securities refer to goods circulating in what is theoretically an unlimited market.

Economic history and the modern image can, secondly, be linked together when viewed through a Max Weberian lens¹¹ – i.e. in the way that the emergence of capitalism acts as a catalyst for a new and more positive notion of work, at the same time as work and traces of work become worthy of depiction in late medieval images. Hegel and Kojève have already shown us how, during the early medieval foundation of the feudal system, the slave took over the master's leading role in the evolutionary drama, humankind's struggle for recognition, and how in consequence work became visible in societal ideology, *inter alia*, with its penance status in the monasteries (cf. chapter 7). This feudal development culminates at the end of the 11th century, when a number of writers regard society as divided into three groups: *oratores* (those who pray), *bellatores* (those who fight) and *laboratores* (those who work), and at the same time introduce the category *artes mechanicae* as a supplement to the *artes liberales* of antiquity, arts which were free because they were pursued without physical exertion.¹²

Having reached an appreciation of physical labour, however, yet another step is taken: the category 'work' is no longer limited to physical toil, but includes any kind of activity designed to enhance society. The Augustine provost Gerhoh of Reichersberg (d. 1169) states that "every profession [...] has a rule adapted to its character, and under this rule it is possible by striving properly to achieve the crown of glory." The anonymous *Libellus de Diversis Ordinibus* (*Booklet on Diverse Orders*) of the mid-12th century even protests against the special status of work in an interpretation of 2 Thessalonians 3: 10: "And let not him who works with his hands vaunt himself above the man who works seated, for there is labor in both."¹³ As Max Weber has shown, this line of thought supposes that work is regarded as a vocation issued by God – a *Beruf*, *beroeep* or *calling* first taken up within the monastery walls, but spreading out onto the streets via the *Devotio Moderna* movement and eventually becoming indistinguishable from a societal duty.¹⁴ This development of work towards such a communal requirement is illustratively reflected in the new councils of free men, the communes, which dominate the Italian city states from the 11th to 14th century.¹⁵ Etymologically, *comune* derives from *cum* (with) and *munus* (task), by means of which access to government is thus the communally imposed work. This practice again goes directly against classical philosophy, in which it is precisely freedom from work that makes the individual fit for administrative office, and which has no equivalent to the term *Beruf*.¹⁶

If we again make a comparison with the development of pictorial art, we will see that this reevaluation of work in early modernity finds a particular echo in the rapidly growing number of illustrations for the *labours of the months*. As I noted in chapter 7, the Carolingian period would seem to have afforded a breakthrough for this genre, as it was here that manuscripts apparently provided the first illustrations of active labours of the months since the 3rd-4th centuries. While miniatures continued to feature these active labours for the ensuing two centuries, they only did so sporadically and often as breakaway experiments in the dominant image type: standing personifications of the months, the only reference to work being via their attributes.

It is not until the 12th century that the calendar labours become dominant, but now with explosive diffusion. Besides privately commissioned manuscripts, where in a few instances the scenes might even involve several figures at a time (cf. *Queen Mary's Psalter*, London (?), c. 1310-20),¹⁷ we come across the labours under public management on the new churches' portal reliefs, especially in France and Italy. The 12th-century reliefs in San Zeno Maggiore, Verona, show, for example, the following manual, predominantly agricultural activities: tree pruning (February), fruit picking (June), grain harvest (July), coopering (August), grape harvest (September), pig feeding (October), pig slaughter (November), tree felling (December). In addition, we notice a few illustrations away from work: a man warming himself by the fire (January), a bugler (March), a flower carrier (April), a warrior on horseback, with shield and spear (May).¹⁸ Evidence of the labours of the months' connection to actual practice and also of their patriotic value can be found in their regional differences. The bugler and the cooper, for example, only appear in Italy, whereas Burgundy's speciality is wood gathering in October and November. Moreover, the further north we travel the later the harvest is scheduled.

To a more pronounced degree than in the 4th century and the Carolingian period, agricultural labours also spread beyond the context of the calendar. As Michael Camille has shown in a searching socio-historical study, they appear, for example, in the margins and decorated initials of psalters and books of hours. A particularly spectacular instance is the *Luttrell Psalter* (c. 1320-45), an English commission by Sir Geoffrey Luttrell, in which grain-growing sequences from tilling to harvest form part of a wider spectrum of border scenes of everyday life.¹⁹ Although these margin decorations are often prompted by single words in the psalm texts, they are characterised by the mendicant friars' wider application of the psalms, where work, especially agricultural work, is advocated as the path to redemption.²⁰ And yet, by being displaced to the margins, the images reflect an attempt to reinforce the feudal hierarchy – a reinforcement that felt urgent in England at the time, with famine and agrarian crises leading to the first peasant risings of the Late Middle Ages.²¹

10.2 Sienese beginnings

*Trial run for the modern landscape image:
Ambrogio Lorenzetti's portrait of Siena*

For the first few decades of the 14th century, the depiction of landscape as such remains impervious to these iconographic innovations, which are predominately exercised in contained, niche-like pictorial spaces. This changes dramatically in what could be called the trial run for the 15th-century landscape image: Ambrogio Lorenzetti's fresco decoration of Sala della Pace (also known as Sala dei Nove) in Siena's Palazzo Pubblico (1337-40).

Here the calendar labours have become ingredients in a hitherto unseen panoramic view (PLATE 13).²² Rather than, as is usual in medieval art, looking towards a fictive or mythical landscape, in the *Effects of Good Government in the City and Countryside* we are confronted with a landscape in its first late medieval sense as a geographical region regulated by certain laws and customs: namely, the republic of Siena and its rural territory. The setting forms part of a double allegory which, through the three hall walls without windows, juxtaposes good and bad government and their effects on the city and the countryside. At the time of the commission, the hall served as the meeting place for *I Nove*, Siena's oligarchic nine-man council composed of members from the most influential families, and it is therefore probable that the decoration was designed to remind them of their duties as regards the common good as well as to warn them against the harmful effects brought about by administrative corruption: decline into the tyrannical form of government with which the communes were in competition. To this end, the artist and his advisors have compiled an encyclopaedically wide-ranging allegory of the moral-political ideas of the time, including fragments from Brunetto Latini, Aristotle and his exegete Thomas Aquinas, besides presumably local legal texts.²³

The warning image, the *Bad Government*, on the west wall takes up the least space, but on the other hand it catches the observer's attention immediately upon entering the hall (originally by the window). The allegorical part comprises a devil-like tyrant surrounded by vices (FIG. 10.1A). However worldly the context and aim might be, the horns, plaited locks and golden cup point in the direction of Babylon, the mother of harlots (Book of Revelation 17: 3-4), so perhaps the tyrant's regime is made up of a social inferno à la Albertus Magnus' Babylon, where no one could find employment and where, in consequence, everything disintegrated. Lorenzetti's only active participants are the weaponsmith making arms and the warriors plundering and raping while the buildings fall into decay (FIG. 10.1B). And in the countryside, the farms that have not already been destroyed are burnt



Fig. 10.1a. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Allegory of Bad Government* (1337-40), fresco. Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala della Pace.



Fig. 10.1b. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Effects of Bad Government in the City* (1337-40), fresco (section). Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala della Pace.

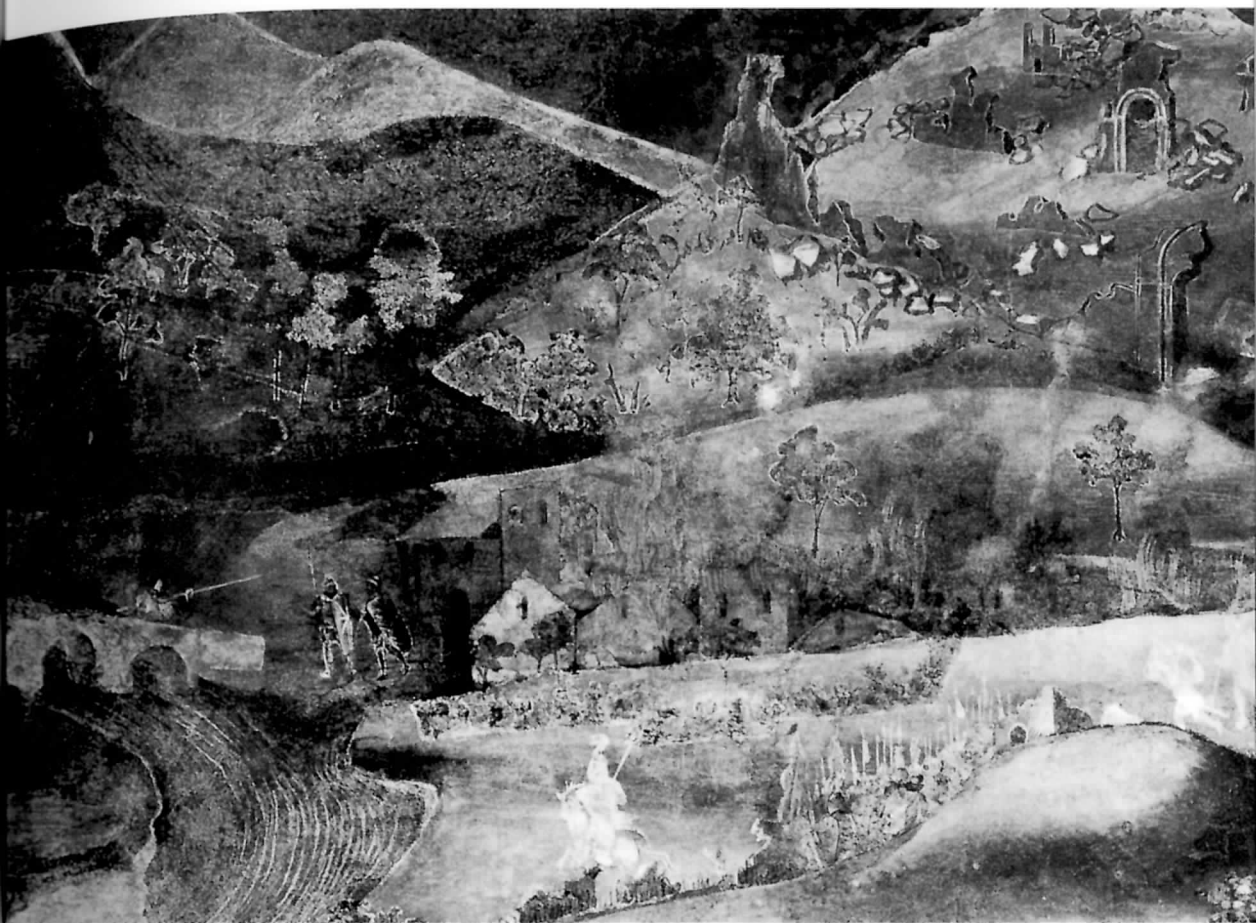


Fig. 10.1c. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Effects of Bad Government in the Countryside* (1337-40), fresco (section). Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala della Pace.

to the ground (FIG. 10.1c), while *Fear* (*Timor*), an old woman clad in rags, hovers beyond the city walls.

At the other end of the scale, the *Good Government* of the north and east walls, Siena's democratic *comune*, can be seen as an earthly counterpart to the New Jerusalem. The *Comune* itself, a man holding sceptre and shield, is attended by the Christian virtues of *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity* above his head, and is flanked by various civic virtues (FIG. 10.1d). *Justice*, an enthroned female figure further to the left, has *Wisdom* above her and is flanked by a Thomistic pair of concepts: the *Exchanging*



Fig. 10.1d. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Allegory of Good Government* (1337-40), fresco.
Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala della Pace.



Fig. 10.1e. *Allegory of Winter* (1337-40), fresco
(section). Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala della Pace.

Justice (Comutativa), who is handing out (and receiving?) two spears and an unidentified object (a money chest?), and the *Distributing Justice (Distributiva)*, who is crowning a kneeling figure with her left hand while beheading another figure with her right hand.²⁴ Under *Justice's* throne, the republic's Consiglio Grande is led by *Concord (Concordia)*, whose thread goes from hand to hand throughout the assembly. These and other ingeniously devised figures emphasise the way in which earthly government has to be regulated by superior principles – the constitutional beginnings of the subsequent nation states.

The fruits of the commercial republic, especially the newly-rehabilitated *artes mechanicae*, are displayed on the third, east wall (PLATE 13). From the city with its buildings, construction workers, zebra-striped cathedral, school, taverns, workshops, wedding procession, dancing women and peasants on their way to and from market, the eye is led through the city gate and out into the widespread *contado*. As a sign of the new interaction between city and country, the steep road up to the city gate is very crowded. Heading for market, peasants hurry along with their wares, pack mules and even a dressed boar. Heading in the opposite direction, affluent nobles (or citizens?) on horseback are riding off to hunt with falcons, an activity underway in the stubble fields further down. As if to indicate the potential for conflict in the city-dwellers' encounter with the countryside, hunters armed with crossbows are similarly busying themselves among the vines outside the city gate while a farmer looks on (in resignation?).

The overriding characteristic of the Sienese hinterland, however, is cooperative harmony. While the most distant hills in the left background are covered by a mosaic of hedged-in vineyards and, further out, by olive groves, the valley area in the middle is taken over by cereal culture. Farmers till, sow, harvest and thrash. All these activities, which in actuality are spread throughout most of the year, are here scheduled to spring and summer, the personifications of which embellish the border above *Good Government*. Conversely, the opposite border – above *Bad Government* – has to settle for *Autumn* and *Winter* (FIG. 10.IE).²⁵ All in all, many of the activities shown in the pictorial panorama of the frescoes can be seen as a way of bringing out the medallions on the borders which, besides the seasons, depict planets, liberal arts and, in the case of *Bad Government*, infamous emperors such as Nero and Caracalla – predecessors of the contemporaneous despots ruling the city states. However, the republican landscape panorama also has its tyrannical traces: when one tributary of the most remote winding river flows into a bay guarded by a citadel, it is a reference, confirmed by an inscription, to Siena's ambitious new port, Talamone, annexed to the republic in 1303. Talamone could, of course, not be seen from the Siena of reality, but is included because of its patriotic-militant significance.

The activities in the Sienese *contado* are not taking place at a particular point in time. Rather, they are representative of a stable and peaceful *everyday life* at a distance from narrative happenings. In order to maintain this work-dependent stability, they have been allocated *Securitas* as their tutelary spirit. The beautiful, semi-naked, winged woman airborne above the city gate is holding out a banner on which we read: "Without fear every man can travel freely, and all can till and sow, as long as this commune keeps this Lady (*Justice*) sovereign, for she has stripped the evil ones of all power." And *Securitas* means business, because in her left hand she is holding a gallows from which a troublemaker dangles. This form of modern idyll with its security, work and steady everyday life is also the model later celebrated in a ballad by the French court poet Eustache Deschamps (1346-1406):

I only ask of God to give me
 That I may serve and praise him in this world,
 Live for myself, my coat or doublet whole,
 One horse to carry my labour,
 And that I may govern my estate
 In mediocre style, in grace, without envy,
 Without having too much and without begging my bread,
 For this day is the safest life.²⁶

That this message is a typical representative of the 14th-century work ethic is corroborated by its reappearance in the English *Piers Plowman*, William Langland's series of dream visions written in 1378-79. This socially critical poem is innovative in that the hero of the piece is not a knight or a saint, but a ploughman, and the saintly deed again consists of stable, humble toil:

Truth's command to Piers was to stay at home and plough his fallow lands. And to everyone who made any useful contribution to his work, helping him to plough, plant, or sow, Truth granted pardon along with Piers Plowman.²⁷

An overall evaluation of Lorenzetti's landscape image leads to the conclusion that it is located at a midpoint between old and new. The sky remains, in medieval fashion, lapis lazuli blue and smooth; the ground is rocky-grey and, at the river, still ruptures into the abyss of the Byzantine terraced rocks. And yet the theme – the portrait of the enterprising republic – sees to it that the mountains are eroded to rounded hills and a valley that is amenable to yellow cornfields, ploughed furrows, rows of vines, hedges, bridges, forests, not to mention paved roads. These zones no longer see a quantum-like leap from rock to vegetation, but evoke a sense of the softened earth

that can organically connect the underground to its growing offspring. Moreover, the plant life is painted with light, sketchy strokes which abandon the medieval focus on individual leaves in favour of an optical overview, a Rieglian distant sight. As a consequence of this same distant sight, the gaze is now finally allowed to venture further out into the space than the atmosphere-less sky would seem to motivate. In a panoramic vista, which has quite a lot in common with Petrarch's only slightly earlier view from Mont Ventoux and which anticipates Jan van Eyck and the 16th-century world landscapes, the gaze is lead across vineyards, rivers and bays to a wilderness with series of hills, scattered trees, occasional castles and a dense forest in the dip of a valley.

As Uta Feldges so rightly observes, without the specific republican commission it would not have been conceivable "that Ambrogio could break with a thousand-year-old tradition of rock landscapes and, in the sense of a modern concept of genius, independently develop wholly new forms."²⁸ At the same time, however, the didactic and moral aim of the work – corresponding to the oldest sense of the landscape concept – by no means precludes the admission of a more general natural beauty. The land that yields the harvest is also the land on which the aristocracy (or the bourgeoisie?) hunt for pleasure and go for outings. To these social classes, the land with its panoramic expanses is something other and more than simply utilitarian terrain. It becomes landscape in the picturesque sense. Furthermore, we noted that the work, despite the allegorical meaning of individual episodes, has no unifying narrative because it is depicting the new collective phenomenon: everyday life. The landscape panorama is able to display its vast – and beautiful – expanse precisely because there is no story to undermine. We are thus witnessing the birth of *description* in a landscape that is almost autonomous – not a landscape serving as background for figures, but a landscape in which figures can appear and disappear.

Portrait of conquest:

Simone Martini's Guidoriccio da Fogliano

The portrait of *ager senensis* is part of a large sequence of images dealing with Siena's land possessions. Like other Italian communes, Siena was keen to acquire land so as to ensure economic and political autonomy for the republic, and in the 13th-14th centuries not only had neighbouring communes such as Grosseto, Massa Marittima and Montalcino been conquered but also strongholds and land owned by local noble families, the Aldobrandeschi's town of Montemassi, for example.

The degree of pride in these conquests is apparent from a document of March 12 1315 in which it is stated that the Consiglio Grande proposes that all hitherto and future conquests made by the republic should be depicted in Palazzo Pubblico.



Fig. 10.2. Simone Martini, *Guidoriccio da Fogliano* (1328), fresco. Siena, Palazzo Pubblico.

According to this document – the earliest extant evidence of a policy devised by political leaders to illustrate their land possessions – a number of conquered citadels had already been depicted and the cycle was to be continued with the citadel of Giuncarico, captured in 1314. Perhaps this is the fenced fortification featured in Memmo di Filippuccio's fresco, uncovered in 1977, on the west wall of Sala del Consiglio.²⁹

The project certainly continued in 1330-31 as we know that Simone Martini depicted the four castles of Arcidosso, Castel del Piano, Sassoforte and Montemassi. That he approached the assignment with topographic accuracy was already obvious from a written record of payment dated September 6 1331, in which it is certified that "Simone, painter" on horseback and accompanied by a servant had visited Arcidosso and Castel del Piano (plus Scansano).³⁰ In the only extant representation from this cycle, the commander Guidoriccio da Fogliano seen against the background of his conquest, the castle of Montemassi, the actual contours of the landscape are thus mirrored in the fresco's two hilltops (FIGS. 10.2-10.2A). Besides the city on the hilltop to the left, Simone has also depicted the renowned *battifolle*, the stronghold built by the Sienese during the eight-month siege in 1328, and furthermore: two-three military tent camps, two small fenced vineyards, a sharply defined road winding down from the Aldobrandeschi family's town, and a long fence against which leans a row of spears.

As a consequence of the demands of territory portraiture, we therefore here see the insertion of terrain-dividing elements which are otherwise alien to medieval art. The road and vineyards provide a more general indication of the surveyed landscape, whereas the fence is specific evidence of military purposes. *Ager senensis*

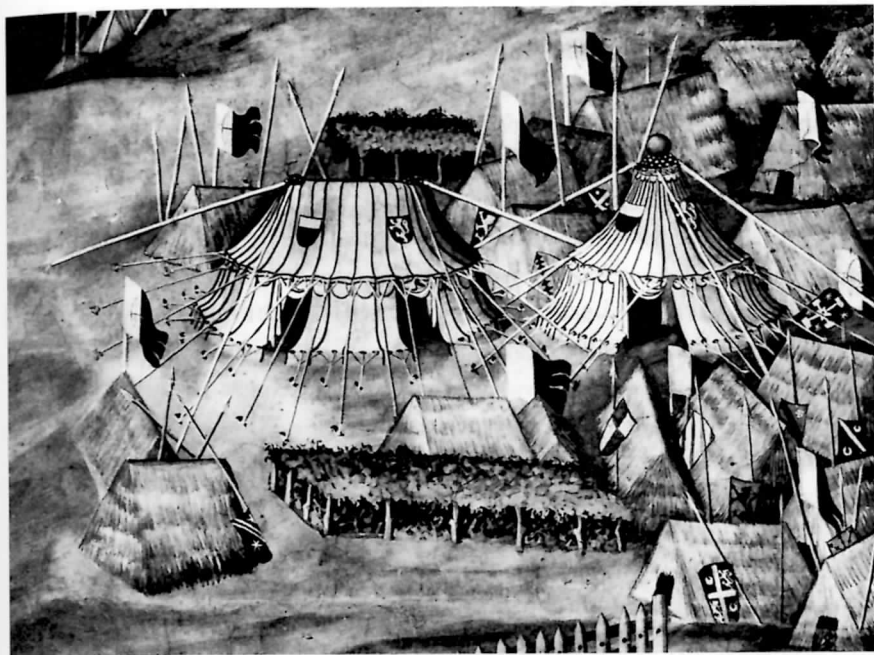


Fig. 10.2a. Detail of

Guidoriccio da Fogliano, fig. 10.2.

and the Montemassi portrait could thus be said to approach the depiction of territory from two different angles: the first deriving from the civic and work-related sphere familiar from the labours of the months; the second originating in the imperialist sphere with forerunners in the Neo-Assyrian and Late Roman reliefs. The two spheres are, however, closely connected, with patriotism and control of land as common denominators. Nevertheless, the extensive rocks in the Montemassi image seem strangely bare, as if the traditional forms are exposed unexpectedly in the glaring topographic light. Unlike Lorenzetti, but similar to the Neo-Assyrian reliefs, the military angle thus fails to get to grips with the ground itself and fill it with a latticework of fields.³¹

Considering the Sienese patriotic fascination with themselves and their conquests, it would seem only logical that they would eventually lift their gaze to a bird's-eye perspective and declare the little Tuscan republic the centre of the world. This occurred in 1345 in a now vanished circular world map on wood placed below the *Guidoriccio da Fogliano* portrait and above Memmo di Filippuccio's aforementioned fresco. If we are to believe testimony from 17th-18th-century sources,

Ambrogio Lorenzetti built this *mappamondo* upon concepts of the New Jerusalem as he placed Siena with accompanying fortresses and territory at the spot where the Christian world's primordial city otherwise nailed the terrestrial disc.³² A completely legitimate gesture, taking into consideration the fact that Paradise in modernity's void can be located wherever might be so desired. For is the centre of the world not everywhere and nowhere?

10.3 Landscape-promoting themes

Time

In tandem with Petrarch climbing his mountain, the scholastics puzzling over *impepetus*, spatial relativity and infinity, and Lorenzetti and Martini unveiling their vistas of the distant hills around Siena, a striking transformation of the *concept of time* was taking place. The transformation corresponds to and qualifies the new space, for in the same way as space is measured out with a subjective yardstick, time is now also measured out independently of the event. To the question "does time exist outside the mind?" the scholastic Pierre Auriol responds that time is nothing but "a being in the mind (i.e., a concept)". And Ockham, the Franciscan nominalist, is of the opinion that Aristotle's definition of time as "the number of motion" is not a "definition according to the thing" but a "definition according to the name".³³

This nominalist concept of time leads to the modern historical sense of placing events in relation to one another and to epochal thinking – which, in brief, introduces a temporal perspective analogous to the spatial. In Spengler's words, "[w]ithout exact time measurement, without a *chronology of becoming* to correspond with his imperative need of archaeology (the preservation, excavation and collection of *things-become*), Western man is unthinkable."³⁴

The groundwork for this temporal transformation had been prepared, as we saw in chapter 7, all the way through the Middle Ages. The carefully measured-out temporal rhythm cultivated as the ideal in monasteries and convents could therefore be absorbed by the enterprising city of the Late Middle Ages, not just in the case of the liturgy, but also where work was concerned.³⁵ *None*, the middle of the day, which was first set at two o'clock and later at midday (hence: *noon*), for example, divides the working day into two parts. There are numerous reports from 14th-century France providing evidence of workers who wanted the working day to be divided into such well-defined intervals, resulting in a fixed correlation between payment and hours worked. This demand is again connected to work as a common calling, an abstract activity detached from the products generated.

Parallel with the more rigorous work rhythm was a need for an improved method of time measurement. Work, liturgy, defence and administration were first rung in by metal bells, later, from the end of the 13th century, also by mechanical clocks. In the same way as modernity's infinite space was captured through the eye-glass, the perspectograph, the camera obscura and the mirror, so the new time was also allotted its own instrument.³⁶ A report of August 15 1335 states that in Aire-sur-la-Lys a special bell had been constructed as a result of the "cloth trade and other trades which require several workers each day to go and come to work at certain hours [...]"³⁷ Time spent working became part of an all-encompassing everyday time, which also included the liturgy, for the work clock could be painlessly installed in churches, as in, for example, York Minster between 1352 and 1370. Everyday time could also be State time, as in the Paris of 1370 when Charles V declared that all clocks should be set by the clock in the Palais Royal which struck every quarter.

Ultimately, time was not merely a common necessity, but a treasure that ennobled the individual. Bernhard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) had already declared: "Nothing is more precious than time".³⁸ In *Disciplina degli spirituali*, the Dominican Domenico Cavalca (d. 1342) deals with measuring, wasting and saving time, and the time-waster is avowed to be at a lower developmental stage than animals. The humanists were pioneers in the utilisation of time, and in the second half of the 14th century the Florentine humanists insisted on a clock in every workroom. In *Libri della famiglia* (1437-38), Alberti is able to declare that humankind has three possessions: destiny, body and time; and he advises: "never waste a single hour of time."³⁹ This line of thought also informs Lorenzetti's cycle: among the virtues surrounding the *Comune*, *Moderation* is symbolised by a woman holding an hourglass (FIG. 10.ID).

Against the background of this obsession with time, which increasingly marks the epistemic *field*, it is therefore no wonder that time and its synonym *weather* also make their presence felt in pictorial art – albeit these themes, like their frequent companion, work, must provisionally be limited to the heightened situations of iconography. Ghiberti refers to, for example, Ambrogio Lorenzetti's spectacular weather phenomena in his aforementioned frescoes in San Francesco (see chapter 9): following the decapitation of the martyrs, "a turbulence of dark weather stirs, with much hail, lightening, thunder, and earthquakes. It seems, to see it painted, that it endangers the sky and the earth [...]"⁴⁰ The weather effects in Ghiberti's *ekphrasis* are in all probability not exaggerated, given that Sala della Pace's personification of *Winter* comprises a man standing with a snowball in his hand while the snow pelts down around him and forms a white layer on his shoulder (FIG. 10.IE); and Ambrogio's *Allegory of Redemption* shows a sky that has turned partially grey-blue as darkness descends upon the crucifixion of Christ (FIG. 10.3).⁴¹ Ambrogio's brother, Pietro, is also open to the new sense of time, for in his *Last Supper* (1330s?; FIG. 10.4)



Fig. 10.3. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Allegory of Redemption* (1330s), tempera on wood. Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

in the Lower Church, Assisi, we see what is possibly the first European pictorial night sky since the late 4th-century Vatican Virgil. Against the backdrop of a dark-blue plane with crescent moon, stars and a shooting star, the interior seems almost to be illuminated by the flames in the fireplace to the left, albeit no shadows are cast.

Light effects in contrast to actual darkness are, however, to be encountered in Florence of the period. In Taddeo Gaddi's *Annunciation to the Shepherds* in Santa Croce's Baroncelli Chapel (1332-38), the announcing angel is revealed in an illusionistic halo, a luminous cloud (PLATE 31).⁴² The middle of the cloud behind the angel emits so strong a radiance that it casts golden light onto the rocks, shepherds, trees and sheep, and one of the shepherds has to use his right hand to shade his eyes against the light. The depiction is sited at a crossroads between supernatural and ominous natural light. Precisely which dangers this new light, modernity's cast light, might activate – from immodest curiosity to blindness – we learn from an exchange of letters between the painter and his friend, the Augustinian preacher Fra Simone Fidati. That Fra Simone considered it worth keeping the correspondence is presumably due to its educative potential – a potential that is on a par with Petrarch's almost contemporaneous letter to another Augustinian monk, Dionigi da San Sepolcro, after the momentous mountain ascent in 1336 (cf. chapter 8).

What Taddeo has been improperly attracted by is, however, not a downward



Fig. 10.4. Pietro Lorenzetti,
Last Supper (1330s?), fresco. Assisi,
 San Francesco, Lower Church.

view, but an upward view, namely a *solar eclipse*. Presumably it was the solar eclipse of May 14 1333 that motivated Taddeo's radiant halo, given that during a later solar eclipse on July 7 1339, shortly after completion of the fresco cycle, he stares at the sun until half blind. As he laments in his letter to Fra Simone in Rome, this act of folly has clouded his eyes and given him problems with his vision, plunging him into the deepest abyss of melancholy. Rather than strengthening his inner eye, the disability has darkened everything. Would it not be possible for his friend to intercede on his behalf and send him a few words of comfort?

The reply, written by Fra Simone on New Year's Day 1340, covers the whole spectrum of regrets we remember from Petrarch and his re-reading of Augustine's *Confessions*:

- You should have looked upon that eclipse which removed the eclipse of the human race, [i.e. the eclipse during the crucifixion of Christ] and which would then have cleared your eyes and sharpened the sight of your intellect. But you have suffered a total eclipse because you looked at the failure of the sun's light not only rashly but with curiosity [...]. For curiosity never leaves her author unavenged, so that the kind of pain with which you must be punished may make the point for you, since you presume to look so rashly upon what it is not permitted to desire [...]. Your eyes are weakened because you looked surmisingly into the heavens; yea, they are affected and darkened because you lifted your face with pride toward the heights, not toward your Creator and not to praise His majesty or the wonders He has made, but so that you might understand those things which there is no usefulness in knowing.⁴³

Taddeo's sight has thus been clouded by the solar eclipse because he has repeated the cardinal sin of Adam and Eve: curiosity. Rather than looking with an eye to intellectual purification – looking toward God and the solar eclipse that redeemed humankind during the crucifixion of Christ – he has, like Petrarch on Mont Ventoux, looked with covetousness at forbidden matters in the heights.

It would therefore be an obvious assumption to read the shepherd in the Barocelli Chapel as being the artist's alter ego, covetously directing his gaze toward naturalism's new, incisive light as it breaks through behind the angel's body like a veritable corona, but also having to raise his hand and shade his eyes against the light since this recognition is still too dazzling. The gaze towards the world's cast light cannot happen until the eye is understood as analogous to the camera obscura, an instrument that was indeed often used in the Late Middle Ages to view solar eclipses. Through this artificial eye the bedazzling look towards the insufficiently shaded fire in front of Plato's cave is displaced to an optical dialectic in which image formation is, in a more modern manner, *mediated* – from the dazzling cave opening to the projection against the dark back wall of the camera.

And yet, the solar eclipse motif in its most ominous connotations is resurrected in Andrea Orcagna's now fragmented *Triumph of Death* (1340s; FIG. 10.5) in the same church. The black ball above the deep darkness, as seen on this fragment of the fresco, is now among the signs presaging the Second Coming of Christ and the Last Judgement. Again, two men are seen looking towards the ball, right hands shading their eyes, while a third man bends away in pain, a hand to his eye – presumably another reference to Taddeo's experience. The sinners to be punished at the Last Judgement will quite evidently include those whose curiosity has led them to be attracted by the celestial light.

In fact, the contemporaneous solar eclipses were considered to be just such ominous signs. In Florence, both eclipses were followed by fierce storms and flooding,

Fig. 10.5. Andrea Orcagna, *Solar Eclipse* (1340s), fresco, fragment from the *Triumph of Death*. Florence, Museo dell'Opera di Santa Croce.



and with reference to the second eclipse, the Florentine merchant and historian Giovanni Villani wrote in his *Cronaca* (c. 1300-48):

All these things were signs of future evils for our city, such as followed soon afterwards. As the ancient experts in astrology have written, every obscuration of the sun in Cancer, which takes place once in about a hundred years [such was the solar eclipse of July 1339], is of great significance with regard to evils to come in this century.⁴⁴

Considering the forecasting reputation of the solar eclipses and the sinful associations of gazing at them, it is remarkable that the new naturalistic developments in art are actually temporarily curbed by reality's equivalent of the Last Judgement: the Black Death in 1348.⁴⁵ It is as if the entire epistemic *field* of the early 14th century ascends towards an evolutionary culmination, but the pressure becomes too intense and it therefore ruptures in overpopulation, plague and accompanying cultural regression. Out of chaos, however, the fluctuation pattern rises again, refreshed, and now with such high evolutionary potential that it, *inter alia*, makes its mark in the new image paradigm around 1420.

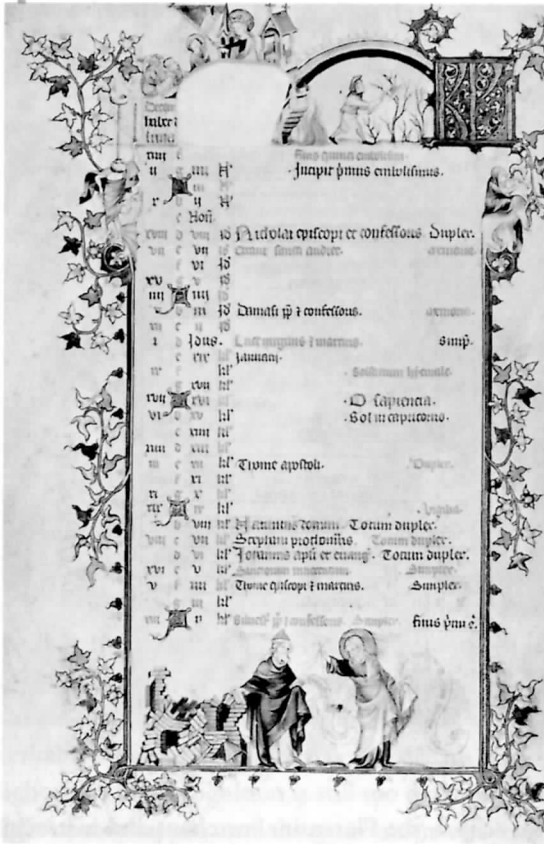


Fig. 10.6. Jean Pucelle,
December (c. 1323-26), miniature
 from the *Belleville Breviary*.
 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale,
 ms lat. 10483.

Another forum in which passage of time found expression via landscape images was that of calendar scenes in the *book of hours*. The specifically private successor to the *breviary*, this genre developed at the beginning of the 14th century as an appendix to the psalter. Like the breviary, a book of hours contains the *horae canonicae*, the canonical offices consisting of eight daily prayers as instituted by Saint Benedict in the 6th century, but while the breviary is, at least in principle, designed for ecclesiastical use, the book of hours becomes an important status symbol for the aristocratic laity.⁴⁶ The weather is almost physically tangible in Jean Pucelle's *Belleville Breviary*, a book of hours painted between 1323 and 1326, possibly for Jeanne de Belleville. Although *December* is the only month illustration to have survived, the original design of the series can be reasonably well reconstructed from later books of hours such as the *Hours of Jeanne II de Navarre*, executed at the Pucelle workshop, 1336-49, and Jacquemart de Hesdin's *Petites Heures du Duc de Berry* of c. 1380-85. However, the *December* scene (FIG. 10.6) in the *Belleville Breviary* is atypical in that it

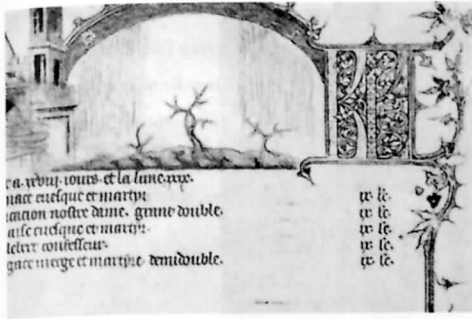


Fig. 10.7. Workshop of Jean Pucelle, *February* (1336-49), miniature from the *Hours of Jeanne II de Navarre*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms nouv. acq. lat. 3145.



Fig. 10.8. Workshop of Jean Pucelle, *March* (1336-49), miniature from the *Hours of Jeanne II de Navarre*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms nouv. acq. lat. 3145.

shows the bare winter trees in the company of their user, a forest worker, whereas the other months were apparently illustrated by means of autonomous landscape vignettes, which do not even refer consistently to the labours of the months: bare trees in *January*, rainfall on trees and land in *February* (FIG. 10.7), budding branches in *March* (FIG. 10.8), flowers in *May*, a ripe cornfield in *July*, falling leaves in *October*, hogs finding acorns in *November*. Moreover, the progression of the year is followed by the yellow sphere of the sun moving along the bordering arch, the symbol of the firmament.⁴⁷ The book of hours is indeed, as we will soon see, one of the warmest incubators for the hatching of the modern landscape paradigm.

Topography

Topography is closely linked with landscape. Both concepts converge on the idea of viewing a specific place at a specific time. But while the landscape image can raise a purely fictive place, the topographic depiction is always obligated to geography. This obligation means that a topographical portrait of nature does not need to have 'landscape' qualities even though it is always, by definition, a landscape image.

Topographic portraits, just like the category of which they are a specific case, the spatial landscape image, are also part of the new formations of the Late Middle Ages. In the Early Middle Ages an image can well visualise the contours of named, usually Biblical, places: for example, Paradise, Hell, Babylon, Zion, Calvary, Bethlehem or the New Jerusalem. But if these places have actual rather than just mythical existence, they are depicted with features that refer only vaguely or not at all to their

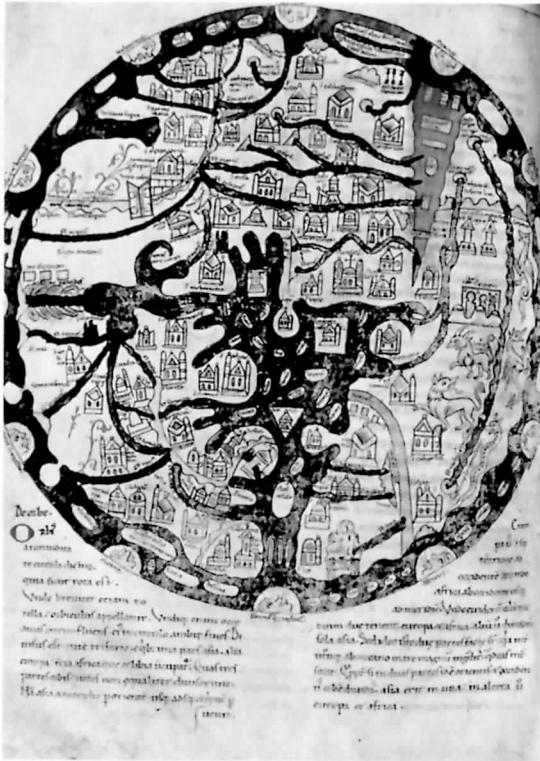


Fig. 10.9. Isidore of Seville's world map (7th century), miniature from an 11th-century manuscript. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, ms Clm. 10058, f. 154v.

optical appearance. If seeking precursors of architectural and landscape topography, we should rather look at the *cartographic* tradition. Maps were so rare in the Middle Ages that there was no specific word for them; a map was either called “diagram” or “picture”.⁴⁸ The schism is distinctive because, like their antique forerunners, medieval maps could be said to span two types of vision: mapping gaze and panoramic gaze. As we have seen in chapters 1 and 4, the mapping gaze only catches spatial displacements in the horizontal plane – for example, river channels and coastlines. Displacements taking an up-down direction, particularly mountains and buildings, are attended to by the panoramic gaze, but now in profile or at most a slight perspective. As a consequence of this rupture in viewpoint, they are put into the map without any tangible connection to the ground, which is thereby cleared of its customary materiality. An 11th-century copy of Isidore of Seville’s 7th-century world map shows the buildings and mountains spread out like flat pieces placed on the light-coloured continents around the Mediterranean, the centre of the world map (FIG. 10.9). Only the tops of the mountains are given illusionist profiles, while they are cut off at the base by linear segments.

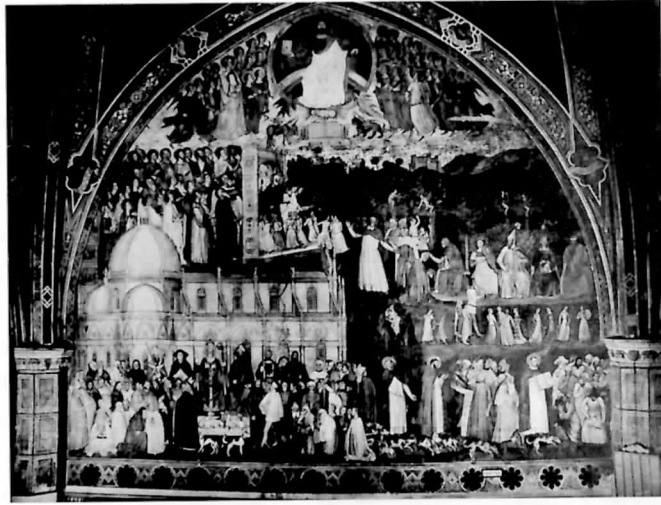


Fig. 10.10. Andrea da Firenze, *Triumph of the Church* (c. 1365-67), fresco. Florence, Santa Maria Novella, Cappella degli Spagnuoli.

Maps like this, either of the world or specific locations such as the St Gall monastery (FIG. 8.16), would seem to be the most important medieval medium for the storage of topographic data in visual form. In order to create a topographic portrait seen from a pictorial view, it is thus necessary in a very concrete sense to zoom in on selected map details and isolate them in spatial images. An image such as the Guidoriccio portrait has not quite reached this point because, like the medieval maps, the topographic portraiture is only accounted for by the mountain profiles.

With its well-defined form, architecture would seem to be a more tangible indicator of place than the mere terrain profile. In any case, the architectural portrait would seem to have been common at an earlier stage than the terrain portrait as seen in the work of Simone Martini and Lorenzetti. When city plans, the Roman in particular, become more pictorially precise,⁴⁹ fragments of them also appear outside the maps themselves: for example, in the work of Cimabue in Assisi. A section of a pendentive in the Upper Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi shows a city view, *Ytalia* (c. 1280-90), with Roman monuments such as Torre delle Milizie, the Pantheon, Pyramid of Cestius and Castel Sant'Angelo. Up until the mid-15th century, however, such precise topographic motifs remain a comparative rarity.⁵⁰ Besides the Rome iconography, which is the most widespread type, other examples are: Andrea da Firenze's portrait of Florence Cathedral (c. 1365-67; FIG. 10.10); Simone Martini's alleged portrait

of Siena's Duomo and Campanile on the façade of the Opera del Duomo;⁵¹ and the Avignon cartographer Opicinius de Canistris' drawing of Pavia Cathedral (c. 1330).⁵²

Among the many motivations behind the creation of such portraits, an important one is undoubtedly emerging nationalism, including the specific Italian variety, the Renaissance. To visualise *Ytalia* in a Christian fresco cycle, as Cimabue does, is patriotism, and to do so with a portrait of Rome that focusses on the monuments of antiquity (Torre delle Milizie was considered to be antique right up until the 15th century) is to give patriotism the attributes of renaissance. It is also patriotism, just of a local brand, when Andrea da Firenze paints Santa Maria del Fiore, when Martini paints Montemassi and when Lorenzetti paints the enterprising Sienese hinterland. The latter examples are illustrative because they show the connection between patriotism and ownership. The topographic portrait is here the picture of the national possessions, not *terra* (as was still the antique *topos* image) but *territory*. And yet, Lorenzetti is already beginning to turn possession into longing, to convert the conquered into the coveted, if not unattainable; in brief, turning the landscape from its original territorial to its later picturesque sense. This ambivalence, making that which is familiar unfamiliar and that which is alien known, turning the domestic exotic and the exotic domestic, is deeply embedded in the topographic – and altogether the modern – gaze.

*The encyclopaedic tradition, I: landscape images
in mirabilia collections and encyclopaedias*

The topographic portrayals border on a broader medieval trend for proto-landscape images, identified by Walter Cahn in a brief, groundbreaking essay as “the encyclopaedic tradition”.⁵³ The material going by this term in the medieval literature is a heterogeneous, partially antiquity-derived corpus stretching from large moralising syntheses to straightforward accounts and descriptions of selected subjects – clarifying notes on the Creation as presented in Genesis. From my point of view, particular attention should be paid to the descriptive tendency which itemises properties of the world's phenomena independently of stories constructed via a narrative because, in a way that leads the thoughts to Alpers' later descriptive category, it is precisely here that the setting emerges for landscape illustrations, framed sections of distinctive spaces.

At the more fantastical end of the spectrum, the *mirabilia* tradition, it should be mentioned by way of example, that the earliest known illuminated version of *Marvels of the East*, an English manuscript from c. 1025-50, not only contains images of monstrous creatures but also a figureless landscape square illustrating a miraculous balsam tree, which is one of four references to fantastical trees and plants.

Fig. 10.11. *Balsa Trees*
 (c. 1025-50 (?)), miniature from
Marvels of the East. London,
 British Library, ms Cotton
 Tiberius B.V, f. 83.



Prompted by the text “In this place [*in hoc loco*] trees grow which resemble laurel and olive trees” the artist has painted in a rocky knoll with three large-leafed trees of such potent fertility that they transcend the frame (FIG. 10.11).

However, the encyclopaedia par excellence that can be linked with landscape images is the widely circulated *De proprietatibus rerum* (*On the Properties of Things*), a Parisian work executed by the Franciscan Bartholomeus Anglicus around 1225-50. Of the 19 books of the manuscript, the following occasion later landscape illustrations: matter and form (10), birds (12), the earth (14), areas of the world (15), precious stones and metals (16), trees and plants (17), plus the various species of animal (18). In the illustrations, of which the earliest extant example is from around 1400, but which were presumably begun with Jean Corbechon’s 1372 French translation for Charles V, the illuminators were evidently guided by just one of the main sources for the text, the foremost encyclopaedia of the early medieval period, Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologiae* (7th century); in at least one 12th-century version of this encyclopaedia there are initials embellished with simple landscape vignettes: for example, a tree-clad rock to illustrate *De montibus* and a stronghold for *De civitatibus*. In the Jena University Library copy of *Livre des Propriétés des Choses*, these initials are now transformed into autonomous squares with more emphatically spatial views. Particularly in the

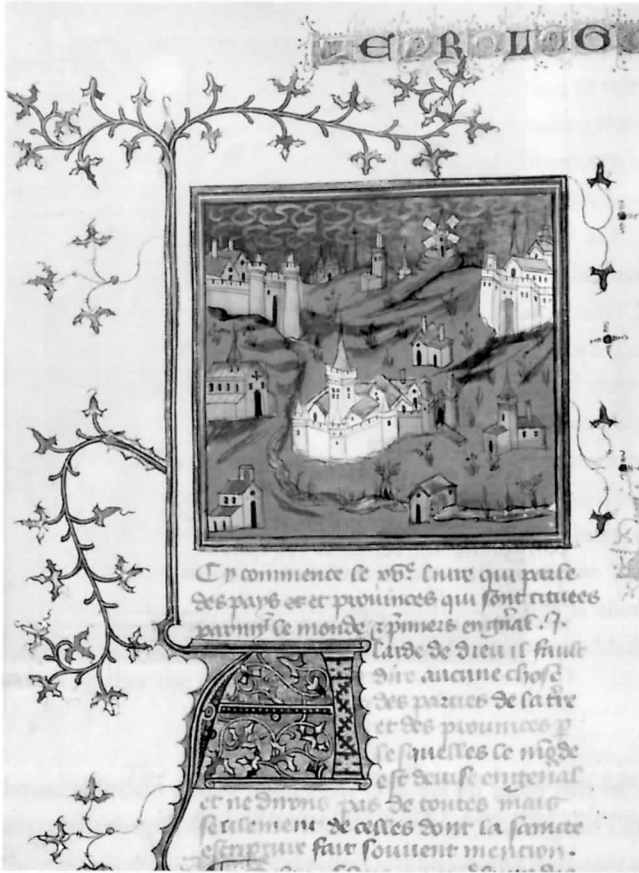


Fig. 10.12. *Areas of the World* ("Pays") (c. 1400),
 miniature from Bartholomeus Angelicus' *Livre des
 Propriétés des Choses* (originally Paris, c. 1225-50).
 Jena, Universitätsbibliothek, ms El. f. 80, f. 217v.

miniature accompanying the section on the areas of the world, *pays* would seem to be undergoing a mutation into its successor, *paysage*; for we are here located above a panoramic rocky terrain where a premature billowing cloud frieze forms the backdrop for cities, castles, churches and even a windmill and a watermill, the fruits of the late medieval 'little industrial revolution' (FIG. 10.12). In Cahn's words, what we have here is "not a raw slice of geography but a piece of nature that has been socially invested and structured in particular ways by implicit human agents"⁵⁴ – in short, a landscape in its first territorial, late medieval, sense.

*The encyclopaedic tradition, II: landscape images
in animal, medical and health compendia*

We have now seen several instances of how the soberly registering overview contributes to the genesis of the landscape image. Another concise gaze is just as imperative – the one directed towards the naturalistic detail. Among the traditions occasioning visual detail studies of natural phenomena, the Islamic scientific corpus introduced into southern Italy from the end of the 11th century is further developed under the 13th-century Hohenstaufen court and reaches a provisional culmination in northern Italy during the International Gothic period of the decades around 1400. Taking into account that antique natural philosophy lay dormant in the Islamic world, it might seem tempting here to speak of a renaissance; more precisely, however, it is a case of an Islamic-Gothic ripening of antique seeds.

The reasons that the Hohenstaufen court was such an important intermediate station for the nature-observing illustration in the Late Middle Ages were, firstly, because it had overtaken the Norman southern Italian culture in which so many Islamic studies of natural science had been translated and, secondly, because Frederick II himself was, among many other things, a rationally-minded scientist. To the frequent irritation of his contemporaries, he would only lend credence to information that could be verified by first-hand experience. He owned a number of zoological gardens and his illustrated treatise on hunting, *De arte venandi cum avibus* (*The Art of Falconry*, c. 1244-50), presents a wealth of new observations which are often at variance with Aristotle's zoological writings.⁵⁵ This is the tradition continued by International Gothic artists such as the Lombardian school's Giovannino dei Grassi and Michelino da Besozzo, and the Veronese school's Stefano da Zevio and Pisanello, when they fill their sketch books with naturalistic animal studies, from which some are selected to ornament monumental works – as is the case with, for example, Giovannino's border illustrations in the *Visconti Book of Hours* (FIG. 10.29).

Another forum for nature studies, but with a more direct link to the landscape image, is the *herbarium*, a plant manual derived from antiquity.⁵⁶ As is apparent from, for example, the renowned *Wiener Dioscorides* of 512, this genre was one of the few slots of the Middle Ages in which the antique disposition to naturalism survived, simply because the properties of medicine depended on a correct identification of the plant. Following importation from the Islamic sphere and development in Salerno and surrounding centres, the herbarium is also given a naturalistic facelift at the Hohenstaufen court, after which it similarly culminates in the International Gothic style of Northern Italy under titles such as *Compendium Salernitatum* or *Secreta Salernitana* (the latter with an alphabetically-listed collection of herbaria texts). In the *Carrara Herbarium* from Padua, for example, minutely observed plants meander



Fig. 10.13. Anonymous Italian artist, *Ears of Corn* (c. 1400), miniature from the *Carrara Herbarium*. London, British Library, ms Egerton 2020, f. 21.



Fig. 10.14. *Apothecaries Picking Herbs* (12th century), miniature from the German *Apuleius-Dioscorides*, Eton College, ms 204, f. iv.

across whole pages (FIG. 10.13). The particular factor in the significance of this genre to the development of the landscape image is that the herbaria also, as a continuation of antique or Islamic tradition, offer small genre scenes which form a bridge to the spatial image: for example, picking the plant in its original environment (FIG. 10.14), pharmacists preparing medicines, or doctors curing patients.

In the search for sources of the modern landscape image, another Islamic import must be studied: the *Tacuinum Sanitatis* manuscripts.⁵⁷ This genre was given its Latin adaptation at Manfred's court after the mid-13th century and, like animal illustrations and herbaria, also reached its peak during the International Gothic period when, between c. 1380 and the beginning of the 15th century, it was refined in the scriptoria of the Po valley. With the *Tacuinum* genre we are moving into another quintessentially modern area, *health*, for in the manuscripts the Baghdad physician Ibn Botlân (Latin form Albulkasem; d. earliest 1068) presents his proposals for the necessary components of a healthy daily life. According to the introduction, this is a matter of six types of phenomena: [1] *air*, concerning the heart; [2] *food and drink*;



Fig. 10.15. *Southerly Wind (Ventus meridionalis)* (c. 1380-90), miniature from manuscript of Ibn Botlân's *Tacuinum Sanitatis in Medicina*, executed in a workshop on the Po plain. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms lat. 6977A, f. 101v.



Fig. 10.16. *Sage (Salvia)* (c. 1395-1400), miniature from manuscript of Ibn Botlân's *Tacuinum Sanitatis in Medicina*, executed in a workshop on the Po plain. Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, *Theatrum Sanitatis*, ms 4182, f. 68.

[3] *movement and rest*; [4] *sleep and wakefulness*; [5] *body fluids*; and [6] *joy, anger, fear and pain*. Very diverse phenomena – plants, foodstuffs, sexual intercourse, dance, vomiting, winds, seasons, for example – were discussed on the basis of these categories and the same questions were applied to each. The *Southerly Wind (Ventus meridionalis)*, illustrated by the flapping capes of two knights walking through a leafy landscape (FIG. 10.15), is accompanied, for example, by the words: “*Nature*: Warm in the second degree, dry in the first. *Optimum*: The kind that sweeps across favourable regions. *Usefulness*: Good for the chest. *Dangers*: Weakens the sense. *Neutralization of the Dangers*: With baths.”⁵⁸

Of the many landscapes filling the illustrations, a few are generated by the herbarium tradition. Rather than being portrayed on their own, the plants are set free in small nature sections, which might either be totally autonomous or show how the plant can be gathered. Sage, for example, is accompanied by a woman carrying a basket and plucking leaves from a plant growing behind a wattle fence (FIG. 10.16). The vignettes actually have the quality of landscape, for even though



Fig. 10.17. *Harvesting Rye (Siligo)* (c. 1390-1400), miniature from manuscript of Ibn Botlân's *Tacuinum Sanitatis in Medicina*, executed in a workshop on the Po plain. Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, ms Series Nova 2644, f. 47.

they are still grounded in Byzantine rocks, the spreading of the plants provides a fine quantitative effect. Inasmuch as the plants are not simply there for the sake of pleasure, but have a practical purpose – i.e. to facilitate wellness in everyday life – it seems obvious that they should be obtained by means of an everyday activity: work. It seems particularly logical that the most laborious farming activity, the harvesting of cereals, has become fully worthy of depiction. It is not only featured as an illustration of the *Summer* season, but also in depiction of the different varieties of cereal: wheat, barley, rye, spelt, rice (FIG. 10.17). The cereal harvest – the result of the Fall – is, however, still but one of the many gathering activities, which include the picking of paradisiacal vegetation such as oranges, grapes, olives and roses. Work is thus integrated into the depiction of nature at exactly the same time as the vegetation of the Fall is put alongside the Paradise flora in the same all-embracing category of utility plants.

In addition, we also see that the *Tacuinum* genre releases time into nature. This transpires in portraits of the *seasons* by means of the picking of roses in the spring and the harvesting of grain in the summer.⁵⁹ It also occurs in portraits of the four winds, with fluttering scarves, trees bent by air pressure and torrential rain forcing

a woman to pull her shawl over her head (PLATE 32). And the subject heading "Snow and Ice" not only produces one of the first snow landscapes in Western culture, but also one devoid of human figures: Byzantine white-speckled rocks sombrely enclosing a frozen grey lake (PLATE 33).⁶⁰

However, it also seems symptomatic that this book, which is the first to release weather and time into the Western landscape image, is also a book dealing with human moods (6) and body fluids (5). The body fluids – yellow and black bile, blood and phlegm – were in themselves determining factors in states of mind inasmuch as they regulated the four temperaments (alternatively known as *humours*) and, as we will see in the next chapter, one of the most important tasks of the future landscape painting is to turn the changeable weather situation, *atmosphere*, into an external expression of the no less changeable state of mind, *mood*.

The forest

Yet another forum to advance the dawn of the modern landscape image is found in *the forest* and its visual depiction. Right up until the aggressive deforestation carried out in the Late Middle Ages, West and Central Europe were still covered by the dense forests that had earlier incited the Romans' awe. In a darkness of trees, thickets and marshes, the villages and their fields were like islands at the mercy of a mighty ocean. The forest provided firewood, timber, game, fruit, fungi and herbs, but it also represented that which was strange and threatening: wild animals and savage humans, phantom creatures, robbers. With its overwhelming presence, the forest constituted both the physical and psychological framework of medieval Western Christianity.⁶¹

I will not here examine medieval forest mythology, but merely note that the forest image is first given spatial attire in the Late Middle Ages; indeed, in a way, that this is where it makes its entrance in pictorial art. As we saw in chapter 6, antiquity was not able to amalgamate the image of the single tree with the image of the thicket, but took a quantum-like leap from the lone figure surrounded by space to the enclosed mass. The leap is already smoothed out to a continuity of openness and closedness in certain 14th-century images: for example, *The Enchanted Garden*, an illumination in a manuscript of Guillaume de Machaut's *Le Dit du Lion* (c. 1350-55; FIG. 10.18). Here the illuminator shows us a Paradise garden with an opulent flora and fauna in the antique tradition of mixed forest, but rather than being blocked, as in Livia's garden fresco (PLATE 5), the eye is led across an extensive flower-bedecked meadow to a background of trees, between which we can walk in and be absorbed by the deep darkness. Unlike the closedness of the garden frescoes, this is essentially a landscape image with spatial view, a *Durchsehung*, which leads the gaze through a succession

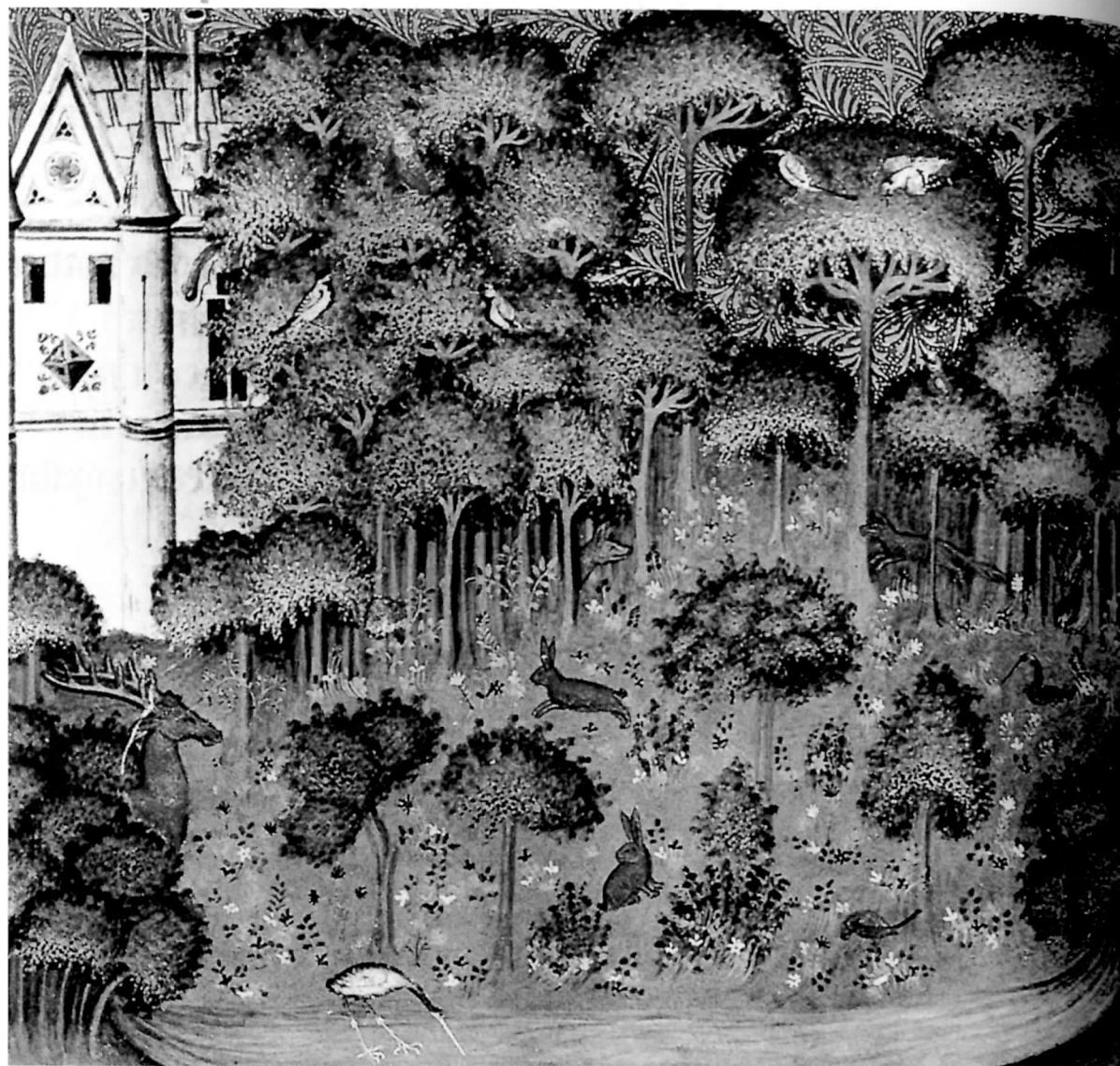


Fig. 10.18. *The Enchanted Garden*
 (c. 1350-55), miniature from French
 manuscript of Guillaume de Machaut's
Le Dit du Lion. Paris, Bibliothèque
 Nationale, ms fr. 1586, f. 103.

of objects. The more remarkable, then, that the forest scene retains its absence of human figures. It thus approaches the status of autonomous landscape image.

Pointing out the physical significance of the forest in medieval culture is valuable because its occurrence at this late point in the evolution of culture could actually have contributed to the development of the conception of infinity. As mentioned in chapter 9, the Italians linked Gothic architecture with "trees that are not yet pruned, from which [the Germans] bend the branches together and bind them to form their pointed arches." In my own description of Gothic architecture, we saw that the branches might indeed have been bent, but that their binding was in a way postponed boundlessly to the celestial infinity. We also noted that the infinity effect was embedded in the serial repetition of the architectural bays. Might the Italians' myth actually have something to it, in the sense that visualisation of the forest in all its spatial, two- as well as three-dimensionality, not only stems from a general spatial awareness, but from the specifically medieval approach to the forest?⁶²

We have seen how the paradisiacal flora in *Tacuinum* became utility plants on equal terms with the cereal crops. A similar process of secularisation, then, is seen when Paradise is converted into the modern, spatial forest. The agoraphobic thicket is hereby broken up into an open collection of trees with a base levelled to a flat and softened landscape.

10.4 On the threshold to the paradigm of modernity

The Labours of the Months around 1400

If we return to the *Labours of the Months*, we will notice that they reach a first monumental synthesis with the regular landscape image in Torre dell'Aquila, Trento. Here, sometime between 1390 and 1407, and in all probability around 1400, anonymous artists make the first actual calendar landscape in Western culture. Due principally to the fact that the frescoes are located at the crucial moment of the modern landscape painting's genesis, there is intense discussion as to whether they are the fruit of Northern or Italian artists. The monumental fresco technique itself seems to be related to North Italian, particularly Veronese and Lombardian, traditions. The iconography, on the other hand, appears to be thoroughly Northern: the architecture is Gothic, the humans blond, storks build nests on roofs, ploughs are pulled by horses, scripts used for the few inscriptions are German; and, not least, the farming rhythm seems to be slow, inasmuch as the cereal harvest is still going on in August (albeit starting in July). Even though there is the possibility that the cycle could have been executed by local artists on the basis of Northern source material, it would

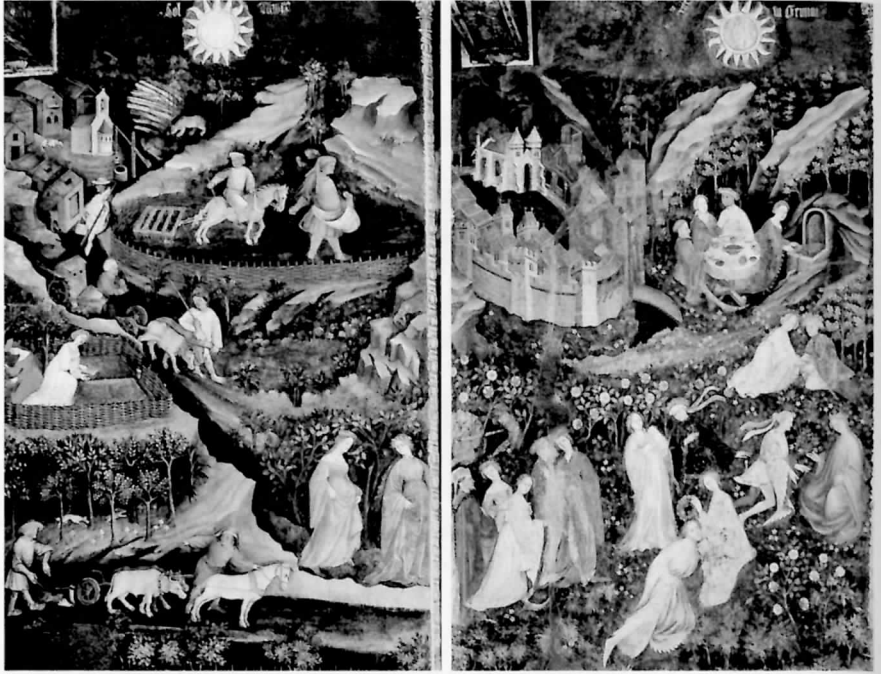


Fig. 10.19. Anonymous Bohemian artist
 (? [from workshop of Meister Wenzlaus?]),
April and May (c. 1390-1407), fresco. Trento,
 Torre dell'Aquila.

seem most probable that it is the work of peripatetic Bohemians. The leader could be a certain Meister Wenzlaus, given that the books of the Brotherhood of Saint Christopher in Arlberg refer to this master as coming from Bohemia along with the commissioner of the fresco cycle, Prince-Bishop George of Liechtenstein. George was Bishop in Trento from 1390-1419, and his key role in the creation of the cycle is clear from the inclusion of his coat of arms embellishing one of the frescoes.⁶³

In the frescoes' skies, which are for the most part traditionally dark-blue, the sun can now break through: a white circle with fiery rays (FIG. 10.19). And in *January*, winter is so well-established that a lightly-clouded sky tops off a snow-covered landscape in which the aristocracy enjoy a snowball fight (FIG. 10.20). Even though the landscapes are still based in Byzantine rocks, these are disrupted by sections of forest and meadow, hedges and wattle fences, fields, rocky tracks and bridges. Moreover, it should be noted that there is no attempt to camouflage social stratification; although the landscapes are qualified by the various labours of the months,



Fig. 10.20. Anonymous Bohemian artist
(? [from workshop of Meister Wenzlaus?]),
January (c. 1390-1407), fresco (detail).
Trento, Torre dell'Aquila.



Fig. 10.21. Limbourg brothers, August (c. 1410-16), miniature from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*. Chantilly, Musée Condé.

these tasks are consigned to the backgrounds while the foregrounds are allocated to the leisure pursuits of the aristocracy. Besides the snowball fight, we can watch such pastimes as hunting, flirtation, festivals, tournaments and outdoor meals. The more laborious activities going on in the backgrounds include cutting grass, forging scythes, picking grapes, grinding grain, ploughing and sowing.

This sharp class division is also found in the high point of labours of the months, and what could be considered the threshold to the modern landscape image, *Les Très Riches Heures*, executed between c. 1410 and 1416 by the Flemish Limbourg brothers for the French duke and patron of the arts Jean de Berry.⁶⁴ In line with surviving evidence of the Duke's stringent taxation of his copyhold farmers – the contemporary chronicler Jean Froissart called him “the most avaricious man in the world”⁶⁵ – scenes of the nobility enjoying their leisure pastimes are acted out at a safe distance from the farmers' work. Festivities and the exchange of gifts in

Fig. 10.22. Limbourg brothers, *October* (c. 1410-16), miniature from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*. Chantilly, Musée Condé.



January, the betrothal of the young couple (Bonne de Berry and Charles d'Orléans (?)) in *April*, and the spring pageant in *May*, are all scenes exclusively reserved for the nobility. And when, for once, aristocracy and peasants feature in the same field of vision – *August* – the gathering of the hay (and the peasants swimming in the river) is removed to a distant background, while falconry and flirtation occupy the foreground (FIG. 10.21).

In extension of the social hierarchy, the landscapes are usually crowned by a castle which, if not belonging to the Duke himself, is at least owned by the royal family, given that Jean was brother to the deceased king, Charles V (reigned 1364-80). The *October* tilling and sowing scene is presided over by a Louvre depicted in such detail that in the 1980s it was used for a reconstruction of the royal palace (FIG. 10.22).⁶⁶ And the diagonal road in *March* runs past a ploughed field, a vineyard and a meadow with herdsmen, to reach the gates of Château de Lusignan in Poitou, one of the

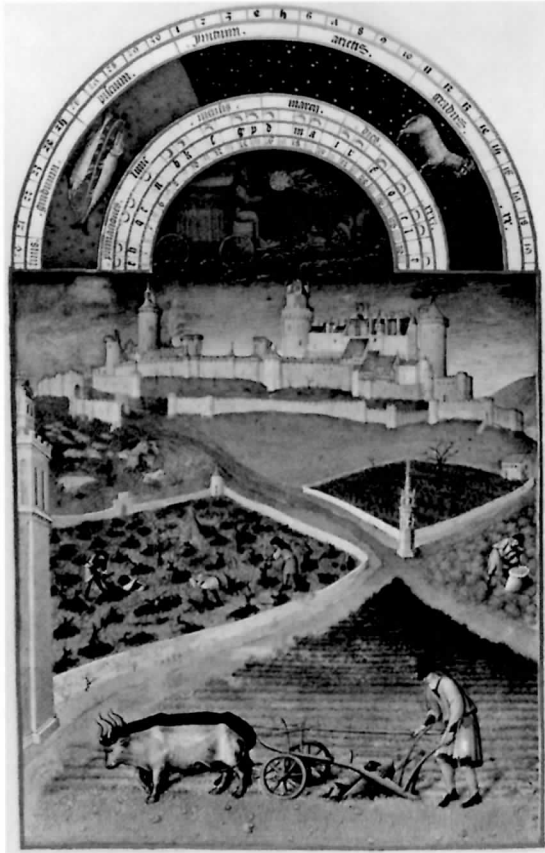


Fig. 10.23. Limbourg brothers, *March* (c. 1410-16), miniature from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*. Chantilly, Musée Condé.

Duke's favourite residences (FIG. 10.23). The effect is reminiscent of Lorenzetti's portrait of the Sienese territory, but laterally reversed: rather than casting the gaze from architecture to land, the gaze is here enclosed by the architecture. Feudalism versus republic? The new landscape images might indeed be based in an emerging capitalist and more democratic culture, but as depicted here the peasants are still the Duke's serfs and must therefore be subject to the authority of the castle.⁶⁷

Regardless the feudalism, the calendar illustrations in Jean de Berry's book of hours constitute a pinnacle in early modern realism. The sky is blue and atmospheric and turns whitish towards the horizon. In *December* the trees have yellowed leaves and bare trunks, while broken-off branches and a tree stump lie on the ground. *February* (PLATE 34) presents a snow landscape with a heavily-clouded, greyish sky and such transient phenomena as footprints in the snow, freezing breath and smoke from the chimney (the first since the Dominus Julius mosaic, PLATE 26). In this and

other miniatures from *Les Très Riches Heures* we have to wait until Brueghel's *Seasons* 150 years later before the Limbourg's innovations are followed up. Even though the few background rocks may still have a Byzantine appearance, they are used on completely equal terms with the other landscape elements. The calendar landscapes are essentially flat – a flatness that falls iconographically into place with their loosened soil. Never before in Western art has the grass-covered ground been transformed into ploughed top soil, as we see it in *March* (FIG. 10.23). Rather strikingly, it is also in *March*, behind the man at the plough, that the first post-antique painted shadow is cast (shadows are also visible in *October* (FIG. 10.22) and *December*). And another effect of light is explored in the *October* river running between the Louvre and the fields: reflections cast by the boats and the people walking alongside the water. Even optical distortions of limbs seen through water are explored in the depiction of the peasants swimming in *August* (FIG. 10.21).

In considering and comparing all these visual innovations, there is a real sense of closeness to the stuff of which Western realism is made; an understanding that this style is not simply a case of a new way of seeing an indifferent surrounding environment, but that it is released by specific subject areas – work, traces of time, infinite particularity – which, despite their apparent individuality, all gain sustenance from a common epistemic *field*: that of modernity.

The landscape paradigm around 1400

My discussion so far of late medieval landscape images has chiefly concentrated on heightened situations: specific iconographic contexts which have provoked progressive shifts in the depiction of nature. Even though the shifts are particularly apparent here – and in a context that puts the implications of their content into relief – it must be mentioned, in conclusion, that they are also to be encountered with increasing frequency in the *standard* landscape image; that is: contexts in which there is no local semantic pressure, but which lead directly to the paradigm. It is by making a comparison between the heightened situations and this transitional paradigm that we realise precisely how far there is to the fully-accomplished paradigm shift in the third decade of the 15th century. The modern paradigm is thus formed in a synthesis between the two categories.

The medieval symbolic sky is already showing signs of atmospheric disorder in Jean le Bon's mid-14th-century *Bible Moralisée*. Here the otherwise blank vellum backgrounds are topped-off with small, dark-blue feathery clouds (FIG. 10.24).⁶⁸ In the Master of the Boqueteaux's illuminations for Guillaume de Mauchet's poetic works of around 1371-77, *Nature Introduces her Children to the Poet* and *Love Introduces his Children to the Poet*, these dark-blue skies have gathered into a complete cover



Fig. 10.24. *Scenes from the Life of Saint Paul*,
miniatures from Jean le Bon's *Bible Moralisée*
(mid-14th century). Paris, Bibliothèque
Nationale, ms fr. 167, f. 285v.

Fig. 10.25. *Nature Introduces
her Children to the Poet*
(c. 1371-77), miniature from
Parisian manuscript of
Guillaume de Machaut's
poetic works. Paris,
Bibliothèque Nationale,
ms fr. 1586, f. E.





Fig. 10.26. *Visitation* (c. 1390), miniature from *Les Heures de Bruxelles*. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale Albert Ier, ms 11060/61, f. 54.



Fig. 10.27. *Flight into Egypt* (c. 1390), miniature from *Les Heures de Bruxelles*. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale Albert Ier, ms 11060/61, f. 106.

of cloud above panoramic landscapes full of details (FIG. 10.25).⁶⁹ On the hilly but no longer rock-like ground, we also find the kind of detail indicative of productivity such as a farm worker carrying a sack of grain on his shoulder as he walks along a proper road towards a windmill. If we move on to *Les Heures de Bruxelles*, a Flemish manuscript painted around 1390, we see that not only does the artist reintroduce a road – now cobbled – running through the landscape, but also that the monolithic aspect of the rocks is in the process of being broken up into flakes of a more naturalistic appearance (FIG. 10.26). Furthermore, the branches of the trees are shown to have lost their leaves in the wintry *Flight into Egypt* (FIG. 10.27). In Melchior Broederlam's altar cupboard lid of slightly later date, 1394-99, adorned with the *Presentation in the Temple* and *Flight into Egypt*, the rocks are again flake-like and, what is more, overgrown with green moss and grass (FIG. 10.28).

In the climate of International Gothic holding sway during the last two decades of the 14th century, there seems to be a symmetry between Italy and Northern Europe as regards iconographic contributions to the genesis of landscape. The scriptoria of the Po valley yield the *Tacuinum Sanitatis* and *Compendium Salernitatum*



Fig. 10.28. Melchior Broederlam, *Presentation in the Temple and Flight into Egypt* (1394-99), altar cupboard lid, tempera on wood. Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts.

manuscripts, Bohemian artists paint the first proper calendar landscapes in Torre dell'Aquila, Trento. Intermittently, as with the small fence in Giovannino dei Grassi's *Paradise landscape* in the scene of the *Creation of Eve* (shortly before 1395-98)⁷⁰ from the *Visconti Book of Hours*, modernity also breaks through in the Italians' standard landscape depiction, the paradigm (FIG. 10.29). It is still clear, however, that from the middle of the 14th century the paradigm-determined frontline in the genesis of the landscape image is located in the North. And after 1400 the North assumes an unequivocal lead. Quite specifically, the new landscape paradigm crystallises in Franco-Flemish manuscript illuminations executed during the first two decades of the 15th century.

In the Boucicaut Master's book of hours (c. 1401-05) the golden rays of the sun break through the firmament – and with such force that they are reflected in the lake behind the *Visitation of Mary and Elizabeth* (PLATE 35).⁷¹ It is fitting that the rays should bless the holy women and, by so doing, at that moment gain a form of iconographic justification in their company; and yet the scene opens up for a type of lighting – cast light – which, iconography notwithstanding, will characterise painting for the following five hundred years. Behind the rays another firmament is revealed, an atmospheric blue sky sprinkled with light fluffy clouds and toned down with white towards the already distant horizon. Although still alternating with the



Fig. 10.29. Belbello da Pavia, initial with the *Creation of Eve* (1430s); workshop of Giovannino dei Grassi (shortly before 1395-98), elaborated by Belbello da Pavia, *Landscape*, miniature from the *Visconti Book of Hours*. Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, ms Landau-Finlay 22, f. 46v.



Fig. 10.30. *Gathering before the Stag Hunt* (c. 1407), miniature from a Parisian manuscript of Gaston de Phébus' *Hunting Book* (1387-88). Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms fr. 616, f. 67.

medieval, symbolic sky – with rinceaux, cubes or other patterns – this sky soon frees itself from golden sunbeams. This type of fully-mature naturalism can be observed in manuscripts such as the *Works by Christine de Pisan* and the *Hunting Book* of Gaston de Phébus (FIG. 10.30), made between 1405 and 1407.⁷² John Ruskin fully understood the significance of this shift in the skies of early-15th-century manuscripts:

The moment the sky is introduced (and it is curious how perfectly it is done *at once*, many manuscripts presenting, in alternate pages, chequered backgrounds, and deep blue skies exquisitely gradated to the horizon) – the moment, I say, the sky is introduced, the spirit of art becomes for evermore changed, and thenceforward it gradually proposes imitation more and more as an end, until it reaches the Turnerian landscape.⁷³ [Ruskin's italics]



Fig. 10.31. Boucicaut Master, *Nativity* (c. 1401-05), miniature from the *Boucicaut Book of Hours*. Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André, ms 2, f. 73v.



Fig. 10.32. Limbourg brothers, *Agony in the Garden* (c. 1410-16), miniature from *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*. Chantilly, Musée Condé.

The star-studded night sky, too, has its – second – breakthrough in the *Boucicaut Book of Hours* (we recall Pietro Lorenzetti's *Assisi Last Supper*, presumably from the 1330s). It features as background to the ray-casting star of Bethlehem in the *Nativity* and the *Adoration of the Magi* (FIG. 10.31). However, while the darkness in these virginal night scenes is still limited to the sky itself, the Limbourg brothers allow it to absorb the space in its entirety; this happens in the *Crucifixion* in *Les Belles Heures du Duc Berry* (c. 1408-09) and again in the same scene and also in the *Agony in the Garden* in *Les Très Riches Heures* (FIG. 10.32).⁷⁴ In the Gethsemane scene, the stars have a naturalistic variation in size and are distributed randomly across the black-blue sky, while lanterns and burning torches cast an orange gleam to illuminate the immediate surroundings.



Fig. 10.33. Andrea da Firenze, *Christ Calming the Storm* (c. 1365-67), fresco. Florence, Santa Maria Novella, Cappella degli Spagnuoli.

Unlike these versatile temporal and meteorological effects in early North European 15th-century manuscripts, the Italian counterparts seem to be restricted to scenes of stormy weather. When Andrea da Firenze adapts Giotto's *Navicella* to his own version of *Christ Calming the Storm* (c. 1365-67), he already has his wind gods appear from an authentic cloudy and greyish sky (FIG. 10.33). And, again, when Lorenzo di Niccolò di Martino (documented 1391-1411) paints *Saint Fina Saving a Ship in a Storm* (San Gimignano, Pinacoteca) in 1402, the usual gold base is replaced by a cloudy sky.⁷⁵ The dark-blue clouds are here shaded towards the horizon, going from a reddish blush to white. According to Bartolommeo Fazio, ten years later Gentile da Fabriano paints: "a whirlwind [*turbo*] uprooting trees and the like, and



Fig. 10.34. Limbourg brothers,
Annunciation to the Shepherds (c. 1410-16),
miniature from *Les Très Riches Heures du*
Duc de Berry. Chantilly, Musée Condé.



Fig. 10.35. Limbourg brothers, *Saint*
Michael Fighting the Dragon (c. 1410-16),
miniature from *Les Très Riches Heures du*
Duc de Berry. Chantilly, Musée Condé.

its appearance is such as to strike even the beholder with horror and fear.⁷⁶ The image was painted at an unidentified location in Venice and possibly reflects the notorious storm that hit the city on August 10 1410.⁷⁷

A further difference between the Northern and Italian landscape images at this time can be seen in the way the Italian images limit their temporal effects to the sky, whereas their Northern counterparts also include innovations in the grounds. The landscape that receives the first pictorial sunrays in the Boucicaut *Visitation* is thus a green landscape with windmill, a farm wall enclosing a hillside, two tree stumps that are evidence of forestry, and even some tiny fields surrounded by

hedging. It would seem, however, that we have to wait until *Les Très Riches Heures* of the following decade before the cultivated landscape again breaks through beyond specific agricultural themes. In the background of the *Annunciation to the Shepherds* (FIG. 10.34), we see a patchwork of yellow, green and brown furrowed fields, and they appear again as part of the world Christ is offered by the Devil in the *Temptation of Christ*.⁷⁸ In the paradigmatic landscape images of *Les Très Riches Heures*, we also meet innovations such as withered trees (*Nativity*, *Annunciation to the Shepherds*, *Entry into Jerusalem*) and something as unprecedented as a sandy coastline with almost van Goghque beached boats (*Saint Michael Fighting the Dragon*; FIG. 10.35). Here the ploughed fields are thus complemented with another tangible expression of the levelling out of the Byzantine rocks.

Thus, the depiction of landscape in Western pictorial art has now reached a cataclysmic threshold, a hyper-unstable state in which the antique-medieval pictorial paradigm, the Golden Age paradigm, is filled to satiety by modern trends, not just iconographic themes such as labours of the months, seasons, winds, snow, plant gathering, and so forth, but also fragmental images of territory or simply optically observed bits of nature. The theme of the next chapter will therefore be the period during which this satiation finally collapses and all these trends crystallise into a new dynamic equilibrium, the imprint of a dissipative structure: the modern paradigm.

Jacob Wamberg


Landscape as World Picture

Tracing Cultural Evolution in Images

VOLUME II

Early Modernity

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