I. Introduction.

The history of landscape painting in the Western tradition originates in the Hellenistic era and in the art of ancient Rome. The Roman desire to seek refreshment and fulfilment in the beauty of nature characterized the Western attitude to nature and to landscape art for many centuries, and two major landscape themes, the pastoral and the Georgic—visions of the shepherd’s life and the tiller’s—were developed by the Romans. The Classical authors Pliny the elder and Vitruvius discussed landscape only briefly, yet in the Renaissance the Classical vision, which had perished in the Middle Ages, was reborn, and the comments of these authors sanctioned the development of a new type of art. Renaissance theorists wrote of landscape in terms of pleasure and described the solace offered by decorative landscape frescoes. Throughout the 16th century landscape artists portrayed either pastoral scenes of aristocratic leisure or Georgic landscapes enriched by agricultural activities that the aristocrat could observe with satisfaction. The Christian tradition added the theme of the hermit saint, to whom nature offered either an ascetic harshness or a sweet tranquillity in which the soul might recover a lost innocence. Landscape, while popular, was considered an inferior art form, and the theoretical principles of landscape art were not developed at this stage.
The first writer to discuss the aesthetics of landscape was Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, who in his *Trattato dell’arte della pittura* (Libro VI, vol. lxii; Milan, 1584) gave a somewhat overwhelming and confused account of different categories of landscape, which nonetheless drew distinctions of lasting importance between ‘privileged places’, enriched with noble architecture, wild landscapes, with forests, rocks and stones, and ‘places of delight’ with fountains, fields and gardens. Clearer distinctions were created by 17th-century theorists, and Roger de Piles established the categories of heroic, or ideal landscape, and pastoral, or rustic landscape. Heroic landscape was the more elevated, yet as a whole landscape remained low in the hierarchy of the genres, placed by André Félibien higher only than fruit and flower paintings. The ideas were developed in northern Europe by such theorists as Karel van Mander, Samuel van Hoogstraten and Gérard de Lairesse. The categories developed in this period persisted, with variations, until the 19th century.

In the 18th century, however, landscape was enriched by new aesthetic ideals; Edmund Burke’s treatise on the Sublime was widely influential, and such theorists as William Gilpin and Uvedale Price created another ideal, the Picturesque, a category between the Sublime and the Beautiful. In 1817 the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris founded a new Prix de Rome for *paysage historique*, but nonetheless the traditional academic hierarchy perished in the 19th century. Writings on landscape, for example those by John Constable and John Ruskin, were concerned rather with the problems of naturalistic landscape. From the early years of the 20th century there was a great deal of critical writing on landscape. Initially, the writers tended to concentrate on development of style and of a modern attitude to nature in landscape painting. Kenneth Clark’s *Landscape into Art* (1949), which discusses such landscape themes as fantasy and naturalism, remains the best short introduction to the subject. There was much scholarly interest in the motives for the development of landscape painting, and opposing views were put forward by Max J. Friedländer and Ernst Gombrich. After the 1960s many new approaches developed; landscape was studied in a socio-economic context, as the purveyor of ideas about property, status and social class; more attention was paid to theoretical texts and to the intellectual background in which landscape artists worked; other studies have sought parallels between art and literature, and explored the role of metaphor and symbol.

II.  **Historical survey.**

1. **Classical world, until c 2nd century ad.**

Before the Hellenistic period Greek painters, in their passionate concern with human values, rarely conveyed an intense interest in nature. Vivid and charming indications of a natural setting, as in an East Greek cup, decorated with a man and trees (mid-6th century...
BC; Paris, Louvre), which is patterned with the swirling branches of leafy trees where birds and a cicada perch and fly, remain rare. Only glimpses of Greek wall painting remain; the Diver, from a Greek tomb in Paestum (c. 480 BC; Paestum, Mus. Archeol. N.), creates an unusual sense of outdoor freedom and space, and the tomb of Philip II of Macedonia (late 4th century BC) at Vergina is decorated with a frieze depicting a hunt in a wood (see Greece, ancient, §VI, 2). Landscape was more important in Etruscan art; in the Tomb of the Bulls (c. 530 BC; Tarquinia) Troilos is ambushed by Achilles in a patterned and schematic setting; in the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing (c. 510 BC; Tarquinia; see fig.) the inner chamber is decorated with scenes of dolphins gambolling, and young boys diving, fishing from boats and shooting birds. Here the scale is more naturalistic, the colours bright and the mood festive.

![Wall painting with hunting and fishing scene, Tomb of Hunting and Fishing, Tarquinia, c. 510 BC; photo credit: SEF/Art Resource, NY](image)

The nature of landscape painting in the Hellenistic era remains controversial (see Alexandria, §2, (v)). Yet it was in this period that the *Idylls* of the Greek poet Theocritus (c. 308–240 BC) established the pastoral landscape in literature, which endured for many centuries. Theocritus described Sicilian herdsmen dwelling far from the city in the beauty of a spring-time landscape, with bubbling brook, shady trees and flowery mead. Such a landscape was the origin of the *locus amoenus*, or ‘lovely place’, which became a major theme of landscape artists. A celebrated Hellenistic votive relief from Corinth (late 3rd century BC; Munich, Glyp.) shows a gnarled old tree sheltering a rustic shrine, and it has been argued (Rostovtzeff, 1911) that painters of this period also created sacro-
Idyllic paintings, which have been defined as landscapes that show worshippers before sacred trees and modest religious architecture, with statues, votive gifts and altars.

In the 1st century BC Roman poets celebrated the beauty of the countryside, providing models for future landscape painting. The Eclogues of Virgil (70–19 BC), where Tityrus plays his pipes, ‘lying back beneath wide beechen cover’, took up the theme of Theocritus’ idyllic landscape, and in his later Georgics Virgil celebrated the virtues of a hard and simple way of life. The rich agricultural landscape of the Georgics, a symbol of the blessings of peace and of civilization, is ordered and enjoyed by man, and the Georgic landscape, where labour is noble, complemented the softer pastoral of the Eclogues. Poets and writers also extolled the ideal of the country villa, which offered the pleasure of solitude and meditation. Horace (65–8 BC) wrote of the beauties of Tivoli, and his famous epode, ‘Beatus ille’ (30 BC), which praises the peace of rural retirement, was to echo through European literature. Pliny the younger described the lovely site of his villa in Tuscany, where the view seems to be a painted scene of unusual beauty, rather than a real landscape and a green and shady room was decorated with ‘a fresco of birds perched on the branches of trees’ (Letters, v, vi.).

This love of the countryside found expression in landscape painting, that became fashionable in the mid-1st century BC, when Roman painters began to decorate villas with illusionistic landscape paintings that seem to extend the real space of the room, as though framed by windows. The extent of their debt to Hellenistic artists remains controversial, yet it is generally accepted that a landscape frieze illustrating scenes from the Homeric epic The Odyssey (mid-1st century BC; Rome, Vatican, Mus. Profano Bib. Apostolica), framed by feigned pillars, copies a Hellenistic original of c. 320 BC. Here the landscape, where space is created by atmospheric perspective, dominates the figures, and strange rock formations and pallid vistas of sea and coast suggest a remote and legendary past. The landscape painted on the rear of a bedroom in a villa at Boscoreale (mid-1st century BC; New York, Met.) is, by contrast, fresh and immediate; it shows a shady vine-covered grotto, with birds and a fountain, and conveys the tranquillity of Virgil’s Eclogues. Nilotic scenes were also popular; the vast Nile mosaic from the Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste (?1st century BC; Palestrina, Pal. Barberini;) shows, from a bird’s-eye view, the Nile in flood, with crocodiles and hippopotami lurking among the reeds.

In the Augustan era various landscape types, including the sacro-idyllic and the architectural landscape with figures, were further elaborated, and mythological landscape was given a new literary context in Ovid’s Metamorphoses with its repertory of nymphs, satyrs, groves and temples. Vitruvius, writing in the early Augustan period, (c. 17–14 BC) mentions corridors decorated with ‘a variety of landscapes ... harbours, promontories, seashores, rivers, fountains, straits, fanes, groves, mountains, flocks, shepherds’ (VII.v.2). Pliny
the elder mentions a painter, Studius, who worked in the Augustan era, and his description elaborates that of Vitruvius, laying greater emphasis on everyday landscape and scenes of villa life (Natural History XXXV.116-17):

[Studius] introduced the most attractive fashion of painting walls with pictures of country houses and porticos and landscape gardens, groves, woods, hills, fishponds, canals, rivers, coasts, and whatever anybody could desire, together with various sketches of people going for a stroll or sailing in a boat or going to country houses riding on asses or in carriages, and also people fishing or fowling or hunting or even gathering the vintage. His works include splendid villas approached by roads across marshes, men tottering and staggering along carrying women on their shoulders for a bargain, and a number of humorous drawings of that sort beside, extremely wittily designed. He also introduced the use of pictures of seaside cities to decorate uncovered terraces.

Wall painting of a garden scene (detail), from the Villa of Livia, Prima Porta, late 1st century BC (Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano delle Terme); photo credit: Scala/Art Resource, NY

The so-called House of Livia (30–25 BC) on the Palatine, Rome, is decorated with mythological landscapes, such as the Landscape with Juno and Io, with small figures in an awesome and sinister setting, and with a narrow grisaille frieze, the Yellow Frieze, which shows a charming blend of the sacred and the everyday, in a countryside decorated with travellers, small towers, columns and sacred trees, bridges and rustic shrines. Similar themes were developed in the
stucco reliefs of the 1st century BC, such as those from the Villa Farnesina which strikingly recall the description of Studius' works. In one delicate relief sacred trees shelter a rustic building, while travellers cross a bridge and an angler on a rock stands poised to cast his line into the water. Paintings from the villa at Boscoreale, painted soon after 11 BC (New York, Met.), place less emphasis on genre and elaborate the theme of the sacro-idyllic landscape; there are both large scenes, against white backgrounds, and small vignettes, which gleam against a dark ground. These works, suggesting a lost bucolic peace, and a longed-for refuge from the turmoil of the city, are reminiscent in mood of the Idylls of Theocritus. This villa is also decorated with mythological scenes in which romantic, bluish-green and softly atmospheric landscapes dominate ethereal figures and create a fairy-tale atmosphere. Another popular landscape theme was the garden (see Garden, §II, 4), and the lovely profusion of nature is richly conveyed by the garden room from the Villa of Livia at Porta Prima (late 1st century BC; Rome, Mus. N. Romano; see fig.), where the walls are treated illusionistically and a frescoed garden invades the room. Neat, trim paths invite the spectator, and beyond a fence trees and leaves seem to rustle in the breeze, where fruits—quinces, pomegranates and arbutus berries—gleam, and birds fly; the varied greens are enlivened by brilliant effects of light, and the touch is fresh and spirited. Livia’s garden room is reflected in two rooms in the House of the Fruit Orchard at Pompeii and the House of the Marine Venus. In the late 1st century AD and the 2nd century AD the villa landscape, adorned with richer, more luxurious architecture, was developed; the View of a Harbour from Stabiae (c. AD 55) and the City by the Sea (both Naples, Mus. Archeol. N.) show a dazzling array of buildings, triumphal arches, temples, columns and statues on the Italian coast, all painted with a light and spontaneous touch. The architectural landscape with figures continued to flourish in the 2nd century AD.

2. Byzantium and the Middle Ages, c 2nd century AD to c 15th century.

With Christianity ascendant, and the physical world no longer viewed as a source of sensuous delight but as a reflection of spiritual truth, the naturalistic landscape of the Classical world virtually disappeared. The Byzantine mosaics at Ravenna developed from the naturalism of the lunette of the Good Shepherd (c. AD 425–50; Ravenna, Mausoleum of Galla Placidia), where the soft play of light and shade creates a sense of space, to the symbolic, paradisal landscape (6th century AD) that glitters from the apse of S Apollinare in Classe. Although occasionally, as in the Vienna Genesis (6th century AD; Vienna, Österreich. Nbib., Cod. theol. gr. 31) and in the Utrecht Psalter (c. AD 816–34; Utrecht, Bib. Rijksuniv., MS. 32), the illusionistic space of Classical art is revived, later Byzantine
mosaics, such as those in the Palatine Chapel in Palermo (1140–89; see Palermo, §II, 2, (ii)), emphasize the decorative beauty of highly formalized trees and animals.

To the medieval Christian this world was a place of exile. The Labours of the Months represented the unremitting toil to which man had been condemned after the Fall; earthly delights were a temptation and the perils of the winter and the wilderness feared. Only the spring-time garden gave solace and a glimpse of paradise (Pearsall and Salter, 1973). In the 13th century there was a new sense that nature might offer pleasure; St Francis saw its beauty as a reflection of God, and in the Canticle to the Sun greeted the earth ‘who maintains and governs us and puts forth different fruits with coloured flowers and grass’ (Kay, 1958). Yet 13th-century paintings from Lucca, Pisa and Siena of St Francis preaching to the birds, such as Bonaventura Berlinghieri’s St Francis (1235; Pescia, S Francesco), retain Byzantine formulae, and it is not until the 14th century that naturalistic landscape reappeared for the first time since Classical antiquity.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Effects of Good Government (1338–9; detail of landscape), fresco, Sala della Pace, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena; photo credit: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY

The Labours of the Months, where each month is characterized by an appropriate task, was a dominant theme. In the early medieval period such labours were represented by carved peasants on cathedral portals, but in the 14th century figures are depicted toiling in a more richly described and naturalistic setting. Country activities
are rendered with vividness and pleasure in the Luttrell Psalter (c. 1330–40; London, BL); in Jean Pucelle’s illustrations to the Belleville Breviary (c. 1323–6; Paris, Bib. N., MSS. lat. 10483–4) the landscapes themselves convey the seasonal effect. The theme attained a new grandeur in Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s fresco of the Effects of Good Government (1338; Siena, Pal. Pub.), which recorded both the city of Siena and the surrounding countryside with new realism, and conveyed an intense patriotic pride. The twisted rocks of Byzantine art have vanished, and elegant huntsmen ride past peasants who work in a freshly observed countryside of rolling hills, winding roads and vistas of distant towns and lakes. Landscape frescoes, with Labours of the Months and the pleasures of the nobility, particularly of the chase, became fashionable decoration for castles and palaces in southern France and northern Italy. The Tour de la Garde Robe in the Palais des Papes at Avignon was decorated with hunting scenes; in northern Italy the Torre dell’Aquila of the castle at Trent was decorated by an unknown artist with frescoes of The Months (c. 1400). These show the everyday lives of the nobility, who in January charmingly throw snowballs, and of the peasants. The space is tilted up, and the surface has a richly embroidered beauty, yet there is a real sense of place, and the country tasks, plants and trees are sharply observed. These frescoes drew on the Italian tradition of the Tacuinum sanitatis, or tables of health, which included genre scenes in landscape settings affected by the weather; Prince George of Liechtenstein (reg 1390–1416), the patron at Trent, owned one of the most famous of these (c. 1400; Vienna, Österreich. Nbib., Cod. s.n. 2644). The theme of the chase remained popular in the 15th century, particularly in the castles and hunting-lodges of the Visconti and Sforza families, such as the Casino Borromeo at Oreno (1445–6). Such courtly and decorative landscapes were further elaborated in the work of Pisanello and Benozzo Gozzoli.
In France the new naturalism is evident in the work of illuminators of Books of Hours at the courts of Paris and Bourges, among them Jacquemart de Hesdin; the Boucicault Master, whose Book of Hours (after 1401; Paris, Mus. Jacquemart-André; MS. 2) was innovative in its use of aerial perspective; and the three Limbourg brothers, Pol, Jean and Herman, who created the celebrated Très Riches Heures of Jean, Duc de Berry (1411–16; Chantilly, Mus. Condé, MS. 65; e.g. April) illustrating the months of the year. In the Très Riches Heures each scene unfolds within a rational perspective and portrays the daily life of the aristocracy and peasants; many show the castles of
Jean de Berry and convey his pride in his noble lineage and lands. The courtly scenes retain the elegance of 14th-century art, yet the peasant scenes anticipate the new realism of the 15th century: the spectator, perhaps for the first time in landscape art, is made to feel the effects of weather, such as the bitter cold of a snowy February day. In the same period late Medieval landscape found its most perfect expression in the theme of the *hortus conclusus*, which remained popular in the 15th century. In the Master of the Upper Rhine’s *Paradise Garden* (c. 1410; Frankfurt am Main, Städel. Kstinst. & Städt. Gal.), the ‘lovely place’ of Classical literature, with perfumed flowers, birdsong, cool water and shade, becomes the enclosed garden of the Virgin.

3. 15th century.

In the 15th century, in both northern Europe and Italy, a new ideal of art was created. The curiosity that had inspired 14th-century painters led to a more objective exploration of the visible world, whose rediscovered beauty became a major theme of Renaissance art. Pictures were no longer decorative patterns of sharply observed details, but created a sense of luminous space. In Italy humanist writers invoked the authority of the classics on the status of landscape, which were to encourage its emergence as an independent genre in the 16th century.
In the Netherlands the great landscape that unites the lower panels of Jan and Hubert van Eyck’s Ghent Altarpiece (Ghent, St Bavo) presents the richness of the visible world with brilliant colour and effects of light and atmosphere made possible by the newly refined technique of oil painting. A paradisal meadow, bordered by a dark thicket of exotic trees, glows with scattered flowers and spires and distant hills gleam in a golden distance. The landscape is intensely real, yet its beauty conveys a spiritual radiance. Later 15th-century Flemish painters developed the theme of landscape; Hugo van der Goes, in the right wing of the Portinari Altarpiece (c. 1474–6; Florence, Uffizi), created an evocative winter scene, with leafless trees dark against a leaden sky; Dieric Bouts, whom Johannes Molanus described as ‘an innovator in depicting the countryside’ (Panofsky, 1953, p. 318), perfected poetic effects of light and soft atmosphere. Serene rustic views, with water-mills, small towers and bridges, beneath which swans glide on still, reflective waters, enchant the eye in Hans Memling’s religious works, while Gerard David, in the Baptism (c. 1503; Bruges, Groeningemus.), recaptured the marvellous precision of van Eyck and, unusually, suggested the beauty of deep forest glades. Netherlandish innovations spread through Europe; Konrad Witz’s Miraculous Draught of Fishes (1444; Geneva, Mus. A. & Hist.) renders the shores of Lake Geneva with topographical precision; in Provence the illuminator of Le Livre du coeur d’amour espris (c. 1465; Vienna, Österreich. Nbib., MS. 2597) explored strange effects of light in Netherlandish landscapes.

In Italy the dominant centres of landscape were Florence and Venice. In Florence interest in the Antique inspired Leon Battista Alberti, in his De re aedificatoria (1485), to recommend landscape for the decoration of palaces and country villas, as Vitruvius and Pliny had done. Alberti stressed the cheering effect of decorative paintings that ‘depict the delightful countryside, harbours, fishing, hunting, swimming, the games of shepherds—flowers and verdure …’.

In the following decade Flemish landscape became popular and influential in Florence. Its influence is apparent in Piero della Francesca’s portraits of Federigo da Montefeltro and his wife, Battista Sforza (after 1472; both Florence, Uffizi), and in the panoramic landscape background of Antonio Pollaiuolo’s Martyrdom of St Sebastian (1475; London, N.G.), which resembles the Arno Valley and includes such remarkable naturalistic passages as a thicket of trees on the pebbly shore of the river, where shallow water falls and breaks. Patrons had begun to prefer the display of such illusionistic skill to traditional gold backgrounds; in 1485 Domenico Ghirlandaio was contracted to paint ‘figures, buildings, castles, cities, mountains, hills, plains, rocks …’ (Baxandall, 1972, p. 18) in
the choir of S Maria Novella, Florence. It is possible that Pollaiuolo made a preparatory landscape drawing for the St Sebastian, and in this period Leonardo da Vinci was investigating nature with new scientific passion in his drawings; he drew the rhythmic forms of plants and water, the panoramic sweep of the Arno Valley, a storm in the Alps and climbed a mountain to study the cause of the blueness of the atmosphere. Leonardo also made an exalted claim for the landscape artist as creator: ‘If he wants valleys or likewise if he wants from high mountain tops to unfold a great plain extending down to the sea’s horizon, he is lord to do so; and likewise if from low plains he wishes to see high mountains, or from high mountains low plains and the seashore’ (Richter, 1939, i, p. 19). In central Italy other artists began to experiment: in Siena, Sassetta painted intensely lyrical landscapes; in Umbria, Pinturicchio, Perugino and Raphael created ideally beautiful and serene landscapes of gentle hills, glittering lakes and delicate trees.

Yet it was in Venice that the most influential landscapes were created. In the still and lucid paintings of Giovanni Bellini the holy figures seem part of nature and the landscape poignantly conveys emotion, as in the Agony in the Garden (c. 1465; London, N.G.), where the rosy light of dawn catches the underside of the clouds, and its promise softens Christ’s grief. Bellini’s portrayals of the hermit saints St Francis and St Jerome created a new kind of landscape, which was elaborated by Cima da Conegliano; Bellini’s St Jerome Reading (c. 1480–90; Washington, DC, N.G.A.) shows the saint within a rocky cave, framing a tranquil Italian view that evokes the lovely simplicity of country life. Albrecht Dürer visited Venice and responded to the poetic light and mood of Venetian landscape in watercolours such as the Alpine Landscape (1495; Oxford, Ashmolean) and the intensely solitary Lake in the Woods (London, BM).

4. 16th century.

In 1646 Edward Norgate wrote in his Miniatura:

To reduce this part of painting [i.e. landscape] to an absolute and intire Art, and to confine a man’s industry for the tearme of Life to this onely, is as I conceive an Invencion of these later times, and though a Noveltie, yet a good one, that to the Inventors and Professors hath brought both honour and profitt.

In drawing a distinction between landscape elements in a picture and pure landscape, Norgate was recognizing a development that had taken place in the 16th century, the emergence of landscape as an independent genre. This occurred, shortly after 1500, in three regions, the valley of the Danube, Antwerp and northern Italy, particularly Venice. Landscape flourished both in the mercantile society of the Netherlands and in the Italian courts, and throughout the century there was a dialogue between artists and patrons north
and south of the Alps. The term ‘landschaft’ was used by Dürer in 1520, and *paese* appears in Venetian inventories at the same moment. Such Italian theorists as Paolo Giovio spread an awareness of the Classical taste for landscape which seemed to sanction this new kind of picture.

(i) The Danube school.

Albrecht Altdorfer: *Landscape with Castle*, oil on parchment on panel, 305×222 mm, ?1520–c. 1532 (Munich, Alte Pinakothek); photo credit: Scala/Art Resource, NY
German, Austrian and Swiss artists who celebrated the beauty of the Danube Valley in southern Germany are now loosely grouped together as the Danube school. The most important of these were Lucas Cranach the elder, Albrecht Altdorfer and Wolfgang Huber, who drew and painted an intensely romantic scenery; a river valley bordered by majestic, moss-clad pines, and fairy-tale castles perched on perilous crags. In the same period such humanist writers as Konrad Celtis were extolling the ancient splendour of their native Germany. In Altdorfer’s landscapes dazzling effects of light, of plum-red skies, and dense forests glittering with bright sun, powerfully create mood (see Danube school; see fig.). His forests have an eerie, primeval beauty and shelter hermit saints, and wild men (e.g. the *Wild Man*, 1508; London, BM); in the *St George and the Dragon* (Munich, Alte Pin.) the forest is an enchanted Gothic wilderness, against whose perils a tiny St George valiantly tests his strength. Altdorfer’s *Landscape with a Footbridge* (c. 1520; London, N.G.) is the first surviving pure landscape to be painted in oil, and his nine etchings of the grandeur of the Danube scenery were the first to be dedicated to landscape, while the charming etchings of Augustin Hirschvogel and Hanns Lautensack popularized such themes.

(ii) **The Netherlands.**

In Antwerp in the same period Joachim Patinir created the Flemish *Weltlandschaft* (‘world landscape’). His landscapes, for example the *Landscape with St Jerome* (c. 1515–24; Madrid, Prado). These look back to the art of the Limbourg brothers and convey the heat of high summer and the bitter chill of icy weather; Bruegel portrayed the abundance of nature, showing man as subject to nature’s laws, and in harmony with the seasons.
In the middle years of the 16th century prints played an increasingly important role in the dissemination of landscape art, and the publisher Hieronymus Cock produced many prints of mountain panoramas, village scenes and forest interiors. The depiction of landscape, especially in prints, was influenced by the burgeoning art of Topography, and many artists, such as Joris van Hoefnagel and Hendrik van Cleve III, travelled extensively to gather material. Norgate later related that landscape was invented when an art-lover from Antwerp, returning from a long journey, inspired a painter with descriptions of ‘what Cities he saw, what beautifull prospects’. Bruegel travelled to Italy by way of the Alps, and a series of prints after his designs, based on nature studies (some of which include the motif of the artist sketching), convey the thrilling perils and heroic grandeur of alpine travel.

After the 1560s Antwerp lost its dominance, and Flemish landscapists worked in many European centres. In the 1590s Paul Bril and Jan Breughel the elder were active in Italy, where Bril popularized decorative landscape frescoes in palazzi and churches, among them the Torre dei Venti in the Vatican and S Cecilia, Rome. Both artists also painted small, brilliantly detailed works on copper, depicting rocky mountains and woodland scenes and evoking the bounty of God’s creation. Jan Breughel’s later landscapes, for example the Peasant Dance (1600; London, Hampton Court, Royal Col.), contrast a naturalistic foreground scene with a magical distance, seen from above, of exotic mountain peaks and charming hamlets, picturesquely enriched with towers and water-mills, and his art formed a link between Mannerist fantasy and the naturalism of the 17th century. Other painters, led by Gillis van Coninxloo III, fleeing religious persecution, formed the Frankenthal school, in which the tradition of the panoramic Weltlandschaft was continued. Later, in Amsterdam, Coninxloo perfected the close-up of dense forest interiors, and his Forest Landscape (1598; Vaduz, Samml. Liechtenstein; for illustration see Coninxloo, van family, §2) suggests the strange charm of nature untouched by man. Netherlandish artists also worked at the court of Rudolf II at Prague, where Roelandt Savery drew the romantic scenery of the Tyrol.

(iii) Italy.

In 16th-century Rome Polidoro da Caravaggio’s landscape frescoes of scenes from the legends of St Mary Magdalene and St Catherine of Siena (Rome, S Silvestro al Quirinale) recall the lost grandeur of the Classical world, in awe-inspiring landscapes embellished with antique ruins, obelisks, temples and colonnades. Yet the richest developments took place in Ferrara and Venice, where artists
conveyed sentiment through the varied moods of nature. Northern landscapes were very popular and connoisseurs began to use the word 'landscape' (paese) and to consider northerners as having a special gift in this genre. Marcantonio Michiel described Giorgione’s tiny Tempest (Venice, Accad.) as a ‘small landscape … with the storm, the gypsy and the soldier’, and in this work, where landscape dominates the figures, Giorgione created a mysterious and evocative poetry. His idyllic style was popularized by the many prints and drawings of Domenico Campagnola, the first pure landscapes in Italian art, which brought a new breadth and vigour to the panoramic vista. The bucolic mood of Campagnola’s and Giorgione’s works reflects the recent revival in Venice of the pastoral poetry of antiquity. Jacopo Sannazaro’s Arcadia (composed in the 1480s) described an idyllic landscape, adorned with altars and small temples, where melancholy shepherds sing and make love and where nymphs and satyrs embody nature’s vitality; Sannazaro was admired by noble patrons, who sought refuge from courtly sophistication in a dream of pastoral tranquillity. Such sentiments were perfectly expressed by many north Italian pictures, such as Dosso Dossi’s lush Three Ages of Man (New York, Met.) where lovers embrace in an enchanted countryside. An arcadian spirit, long associated with Giorgione’s name, fills the Concert Champêtre (c. 1510; Paris, Louvre) fashionably attributed to him; where elegant young men and naked women make music in the ‘lovely place’ of pastoral poetry, shaded by trees and refreshed by crystalline water. In the art of Titian, the pastoral landscape is richly mythologized, and the Venus of Pardo (Paris, Louvre), with its huntsmen, sleeping nymph and lascivious satyr, established a new and lasting theme. Yet the pastoral could also suggest a harder virtue, and in Jacopo Bassano’s country scenes the city dweller could admire the simple beauty of rural tasks.
Italians considered landscape a pleasing, albeit minor, speciality of northern artists. Nonetheless, Titian, although he never painted pure landscape, was acclaimed for the unsurpassed naturalism of his landscape passages, and later writers considered him the true creator of landscape painting. He was celebrated for his rendering of majestic forest groves and criss-crossing tree trunks, as in the *Death of St Peter Martyr* (destr.); for the airy beauty of blue mountain ranges; and for the sunset light, which floods the ravishing view of Venice seen from across the lagoon that forms the background to the *Virgin and Child in Glory with SS Francis and Louis of Toulouse* (1520; Ancona, Pin. Com.). Through Titian, Pietro Aretino discovered the splendour of the Grand Canal, and in a famous letter he compared the effects of Nature’s brush to those of Titian. Titian brought new passion to the landscape with a hermit saint, and in his *St Jerome in Penitence* (Madrid, Escorial) the wild and stormy landscape echoes the saint’s fervour. Girolamo Muziano’s many
drawings of landscapes with hermit saints (e.g. in Florence, Uffizi) developed the new intensity attained by Titian; his landscapes were engraved by Cornelis Cort and remained influential throughout the 17th century.

Later in the 16th century many Venetian patricians bought country villas on the terra firma, where they recreated the ideal of the ancient Roman villa life, and, appropriately, they also recreated the illusionistic landscape decorations of ancient Rome. In Dosso Dossi’s decorations at the Villa Imperiale, near Pesaro, and Paolo Veronese’s at the Villa Barbaro, Maser (1561–2), the rooms seem to open to the landscape beyond, recalling Vitruvius’ descriptions of ancient landscape. In these years the relationship between Venetian and north European landscape intensified; Bruegel’s landscape drawings reveal his interest in Venetian models, while Italian artists, particularly at Ferrara and Modena, painted fantastic panoramas inspired by Flemish world landscapes. Through Nicolò dell’Abate, who painted the Story of Eurydice and the Rape of Persephone (Paris, Louvre) at Fontainebleau in the 1550s, the style spread to France.

5. 17th century.

In the 17th century Rome and the northern Netherlands became the major centres of landscape, and artists, moving away from the 16th-century emphasis on the insignificance of man contrasted with the grandeur of the natural world, developed new traditions; in Rome, ideal or classical landscape developed, and in the Netherlands a wholly new kind of naturalistic landscape arose.

(i) Artists working in Italy.

Rome attracted artists from all over Europe, from the Netherlands, Germany, France and Lorraine, and in the early years of the Baroque, when there was a renewed interest in naturalism, new varieties of landscape flourished. Frescoed landscape friezes, such as those by Agostino Tassi, adorned fashionable Roman palaces and villas. Northern painters began to create a new kind of naturalistic landscape on small canvases and coppers, which had parallels in Haarlem. Adam Elsheimer’s tiny, jewel-like landscapes on copper explored new effects of light and created an idyllic mood; such Dutch artists as Bartholomeus Breenbergh and Cornelis van Poelenburch painted sunlit views, from a low viewpoint, of ruins in the Roman Campagna.
The northerners also felt keenly the charm of an Ovidian landscape, where, as in Paul Bril’s *Landscape with Pan Pursuing Syrinx* (San Francisco, CA, de Young Mem. Mus.) or Jacob Pynas’s *Landscape with Mercury and Herse* (c. 1608; Florence, Pitti), nymphs and shepherds dwell in a woodland grove. Many artists, and above all Claude Lorrain, drew and painted from nature in the Roman Campagna, exploring such new motifs as woodland glades, trees and waterfalls with an unparalleled freedom and boldness (see fig.). These northern landscapes were new in their use of a low viewpoint and greater atmospheric unity, and their quality was appreciated by the connoisseur Giulio Mancini, who described how Bril, in his late works, moved away from the ‘maesta scenica’ (scenic majesty) of the Flemish tradition to the naturalism of a true ‘prospetto di paese’ (view of landscape).

Although popular with collectors, these works had no place in Italian art theory. Seventeenth-century Italian theorists believed that history painting, which portrayed the heroic acts of mankind and drew its subjects from the Bible or Classical literature, was the crowning achievement of the painter, and landscape remained a lowly form of art, the province of northern specialists. However, in the majestic *Landscape with the Flight into Egypt* (1600–04; Rome,
Annibale Carracci created a landscape that, for the first time, aspired to the intellectual weight and seriousness of history paintings. The forms of nature are selected and idealized, the middle ground is embellished by the splendid architecture of man, and the theme is noble. Within a symmetrically framed composition space is lucidly constructed by a series of layers parallel to the picture plane. This work established a tradition that was later called ideal, or classical landscape; it was developed by Annibale’s pupil, Domenichino, whose landscapes became increasingly rocky and majestic and were popularized in the many paintings and prints of Giovanni Francesco Grimaldi.

The conventions of ideal landscape were perfected by Nicolas Poussin, Claude Lorrain and Gaspard Dughet. Poussin continued the elevated tone of Annibale Carracci; he saw that landscape, like history painting, can convey human passion, and his landscapes are distinguished above all by the austere harmony that they impose on nature. In two seminal works, Landscape with the Burial of Phocion (priv. col., on loan to Cardiff, N. Mus.) and Landscape with the Ashes of Phocion (Liverpool, Walker A.G.), a winding road leads through a crystalline landscape, where every formal accent suggests meditation, and where the clear-cut geometry of distant towers, temples and tombs evokes the timeless beauty of the Classical world. Phocion was a Stoic hero, unjustly condemned to death, and here nature echoes the nobility of man. These works may be described as ‘heroic’, a term that suggests the most grave and elevated conception of ideal landscape, expressed in monumental compositions enriched by grandiose architecture. The epithet was applied to Poussin’s works in the Cours de peinture par principes (1708) by Roger de Piles, who described heroic landscape as:

A composition of objects which, in their kinds, draw both from art and nature everything that is great and extraordinary in either .... The only buildings are temples, pyramids, ancient places of burial, altars consecrated to the divinities, pleasure houses of regular architecture. And if nature appear not there as we every day casually see her, she is at least represented as we think she ought to be.

De Piles distinguished between the heroic and the pastoral, or rural, scene, of which the greatest exponent was Claude Lorrain, whose works were eagerly sought by the most aristocratic Italian patrons. His subtle effects of light and the beauty of his aerial perspective delighted the connoisseur; he favoured the bright light of early morning or the warm red glow of evening. His early pastorals convey an aristocratic dream of bucolic peace; later he developed a statelier landscape, with mythological and biblical figures, and adorned with classical buildings, where tall trees frame the foreground, a large feature marks the middle ground, and travellers, bridges and distant towns lead over flat ground to a luminous distance. In many of Claude’s mythological landscapes, such as the Enchanted Castle (1664; London, N.G.), the poignancy of a twilight landscape echoes
the transience of love; others, such as the *Landing of Aeneas at Latium* (1675; Anglesey Abbey, Cambs, NT), draw their theme from the early history of Rome, and convey the shadowy beauty of a legendary era. The real Roman countryside is more vividly suggested by the landscapes of Gaspard Dughet, who painted the shifting patterns of light and shade in the rugged countryside around Tivoli and Frascati, recalling a landscape celebrated by Horace and Virgil (e.g. *View of Tivoli*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Hatton Gal.).

Dughet’s rocky landscapes have something in common with those of Salvator Rosa, the greatest Italian landscape painter of the 17th century. In Naples, Rosa, with Micco Spadaro, pioneered a school of fresh and spontaneous landscape painting. Later he worked for nine years (1640–49) at the Medici court in Florence, where picturesque rustic landscapes, such as those by Filippo Napoletano, were popular, and Rosa’s vast *Landscape with Cincinnatus Called from the Plough* (Althorp House, Northants) brought a new grandeur to this Tuscan theme of the charm of rural retirement. In Rome, from 1649, Rosa painted majestic, rocky landscapes and desolate river valleys full of brooding melancholy poetry; in a letter of 13 May 1662 he described a journey from Ancona to Rome in strikingly proto-Romantic terms: ‘O God! how often have I sighed to possess, how often since called to mind, those solitary hermitages which I passed on my way! ... I saw at Terni ... the famous waterfall of the Velino on the River Rieti; an object to satisfy the boldest imagination by its wild beauty’ (‘orrida bellezza’; Lady Morgan, 1824, ix). This wild beauty is the subject of such small landscapes with hermit saints as the *Landscape with SS Anthony and Paul* (London, Denis Mahon priv. col.), which create a new mood of religious exaltation. Dughet and Rosa were the dominant influences on late 17th-century and early 18th-century landscape in Italy, and their tradition was continued by such artists as Andrea Locatelli and Jan Frans van Bloemen (Orizzonte), while in France Jacques Fouquier and Pierre Patel the elder were influenced by Claude.

(ii) *Northern Netherlands.*

In Holland landscape enjoyed a new popularity, and 17th-century Dutch landscape is distinguished by richness and variety. Artists continued to paint mountain panoramas and idealized Italian landscapes; many travelled widely and painted German and Scandinavian views. Yet the most remarkable achievement was the creation of a totally new kind of naturalistic landscape and the portrayal of a native Dutch countryside. Artists explored every aspect of their flat and unremarkable landscape in changing weather and light (see colour pl. III, fig.), portraying moist river scenes, dune landscapes, sunlit fields of corn, country roads and inns, sweeping panoramas, festive winter scenes and moonlit canals; so great was the demand that many artists specialized narrowly. This flourishing of landscape may have been encouraged by Calvinism, which
destroyed the demand for religious art and yet encouraged the sense that the natural world reflects the bounty of God. The northern Netherlands had won their independence, and these naturalistic landscapes convey pride in the land for which men had fought. Such landscapes no longer show the Labours of the Months but suggest the pleasure that the increasing number of city dwellers took in country walks and excursions.

Naturalistic landscape originated in Haarlem in the 1620s. It was anticipated in a series of drawings of the dunes near Haarlem by Hendrick Goltzius (e.g. 1603; Rotterdam, Mus. Boymans–van Beuningen) and in prints of unassuming familiar motifs by such artists as Claes Jansz. Visscher I and Willem Buytewech. Esaias van de Velde pioneered naturalism in landscape, and his achievement was developed by Pieter Molyn, Jan van Goyen and Salomon van Ruysdael. Their early works, such as Esaias van de Velde’s Ferry Boat (1622; Amsterdam, Rijksmus.) are brightly coloured renderings of quiet village life, yet gradually these artists began to portray simpler motifs and more unified compositions, where transient effects of light and weather are conveyed through subtle modulations of tone, of almost monochromatic blues and greens, browns and yellows. This trend, known as the tonal phase of Dutch landscape, lasted from c. 1625 to the 1640s. The dune landscape was popular, and many portray almost provocatively insignificant motifs: tattered goat herds, dilapidated cottages and broken fences. More delicate are the many pictures of undramatic stretches of river, and Salomon van Ruysdael’s River Landscape (1632; London, N.G.) and Jan van Goyen’s Windmill by a River (1642; London, N.G.) subtly evoke the cloudy skies and moist atmosphere of a northern day. The winter scene was popular, and Haarlem painters moved away from the festive scenes of their Amsterdam contemporary Hendrick Avercamp, executing smaller works that emphasize the bitter cold.

In the mid-17th century, in what is known as the classic phase, Dutch landscape attained a new grandeur and richness. Colour brightened, form became more solid, and motifs more dramatic. There is a sense of widening horizons, of a renewed pleasure in the imagination, and Italianate landscapes such as Jan Asselijn’s Panoramic Landscape (c. 1649; Vienna, Akad. Bild. Kst.) and Jan Both’s Italian Landscape with Draughtsmen (c. 1650; Amsterdam, Rijksmus.) again suggest a northern delight in the perils of Alpine travel and the enchantment of Mediterranean ruins and sunny light; Asselijn and Both had travelled in Italy, and shared with Claude an interest in richly atmospheric effects. Allart van Everdingen travelled in Norway and Sweden and popularized landscapes of waterfalls and log-huts in rugged, mountainous scenery.
The great landscapists of the later 17th century, Jacob van Ruisdael and Aelbert Cuyp, were influenced by the Italianate tradition both in their use of light and in an increasingly firm and classical structure. Ruisdael created a more sombre, elemental sense of nature’s power, and in his landscapes the darkening of thundery light above a mournful heath, or the shifting patterns of light and shade across a flat Dutch landscape zigzagged by bleaching fields and sunny meadows, or the sinister bleakness of snow-filled clouds on a dark winter’s day, suggest the insignificance of man in the natural world (see fig.). Crumbling ruins, overrun by nature, as in the Landscape with Ruins of the Castle of Egmond (early 1650s; Chicago, IL, A. Inst.), inspire ideas of transience and mortality, while his forest views, with majestic tree trunks, are awe-inspiring and remote from man. His most gifted pupil was Meindert Hobbema, who specialized in woodland scenes, often with water-mills, which derive from Ruisdael. Yet Hobbema’s landscapes, such as Wooded Road with Cottages (1662; Philadelphia, PA, Mus. A.), idealize country life, and his brighter, more graceful, forest glades shelter charming rustic cottages (see fig.). Slender trees are patterned with Rococo elegance against bright sunlight, and leaves glisten with pinpoints of bright light; a variety of greens attracts and delights the eye.
Cuyp’s brilliantly lit landscapes contrast sharply with Ruisdael’s grave art. Cuyp painted a rich and prosperous countryside, where sleek cows graze and elegant horsemen observe contented milkmaids and herdsmen. Cuyp’s is a pastoral vision, and his landscape is idealized by a golden light and by the clarity and balance of his compositions; his View of Nijmegen (c. 1652–4; Indianapolis, IN, Mus. A.) glitters with bright highlights, and luminous and simplified planes of colour create a taut pattern of horizontals and verticals.

(iii) Southern Netherlands.

The emigration of landscape artists from the southern Netherlands continued during the 17th century, and few of the followers of Coninxloo and Jan Breughel the elder remained. Landscape was dominated by Peter Paul Rubens, who united the 16th-century Flemish landscape tradition with the Venetian pastoral. In his later years Rubens bought a country estate and devoted himself to landscape; he was steeped in Classical literature, and his Landscape with Het Steen (c. 1676; London, N.G.) conveys an essentially Georgic ideal of good husbandry. The viewpoint is high, and there is an echo of the archaic three-colour scheme; sweeping diagonals and a flood of sunlight draw attention to the Flemish château in the background, where elegant gentlemen stroll, contented peasants set off to market and the lovely fertility of a well-tended landscape supplies man’s needs. Lucas van Uden and Jan Wildens worked in Rubens’s studio and produced some independent landscapes; more original are the landscapes of Jan Siberechts, with fords and cattle.

6. 18th century.

In the 18th century, when France and England became the new centres of landscape art, the two great traditions of 17th-century landscape, the Italian and the Dutch, retained their authority, and throughout the period there was a continuous dialogue between an Arcadian vision of Italy and a growing delight in the precise observation of a fragment of nature. Italian painters played a lesser role, and the most exciting developments took place in Venice, in the soft, Claudean scenes of Francesco Zuccarelli, and the fresh, spontaneous landscape gouaches of Marco Ricci. Yet Rome remained the artistic capital of Europe, its glamour drawing artists from many countries to establish a colony there that contributed to an increasingly international landscape movement. The Grand Tour was at the height of its popularity, and wealthy patrons, often accompanied by artists, travelled through Europe, creating a ready market for topographical landscape, the Capriccio and the Veduta, and for the cheaper media of prints and watercolours. In the second
half of the century, when artists and writers responded to nature with new intensity, landscape became more important and many new varieties were created.

Antoine Watteau: *Pilgrimage to the Isle of Cythera*, oil on canvas, 1.29×1.94 m, 1717 (Paris, Musée du Louvre); photo credit: Scala/Art Resource, NY

At the turn of the century, in both France and England, pastiches of Italianate landscape remained popular. Yet in the 1710s the fresh and informal vision of Jean-Antoine Watteau created a new kind of pastoral landscape with figures, the *fête galante*, and his landscape of gardens, parks and woodlands, where lovers stroll and make music, was elaborated by François Boucher, and inspired Jean-Honoré Fragonard in the 1760s. Watteau absorbed the poetic mood of Giorgione, and the grandeur of his most celebrated work, the Pilgrimage to the Isle of Cythera (1717; Paris, Louvre), with lofty trees and airy mountain ranges, suggests his intense study of Venetian landscape. Boucher’s charming and decorative pastoral scenes, glittering with brilliant blues and greens and vivid in detail, are theatrical settings of water-mills, tumbledown cottages and rustic bridges, where pretty laundresses and peasant girls enact a tranquil rustic idyll. In England, too, the pastoral was revived, albeit in a harsher, more Georgic vein. Hitherto the English gentleman’s appreciation of landscape had been limited to the backgrounds of hunting scenes, such as those by John Wootton, or to the settings for portraits of country houses. Yet from the 1720s the serenity of a richly cultivated landscape, celebrated in the poems of John Dyer (1699–1757) and James Thomson, became the subject of landscape painters, and Edward Hayley and Thomas Gainsborough painted
harmonious rural scenes. A taste for Dutch landscape developed, and Gainsborough’s *Cornard Wood* (1748; London, N.G.) is a lively blend of Dutch and French motifs.

In the mid-century French and English landscape conventions were enriched by the experience of artists working in Italy, the ‘Magick Land’. There artists responded both to the beauty of Italian light and scenery, and to the rich associations of a landscape celebrated by the Latin poets; the Roman countryside had, moreover, inspired the great landscapes of Claude, Poussin and Dughet, and every site seemed hallowed by tradition. Joseph Vernet worked in Italy from 1734–53, and painted Claudean views that were popular with the British. He was known for his sets of pictures illustrating the four times of day, which present contrasting effects of light and weather. Vernet’s meeting with Richard Wilson in Rome encouraged the latter’s interest in landscape; Wilson’s elegiac Italianate landscapes (*e.g.* *Rome and the Ponte Molle*, 1754; Cardiff, N. Mus.), with mournful cypresses and dusky light, revived the 17th-century ideal landscape tradition and suggested the beauty of the classic ground whose present decay stimulated the melancholy reverie of the Grand Tourist. A similar melancholy pervades John Robert Cozens’s muted, atmospheric *View of Lake Nemi* (London, BM), an ecstatic response to the dream-like beauty of a Virgilian landscape, made more poignant by Cozens’s evocation of the poetry of Claude. In his later years, in such austere and meditative works as *Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle* (c. 1756–7; Liverpool, Walker A.G.), Wilson brought this new grandeur and intellectual complexity to a British landscape.

Yet Rome also encouraged the development of a more informal landscape, and it was above all in Rome that the practice of both painting and drawing outdoors developed into a tradition. Fragonard and Hubert Robert, both of whom were attracted by the Italianate capriccio tradition, drew in the grounds of the Villa d’Este at Tivoli, and the villa’s elegiac blend of luxuriant nature and crumbling architecture remained a rich source of motifs. Startlingly immediate outdoor oil sketches were made by both Thomas Jones and Philippe de Valenciennes in the 1780s. Both artists chose unassuming motifs, and yet betray a classical sense of balance and clarity.

In the late 18th century many new landscape types emerged. Edmund Burke’s treatise *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1756; see Sublime, the) encouraged a new enthusiasm for nature’s violence. The grandeur of mountains, hitherto feared, began to fascinate, and the alpine scenes of Caspar Wolf, and of John Robert Cozens, movingly create the mystery of an icy domain, alien to man. A taste for the Sublime was nurtured by pictures of rocky caverns, towering cliffs, cascades, storms and volcanoes, and found its characteristic expression in such works as Julius Caesar Ibbetson’s *Phaeton in a Thunderstorm* (1798; Leeds, C.A.G.) or Philippe de Loutherbourg’s *Coalbrookdale by Night* (1801; London, Sci. Mus.; see colour pl. III, fig.). Many artists painted Vesuvius, obligingly active at this time; Pierre-Jacques Volaire specialized in such scenes; Joseph Wright of Derby’s
Eruption of Vesuvius (c. 1774–6; Aberystwyth, U. Coll. Wales, Powell Col.) contrasts with his tranquil Grotto by the Seaside in the Kingdom of Naples, with Banditti, Sunset (Boston, MA, Mus. F.A.), and the two pictures epitomize 18th-century categories of the sublime and the beautiful.

In France there was comparatively little interest in a native landscape, but in England the illustrated travel accounts of the Picturesque theorist William Gilpin encouraged the appreciation of the wild beauty of Wales, the Lake District and Derbyshire, and stimulated the vogue for picturesque travel. The Picturesque was characterized by roughness and irregularity, and its admirers enthused over views of tumbledown cottages, framed by gnarled trees, where tattered gypsies or shaggy donkeys added a note of colour, or of irregular medieval ruins, where encroaching ivy, ‘the mossy vest of time’, created varied textures and suggested pleasing meditations on transience. The watercolour landscapes of such artists as Michael ‘Angelo’ Rooker, Thomas Hearne and John ‘Warwick’ Smith, who in these years moved from topography to the creation of independent works, show ruins or homely rustic scenes, and were created for connoisseurs of the Picturesque.

Throughout the century landscape had remained low in the academic hierarchy of the genres. In the years after the French Revolution (1789–95), de Valenciennes and the French Neo-classical landscapists Jean-Victor Bertin and Jean-Joseph-Xavier Bidauld created the paysage historique (see Neo-classicism), in which they attempted, as Poussin had done, to ennoble the genre by re-creating the Classical past and by restoring Poussin’s lucid structure and moral gravity; de Valenciennes’ Landscape of Ancient Greece (1786; Detroit, MI, Inst. A.) and Bidauld’s Historical Landscape with Psyche and Pan (1819; Paris, Louvre) are particularly fine examples of this category. In the same years other artists turned to a northern tradition for fresh inspiration, and Georges Michel’s Landscape with Windmill (c. 1800; Paris, Louvre), which is deeply indebted to Dutch 17th-century art, captures the moody beauty of a stormy sky. In England too the most original painters sought a closer union with nature, and the early watercolours of Thomas Girtin attained a new simplicity and power.

7. 19th century.

In the 19th century, as the religious and political fixities of the 18th century perished, and the Industrial Revolution threatened the traditions of rural life, the old hierarchy of the genres crumbled, and throughout Europe and North America landscape attained a new supremacy.
(i) Romantic era.

In the late 18th century a new sensibility to nature had been aroused by the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the Romantic artists of the early 19th century saw the power of landscape to express passionate feeling (see Romanticism). They painted visionary landscapes of waste and solitary places, which create a sense of the transcendental and of man’s longing for the infinite; at the same time they strove to recover a moral purity and truth, equated with the unsullied vision of childhood, in intense contemplation of the simplest and most unassuming motifs. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82), in Circles, expresses this desire to seek the spiritual in nature: ‘We can never see Christianity from the Catechism—from the pastures, from a boat on the pond, from amidst the songs of wood birds, we possibly may’.

J. M. W. Turner: *Snowstorm: Hannibal and Army Crossing the Alps*, oil on canvas, 1.45×2.36 m, 1812 (London, Tate); photo credit: Clore Collection, Tate, London/Art Resource, NY

In Germany, Caspar David Friedrich was the first artist to endow the forms of nature with an intense spirituality, and his *Cross in the Mountains* (1808; Dresden, Gemäldegal. Neue Meister) was the first landscape to be used as an altarpiece. His desolate scenes, of the moon eerily framed by gnarled branches, of ruined Gothic churches and mountain peaks touched by the mauves and silvers of dawn, are radical in their treatment of space and light and convey, as no earlier painter had done, the sense of mystery aroused by natural phenomena. In England Samuel Palmer, responding to the ‘mystic and dreamy glimmer’ of William Blake’s wood engravings to (Robert) ‘Thornton’s Virgil’ (1822), painted and drew, in the countryside around Shoreham, Kent, small pastoral scenes that suggest the
revelation of the divine in the rich abundance of nature. J. M. W.
Turner shared with Friedrich an interest in symbolism yet, as a
passionate traveller, produced an art that is more various and more
complex in its relationship to tradition. He sought to create
landscapes with the moral grandeur of history painting, and, through
increasingly expressive and brilliant colour, to create a new sense of
the mystery of space and light. He painted the magnificence of
nature—and of the violence of the elements, of fiery sunsets,
avanches, storms (see fig.)—and yet endowed these fashionably
Sublime subjects with a new universality and emotional power; he
also painted such lyrical scenes as the Bay of Baiae, with Apollo and
the Sibyl (1824; London, Tate), a picture steeped in awareness of the
art and poetry of the past while suggesting the Romantic discovery
of the intoxicating and paradisal beauty of the southern Italian bay.

Albert Bierstadt: Rocky Mountains, Lander’s Peak, oil on canvas, 73 1/2
x 120 3/4 in. (186.7 x 306.7 cm), 1863 (New York, Metropolitan Museum
of Art, Rogers Fund, 1907, Accession ID:07.123); photo © The
Metropolitan Museum of Art http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/
search-the-collections/20010496 <http://www.metmuseum.org/
Collections/search-the-collections/20010496>

In the USA painters of the Hudson River school, founded by Thomas
Cole, responded to the sublimities of Turner and the melodramatic
outpourings of his follower John Martin. These artists believed that
landscape should declare the glory of God and saw in the solitary
wildernesses and virgin forests of North America a world that
retained a primeval innocence. Cole painted heroic landscapes of
American scenery, such as his stormy Schroon Mountain,
Adirondacks (1838; Cleveland, OH, Mus. A.), and Albert Bierstadt
and Frederic Edwin Church created, in an increasingly nationalist
spirit, such American landscapes as Bierstadt’s The Rocky
Mountains, Lander’s Peak (1863; New York, Met) and Church’s *Niagara* (1857; Washington, DC, Corcoran Gal. A.) with theatrical effects of light and dizzying space. In the mid-19th century the Hudson River school’s interest in light was developed by the Luminists, a group founded by Fitz Hugh Lane and developed by Martin Johnson Heade and Sanford Robinson Gifford. Yet Luminist works are characterized, not by grandeur and melodrama, but by an extraordinary stillness and clarity, and by smooth, glistening surfaces that create a sense of infinite space. Man is rarely present, and such lyrical works as Lane’s *Bruce’s Reach, Bruce’s Cove* (1804; US priv. col., see 1980 exh. cat., pl. 11) attain a magical intensity, while Heade’s *The Coming Storm* (1859; New York, Met.) creates a darker, more mysterious mood.

John Constable: *The Haywain*, oil on canvas, 1.302×1.854 m, 1821 (London, National Gallery); Photo credit: National Gallery, London/Art Resource, NY

Romantic landscape embraced not only the sublime and visionary, but also those painters who brought a new moral weight to simple and quiet scenes. In England the humble motifs of Norwich school artists, among them John Crome and John Sell Cotman, were deeply influenced by Dutch art, while John Constable sought a ‘pure and unaffected manner’ of recording the childhood landscape of his native Suffolk. His art is new in the fresh greens and bold brushwork of his studies from nature and in his scientific yet passionate observation of effects of light and weather; his studies of the sky convey the liberation of feeling in movement and change. His large landscapes idealize a rich, well-ordered, sunny agricultural landscape (e.g. *The Haywain*, 1821; London, N.G.), suggesting a world where man is in harmony with nature.
(ii) ‘Plein-air’ painting.

In the 1820s and 1830s there was a yet stronger emphasis on painting out of doors, facilitated by the new availability of the paint-tube, which resulted both in the leaf-by-leaf realism of the Pre-Raphaelites and in an increasing directness and informality that was to culminate in Impressionism. The bright outdoor studies of Camille Corot, such as the View in the Farnese Gardens (1826; Washington, DC, Phillips Col.), distinguished by subtlety of tone and crisp geometric compositions, inaugurated a new naturalistic vision, and in Denmark a newly founded school of landscape artists, which included Christen Købke, painted small, still scenes, sharply lit and tranquil in mood (e.g. Købke’s View of One of the Lakes in Copenhagen (1838; Copenhagen, Stat. Mus. Kst)). In the 1830s a colony of artists established themselves at the village of Barbizon, on the edge of the Forest of Fontainebleau, and painted, with new freshness, the moist atmosphere and changing light and weather of the countrysides of northern France (see Barbizon school). In the depths of the forest these artists sought a lost Arcadian innocence and the simple rhythms of country life; Théodore Rousseau’s stormy marshes and Narcisse Diaz’s woodland glades suggest a Romantic seclusion in an untouched world. Yet the mournful beauty of Barbizon pictures could also suggest the powerlessness of man confronted by nature; Jean-François Millet’s great cycle of the Four Seasons (1868–74; Paris, Louvre; New York, Met.; Boston, MA, Mus. F.A.; Cardiff, N. Mus.) is rich in drama and symbol, and the pastel November (c. 1866; Glasgow, Burrell Col.) is an extraordinarily bleak image of death and desolation. In the 1860s Gustave Courbet also painted wild scenes remote from man, such as the Source of the Loue (1864; Zurich, Ksthaus) and Roe Bucks Shelter in the Winter (c. 1866; Lyon, Mus. B.-A.). The Barbizon school was widely influential and had similarities with the later Hague school, a group of Dutch landscape artists who from the 1860s painted lyrical effects of light and atmosphere in the landscape around The Hague, and with the Macchiaioli, among them Giovanni Fattori and Silvestro Lega, who from the late 1850s painted small, horizontal plein-air landscape sketches in macchie (It.: ‘patches’) of colour, which create effects of brilliant light by vivid contrasts of tone.

Impressionism, which originated in France in the 1860s, was indebted to Barbizon, yet rejected its Romantic isolation for a sunnier, more modern world. Painting out of doors was central to the Impressionists’ art and, increasingly, they destroyed the distinction between the sketch and the finished work of art. United by their interest in colour and light, the Impressionists chose those themes, such as effects of fog, mist or snow, the reflective waters of the Seine, a blossom-filled orchard, a meadow red with poppies (see fig.), where the everyday world seems to dissolve into shifting patterns of light and shade. They suggested effects of vibrant light through a varied brushstroke, of patches of colour or comma-like dashes of paint, and intensified its brightness through the use of a white ground and through coloured shadows and complementary colours, as in the brilliant blues and oranges of Auguste Renoir’s *Boating on the Seine* (c. 1879; London, N.G.) and the reds and greens of Claude Monet’s *Field of Poppies* (1873; Paris, Mus. d’Orsay). In the 1870s the artists painted in the landscape around Paris, and yet their subjects are varied. Monet, Renoir and Berthe Morisot, alive to Charles Baudelaire’s plea that the artist should
paint modern life, captured the pleasures of the bourgeoisie in the Bois de Boulogne and in the pretty suburban landscape at Argenteuil, sometimes touched by encroaching industry. Scenes by Camille Pissarro such as Orchard with Flowering Fruit Trees, Springtime, Pontoise (1877; Paris, Mus. d’Orsay) suggested a harsher, more rural life, while Alfred Sisley’s serene and tranquil river and snow scenes, among them Snow at Louveciennes (1878; Paris, Mus. d’Orsay) and Rue Eugène Moussoir at Moret: Winter (1891; New York, Met.), look back to the untouched landscape of Barbizon. The main legacy of the Impressionists was a lighter palette, and English painters such as Philip Wilson Steer are sometimes described as Impressionist.

(iii) Late 19th century.

In the 1880s many artists, among them the Impressionists themselves, reacted against Impressionist naturalism and attempted to restore a sense of structure and enduring truth to landscape art. The emerging Symbolist aesthetic encouraged an interest in ambiguity and mystery, and in the power of colour and line to create emotion, and many landscapists explored the symbolic effects of pure colour and of rhythmically patterned compositions. Some Symbolist artists withdrew from reality and used landscape to create an imagined and timeless world that suggests a subjective mood. Pierre Puvis de Chavannes who preferred ‘mournful aspects to all others, low skies, solitary plains, discreet in hue, where each tuft of grass plays its little tune to the wind of midday’ (Lucie-Smith, 1972) painted the melancholy greys and mauves of the Poor Fisherman (1881; Paris, Mus. d’Orsay), while the Swiss Arnold Böcklin created powerful mythological landscapes such as the Island of the Dead (1880; Basle, Kstmus.).
The many trends present in landscape at this point were brought together in Georges Seurat’s coastal scenes of the 1880s, such as *Le Crotoy, Looking Upstream* (1889; Detroit, MI, Inst. A.). Startlingly luminous, these works extend Impressionism, and yet the balance of horizontals and verticals and of void and solid has a classic clarity and beauty, while the stillness and absence of figures create a haunting poetry. In the same years the art of Paul Cézanne attained a new grandeur; he painted harsh and rocky hillsides, great trees bleak against a winter sky (e.g. *Alley of Chestnut Trees at the Jas de Bouffan in Winter*, 1885–7; Minneapolis, MN, Inst. A.) and a series of pictures of the majestic Mont Sainte-Victoire (1900–06; e.g. Paris, Louvre) in which, through shifting planes of colour, he explored the relationship between surface and depth, creating an ordered and disciplined landscape that is, at the same time, passionately felt.
Other artists were more concerned to paint landscapes rich in human meaning. Both Pissarro and Vincent van Gogh looked back to Barbizon, and their agricultural landscapes convey the timeless rituals of country life. Van Gogh’s Provençal landscapes, of blossoming orchards, such as the *Pink Peach Tree in Blossom* (1888; Otterlo, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller) and his harvest scenes, lit by a brilliant southern sun, suggest, through the richness of the colour and the boldness of the space, a religious celebration of the richness of the earth (see fig.). His latest southern landscapes attain an almost mystical intensity, and in the *Starry Night* (1889; New York, MOMA) the undulating rhythms and the union of earth and sky, suggest a passionate desire to become one with nature.

Yet other artists sought a purer, more primitive existence in a harsher, bleaker landscape, where the lives of peasants and fishermen offered the ideal of a life untouched by modern civilization. Artists’ colonies flourished, at Pont-Aven in Brittany, at Newlyn in England, Cockburnspath in Scotland, Skagen in Denmark and Worpswede in Germany. The colony at Pont-Aven had a strikingly international character, and there artists, dominated by Paul Gauguin, painted traditional agricultural scenes, of apple-picking, buckwheat- and hay-harvesting, in flat areas of pure colour. European landscape painters were also at this time following in the
footsteps of European colonists, recording other lands and cultures for consumption at home (see for example Orientalism) and imitating new national schools in territories such as Australia.

Claude Monet: *Haystacks* (Effect of Snow and Sun), oil on canvas, 25 3/4 x 36 1/4 in. (65.4 x 92.1 cm), 1891 (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929, Accession ID: 29.100.109); photo © The Metropolitan Museum of Art http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/110001570

In the late 1880s and 1890s the Romantic interest in an intense meditation before nature, and in a sublime landscape, was reborn. After 1890 Monet painted series of pictures, of poplars, haystacks (see fig.) and waterlilies, that explore effects of atmosphere on a single motif, and his harmonies of colour became increasingly subjective and invited reverie and contemplation. In Scandinavia, Switzerland and around the north Italian lakes artists suggested a pantheistic feeling for nature in Alpine scenes and solitary lakes. Such works as Harald Oskar Sohlberg’s *Winter Night in Rondane* (1901; Bergen, Reksten Found.) and Ferdinand Hodler’s *Lake Geneva from Chexbres* (1895; Zurich, Ksthau) with their emphasis on the expressive power of boldly simplified and decorative forms, parallel to the picture plane, look forward to the increasing abstraction of 20th-century landscape.
8. 20th century.

Although in the 20th century the major artistic movements were no longer dominated by landscape, it remained an important subject or element as painters responded to the successive fears of the century—world wars, increasing industrialization and materialism, the threat of global destruction and of irreparable damage to the ecology—with landscapes that express a longing for a spirituality and timelessness found in nature.

The formal innovations of Post-Impressionism were developed by the Fauves between 1900 and 1905. They created a new kind of landscape, characterized by such works as André Derain’s Collioure: The Village and the Ocean (1905; Edinburgh, N.G. Mod. A.) in which patches of pure colour and flattened, rhythmic shapes convey the brilliant sunlight of the Mediterranean. In Matisse’s Joy of Life (1906; Merion Station, PA, Barnes Found.), where nude figures harmonize with the natural scene, the myth of Arcadia was reborn, while the paradisal beauty of a sun-drenched and timeless Mediterranean world, rich in echoes of the poetry of Virgil and Theocritus, formed a major theme of the sensuously coloured landscapes of Pierre Bonnard. A similar vision informed the landscapes of such Spanish Catalan artists as Joaquim Sunyer (e.g. his Pastoral, 1910–11; Joan A. Maragall priv. col.). Joan Miró’s detailed Vegetable Garden with Donkey (1918; Stockholm, Mod. Mus.) suggests, in its highly sophisticated naivety, a longing for the simplicity of rural life, an element of his Catalan nationalism.

In northern Europe the German artists of Die Brücke sought a sense of oneness with nature in remote, sometimes exotic surroundings. Landscape was a major theme, and scenes of nudes in the open air, such as Erich Heckel’s Woodland Pool (1910; Munich, Staatsgal. Mod. Kst) and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner’s Striding into the Seas (1912; Stuttgart, Staatsgal.), vigorous, harshly simplified works, celebrate their sense of an ideal freedom in nature. The Norwegian landscapes of Karl Schmidt-Rottluff depend on bold clashes of colour, and in such visionary works as Emil Nolde’s Tropical Sun (1914; Seebüll, Stift. Nolde; see colour pl. IV, fig.) colour heightens an intensely religious emotion. A belief in the spiritual power of art inspired the artists of the Blaue Reiter, while Vasily Kandinsky’s Improvisations and Compositions, painted between 1909 and 1914, are visionary abstract landscapes, freed from the demands of naturalism yet rich in the sense of the mysterious beauty of light, of the elements, of mountains and valleys.

By 1907 the influence of van Gogh and Gauguin had yielded to that of Cézanne. Cézanne’s late landscapes, and his instruction to ‘Treat nature by the cylinder, the sphere, the cone’ encouraged an emphasis on formalism that was taken up by the Cubists. In Georges Braque’s landscapes painted at L’Estaque and La Roche-Guyon in 1908 and 1909, and Pablo Picasso’s Horta de San Juan landscapes of 1909, forms become planar, intersecting and overlapping. Contact with Picasso and Braque encouraged Piet Mondrian to experiment with abstraction, and an intense contemplation of the beach and sea
at Domburg led to Composition No. 10: *Pier and Ocean* (1915; Otterlo, Rijksmus. Kröller-Müller), where nature is reduced to a glittering pattern of delicate crosses.

In the early years of the century Giorgio de Chirico developed his Pittura Metafisica, with its fictive space and subverted perspective, and by the 1920s and 1930s Surrealist artists created a new landscape of the subconscious. Through the evocation of boundless space, of vast, smoothly painted plains and distant horizons, barren of figures yet filled with light, they suggested mystery and desolation. Max Ernst’s forest pictures of 1927–33 depict a sinister, nightmare realm, alien to man; less threatening, yet eerie and melancholic, are Yves Tanguy’s imagined landscapes, peopled with strange, biomorphic forms, and Kay Sage’s austere, grey-green visions.
Georgia O’Keeffe: *Mule’s Skull with Pink Poinsettia*, oil on canvas, 1019×762 mm, 1936 (Santa Fe, NM, Georgia O’Keeffe Museum); © 2007 Georgia O’Keeffe Museum/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, photo credit: Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe/Art Resource, NY

Yet other artists united a Surrealist intensity of vision, and interest in the inward meaning of natural forms, with traditionally Romantic themes. The Canadian artists of the Group of Seven painted richly symbolic images of a vast and wild terrain, while in the USA the magically lit landscapes of Arthur Dove and Georgia O’Keeffe’s brilliantly coloured desert scenes suggest the elemental rhythms and forces of the natural world (*see* *Mule’s Skull with Pink Poinsettia*, 1936; Santa Fe, NM, Georgia O’Keeffe Mus.). The English painter Paul Nash’s poetic works emphasized the power of natural shapes and effects of light to stir emotion, and his art formed a link between Surrealism and the visionary art of Neo-Romantic painters, who included such artists as Graham Sutherland, John Minton and Michael Ayrton. Sutherland’s idyllic etchings of 1925–7 were inspired by the early work of Samuel Palmer, but in the 1940s he sought a wilder landscape, depicting Pembrokeshire scenes such as *Black Landscape* (1939–44; London, Tate) with a magical, slightly disturbing intensity. This period is also characterized by a strong revival of traditional landscape, for, in the retreat from modernism that followed World War I, many landscape painters created naturalistic scenes filled with longing for a time-hallowed peace with nature.

The rural scene became a popular American subject, both celebrated, as in Grant Wood’s boldly simplified *Stone City, Iowa* (1930; Omaha, NE, Joslyn A. Mus.), or mourned for, as in Charles Burchfield’s pictures of dreary Midwestern farms. Many English painters, of whom John Nash was among the most powerful, celebrated rich agricultural scenes. The paintings of Ivon Hitchens also celebrated idyllic qualities in Sussex woodland, but in a manner that transmuted them into qualities of his personal experience.

In the 1940s, particularly after the horrors of Hiroshima, American painters sought to reassert ‘man’s natural desire for the exalted, for a concern with our relationship to absolute emotions’ (Newman, 1948). The lack of such a relationship is poignantly present in the nostalgic, Maine landscapes of Andrew Wyeth, where the artist brooded over the timelessness of rocks and hills, and ‘the bone structure in the landscape—the loneliness of it—the dead feeling of winter’ (Corn, 1973).
Yet the art of the Abstract Expressionists has also been seen as a confirmation of the sublimity of 19th-century American landscape painting. Although their imagery is abstract, the vast canvases of Clyfford Still and of Jackson Pollock suggest the grandeur and energy of landscape, while the stark, elemental structures and radiant fields of colour of Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb are metaphors for the mystery of creation and the elements. These artists were deeply interested in myth and the primitive, and Gottlieb’s *Bursts*, which show the tranquil orb of sun or moon above an exploding earth, strive to reveal a cosmic truth (see fig.).
In the 1960s Jasper Johns’s *By the Sea* (1961; priv. col.), divided into four horizontal bands labelled red/yellow/blue, and a combination of the three words, epitomized the cold eye that Pop art cast on the concept of the Sublime. Art became urban; Allan D’Arcangelo painted the highway as landscape; James Rosenquist and Tom Wesselmann appropriated imagery from billboards, suggesting a landscape glimpsed from the window of a car (see fig.), and this theme recurred in David Hockney’s pictures of the 1980s. Yet from the late 1960s many artists again began to contrast the grandeur and timelessness of nature with the puniness of man, and this renewed Romanticism was given a distinctive character by a sharpened awareness of an increasing threat to the Earth. In the USA artists moved out of the studio and worked in the untouched space of Arizona, Nevada and California (see Land art). In England, land art was more deeply rooted in a native romantic tradition and expressed above all a reverence for the natural world, and a desire to seek a time beyond man and renew a primal sympathy with nature.
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