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TITIAN'S LANDSCAPES

By

Yen-min Chou

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ABSTRACT

TITIAN'S LANDSCAPES

By

Yen-min Chou

Titian was called “the Homer of Landscapists,” signifying his unique and landmark status in landscape development and his high level of achievement. More than any of his predecessors, Titian was devoted to landscape paintings and drawings. The main purpose of this thesis is to thoroughly investigate of Titian’s landscapes.

Titian created the pastoral works, which may not be only inherently visual. To some degrees, these are associated with pastoral literature. To find the link between Titian’s landscapes and Virgil’s poetry is one important concern of this research.

Another concern relates to Titian’s stylistic changes at different periods. Especially in his landscape drawings, he created new ways of composing and looking at the beautiful natural scene. Based on a chronological analysis, these changes can be clearly exhibited. Titian’s spiritual refinement, along with his stylistic development, is also investigated.

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Introduction

When we consider the history of Italian Renaissance painting, one wonders why no pure landscapes appeared during this period. From the social viewpoint, Richard Turner suggests that landscape painting as an independent genre was not highly esteemed during the Renaissance, whereas figure painting was of the highest order. An artist during the Renaissance would have rather abandoned his gift of landscape to be a second rate figure painter.¹ Kenneth Clark, on the other hand, explains this phenomenon from a technical viewpoint. He considers Brunelleschi's linear perspective to have had a great influence on the development of the landscape. He tells us that with a linear perspective the sky is difficult to reduce and measure, and the middle distance is another difficulty "that baffled earlier landscape painters."²

Turner and Clark's interpretations do furnish some substantial answers to this question, but probably there is a more profound reason that further explains why landscape was held in lower esteem and why skills in rendering it were not developed during this period. This reason is associated with Renaissance philosophy. Inheriting Greek ideas, people of the Renaissance believed that humans are central in the universe, and man was regarded as a microcosm of the world. This thought, combined with the Christian idea that men are created by God in his image, was strongly imprinted on the mind of Renaissance men

¹ Richard Turner, The Vision of Landscape in Renaissance Italy (London: J. Murray Press, 1949), 117 & 130.

² Kenneth Clark, Landscape into Art (London: J. Murray Press, 1949), 31.

and reflected in the flowering of iconographical painting. For them, to paint figures, especially religious ones, was to probe the human soul. The great minds in this period, such as Michelangelo and Petrarch, unanimously focused their attention on religious figures and their souls. Michelangelo said that he was eager to see God the Father, and indeed he saw him through the Sistine Chapel's divine task. In the same vein, Petrarch regretted that he had praised the natural scene, for the human soul was the only thing he should admire.

Compared to Florentine and Roman artists of the Italian Renaissance, Venetian and Netherlandish artists devoted a greater amount of space to landscape in a painting. Later well-developed, pure landscape appeared in Holland in the seventeenth century. Thus, we wonder if topography influenced the artist's aesthetic perspective, for both the Veneto and the Netherlands belong to regions near the sea, where poetic and beautiful visions can be seen everywhere. The tones and colors of the water provided inspiration for their artists to embellish their paintings with landscape.

More than any of his predecessors, Titian grasped the noblest spirits and moods of nature in his landscapes. He devoted large spaces of his canvases to landscape and sometimes almost subordinated the figures to nature. In his drawings, he freely drew fascinating landscapes for their own sake. Due to his extraordinary contributions to landscape, it is important to explore his landscape paintings and drawings in a thorough investigation.

In the first chapter, I will explore to what degree landscape literature, especially Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, could have influenced Titian's

landscapes. The second chapter concerns the chronological development of Titian's landscape paintings and drawings and his stylistic changes. The third chapter will probe Titian's interior spiritual world through an analysis of the subject and meaning of Titian's landscapes.

Chapter 1 Titian's Landscapes and Ancient Literature

"Landscape feeling," which is a pathos that comes from people's responses to natural beauty and their capability of embodying this beauty in images, existed in Greek and Roman literature long before the landscapes of the Renaissance. Here, the argument will be presented that landscape feeling existed in literature prior to being found in landscape painting.

When E.H. Gombrich discusses the priority of landscape feeling and landscape painting, he claims: "We are almost tempted to reverse the formula and assert the priority of landscape painting over landscape feeling."³ The evidence that tempted Gombrich to assert this is based on two anecdotes from the Renaissance. One story relates that Pietro Aretino, a sixteenth century poet, discovered the beauty of Venetian sunsets through the medium of Titian's color. Another anecdote is about the invention of landscape painting, that tells us that in the sixteenth century, a gentleman returning from a long journey described this journey to his painter friend and the painter spontaneously improvised a landscape painting. The gentleman's sense of a beautiful scene was thus aroused by this painting.⁴ While these are curious anecdotes, Gombrich's evidence is not enough to reverse the order that landscape feeling preceded landscape painting. The first example only explained that Aretino was sensitive enough to appreciate Titian's sunset landscape, but does not prove that the

³ E.H. Gombrich, "Renaissance Artistic Theory and the Development of Landscape Painting," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, (1953), 354.

⁴ Gombrich, 352.

beauty of the Venetian sunset had never been felt by Aretino before. The second anecdote simply proves the contradictory fact that no matter how plain or vivid the gentleman's description was, the artist's imagination was inspired by his words, a kind of oral literature. This could be used to prove that landscape painters needed some literary or verbal sources to visualize their landscape language. One may conclude that the painter's visualization of landscape was apparently based on landscape literature.

An important derivation for Titian's landscape painting, besides directly observing nature and absorbing other artists' vocabularies, was landscape feeling from literature.⁵ There is an affinity between the literary sources and Titian's landscapes that will be explored here. Before Titian, that is, prior to the sixteenth century in Italy, the literati of the ancient world and the Renaissance had already constructed plenty of landscape beauty and feeling in literature, which became the sources for Venetian artists to create their landscape paintings.

As Josiah Gilbert suggests, before in the visual arts, there was a long tradition in literature, which dealt with poetry about poets' passionate delight in the grandeur of natural scenes.⁶ He points out that in Greek poetry, such as that

⁵ Due to the fact that no pure landscape paintings existed during the Renaissance period, it would be impossible to discuss Titian's landscapes apart from his figures, and there is a thematic unity between his landscapes and figures. Therefore, whenever Titian's landscape painting is discussed in this thesis, it means his painting with landscape, or his painting in which landscape dominates the scene.

⁶ Josiah Gilbert, Landscape in Art before Claude and Salvator (London: J. Murray, 1885), 7.

by Homer and Sophocles, landscape had been used to illustrate human action or to enhance the effect of dramatic performances. Theocritus, furthermore, wrote pastoral poetry using the rural scene and the songs of shepherds. Roman poets, such as Lucretius, Catullus, and Virgil, brought landscape feelings or pathos to poetry by means of pictorial effect.⁷ Gilbert accomplished a pioneering study of the landscape literary tradition but did not really probe into the relations between landscape literature and landscape painting, which is the focus of this chapter.

Titian could have become familiar with landscape literature in multifarious ways. Titian himself was actually “alien to forming words,”⁸ but he obtained the sources of classical literature through translations or frequent contacts and conversations with other intellectuals; outstanding among these were the architect and treatise writer Serlio; Dolce, the prime translator of classical texts; and the publisher Marcolini.⁹ Vasari also tells us that in sixteenth century Venice, there was a literary humanist circle, the members of which, such as Pietro Aretino and Jacopo Sansovino, who were intimate friends with Titian, indulged in reading ancient literature. They were enthusiastic readers of the

⁷ Gilbert, 8-19.

⁸ Titian's letter to Gonazga in 1528, quoted from Giorgio Padoan, “Titian's Letters,” Collected in Susanna Biadene ed. Titian: Prince of Painters (Munich: Prestel Press, 1990), 45.

⁹ Giorgio Padoan, Titian's Letters. ed. by Susanna Biadene, Titian: Prince of Painters (Munich: Prestel Press, 1990), 45. Padoan says: “the formation of Titian's personal culture comprised conversations with intellectuals of various persuasions as well as first-hand acquaintance with antique sculptures, drawings, prints, illustrated books of mythology in Italian translation, and, naturally, the paintings of other masters.”

poetry of Homer, Sophocles, Virgil, and Ovid, and discussed them in this circle.¹⁰

Titian was an enthusiast of this fashion and would have been familiar with these works. No wonder David Rosand wrote: "The painter [Titian] recognized, perhaps more truly than any other reader of the Latin poet, the tragic depths of those ancient tales, the pathos underlying the brilliance of the lines."¹¹ A point that should be added to Rosand's comments is that Titian also recognized the possibility of translating the potentially tremendous poetic landscape feeling of the Latin poetry into a pictorial form.

Despite the fact that one can never prove that Titian read landscape literature, one cannot resist speculating about the association of Titian's landscapes and landscape poetry. We apparently can feel there is an intimacy between them. Therefore, I propose here that Titian's pastoral landscapes were primarily inspired by Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, whereas Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was the inspiration for Titian's mythological figural paintings. What Erwin Panofsky says in his treatise *Titian and Ovid* may also be applied to the relationship between Titian and Virgil:

He must have felt an inner affinity to an author profound as well as witty, ... And it was precisely this inner affinity which enabled Titian to interpret Ovid's texts both literally and freely, ... in a spirit of uninhibited inventiveness.¹²

¹⁰ Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters* (New York: Heritage Press, 1967), 240. Vasari discussing their friendship, wrote: "he (Titian) has been favored beyond the lot of most men, ... In his house he has been visited by what ever Princes, Literati, or men of distinction have gone to or dwelt in Venice."

¹¹ David Rosand, *Titian* (New York: Abrams Press, 1978), 42.

¹² Erwin Panofsky, *Problems in Titian, Mostly Iconographic* (New York: New York University Press, 1969), 140.

Similarly, as we shall see, Titian interpreted, translated, and paraphrased Virgil's text, but never lost the independent spirit to supplement and change its essential significance.

The flourish of the pastoral landscape in Venetian art paralleled the revival of ancient pastoral literature.¹³ This was in the opening of the sixteenth century, when Jacopo Sannazaro's *L'Arcadia* was published in Venice in 1504. In his poems he took classical pastoral sources as his model and his challenge. He tells of the voyage of Sincero, a Neapolitan shepherd, to the far-off place of Arcadia, where he lives among the simple shepherds, sharing the unhurried tempo of their daily lives. All these events are interspersed with descriptions of landscape. Pietro Bembo's *Gli Asolani*, which was published in 1505, describes on three successive afternoons six young men and women withdrawing to a beautiful garden. They sit by a cooling fountain and discuss the qualities of love. These descriptions in literature nourished pastoral imaginations in the visual arts. The development of pastoral literature can be traced back to Theocritus, who was the first one to invent the form of pastoral poetry; then Virgil became his Roman heir. Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, in turn, "were the sources for later Italian poets."¹⁴ Scholars usually attribute the inspiration of Titian's lyrical

¹³ The pastoral ideal had been revived in the fourteenth century by Boccaccio. In the later fifteenth century, Lorenzo il Magnifico sketched an elaborate picture of the Golden Age in the *Selve*, and the plea of the shepherd Corinto. In Florence, however, painters did not respond to these poetic suggestions. Rather, in Venice, an enthusiasm for pastoral poetry continually developed and Venetian artists transformed the pastoral ideal into visual forms.

See Turner, 95-6.

¹⁴ Wethey introduces these two poets: "Virgil (70-19 B.C.), a country youth born near Mantua, inherited pastoral poetry from Theocritus. Theocritus, a Greek bucolic

landscapes to Giorgione, whose love of idyllic nostalgia and music and whose pictorial poetry on the canvas lead to Titian's pastoral landscapes.¹⁵ The tradition of visual art, however, could not be isolated from its cultural atmosphere, and pastoral landscape was concomitant with pastoral literature in the Renaissance. Therefore, in addition to Giorgione's influence, we should not neglect the possible impact of pastoral literature on Titian's landscapes.¹⁶

Virgil's *Eclogues* center on the theme and quality of music, poetry, and love, which are three important elements in Titian's landscape paintings. All these elements are integrated into a framework of nature in both of their works. Virgil describes the Golden Age when shepherds living in Arcadia with gods and goddesses learn how to play music, to sing, and to write poems. Nature is the stage in which they drive their flocks, perform their love, passionately enjoy their life and the beauty of nature, and share their happiness and sorrow with nature

poet, probably born in Syracuse about 315 B.C., first invented the form of pastoral poetry in his ten short poems. He extolled the beauties of life in the country, particularly among the shepherds, whose idyllic existence was passed in song and love. Virgil further developed the pastoral poem, that is, verses celebrating the lives and loves of shepherds, who cared for their flocks, sang songs, and played simple musical instruments, originally pipes. Virgil's famous works in this genre were the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*, which in turn were the source for Petrarch and for later Italian poets." See Harold E. Wethey, *The paintings of Titian* (London: Phaidon Press, 1969-75), 42.

¹⁵ For example, Charles Ricketts says: "the development of that lyrical mood which we call the Giorgionesque manner in art is best illustrated by works done by Titian, mainly after Giorgione's death." See Charles Ricketts, *Titian* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd. Press, 1910), 7.

¹⁶ Even though Theocritus' *Idylls* was the prototype of Virgil's pastoral poetry, the spirit of Titian's pastoral paintings is closer to Virgil's than Theocritus', for Virgil differs from Theocritus in many ways. For example, there are more cowherds than shepherds in Theocritus' pastoral poems, and Theocritus is more often light-heartedly ironic. Theocritus set his Arcadia in the shade of the pine trees, rather than the shade of oaks in Virgil's poetry. As we shall see the trees in most of Titian's pastoral landscapes are oaks rather than pine. For the ideas of life, love, and world, Titian was more tied to Virgil than Theocritus. See M. Owen Lee, *Death and Rebirth in Virgil's Arcadia* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989),

as well. These incidents, scenery, emotions, and feelings are shown, for example, in Titian's *Three Ages of Man*.

Love and the cycle of life and death are the central themes in the *Three Ages of Man* (figure 1) as well as in the *Eclogues*. In the painting, the landscape contains three groups of figures, which are situated at a winding road along with two major compositional diagonals. At the beginning of the winding road, there are three putti sleeping and playing under a stump on the right of the picture. On the left under the shaded woods, a nude male embraces a young lady, who grasps two flutes and wears a laurel crown. Beyond, an old man holding skulls sits on a slope in the middle ground. At the end of the winding road, the house is surrounded by sparse trees against the dusk of blue sky. Panofsky explains the three ages of man as symbolizing the future, present, and past: Infancy represents potentialities of the future; adulthood, the actuality of the present; and old age, the memory of the past.¹⁷ On the other hand, Harold Wethey regards this "charming poetic evocation of the beauty of life when love is young, to be followed by the inevitability of death," as the bucolic nature of the theme and the belief in a Golden Age.¹⁸ Panofsky's notion is too general to refer to the specific meanings of the two young lovers and the lyrical landscape. On the other hand, Wethey's interpretation seems closer to Titian's original idea. When we go to Virgil's pastoral poetry describing the Golden Age to search for a comprehensive

9-10.

¹⁷ Panofsky, 95.

¹⁸ Wethey, 18.

identification and the link of a thematic unity for these three groups of figures, this painting becomes more understandable.

The young couple is painted larger than the other two groups of figures and placed close to the viewer in the foreground, showing they are the central concern in the *Three Ages of Man*. The flutes, the poetic landscape, and the young couple's wistfully exchanged glances in the picture indicate that music and love are the important elements in this painting. The subjects of the male with a sturdy nude body and the shaded woods are reminiscent of Virgil's god-like or hero-like shepherds in Arcadia. The girl looks up into the youth's face with adoration and a slightly sad expression testifying to her complicated love for him. Perhaps it is because their love is hopeless that makes them so sad; as narrated in the *Eclogues* when Corydon is in love with his master's favorite, Alexis, he knows that "little reason had he for hope."¹⁹ Nevertheless, he meets her in his daydreams and cuts branches of laurel and myrtle with mingled fragrance for Alexis, which explains the crown that the girl is wearing in the painting. One possible interpretation of the two sleeping putti on the right of the painting is that they signify that the youth and his lover are in a daydream, and the third putto tries to awaken them.

A parallelism to contrast human emotions and nature is employed by both Virgil and Titian. Virgil suggests these parallels in phrases such as "A shower is sweet to growing crops,.../ Willow is sweet to breeding herds,/ none but Amyntas

¹⁹ Virgil, *Eclogue II (L.3), The Eclogues, Georgics and Aeneid*, trans. by C. Day Lewis (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 7.

is sweet to me."²⁰ Perhaps this kindled the painter's inspiration. As a result, in the *Three Ages of Man* we see the three figure groups accompanied by three different forms of vegetation within the well-developed landscape. The emotions and moods of these figures are closely attached to the symbolic meanings of these natural growths. The stumps and saplings around the putti reflect children's fragility and inexperience on the one hand, and the potentiality of their growth on the other hand. The young couple escorted by the fully mature trees symbolize their vigor and a state of climatic perfection, and the dark silhouettes of the trees give a sorrowful atmosphere to their hopeless love. The old man, painted as a prophet or a philosopher, looking down at the skulls, is engaged in the reflection on death. The broad plain where he sits and the trees with sparse leaves in the background furnish him a contemplative surrounding. Nature is emotionalized and sways with the rhythms of human emotions.

Are they positive or pessimistic moods, and are there any conflicts between lyricism and reality in the *Three Ages of Man*? These same questions have been asked by Virgilian scholars in discussing the *Eclogues*. Charles Segal thinks that some scholars over exaggerate the positive side and neglect the darker tones in the *Eclogues*.²¹ For me, Virgil's work is positive for he passionately embraces life. Titian's spirit conformed to Virgil's; both of them stress love, which links life and death in a powerful unity. The seemingly

²⁰ Virgil, *Eclogue* III (L1-4), 15.

²¹ Charles Segal, Poetry and Myth in Ancient Pastoral (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), 10.

sorrowful melody of the protagonists in their works is always surpassed by feelings of love.

Birth and death in Virgil's world are not pessimistic, nor are they in Titian's work. When Virgil talks about a child's birth, he says it comes with the blessings of the natural world:

Child, your first birthday presents will come from nature's wild...
Bouquets of gipsy lilies and sweetly-smiling acanthus. ...
Silk-soft blossom will grow from your very cradle to lap you.
But snakes will die, and so will fair-seeming, poisonous plants.²²

In Virgil, then, with the fullness of parental expectation and unshakable destiny a child, who makes good things of nature grow and bad things die, is born. In the *Three Ages of Man*, the way Titian celebrates infancy is to depict three chubby, innocent putti: one pushing the stump away and mischievously playing, and the other two sleeping, like the saplings waiting to grow up.

The episode of death that Virgil describes in the *Eclogues* is about the shepherd Daphnis's death, full of affective pathos. He states:

Daphnis graced all nature-when he died,
Corn-god and Song-god left us too.
Daphnis shines at heaven's dazzling gate,
under his feet sees clouds and plants.
Shepherds, nymphs and Pan are glad for this,
forest and campaign quickened with joy...
Wooded hills, crags, orchards cry to heaven
jocund hymns-A god is he!²³

Although Daphnis' death was bemoaned, his ascent to heaven and his attainment of divine status were, in effect, imbued with divine blessings.

²² Virgil, *Eclogue IV* (L.20), 18.

²³ Virgil, *Eclogue V* (L.1-8), 22-23.

Similarly, Titian portrays a speculative mood for the theme of death but without horror in the *Three Ages of Man*. The size and placement of the old man with the skulls in the canvas attest that death is not the thematic focus, but merely a transition in the whole human cycle. The end of life is not death but a return to nature, as the winding road in the picture smoothly leads the viewer from the scene of birth, growth, and death, to the ultimate destination-nature. Love links these components together in Titian, whereas Virgil concludes at the end of the *Eclogues*: "all-conquering is Love."²⁴ The cycle of life and death, and the existence of nature are all for the sake of love, as we see in the *Three Ages of Man*, where the youth's love is the emphasis and all the putti, old man, and nature play their supporting roles.

It is no coincidence that Titian chose the cult of Venus and apples as the subject matter in his *Worship of Venus*, (figure 2) corresponding to the descriptions of a paragraph in the *Eclogues*. Nonetheless, Titian paraphrases a single episode of the mother and child plucking apples in the *Eclogues* into a magnificent, brilliant, and shining image. The paragraph is:

I've a present for my Venus,
I've a present for my dear,
Since I did mark a treetop high
and doves a-building nesties there.
The golden apples did pluck,
ten golden apples a wild tree bore:
All that I could, I sent to my boy,
tomorrow he shall have ten more.
A child you were when I first beheld you
our orchard fruit was chilled with dew

²⁴ Virgil, *Eclogue X* (L.11 from the bottom), 44.

You and your mother both apple-gathering:
just twelve I was, but I took charge of you.²⁵

In Titian's painting, the boy becomes hundreds of cupids and ten golden apples from a tree turn into thousands of apples spread on the ground and hanging on a group of laden trees. A statue of Venus, the goddess of love and fertility, watches over a frolicking field of cupids, who fly on the branches of ripe apple trees plucking fruits to drop to their comrades on the ground, and kissing and sweetly fondling one another. Two women rush into the picture from the right; one offers Venus a mirror—a traditional symbol of Venus—while the other looks back seemingly to be calling more company. A sense of ripeness, of blooming, of cheerful celebration with an innocent playfulness, and the golden, warm color of apples and flesh are embodied in this picture, which contains more incidents and images than those of the original literary paragraphs. This is probably because the essence and merits of the pictorial image are quite different from those of the literary image.

It appears that Titian sometimes interprets phrases from the *Eclogues* but changes their context. What Titian depicts in *The Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Catherine* (figure 3) is an interpretation of Virgil's words: "All nature smiles."²⁶ Beyond the shepherd driving his herd of cattle and lambs and walking into the picture from the extreme right (figure 4), a curved road dimly appears in front of them and passes to the undulating, distant mountains. Some green trees and the deep blue range of mountains rise from

²⁵ Virgil, *Eclogue* III (Damoetas L.1-8), 13-14 & 34.

the plain and a putto flies down from the sky above. The foreground is occupied by the Madonna and St. Catherine, who plays with the Christ Child, and the young St. John. A cheerful mood and atmosphere are represented by both the figures and the landscape. All of these figures have smiling faces that are echoed by the corresponding appearance of the distant mountains and the mass of trees. Nature's face is shown by the soft twilight that breaks through the clouds and cleanses the mountains and trees, like a beauty unveiling her smile after tears. The light-hearted mood is also rendered by the angel who brought the gospel, revelations, and divine messages to mankind. The lobes of leaves are opening as if they are pleasingly bathed in the divine scene. A warm, dust-filled light diffuses the foliage and brings the mountains to life. All these natural details, harmonious with the spirit of the figures, show us how "nature smiles."

A play with pleasant sounds and effects goes along with the scene of "nature smiles," in this painting. St. John slightly opens his mouth while offering the Virgin flowers and fruits, as if he is inviting the Virgin to enjoy his gift. St. Catherine is playing the Christ Child, who looks up and raises his hand toward the sky happily, and we can almost hear him giggle. The sound also comes from the shepherd urging the march of his flocks, and the foliage waving in the wind. The figures' voices and the natural sounds are composed by a graceful, glorious and stately concerto with a pleasant tone. Titian, alone, depicts this theme with such a favorable and joyful aura. His expressive, joyous mind, which is attuned to Virgil's, unreservedly is revealed here again.

²⁶ Virgil, *Eclogue VII* (Corydon L.3), 31.

In moving from the *Eclogues* to the *Georgics*, Virgil became more realistic. The ideal Arcadian world gave way to real rural life. As Titian followed in the steps of Virgil, his subjects became more realistic,²⁷ as if “he put down the copy of Virgil's *Eclogues* and opened up the *Georgics*.”²⁸

In the *Georgics*, Virgil is dedicated to agriculture. He presents his incredible knowledge of actual agrarian activities, as if he were a farmer or a shepherd setting out to teach others this knowledge. As to the things he discussed, they covered how to plant crops, to plow, and to observe the laws of seasonal changes; how to manage flocks; and how to trap cranes, stags, and hares; and even more specifically, the rotation of crops, irrigation, and the trimming of sheep for wool. The *Georgics* is almost a farmer's manual and calendar.

As a versatile artist, we might imagine that Titian was naturally attracted by these verses, and ambitiously desired to present them in his work. Unfortunately, there are not many extant prints attributed to Titian, and the only one known today is *The Landscape with a Milkmaid*, (figure 5) a woodcut after a drawing by Titian.

There is no specific literary passage from Virgil's *Georgics* that informs *the Landscape with a Milkmaid*, but the subject matter and spirit of this work are

²⁷ Some factors may also contribute to these changes. For example, printmaking was a freer, less restrained medium than painting and broadly spread in the middle class instead of the nobility. Employing this medium, Titian could create the *Georgics*' style of pastoral scene and not to consider aristocratic taste or commissions.

²⁸ Patricia Fortine Brow, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Press, 1997), 139.

Virgilian. In this woodcut, a boy, feeding his flock of goats and playing with a sheep, and a woman milking a cow, are set in a country scene with an abundance of rocky outcroppings. A village with the castles and mountains, seen beyond rolling terrain, appears in the far distance against the sky with whirling clouds. The galloping horse in the middle ground and the triumphant eagle perched on a stump in the front plane, are not from Titian's original drawing and perhaps were added later by the woodcut artist. The horse and eagle look too awkward and noisy to be congruent with this quiet pastoral mood. Here, Titian depicts a typical rustic scene of farmyard activity but never loses the essentially peaceful, poetic qualities of his pastoral painting.

Another painting of relevance here is the *Pastoral Symphony (Fete Champetre)* (figure 6), the attribution of which to Giorgione or Titian still remains controversial.²⁹ All critics, no matter which side they take, provide substantial evidence to support their opinions. Owing to the cooperative relationship between Giorgione and Titian, and their mutual influence, to make a judgment of the attribution of this painting is really hard. Even though this controversy may not yet be solved, we find there are some strong Titianesque characteristics,

²⁹ There is a great controversy surrounding the attribution of this work. It has passed from Palma Vecchio to Giorgione, then to an imitator of Sebastiano del Piombo to Sebastiano himself, then back to Giorgione. Today opinion veers strongly towards an attribution to the young Titian. See Turner, 98. From Marcantonio Michiel's statement in 1525, we know that Titian painted the landscape background of both Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus*, and the *Pastoral Concert*, but Harold E. Wethey also thinks that many critics now give the work *Pastoral Concert* to Titian alone. See Wethey, 43. Voices advocating Titian eventually prevailed so that in 1976 the picture was relabeled by the Louvre curators as Titian. See Paul Holberton, "The *Pastorale* or *Fete-Champetre* in the Early 16th-century" *Studies in the History of Art*, 45 (1994), 255. A more recent article which attributes this painting to Titian is Elhanan Motzkin, "The meaning of Titian's *Concert Champetre* in the Louvre"

which do not belong to Giorgione. These include the diagonal composition, the motif of a shepherd with his flock walking into the picture on the right, the full crowned foliage, and a tall, strong tree in the foreground.³⁰

A strong Virgilian atmosphere can be sensed in the *Pastoral Symphony*. The two nude females, accompanied by two clothed young men, sit on verdant grass through which a shepherd passes; in the distance, a villa crowns a hill and the valley while a stream disappears into the horizon. If we read this painting as a pictorial expression of Virgil's poetry, then the meaning of this work will not be as mysterious as scholars usually suggest.³¹ The scene almost interprets a verse in the *Eclogues*:

We sit upon the soft grass here
At the loveliest time of the year-fields pushing up their crops,
And every orchard fruiting and woodlands all in leaf.
You begin, Damoetas, and you, Menalcas, follow.
Sing turn and turn about: that's what the Muses love.³²

The protagonists, both in the painting and in the poem, like natural artists who are engaged in poetry and music, found their natural setting in some shady grove. Singing of their loves, they celebrate the songs of their passion, and enjoy leisure time in the pleasant season.

In the *Pastoral Symphony*, the two young men-one, dressed fashionably and playing a lute, looks like an urban gentleman; the other, a rustic youth or a

Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 116 (1990), 51-66.

³⁰ Considering Giorgione's three unanimous attributed paintings-the *Nativity*, the *Three Philosophers*, and the *Tempesta*, we find Giorgione does not use these compositional characteristics, but they often appear in Titian's other paintings.

³¹ For example, Patricia Fortini Brown says: "The subject of the work (the *Pastoral Symphony*) has also eluded a sure interpretation." See Brown, 138.

³² Virgil, *Eclogue III* (Palaemon L.1-6), 12-13.

shepherd, are placed in the middle of the picture. A concert takes place here, or perhaps it is a musical contest, witnessed by the urban visitor to the country.³³

There are two women; the standing nude on the left pours water from a crystal pitcher; the other, holds a flute and faces the shepherds on the right. The women probably are muses; the water one of them pours symbolizes the source of poetic inspiration and the instrument the other holds could also be the inspiration for the two young men's poetry.³⁴

The iconography of the muse changed from the ancient period to the Renaissance. In a Roman sarcophagus (figure 7), muses are dressed and posed gracefully; two of them hold a scroll. In the Renaissance, Raphael preferred the fashionably and luxuriously dressed muses holding instruments (figure 8), and Marcantonio Raimondi (figure 9) followed the classical models. They both infused them with idealized beauty. In the *Pastoral Symphony*, the muses are personified as two nude women. The muses are nude, which is not usually the case, but "their being so is not a serious modification of the traditional iconography, for female superior beings to be portrayed as nude is banal."³⁵

Philipp Fehl explains them as two nymphs who, having been attracted by the

³³ For Virgil, shepherds are god-like or heroic people, not only because they inhabit the same Arcadian community as that of gods and goddesses, but because the shepherds' status is possibly changed. The shepherds could attain their divinity or heroism by contesting or even beating gods in music, even though they do not possess gods and goddesses' supernatural power. The *Eclogues* records: "Should Pan compete with me (the shepherd poet), and Arcady judge us, even Pan, great Pan, with Arcadian judges, would lose the contest," and "Amyntas fancies himself to beat Apollo." See Virgil, *Eclogue IV* (L6-7 from the bottom), *Eclogue V* (Mopsus L.1), 20-1.

³⁴ Virgil says: "You, (Muse) my poetry's source, shall be its bourne." In another paragraph he mentions: "The Muses made me/ A poet too." See Virgil, *Eclogue VIII* (L.14), *Eclogue IX* (Lycidas L.5-6), 33 & 39.

music and the charm of the young men, have joined their concert.³⁶ These two nude women could be nymphs, but it is not likely they are attracted to join the concert, because of the gloomy face of the standing one.

The instruments associated with the protagonists carry different connotations. The lute that the young man plays, stringed and able to accompany the poetry of song, recalls ancient Apollo's lyre that signifies a high cultural sophistication. The wooden flute that the woman holds, originated from the pipes of Pan, belongs to the pastoral mode.³⁷ According to the *Eclogues*, the musical instrument is invested with magical power, almost equal to divine miracles, which makes the shepherd's love eternal.³⁸ Although the reed-pipes in the *Eclogues* are replaced by flute and lute in the painting, their function is unequivocal; they represent the quality of love and poetry. Nature is there to contain and listen to the shepherds' music or poetry, the tale of love,³⁹ and Titian depicts a consonant natural scene of field and mountains in the distance as a

³⁵ Motzkin, 55.

³⁶ Philipp Fehl, "The Hidden Genre: A study of the *Concert Champetre* in the Louvre," The Journal of Aesthetics & Art Criticism, XVI (1957), 157.

³⁷ David Rosand, *Giorgione, Venice, and the Pastoral Vision*, collected in Robert Calfritz ed. *Places of Delight: The Pastoral Landscape* (New York: C.N. Potter Press, 1988), 38-9.

³⁸ Virgil mentions the device of the reed-pipes: "Pan invented the shepherd's pipes, waxing a handful/ Of reeds together: Pan looks after sheep and shepherd." Since Pan is the guardian of shepherds, the pipe seems to have a magical, fantastic power.

Virgil writes: "If over them you reed-pipes were making my love immortal." See Virgil, *Eclogue X*, 41-3.

³⁹ Virgil, *Eclogue IX* (L.40-3), 43. The poem is: "Arcadians, you'll be singing/ The tale of my love to your mountains, whatever befall. You are masters of music, you Arcadians."

background for these figures.⁴⁰ The dream of Arcadia is embodied in both of their works.⁴¹

A diagonal composition is devised in the *Pastoral Symphony* to distinguish yet to link the two worlds—the actual world, where a goatherd, driving his flock, diagonally enters the picture from the right, and the divine world, where the two youths work with the muses on music and poetry. Man and the gods, goddesses live in a world in which the ancient pastoral tradition is strongly recalled.

The protagonists in the *Pastoral Symphony* are set in a shaded place with a woodland, which is repeatedly described in pastoral literature. Theocritus mentions that on the slope of Mt. Etna, a shepherd meets a goatherd and, in the shade of the pine trees, by a stream that drips from a high rock, sings in exchange for a beautifully figured bowl.⁴² Virgil also believed that heroes, gods, and shepherds lived in a wooded land: “Trojan Paris, and even gods have lived in the woods like me,” and “The woodland spirit beneath a spread of sheltering beech.”⁴³ In Sannazaro’s *Arcadia* in the sixteenth century the shepherds enjoy

⁴⁰ Vigil writes, 43: “The tale of my love to your mountains, whatever befall.” “The valleys caught this music and tossed it/ Skyward.” “He poured forth words like these, piecemeal, to wood and hill.” See Virgil, *Eclogue VI*, 27 & 8.

⁴¹ The idea of Arcadia cannot be separated from the pastoral ideal, which evokes the lost innocence of mankind of the past. The famous descriptions of nature as a place of innocence or escape in Euripides’ *Hippolytus*, or as a place that, in Plato’s *Phaedrus*, is filled with inner peace and the quiet joys. See Lee, 14-5.

⁴² Theocritus, trans. by Anna Rist, *The Poems of Theocritus* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 11-2.

⁴³ Virgil, *Eclogue I* (L.2), 3 & 9. There are many other places which mention the shaded woodland in the *Eclogues*. For example, “Oh mossy springs, grass soft as sleep is, all besprent with green arbutus shade,” (*Eclogue II*, 31) “Shading our uplands; but when my Phyllis comes here,/ green shall the woodlands be,” (*Eclogue II*, 31) “the springs thatched over with leaves to shade them?” (*Eclogue IX*, 39) “In shade and teach the woods to repeat ‘Fair Amaryllis,’” (*Eclogue I*, 3) “Here with me in the woodlands, you’d rival Pan for music,” (*Eclogue II*, 8) “I live in woods, my fame lives in the stars,” (*Eclogue V*, 22) and “To live in the woods and dally with

their lives under a pleasant shade.⁴⁴ Therefore, we have reason to believe that the pastoral construction of a shaded place in the painting was inspired by pastoral literature.

The most significant quality of the *Pastoral Symphony*—the poetic, lyric pastoral mood, not done before by other artists to such a degree, relies on the thematic significance and the features of landscape. Virgil's descriptions of the beauty of nature, music, and youth are materialized here. The air is suffused with a muted musical and poetic atmosphere, and the verdant opulence and the lushness of trees emphatically enhance this tranquil mood.

There is a drawing by Titian titled *Arcadian Musicians*, (figure 10) which shows the same spirit as the *Pastoral Symphony*. In the drawing, the lyrical pastoral mood can be found in the passages of music and love in the woodland, the shepherd with his sheep sleeping under his feet, and the beauty of an ideal landscape. The youth plays a stringed instrument to attract a goddess-like female with his song, but she appears to listen rather abstractedly, as she holds her pipe and gazes off into the distance. Compared to the nude female figure in the *Pastoral Symphony*, this one seems a copy of it; they show the same turn and seated pose and both hold the flute. This is a mild seduction scene; it is this temperate presentation of love that makes Titian's pastoral landscape lofty. The trees with stout boughs are even more powerfully rendered in the drawing than in

lightweight pastoral verse." (*Eclogue VI*, 25)

⁴⁴ cited in FehI, 173. Sannazaro says: "...shall I indeed amid these desert strands, to the listening trees, and to those few shepherds that may be here, recount rustic eclogues issuing forth from a natural vein, and present them as naked of ornament as under pleasant shades, to the murmur of clear flowing springs, by the shepherds

the painting. The landscape in both the painting and the drawing plays with human thoughts; it shows that the pastoral dream of love and music in the countryside is as strong as the tree trunks and boughs, and yet as far as the dreams of the shepherd and the sheep.

Titian's landscapes display close relations to pastoral literature. He seems to adopt the subject matter, the pastoral construction, and the mood from Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics* freely. His landscapes are suffused with pastoral pathos; both the shepherd's idealized life and the reality of life are revealed there.

Chapter 2 A Chronology of Titian's Landscapes

The pictorial form that Titian constructs in his pastoral landscape is a place of shelter, protected by a stand of trees with thick foliage within a grove, which provides a large terrain to contain the thematic story. The meaning of this pictorial construction, David Rosand argues, "is carried by visual structures and itself becomes inherently visual, operating within its own"; this pictorial convention is "founded in a perception of the world dependent upon the poetic imagination."⁴⁵ Rosand, on the one hand, recognizes the poetic creation of Titian's landscape, but on the other, denies its close relationship with literary work. He thinks, "this structure, only distantly dependent on literary association, is essentially pictorial."⁴⁶ The intention of his argument, which stresses Titian's independent invention, can be comprehended, but it does not necessarily mean that the distance between Titian's designs and literary associations is remote.⁴⁷ With an original mind, Titian surely does not copy a piece of literature, but in the analysis of the first chapter we suggested that the pictorial construction of Titian's pastoral landscape was inspired by a pastoral tradition in literature, especially by Virgil's poetry. A sheltered place with a large tree and a grove,

⁴⁵ David Rosand, "Pastoral topoe: on the construction of meaning in landscape," *Studies in the History of Art*, 32 (1992), 162.

⁴⁶ Rosand, 174.

⁴⁷ In another article, Rosand, who attributes the *Pastoral Symphony* (the *Concert Champetre*) to Giorgione, argues that this painting "visually realizes the world of the *eclogue*, [that is, in Sannazaro's *L'Arcadia*] the world of shepherds and nymphs, of music, poetry, and implicitly, love, a world shaded from the sun, refreshed by the sound of a spring." It is hard to imagine that the similarities between this painting and this poetry are only by accident, and without any close relationship. See David Rosand, *Giorgione, Venice, and the Pastoral Vision*, collected in Robert Cafritz ed. *Places of Delight: The pastoral landscape* (New York: C.N. Potter Press,

where Arcadia exists, is almost a norm in traditional pastoral literature as well as in many of Titian's landscape paintings. The relation between Titian's landscape and literary sources is indeed not remote, but intimate.

Yet, Rosand is perfectly right about the idea that the visual design of pastoral landscape does attain an independent meaning and its own life. The choice to construct a large tree with thick foliage and spacious terrain was meaningful. It gives a warm, immediate experience and perception of the scene and it is more accessible emotionally. Especially in Titian's paintings, a tall standing tree, followed by an uninterrupted continuum of space, gives an architectural character and directs the eye into the distance. Under the shade of trees, it seems that the figures obtain protection. All of the figures' activities beneath the tree seem like a strong accent and weighted overture to start telling a marvelous story. This construction is founded in the artist's favorable perception of the natural world, and this perception is associated with literary sources.

It would be an incomplete picture if we neglected to mention earlier Venetian artists, such as Giovanni Bellini, Giorgione, and Palma Vecchio, who had been dealing with poetic feeling and imagination of landscape long before Titian. They used their sensitivities to view their surroundings, such as lagoons, canals, and natural scenes, and found in them the tinges, colors, and sources for their particular landscape. Like the poets, these Venetian masters wrote their

1988), 48.

poetry in landscape form. Titian was certainly influenced by his Venetian predecessors.

Literary sources and Venetian artistic tradition are two cornerstones for Titian's landscapes. On these foundations, Titian built his own subtle and delicate landscapes. In the first chapter, I have discussed that literary sources could have influenced Titian. In this second chapter, in order to gain a complete understanding of Titian's accomplishments, including his heritage and originality, there is a need to investigate Titian's landscape paintings on a chronological basis. An iconographical analysis is also necessary in order to understand his stylistic characteristics and development, as well as his pictorial thoughts. After all, pictorial vocabularies and languages are fundamental elements for all artists.

Panofsky provides a chronological framework of Titian's style.⁴⁸ He divides Titian's activity into three periods, depending on how Titian's attitude changed in each period: his attitude is traditional in his early years to 1529; he originates a tradition of his own from 1530 to 1550; he outgrows the tradition and is no longer accessible to others from 1551 to 1576. Panofsky further suggests a subdivision of each of these periods into two equal sub-periods or phases, primarily focusing on how Titian perceives and uses color. The division of six

⁴⁸ Panofsky, 18-25. Panofsky says that in the first phase Titian conceives color as "object color" and the shadows are often gray. During this time the general mood of Titian's paintings is calm and lyrical. In the second phase, the gray shadows have disappeared, and the chromatic harmony improved. In the third phase, his dramatic passion is replaced by a spirit of quiet observation and impassive order. In the fourth phase, Titian favors broad strokes, patches and dissonant chromaticism. In the fifth phase, the colors begin to glow like jewels, and this is his final efflorescence of colorism. In the sixth phase, a "colorful monochrome" is

equal phases during Titian's almost seventy years activity means that almost every ten years Titian renewed his style. This also shows Titian's tremendous creative power to change form and content in his work continuously. As a result of his penetrating eye and intellectual mind, Panofsky's chronological analysis is astute, and it is also useful as a way of understanding the different periods of development in Titian's landscapes.

Charles Ricketts also divides Titian's life into three periods, equivalent to Panofsky's and based on Titian's perception of color. He distinguishes Titian's three careers as: the first, a colorist; the second, a harmonist; and the third, an experimentalist.⁴⁹ His analysis gives us a vivid conception about how the artist deliberately managed and developed his technique of using color. Besides an examination of color, our analysis in this chapter will focus on compositional significance, the manner, the method, and the pictorial thought. we will discuss Titian's landscape paintings in three periods, correspondent to Panofsky and Ricketts' division, that is the first period (early to 1530), the second period (1531-1550), and the third period (1551-1576).

Panofsky characterizes Titian's manner in the first thirty years of his career, before 1530, as traditional. I would describe it as an ever-growing

developed, and Titian reaches a balance of two opposite direction: intense emotion and outward stillness.

⁴⁹ Ricketts, 123-27. Ricketts explains that in the first thirty years, Titian, as a colorist, brought the richest hues and combined them in nobly spaced patterns, which means that color was secured by the choice of the dominant hues, and their quantity and spacing were equally important. In the second period, Titian, as a harmonist, delighted in color's modulation and transitions from one to another, which may even be achieved in a hueless scheme, or without recognizable color-pattern. In the third period, Titian, as an experimentalist, more drastically used

development, in which his vision of landscapes was continuously broadened and enriched. Even in the first ten years of his career until 1510, Titian had already established his own landscape style, which distinguishes his from his Venetian predecessors'. As innovation is always developed from convention, the master used the conventional rule as a jumping off point. Although nourished by Venetian masters, Titian innovated and refreshed the landscape tradition, and thus earned the title "the Homer of landscapists," and "the creator of landscape."⁵⁰ These epithets signify Titian's unique and landmark status in landscape development and his high level of achievement. Other than the charm of landscape in Giovanni Bellini and Giorgione, Titian found a new poetry, a new pathos, a new sentiment to interpret nature in a novel vision. He entered into the moods of nature as expressed in her noblest scenes.

We know much about how Titian is related to Bellini and Giorgione through extensive scholarship, but more important is where Titian breaks with these two masters. It is well known that Titian learned from Bellini about the towers rising upon a steep hill, the hills against the cumulus clouds, a tender sky, and the quietude of mood. Titian learned from Giorgione about lofty mountain forms, open fields, groves, streams, and blue hills.⁵¹ Titian also shared with Bellini and Giorgione the feeling that figures and landscape should be related to

color, employed broken, almost shapeless touches and surfaces, and at times applied a dark-colored underground.

⁵⁰ Count Francesco Algarotti first gave Titian this sublime praise, and his words: "Titian, nature's greatest confidant, is among landscapists the Homer" were published in 1756. Eugene Delacroix also mentioned: "One may regard him (Titian) as the creator of landscape. He introduced in it that breadth with which he rendered his figures and draperies." See Turner, 107 & 110.

one another.⁵² However, Titian departed from them in significant ways. For example, Bellini favored the leaf-less, but Titian loved full-crowned foliage. Giorgione's landscape is characterized as "sober"—that is not what Titian liked.⁵³ Titian's world is more tangible, whereas Giorgione's is a softly floating world. And, furthermore, Bellini and Giorgione did not establish a truly idealistic and pastoral landscape.

Titian infused the pastoral passion, in other words, the pastoral with human pathos of great magnitude, into his landscapes, which is absent in Giovanni Bellini's landscapes. Giovanni Bellini germinated a kind of landscape, which we may more properly call "bucolic" rather than "pastoral."⁵⁴ In his landscapes, Bellini showed his power to illustrate peaceful mood of a rustic scene, but he lacked the ability to bring the figures and the landscape into a dynamic relationship. *The Madonna and Child in a Landscape* (figure 11) is a typical work of this kind. The details of a rustic countryside are finely configured, but there is no pastoral passion in this scene. In the landscape, behind the lovely Madonna and Child, flocks of sheep accompanied by a shepherd graze in the soft glow of approaching twilight. Rabbits hop through the fields to the right, while a white bull stands still and another crouches at the left.⁵⁵ All the human beings, animals, and landscape create a static setting or a tableau frozen in the

⁵¹ Gilbert, 319.

⁵² Turner, 111-12.

⁵³ Gilbert, 320.

⁵⁴ There are more cowherds than shepherds in Giovanni Bellini's painting, and in Greek, the word for cowherd is "bucolics."

⁵⁵ Harold E. Wethey, Titian and His Drawing: with reference to Giorgione and some close contemporaries (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), 42.

background. The mood of stillness, peace, and serenity is incomparable, but they are too motionless to express a pastoral passion.

Titian tried to create a feeling of a warm, intimate landscape scene distinct from Giorgione's remote, dream-like quality, enclosing space, and enveloping atmosphere. For example, in Giorgione's *Tempesta* (figure 12), the interrupted space and the entangled objects compose an intricate structure that enriches our visual enjoyment but loses intimacy. On the other hand, in Titian's *Three Ages of Man* (figure 1), from 1509, there is an open space and intimate quality. The protagonists are drawn into the foreground, and a spacious plane is unrolled behind them. Opposed to Giorgione's horizontal device, V-shape composition in the *Three Ages of Man* serves to open the middle of the picture into the far distance. Several layers of meanings lie in this compositional design: it leaves a space to arouse people's imagination; it directs the eye to look into the far distance; and it makes the painting less enclosed. An effect of illusion is produced; it is as if the subject of the story occurs not on a stage, but in an open landscape.

We come to another controversial painting: *the Idyll, a young mother and a halberdier in a wooded landscape* (figure 13), the attribution of which may perhaps be solved by considering its stylistic characteristics. Although this work looks like a copy of Giorgione's *Tempesta*,⁵⁶ the approaches in both composition

⁵⁶ The attribution of this piece *Idyll: a young mother and a halberdier in a wooded landscape* varies from Sebastino del Piombo, Palma il Vecchio to the circle of Giorgione. Nonetheless, in this century Bernard Berenson first proposed an attribution to Titian in 1932, an opinion advanced more recently by Konrad Oberhuber. See Hilliard T. Goldfarb, "An early masterpiece by Titian rediscovered,

and feeling are quite different. As Hilliard T. Goldfarb analyzes, the *Idyll* is more accessible physically and psychologically.⁵⁷ In the *Idyll*, it seems that the tree is enlarged and moved from the middle ground to the foreground, and is put to the front of the eye. The water is used to guide the eye naturally into the distance. The mystic sense in the *Tempesta* of the approaching storm, darkening the sky, trees and everything, disappears. The feeling of the *Tempesta* is completely opposite the simple lyrical and coloristic splendor in the *Idyll*. These changes draw the distance between the viewer and the painting closer, and all characteristics of the *Idyll* belong more to Titian rather than to Giorgione.

In the second ten years of his career (1511-20), Titian developed a majestic vista of landscape as seen in the *Sacred and Profane Love*. (figure 14) The simple lyricism of his early phase was replaced by a grand orchestra. Titian was not satisfied merely to show a segment of nature with a poetic and lyrical aura in a microcosmic context, as he did in *Three Ages of Man*. He also ambitiously worked on a macrocosm landscape reflecting his broad, vast mind. The *Sacred and Profane Love* exhibits Titian's enormous capability of displaying mighty, magnificent landscape. Titian creates two types of worlds, the divine and the secular. These two worlds are linked by sky but skillfully separated by a large piece of gorgeous foliage in silhouette. In the divine world, behind the nude female or sacred love, long horizontal lines stretching into the unlimited space are drawn in the evening blue sky with cumulus clouds. An immense,

and its stylistic implications," *The Burlington Magazine*, 127 (1985), 419. Goldfarb has a detailed discussion about the attribution of this painting.

extended universe and a prolonged time are hinted at this macrocosmic landscape. To the right, two hunters with their hounds are riding inland on their horses; because of their small scale, they do not spoil the quiet mood. In the same middle distance, the shepherd and his flock are resting while there is also an embracing couple under the grove on the side. A town with a tower is set between peaceful lagoons and a large piece of calm blue sea. Earth and water, blended with one another, receive the last rays of sunlight. The sails of a boat disappear towards the horizon in the far distance. A sharp-towered church stands high to watch over a broad vista and symbolize spiritual refinement. An extraordinary scene with tranquil atmosphere is rendered, and it is worthy of being called "divine."

The secular world counterpoints the divine world, just as sacred love is accompanied with profane love. In the *Sacred and Profane Love*, behind the dressed woman or profane love, a man hurriedly rides a horse towards a fortified city. The fortified buildings represent that man-made artifacts are hard and solid but perishable. To the left, the land is decorated with small flowers, and rabbits who are freely and contentedly playing there. Like the secular world, it is beautiful but evanescent. Titian purposely contrasts this world with the divine world; one is mortal, the other timeless and eternal.

Landscape painting is regarded as a substitute for an exhausting journey, because people could stay home and comfortably enjoy the natural scene without walking anywhere. As Max J. Friendlander says, there are two kinds of

⁵⁷ Goldfarb, 420-23.

enjoyment of nature: "a view from above of the open country, ...the spectator feels himself free, lifted up, face to face with nature and outside her.... The other kind of enjoyment comes from lingering in the woods, looking up at tall trees, living in nature."⁵⁸ If the *Sacred and Profane Love* satisfies the former delight, then the *Worship of Venus* and *Bacchanal of the Andrians* relates to the latter preference. It must take different temperaments for one to enjoy these two kinds of pleasures.

Titian produced two excellent woodland scenes in the *Worship of Venus*, and *Bacchanal of the Andrians* in 1518-19. A new way of seeing and a new type of pictorial form, such as the effect of interlaced groups of figures and trees, a dynamic composition, and various colors of trees, are introduced in these works.

In the *Worship of Venus* (figure 2), the trees with intricate shapes, rising to the sky, occupy more space and dominate the scene. The leaves of several trees merge in a dense mass and the branches of foliage stretch out against the evening sky. The trees create a screen and laterally recede into the distance. The erection of this tree-wall is significant for the composition, because it functions as a perspective plane diagonally extending towards the horizon.

The leafy tree with fruits is as striking as the hundreds of frolicking cupids in the *Worship of Venus*. The overwhelming foliage not only provides surface decoration to the painting but allows the glint of light among trees, fresh air, and a cool shade for the forest wanderer. Of great charm is the variety of the colors

⁵⁸ Max J. Friedlander, Landscape Portrait, Still-Life-Their Origin and Development (New York: Philosophical Library Press, 1950), 83.

of the leaves. These colors change, depending on the level of received sunlight, from dark black, light green to golden brown. The gracious and various position of the leaves are also successfully portrayed. Titian's foliage is among the most beautiful foliage ever painted. The leafy tree, like a hero who looks down on the world with a victory glance, is comprehensively palpable.

Another breath-taking innovative landscape during the second phase is Titian's *Bacchanal of the Andrians* (figure 15). Compared with Bellini's similar subject of the *Feast of the Gods*, (figure 16) in which gods and goddesses like a stately tableau recline in a grove, the *Bacchanal of the Andrians* breaks stillness and quietude. Titian creates a fabulous drama with passionate ecstasy. A new pastoral community is established in a mythological splendor. Although there are no shepherds in this place, the single tree in the right and the shaded grove as well as the pastoral passion of music and love are here.

Infused with laughter, music and love in woodland, Titian refreshed the subject of the feast of gods. The *Bacchanal of the Andrians* brings the relations of the landscape and the figures to a new height. The interlaced groups of trees, coupled with the interlocking groups of figures, are invested with vigorous movement and dynamic interaction. As John Walker points out, in many ways the *Bacchanal of the Andrians* rejuvenates the pictorial content, such as the complexity of composition, the intricate choreographic movement, and the passionate visions.⁵⁹ Gods and goddesses, dancing in an enchanted grove, are

⁵⁹ John Walker, Bellini and Titian at Ferrara (London: Phaidon Publishers Press, 1956), 64.

organized carefully in a dynamic design, interlocking with each other. This gives a new richness and density to the composition. A sense of balance is injected into the painting. The looming mountains in the distance on the right are placed in opposition to the heavy foliage on the left and between them is blue sky. The heavy foliage with overshadowing majesty is counterbalanced by the mass of figures. The stream of light flows between the dark masses of the mountain and the foliage.

The *Bacchanal of the Andrians* directly and compellingly appeals to the spectator's vision, since the trees and the figures are drawn to the frontal plane of the picture. This is the first time the protagonists of the painting are placed and activated in the woods. The pleasure of lingering there belongs not only to the viewer, but also to the gods and goddesses in the picture. The feast is performed in a burst of emotions of the figures and the cheery atmosphere of a festival. The joy of an open view is replaced by the direct attention of the viewer.

In the third ten years of his career (1521-30), Titian extended his interests to religious pastoral landscapes. Two Madonna pictures were created in 1530. These twin works portray the Alpine mountain scene from different times and viewpoints. The sensuous manipulation of pigments is a prevailing trait common in these two paintings, which best illustrate what Charles Ricketts describes as Titian's style as a colorist. The choice of color and its combinations are spaced in definite patterns, and show the richest hues.⁶⁰ In *The Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Catherine*, (figure 3) the saints are set on a

piece of rock and shaded by a cluster of foliage on the left; on the right further in the distance are the grazing flock with shepherd and the deep blue mountains. The time is dawn; the sky and mountains still remain blue, when the first light breaks the clouds. This blue is repeated in the Virgin's dress. The same expression is seen in *The Madonna with a Rabbit*. (figure 17) It seems that the artist changes the Virgin's dress to red to echo the color of the sunset landscape.

It appears that Venetian painters preferred nature most in the evening, a time when all is warmed by the glow of the sky and atmosphere. Rich tones can be caught through modulated and blended colors of objects at evening, and through the sun glowing against a darkening sky at sunset. The Venetian sunset is caught in *The Madonna with the Rabbit* in wonderful glory. All objects are immersed in the sunlight; the colors of golden-red and yellow dominate the scene, and the shadows are soft. The happy mood and warm relations of the Madonna, Child, Catherine and the rabbit form a light, pleasant vision. In the foreground, the flowers and vegetation in the Virgin's garden are naturalistically painted. To the right, the shepherd is about to stand up, intending to drive his flock back, while the sheep are still hidden in the grove playing with one another. Shoulder by shoulder, peak by peak, the stately Alpine mountains in the background create gigantic energy to enhance the magnificence of the picture. A tower in silhouette, isolated and standing high on a steep hill, stretches into the infinite sky. The spiritual quality is heightened by its temporality.

⁶⁰ Ricketts, 125.

In the second period (1531-1550), Titian changed his style of landscape to another dimension of pictorial thought. He tended to a generalized form and used a heavier key of color and tone. The typical work is *Charles V.* (figure 18). This painting shows a darkened scene, in which the color is modulated; Titian turns from a “colorist” to a “harmonist.”⁶¹ The landscape in this painting, vague and indistinct, successfully constructs a meditative atmosphere. The emperor, an emaciated figure, canters on his horse out of the forest towards an unknown destination. Dimly visible before the emperor is a river, and beyond the river the mist rolls upward. A calm resplendent twilight is found here. The sun is almost set; the gloomy sky and trees turn to a resonant color, consonant to the deep brown of the horse. The golden armor shines in the darkness. One triumph of this painting is the Venetian red, which enlivens the whole dark scene. A contemplative atmosphere and mood can be found in the figure’s nobility and the darkened landscape. This painting evokes the emperor’s glorious past and simultaneously reveals the approaching end of his life. The emperor thus looks pale and his marching seems slow. All these indicate that the emperor’s fine past is at the end of his glory.⁶² Charles V’s love of this painting showed his good taste in appreciating its contemplative mood. His state of mind during this time could correspond with the portrayal in this painting.

Titian’s types of landscapes changed in the third period (1551-1576), along with the different subjects. In *Venus and Adonis* of 1551-54, (figure 19)

⁶¹ Ricketts, 124.

⁶² Turner, 111-12.

Titian repeated the motif of the dark silhouette of a large tree with thick foliage in *Charles V* of 1548, but the interpretation of the sky is totally new. The sky, with its patches of blue and rays of light, appears as a glimpse of sunlight. As Cupid is still sleeping, Adonis is about to leave Venus when the day breaks and the sun will shine on everything. The blurred effect of the trees injected by the radiant light of the sun is wonderful. Every stroke of the brush is natural, and the feelings of the figures and the landscape are properly exhibited. The well-interpreted sky increases the charm of this touching mythological story.

Later on, in 1554, Titian attempted a night scene in *St. Margaret*. (figure 20) Its stunning evocation of nocturnal illumination, especially in the burning city in the background, is striking. The color is reduced to a lowered tone. The painter developed this reduced color palette, but with no less variations than before. This anticipates that Titian, a colorist, in his later years would be haunted by monochrome painting. The conception of the work is inventive. A lyrical impulse of darkness has added fascination to the magic of color. The saint is robed in green, the dragon being lost in a mass of gloom; beyond the rock stretches an immense sky of broken color, decorated by a range of rich blue. A town is swept away towards the horizon, while at the left edge of the picture, a boat sails in the river. There are ceaseless variations in the tones of the sky, the rock, and the dress of the saint as well. All tints of color are resonant and united in the darkness.

Titian continued the tendency of the play of water and rock and the play of brilliant colors in the *Rape of Europa* (figure 21), but with much coarser strokes

than earlier. Colors are still placed on each object unmistakably but looser than before. The figures and the landscape are composed in a similar pictorial form. The sweeping movement of the figures corresponds to the sweeping landscape; a powerful diagonal line divides yet connects them into a counterbalanced composition. Arthur Pope says that by the time of the *Rape of Europa* Titian's paintings had become highly dramatic in character. He defines the "dramatic" as "the representation of the human figure in action on a noble scale with the large and sweeping movement which we now associate with grand opera. It meant especially movement of hands and arms and legs in gestures far removed from those of ordinary life."⁶³ The blending of the shapes and colors between the far distant mountains and the clouds, and between the water and the sky produces a harmonious and grand atmospheric effect.

After 1571, Titian's inclination towards spiritual refinement is unreservedly revealed in his last landscape paintings. The austere life and the spirituality of the hermit saint is reflected in the roughness and wildness of the landscape in *St. Jerome*. (figure 22) The landscape is seen in darkness, and a spot of light is dramatically injected into the grotto from the heavens. It seems that the saint's soul is purified in the moment when he fervently gazes at the illumination on the tiny crucifix. Creating this fascinating scene, Titian in his eighties must be likened to the hermit saint in his spirituality.

⁶³ Arthur Pope, Titian's Rape of Europa (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960), 15.

The motif of trees and rocks, combined with a religious theme, is brought to a new high level. The wild mass of vegetation, expanded on the surface of the arched rocks, is half immersed in the darkness and half illuminated by heavenly light. Glimpsed through from the inside of the dark grotto, one can see a bright scene with deep blue sky. The majesty of clouds and mountains in the distance builds up a place where the miracle is expected to occur. The coarse rocks and pebbles, on which the saint kneels, signify his harsh seclusion.

In the foregoing discussion, we have seen that Titian's style changed at different periods, based on the growing results of his never ceasing observation and study. In his early period, before 1530, he painted with careful details, grace and spontaneity, and smoothness. He blended and harmonized a broad range of colors with fascinating effects. He created majestic views of landscape as well as warm, intimate ones. The pastoral passion, the dynamic composition, the majestic interlaced trees were brought into his landscapes. As his style progressed after 1530, he leaned towards forms without outlines and a restricted palette. He executed his paintings in bold, broad strokes, and in dark-colored underground.

Titian's landscape drawings show different inclinations from his landscape paintings. In this medium, Titian was completely free from the preferences of patrons and the restrictions of ecclesiastical art. Most of his landscape drawings were executed not in preparation for a painting but for their own sake. Therefore, his landscape drawings, perhaps, are more expressive and freer than his landscape paintings.

There still exists a wide divergence of opinion about Titian's drawings- which one is by Titian's own hand, which is a copy of a lost original, which is by Domenico Campagnola,⁶⁴ and which is a forgery. Most authorities seem to agree that the total number of surviving figural as well as landscape drawings by Titian himself is about fifty.⁶⁵ We may call copies, imitations, and forgeries "Titianesque drawings," for they were executed in Titian's manner or style. His drawings we choose to analyze here are accepted as his. They reveal Titian's achievement in landscape.

In the *Group of Trees* of 1514-15 (figure 23), Titian challenged himself with the form of the cluster of trees conglomerated with interlaced complexity. The aesthetic consideration rather than botanical interest is probably the primary concern here. Several clumps of trees are interwoven together with a light, sure touch. The gnarletrees grow from a mound, and the stems of these trees are meticulously executed. With the strong and assertive stroke, the vitality and vigorous growth of trees are rendered with thorough effect. Even though this is merely a drawing, it is moody. An atmosphere is shown by the deep shadow of the trees; the daylight disappears and the forest is darkened gradually.

The *Shepherd Asleep with His Flock in an Alpine Setting* of 1520-25 (figure 24) is a study of Titian's hometown in a pastoral context. Here, a sleeping

⁶⁴ Domenico Campagnola, the adopted son of Giulio Campagnola the engraver, is himself well known as an engraver and designer for woodcuts and a prolific draughtsman. He is said to have been an assistant for Titian, and the one artist of the Venetian circle who came closest to Titian in certain landscape drawings. See James Byam Shaw, "Titian's Drawings: A Summing-up," *Apollo* 112 (1980), 389.

⁶⁵ Shaw, 386-88.

shepherd naps under a tall tree with gnarled trunk in the foreground, while the familiar high-pitched roofs of wooden Alpine houses are singled out in the background. A stream with steep banks meanders into the distance on the one side, and an arched bridge and sailboats are added to the other side. The pastoral mood of peace and contentment are shown through accomplished technique and design. The passage of sheep is very successful in this drawing. It is like a study of the ecology of the animal; rather than as a flock, the sheep are depicted in various poses, raising heads, grasping grass, and squatting on the land. Expressed usually in several suggestive strokes with vague contours in less prominent places in Titian's other works, the sheep are now drawn enlarged and take on a prominent status.

Titian made copious numbers of drawings between 1521 and 1530, in which a nostalgic yearning is revealed and suffused. The scene of Titian's birthplace—Pieve di Cadore, a town in the Alps three day's journey to Venice—often appears in his works. It is very likely that Titian drew his familiar landscape in the *Fortified Village in a Landscape* of 1525-30. (figure 25) The castle with the sharp-crowned tower is built on rocks, and beneath the castle are the straggling houses. Near the village, a limpid stream flows to the distance on the one side, and a few branches of trees handsomely stand on the other side. This scenery almost completely corresponds to the description of Cadore by Crowe and Cavalcaselle.⁶⁶ If their description is reliable, then this landscape is not created

⁶⁶ There is a vivid description about the similarity: "The rock of Cadore rises in a steep and rugged mass; the castle of Pieve rears its towers on the crest, which falls more

by imagination, as Wethey says, but from a real vista.⁶⁷ The master kept his vivid memory in his forties and unmistakably presented it in his drawing. This may have soothed his mind of homesickness and amused with a pure landscape.

The technique of the *Fortified Village in a Landscape* is superior. It is a well-done work like an ink painting; the trees and the castle are skillfully shaded by different gradations of penstrokes. This produces a wonderful effect of a black-and-white picture, appropriate to a nostalgic mood. The fortifications rising from barren mounds take on a monumentality. The scenery is composed beautifully; the crossing mounds, edged by delicate trees that wave in the foreground, and in the middle, the spaciousness accommodates plenty of buildings. The whole town is suspended in a moody air. The artist produced a vaporous effect by varying the lines from light, dark, to blur. To create an atmosphere is as important as the solids that are drawn.

Segments of nature, appearing as diverse and multifarious, eternally attract the landscapist's attention. The communion between the artist and nature is so subtle that nature's outlooks are always caught on canvas by Titian from different perspectives. Sometimes, he puts several unrelated segments of natural scene together to create an idealistic landscape.

precipitously than in nature to the torrent of the Piave; and we feel that if the foliage would butlet us, we should see-as from Ravis-the town of Pieve on the saddle to the left, the peaks of Antelao above the town, and beneath the castle crag the stragglng houses of Sotto Castello." Quoted in Walker, 68-9.

⁶⁷ Wethey, 49.

The *Shepherd Playing a Flute and Leading His Flock* of 1530 (figure 26) is an elaborate idealistic work. The beautiful moments and segments of nature are detected and collected by Titian's sensitive aesthetic concerns in this drawing. The way of composing and delineating the details is a distinct characteristic of this work. Two water ways appear in this picture; a pond in the foreground and a large lake surrounding the land on the left. A sheep stops to drink the water in the foreground and its graceful turning pose indeed heightens this beautiful moment. Some vegetation decorates the top of a well-knit, textured rock, near the transparent lake. Far across a lake, one sees two sailboats, a splendid tree and a row of wooden houses. A feeling of the quantity of the sheep is well-expressed by using clear contours to depict the foreground sheep and indistinct lines to depict the flock farther beyond. The shepherd's flute enchants the animals with musical magic. A rustic scene with a landscape pathos is the result of Titian's genius.

Titian was still obsessed with the study of trees in his third period, and further enhanced his techniques and expressions. If compared with the *Group of Trees* of 1514-15, the *Tree and Distant Castle* of 1530 (figure 27) is a more refined work. In it, the trees are heavily shaded to create an effect of relief. The hanging foliage overlooks the majestic castle. Titian's love for trees and his accomplishments in portraying them established his place and influence in the history of landscape painting on the later age. His landscapes were famous and widely diffused during his lifetime. They were recommended as models to the students of painting after his death by Karel van Mander, a Dutch painter and

critic in the seventeenth century. Titian's woodcuts were a source for the landscape in Netherlands art. Later in the seventeenth century, Netherlands painters still studied them, using his inventions in their own work.⁶⁸

Titian attempted to show the reflection of the thicket's foliage in the water in the *Trees beside a Pool* of 1530 (figure 28). A startling scene of suffused foliage and its reflection is viewed with an overwhelming feeling. Although the delineation is only a few vertical suggestive lines, the intention of demonstrating the reflection in the water is innovative. Such a pure landscape with full rich massed foliage reflected in the transparent water is admirable. By all means, this representation required a high intricate technique of control of each stroke with appropriate variation. The deep shadow of the foliage gives the viewer hints to imagine its volume and depth. The curled leaves are elaborately shaped by a number of light and dark pen-strokes.

Two small drawings, *The Castle on a Mountain* (figure 29) and *The Satyr in a Landscape* of 1535 (figure 30) are, for this period, like two simple etudes to entertain the artist. Even so, *The Castle on a Mountain* creates a marvelous effect for its sheer isolation and simplicity. The soaring height of the castle in the almost empty countryside is impressive. *The Satyr in a Landscape* probably is preparatory for a more complicated satyric pastoral scene. The satyr sits beside a rock and faces a goat in the foreground. In the background there is still Titian's

⁶⁸ Peter Dreyer, "A Woodcut by Titian as a model for Netherlands landscape drawing in the Kupferstichkabinett," The Burlington Magazine, 127 (1985), 762.

familiar village with a stream flowing through the far hills. The sureness of the thin lines accounts for the artist's confidence in easily drawing these scenes.

Some wonderful drawings were executed in 1565. *The Horse Running from a Pool* (figure 31) is a splendid and poetic piece. The vigorous movement of the running horse in the foreground makes a strong contrast with the serene, poetic landscape in the background. The combination of these two is an interesting and unusual pictorial conceit. Both the lunging body of the horse and the long bridge shape two horizontal lines, coupled with the lower horizon, geometrically balanced by the vertical lines formed by the tall trees, groves and their reflections in the water. The feeling of enraged tossing clouds, which occupy a large space on paper, and the mood of the quiet, smoothly flowing water in the lower part, form another interesting contrast. The deliberate composition, associated with the graceful shapes of the trees, bridge, pond, and horse, constitutes a harmonious melody of a pictorial poem.

Roger and Angelica in a Landscape of 1565 (figure 32) is one of Titian's most beautiful drawings. A graceful female nude reclines in a corner facing a magnified, marvelous landscape. A line of architecture, beginning with the ancient ruins at the upper left, the tower, bridge, and a set of buildings on the right, extends to the far distance. The crossed lines and various pen-strokes, which constitute a complicated composition, are used on the dragon, skull, pond, hills, buildings, trees and clouds. Our eyes are busy moving from here to there. Nobody will try to view this picture in one glance. A meticulous examination of each part of the picture is necessary for us to witness the artist's superior pen-

work and to speculate on the creator's sophisticated thought reflecting on each detail.

The *Nymphs and Satyrs in a Forest* of 1565 (figure 33) is another of Titian's most elaborate drawings. The accomplishment of Titian's study of trees reached its culmination here. A real full, rich forest becomes the protagonist, and the figures and buildings merely play a supporting role on paper. Like human poses and facial expressions, the trees are shown in diverse gestures and countenances: some handsomely posed, some wild and strong with wrath, and some slender and delicate in laughter. Several large trees grow beyond the frame of the picture; their foliage almost covers the whole sky, and their shadows are cast on the land, pond, and figures. The receding trees, varied in size, successfully generate the feelings of depth and broad space of the forest.

While the trees in the forest are busily engaged in their competitive growth towards the sky, the mythological figures proceed with their story. In a corner of the forest, a nymph is seduced by a satyr, but her stare, along with the other two satyrs' gazes, falls on a comic scene, where a jaunty satyr is chased by a goat near the pond on the other side of the forest. In spite of the small scale of the nymphs and satyrs, the lush landscape is enlivened by the incidents of this mythological theme. The presence of the nymphs and satyrs greatly intensifies the mysterious, idyllic pathos of the forest. The artist's deliberate organization of the whole scene is conceivable. The sense of the density, the warmth, and the variety of the woods are lavishly added to the forest's opulence.

Titian was prolific in landscapes in his early years until 1530, and most of his landscape paintings as well as drawings were created during this period. In the first thirty years of his career, Titian exhibited his joy of living in all its youth and beauty in his landscape paintings; the color is resplendent with subtle delicacy. His drawings create unrivaled pastoral and nostalgic moods, and unprecedented pictorial thoughts in his study of gnarled trees as well as new ways of composing and looking at the beautiful natural scene. In his later years (1531-76), he produced only limited landscape paintings and drawings. The master seemed inclined towards stimulating his soul to be loftier. There was also a change in his technique of modulating and darkening the color, and in his use of broad brushwork in his landscape paintings. In his drawings, he indulged in elaborate satyric landscape. Titian's view of nature changed at different periods, reflected in his continuous refinement of his landscapes.

Chapter 3 Subject and Meaning of Titian's Landscapes

Nature, one of the most miraculous masterpieces created by God, is a direct and effective vehicle to communicate with the supreme power. This communion between the artist and nature through landscapes could be a spiritual union. Working on the landscape, the artist receives a kind of inward spiritual touch, which originates from his constantly being in contact with and observing the natural scene. Venetian artists in the sixteenth century, more or less and to different degrees, achieved this goal in their minds. They painted the landscape and the figures in a comprehensive wholeness, which, indeed, realistically reflected their interior worlds. Among them, Titian went through a journey of inner mind, perhaps more significant than other artists of the period resulting in a wealth of landscapes in both paintings and drawings. When he moved from one work to another, it perhaps reflected not merely a stylistic change, but a spiritual journey. The different subjects and meanings of Titian's landscapes reflect different stages of his search for self-understanding. This course of approaching a higher spiritual form and existence in his landscapes, and, of course, his figural paintings as well, and the changes of his inward state of mind are as important as his stylistic development. This chapter will engage in a further investigation of these aspects of change.

Venetian artists seldom expressed their thoughts in writing, and their interests were mostly confined to the visual arts. The only writings by Titian that

can provide some insight into his thought and culture are his own letters.⁶⁹

Unfortunately, a mass of correspondence and records only reveal that he was shrewd and sagacious in building up his fame and fortune, but nothing about his state of mind.⁷⁰ Because of the absence of any documentation to enlighten us about Titian's intellectual world, the artwork itself, the choice of subject and the method of expression, provide us with insight to judge the painter's emotions and the passion of his soul.

Most of Titian's landscapes could be generally classified as "pastoral," even though Richard Turner claims that: "the idea of pastoralism in Venetian painting is so broad that it escapes any exact definition."⁷¹ For him, "pastoralism" had already become an enigmatic term for which a host of definitions have been proposed. The genesis of the word "pastoral" comes from the Latin word "pastor," which means shepherd.⁷² Thus we know the original meaning of "pastoral" is associated with the shepherd's world. The essential elements for the "pastoral" are shepherds, whose flocks are joined with the deities or demigods of pleasant groves. Often, once a term is created, a great number of generic meanings are attached to it so that they enrich yet simultaneously veil the original meaning of the term. Even so, the situation is not completely hopeless. If we can put the word "pastoral" in a significant framework, and when

⁶⁹ Padoan, 46. Titian left a rich body of correspondence for us. The volume comprises 103 letters from him, and 81 addressed to him. In addition, there are eight petitions to the Venetian authorities and a tax declaration of 1566.

⁷⁰ Arthur Stanley Riggs, *Titian the Magnificent and the Venice of His Day* (New York, Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Press, 1946), 48.

⁷¹ Turner, 125.

⁷² Lee, 10.

its many meanings are reviewed, then this term becomes more understandable. This can be achieved by looking at different literary, religious and metaphorical contexts. Turner's further summary of the Venetian pastoral is an example. He clarified "pastoral" as two distinct streams: the literary pastoral with mythological figures, shepherds, and nymphs in Arcadia; and the contemporary rural life with peasants.⁷³ Turner puts Titian's landscapes in both literary and social contexts. However, for Titian, it seems that these two streams belong to the same category—the literary pastoral. Both of them originate from literature: the former from Virgil's *Eclogues* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and the latter from Virgil's *Georgics*. Other than subject matter, we may widen the range of the pastoral more broadly to the landscape which possesses pastoral structure, mood, or passions, and to a place, which is ideal and imagined and where Arcadia lies.⁷⁴

Titian's early life was his journey to search for an Arcadia, and the idea of his pastoral landscape cannot be separated from this. We cannot pinpoint an exact geographical location, for Arcadia is a concept. When this idea is embodied, its primary feature could take the form of a civilized, lyric landscape as in Titian's works.

⁷³ Turner, 125.

⁷⁴ Before Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, in medieval or early Renaissance pastoral, Arcadia was not yet a paradise. Arcady was referred to a kind of forest of Ardennes, a land that is not here. Snell, Curtius, and Panofsky suppose that Arcadia existed as a magic and before Sannazaro. Any gathering of shepherds or the gods or heroes was enough to create an Arcadia. It could be created by invoking in a pastoral manner the trees, rivers, and rocks, and by simply to make music. See Paul Holberton, "The *Pastorale* or *Fete Champetre* in the Early Sixteenth Century," Studies in the History of Art, 45 (1994), 245-62.

In Titian's early years, the configuration of Arcadia is similar to Virgil's. It is as defined by M. Owen Lee: "a place half-way between a past dimly remembered in myth, a Golden Age of innocence, and the troubled present."⁷⁵ Virgil, as well as Titian, set this place in a perspective of a village over the rocky hill, a rivulet meandering into the distance, and a tall, strong tree standing nearby a grove. For them, the pastoral represents not an escape from the city or the sophisticated complexities of urban life, but a pleasant place to show their happiness, sorrow, love, hope, and desire. Through the mirror of shepherds, gods, and goddesses, we see Titian and Virgil's celebration of youth and beauty.

We come to the *Pastoral Symphony* (figure 6) again; no matter whether scholars attribute it to Giorgione or Titian, the pastoral vein and the spirit of this painting is evident. In this painting the observer feels the arrival in an Arcadia, a pleasant, comfortable place, where shepherds and goddesses are making music in the shade of a grove, and a village is just a stone's throw in the distance. As in Virgil's *Eclogues*, in this *Pastoral Symphony*, a youth's joys, sorrows, and hopes for the future are reflected with transparent clarity. Here, the men look young and the women mature, in their heyday, and the landscape is lush and full. Their joys spring from the musical competition, an Arcadian tradition in which all shepherds are poets who sing their poems. As we see in the painting, two youths sit together. One might imagine that they discuss how to improve their music and poems. While one nymph or muse holds a pipe and turns to the two youths seemingly to consult about their music, the other pours water into a

⁷⁵ Lee, 36 & 86-7.

well symbolizing their inspiration. The days for the youth are not always without anxiety, if his passion and love earns no response nor release. The nymph or muse, turning her back to the shepherds and standing beside the well, looks gloomy; is she worried about the loser in the musical competition?

The peaceful sky and valley is painted in a reduced vibrancy. It shows nature remains silent; there are no responses nor solace for the shepherd's pain, as he sings his song to the valley and the sky. The young shepherd's sorrow, however, is so slight that it is released when he drives the flock home, and after he consoles himself with his pastoral tasks. As we see the shepherd driving the flock home on the right of the picture, the scene seems to imply that there is hope for the future; therefore, the shepherd's happiness returns. The shepherd's feelings are keyed to the times of day; as Virgil describes, when the shadows fall, his passion subsides. Similarly in the painting, the pastoral passion is keyed to the landscape.

Many scholars have given numerous interpretations of the *Pastoral Symphony*, but none satisfactorily explains it.⁷⁶ The subject and meaning are, in fact, ambiguous and escape interpretation. It is dissonant that two dressed gentlemen sit with two nude females in the open air surrounded by a beautiful natural scene. The most discordant note, as Turner points out, is the elegant

⁷⁶ Some scholars go very far; for example, J. P. Hodin thinks that it is not important to reach any satisfactory explanation because the artist gave free rein to his creative imagination, guided only by the inner logic of his poetic vision. See J. P. Hodin, "The Riddle of Giorgione," *Art Digest*, September 15, 1995. To me, this opinion reveals the formalist claims of the autonomy of art, and precludes cultural influence on artistic development.

young man with overbred sophistication.⁷⁷ One interpretation is that the two nudes and two men are two halves of Aristotle's views on poetry, a higher and a lower genre.⁷⁸ Another interpretation is that the elegant young man himself represents the pastoral poet and could not completely escape from the refined environment and the sophistication of society.⁷⁹ The nude female personifies poetry, based on evidence of the fifteenth century playing card, labeled "poesia," where a woman is seated by a fountain, playing the flute in one hand and pouring water with the other.⁸⁰ Turner argues that this painting should not be interpreted as a simple allegory.⁸¹ I agree with Turner, because the two genres of Aristotelian poetry would not be illustrated with a large length of lush landscape to distract the viewer's attention, nor would the dressed men represent a lower status since they occupy the central place and play a dominant role in the painting. However, if, as Turner says, the sophisticated dressed man is pastoral poetry itself, and the nude female is the nymph of the fountain, how can we explain her sad emotion? I believe if we put this picture in Virgil's literary context, its meanings can be comprehended.

In Virgil's *Eclogues* Arcadia is not a place where the inhabitants

⁷⁷ Turner, 102.

⁷⁸ Patricia Egan, "Poesia and the *Fete Champetre*," *The Art Bulletin*, XLI (1959), 304-06. To Patricia Egan the picture appears divided in two halves: the left side comprises the water-pouring "musi," the fine young lute-player, the white gabled building by the lake, and the far landscape; the enclosed landscape on the right side contains the flute-playing "muse," the shepherd boy, the farmhouse, the grove, and the goatherd with his flock. All these contrasts are strengthened by implications of "higher" and "lower" status.

⁷⁹ Turner, 101-12.

⁸⁰ Turner, 101-12.

⁸¹ Turner, 101.

are in timeless happiness and youth, nor is it in Titian's paintings. In the *Three Ages of Man*, (figure 1) Titian tackles the essential problems of life and death. There a strong sense of melancholy and mortality is conveyed by the young shepherd's sorrowful face, the skulls held by an old man, as well as by the gloomy sky, the tree stump, and the dark tree. The joys of life bear a weighted, pessimistic feeling, elicited by the fact that life is unavoidably ended by death. Any joy of love and youth cannot make one escape from this destiny. In this case, Arcadia turns into a vulnerable place, and the tones of Arcadia become sad, heavy and blue. Although there is no tomb here for the shepherd, a sense of the immediacy of death is detectable. Once the question of life and death is considered, one can feel that death is not in the far distance but is imminent; in other words, it is not in the future tense but in the present. Therefore, Titian puts the putti, the young shepherd and his beloved, and the old man as three groups of people in contiguous places on the canvas, connecting this nexus into a cycle of life. Through the process of searching, no answer is found in the *Three Ages of Man*; all questions seem suspended there in Titian's early life.

The heavy burden of speculating on the question of life and death is relieved in *The Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Catherine*, (figure 3) by the message of the Messiah brought by the angel. In Arcadia man's original sin is committed but man can be saved only by God's mercy and compassion. In this painting, the shepherd, on the left, bears witness to a scene of the promise of religious salvation. He is bathed in a smiling landscape; the dawning sunlight plays upon the clouds on hills, bushes, and the

foliage. The shepherd must be enlightened by the descending angel and its blissful gospel and must know how to share the joys with the holy family. The two worlds, the shepherd's and the religious, are thus melded into one united Arcadia. The shepherd's hope for the future is thus not a Utopian dream, and it could be fulfilled through the Christian religion.

In addition to finding hope in the religious context, the hope of the pastoral could also come from the innocence of childhood. In the *Worship of Venus*, (figure 2) the image of a wealth of golden apples and a huge number of lovely cupids evokes the innocence of the past Golden Age. The landscape echoes this image; as we see, the foliage contains full saturated sunlight. The "Golden Age" was sung for centuries in literature, but it was in an irrevocable past. M. Owen Lee says: "Virgil is in fact the first poet to sing that the Golden Age of the dawn of creation will return,"⁸² and Titian followed him but put it in a mythological scene. The trees laden with apples symbolize the Golden Age in all its fullness. The putti plucking the apples signify the future's hope. By the time the child matures and reaches manhood, the Golden Age will come. The apple here is no longer a symbol of original sin but an emblem of humankind's promising land.

Titian's spiritual journey of his early years was attuned to Virgil's, but in his later years his spiritual journey turned to explore deeper emotions and human soul. Titian thus no longer stayed in the Virgilian pastoral mood. A tragic pathos

⁸² Lee, 77.

and dramatic emotions are reflected in the subjects of hermit saints in his later landscapes.

The *Nymph and Shepherd* (figure 34), a painting created in Titian's last years, shows the master's farewell to the pastoral landscape favored most in his youth. In the first glance, the spectator is as if back to Titian's early work, where the shepherd's love of music is the subject under the shadow of a tall standing tree. As a matter of fact, the elderly artist rephrased the whole pictorial language and text in this painting. The scene is vague, and takes on a surreal quality. No clouds, mountains, or land can be distinguished. The landscape bursts with pigments; the glowing sunset is suggested by the floating and modulated pigments with an outburst of emotions. The tree stumps, stretching towards the sky, and monumentally placed on the hill, are painted by a mere conglomeration of dark pigments. The overshadowing foliage, drawn by loose, broad strokes, are shaped like feathers, flying and dancing in the sky gracefully. The furry leaves are similar to the shepherd's crown of hair and the animal skin beneath the nymph.

The pastoral world, expressed by the shepherd holding a pipe and peacefully staring at the nymph, and the nymph turning her reclined body and exchanging glances with the shepherd, creates a classical calm and noble scene in the foreground. In contrast, the landscape in the background is submersed in furious pigments. The pigment here becomes a powerful medium to show the artist's passion. Reading this painting, we feel that Titian experienced a conflict

and yet a balance of two opposite emotions; pastoral peace and a strong feeling of an uncompromising struggle to destiny.

A transcendence of trivial pleasures on earth and of human mortality is pursued by the master, after he exhausted secular wit and brightness. A civilized, lyric Arcadia gives way to a wild, untamed nature in Titian's *St. Jerome* (figure 22).

Titian depicts a place of timelessness in the *St. Jerome*; outside of the cave the sky is gloomy blue, and inside the cavern is dark, but enlightened by a soft light with a silvery shimmer. Turner explains that this soft glow is the emanation of moonlight, which rises directly behind the tree, and that this is a haunting nocturnal scene.⁸³ As a matter of fact, it is hard to discern if the time is dawn or evening, because of the multiple sources of light coexisting in this picture. The light illuminating the interior cave could be moonlight, assuming that this light comes from the outside of the cave, but in this picture the source of moonlight comes from within, so this does not seem possible. The fresh blue sky combined with the crystal mountains is probably illuminated by the natural light of dawn, and the darkened cavern and the saint's body are lit by a supernatural light. Most fascinating is a dramatic light like a thunderbolt pouring into the rocky architecture of gigantic monoliths and falling on the tiny crucifix. After unaccountable days of meditation and complete seclusion, a dramatic event happens. The saint's eyes and muscular body as well as his cave are suddenly brightened by this supernatural light, coming from God's mercy.

Not only is the time indiscernible, but the place is unrecognizable on earth, where the cave is next to crystal mountains and a furious sea. This place seems a space without boundary that crosses the secular world and paves the way to heaven. As Turner describes, the artist attempts to show the theme of the hermit saint in a landscape as “a search for an intersection of Time and Eternity in some quiet spot of God’s creation.”⁸⁴ Titian’s *St. Jerome* is the best explanation for this description.

The supernatural light, appearing in a natural subtle landscape, was an astute invention of Venetian artists. It is applied to replace the traditional way of showing Christian subjects in narrative sequence and to symbolize divine revelation. In Giorgione’s *Three Philosophers* (figure 35), perhaps the three magi, disguised as the three philosophers, are set in a vision of boundless light suffused through airy clouds, and the sun setting behind blue hills beside a cavern.⁸⁵ In this lyric, beautiful scene, we notice the two sources of light—that is, an artificial light and the light from the heaven. The heavenly light comes from outside the picture; it picks out the leaves, the rough rock, and scatters a myriad

⁸³ Turner, 114-15.

⁸⁴ Turner, 112.

⁸⁵ Salvatore Settis discovered through X-rays an earlier version of the painting which differed from the final composition in certain details of the landscape, and especially in the facial expressions of the three protagonists. The youngest “philosopher” stares intently, with parted lips, in an attitude of surprise rather than meditation. The eldest is turned sharply towards the cave and wears an extravagant “oriental” head-dress; the third man is no longer a generic “oriental” but a negro. This last detail dispels any doubts about the identity of the “philosophers” in the earlier version: they are the three Magi. See Salvatore Settis, tr. by Ellen Bianchini, *Giorgione’s Tempest-Interpreting the Hidden Subject* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 20.

of reflections over the pebbles at the mouth of the cave.⁸⁶ We are barely aware that this light is not natural, because it is skillfully and sensitively melded with the natural scene.

Besides the supernatural light, another significant emblem representing divine revelation in Titian's *St. Jerome* is the tree. We know a tall, strong tree that borders the picture has structural meaning and denotes a "locus amoenus"⁸⁷ in Titian's pastoral landscapes, but beyond this meaning, this type of tree gains another layer of meaning associated with Christian thought. In *St. Jerome*, the tree, with a stunted trunk and invisible stems, truncated from the top foliage, seems to root on a coarse rocky cliff—an impossible place to grow trees. This shows the tree must have been invested with unusual, transcendent meanings. As we know the tree in *Genesis*; when Adam and Eve are at the moment of the original sin in Eden, the fig is an allusion to the tree of good and evil or the tree of knowledge, and the ivy to the strength of redemption. Although it is impossible to identify the species of the tree in this picture, the implication of this tree as an emblem of the choice tree is perceivable. It is like the Tree of Life or the Tree of Paradise that bears the promise of salvation through the Passion of Christ.

In *St. Jerome*, Titian created a timeless place which is in the intersection of time and eternity. Beyond human emotions, like happiness, anxiety, and love,

⁸⁶ Settis, 27-8.

⁸⁷ The "locus amoenus" means the "pleasant place" that is the requisite site for pastoral encounters. See David Rosand, *Giorgione, Venice, and the Pastoral Vision*, in Robert Cafritz ed. *Places of Delight: The pastoral landscape* (New York: C.N. Potter Press, 1988), 38.

this place is modeled by an atmosphere of sublime peace, laden with penitence; the light and the tree evoke religious piety. The artist's state of mind should attain a reprieve after completing such a work of ingenious design for a Christian subject.

In summary, the subject and meaning of Titian's landscapes reveal messages about the painter's inner world. His spiritual journey began with delight and joy of life and continued by searching for the meaning of life and death. His journey seems to end in his religious passion. His last religious works explain his spiritual refinement and sublimity.

Conclusion

Titian's pastoral landscapes are among the most imaginative and original Old Master paintings. As discussed here, inspired by Virgil's pastoral poetry, Titian added his own love and understanding of nature from the mountains and forests of the Veneto. He continued the lyrical, contemplative mood of landscape in the Venetian tradition, but, more importantly, he invented new ways to express the landscape in each stage of his long life. With bright intelligence and high sensitivity, he carefully studied the stems of group of trees, the large-armed trees, the steep slant of the wooded hill, the effect of airy or glowing mountains, and the result was new landscape compositions. In Titian's work nature is characterized by cumulus clouds overhead, the rural buildings overlooking a peaceful valley, or a pleasant grove with a remarkable tree. The distillation of the essential ingredients from nature nourished his landscape to an unequaled high level.

Titian is regarded as a great colorist and sensual painter in his figure paintings, but through Titian's insight into the soul of nature we see his spiritual elevation and refinement in his landscapes. His dream of the Arcadian or pastoral ideal, and his experience of religious spirituality through his landscapes as well, makes him undoubtedly not only a sensualist but also a spiritualist.

APPENDIX



Figure 1 Titian: the Three Ages of Man, c.1509.

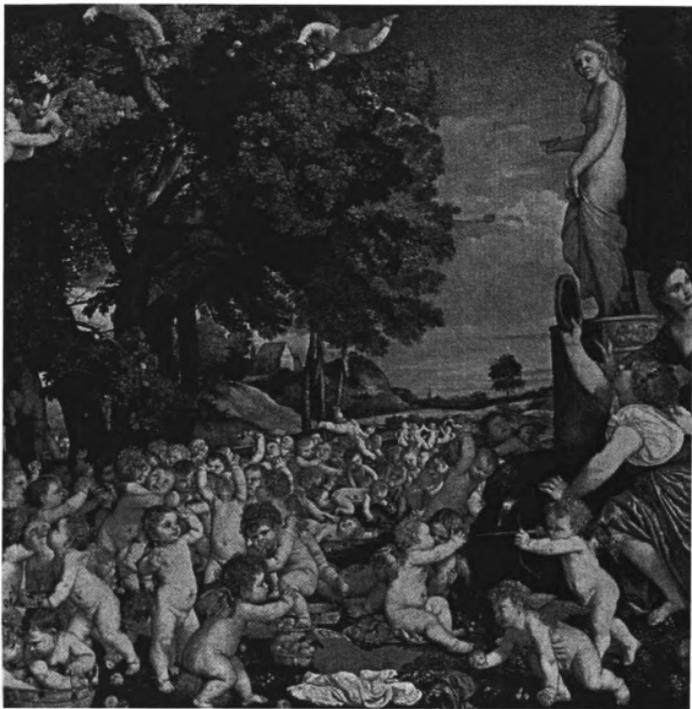


Figure 2 Titian: the Worship of Venus, c.1518-19.



Figure 3 Titian: The Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist and St. Catherine, c.1530.



Figure 4 (detail) Titian: The Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist and St. Catherine, c.1530.



Figure 5 Boldrini (woodcut after Titian): Landscape with
Milkmaid and Youth Sowing, c.1540.



Figure 6 Titian: Pastoral Symphony, c.1508-10.



Figure 7 Roman sarcophagus with Muses (left half of front).

Vienna, Archaeological Museum.



Figure 8 Raphael: Apollo and the Muses. Detail of the Parnassus, fresco, c.1509.



Figure 9 Marcantonio Raimondi: the two Muses. (Engraving) c.1517-20.



Figure 10 Titian: Arcadian Musicians in a Landscape, c.1510.



Figure 11 Giovanni Bellini: The Madonna and Child in a Landscape, c.1505.



Figure 12 Giorgione: the Tempesta, c.1505-08.



Figure 13 Titian: Idyll: a young mother and a halberdier in a
Wooded landscape, c.?



Figure 14 Titian: Sacred and Profane Love, c.1514.



Figure 15 Titian: Bacchanal of the Andrians, c.1518-19.



Figure 16 Giovanni Bellini: The Feast of God, c.1503.



Figure 17 Titian: The Madonna and the Rabbit, c.1530.



Figure 18 Titian: Charles V, c.1548.



Figure 19 Titian: Venus and Adonis, c.1551-54.

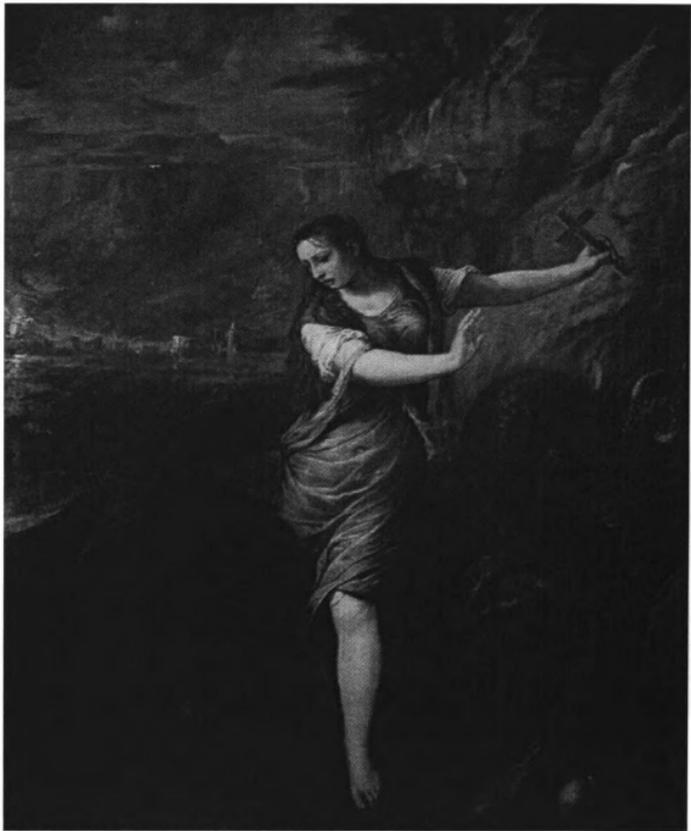


Figure 20 Titian: St. Magaret, c.1554-58.



Figure 21 Titian: The Rape of Europa, c.1559-62.

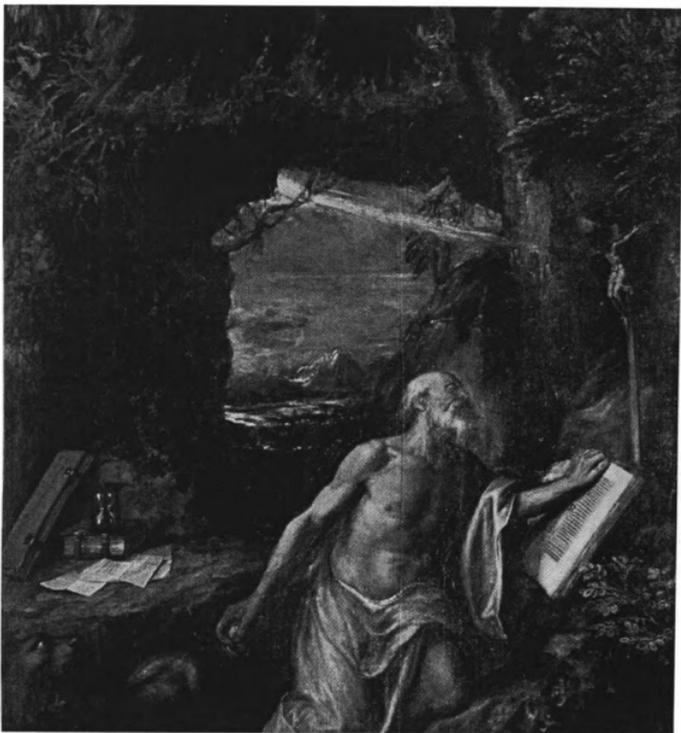


Figure 22 Titian: St. Jerome, c.1571-75.



Figure 23 Titian: Group of Trees, c.1514-1515.

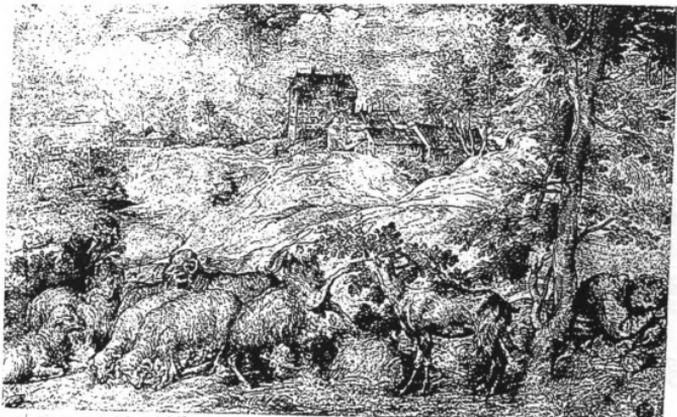


Figure 24 Titian: Shepherd Asleep with His Flock in an Alpine Setting, c.1520-1525.

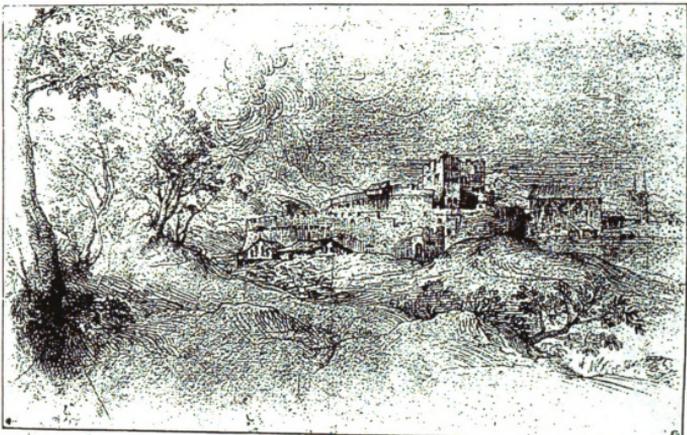


Figure 25 Titian: Fortified Village in a Landscape, c.1525-1530.

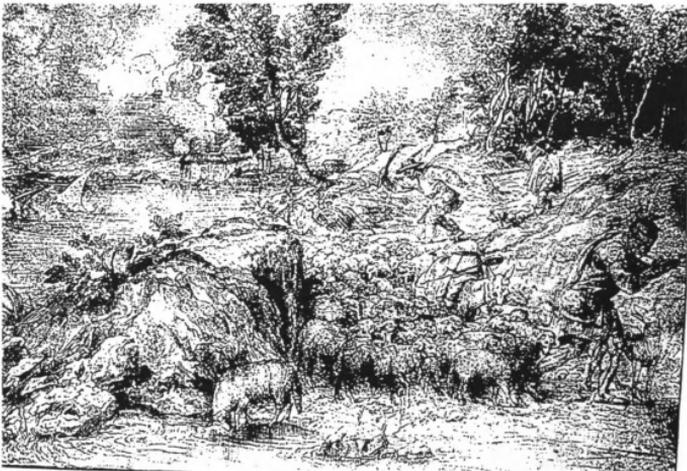


Figure 26 Titian: Shepherd Playing a Flute and Leading His Flock, c.1530.



Figure 27 Titian: Tree and Distant Castle, 1530.



Figure 28 Titian: Trees Beside a Pool, c. 1530.

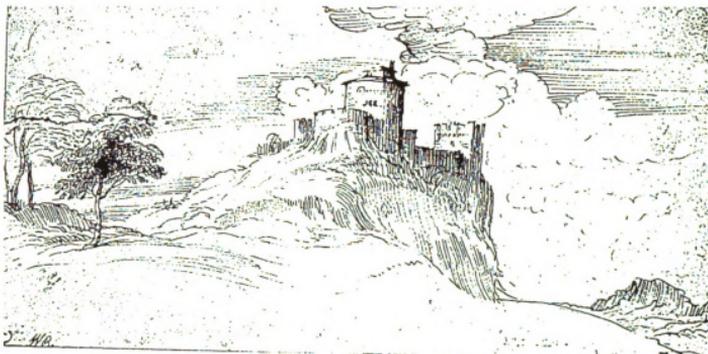


Figure 29 Titian: Castle on a Mountain, c.1535.



Figure 30 Titian: Satyr in a Landscape, c.1535.



Figure 31 Titian: Horse Running from a Pool, c.1565.



Figure 32 Titian: Roger and Angelica in a Landscape, c.1565.



Figure 33 Titian: the Nymphs and Satyrs in a Forest, c.1565.



Figure 34 Titian: Nymph and Shepherd, c.1570.



Figure 35 Giogione: the Three Philosophers, c.1506-08.

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