

*'Every house has a terrace on the roof made of brick or wood: these are called altane and are used to hang washing in the sun. From them one sees – beyond the long stretches of water – the whole of the surrounding countryside'*¹

Sansovino's words raise an important question. If Venice is 'the city of water', how did Renaissance painters paint landscape in their works if there was only the distant landscape of the Dolomites to see? Unlike Leonardo in Florence or Constable in East Bergholt, who both worked within landscapes, it is possible Venetian painters relied on the experience of travelling from and returning to the water city as well as observing landscape in the works of other painters in Italy and across Europe to conceive of landscape in their works. Despite such environmental limitations, by the 1500s the most significant developments in landscape occur in Venice. Central to this discussion is the development of landscape as a significant element in the art of Giovanni Bellini.

I will examine Bellini's use of landscape using a method of analysis which requires explanation. Accurate observation and comparison of material will remain central to this study because this is the perceptual process Bellini would have practiced. He may have been practicing in a culture which I can only imagine using the evidence of painting and literature, but one can relate to the formal problems he addressed because 'looking' is what painters do whether it be in today's culture or Venice's five hundred years ago. How did Bellini look? This question is central to the following discussion and therefore I will examine the methods Bellini used to conceive of landscape in his work.

Using the word 'landscape' is problematic. Malcolm Andrews challenges Kenneth Clark's definition of landscape as a 'good view of a stretch of countryside' translated into a painted image by a person with vision, flair and technical skills². Andrews find this process too simplistic. 'Land' he says, rather than landscape is the raw material awaiting a perceptual process which is two fold – land into landscape, landscape into art³. Essentially, Andrews is changing the use of the word landscape from a noun into a verb. This widens our thinking. We look at land, and assess which part we wish 'to landscape' through the process of editing and isolating a component of land, within the confines of the picture frame. Our view of land as we walk through it is not about the continuous experience of a broad view, but the changing materiality and scale of organic elements as we pass through it. Dürer's *Great Piece of Turf* (Fig.1) is a landscape. It constitutes part of broad view of land seen in close up. If organic elements in a

¹ M. Rosenthal, *Landscape in Venetian Painting*, unpublished essay (2003) p 3.

² M. Andrews, *Landscape in Western Art*, ed. Oxford (1999), p 3.

³ Andrews, *Landscape in Western Art*, p 3.

fifteenth century painting are out of scale with other elements in the work, it could be presumed that this is a failure to create a broad view of landscape. However, I would suggest that the work is a beautiful description of the experience of seeing varieties in the scale of the landscape. I believe such visual editing was a process Renaissance painters went through in considering what elements of land to use in their paintings. However, another mechanism was involved which was as significant. The landscape was organised around what was compositionally and thematically more significant, the non-landscape.

Alberti tells us landscape could only provide a backdrop to the centrally important 'istoria' in a painting⁴. Landscape's 'main function was to support and underline the narrative of a work by providing an appropriate setting for the figures, or by adding symbolic detail'⁵. Fra Antonio da Negroponte's *The Virgin Enthroned in Adoration of the Christ*⁶, in the Chiesa di San Francesco della Vigna, Venice, 1450, is an enclosed scene which serves purely to enhance the symbolic meaning of the 'hortus conclusus'. This is symbolic of the virginity of Mary, the impenetrable wall being a metaphor for her virginal state. Antonio Vivarini's and Giovanni d'Alemagna's *Four Fathers of the Church* triptych, 1446, shows the natural world fenced off from the religious scene, the space constructed out of three enclosed walls with the natural world literally providing a backdrop to the elaborate gothic stage. The fact that the space is 'unified' is vitally important with regard to the emancipation of landscape. Peter Humprey states that 'the work provides an important precedent for the much more radically innovative triptych that Andrea Mantegna was to paint more than a decade later for the S. Zeno in Verona and later for the completely unified altarpieces of Giovanni Bellini'⁷. I think conceiving a coherent space, even by architectural means, was a vital lesson to the Renaissance painter because it led Bellini to imagine the necessary lines which make any sort of space cohere. The overlapping planes that make up a landscape, work entirely differently to artificial linear perspective. We see an early consideration of this in the left hand panel of a saint in Antonio Vivarini's *Pesaro polytych*, where the placing of the figure in a river enhances the illusion of recession into the distance. Landscape is functioning as a formal pictorial device, grounding the figure in a coherent space and is working beyond a decorative boundary.

⁴ R. Turner, *The Vision of Landscape in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Princeton (1966), p 4.

⁵ S. Fermor, *Piero di Cosimo. Fiction, Invention and Fantasia*, ed. London (1993), p 164.

⁶ For a good illustrations of Antonio da Negroponte's *The Virgin Enthroned in Adoration of the Christ*, Antonio Vivarini and Giovanni d'Alemagna's *Four Father's of the Church* and Antonio Vivarini's *Pesaro polytych*, see P. Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice*, ed. Yale (1995), pp 45, 50, 53.

⁷ Humprey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice*, ed. Yale (1995) pp 51-52.

Johannes Wildes sites the influence of Andrea Mantegna and Florentine artists, especially Donatello in creating a 'new orientation' in Giovanni Bellini's *Agony in the Garden* (Fig.2)⁸. This type of analysis is derivatively too neat with regard to Bellini's landscape and everything that is meant in its achievement. If we compare Andrea Mantegna's *Agony in the Garden* (Fig.3) with Giovanni Bellini's treatment of the same subject, I agree stylistic affinities are strong. Neither works are dated so the question of precedent is uncertain, but both date from the 1460s. Both Christs pray on top of rocky landmasses, similarly constructed, only orientated in different directions with the rock forms rendered to suit the kneeling position of the Christ. In the Bellini, the Christ even rests his elbows on top of it, as if it were an altar. Similarly, with the Mantegna, it is the rock form which directs the appearance of the angel where he is turned to, but unlike the Bellini, there is a suggestion that this rocky landscape continues up the path where the rabbits rest. Half a body of one of these little animals is shown, a simple device to imply the continuation of the landscape. There are other similarities, such as the undulating, stripy layers of land that the sleeping figures curve themselves around and the distant procession follow through. The scriptures tells us that the scene occurred at the Mount of Olives and that the disciples 'withdrew about a stone's cast' while Christ kneeled down and prayed⁹. Neither painter seeks to find visual imagery equivalent to the Mount of Olives.

Mantegna concentrates on the form of the stone's cast which occurs out of the mountainous area that pervades the background. Bellini's scene happens in a space which is separate from the landscape that surrounds the figures. There is a fence with an open gate onto grass and a bridge over the river which meanders in exactly the same way as the path and the layers of rock around the central environment. In the Mantegna it is also a river which separates this central space and like Bellini, Mantegna literally 'bridges' the two spaces, in placing a fallen log over the two.

However, there are essential differences which separate Mantegna's *Agony* from Bellini's. The elements of land that make up the space in Magteгна's panel are relatively similar to each other. Folding layers of rock rise and fall in response to each other, making up one kind of landscape. In Bellini's panel we are dealing with what seems to be six landscapes juxtaposed together. Little is known about Giovanni Bellini's workshop. The shop was primarily preoccupied with the manufacture of relatively small devotional panels, mainly Madonnas, for private use. Significant evidence for the use of workshop *simile* has been produced, not

⁸ J. Wilde, *Venetian Art from Bellini to Titian*, ed. Oxford (1981), p 5.

⁹ Luke, Chapter 22, verse 39.

for only figures and heads but also for landscapes¹⁰. If the simile technique was employed regularly, perhaps the landscapes in the *Agony* are six similes taken from a variety of sources, even rendered by different hands.

The sandy, undulating area in the foreground, which begins as a meticulous record of sand grains in the bottom right hand corner by the fence, is forgotten in a shape of colour which sweeps around the apostle's bodies. The second landscape, the rocky mass embedded in the sand, shows cracks and crevasses painted with incredibly detailed finish unlike the other more fluid, abstract streams of land which push in and around forms. Interestingly, the two paintings date to the same decade, when chalcedony glass was popular in Venetian culture. The 'strangely molten' landscape in Bellini's work, the curved rhythms that stream across the panel, compare to the marbling in Venetian goblets, possibly revealing what was popular in Quattrocento visual culture¹¹. Alternatively, we could account for this treatment of colour in the medium of egg tempera, which in its very nature produces a hard impalpable finish.

Bellini's power in landscape, especially seen in the *Saint Francis* (Fig 4), begins with his adoption of the oil method, brought by Antonello da Messina from Flanders to Venice between 1475-6. New varnishes were also introduced which gave his work an opulence and a golden glow, preparing us for the works of Giorgione and Titian¹².

Representing landscape entails two concerns. Firstly there is the desire to supply detail, to record minute changes in material structure. A second concern is to block out this detail to render a more essential structure. The former concern is developed to an extreme in Bellini's *St Francis*. Here all areas of the landscape are detailed as opposed to attention being focused on one area. Landscape can also have a cultivated appearance, showing blades of grass, leaves, weeds and grains of soil, painted realistically to their form. It is fair to suggest that Bellini was able to paint such details exactly, because this is the only vegetation that grows on the lagoon and therefore the only thing he could have studied directly. We only have to look at the one colour sketch of an *Iris* (Fig 5) by his father Jacopo, to suggest that if his father made close studies of natural forms it is highly probable Bellini would have been taught to engage in such a practice. Above this is a fourth landscape, a chunk of dark marshy land, with a stream

¹⁰ F. Gibbons, "Practices in Giovanni Bellini's Workshop", *Pantheon*, 23 (1965) pp 146-155. The Bellinesque simile drawing of a landscape is said to correspond with several workshop pieces – the Madonna probably by Girolamo da Santa Croce in the Ca'd'Oro Venice, Bartolomeo Veneto's Madonna of 1505 in the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo and the Pieta by him in San Pietro d'Orzio near Bergamo, p 151.

¹¹ P. Hills, *Venetian Colour. Marble, Mosaic, Painting and Glass 1250-1550*, ed. Yale (1999), p 119.

¹² Gilbert. *Landscape into Art*, p 42.

verging off into thinner veins of water. One can also see a wasteland area in the middle, which fills up the space before the distant more fertile landscape. This wide panorama contains towns and other little houses which might be typical of Bellini's contemporary world¹³. Bellini has stretched further than Mantegna and is beginning to understand landscape perspective in a way Mantegna had not. Rona Goffen compares Bellini's work to Mantegna's and makes explicit Bellini's progression from the latter's construction of landscape space:

'Bellini painted a new kind of devotional picture in which the landscape is of the utmost importance: visually, in the composition; emotionally, in establishing the mood of the scene – and of the beholder; and symbolically, as a metaphor for God's presence. ... More than any other of his Italian contemporaries, Bellini' strove to recreate our visual experience of the world – the physical act of seeing – as a metaphor for our experience of the sacred¹⁴'.

Michael Rosenthal agrees: 'Like Mantegna he knows how to indicate depth through his placing of small groups of figures, but these walk in a landscape less obviously constructed from particular components set together, which is still, to an extent, wrapped in the gloom of the pre dawn'

Why is the landscape in Bellini's *Agony* more significant than Mantegna's? We can find part of the answer in examining the work of his father Jacopo Bellini, a difficult task considering the loss of the majority of Jacopo's paintings. We have two of Jacopo's sketchbooks that are important because they illustrate progress in the construction and exploration of pictorial space. The *Paris Album* 'demonstrates the way in which the artist gradually freed himself from the schematism of the vagueness of trecento ideas of landscape and developed into the creator and arranger of spacious landscape visions'¹⁵. A direct comparison can be made between Jacopo's *Agony* and Bellini's landscape, where 'a self contained composition on the right-hand page of a double opening and later extending it with a landscape on the left'¹⁶. Other works provided lessons for Bellini. *The Feast of Herod* (Fig 6) c.1440-5, is a strange visual experiment with the laws of perspective showing a court, analogous with that of the Doge's palace. Historians tend to concentrate on Jacopo's rendering of antique statues, rather than contemporary activity like the grazing of horses that takes place in the undefined area between the mountains and the courtyard. The entire scene is conceived not within the cityscape but in a landscape surrounded by distant

¹³ Rosenthal, *Landscape in Venetian Painting*, p 1.

¹⁴ R. Goffen, *Giovanni Bellini*, ed. Yale (1989) pp 106-107.

¹⁵ B. Degenhart & A. Schmitt, *The Louvre Album of Drawings*, ed. New York (1984), p 19.

¹⁶ G. Robertson, *Giovanni Bellini*, ed. Oxford (1968), p 32.

mountains. Other sketches, *The Deposition and Lamentation* (Fig 7) and the *St Christopher* (Fig 8), show Jacopo applying ordering elements to the landscape, attempting to organise landscape planes with perspective structural elements. This may have influenced Bellini's *Agony* in the inclusion of fencing in the bottom right of the picture in order to recess the scene to a greater extent. Roger Fry acknowledges the wattled fence as a frequent device employed by Jacopo in his sketches and taken up by Giovanni¹⁷.

Where Jacopo uses the winding river to demonstrate the depth of space from the foreground to the horizon, Bellini uses a path, from where the distant figures approach. As a result of these two devices, landscape assumes a significant role, in the *St Christopher* for example where 'the landscape is secondary in importance to the open space that surrounds the figures'¹⁸. Architecture's relationship to landscape was sensitive in Bellini's mind, thematically as well as formally. His *San Gionvanni Crisostomo altarpiece, altar of St Jerome, in San Giovanni Crisostomo* (Fig 9) combines the extended illusionary interior occupied by Christopher and Louis of Toulouse, with the outer world of Jerome who uses the tree stump like an architectural feature. You will notice in works such as Cima's *Doubting Thomas with Saint Magnus* (Fig 10), and his *Virgin and Child with Saints* (Fig 11), how through a architectural structure a landscape is conceived. In the *Doubting Thomas with Saint Magnus* particularly, the landscape unfolds in the distance with great perspective accuracy. It is probable that Jacopo maintained a large studio, and that in addition to his sons, he may have instructed Cima, as well as Bastiani and Foppa¹⁹ and used the two sketch books as teaching devices for how to construct a realistic pictorial space, which included landscape, so that they function as a visual alternative so to speak for Alberti's '*De Pittura*'. In the early fifteenth century the principal, but not sole source of visual experience for the apprentice painter, were two-dimensional works such as drawings by the master²⁰. It has been suggested that the combination of interior and exterior landscape is the invention of Jan van Eyck with works such as *Madonna of Chancellor Rolin* (Fig 12)²¹, where out of the court there is a spectacular panorama of the surrounding countryside.

We could go further and suggest that an explicit relationship between architecture and landscape developed because painters went out onto the

¹⁷ R. Fry, *Giovanni Bellini*, ed. New York (1995), p 25.

¹⁸ Fry, *Giovanni Bellini*, p 19.

¹⁹ C. Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, ed. New York, (1989) p 87.

²⁰ A. Lewis, *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist*, ed. Yale (2000) p 36.

²¹ B. Aikema & B.L Brown, "Painting in Fifteenth-Century Venice and the *ars nova* of the Netherlands in Renaissance Venice and the North" in B.Aikema & B.L Brown, eds., *Renaissance Venice and the North. Crosscurrents in the time of Dürer, Bellini and Titian*, (Thames and Hudson 1999), p 178.

expanding Venetian territory and viewed the countryside from dwellings that were being built. We know that Bellini had a villa and it is therefore highly probable that he engaged in such a practice²². This technique is like using a viewfinder when drawing a landscape so that one concentrates on a single space to be transferred on to a canvas without being distracted by other components of the land.

The presence of Florentine artists in Venice corresponds with Giovanni's activity in the workshop of his father Jacopo in Padua. It is interesting that a great majority of Florentine commissioning was centred on the mosaic decoration of St Marks. The first Florentine painter of the new generation whom we know to have come to Venice was Paolo Uccello, who worked as a master mosaicist at St Mark's from 1425 to 1428 (although we do not know of the work he did there). Andrea del Castagno visited Venice in 1442 and additionally to other work, provided the cartoon for the mosaic of the *Dormition of the Virgin*²³. St Mark's played a significant role in formulating the way landscape was used by Giovanni. Giovanni and Gentile once lived with their father close to the Piazza San Marco²⁴. If the façade functioned as a symbol of the wealth, power and sophistication of the Venetian state, I think the influence it would have exerted over the way landscape was painted would have been strong. Interestingly, in some cases the representation of agricultural themes in the Piazza and the Piazzetta San Marco take a significant place through central optical sightlines. On the standard base nearest the clock tower, in front of the central west faced, a satyr presents the vines and fruits of the earth to Neptune. These foods would have been abundant in the territories of the Republic. Most importantly, within the central portal of the church, the outstanding secular decoration features some rural themes. Within the soffit of the second face the labours of the months are represented, such as grape gathering in September, bird catching in November, and pig killing in December. It is strikingly unusual for a Church to represent secular themes in such a central position. Perhaps we should begin an investigation into why the most influential landscape paintings were made in Venice with the centrality of these themes on the most important piece of architecture in Venice? Rodini identifies the method of sight-reading San Marco as the central component in Gentile Bellini's *Procession of the Cross in the Piazza San Marco*, where the basilica as Venice's primary civic centre acts as the principal figure through which the narrative of the miracle of the cross is located²⁵. A similar technique is used in Bellini's *Enthroned Madonna* (Fig 13) in

²² 'I received 25 ducats to give to Giovanni Bellini, who is at his villa' in D.S Chambers, *Patrons and Artists in the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Carolina (1971), p 23.

²³ G. Robertson, *Giovanni Bellini*, ed. New York (1981) p 4.

²⁴ Fry, *Giovanni Bellini*, p 18.

²⁵ E. Rodini, "Describing Narrative in Gentile Bellini's *Procession in Piazza San Marco*", *Art History*, 21 (1998), pp. 26-44, pp. 29-30.

the Chiesa di S. Zaccaria where the apse decoration reminiscent of St Marks encloses the figures and pushes the landscape into subordination.

Preserved in Gentile's canvas is the third apse decoration on the right of the west façade. It illustrates landscape forms constructed in tight relationship to the figurative component of the scene through the use of bright tesserae. Here we are dealing with mosaic, which by its very material nature, produces flat planes of colour. This partly explains the way Bellini uses landscape in close juxtaposition to the figures in the foreground of the *Agony*, where the disciples form themselves around the stone's cast. St Marks is where we see lessons being taught, not in the calculation of linear perspective, but in the construction of landscape through the juxtaposition of colour. Colour is what liberates Giovanni's landscape as much as a desire to create a broad view of land. Here where the glass tile sits and plays with light, he could see colour working²⁶.

We cannot ignore the mosaic of *the Agony in Garden* (Fig 14) on the right wall of the interior of the church, which forms the largest single mosaic in the Basilica. Christ appears five times, expanding on the episode of in the Garden of Gethsemane by a means of continuous narrative. This episode must have meant something to Venetians because it is extended and expanded. The master of the mosaic avoids any cutting off of the narrative because the rock runs in a continuous strip from one end of the composition to the other "accentuating the horizontal extension and coherence of the whole"²⁷. Bellini's *Agony* owes something to this mosaic²⁸ in terms of colour and in the significance of the setting, conceived in such a large scale.

Decisive contacts between Tuscan and Venetian artists occur in the 1440s. Andrea del Castagno visited Venice in 1442, possibly accompanied by Domenico Veneziano where he painted the apse frescoes in the chapel of S.Tarsio at S. Zaccaria. He seems to have brought little in the way of landscape. The saints stand on schematically rendered rocks but no attention is given to their setting. Most importantly, Donatello was at work in Padua from 1443 to 1453. His presence in the city for ten years must have had a profound effect on artistic activity. Attention has been given to his work for the high altar of the Santo and his *Pieta* of the Basilica of St Anthony, where the latter is said to have influenced Mantegna and Bellini. The modulation in Donatello's bronze

²⁶ John Ruskin observed this when he said, 'Round the domes of the roof the light enters only through narrow apertures like large stars and here and there a ray or two from some far away casement wanders into the darkness and casts a narrow phosphoric stream upon the waves of the marble that heave and fall in a thousand colours along the floor' in J.Unrau, *Ruskin and St Marks*, ed. Thames and Hudson (1984) p 128.

²⁷ O. Demus, *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice 2. The Thirteenth Century*. Volume 1, Text, ed. Chicago (1984), p 10.

²⁸ J. Gardener referred to the influence of the *Agony* mosaic on Bellini's *Agony* panel in an unpublished lecture, *The Mosaics of San Marco*, Venice, week 4, term 2, 2002.

sculptures account for the crackling draperies which make up the rocky landscapes. I think greater attention should be given to Donatello's, *The Miracle of the Irascible Son* (Fig 15) in terms of the lesson it teaches with regard to the mathematic reconstruction of pictorial space. This may be architecture, but as Charles Avery maintains, 'Donatello fully exploits the various spaces plotted by his complicated structure'²⁹. Just like Jacopo's sketch books where we saw structural devices included in the pictorial space to encourage the space to recess, figurative activity happens at multiple levels in Mantegna's *Agony*, where figures cascade down the hillside and in Bellini's *Agony* where they appear from the distance to enter the foreground.

If Bellini has painted hill towns which may be typical to those in the Northern Italian countryside³⁰, his *Madonna of the Meadow* (Fig 16) goes some way to secularising a religious image through partly representing the observed world of the Veneto. The Madonna is sitting on the ground, traditional to the Madonna of Humility, in a landscape which is earthy, and freshly tilled it seems as a result of the farming activity that is happening in the background. This is a domesticated landscape, and is not explained by the scriptures³¹. Moreover landscape is beginning to work dynamically with figures. The function of the landscape is symbolic, not in overt terms where symbols within the landscape work to allude to the narrative, but in the quiet poetic affiliation between the earth in its material baseness and the pure relationship between the mother and child. It has been argued and I would say correctly, that there is a correlation between the Madonna's blue robe and the mountains in the background that resonate in the same fashion³². This device suggests the Madonna has a mountainous strength in her ability to look after Christ. Alternatively, we might find explanation for Bellini's exaggerated use of intense blue (in combination with egg tempera in this case) in the oil medium new to Bellini's palette. Oil could be used to greater colouristic effect than tempera, altering the relative transparency of pigments to achieve greater luminosity³³ so that the light that touches the landscape is crisp and illuminates the texture of the soil. Unlike *The Agony* where the time of day is ambiguous because the landscape is not harmonious, we see a landscape indicating what could be midday. There is a humble, naturalistic quality to all of Bellini's Madonnas, which precede the *Madonna of the Meadow*. However, the quality that separates *The Meadow* canvas is the

²⁹ C. Avery, *Donatello: An Introduction*, ed. New York (1994), p 79.

³⁰ Rosenthal, *Landscape in Renaissance Painting*, p 1.

³¹ Turner, *The Vision of the Landscape in Renaissance Italy*, p 77.

³² M. Rosenthal interestingly suggested this pictorial echo in the repetition of shapes in a seminar, Venice, week 7, term 1, 2002.

³³ Hills, *Venetian Colour: Marble, Mosaic, Painting and Glass*, p 134.

absence of artificiality between the setting and the figure, like the *Brera Madonna*, where the landscape and the figure are unified. Why does this happen?

Mantegna plays an important role in influencing Bellini to conceive a landscape from observing the contemporary world of the terramirra. Mantegna's *The Madonna of the Cave* (Fig 17) relates to *The Madonna of the Meadow* in a number of ways. Firstly, the humble Madonna is seated on the floor, her robes resonating in the same way as in Bellini's composition and similarly in the expanse of foreground meticulously detailing grains of stone, grasses and rock folds. But of greater significance is the agricultural work occurring in the background of the composition. Behind the Madonna is what seems to be the quarrying of stone out of the rocky mountain which in its jagged, spiky form juxtaposes the tender relationship of the Madonna and Child. This might be taken from an engraving which he did of the *Virgin and Child* (Fig 18), with parallel strokes around the figure conceiving the latter landscape setting and figurative relationship. Mantegna also depicts the passage of the shepherd and his sheep herd around the base of the mountain to the edge of the road and a cultivated agricultural landscape with workers tilling the crop. Behind this is a castle, perhaps it is taken from Asolo, and on top of the hill is a town where produce is being transported. Perhaps Jacopo is influencing Bellini again in his naturalistic renderings in *The London Book*. In *The Stigmatisation of St Francis* (Fig 19) and *Rustic Architecture with Castle* (Fig 20) we see a vista of farm life; of woods, barns and cottages. These are the most innovative subjects of the book. Anchise Tempestini states that in Bellini's *Agony in the Garden* 'the hill on the left seems clearly derived from the Enganean Hills near Padua, with their quarries'. This is further evidence that Bellini is recording the Paduan landscape of his contemporary world and that he and Mantegna were drawn to similar locations, the quarries especially where land was taking on an interesting aesthetic transformation.

Bellini's and Mantegna's recording of the agricultural activity they observed happening in their contemporary world, illustrates the nature of Venetian territorial expansion in the late fifteenth century. In the early Renaissance period, natural landscape, hardly touched by the individual or the group, changed to a more complex picture, with the interweaving of an irregular network of fields. Landscape's appearance was tied particularly to the expansion of bourgeois property owning and individual plantations, on hillside terrains³⁴. For the whole of the fifteenth century and beyond, the communal bourgeoisie did not economise on the investment necessary to clear and plant land in the hills:

³⁴ Sereni E, *History of the Italian Agricultural Landscape*, ed. Princeton (1997) p 121-123.

'In the fifteenth century ... the decreasing proportion of uncultivated land, fallow and stubble that was utilizable for pasture, contrasted with the growing need for livestock to improve tillage of the soil, and for the abundant production of dung. ... Without hay from the meadows now, and with fewer resources for pasturage, or dung, a farm lacked even the strength of beasts of burden which would not provide their needed droppings if they were not well nourished ... Essential fodder for beasts of burden was assured, not excluding what came from natural meadows that could be moved chiefly for forging ... In early Renaissance Italy, new agents intervened to change the conditions disfavoured to the enclosure of meadows and pastures'³⁵.

Bellini's *Madonna of the Meadow* is therefore a superb document of the transformation of landscape in northern Italy in the late fifteenth century. Tangalia wrote at its end, 'now one must prepare the great meadows with dung, mixed with seeded hay'³⁶. Bellini documents the construction of 'political landscapes' through these land changes. In his *Coronation of the Virgin between Saint's Paul, Peter, Jerome and Francis* (Fig 21) Tempistini suggests that the central space within the throne behind Mary and Christ is 'aside from any theological allusion to a celestial Jerusalem or to the Marian Ivory towers a representation of the Rocca or fortress of Gradara, a town about nine miles northwest of Pesaro'³⁷. This hypothesis has served as a starting point for various theories seeking to establish why the painting was commissioned. These range from a celebration of the conquest of Gradara by Alessandro Sgroza, ruler of Pesaro, in 1463 to a celebration of the wedding of his son Costanzo in 1474³⁸. The fortress of Gradara was possibly given a central position within a religious scene and as architectural features they appear consistently in other works by Bellini such as *The Agony in the Garden* and *The Madonna of the Meadow*. This cannot be ignored in examining how landscape is used in Bellini's work. We know that in the fifteenth century fortresses were still being built on high ground³⁹, another factor suggesting Bellini recorded changes to the terrafirma landscape. Like Jacopo's inclusion of an architectural structure in the *St Christopher* sketch, the role of the castle determines the way the landscape behaves so that it remains subordinate as a potentially free and inhospitable element. This is especially the case with Mantegna's *Madonna of the Cave* in the representation of peaceful well-ordered land use, where the central authority that governs the whole secures the rational divide of labour. Warnke states in

³⁵ Sereni, *History of the Italian Agricultural Landscape*, p 125- 26.

³⁶ Sereni, *History of the Italian Agricultural Landscape*, p 127.

³⁷ A. Tempestini, *Giovanni Bellini* ed. Abbeville (1999), p 96.

³⁸ Tempestini, *Giovanni Bellini*, p 96.

³⁹ M. Warnke, *Political Landscape. The Art of Nature*, ed. London (1994), p 42.

relation to Mantegna's fresco of c.1460 in the Camera degli Sposi of the Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, that 'the land must be tilled and made productive through the agency of the castle, which is no longer just a guarantor of security, but a great storehouse into which every thing produced through the rational exploitation of land is gained'⁴⁰. These terms can be applied to Mantegna's *Madonna of the Cave*.

Bellini might be responding to the changing nature of landscape from a natural to man made construct. If central and northern Italy saw the diffusion of natural pastures into artificial pastures that produced a new pastoral system, the relationship Venetians had with the landscape must have changed in an emotional and a practical sense. Perhaps we should see the spatial incoherency in Bellini's *Agony* not so much in terms of perspective uncertainty, but as a representation of the methods and aesthetic effect of cultivated landscape. We know that between the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, Venice set about remodelling and rearranging the flow of all the rivers of the dominion on the mainland⁴¹. These strange, meandering streams that branch out of the central river, may show changes to parts of the terra firma, from a lush and pastoral place to a cultivated space in the middle ground and back ground.

We must not fail to acknowledge the influence of classical literature on Bellini's use of landscape. Virgil's *Eclogues* represents the excursion taken by highly cultivated young men to the countryside and Virgil's *Georgics* is a poem dedicated to agriculture⁴². Alberti first articulated at length the need for painters to learn from poets and to seek equality between painting and poetry⁴³. It is therefore fair to presume that these ideas were part of the intellectual currency of early Renaissance painters⁴⁴. Leonardo da Vinci's notes on painting's affinity to the poetic process are important, but just how far his theories were known or approved of in Venetian circles is an impossible question to answer⁴⁵.

In the late fifteenth century the Bruges market, previously crucial to Venice's trade links, encountered increasing difficulties and the structure of trade routes changed dramatically. Antwerp, which had initially worked in harmony with Bruges, took on a new independent position. As a result, land routes, which went

⁴⁰ Warnke, *Political Landscape. The Art of Nature*, p 44.

⁴¹ Sereni, *History of the Italian Agricultural Landscape*, p 131.

⁴² M. Farra, *The Development of Landscape Painting in the Italian Renaissance*: <http://www.csuchico.edu/art/contrapposto...posto99/pages/essays/art345/defarra.html> (visited 2/10/03 4:26 PM)

⁴³ A Lewis, *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist*, ed. Yale (2000), p 38.

⁴⁴ Lewis, *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist*, p 39.

⁴⁵ E. Gombrich, *Norm and Form. Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*, ed. London Phaidon Press (1966) p 112.

via the Rhine Valley, replaced sea routes and the German space became land locked with the dominant European system⁴⁶. This interlocking of cultural interests is characteristic of Venetian society. German artists had constituted the largest and the most established group of foreigners in Venice since the fourteenth century⁴⁷. This must have affected the way landscape was used in painting in a very simple but fundamental way. Landscape became more present in the lives of painters, poets and ordinary Venetians. By travelling across Europe by land and not sea, Venetian painters would have experienced seeing the way landscape changed from their homelands to their destinations. They would have sketched along the way or remembered at least the way a hill looked, a river curved or a people behaved on land. Venice was at its height of commercial adventure, European dominance and state power so the experience would have been more intense. Marco Polo's travel journal was published in Venice in 1477. His evocative descriptions of the mountainous districts of non-European kingdoms might have fuelled Bellini's conception of landscape. An extract from the diary of the humanist Poggio Bracciolini, written between 1406-1436, interestingly suggests that the landscape of the Rhine was a striking memory for those who travelled there. His words could form the basis for a landscape and are therefore worth quoting at length:

'On the first day, by boat on the Rhine, we travelled twenty-four miles to the town of Schaffhausen, then since the journey had to be made on foot for tens of miles because of the remendous drop of river over steep cliff and rocks, we approached the castle, which stands high over the Rhine and is called Caesarstul; this in there language means Ceasar's throne. I think that this place, to judge by the name, must have been a Roman camp from the aptness of the site, for it is on a high hill overlooking the river, which here joins Gaul to Germany by a narrow bridge. On this walk we saw the falls of the Rhine from a high cliff over scattered rocks, full of sound and fury, so that you might think the river itself was complaining and lamenting about its fall⁴⁸'

Bracciolini refers to a bridge joining Gaul to Germany, suggesting that the frequent representation of bridges in Bellini's works such as *The Agony in the Garden*, and his early *Crucifixion* panel of c.1453-55⁴⁹ for example, function as

⁴⁶ P. Stabel, "Venice and the Low countries: Commercial Contacts and Intellectual Inspirations", in B. Aikema & B. L Brown, ed., *Renaissance Venice and the North. Crosscurrents in the Time of Dürer, Bellini and Titian* (Thames and Hudson 1999) p 37.

⁴⁷ L. C Matthew, "Working Abroad: Northern artist in the Venetian Ambient" in B.Aikema & B.L Brown, eds., *Renaissance Venice and the North. Crosscurrents in the Time of Dürer, Bellini and Titian* (Thames and Hudson 1999) p 61.

⁴⁸ P. Bracciolini, trans. P. W. G. Gordon, *Two Renaissance Book Hunters – The Letters of Poggio Bracciolini to Nicolaus de Niccolis.*, ed. Columbia (1974), pp 25-26.

⁴⁹ For a good illustration of this work see Goffen, *Giovanni Bellini*, p 10.

symbols marking territorial boundaries in the landscape. Alternatively they provided useful decorative fillers much like castles or are recessive devices. However, Evelyn Welch's definition of Italy as a 'modern phenomenon', reminds us that before its unification in 1870, distinct cultural variation in art, literature, language and foods, created natural regions. This questions the very idea that 'Italy' ever existed before the nineteenth century and how we consider its historical past⁵⁰. The historian Paolo Selmi has written of the post 1460 systematic mapping of the mainland territory, fired by 'that greed of information that the merchant had transferred from commercial to political management'. This general process, 'led to enquires and research being conducted in the production of technical drawings, topographies and maps up to the pointing that in 1460 the Consiglio de Dieci insisted that a description of the entire Terra territory be systematically outlined in a complete map making operation ... the rivers, the plains, the distances from place to place, the continuing territories, the places affording access outlined with the utmost precision'⁵¹. The regional map of Verona was produced between 1453-59⁵². Jacopo di Barbari's woodcut view of Venice and the Alps of 1500 reveals the extent to which vast accurate prospects of land had become increasingly important. We have unfortunately lost views by Jacopo Bellini⁵³.

Accurate description of landscape forms and the significance of the travel route down the Rhine valley is present in the work of Albrecht Dürer. He completed his apprenticeship in the workshop of Wolgemut in 1489, and following this travelled to the Netherlands, Colmar, Basle, and finally to Venice. The prints he did at Basle include *St Jerome in his Study* (Fig 22) which formed the front piece for the saints letters *St Hieronymus: Epistolae*, appearing in publication in 1492. Jerome sits in his study, carefully taking the thorn out of the lion's paw. The objects around him are displayed with precision and the window is open to a view of a distant landscape. This is important evidence of the popularity of the theme of the Hermit saint, whose environment reflects his emotional state. Like St Francis, a saint who finds a religious relationship with the natural world, St Jerome's act of penitence in the wilderness was popular in the fifteenth century. Cima da Conegliano's panels are superb evidence of how the theme of St Jerome was attractive because it allowed landscape to be painted as a significant, rather than subordinate element. To take just one of many interesting examples, his *St Jerome* in the London National Gallery (Fig 23) sensitively records minute natural detail, and in certain areas the scale in the landscape is

⁵⁰ E. Welch, *Art and Society in Italy 1350-1500*, ed. Oxford (1997), p 9.

⁵¹ Rosenthal, *Landscape in Venetian Painting*, p 5.

⁵² J. Schulz, "Jacopo di Barbari's View of Venice. Map making, city views and moralised geography before the year 1500, *Art Bulletin*, 60 (1978), pp. 425-74, p 444.

⁵³ Schulz, "Jacopo di Barbari's View of Venice", p 428.

distorted. A pair of figures, one on horse back, cross a rock close to Jerome's space, their scale drastically miniature in relation to the saint. Dürer's illustration tells us of the popularity of a theme bred in the intellectual climate of Basle, which like Padua, had a University, a centre for humanist thought. Cima's Jerome panels in their very nature as private devotional pieces for individual patrons, act as concentrated lessons of man's spiritual bound with nature. I think Dürer's illustration would have worked in similar terms, the circulation of *St Hieronymus: Epistole* made accessible through a visual image. It can be said that the popularity of the lives of St Francis and St Jerome in Bellini, Cima and this illustration by Dürer, anticipates the pastoral ideal born in the early fifteenth century, not only in terms of individual relationship with nature but realised through a literary model.

Dürer left for Venice in 1494. His route took him through Innsbruck, Klausen, Arco, and Trento and in this period he painted *plein-air* views, in watercolour and gouache, which are regarded as the first modern, topographically accurate, autonomous representations of landscape⁵⁴. Historians have argued about whether his watercolours are views taken before or after his visit to Venice. It is generally agreed that the *View of Trent* (Fig 24), showing the river Adige, was executed on the way to Venice⁵⁵. Dürer records human habitats built around a mountainous environment with breathtaking accuracy. The general theme which preoccupied him, before and after his journey, are rocky hill tops with fortresses and more humble dwellings occurring like the trees and grasses out of mountainous crevices. It can be argued that works such as *Ruined castle on a Rock* (Fig 25) and *View of Arco* (Fig 26) treat this theme so eagerly that they must be partly enthused by what Dürer saw of Mantegna's work after his trip to Venice, perhaps the *Madonna of the Cave* is an example. His later *Quarrie Studies*, show his interest extended to a further abstract degree, revealing his customary interest alongside Bellini and Mantegna in the form and texture of landscape and the subtle nuances of brown and grey. It is highly probable that Dürer would have shown Bellini's his *View of Trent* and the *Doss Trento* also believed to be painted on route to Venice⁵⁶ Perhaps this explains how Bellini uses landscape as a significant element in the *Madonna of the Meadow*. Dürer's example reveals how the whole landscape is more relevant than its parts, and every land object, 'man made or natural is thought of partaking of the universal life of nature'⁵⁷. An equal artistic exchange occurred as much for Dürer as for

⁵⁴ F. Koreny, "Venice and Dürer" in B. Aikema & B.L Brown, eds., *Renaissance Venice and the North: Crosscurrents in the Time of Dürer, Bellini, and Titian*, (Thames and Hudson 1999) p 241.

⁵⁵ A.O Chiesa, *The Complete Paintings of Dürer*, ed. London (1971), p 91.

⁵⁶ Chiesa, *The Complete Paintings of Dürer*, p 91.

⁵⁷ E. Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, ed. Princeton (1971) p 38.

Bellini. Dürer said in 1506, 'I have stopped the mouths of all the painters who used to say I was good at painting, I did not know how to handle my colours'⁵⁸.

There is a similarity between the accurate description of buildings in the left middle ground of the *View of Trent* and those in the *Madonna of the Meadow*. Topographically accurate representations of land also feature in the work of Cima da Conegliano, such as *St Helena* which 'provide a fairly accurate record of the town as it appeared in the fifteenth century with its fortified *castello* on the hilltop to the right and the residential *borgo* at the bottom of the hill on the left'⁵⁹. This describes Cima's birthplace. He went back to study the landscape seen from the city which "commands extensive views across fertile plains towards the Adriatic in the south, and of vine-clad foothills leading to distant mountain peaks in the north"⁶⁰

The flow of trade from the Antwerp included painting as a commodity for wealthy patrons who had developed a taste for Northern European Prints. In the first half of the fifteenth century the first works by Jan van Eyck and his followers appeared in Venice, but the information we possess about the presence of individual painting by van Eyck and his followers in Venetian collections is slight⁶¹. However, 'the technical qualities and the detailed rendering of early Netherlandish painting entitles us to assume that these were elements which had attracted the southerners in the early fifteenth century'⁶². Perhaps we see evidence of this in the detailed finish of *The Madonna of the Meadow* and in the *St Francis* especially where shadows are cast off from every natural thing where necessary to enhance the sense of space - a typically Netherlandish technique. Bellini even owned one of the prosperous brokers patents for the Fondaco dei Tedeschi and had to be present at the German trading centre on the Canale Grande from time to time for business⁶³. He would have seen what was new to Venetian walls.

⁵⁸ A. Chiesa, *The Complete Drawings of Dürer*; p 6.

⁵⁹ P. Humfrey, *Cima da Conegliano*, ed. Cambridge (1983) p 3.

⁶⁰ Humfrey, *Cima da Conegliano*, p 3. Cima's landscapes are as interesting as Giovanni Bellini's. A history of Venetian landscape painting, not yet written, should include this painter as a significant force in the formulation of the genre.

⁶¹ B. Aikema, "The Lure of the North. Netherlandish Art in Venetian Collections" in B. Aikema & B.L. Brown eds., *Renaissance Venice and the North: Crosscurrents in the Time of Dürer, Bellini and Titian*, (Thames and Hudson 1999) p 53.

⁶² B. Aikema and B.L. Brown, "Painting in Fifteenth Century Venice and the *arts nova* of the Netherlands" in B. Aikema & B.L. Brown, eds., *Renaissance Venice and the North: Crosscurrents in the Time of Dürer, Bellini and Titian*, (Thames and Hudson 1999), p 177.

⁶³ F. Anzelewsky, *Dürer: His Art and Life*, ed New York, (1981), p 48.

In the *St Francis* Bellini represents landscape in accurate terms according to Turner, who states that 'the space of the picture is achieved only secondarily by means of linear perspective, as in the foreground trellis, or the few zig zag lines of the land which lead back to the town. Rather the picture is built in space much as our eye experiences landscape in fact, by a series of overlapping parallel planes'. Bellini's achievement might be read in relation to this cultural preoccupation with accurate looking. Using photographs of the site of the La Verna where the stigmatisation took place, we see a clear visual similarity between Bellini's canvas and the landscape's morphology⁶⁴. As discussed, Bellini recorded architecture that was contemporary to his world, such as the castle of the Rocca di Gradara and Padua. It can be said that travel recording included landscape, using this photographic evidence of the La Verna. We know that Bellini had made a trip to Pesaro that almost certainly took him through Rimnini. If this is true it is highly probable that he visited the La Verna which is so very near⁶⁵. Turner states to the contrary that 'he is far from the La Verna, the rigged site of the stigmatisation and has ascended to that Venetian hinterland where the green fields and neat rows of plane trees give way to the more irregular configurations of the Dolomite foothills'⁶⁶. If the horizon is representative of the Dolomites it can also be said that the shepherd herding his flock is probably taken from the terraferma's agricultural world. As a travel record, perhaps we should see the canvas as an amalgamation of the two landscapes to serve the narrative. Bellini's deep analysis of colour in landscape, in every blade of grass, pebble, leaf, significantly separates the canvas from works like *The Agony* in its extraordinary finish.

Bellini treatment of landscape in the *St Francis* has been the subject of much debate. It possibly shows St Francis on Mount Avernia receiving the stigmata. If so it is an unorthodox representation of the subject because traditional forms associated with the scene have been omitted. The legend says 'he saw a vision of God, a man like a seraph having six wings, standing over him with hands outstretched and feet joined together, fixed to a cross'⁶⁷ but Bellini excludes the essential symbol of the cross. Bellini has painted St Francis's wounds with minimal emphasis. Francis receives the stigmata facing the light of the laurel tree which illuminates the whole of the landscape. Alternatively, Bellini could be showing Francis in the act of composing his famous *Canticle to the Sun*⁶⁸. This is

⁶⁴ This was shown in a lecture by M. Rosenthal who has taken excellent shots of the landscape, Venice, week 7, term 1, 2002. It is also referred to by M. Meiss, *Giovanni Bellini's 'St Francis' in the Frick Collection*, ed. Princeton (1964), p 22.

⁶⁵ M Meiss, *Giovanni Bellini's St Francis in the Frick Collection*, p 16.

⁶⁶ Turner, *The Vision of the Landscape in Renaissance Italy*, p 60.

⁶⁷ G. Kaftal, *St Francis in Italian Painting*, ed. Whitefriars (1950), p 84.

⁶⁸ Meiss sees the patch tucked into the saint's robe as the paper of the poem, p 21.

very possible considering the fact that the saint is turned in the direction of one of the two light sources in the painting. The *Canticle to the Sun* celebrates the smallest grasses and flowers in nature, understanding spiritual experience is in wholly natural terms, 'for sister our mother earth who maintains and governs us and puts forth different fruits and coloured flowers and grass'. This would account for the significant role landscape takes. The patronage of Giacomo Michel may explain more. Michel Fletcher finds evidence to suggest that he was a man who enjoyed miniature painting and therefore would have responded to the unusual density of detail contained within the *St Francis*⁶⁹. It was also in Bellini's nature to take on themes that he was most attracted to, despite his patron's tastes. He would not paint what a later Marchioness of Mantua wanted because her idea was not accommodated to his fancy and he was 'used always to wander at his pleasure in his painting'⁷⁰.

Conclusions drawn from the technical investigation of the Philadelphia Museum of Art's *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata* and the painting of the same subject in the collection of the Galleria Sabauda in Turin contain observations relevant to the representation of the geology of the La Verna in Bellini's *St Francis*. 'The most notable similarity between the two paintings can be seen in the brushwork and the manner in which paint is laid upon the surface of the supporters ... Using magnification, one can see that flowers and blades of grass in the foreground are painted using the identical language of brush strokes in both paintings'⁷¹ This kind of naturalistic detailing extends to the modelling of the rocks leading the author to conclude that 'the Philadelphia picture is painted not by the conventions of manuscript illumination, but like the Turin picture, with such careful observation and rendering of naturalistic detail that one can only speculate that Jan van Eyck must have travelled through the Alps and seen with his own eyes jagged mountain peaks, grey rocks streaked with orange, small streams flowing through rocks, distant white-capped peaks, and diversity of wild flowers that are rendered so specifically in the Johnson and Turin paintings'⁷². I would speculate further that this could only have been achieved using a sketch done in situ and transferred to the panel in the workshop using paint. The accuracy by which the landscape in *St Francis* is rendered might suggest that like

⁶⁹ J M Fletcher, "The Provenance of Bellini's Frick *St Francis*", *Burlington Magazine* 114, p 206-214, 1972, p 209-210.

⁷⁰ C E Gilbert, *Italian Art 1400-1500 – Sources and Documents*, ed. Eaglewood Cliffs (1980), p 132.

⁷¹ Kenneth Bè, *Jan van Eyck. Two Paintings of Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata*, ed. Philadelphia (1997), p 39.

⁷² Bè, *Jan van Eyck. Two Paintings of the Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata*, p 42.

van Eyck, Bellini may have made a drawing of the morphology of the La Verna and then transferred it to the painted panel⁷³.

To a large extent Bellini spawns the landscapes created by Giorgione and Titian. Titian was Bellini's apprentice and his master's influence can be seen in works such as *The Virgin and Child with Saint Catherine and a Shepherd* ('*The Madonna of the Rabbit*') (Fig 27). Titian paints a domesticated landscape, like the *Madonna of the Meadow*, with the Virgin seated in a landscape which for its meticulous attention to detail, is one of the most highly finished paintings in Titian's oeuvre⁷⁴. The blades of grass, the wild strawberry plant, the symbolic fruit, recall the attention paid to details in the foreground of *The Meadow* canvas and the close botanical studies in the *St Francis*. We can see Titian adopting Bellini's pictorial echo between the virgin's mantle and the distant blue mountains. This colour patterning is also present in his *Virgin and Child with the Infant Saint John and a female Saint or Donor* ('*The Aldobrandidi Madonna*')⁷⁵. In adopting such evocative passages, interspersed with *sfumato* foliage, Titian anticipates 'the recessional pastoral scenes for which Claude was renowned a century later'⁷⁶. Titian's *Noli me tangere* (Fig 28) also shows Christ and Mary Magdalene integrated within the landscape. Natural elements are a noticeable part of the emotions of the figures, like the tree which curls towards the figures, a device perhaps beginning in the *St Francis* where the laurel tree bends towards Francis suggesting that he is perhaps addressing his song towards it. The tree sympathises with the Magdalene. Titian is to take landscape into new directions where 'the expression of touch itself' becomes a 'quality dear to Van Dyck and Delacroix in later centuries'⁷⁷. Titian's *Flight into Egypt*⁷⁸ c 1506-8, shows rustic figures placed in equal relationship with religious ones. This is initially realised by Bellini, in his recording of his contemporary agricultural world, and forms the basis of the pastoral ideal. The Jerome like figure in *The Three Ages of Man* (Fig 29) positioned near two skulls and with a church in the background evokes a sense of spirituality.

⁷³ If I were to extend this study, a close technical investigation of the *St Francis* panel is urgently needed. This might tell us of Bellini's technical practice.

⁷⁴ D. Jaffè, "The 1530s: Landscapes", in *Titian* (exhibition catalogue) ed., David Jaffe, Yale 2003, p 118.

⁷⁵ For a good illustration of this work see Jaffè, *Titian*, p 121.

⁷⁶ Jaffè, *The 1530s: Landscapes*, p 113.

⁷⁷ N. Penny, "Noli me Tangere", in *Titian* (exhibition catalogue) ed., David Jaffè, Yale 2003, p 87.

⁷⁸ For a good illustration of this work see Jaffè, *Titian*, p 72.

Giorgione probably spent his years of apprenticeship in Bellini's workshop in the 1490s⁷⁹. As with Titian it is also legitimate to identify his landscapes as being influenced by Bellini's. In *The Three Philosophers* (Fig 30) geometry may be a key element⁸⁰. Whether these men are the same person at different ages or the three Magi, has been the subject of much debate. The oldest holds a astrological chart, and from the direction of his glance, surveys the rock form. The main content of the scene, as Wilde agrees, is this central communion with nature⁸¹. According to Marcantonio Michiel's notes, a contemporary of Giorgione, the best detail in it was the 'wonderfully painted rock'⁸². With his *Adoration of the Sheperds*, the *Fete Champetre* and the ambiguous *Tempest*, 'he is the creator of a new kind of painting with figures in landscape in which subject, if it is there at all, is of little importance and the poetic mood the *raison d'etre* of the picture'⁸³.

Giovanni Bellini's use of landscape has been discussed with particular attention given to the comparison of visual material. This has been related to the culture in which Bellini lived in which encouraged methods of accurate 'looking'. Further research into Bellini's use of landscape might be undertaken using a method of analysis untraditional to art historical practice. A study of the morphology of the terrafirma landscape could be made using a camera. A wide photographic examination might reveal with greater certainty the extent to which Bellini's description of landscape is accurate and therefore a significant part of his work. However, for the mean time, conclusions can be drawn from this study as follows. Bellini used landscape as a significant element in a number of his works through the example demonstrated to him in his father's sketchbooks where the landscape is drawn with a sculptural and evocative force within a rustic setting or in close proximity to the cityscape. The work of his brother in law, Andrea Mantegna, greatly influenced the way he used landscape in his work. The two painters were not only drawn to similar landscape themes, but often the same forms, where the land had or was being transformed into interesting shapes. This was a period of great technical innovation, with the expanse of craft industries such as glass and the gradual introduction of oil paint and new glazes, breathing new life into landscape colours and textures. These artistic changes must be placed within context of Venetian territorial expansion in the mid fifteenth century when the shape of the land of the terrafirma was accurately

⁷⁹ Wilde, J. *Venetian Art from Bellini to Titian*, ed. Oxford (1981), p 60.

⁸⁰ D. Cosgrove, "The geometry of landscape: practical and speculative arts in sixteenth-century Venetian land territories", in *The Iconography of Landscape*, ed. Cambridge 1988 p 270.

⁸¹ D. Cosgrove, *The Iconography of Landscape*, p 270.

⁸² Wilde, *Venetian Art from Bellini to Titian*, p 66.

⁸³ Steer, J, *A Concise History of Venetian Painting*, ed. Thames and Hudson (1970), p 78-79.

recoded in maps, charts, diaries and painting. Bellini's landscapes document his contemporary world on the Veneto where agricultural life was becoming increasingly present in the world of a maritime republic. Venice's wealth and strategic position explains its treatment as a cross-cultural centre for artistic commodities. Northern European painting brought new artistic conceptions and techniques, particularly seen in the work of Albrecht Dürer, whose watercolour landscapes on route to Venice were conceived as whole entities through the activity of travel and the description of land routes. We must end with the power of Bellini's imagination which like a landscape reached depths and stretched new breadths when he painted land.

Bibliography

Aikema, B. "The Lure of the North: Netherlandish Art in Venetian Collections" in B.A Aikema & B. Brown, eds., *Renaissance Venice and the North: Crosscurrents in the Time of Dürer, Bellini and Titian* (Thames and Hudson , 1999) pp 82-91.

Ames-Lewis, F. *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist*, ed. Yale (2000).

Andrews, M. *Landscape in Western Art*, ed. Oxford (1999).

Anderson, J. *Giorgione. The Painter of 'Poetic Brevity'*, ed. New York (1997).

Avery, C. *Donatello. An Introduction*, ed. London (1994).

Bracciolini, P trans. P. W. G, Gorgon. *Two Renaissance Book Hunters – The Letters of Poggius Bracciolini to Nicolaus de Niccolis*, ed. Columbia (1974).

Chambers, D. *Patrons and Artists in the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Carolina (1971).

Chiesa, A. *The Complete Paintings of Dürer*, ed. London (1971).

Cosgrove, D. "The geometry of landscape: practical and speculative arts in sixteenth century Venetian land territories" in *The Iconography of Landscape* eds., D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels, (Cambridge 1988) pp 254-276.

Degenhart, B & Schmitt, A. *Jacopo Bellini. The Louvre Album of Drawings*, ed. New York (1984).

Demus, O. *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice*, volume one, ed. Chicago (1984).

Eisler, C. *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, ed. New York (1989).

Fermor, S. *Piero di Cosimo. Fiction, Invention and Fantasia*, ed. London (1993).

Farra, M. *The Development of Landscape Painting in the Italian Renaissance*: <http://www.csuchico.edu/art/contrapposto...posto99/pages/essays/art345/defarra.html>.

Fletcher, J. "The Provenance of Bellini Frick St Francis", *Burlington Magazine*, 114, (1972), pp 206-214.

Fry, R. *Giovanni Bellini*, ed, New York, (1995).

Gibbons, F. "Practices in Giovanni Bellini's Workshop", *Pantheon*, 23, (1965), pp 146-155.

Gilbert. *Landscape into Art before Claude*, ed. New York (1979).

Gilbert, C. E. *Italian Art 1400-1500. Sources and Document*, ed. Eaglewood Cliffs (1980).

Goffen, R. *Giovanni Bellini*, ed. Yale (1989).

Harbison, C. *Jan van Eyck. The Play of Realism*, ed. London (1991).

Hills, P. *Venetian Colour. Marble, Mosaic, Painting and Glass 1250-1550*, ed. Yale (1999).

Humpfrey, P. *Painting in Renaissance Venice*, ed. Yale (1995).

Kaftal, G. *St Francis in Italian Painting*, ed. Whitefriars (1950).

Koreny, F. "Venice and Durer" in B.A Aikema & B. Brown, eds., *Renaissance Venice and the North: Crosscurrents in the Time of Dürer, Bellini and Titian* (Thames and Hudson , 1999), p 240-249.

Lightdown, R.W. *Mantegna*, ed. Oxford (1986).

Matthew, L.C. "Working Abroad: Northern Artists in the Venetian Ambient" in B.A Aikema & B. Brown, eds., *Renaissance Venice and the North: Crosscurrents in the Time of Dürer, Bellini and Titian* (Thames and Hudson , 1999) pp 60-75.

Miess, M. *Giovanni Bellini's 'St Francis' in the Frick Collection*, ed. Princeton (1964).

Rosenthal, M. *Landscape in Venetian Painting*, unpublished essay, 2003.

Panofsky, E. *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, ed. Princeton (1971).

Robertson, G. *Giovanni Bellini*, ed. New York (1981).

Rodini, E. "Describing Narrative in Gentile Bellini's *Procession in Piazza San Marco*", *Art History*, 21 (1998) pp. 26-44.

Roeck, B. "Venice and Germany: Commercial Contracts and Intellectual Inspirations" in B.A Aikema & B. Brown, eds., *Renaissance Venice and the North: Crosscurrents in the Time of Dürer, Bellini and Titian* (Thames and Hudson , 1999) p 44-55.

Russell, H.D. *Eva/Ave: woman in Renaissance Baroque Prints*, ed. New York (1996).

Schulz, J. "Jacopo Barbari's View of Venice. Map making, city views and moralised geography before the year 1500", *Art Bulletin*, 60 (1978) pp 425-74.

Sereni, E. *History of the Italian Agricultural Landscape*, ed. Princeton (1997).

Steer, J. *A Concise History of Venetian Painting*, ed. Thames and Hudson (1970).

Strieder, P. *The Hidden Dürer*, Oxford (1978).

Tempestini, A. *Giovanni Bellini*, ed. Abbeville (1999).

Turner, R. *The Vision of the Landscape in Renaissance Italy*, ed., Princeton (1966).

Tofani, A. *Italian Painting. The Uffizi Florence*, ed. New York (2000).

Unrau, J. *Ruskin and St. Marks*, ed. Thames and Hudson (1984).

Warnke, M. *Political Landscape. The Art of Nature*, ed. London (1994).

Welch, E. *Art and Society in Italy 1350-1500*, ed. Oxford (1997).

Wilde, J. *Venetian Art from Bellini to Titian*, ed. Oxford (1981).

Wilkins, D & Bennett, B. *Donatello*, ed. Oxford (1984).