

Writing in 1548 Paolo Pino<sup>41</sup> tries to account for it by a theory which deserves to be analysed.

The Northerners show a special gift for painting landscapes because they portray the scenery of their own homeland, which offers most suitable motifs by virtue of its wildness, while we Italians live in the garden of the world, which is more delightful to behold in reality than in a painting.

What we find here is the first formulation of the idea of the 'picturesque', which is usually associated with the eighteenth century.<sup>42</sup> Italy, Pino says, may be the most beautiful country in the world, but it does not go well into pictures, while the wild tracts of land from which the *oltramontani* hail is the ideal painter's country. Pino obviously believed that the bizarre late Gothic rock formations which he saw in the paintings of Patinier and his followers (Fig. 150) faithfully represented the native land of these artists. But however that may be, his type of explanation survives in a less crude form in many more refined discussions of landscape art. We are referred to the rocks on the upper reaches of the Meuse as an explanation of Patinier's style<sup>43</sup> or to the impression made by Alpine scenery as the mainspring of Altdorfer's, Huber's or even Breughel's art. That elements of such natural scenery are sometimes reflected in the *œuvre* of these masters is quite well attested,<sup>44</sup> but as an explanation of the development of landscape painting these theories seem to me little better than Pino's. For if these examples show anything, they show how long and how arduous is the way between perception and representation. Sixteenth-century landscapes, after all, are not 'views' but largely accumulations of individual features; they are conceptual rather than visual.

It is in this context that Norgate's anecdote about the invention of landscape painting gains significance.

The first occasion, as I have bene told abroad, was thus. A Gentleman of Antwerpe being a greet *Liefhebber* (Virtuoso or Lover of Art) returning from a long Journey he had made about the Countrey of Liege and Forrest of Ardena, comes to visit his old freind, an ingenious painter of that Citie, whose House and Company he useually frequented. The Painter he finds at his Easill—at worke which he very dilligently intends, while his newcome freind, walking by, recountes the adventures of his long Journey, and with all what Cities he saw, what beautifill prospects he beheld in a Country of a strange scitiation, full of Alpine Rocks, old Castles and extraordinary buildings &c. With which relation (growing long) the prompt and ready Painter was soe delighted as, unregarded by his walking freind, he layes by his worke, and on a new Table begins to paint what the other spake, describing his description in a more legible and lasting Character then the others words. In short, by that time the Gentleman had ended his long Discourse, the Painter had brought his worke to that perfection, as the Gentleman at parting, by chance casting his eye that way, was astonisht with wonder to see those places and that Countrey soe lively exprest by the Painter as if hee had scene with his eyes or bene his Companion in the Journey. This first Essay at Lanscape it seemes got the painter Crownes and Credit. This began others to imitate. . . .<sup>45</sup>