

fashions them. So if he desires valleys or wishes to discover vast tracts of land from mountain peaks and look at the sea on the distant horizon beyond them, it is in his power; and so if he wants to look up to the high mountains from low valleys or from high mountains towards the deep valleys and the coastline. In fact, whatever exists in the universe either potentially or actually or in the imagination, he has it first in his mind and then in his hands, and these [images] are of such excellence, that they present the same proportioned harmony to a single glance as belongs to the things themselves. . . .<sup>22</sup>

The claims made for the painter in this momentous passage exceed everything that had ever been put forward before. If Alberti looks at painting from the point of view of its psychological effect on the beholder, Leonardo probes deep into the motive powers of the creative process itself. If Alberti parallels poetry and painting for their range of subject matter, Leonardo draws the ultimate conclusions from the Horatian *Ut pictura poesis* by claiming for the painter the prerogatives of genius. And what he creates derives its relevance not from any association with important subject matter but from the fact that—like music—it will reflect the harmony of the Universe itself.<sup>23</sup>

We do not know how far Leonardo's extreme theories were known or approved of by the cultured art lovers of Milan or of Venice.<sup>24</sup> But the idea of painting as a kind of poetry, which had the authority of Horace, was certainly widely accepted.<sup>25</sup> It may lie behind Bembo's advice to Isabella d' Este not to tie Giovanni Bellini too closely to a programme as he preferred to follow his own imagination.<sup>26</sup> Once this attitude had become universal the idea of a 'pastoral' kind of painting must have suggested itself to many. May we not infer that it was within such a framework that a Giorgione created his new type of subject matter, that he was accepted by his Venetian patrons as a painting Sannazaro or Tebaldeo rather than as a mere illustrator of obscure classical themes? And can one not imagine Cardinal Grimani using a similar turn of phrase when explaining his Northern *tavolette di paesi* to a puzzled visitor? The classical theory had created an atmosphere in which the products of Northern realism appeared in an entirely new and possibly unintended light.

True, the pastoral genre of Giorgione or Campagnola (Fig. 148) is not yet pure landscape painting. But if the Renaissance collector looked for authority to justify his taste for non-illustrative painting, he could also find it in those classical writers on art who increasingly supplied the vocabulary and standards of criticism.

It was to Pliny and his chapters on classical art that the educated Italian looked for terms and categories to discuss and conceive the art of his time. And in Pliny he would not only find the idea of landscape paintings but also the notion of the specializing artist which remained for so long connected with it.

It might be quite a rewarding subject for a doctoral thesis to trace the application of Pliny's sobriquets to one new artist after another in the literature of the