

# Europe's Cultural Landscape: archaeologists and the management of change

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*Cover illustration: An early medieval stronghold at Moraczewo, in the Wielkopolska region of Poland, one of c. 7,000 entries on the Polish official register of scheduled sites and monuments. The stronghold is dated to between the 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century AD, and is associated with the power base of the Polanie tribe, one of the foundations of the future feudal Christian State. It sits within an agricultural landscape of much later date. Current agriculture activities on or near the site are monitored by the Service for the Protection of Monuments. The modern farm near the stronghold was built before the site was designated in 1972. Photo: W. Stêpień.*

## 24: *Europae Archaeologiae Consilium*

# A STRATEGY FOR THE HERITAGE MANAGEMENT OF EUROPE'S LANDSCAPE

### Statement of Intent

1. Europe's landscape is quintessentially the product of past human activity and land-use over very long periods of time stretching back to the Mesolithic. It is the result, as the Florence Convention's definition makes clear, of long and complex interaction between humans and nature. The evidence of this history - archaeological sites, the pattern and character of land cover and habitats, hedges, walls, and architecture - is still there to be read in the current landscape. It will not, however, remain visible and comprehensible to our descendants unless it is properly understood by our own generation and unless it is sustainably managed in the face of all the pressures for change and destruction that act upon it. The historic and archaeological dimension of the landscape is a key aspect of landscape's character that needs to be taken into account in landscape protection, management and planning.
2. **The EAC will promote the management of the cultural landscape within all aspects of European and national landscape policy. We will participate in the debate on landscape's promotion and protection that is being championed by the Council of Europe. Because of the special importance of agriculture in shaping the landscape, we will also engage with EU programmes of agri-environmental management of the rural landscape.**
3. **We will work in multi-disciplinary partnership with others concerned with the sustainable management of change as the future landscape is created. Above all, we will encourage the archaeological research and historic characterisation of the landscape that is necessary to ensure that the cultural and archaeological dimension of the landscape is properly understood and taken into account in landscape planning and management decisions.**

### Background considerations

4. The importance of the landscape to Europe's common heritage, its important public interest role in the cultural, ecological, environmental and social fields, and its contribution to identity, economic activity, and culture is well known and widely recognised. This is indeed the starting point of the *European Landscape Convention*. It is less certain, however, that the historic and archaeological aspects of landscape are as widely recognised, and one of the EAC's aims in sponsoring this book to bring these issues to a wider audience.
5. Although landscape can appear to many as primarily natural, and whilst often it is landscapes closest to nature (so-called wilderness landscapes) that are valued most highly, it is nevertheless clearly demonstrable by archaeology, history, and cultural geography that landscape, as people today perceive it, is essentially cultural. Insofar as human beings can be separated from Nature, the environment that we have inherited in 21<sup>st</sup>-century Europe is the product of human as much as of natural influence.
6. More importantly, the concept or image of landscape that we create in our minds and hearts out of the raw material of environment is of course entirely the product of cultural and human intervention. This is true whether we are looking at landscape as archaeologists looking for historic processes and social agency, or as ecologists examining biodiversity and habitat distribution, or as landscape architects using systems of aesthetics to evaluate landscape, or as ethnographers studying past ways of life. Indeed, landscape is one of the most inter-disciplinary of subjects: doing justice to its complexity and variety requires an enormous range of approaches and objectives to be brought together in an integrated whole. This is another reason why the EAC is so concerned to ensure that archaeological approaches to landscape are brought fully into the current and future debate about landscape and its sustainable management.

7. Landscape is also one of the most democratic of subjects. The character of the landscape affects everyone, in some way, since we all live in and have memories of landscapes somewhere, of some type. The changes that are made to landscape by new ways of farming or by processes such as urbanisation, industrial growth or infrastructure building such as roads or dams affect everyone in some way. It is therefore very necessary, as the Florence Convention makes abundantly clear, to democratise the processes by which society understands landscapes, evaluates its significance and takes decisions about its future. Here again it seems necessary that the historic and archaeological depths of landscape play their part, not least because it is very often characteristics deriving from the past (or having historical associations) that consciously or not are the attributes which are most valued by European citizens.
8. Finally, of course, the landscape has a special value to the EAC and its members as one of the primary sources of understanding and knowledge about the past and the nature of the present. When studied in the right way, it can tell us about human origins and history, about the social progress that has led to the present day, and about the environmental and ecological lessons that we can draw from our predecessors' interaction with their environment. In its own right, landscape deserves care and management: protection where that is possible, study before destruction where that is necessary. Landscape can be like a book, one that tells us who we are and how we have arrived at this place that we call the modern world. As archaeologists we regard the landscape as primary historical evidence, to be looked after just as well (to use Florence, appropriately, as a reference) as we might care for the Renaissance villas and churches of Florence or the paintings in the Uffizi.

## EAC Strategy

9. The EAC Strategy for the heritage management of Europe's landscape is supported by four precepts:
  - 9.1 That the aims, principles and recommendations of the *European Landscape Convention* (the Florence convention) provide a democratic and comprehensive recognition of the landscape's place in Europe's cultural and economic life. They establish practical and effective ways of promoting the protection, management, and planning of the whole landscape in the light of its important public interest, its contribution to cultural and economic and environmental quality of life, and to the formation of local culture, human well-being, and the European identity (*The European Landscape Convention*.)
  - 9.2 That the landscape itself - at many levels from the personal to the collective - is a construct of multiple values and perceptions, and its management requires an integrated understanding of both the landscape and of the threats and pressures being placed upon it; multi-disciplinary research and management through partnership are indispensable (*Partnership and co-operation*).
  - 9.3 That archaeological approaches (defined here broadly as the study and use of material culture to understand both past and present and in its applied form, as archaeological heritage management, to help shape the future), are an indispensable component of the task of understanding and managing the character of the present-day landscape; archaeology should not be confined to studying landscapes of the past but applied to the management of today's landscape and the planning of tomorrow's (*Applied archaeology*).
  - 9.4 That all those who manage change in the landscape, whether farmers, developers or politicians, and the people and general public for whom it is their living and working environment, should have easy access and if necessary support to use up to date, continuously-developing archaeological understanding of the landscape, generated by synthesis, monitoring of change, and new research (*Research and understanding*).
10. Within this framework, the EAC's aims and actions will follow the following seven inter-linked avenues:
  - 10.1 Working with international networks
  - 10.2 Promoting conservation and management
  - 10.3 Raising and learning from public awareness
  - 10.4 Developing research initiatives
  - 10.5 Encouraging applied research
  - 10.6 Supporting training
  - 10.7 Monitoring change and knowledge

## Working with international networks

11. The EAC will work with international organisations and networks, notably:

### **The Council of Europe**

12. The EAC will advise on the implementation and monitoring of the *European Landscape Convention*:
  - 12.1.1 through CC-PAT (the Council of Europe's Cultural Heritage Committee), in its role of responsibility, alongside CC-DBP (the Committee for the activities of the Council of Europe in the fields of biological and landscape diversity), for monitoring the implementation of the Convention)
  - 12.1.2 through membership of the annual ELC Signatories' Conference and its linked Ateliers;
- 12.2 The EAC will promote the adoption of the ELC among its member states;
- 12.3 The EAC will, where appropriate, encourage nomination for the European Landscape Prize (and when the Convention is in force, the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe) of exemplary policies or measures that protect or manage and/or plan a landscape while taking its archaeological significance fully into account, particularly if through new research.

### **UNESCO World Heritage Convention**

13. UNESCO's World Heritage Site criteria for identifying 'cultural landscapes' of global significance were among the first to recognise the need to integrate the natural and cultural attributes of landscapes.
- 14. The EAC will seek to establish common ground with UNESCO in relation to the nomination of World Heritage cultural landscapes in Europe.**

### **European Union**

15. The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been one of the main agents of change in the rural landscape of Western Europe for the past few decades. Through its emerging Rural Development and Agri-Environmental programmes it is likely to become one of the principal agents of heritage management, both in the West and following enlargement, the East.
- 16. The EAC will seek to enter into policy dialogue with the European Commission's Agriculture Directorate-General to ensure that the Common Agricultural Policy respects the public and scientific importance of the cultural landscape.**

### **Promoting conservation and management**

17. The *European Landscape Convention* (article 5) sets down four specific mechanisms for meeting its aim of promoting landscape protection, management and planning, and for organising European co-operation. These are:
  - 17.1 legal recognition of landscape
  - 17.2 policies for landscape protection, management, and planning
  - 17.3 procedures for public and local authority participation
  - 17.4 integration of landscape into spatial planning, environmental, and agricultural policies

### **18. The EAC will encourage adoption of these measures by its member countries, particularly:**

- 18.1 recognition in law of the archaeological and historic character of landscape, which in our view is a particularly important but often under-regarded aspect of landscape's contribution to Europe's common cultural heritage and to personal, local, national and European identity;**
- 18.2 implementation of appropriate landscape policies (in accord with existing national approaches and laws and especially with regard to spatial planning and agri-environmental policies) for sustainable protection, management, and planning that fully and appropriately take account of historic landscape character when taking decisions about changing or using the landscape.**

### **Raising and learning from public awareness**

19. One of the principal values of landscape, alongside its value as direct evidence for the development of human society, is that it belongs to everyone. It is truly common heritage, whether we are talking about the places where people live or work, or places perhaps where they were born but have left, or where they take holidays, or even places which they never visit but whose known existence enriches their lives. Everyone carries landscape in their hearts and their minds, fuelling a sense of identity and feelings of belonging, supporting personal memories and nurturing hopes and ambitions.

Everyone too makes their 'landscape' through their own perceptions, and the place of historic character and archaeology in these landscapes is central and assured. The combination of peoples' perceptions of landscape with expert views such as those of archaeologists, as the Florence Convention implicitly recognises, will be a very powerful influence on how the landscape looks in the future and on what we pass on to future generations.

- 20. The EAC will seek ways to bring an appreciation of the archaeological and historic character of landscape to a broad, preferably local, public audience. In doing this, we will seek to make the dissemination of understanding a two-way process, using it to learn about peoples' own perceptions of landscape character and significance, and to create a new integrated appreciation.**

### Developing research initiatives

21. Despite all the work reported in this book, and the century and more of landscape-scale archaeological research to which all European countries can point, our archaeological understanding of Europe's cultural landscape is still inadequate to the task of achieving sustainable management. Our knowledge needs to be continually increased, both within countries and perhaps more significantly at trans-national level, learning from each countries' experience and skills, comparing our very different but still distinctively European landscapes.
22. The new research that is required is not merely a case of recognising how little we really know about long-studied landscapes of the prehistoric period for example, but also about archaeological research into historic periods, whose landscapes are not, contrary to some public perception, fully revealed by historic documents. Equally there are new landscapes - of the twentieth century - which perhaps archaeology is better placed to study than history because their proximity to our times makes it difficult for us to see through the biases built into historical records. Finally, there is the newer philosophy of studying, or 'characterising', the present day landscape as if it were a monument in it right - tracing its history in its material remains, and unravelling its time depth. All this needs continuing research targeted as much on heritage management as on academic understanding; applied archaeology in fact.
- 23. The EAC will encourage European archaeologists to carry out landscape-scale projects of archaeology of all periods, with sufficient emphasis on the recent stages of landscape history that are so central to modern landscape character. We will also promote the use of various types of *historic landscape characterisation* to understand the present day landscape's archaeological dimension to facilitate its sustainable management.**
- 24. The EAC will also encourage its members to develop proposals for trans-European programmes to exchange expertise and develop an understanding of the European character of the landscape. Such programmes will study and understand cultural landscapes, promote greater and wider public awareness, and study the effects of policy on the appearance and fabric of the landscape.**
25. These programmes will be designed to operate in partnership with existing Cultural Landscape networks (for example EPCL, LANCEWAD) and national landscape programmes such as England's historic landscape characterisation or Norway's NIKU/NIBR Threatened Landscapes project, and in integration with parallel work on the natural dimension of landscape.

For example:

- 25.1 Develop the work of the present volume to explore the ways in which EAC members currently frame and implement landscape policies.
- 25.3 Devote a future EAC Annual Symposium and Occasional Paper to the effects of the CAP on the landscape's archaeology and historic character.
- 25.3 Take stock of the state of current understanding and ongoing research across Europe of archaeology at landscape scale.
- 25.4 Encouraging the carrying out, by appropriate methods, of historic characterisation of the landscape of EAC member countries.
- 25.5 Encourage national programmes, with the active participation of other interested parties, to improve knowledge of landscape, by analysing its characteristics and the forces and pressures transforming it, and by taking note of changes.

## Encouraging applied research

26. Studying the present-day landscape as a monument in its own right will bring archaeological research into the mainstream of European environmental, sustainable development, and spatial planning policies. High level documents such as the European Spatial Development Perspective, the Helsinki accord, and the EU's sustainable development strategy all create opportunities for the application of archaeological research to spatial planning and development control, to economic development, and to the management of the landscape. It is not possible to create a *sustainable* use of an environment which has been created by centuries of human modification whilst being ignorant of its history; that is, without understanding the long sequence of change, without knowing precisely why the landscape looks like it does.
- 27. The EAC will promote the application of archaeology to management and planning, notably in all fields of decision-making, always in conjunction with spatial planning in the framework of sustainability and the management of change, and wherever practical in collaboration with the other constituencies that are striving to achieve sustainable development.**

## Supporting training

28. There are large numbers of archaeologists in most parts of Europe engaged in the archaeology of landscape, but despite growing interest, still too few are engaged with the archaeology of the present day landscape or of its management.
- 29. The EAC will encourage archaeologists throughout Europe to add to their traditional concerns with past landscapes, settlement studies, and excavation and landscape survey an interest in the understanding of the present day landscape from an archaeological perspective. We will encourage throughout Europe the archaeological study of the landscape as a monument in its own right, recognising the archaeological significance of all landscape features of all dates and type.**
- 30. Where appropriate, EAC will help to establish trans-national exchanges of information, conferences, training, of both landscape characterisation and its management and planning.**

## Monitoring change and knowledge

31. Knowledge is a pre requisite for sustainability: knowledge both of the environment itself, or rather in the present context of the historic and archaeological dimension of the landscape, and knowledge of the pressures for change that affect it, and of how it is being changed and in what direction and at what speed. The processes mentioned above will create some of that knowledge. As well as this research to generate new understanding, there is also a need for research at European level into what we know and where the gaps in our knowledge lie: a sort of continual stocktaking of understanding. We also need research - monitoring - into what is happening to the landscape. What new landscapes are being created, and what is being lost in the process? How successful are we at protecting particularly important aspects of landscape? Are we exploiting change to learn about the landscape as whole? This work needs to be carried out at national and regional level but also at pan-European level.
- 32. The EAC will seek partners and support in the EU to work towards the establishment of a formal Pan-European Cultural Landscape Observatory to promote the study and management of the historic and archaeological aspects of landscape and to monitor both landscape change and the growth of understanding.**
- 33. We will also seek to create working links with existing bodies of this type, notably the European Environment Agency, based in Copenhagen.**

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