Part III

Conclusions

Sharing our common heritage and culture

This book has presented EPCL's views about the European cultural landscape. In particular, we have tried to show how the landscape's historical and archaeological richness contains both diversity and unity, representing a common heritage. Landscape is an 'idea', not a thing: we construct it in our minds using the stimulus of the real world, from the artefact that is the historic environment. This 'mental' cultural landscape cannot be measured or weighed, but it can be described in a myriad ways. This book offers examples of a few of these ways. By using the age-old device of story-telling we hope we have been able to present an idea that is apparently simple but is in fact highly complex; in doing so we have brought together many disparate views, perceptions, approaches to study, requirements and objectives.

Sharing the knowledge, methods and cultural perceptions of twelve very different regions of Europe has been one of the most important aspects of our project. But our aim has not just been to increase understanding amongst ourselves. We have also tried to pass on our understanding, to share it with others in various ways. The project, and this book in particular, has tried to encourage more people to explore their own landscapes. The stories, and many of the other products of our project, are designed to say 'This is what we think we know about the landscape: now it's your turn. What do you feel about this landscape?' The many contributors to this book may be experts in their fields, but we have much to learn from each other about landscape and its meaning. We have much to learn also from other types of discipline and from the people who live in or visit the landscape areas we study. Our own perceptions of landscape have changed during the course of the project, as we have together seen, experienced and travelled through our different areas. Meanings are not fixed: those with which we started out are not the same as those with which we finished. We have gained in experience and knowledge, and we have learned about events, cultural phenomena and traces in landscapes that are different

The Albersdorf landscape

from those to which we were accustomed, and which might be able better, or in a different way, to explain our own landscapes which we thought we already understood.

In this spirit of explanation and learning we have, within our national projects, published leaflets, articles and books about the landscapes of our areas. We have created signposted, and in some cases personally guided, trails across the landscape to enable greater public access and appreciation. We have created virtual guides to the landscape on video, CD ROM and the Internet. We have given lectures and organised conferences, and we have prepared this book, drawing together all our work into a single place. The simple fact that the project has allowed this book to be written at all, as a joint collaboration between dozens of people in so many countries of Europe, is itself a highly positive outcome of our work.

This book shows how much we have achieved in just three years simply by sharing our archaeological perspectives and understanding of twelve small areas of Europe. We have established a wide-ranging network, not just of professional archaeologists but of many other groups working with and in landscape, across most of Europe. The project has clearly demonstrated that sharing is important, whether we are exchanging experiences, landscapes, views, methods of working or broader cultural experiences. We have raised awareness amongst ourselves, the general public and decision-makers.

The book also, of course, shows how much more could be achieved even in our twelve areas with more time and greater opportunity to establish dialogues. Our

areas. We believe that our work, the various types of Pathways that we have created to help people move into and across their landscapes and, perhaps most of all this book, shows how the study, assessment, explanation and management of 'ordinary' or 'marginal' landscapes can be achieved. We have shown how landscapes have their own special value for their inhabitants and others, and also how they contribute to the rich variety of European landscape, as well as to culture in broader terms.

It is improbable that any of our twelve areas would be found on a typical list of the best or most celebrated European landscapes, and many of them might not figure even on a national list. They were all specifically chosen because in some way they were marginal to mainstream landscape. Few of them are 'well preserved' or 'intact' in the conventional superficial sense, but they are rich in the layers of time, exhibiting the effects of their long history up to and including the 20th century. They had in some way been overlooked for their real cultural and historic interest, except of course by those who knew them best, those who lived in them or carried them in memory even though perhaps distant from them. And even these people saw only part of an area's landscape character. These are most definitely living landscapes of today, steeped in history and tradition but still modern. They are not museums, but places where life goes on, and they are always changing. Indeed, these continuing, never-ending processes and their effects and results are what make landscapes cultural.

We think we have also shown in this book how landscape is a thing of perception, not a material thing. As archaeologists, we deal with material remains from the past – sites, monuments and artefacts – and indeed these are the building blocks of some of our most powerful constructions of landscape. But even archaeologists have more than one way of using these traces from the past, as Chapter 1 alone amply shows. We also use myth and tradition, historical documents and maps, imagination and feelings, to invest into our notion of landscape the 'time-depth' that it deserves. Finally, and importantly, as the Convention recognises, there are many other ways of understanding landscape, such as those of ecologists or anthropologists, of teachers, of landscape architects, of agronomists and farmers, of artists and writers. Even with that list, as we hope some of our stories have shown, we have not

network will not vanish when EPCL ends, and we hope it will grow and become the foundation for many other types of collaboration. We hope that future projects, with new partners as well as some 'old' partners, will look in more detail at some of these areas we have begun to cover, but will also examine new areas, and extend our explanations to even wider public and educational audiences.

Supporting the European Landscape Convention

We explained briefly in Part I how our project took inspiration from the European Landscape Convention (ELC). We adopted its definition, and echoed its insistence that landscape is everywhere, in commonplace or degraded land as well as in special or outstanding areas. Like the ELC, we believe that landscape is part of everyone's common heritage and therefore needs democratic input into its understanding and management. In return for this borrowed framework for our project, we hope that this book will offer some assistance, or at least inspiration, in its own turn to those who are already starting to implement the Convention and put its aspirations into action.

The choice of areas in our project, all of which are described in this book, is a clear demonstration of the Convention's democratic and more inclusive definition of landscape that goes far beyond the traditional concern with so-called 'special'

enriched by rather different approaches in countries such as Wales, where there is a much more developed and sophisticated attention to cultural associations and public perception. Out of such interchanges emerge innovative and more effective methods of achieving the Convention's goals.

Learning from stories

We have explained our views in this book through a series of stories, linked by more detailed texts which are themselves a different sort of story. Stories are vitally important. They tell us about our past and our present, they explain how and why things happened. They can codify complex sets of information and make them digestible. People will read stories where they might not read a dry academic report – stories bring the landscape alive and make it relevant. The project has shown how varied are the stories we can tell, and how many the number of ways in which they can be 'teased out' of the landscape. All of the approaches to story-telling are valid, even if they produce different results. They demonstrate the wide range of what can be found out and told (or retold). These stories represent just a few examples. We could include only three from each of the twelve areas but there could have been many hundreds more, and this book shows the potential for the millions of stories in the landscape that are waiting to be told. Stories depend not only on the material available from which to construct them (gained in a variety of ways from a variety of sources – see Chapter 4 especially), but also on the imagination and attitude or viewpoint of the teller.

So, what overall messages can we glean from the stories we have told, and from all the stories that we have not been able to fit into this book or which we have not yet discovered? On what issues and questions

produced a complete perspective: there are also all the very many so-called 'non-expert' or popular viewpoints on which our project has only just begun to touch.

Finally, our project and this book show the benefits of exchanging skills and expertise, of combining knowledge and information, of discussing problems and sharing our areas of ignorance, and of using the greater understanding that has been built up to promote awareness-raising more widely. These are the activities and actions that will be the primary means of implementing the Landscape Convention. We hope that this book illustrates some of the ways in which archaeologists, and related scientists who are interested in our environment and therefore our landscapes, explain how they have become as they are. As one example, we have mentioned several times the methods of historic landscape characterisation (HLC) that have been used in and around our Bowland project area as a way of assessing and understanding landscape. This was a technique developed for use in England, but one result of our project has been its extension in suitably modified form to other countries such as Ireland and Sweden, and its influence on other landscape methods in other partner countries. At the same time, however, English methods of HLC have been

should we reflect as a conclusion to this book?

1. A common and shared European landscape inheritance

First of course, as all the stories show, both singly and together, is the observation – already recognised but reaffirmed by our work – that the idea of 'landscape' is a fluid one. It depends on the perception of a wide range of visible and invisible, tangible and associative attributes of the environment, on personal perception, and on markers of identity. There needs to be a wide definition of landscape that has no chronological cut-off point, that includes buildings and earthworks, buried remains, living things, animals and birds, land cover and trees; it should include colour, noise and knowledge. It should not in the first instance be selective or qualitative – everywhere is someone's landscape. Of course living in a changing world, with new demands on our environment and the constant evolution of the natural world, we cannot keep everything. Difficult decisions about what we value most, and most want to preserve, are being made daily. But those decisions are a second stage, and first we must learn to understand our landscapes, find them in ourselves, explore them and enjoy.

Equally important is the message from our stories about the great variety of our landscapes. Landscape varies across even small areas, but especially between cultural regions, and this is not just a reflection of geography or topography. What makes a landscape truly fascinating is its variety of cultural differences: different ways of growing crops, different ways of marking the edges of fields or sitting farmsteads and villages, different ways of building mounds to cover and commemorate the dead, different treatment of trees. There is variety through time as well, that fourth dimension to landscape which archaeologists bring as one of their particular contributions to the inter-disciplinary study of landscape. Some areas, as we have seen in our stories, exhibit little evidence of change for many centuries and appear as very old, continuous landscapes. Others are exciting for the opposite reason, because we can see in the land many overlapping layers of change, evidence of vitality and human restlessness.

During EPCL, we learned about this richness, diversity, and varied value of Europe's cultural landscapes, and we have also learnt that they are connected physically and culturally. Nowhere is precisely the same – you could say that everywhere is unique – yet at a higher level of looking we see similarities everywhere, slightly modified reflections, an ultimately seamless single European landscape moving from mountains to shore, from agriculture to industry, from town to country.

National borders, in fact, are meaningless in terms of landscape. Nations are after all 'imagined communities', the consequences of state-craft and administrative convenience, an agreement by their citizens to accept certain things in common that define an identity. Internal regional boundaries often seem to have more connection to landscape and cultural identity than national boundaries, and most of our study areas can be perceived as being typical of region rather than nation. But even here many aspects of landscape exist at a more local level of differentiation, whilst many others transcend regional boundaries. Landscape perception and understanding, and therefore landscape management and use, must cross borders, as our project has done repeatedly, and as the European Landscape Convention recommends, in search of a variable and overarching view. Our understanding needs to be alive to local differences but nevertheless to recognise the centrality of a regional scale of perception.

2. People and landscape

The ultimate conclusion that can be drawn from considering the landscape in a holistic and cultural manner, and one that every one of our stories throws light onto, is that however important animals and plants, trees and birds, wind and water are to an area of land, it is the cultural and human elements of the land more than the 'natural' that make up our landscapes. 'Nature' is in any event an idea invented by people once they became conscious of their separation from the natural world, once they felt the need to separate 'culture' – that is, literally, agriculture, the cultivation, acculturation, the 'making human', of the land – from everything else, the 'unimproved' world. This is probably a pre-Christian worldview, an age-old one even if the word Nature itself is of much more recent origin. The concept must have in some way surrounded the construction of the artificial hills that we call burial mounds, such as those of Bjäre, or of the artificial islands in Dowris that we call crannogs, or of the accommodation into the 'real world' – i.e. into the mental landscape – of the incredible and inconceivable fall to earth of the sun-like meteorite at Kaali.

People in the past created landscapes in this way as well as creating the material traces and the landforms and biodiversity that we ourselves use to help make our own landscapes today. Many of our stories

(notably but not only in Chapter 4) offer us surviving fragments of the myths and legends that carried these past landscapes in people's minds and allowed them to communicate them to other people. This whole book is a modern way of doing the same thing, allowing a group of more than fifty archaeologists from all over Europe to send out their view of the modern landscape. Individual stories in this book show lots of other ways of doing this too, particularly in Chapter 5. The landscape is full of past lives about which stories can be told, and communicating these to more and more people is the best strategy we have, which the Landscape Convention again recognises, for raising awareness and therefore support for effective sustainable management.

It is possible to protect small parts of landscape by law and restriction, and by the use of large sums of public money, for example to replicate the lost processes of land use that created a landscape in the first place. But this creates static monuments, necessary in some cases (for instance, to stop the destruction of burial mounds or prehistoric settlements, or ruined castles), but it does not easily create a living landscape. Keeping landscape by managing it sustainably needs the input of people, both to imagine the landscape into being and to manage its components, by maintaining the farming systems or other management techniques that achieve the same appearance, that makes it cultural. The very first step towards sustainable landscape management is therefore to achieve community and popular support for keeping landscapes, and that requires shared valuations and appreciation. This is partly a call for the better explanation of landscape by experts and for better education, but it is much more: it is also a recognition that the landscapes that experts define, and that politicians and decision-makers strive to preserve or change, must be

The Funen landscape

those that are also recognised by the people who live or work in, visit and use them. This is a plea for sharing our perceptions of landscapes, and the sharing must be in both directions.

During this project and in this book, we – archaeologists and scientists, accustomed usually to hard scientific fact and rational explanations – have learnt the wisdom of expanding our horizons to take account of myth, tradition and – quite simply – the mystery of 'un-knowing', whether that is an ignorance of the purpose of the Hallandsåsen 'wolf-pit' (and perhaps a desire not to find out!) or of the real contemporary meaning of the Bleasdale circle on Bowland. Surely the story of the Princess of the Moon is a more enthralling explanation for the colour of the Pale Mountains than the geo-chemical explanation of Gratet de Dolomieu? Saying this is simply to insist on the importance of involving everyone in landscape politics, as participants and observers, tellers and listeners, actors and decision-makers. This is not only for their own interest but also for practical reasons – because landscape can only be managed properly and sustainably, and passed on healthily to future generations, if everyone is involved and wants this to happen.

3. Education and learning

We suggest that active learning is the most important tool in management and conservation. Understanding and knowledge are widely accepted now as prerequisites for archaeological resource management, nature conservation and monument protection, and we believe that they are also necessary for fully-engaged democratic involvement and support for managing change in the landscape. People must want to conserve something before they will do it. If they know what and why, then our task is made easier. But landscape has different meanings for different people, professional or non-professional, within regions and across Europe, through time, even seasonally and in terms of gender, class, occupation and age. The community's attitude to landscape is as diverse and complex as landscapes themselves, so the task of forging common appreciations and shared goals is neither easy nor straightforward. We need all the new tools we can get, which is why in our project we have devoted so much time to setting up pathways with signposts and leaflets, and exploring the options for virtual, computer based trails and for using the newest technology, especially Geographical Information Systems, as with Bowland's HLC,

both to learn more in new ways and to communicate with wider audiences.

We have only scratched the surface of this task, even in our own areas, and the rest of Europe awaits. The impetus given by our three–year project will surely continue to generate further work, such as more school visits to reconstructions like the Bjäre Bronze Age house and the Albersdorf Centre's Neolithic village, or more guided walks like those in Paneveggio. We of course hope that this book will play its part, awakening more interest in the landscape and in everyone's ability to share in its common heritage.

4. Sustainable management and applied archaeology

Understanding and appreciation of the European landscape and its personal creation in intellect and emotion is only the first step on the pathway towards a sustainable landscape for European identity and culture. Increased understanding and shared appreciation will support better care and sounder, wiser decision-making about the future use of the land. This book has many stories that show the effects of unsustainable decisions in the past, and we can learn from the past in this way. More importantly, we can appreciate how much of our landscape arises from its human past, and how much of it depends on human management; this alone tells us that we cannot simply leave the landscape to itself. If we do, it will eventually revert to wasteland and wilderness, not in the romantic 19th century aesthetic sense, but in the sense of a place beyond human experience, identity and culture. We should be wary of trying to create paradise-like natural wildernesses or trying to turn back the clock by 're-creating' some lost animal habitats and ecological zones. The human habitat is the cultural landscape, which we have shaped to fit our needs over thousands of years; 'wilderness' is surely just as undesirable to us as those desolate wastelands created by the total extraction of the earth's raw materials (which at least have some cultural significance for some people, even while others rightly recoil).

Change is vital to landscape, to its current and its past character, and to its future appearance and shape. Change is what makes landscapes 'cultural', as most of our stories illustrate in some way. Studying

The Kaali landscape

The Paneveggio landscape

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change is what archaeologists do most, and best. That interest, our starting point, gives archaeologists a different perspective on change and threat. Like everybody else, we know that change is inevitable; perhaps unlike some other landscape sciences, however, we also find it interesting and valuable for its own sake. It is a part of the future's archaeology, the raw material for tomorrow's landscape. Paradoxically, archaeology studies the past but when applied to environmental and resource management, it is forward–looking in ways that other disciplines are perhaps not.

The Pathways continue onwards – future prospects

Some change is inevitable, and management of that change is essential. This was obvious in all of the project areas, where the landscape is in a constant state of renewal, an evolving process of modification and creation. We are dealing at the beginning of the 21st century with landscapes which are not the end products of a long history but are merely a stopping point, a staging post on the pathway towards new types of landscape, like the staging posts of the Spessart waggoners, traversing Europe with their goods from landscape to landscape. What we see as our landscapes, that we often wish to keep unchanged because they are so much a part of our identity, would to

our predecessors be strange and modern and will to our descendants appear as fragments of lost worlds. Today's landscape is just one slice taken from a tall column, whose base is invisible to us in the mist of time at its foot, and whose top is unknowable to us in the clouds of the future. All we can do is try to understand as best we can what we have today, the past that we can see, with all its layers of history and natural/cultural interplays. We can ask how it came to be like it is, what its true meaning and importance is, and then we can act accordingly on the answers, shaping our decisions to take account of the past as well as serving the future.

Change offers new opportunities which we need to see, to understand and to exploit. Landscape is never complete, never closed, never finished. It is cultural through and through, and this means that it needs people and their management in order to stay alive. Here again we return to the most important aspect of the EPCL project, whose stories this book has told: that it brought together not only seventy or so experts from twelve very different regions to share experiences of the landscape and its past and to discuss its future, but many other people besides. Each national project also involved larger teams of archaeologists, as well as ecological and landscape and environmental scientists. Many more were involved in our conferences and seminars. Furthermore, behind all these people, the project has also touched in many different ways, through its various events and products, many thousands more, not just experts but citizens of Europe in a wide range of walks of life. This is surely the way to ensure the continued creation of new stories of landscape in Europe, as we follow new Pathways in the Cultural Landscape.

The Untamala landscape