

# Part I

## Introduction

### Memory and management

The landscape is a pathway into our memories.

It is also, of course, a place where people appreciate Nature. It is a place where aesthetic senses are stretched and exercised; it is a source of both physical and mental health. It is where we live and work, and have our being. Our identity, personal, local or national, is partly rooted in our landscapes. We make landscape in our own image.

Landscape is therefore many things to different people. To a great many people, a landscape's significance and value lies in its history. The purpose of this book is to give a small taste of this meaning of landscape, using examples from twelve areas of Europe.

These twelve places, from Estonia in the east to Ireland in the west, form the basis of a network of about seventy archaeologists, historians and heritage managers with shared interest in the cultural landscape. This network was set up under the aegis of an EU grants programme, and the production and publication of this book marks the end of a three year Culture 2000 project within the network called 'European Pathways to the Cultural Landscape' (EPCL). It was supported by EU grants and by matching national funds, and operated in twelve separate regions in ten countries. EPCL was the successor to an earlier three-year project involving five countries, and we hope that it will be succeeded in turn by another stage of work drawing in new partners. In this way we hope to build up an expanding network of partners, some more active than others at any one time, but all contributing to the aim of exchanging ideas and experience about the landscape, and sharing ways of bringing them to a wider public audience.

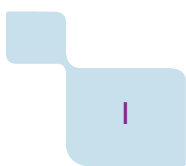
The EPCL project, running from 2000 to 2003, gave itself three main objects – to increase **understanding** of the cultural landscape; to find ways to achieve the



*The Wadden Sea  
landscape near Albersdorf*

**presentation** of this knowledge to wider public audiences; and to promote sustainable methods of **managing** the landscape. We worked by means of staff exchanges, seminars, conferences, and joint meetings; we used the web and arranged educational events for schools; we carried out local research, wherever possible using new technology such as Geographical Information Systems to produce new understandings, and we created both real and virtual trails through the landscape.

In its work, our network has adopted the European Landscape Convention as its guiding framework. We believe we are one of the first groups to put into practice the Convention's principles of landscape as common heritage, of the need for a true democratisation of landscape, and of the requirement for the sustainable management of the landscape. In all our work we have taken the landscape as a visible guide to the past, to the origins and long development of our culture that has grown in Europe, relatively uninterrupted, over ten thousand years, even without counting the long millennia before the land began to be farmed. Only small parts of this story can be found in historical documents or in old maps. The landscape itself can tell us a much bigger story, more dramatically, more personally and more directly, as we hope the stories in this book will demonstrate.





The Arfon landscape

If you look at the landscape with care – if you ‘read’ it, and its messages from the past, metaphorically speaking – you can develop a stronger understanding and appreciation of European identities, of local character, and of history. In turn, that increased understanding can lead to better care for the landscape itself, so that it becomes easier to pass on our landscape in good condition to the future, for others to enjoy and interpret.

## Archaeologists and their landscapes

We remember our past through stories. Historians tell stories that are knitted together from documents written by our predecessors. Artists and writers use the landscape to tell stories about life, the human condition and our place in the world. But EPCL is mainly a network of archaeologists, and archaeologists do not only dig holes and find buried treasure. Archaeologists have our own ways of looking at the whole of the world. We interpret the environment that we inhabit in particular ways, drawing out of it information about past human societies and individuals. Drawing out and finding that information (whether buried in the ground or visible in the shape of fields and woods in the modern landscape) is what the practice of archaeology is all about. And there is also ‘applied’ archaeology, in which understanding of the past and therefore of the present is put to good use in managing and conserving the landscape for future generations.

Archaeologists find stories about the past in all types of material culture, in the objects, the traces, the ‘things’ left behind by the past, whether buried deep in the ground or still

part of the world we inhabit. One of the richest sources for archaeologists is the landscape itself, the whole of the landscape that has been shaped, modified, designed and reconstructed over centuries. We can see our predecessors’ footprints all over the landscape: from medieval times, from the Iron Age, from the Bronze Age, or from the first ‘Neolithic’ farming ages – even sometimes, more faintly, from the long-distant early stone ages. There are millions of stories within the landscape, waiting to be read; this book offers only a few examples taken from the twelve areas in our network.

There are stories in the landscape that tell us about our predecessors and their actions, how they changed the world around them and turned it into the world that we have inherited. They explain how our predecessors lived, how they farmed the land, eating its produce, exploiting its raw materials, and using it to validate and reinforce social and political structures. Aristocracies used it to justify their position, and left much evidence of their power. The bulk of the population used it to live and to die, and have left traces no fewer and no less important that tell us about their lives, how they organised their communities, what they ate, where they sheltered from the weather. There are also stories that are as much about how our predecessors thought about the world as they are about the landscape itself; they reveal past mentalities and interpretations of the world, religious and spiritual as well as secular and political.

This book’s stories from the landscape also tell us about our world of the 21st century. We can see why the landscape in this place here has small fields, but elsewhere there are only large open farmed expanses. Here it is thickly wooded, in some places with long-established almost natural woodland, in others with more recent commercial plantations; elsewhere trees are confined to the slopes of valleys, or grow only at the edges of village territories, or in the common land between communities. The diversity of landscape across Europe is outstanding, and it is only partly to be explained on the basis of geology, soil variation or altitude. Equally influential (though often subtle and more difficult to trace) have been the cultural differences between communities across Europe and over time; if these can be traced, we get very close to a true understanding of the European cultural landscape.

The insight that landscape embodies history, culture and identity, and that the stories it can be made to tell can illuminate our lives, is the starting point of this book, and of the EPCL Culture 2000 network that has produced it. We have used three main ideas as the philosophy of our work, based around the concept of historic landscape character:

**'Past but still present ...'**

Although most of us in the EPCL network are archaeologists, and therefore more used to studying the past than the present, we agreed that our guiding principle would be that EPCL is concerned with the present-day landscape, not with past landscapes or past environments. We believe, however, that one of the most important characteristics of the present-day landscape is that it contains the past, its 'time-depth', the way that history and earlier landscape and the evidence of past change can still be seen within the present-day landscape. The changes that have happened in the past are particularly important to us, because studying change and its effects is one of archaeology's main preoccupations, and one of the things that archaeological study explains best. But we also believe that change is one of the landscape's primary characteristics. Perhaps more than anything, it is the long process of change through time that for us makes a landscape cultural rather than natural. Nature has been modified by cultural activity, and the results of that have later been changed and remodelled time and time again, producing the essentially cultural landscape that we see today, and that we occupy as our physical and emotional and spiritual habitat. EPCL has been concerned to identify and explain the historic dimension of the landscape, its historic character. This is an historical and archaeological approach to landscape, not one of geography.

**'... all encompassing ...'**

Our second guiding idea has been that we adopted the widest interpretation of what makes up the landscape. We tried to escape from the more conventional archaeological perspective of looking at sites within the landscape rather than at the whole landscape as a site in its own right. We recognised no chronological cut-off date: anything, no matter how recent or modern, can be treated as part of historic landscape character. Nor do things that make up the landscape necessarily need to be visible. Below-ground remains can be as much part

of the mental construction of landscape as can visible things. An understanding of the chains of cause and effect that have led to the present-day landscape in any particular area can also be part of that perception of landscape, whether or not all links in the chain are still visible or even still exist. Equally, the components that contribute to historic landscape character do not only include the obvious built features such as houses and farms. They also include semi-natural and living features such as woodland, land cover and hedgerows, which are as much a part of historic landscape character as are archaeological sites. Matching this breadth of approach to the object of study, we adopted a broad view of the 'right' methods to use, recognising that the traditions of archaeological and landscape research across Europe were nearly as varied as its landscapes. EPCL used a large number of different approaches, but each operated within the framework of this overall philosophy.

**'... and an idea, not a thing.'**

Our third principle and unavoidable, is that landscape characterisation is a matter of interpretation more than of record, and of perception more than of hard facts. 'Landscape' is an idea, not a thing. It is this, along with the human actions that changed the shape and appearance of the land, which makes today's European landscape cultural: because we perceive it, indeed define it, in our heads and hearts, and this is inevitably a cultural act. Even untouched natural wilderness, for example, becomes cultural if we have seen it through spiritual or artistic perception. As an idea, as an intellectual or cultural construct, landscape is created by our minds and emotions. We use a combination of physical objects or things as our building blocks, and the physical basis of landscape is therefore the 'Environment'. The environment can be pinned down with objective statistics and data, but landscape itself is more fluid, more personal, more varied, more open to debate and confrontation, better suited to carry messages and signals about identity and place. An important aspect of landscape character in EPCL has therefore been a search for collective and public perceptions to lay alongside expert views. This book contains expert views and legends, myths and fables in about equal measure, drawing together the two ways of seeing into a better view of landscape as perception.



The Bjäre landscape

## The diversity and distinctiveness of the European landscape

In only three years, and even with as many as twelve partners, we have of course not been able to look at all of the European landscape. But our twelve projects are spread across the length and breadth of Europe, reflecting much if not all of Europe's landscape diversity. We are aware that major parts of Europe are not represented in this book, most notably Iberia, the Mediterranean zones, the eastern countries and Turkey, but nevertheless our spread is wide enough to allow preliminary generalisation until we can extend our network.

Our twelve projects, arranged in alphabetical order by country, are:

- Czech Republic (Prácheňsko)
- Denmark (Funen)
- England (Bowland)
- Estonia (Kaali)
- Finland (Untamala)
- Germany (Albersdorf)
- Germany (Spessart)
- Ireland (Dowris)

The Bowland landscape



- Italy (Paneveggio)
- Sweden (Bjäre)
- Sweden (Halland)
- Wales (Arfon)

There are many ways in which these twelve areas can be perceived as covering a range of landscape types. In bio-climatic terms, some are Atlantic areas (e.g. Dowris), others Boreal (e.g. Untamala), others Continental (Prácheňsko) or Alpine (Paneveggio). The network covers farmland (e.g. Halland or Bjäre), forests (e.g. Kaali or Spessart), wetlands (e.g. Albersdorf) and moorland (Bowland). We have islands (e.g. Fyn) and mountains (e.g. Arfon), dry land and drained land, bog and marsh, land that is sinking towards the sea and land that is still rising out of the sea. We saw landscapes of villages or towns, but also landscapes of hamlets or even just farmsteads. We saw landscapes where people have lived for thousands of years, and others where people are only periodic visitors as part of transhumance and other seasonal land-use. In yet other landscapes people have only lived for two or three thousand years, or just a few centuries, or only tenuously, sometimes being driven away by nature. We include areas of land characterised mainly by quarrying and industry, others by farming, and no areas are single purpose. We have land that to some of us seemed frighteningly over-populated and over-exploited, and land that to others seemed remote and empty of people. Our network includes high lands and low lands, tamed land and still-dangerous land. We have 'new' landscape, where most of what first catches the eye seems to be 19th or 20th century, and of course we have very ancient landscape.

The people who live in or visit our twelve areas speak a wide range of languages, including the ten languages in which this book is being translated (English, Welsh, Gaelic, German, Danish, Swedish, Finnish, Estonian, Czech, Italian). We have enjoyed in our project meetings an



*The Dowris landscape*

As Europeans we share many things that may be reflected within the landscape, including:

- Family, ethnic and tribal connections;
- Language and its traditions;
- Trade – of goods, of ideas, and of people;
- Political, economic and social systems;
- Religious and spiritual beliefs;
- Artistic, architectural and industrial traditions;
- Proximity and shared borders;
- A long, shared 'history' (taught and perceived).

astonishing diversity of landscape and archaeology, but we are aware that we have seen only the tip of a very large iceberg. We have savoured a wide range of foods and drinks specific to each landscape that we have been able to visit, a very relevant demonstration of how landscape shapes culture, but again (even more sadly), this is only a small fragment of Europe's huge variety. Whether landscape or townscape, taste-scape or sound-scape, however, our work in these twelve areas has been more than enough, as we hope this book will demonstrate, to confirm the richness, diversity, range – and value – of Europe's cultural landscape.

This is not to say that shared traditions do not also exist outside of Europe, any more than it is to deny the variation within Europe that we have spoken of earlier. Every continent has its own unique, long-lived culture and landscape, and the connections formed by migration and trade ensure the continual cross-fertilisation of cultures across the world. But it does point to a place where there is overlap and a coming-together of shared history, sometimes simply as a result of mere physical proximity, and this creates the common patterns of our inherited European landscape. Very often, however, landscape, like history, has been studied within national borders and these wider connections and similarities have been overlooked. This is perhaps the real value of our EPCL network – that we each shared our own landscapes with colleagues from other countries.

As well as this great variety, however, the landscapes of Europe are connected one to another, no matter how different they might be. They are connected physically, through a geography, geology and topography that often ignores international boundaries, and they are connected culturally, through common social processes shared by European inhabitants, both past and present. Europe is not simply a patchwork of unique and separate landscapes, but it is also a constructed single landscape in a very real sense. We can see a multitude of different landscapes which overlap and reflect one another, from local scale to pan-European scale and beyond, but we can also see the distinctive single European landscape that incorporates diversity within a strong set of common and shared attributes. We think this is one of the prime characteristics of Europe's cultural landscape: any area is simultaneously locally distinctive and unarguably European.

One very important aspect that all European landscapes do have in common within their wonderful diversity is that they are all cultural. Nowhere has completely escaped being changed by human activities. There are some places – the high mountain

*The Funen landscape*



One starting point for exploring the shared European landscape is to identify the cultural commonality that leads to repeating patterns in the landscape, and where and why those patterns differ in space and time.



The Halland landscape

tops, the deep forests, some coasts – where people have but lightly touched the landscape. Even here, the lack of physical impact and of material remains is most often more than compensated for by a wealth of cultural associations in legend, myth, sentiment, art, literature and music. Indeed, some of the most natural places sit at the very heart and soul of the European psyche, and in human consciousness they have been created by these associations just as much as – or more than – they can be said to have been made by nature. At the other extreme there are almost wholly ‘artificial’ landscapes, and not only those caused by industry (e.g. the ‘wastelands’ left by Irish peat extraction to fuel power stations). And in between the extremes lie the majority of European landscapes. These are areas where nature and culture interact in a multitude of different subtle combinations, each able to be read by those who look.

The landscapes in our project are not very famous or widely celebrated. Most of them, indeed, are local small-scale jewels rather than acclaimed masterpieces. Our project deliberately chose such mainly forgotten – or at least overlooked – landscapes. We wished to emphasise as strongly as possible that any landscape in Europe has stories to offer, that all areas are locally distinctive examples of the history of our culture but also contribute to the common European heritage of landscape. Our landscapes are marginal not in the sense of being marginal to mainstream agriculture and urbanisation (as for example were the Arfon landscapes), but they are marginal to current mainstream European identity and awareness. They are nevertheless important on a wide range of fronts, as part of local character and distinctiveness, for example,

because they are ‘reserves’ of particular aspects of landscape that can stand as Europe-wide exemplars, and because they form part of the rich tapestry of the whole European landscape.

It is this aspect that makes the landscape such a central element of Europe’s common heritage, and why the Council of Europe recently, in 2000, added a Landscape Convention – the Florence Convention – to its ‘family’ of treaties. This is a forward-looking convention, designed as much as anything with the 21st century landscape in mind. It is not prescriptive, and does not try to protect only special areas: instead it promotes all landscape as a common European heritage, a central aspect of everyone’s lives, with its roots in nature but also the product of a long human history. It concerns landscape as living culture. That it is needed, and that it is timely, is seen by the rapidity with which it has collected national signatures and ratifications.

#### The European Landscape

*Convention is the first instrument devoted exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. It adopts the innovative starting point that its aspirations apply everywhere, to the whole landscape. Other measures may apply particular protection to especially beautiful or apparently natural areas within the landscape, but the Convention’s democratic approach is concerned with so-called ordinary, ‘everyday’ landscape, even with landscape that may be perceived as spoiled or damaged. Any landscape has been produced by human/natural interaction through time, and if some aspects are ugly or unnatural, they are nevertheless part of the cultural landscape’s rich story. Whether very old or very recent, all landscapes are part of Europe’s culture, the setting to someone’s life, a focus of identity, and the foundation for creating Europe’s landscape for the new century.*

*The Landscape Convention is an important step forward, taking into new territory the Council of Europe’s existing heritage conventions (Bern for the natural heritage, Grenada for the architectural heritage, Valetta for the archaeological heritage). It breaks new ground in several ways:*

- *Providing a significant new definition that has both simplicity and inclusiveness: “landscape means an area, perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural*

and/or human factors". These words emphasise the human aspect of landscape: landscape is created by people's perceptions, and is the product of people's interactions throughout time with nature, and this is a definition that EPCL adopted to underpin its work.

- Recognising that ordinary, typical, 'everyday' landscapes, often characterised as much by human impact as by 'natural beauty', have their own special value, contributing to the rich variety of the European landscape.
- Emphasising that landscape is a product of people's perceptions – not, in other words, simply another term for environment, but something more, created in the eyes, minds and hearts of beholders by treating the material, 'real' components of our environment as raw material for memory and association, understanding and interpretation.
- Promoting awareness–raising, exchange of information and expertise, and multi-disciplinary approaches for the better understanding, assessment and management of the landscape. Foremost is the need for better and stronger understanding of landscape's history and character, and of people's perceptions.
- Asserting that landscape appreciation is not solely a matter for expert judgements, but that dialogue and exchange of viewpoints are necessary across the full spectrum of society. Anyone can create their own perceptions of a landscape where they live or work, and this democratic participation contributes to the cultural and social as well as the environmental and economic significance of landscape.

The Convention stands at the core of the EPCL project, as should be clear from our adopted 'philosophy' that we described earlier. Perhaps most importantly, the Convention is a democratising instrument which states that landscape is a common heritage and a shared resource. Citizens should have access both to the process of deciding which landscapes are most valued and why, and to that of deciding how landscape is changed, protected and managed. We hope that this EPCL book will help in a small way to start this process of public participation. We have tried to engage with public perceptions during our three year work, and some of the results are in this book. More importantly, however, we offer



*The Paneveggio landscape*

this book as some indication of how we (the EPCL partners) see these landscapes, not offering this as necessarily the 'correct' or only interpretation, but saying: 'here is our understanding, our interpretation and perception, of these areas, these are our 'landscapes': tell us about yours'. Perhaps they are the same, perhaps not: sharing is the way to find out.

### Reading this book

This book is constructed around a series of stories. Each project provided three, to fit into an agreed structure, but each story in its different way arose naturally from its area's distinctive landscape. They are arranged in five chapters, which are based on broadly different ways of understanding and describing ('making') landscape. Supporting examples and comparisons from the other EPCL projects have been added wherever possible.

The overall theme of our book – its narrative, plot-line or meta-story – is the message that this introductory part has been putting forward. This is that the present-day



*The Prácheňsko landscape*



*The Kaali landscape*



*The Spessart landscape*

landscape of Europe, in all its diversity and richness, is pre-eminently a 'cultural' landscape, and that it is cultural in a dual sense. It has been created both by human actions and by human ideas and thought:

- the physical elements of the environment that we use in the making of landscape (including its biodiversity and its natural elements) have been created by human action and modification, and
- the landscape's character – intellectual, emotional, aesthetic, associative and scientific – is created by human thought, and by interpretation and imagination.

The stories in each of the five chapters illustrate in one way or another this overall idea. Moreover, the stories demonstrate a number of specific archaeological (or historical) ways of seeing and understanding the landscape, within the framework of the EPCL philosophy set earlier. We hope that these concrete and simple demonstrations of how we look at landscape will be one of EPCL's particular, distinctive contributions to the wider debate being promoted by the European Landscape Convention.

The five chapters that follow, therefore, reiterate, using the distinctive landscape character of each project area, two important points about the European landscape: first, that the cultural landscape is a creation of human action and human imagination (as the Convention puts it, the results of the human/nature interaction through time and current perception by people); and second, that there is a distinctive archaeologists' 'way of seeing and explaining' landscape, but that this can use many methods, and wherever possible needs to be integrated with other ways of understanding and seeing.

The first chapter of the five explores a view of the historic landscape that is relatively straightforward and simple, and widely-held. This chapter (Places and Traces: Their Meaning in Landscape) demonstrates that the environment is only partly natural, and has been modified over thousands of years by people and their actions. This process has left many material remains that are our starting point – often our only one – for understanding why the environment looks as it does today.



They are the building-blocks of 'landscape', one of the key ways in which we trace the passage of time in our landscape, and recognise the scale of human and cultural change affecting it. This first chapter therefore takes a few examples from our projects to emphasise that constructing 'landscape' from material traces (apparently a simple matter) is actually quite complicated, a question of cultural interpretation and of perception. The chapter highlights landscape context, wider patterns of landscape, and shows how 'things' – objects – help us to construct landscape.

The narrative of the book then moves on to talk about how two sorts of interaction in the past have created our perception of landscape. Chapter 2 (Interacting with Nature: Creating Landscapes) examines the effect on the landscape of human interaction with nature over time, especially in its more extreme forms. Some of these interactions have given rise to important legends about the landscape that will reappear in other chapters, showing how difficult it is to separate the various strands of landscape perception. The main focus of Chapter 2, however, is on how today's landscape still contains the evidence, if we look in appropriate ways, of how people have struggled with and usually overcome nature, whilst adapting to changes in their environment such as changes in sea level. We will also see examples of how people have created religion in the landscape, investing natural features with religious and cultural significance and thereby making every natural landscape 'cultural'. This chapter will consider both present-day observation of how interacting with nature in the past affects our landscape today, and ways in which people in the

past created symbolic landscapes (e.g. fishponds or deerparks) using features which were also functional.

Chapter 3 (People and Communities: Social Landscapes) shows how the landscape is also a result of social interactions between people. It introduces into the story the historic social and community processes that made our landscape look how it does, and the various ways in the communal efforts, actions and activities of our predecessors can still be recognised in the landscape. It is about the people themselves and how they lived in the landscape – about how they lived lives and left traces. It focuses on people-to-people social interaction, and in so doing it moves further away from the sites, remains and physical traces that Chapters 1 and 2 are mainly about. In Chapter 3 too, in anticipation of Chapter 4, we start to see the role of symbolism and status in the world of legend and myth. This reminds us again that we cannot separate traditional story-telling from modern scientific story-telling, that the two can be sides of the same coin, and that one is not necessarily superior to the other.

The final two of the five chapters consider the ways in which landscapes are explained. Chapter 4 (Imagination and Explanation: Landscapes of the Mind) tells about the traditions and legends of earlier societies, which perhaps still hold something for us. Chapter 5 (Reading, Understanding and Explaining: Landscape as Information) describes modern archaeology, and rational scientific approaches. People in the past have explained the landscape by making up and passing on stories, often in terms of supernatural beings. But thereby they have created our landscapes just as much as they did with ploughs or building works. These two final chapters counterbalance each other.

The main difference is that modern stories seem to be based on science and

*The Untamala landscape*



rationality. Most of us find it more difficult than our ancestors did to believe in giants and trolls. But all the stories that we have selected for both chapters answer the question 'how do we know what happened'. They also raise the question of why people have forgotten the past, and of how we might be able to bring it back to notice by re-explaining it in modern ways. In particular, Chapter 5 is focused on EPCL's second objective of presenting the landscape to a wider audience.

Taken as a whole, we hope that the five chapters and their 36 stories will illustrate what we mean by Europe's cultural landscape, and how its historic depth and character can be studied and understood. We have taken our examples almost entirely

from EPCL's own twelve areas, but we know that similar stories can be told about any part of Europe's landscape. Our areas are not special – indeed they have been chosen because they are the exact opposite, being typical, representative and even commonplace (but still each has their own identity and is significant in their own way). Precisely because of this ordinariness, we think that our work has a wider significance beyond our own project areas, indeed beyond our own regions and even countries. Europe's landscape diversity tells us that our stories cannot be applied in detail anywhere else, yet we know they are representative at some level and we hope they will encourage others throughout Europe to collect their own stories.



