Settlement and landscape in English historical studies: a French view

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SETTLEMENT AND LANDSCAPE IN ENGLISH HISTORICAL STUDIES: A FRENCH VIEW

By MAGALI WATTEAUX[1]

The study of historic landscapes, space and territories – *geo*-historical studies – is one of today's most dynamic fields of research. Although some early pioneers embarked on various aspects of this work, it was not generally until the second half of the 20th century that research relating specifically to landscapes flourished. Gérard Chouquer and I have reviewed these studies from the 19th century to the present day, from their origins in palaeo-naturalistic science to the latest French versions of spatial archaeology, 'archaeogeography', which is our field of research (Chouquer & Watteaux 2010).

This recently-established specialism[2] (Chouquer 2000; 2003; 2007) is part of a wider movement that aims to rediscover geography, and particularly physical, agrarian, urban and historical geographies. We would argue that the concepts and aims behind these geographies – at least as they have developed for some time now – do not permit us to understand fully the form of the cultural landscape. This may explain the lack of interest shown by geographers in historic landscapes from the 1970s to the end of the 20th century.

Archaeogeography can be differentiated at two levels from other French scholarly traditions. It is primarily an archaeology of geo-historical knowledge, keenly aware that there is a crisis in geography and aimed at reconstituting the traditional goals of geographical history. In a more narrow sense, it is an emerging discipline focusing on the form of fields, routes and urban structures, and dealing with several scales of time and space. It aims to improve our understanding of the form of past landscapes and our knowledge of the long-term dynamics that are part of our heritage. This last aspect is crucial: before we can understand the ancient object, more time must be spent on studying how it has been transmitted to us. In other words, we study less what things have been, because this aim seems increasingly difficult to reach, than what they have become.

Our historiographical and epistemological research provides a foundation for archaeogeography. We wanted to know where we had come from a little better, whose heirs we are and what exactly the words we use mean. By generalizing and systematizing our research, we have studied about 140 works relating to this extensive field of geographical and historical research[3]. In the process, we encountered foreign historiographical traditions (German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and English) and went beyond a strictly French analysis for wider perspectives. In this article will I present some results of our enquiries into British traditions[4].

Although works in English often present short historiographies from one or other discipline on landscape and settlement, there are relatively few syntheses at a more global scale which take account of the whole body of relevant research. My aim here is to present a short but broad panorama of studies in English, arranged chronologically, in order to sketch the outline of a tradition that is different to my own. Of course, in a short contribution like this I cannot fully take account of the richness of research in all relevant disciplines, not least because I have relied mainly on the collections of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. So I am aware that British scholars will identify gaps here. Interested readers will be able to find more in our forthcoming book and in a subsequent issue of *Medieval Settlement Research*, where a complementary article by Gérard Chouquer will present an analysis focussed on the epistemological basis of European traditions. Again, I would stress that we do not claim to explain all English or British approaches, but merely that we discuss French impressions of work from across the Channel. The reverse would be rewarding as well: indeed, this article is an invitation to exchange.

The historical basis of settlement and landscape studies: founding fathers

Legal History: early studies on village communities in Great Britain

The importance of studies of village communities in Britain has origins in legal historians' research from the middle of the 19th century onwards, particularly Sir Henry Summer Maine and Frederic William Maitland. Maine wanted to understand how the original free community had disappeared in England in favour of the aristocratic manorial system (Maine 1871; 1889). He belongs to an intellectual movement which regarded individual property as the result and necessary consequence of modern western civilization. It looked to the past for traces of ownership, if not collective at least joint, which was seen as a sort of 'primitive communism'.

Maitland specialized in medieval common law (Maitland & Pollock 1895; Maitland 1897). In his *Domesday Book and Beyond* he tackled the question of social and legal organization in the 11th century and earlier, focusing on the retrogressive method of moving 'from the known to the unknown' after the historian Seebohm (Maitland 1897, v). He became interested in the history and practical arrangements of settlements and fields and was an early exponent, along with Seebohm, of using the Ordnance Survey's maps for this aim. He

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[2] Not to be confused with 'geoarchaeology',which is the study of sediments and soils for archaeology.

[3] For a diagrammatic representation of the relationships between these titles, see the archaeogeography website: www.archeogeographie.org (Médiathèque/Cartothèques/'Liste des intitulés disciplinaires mentionnés dans le tome 2 du *Traité d'archéogéographie*').

[4] My thanks to Solveig Hurard and Sam Turner for their assistance with this translation.

emphasized the antiquity of the main structures of agrarian organization as much as the changes affecting them:

> At the present moment there is no need for arguments which insist upon the immutable character of ancient agrarian arrangements. [...] Nothing but a unanimous agreement among those who are not likely to agree can break up that prison-house of cells in which agriculture has been cramped and confined. Rather, it may be the student who is perusing the 'estate map' and who is fascinated by the possession of a new tool for picking historical locks, should warn himself that, though there has been permanence, there are also been change, and that in a far-off time changes of a certain sort came quickly. (Maitland 1897: 362)

He was recognised in his own time as a significant jurist and historian, both for his methodological innovations and his new discoveries (Vinogradoff 1907).

Economic history: the development of the historical study of agrarian systems and settlement

Three names have left a particularly deep imprint on social and economic research into field systems, agriculture and the history of settlement: Frederic Seebohm, Paul Vinogradoff and Howard Levi Gray.

Seebohm began the analysis of open fields and the other agrarian systems in Great Britain at the end of the 19th century. In his book *The English Village Community* (1890) he took an unconventional perspective:

> I confessed to having approached the subject not as an antiquary but as a student of Economic History, and even with a directly political interest. [...] it must be my apology for treating from an economic point of view a subject which has also an antiquarian interest. (Seebohm 1890, vii)

In order to carry his analysis through, he used not only texts but also historic maps and plans, thus introducing regressive analysis based on planimetric evidence. He also became very interested in metrology. Even if he was not the first scholar to take interest in these questions[5], he was the first to deal with them thoroughly (Vinogradoff 1912, 339). Even so, Hoskins wrote in 1955 that his book remained 'neglected and under-valued' (Hoskins 1955, 45), indicating the road he would travel to follow up Seebohm's insights. In France, Marc Bloch's rural history was much inspired by Seebohm (and other English scholars) though like him, not all his insights would immediately be developed (Bloch 1929; 1931).

Famously, Seebohm regarded the ancient open field as a kind of communist system that was finally overthrown by the new order of freedom and free enterprise manifested by enclosure (for the latter, see Scrutton 1887):

> The freedom of the individual and growth of individual enterprise and property which mark the new order imply a rebellion against the bonds of communism and forced equality, alike of the manorial and of the tribal system. It has triumphed by breaking up both the communism of serfdom and the communism of the free tribe. (Seebohm 1890, 439)

In 1892, Paul Vinogradoff reconsidered Seebohm's conclusions and insisted on a more social history in his *Villainage in England. Essays in English medieval History* (1892). Finally, Howard Levi Gray presented his landmark text *English Field Systems* (1915) based on the conclusions of Seebohm and others. Gray wished to understand the links between agriculture and society, and he attempted to study various types of people who had hitherto been neglected in English work.

Local History according to Hoskins: the introduction of landscape

Although Local History does not represent a very large academic discipline[6], its dynamism and heritage (especially amongst amateur historians) mean that it cannot be ignored. It is much more important in England than in France where no comparable tradition developed, despite the liveliness of regional scholarly societies in the 19th and early 20th centuries. From the 16th century onwards histories of parishes, counties, towns and communities had always included a topographical dimension. William George Hoskins, professor of Local History at Leicester and then Oxford, noted that 'the study of topography is the foundation of local history' (Hoskins 1959, 12). Consequently it is not surprising that this pioneer of Landscape History generally linked studies of local history with local landscapes. His many publications for amateur local historians advised them to turn their attention to landscapes and maps as important sources (Hoskins 1959; 1967). Hoskins advocated the pursuit of old boundaries, fossilized fields and other structures in the landscape (Hoskins 1959, 107) and for this reason, fieldwork has an important place in this Local History: 'no historians – certainly no local historian – ought to be afraid to get his feet wet' (Hoskins 1959: 2).

Historical Geography: a strong and structured discipline

England has a powerful school of historical geography which owes its development in the 1930s to the American geographer Carl Ortwin Sauer and the English geographer Henry Clifford Darby (Darby 1936; 1951; 1952–77; 1953; 1960; 1962; 2002). Its strength derives largely from Darby's work, particularly on the geographical interpretation of Domesday Book (Darby 1952–77), but also from his robust methodological thinking on topics such as the organisation of scientific results, and on the frontiers between history and geography (Darby 1953; 1962; 2002). Darby wanted to delimit a 'self-conscious discipline' (Baker 1984, 16) and he distinguished four historical geographies: the geographies of past, the evolution of landscapes, the past in the present, and geographical history (Darby 1962).

[5] Olufsen, Hansen and Meitzen had already tackled the problem in Germany. The German scholar Nasse had even examined the Anglo-Saxon material in 1872 for evidence of enclosures and rotations.

[6] With the notable exception of the University of Leicester's Department of Local History, founded in 1947.

This dynamic school of thought differs greatly from its French equivalent ('geohistory'). Despite having its origins in the 19th century with Vidal de la Blache, French historical geography has never had such strength, perhaps because theoretical reflection on a similar level did not exist. Hugh Clout puts this difference down to Darby's prolific writings and energetic personality, and to the opportunities offered to him to build up university studies in historical geography; in France meanwhile, the subject dwindled in favour of history (Clout 2005, 83). In the final analysis French historical geography differed from the pragmatism and eclecticism of the British tradition by taking a rather deterministic and single-minded approach to understanding how historical developments produced what it regarded as an ideal form, the modern French countryside (Planhol 1988).

The early development of survey: fieldwalking and aerial photography

Methods aimed at broadening the scope of archaeology are principally an English tradition. Fieldwalking survey, which owes a great deal to Clarke (1922), has been established as a method through a range of surveys all over the world, though its history remains to be written. It quickly appeared that the way material from sites was distributed on the surface could be analysed according to rules, laws or patterns (Banning 2002, 12–22). This discovery influenced thinking on the regional scope of survey and greatly encouraged researchers to move from creating inventories to building up a fully-fledged sub-discipline.

In England, aerial photography gained early importance among the numerous mapping tools used by researchers. After the First World War the work of Osbert Guy Stanhope Crawford made it an indispensable tool, and he promoted its development at home and abroad (Crawford 1924; 1929; Crawford & Keiller 1928). Nevertheless, John Bradford reminds us that the next generation was relatively slow to develop the method further (Bradford 1957). In France, Marc Bloch pointed out the technique's usefulness as early as 1930, but aerial archaeology was also slow to develop further (Bloch 1930).

Field Archaeology: a conquering discipline

The British tradition of detecting and recording field monuments is very ancient: it goes back to the end of the Middle Ages and developed in subsequent centuries with historians and local topographers (Hoskins 1959, 15; Aston & Rowley 1974, 15–16). The age of science arrived in the second half of the 18th century with General Roy, a soldier, cartographer and founder of the Ordnance Survey, and with Captain Robert Melville who mapped Roman camps (Crawford 1953, 36–37). The creation of the Ordnance Survey archaeologist in 1920 was a particular highlight of a long-lasting and fruitful association between cartographers and field archaeologists. The arrival of aerial photography revolutionised field archaeology and from the 1920s opened new horizons to researchers, particularly for work on agriculture in medieval times and earlier (Crawford 1953, 38–39). The Curwens (father and son) studied medieval agrarian micro-relief and were pioneers of agrarian archaeology (Curwen & Curwen 1923).

But it is Crawford more than anyone else who defined the scope of field archaeology[7] and worked to extend archaeology both into new subjects and all periods, including the modern era. If Crawford defined a field archaeologist as more than just an excavator (Crawford 1953, 36), he also criticised (in a rather charming manner) those library-based archaeologists who never ventured outside:

> It is better to study these records [old estate plans and local surveys], especially the contemporary plans, than to confuse one's mind by reading the arguments of clean-booted historians. [...] The medieval field system can only be understood by a combined study of documents and the visible remains in the field. The student must be at home in both spheres, and whether he is called a field archaeologist or historian is a matter of words: he must be both. (Crawford 1953, 198)

Clearly ahead of his time, Crawford insisted on the importance of interdisciplinary studies (Crawford 1921, 89):

> The archaeologist and historian who has not disciplined his thought so that he thinks in terms of these two fundamental dimensions [time and space] will never really understand his subject." (Crawford 1953, 40).

This dimension had to be studied using maps and aerial views in order to embrace large areas. Crawford's participation in the Ordnance Survey's inventory projects was therefore entirely logical. We should also note here the work of the various Royal Commissions on Historical (or Ancient) Monuments, who played a key role through their detailed and richly illustrated inventories and field surveys (e.g. RCHME 1968).

The development of Field Archaeology opened up a considerable research effort in England. Nevertheless, in 1953 Crawford still regretted that it was not more widely practiced:

> But the impression still exists, and finds expression in print, that it is enough to live in a museum to be an archaeologist. Museums are, of course, of vital importance, and I should be the last person to decry them. But they are not enough. They must be supplemented by field-work if they are not to degenerate into charnel-houses containing the desiccated corpses of potential archaeologists. (Crawford 1953, 233)

Field Archaeology as championed by Crawford was succeeded from the 1950s by a multiplication of excavation techniques and the birth of Landscape Archaeology. These developments brought a renewed energy to the discipline (see below). In France, no comparable tradition exists: even the term 'Field Archaeology' is hard to translate since it implies a combination of sources, approaches and methods which are the domain of other subjects.

[7] The term was invented by Dr J.P. Williams-Freeman in 1915 to designate outdoor archaeology as opposed to museum archaeology (Williams-Freeman 1915).

Landscape History: birth of a new discipline

Landscape History or Archaeology, like the French *archéologie du paysage*, is not distinguished by a particular body of techniques or theory but rather by its research theme: the landscape (Williamson 1998, 1). Its aim is to explain contemporary landscapes: how did they become what they are?

Without going through all the details of this discipline's history, already discussed by others (Williamson 1998, 2; Hooke 2000, 143–144; Taylor 2000), I will note here some personal reflections on its origins and future direction. Its beginnings are often located with W.G. Hoskins and his cult book *The Making of the English Landscape* (1955). Although the research of Beresford, Hurst, Finberg, Crawford and some historical geographers contributed significantly to preparing the disciplinary terrain, it was Hoskins who did most to make Landscape History recognised in the academic sphere and he was also the first to attempt a diachronic synthesis at the scale of the whole of England. His broad expertise – in Local History, Landscape History, Agrarian History, Historical Demography, Urban History and Vernacular Architecture – allowed him to develop very broad analyses of landscapes. With H.P.R. Finberg, he re-examined the traditional image of his native Devon's countryside, passed down from Maitland (Hoskins & Finberg 1952). Later, his work on the television series *Landscapes of England* from 1976 helped popularise this new discipline for a large public in the context of unhappiness about the widespread destruction of English historic landscapes. The subjects he tackled in his work were extremely varied: population, territories, roads, fields, buildings, agrarian and urban morphology, towns – themes which became the principal subjects of future historians and archaeologists of the landscape.

In contrast to other researchers, Hoskins adopted a chronological perspective more than a thematic one 'to show the logic behind the changing face of the English landscape' (Hoskins 1955, 13). But even though his chronology was long (this distinguished Hoskins from traditional historians), it was focussed after Antiquity and was profoundly periodised according to traditional criteria in order to identify the impact of each era on the landscape. This was a linear and stratigraphic idea of landscape made in bygone times, and popularised by the metaphor of landscape as palimpsest (Crawford 1953, 51; Beresford 1957). Later, as in France, this became something of a cliché (Taylor 1974, 24; Aston & Rowley 1974, 14; Fowler 2000, 272). Recent archaeogeographical research has shown that this image does not take account of the complexity of processes of remembering and transmitting the form of the landscape across time and space[8].

The impact of Hoskins' book and his work in general was considerable for historical studies of landscape. The goal of his works was to 'take us nearer to the exact truth of the way in which things happened' (Hoskins 1955, 15). For that, all relevant sources, methods and analytical techniques needed to be mobilized. It was on these lines that landscape history developed, and subsequently its archaeological variant, Landscape Archaeology.

New Archaeology and the quantitative revolution: new aims and methods

Spatial Archaeology in the wake of New Archaeology

Spatial Archaeology – or spatial analysis in archaeology – comes directly from the Anglo-American New Archaeology developed from the 1950s onwards by Lewis Binford and others. Whilst archaeologists had traditionally complained about their lack of data, Binford argued that this relative poverty should not limit their theoretical aspirations and urged them to moved from simple description to the explanation of cultural processes (Binford 1962; Sabloff 1998). The development of *settlement pattern studies* from the 50s onwards created a favourable climate for tackling archaeological distributions. Methodical sampling allowed the use of statistics, opening the way to quantitative spatial analyses.

Furthermore, these developments in archaeology were deeply influenced by New Geography. Human Geography in the 1960s witnessed a revolution that re-focussed the subject on process, function and quantitative analysis. Archaeologists delved into this literature for answers to the problems of spatial data. David Leonard Clarke even described a 'geographical paradigm' for archaeological research (Clarke 1972) and Colin Renfrew argued that the writings of New Geography provided methodological resources for archaeology (Renfrew 1969). Clarke's new approach was formalised in his *Spatial Archaeology* (1977), which appeared at almost the same time as Ian Hodder and Clive Orton's influential *Spatial Analysis in Archaeology* (1976; Djindjian 1991, 202). Rigorous analytical methods and strategies were finally available for studying traditional distribution maps. Besides this, the sheer increase in available archaeological data as a result of rescue archaeology made it necessary to improve methods of spatial analysis.

The close relationship between New Archaeology and New Geography allowed many new spatial modelling techniques to cross over in the 70s and 80s. The majority of these models theorised location and came ultimately out of sociological and economic models developed by German researchers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (for example Thiessen polygons, the von Thünen model; Schiebling 1998, 28).

The new archaeologists emphasised landscape research as the study of economic resources and systems through scientific and statistical methods. The development of scientific environmental archaeology was closely linked to this quantitative revolution. 'Space' took the place of 'landscape', the appreciation of which diminished. New archaeologists and geographers are described as neo-positivists because their work was founded on the idea that fundamental laws of spatial organisation can be uncovered through the hypothetico-deductive (and nomothetic) method. The elementary spatial shapes are then regarded as universal and independent from time: the laws that govern these shapes and structures are not the result of conscious will and human action since communities rarely build their

[8] See also Chouquer 2000 (107–8) for a critique of the idea that landscape can be 'read', which is also very widespread and linked to the metaphor of the palimpsest.

environment consciously. Space was therefore considered an abstract dimension or, to borrow Christopher Tilley's word, a simple 'container'. Neutral, disembodied, abstract and so measurable, space 'provided a coherent and unitary backdrop for any analysis, since it was always the same' (Tilley 1994, 9). We can thus observe, for example in field survey, a process of rationalisation of the names of methods like *Site Catchment Analysis* (Vita Finzi & Higgs 1970), *Distributional Archaeology* (Ebert 1986) – also known as "non-site", "siteless" or "off-site" archaeology (Dunnell 1992) – or even *Surface Artefact Survey* (Bintliff, Kuna & Venclova 2000).

It is worth noting finally that in France spatial archaeology saw less growth thanks to the weighty inheritance of the Vidal de la Blache, which kept *paysages* within geography. Today, although GIS-based spatial analyses are frequently used, the term spatial archaeology is not widely recognised and the method is just a simple analytical technique. This results from the lack of interest in or outright opposition to methods developed in the 1970s. Today, the term *archéologie des réseaux locaux* ('archaeology of local networks') is preferred (Brun 2006).

The development of multidisciplinary landscape studies

Historical Ecology: finding evidence in plants

The label Historical Ecology is an invention of the 1960s which signaled the introduction of people into ecological analyses, again in the context of the changing English landscape. According to Max Hooper, the foundational study in the discipline was Oliver Rackham's work on the coppices of Cambridgeshire in 1967 (Hooper 1974), and according to the latter a collaborative study of 1960 where the contributors introduced vegetation as a third dimension in their archaeological and historical synthesis (Rackham 1995, xiv). The first informal meeting of *The Historical Ecology Discussion Group*, comprising historians and ecologists, was held in 1969.

The disciplines objective was defined simply by Hooper: 'Historical ecology is therefore the art, science, craft or mystery of elucidating the present patterns of organisms in the light of man's past activities' (Hooper 1974, 41). Thus ecological evidence became an historical source and ecologists could better understand the reasons for the establishment of different species. Hooper himself was the pioneer of hedgerow dating based on their composition (Hooper 1976), a study that inspired many others, including in France. However, the expression used there was usually *histoire écologique* ('ecological history') (Bertrand 1975) or *écohistoire* (Beck & Delort 1993) since the method was generally employed by historians (and as a result grew closer to historical geography or rural history). It finds its most recent avatar in *phytohistoire de la haie vive*, defined by Christian Perrein as being in the tradition of work by Hooper (Perrein 1991).

From site-scale to landscape-scale

From the 1970s onwards the field of landscape studies exploded chronologically (into pre-Roman and post-medieval periods), geographically (beyond the British Isles) and thematically (with new subjects such as estates, farms, country houses, forests, art, etc; Taylor 2000: 157). Various factors which took root in the 1960s launched these changes: the emergence of 'context' in archaeological studies thanks to the New Archaeology; the discovery of vegetation history thanks to historical ecology; growing interest in aerial archaeology; and not least the unprecedented growth in archaeological excavations thanks to major development works. Generally speaking this led to a growth and diversification of landscape studies: historians and historical geographers refocused their attention on English agricultural systems (Rowley 1981), ecologists carried out historical, settlement studies made significant advances (Roberts 1977), increased attention was given to vernacular architecture by bodies such as the RCHME (Mercer 1977) and the journal *Landscape History* was created in 1979 along with the Society for Landscape Studies (Williamson 1998, 3). Numerous publications followed in the 1980s and their scope widened to include ornamental landscapes like parks and gardens (Taylor 1983).

Tom Williamson has written that 'some practitioners would be hard put to say precisely which 'conventional' discipline they fall into, and to some extent the terms 'landscape history' and 'landscape archaeology' are interchangeable' (Williamson 1998, 1). Consequently the difference between Landscape History and Landscape Archaeology relates more to the early training of researchers and to their favoured source material, whether textual or material culture.

We can see a similar growth of landscape studies in French archaeology for the same reasons, although fewer publications have resulted. In France this growth did not result in a new discipline: after a positive start at a major 1977 conference (Chevalier 1978), few researchers came to the banner of landscape archaeology with most preferring to remain on its edges (in e.g. geoarchaeology, archaeobotany, archaeogeography, historical archaeology). This reticence may be explained in part by the fuzziness of landscape studies as a concept and by a lack of intellectual content. Nevertheless, some researchers have recently rallied to its defence (Leveau 2005).

A multidisciplinary discipline

This British landscape archaeology sees itself as fundamentally and necessarily multidisciplinary. Since 1974 Christopher Taylor has argued that landscape archaeology is 'total' archaeology:

> 'Finally the landscape historian must have the ability and broadmindedness to pick up quickly, use and understand all kinds of techniques and information which are normally beyond the requirements of his field of study' (Taylor 1974, 24).

The character of this research explains the frequent association of Landscape History/Archaeology with Field Archaeology (Aston & Rowley 1974; Muir 2000), Local History/Archaeology (Rogers & Rowley 1974; Taylor 1974; Aston 1985; Fowler 2000; works of Christopher Dyer and Harold Fox), agrarian history (Fowler 2002) and aerial archaeology (Bradford 1957; Wilson 1975). Each of these disciplines systematically

studies the history of settlement and calls on other disciplines such as place-name studies, history, archaeology, and different types of survey and environmental archaeology.

In particular, the publications of Christopher Taylor, a pioneering landscape archaeologist, perfectly illustrate this disciplinary collaboration (Taylor 1974; 1975; 1983; 1984; 2000). Peter J. Fowler should also be mentioned here since he proposed a synthetic vision of studies on the environment, landscape, fields, settlement and agriculture from an agrarian perspective (Fowler 2002).

This emergence of landscape in archaeology revitalised Field Archaeology which became one of the branches of Landscape Archaeology. Taylor wrote in 1975 that 'Ultimately the field archaeologist's job should be the reconstruction and cartographic presentation of past landscapes to show the totality of land-use and occupation at any given period of the past." (Taylor 1975, 136). Field Archaeology also benefitted from new life thanks to the appearance of rescue archaeology which led to the frenzied recording under 'emergency' conditions of evidence from the past (and sometimes even the will to conserve it) in the face of destructive development. Michael Aston and Trevor Rowley wrote that they were 'at the front', facing up to the threats that were menacing earthworks and historical landscapes (Aston & Rowley 1974, 12). In addition, from the 1970s the Ordnance Survey saw a new phase of expansion with renewed study of the architectural and archaeological heritage of England (Bowden, Mackay & Topping 1989, ix; 1–2).

Aerial Archaeology and landscape

In spite of the early development of aerial photography in Field Archaeology, it was with John Bradford (1957) that Air Archaeology became a quasi-discipline of its own. Writing about his technique, Bradford used the terms 'air archaeology' (the title of the first chapter), 'aerial photo-interpretation' and 'archaeological study of aerial photographs'[9]. Bradford's book, entitled *Ancient Landscapes* and subtitled *Studies in Field Archaeology*, defined the scope of a major field of research. The Air Photograph Unit of the RCHME's National Monuments Record was established in 1965 and great emphasis was placed on recording and studying landscapes (Hampton 1975, 123; Bowen 1975; Taylor 1975; Fowler 1975). In the context of the emergence of archaeological landscape studies, aerial photography became indispensible. The same kind of development took place in France with Raymond Chevallier (1964) and in the context of fieldwalking surveys (Ferdière & Zadora-Rio 1986; Noyé 1988).

Maurice Warwick Beresford regarded aerial photography as an invaluable way to assess the economic and social past because it revealed omnipresent medieval and modern traces to those who looked (Beresford 1954; Beresford & St Joseph 1958). These traces had hitherto been neglected in favour of prehistoric evidence, probably because medieval history was already well developed.

[9] Later on we also find 'aerial reconnaissance for archaeology' (Wilson 1975).

Settlement History: collaboration with landscape studies

Settlement history or archaeology is not formalised as a discipline and is undertaken by historians, archaeologists and historical geographers. It is a subject that calls for broad expertise. In medieval archaeology it developed particularly thanks to Beresford. With John Hurst, he started research on deserted villages and medieval settlement with Wharram Percy from 1950, with the Deserted Medieval Village Research Group in 1952 and with various publications (Beresford 1954; 1965; Beresford & Hurst 1971). Since then this research has developed with the integration of the latest methodological developments and new interpretations. Since the end of the 1980s medieval villages have not been studied in isolation, but in the context of successive landscapes and episodes of settlement over the long term. The emphasis on just nucleated villages has disappeared in favour of a broader variety of settlements; furthermore, deterministic explanations have been given up in favour of discussion of people's choices (Taylor 1984; Aston, Austin & Dyer 1989; Everson, Taylor & Dunn 1991; Lewis, Mitchell-Fox & Dyer 2001). The transformation of the DMVRG into the Medieval Village Research Group and later the Medieval Settlement Research Group reflects these changes in perspective which themselves reflect a change of scale: from the archaeological site to the landscapes and territories inhabited by people (Baker 1989, 168–9).

In fact, the frontiers of disciplines dealing with landscapes are largely broken down in Landscape History/Archaeology which creates problems in trying to define it (Taylor 2000, 159). Taylor, having sung the praises of this approach to the study of landscapes (Taylor 1974, 15–16) was later on the defensive faced with the risk of losing the fundamental values and objectives of Landscape History/Archaeology ('danger of fragmentation': Taylor 2000, 159). His conclusion was a bitter one: 'Landscape historians are increasingly unable to speak to each other about their particular interests' (Taylor 2000, 159–160).

Landscape studies in post-processual and phenomenological perspective

New developments in Historical Geography

Since the 1980s, new developments in geography and more generally in the social and human sciences raised the possibility of a new kind of historical geography. Alan R.H. Baker invested significantly in reinvigorating Darby's inheritance (Baker 2003; 2005) and refused to disconnect historical geography from contemporary geography in the hope of promoting 'historical studies in the many branches of geography' (Baker 2005, 20). In France meanwhile, historical geography has been suffering a crisis of identity placing it closer to contemporary geography (Boulanger & Trochet 2005). This *rapprochement* can be observed in the evolution of approaches, themes and theories in historical geography. From the end of the 1970s, geography's 'cultural turn' was manifested in English-speaking countries by the appearance of a 'humanist geography'. This cultural geography defined itself in reaction to New Geography by emphasising the subjectivity of interpretation and

analysing the human meanings of places (Baker 2005, 28; Claval 2001, 106–107; 2005, 187; Claval, Pagnini & Scaini 2003). Space was no longer considered as just a neutral geometric surface or background. Landscape again found an important place though in a new way where the emphasis was placed on the relationships between human sensitivities and the environment.

In this way, new processes and themes were explored: for example ethnic segregation, the perception of landscapes, and communication networks (Pacione 1987, ix–x; Nash & Graham 2000, 3). Questions of power and knowledge took on a crucial importance which can be accounted for through the influence of feminism, post structuralism, anti-racism and post-colonialism (Nash & Graham 2000, 3). Scientific research itself became a source for study, since it was now established that any research is by nature 'situated' and that any interpretation is to a large extent political. French archaeogeography has made this axis of research one of its principal pillars (Chouquer 2007; 2008). Yet this new historical geography did not put an end to the pragmatic study of land and landscape organisation. An 'applied' historical geography still exists which is concerned with the preservation of historic landscape and contributes to debates on the management of today's landscape heritage.

Landscape Archaeology according to Interpretative Archaeology

Since the 1980s, archaeology has witnessed profound changes with the development of Postprocessual (or Interpretative) Archaeology, in the global context of the 'cultural turn' in human sciences and particularly in Anthropology and Geography. Ian Hodder, Michael Shanks, Christopher Y. Tilley and others defined its shape in numerous publications (Hodder 1982a–b; 1989; 2007; Shanks & Tilley 1987; 1988; Tilley 1993; Bender, Hamilton & Tilley 2007).

In the sphere of landscape archaeology, Tilley has animated the debate through theoretical writing and fieldwork on prehistoric landscapes. He and other scholars accuse the old school of Landscape History/Archaeology of failing to lay sufficient stress on the social and cultural aspects of the past, where landscapes should be seen as the expression of particular cultural meanings (symbols and representations). But Tilley counsels against a divorce:

> […] I do not wish to set up a polar divide between a supposed economic rationality and a cultural or symbolic logic but rather to suggest that each helps to constitute the other. People do not, of course, deliberately occupy inhospitable habitats or those with few resources by virtue of some slavish accommodation to a symbolic scheme; but the places they do occupy take on, through time, particular sets of meanings and connotations which are at least partially interpretable from archaeological evidence and appear to be too important to be ignored. (Tilley 1994, 2)

In a key work, *A Phenomenology of Landscape* (1994), he sketches out the contours of this new landscape archaeology. After an introducing his philosophical and archaeological inspirations, he tackles the question of the relationship between prehistoric sacred sites and topography. He tried to understand how Neolithic tombs cast light on particular places and what role they played in the creation of social and symbolic meaning in landscapes. Tilley also adopted an alternative definition of the notion of space, which was considered as a *medium*: creating place is an implication of human action and cannot be separated from it (Tilley 1994, 10–11).

Numerous publication have followed this perspective, particularly in prehistory (e.g. Ashmore & Knapp 1999; Ucko & Layton 1999; Bender, Hamilton & Tilley 2007). It strongly distinguishes scholarship in English from French work, which has barely seen any comparable studies. Howeber, this spotlight on the non-economic relationships between people and the land has led to the almost total disappearance of agricultural landscapes and their materiality: there is nothing on the management of agricultural resources, communication routes, or the morphology of fields (even when the work of Andrew Fleming is cited). Fowler decried the phraseology of Tilley's book where people do not walk 'but realise a pedestrian speech act' (Fowler 1998, 25). In a volume on landscape archaeology edited by Ashmore & Knapp (1999), no map is found other than simple location plans of sacred sites; the cover is a contemporary abstract painting by Wenten Rubuntja Tjabanati evoking the creation of the Alice Springs region according to an aboriginal myth.

Environmental Archaeologies: the end of the bare data collection

Finally, we should note that the post-modern movement has not spared environmental archaeology which has also realised the necessity of reviewing its theory and practice. From a functionalist and processualist reading of data the field moved, from the end of the 1980s, to a post-processualist interpretation which denies that there is an implicit determinism in environmental studies and moves the focus to more subjective and individual analysis (Evans & O'Connor 2005, 7–8 ; Evans 2003). Interpretative archaeology has thus given rise to a new way of analysing data: palaeoecology today seeks to understand the social or ecological motivations behind the adoption of different strategies, as well as how and why changes took place in ecosystems.

Landscape Archaeology today: divorce or hope of synthesis?

Two schools of Landscape Archaeology

Since the 1990s, British landscape archaeology has been characterised by two major strands. The first, in the tradition of Hoskins and Taylor, continues to research the physical evidence in the landscape. It addresses classic themes such as fields, settlement, routeways, and the contribution of plants and trees. It integrates advances from neighbouring disciplines (environmental archaeology, vernacular architecture, industrial archaeology and so on). Since the beginning of the 21st century, GIS and other digital techniques have facilitated and accelerated the collection and analysis of data with the result that opportunities for multi-scalar projects are much greater. Landscape History/Archaeology today certainly gives the impression of a flourishing discipline

which is appealing to professional researchers, amateurs and the general public alike.

The second strand (a sort of 'Post-Landscape' Archaeology) emerged at the beginning of the 1990s and differs profoundly from the first. Even if its critique is directed towards the adherents of New Archaeology and its abstract models, this way of considering places as vehicles of meaning and putting landscape perception at the heart of its analysis identifies the 'Hoskinsian' approach as rather marginal and old fashioned, with its obvious positivism sitting in opposition to the subjectivist and interpretative perspectives advocated by the post-processualists.

If we are to believe Taylor, the same issues that lie behind the weak development of landscape archaeology as a discipline in France also seem to pose problems today in Britain. He regrets that many publications use the word 'landscape' to cash in on the success of the discipline even though they hardly deal with it:

> By devaluing the term landscape in this way I believe that we are in danger of forgetting what Hoskins and the other pioneers of landscape history taught us, that it is landscapes that we are studying and landscapes that we are trying to explain. These landscapes can be actual or perceived, extant or relict, hidden or even destroyed. And to explain them we may, indeed must, use the techniques and methods of geographers, archaeologists, historians, philosophers and many others. But we have to remember that it is the landscape that is our prime concern and, often, that it is that landscape that contains the answers to the questions it poses. (Taylor 2000, 160)

More recently, a method first developed in Cornwall and known as Historic Landscape Characterisation (Herring 1998) has attempted to reconcile these two perspectives. Its aim is to interpret and present information on landscape history and support the management and sustainable development of landscapes (Turner 2007, 13–15). Turner argues that the approach can go beyond the divisions between the various scientific schools:

> […] we have to get our data from different sources and combine them to create rich descriptions of past societies. One of the most important achievements of recent social and cultural approaches to archaeology is the realization that the whole landscape both affects and is affected by people […]. We have to put sites into a richer context than we can by simply plotting a few points on a map, and we need to try to encompass whole landscapes. (Turner 2007, 11–12)

The materiality of landscapes, in the tradition of Field Archaeology and landscape history, can therefore be at the heart of a subject that includes symbolic and social dimensions of landscape.

By way of conclusion: an abundance of disciplinary traditions

The aim of this short retrospective was to outline the various historiographical strands in British studies of historic landscapes. As in French historiography, the impression is of abundance in the discipline and in related fields of geo-historical research[10]. We might reflect on why and how we have we moved from the few plain and apparently solid sub-disciplines of the early 20th century to dozens of sub-disciplines, many of which are to some extent synonymous. We face challenges in dealing with this profusion and the inevitable proceeding confusion.

The existence of significant national 'genealogies' in research can also be observed since they account for the main thematic choices and so for the names through which different disciplines or the disciplinary fractions designate their objects of study and the scope of their investigations. Four main traditions can be distinguished within the limits of our investigation. We will briefly mention them here but readers will be able to find more in our forthcoming book and Gérard Chouquer's future article in *MSR*:

- A *French* tradition based on a fundamental relationship between form and function, constituting the functionalist and determinist heritage of the 19th and 20th centuries.
- A *German* tradition based on ethnicity, law, state control and planification.
- A tradition originating in the *Mediterranean* based on topography.
- An *English* tradition which is rather archaeological, and which found close links with the utilitarian and conservative economic thinking of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The British work, when compared with the other disciplinary traditions, forms a significant part of this research on landscapes and ancient spaces. As such it has been innovative and dynamic but not isolated.

The abundance of disciplines and sub-disciplines is evidence of the richness that characterises research into historic landscape, space, environment and territory. The archaeogeographical enterprise we have been working on for some years in France has provided an opportunity to think over the diversity of the discipline, and pursue an intellectual aim: to create a new framework and better understand the development of our knowledge.

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[10] Legal History, Economic History, Local History, Historical Geography, Air Archaeology, Field Archaeology, Landscape History/Archaeology, Fieldwalking, Spatial Archaeology (or spatial analysis in archaeology), Site Catchment Analysis, Distributional Archaeology, Surface Artefact Survey, Agrarian History, Settlement History/Archaeology, Landscapes of Settlement, Historical Ecology, Environmental Archaeologies (Zooarchaeology, Archaeozoology, Ethnozoology, Osteoarchaeology, Geoarchaeology, Archaeological Geology, Contextual Archaeology, Archaeobotany), Historic Landscape Characterisation.

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