



MAKING THEM DRAW

The use of drawings when researching public attitudes towards the past

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An approach to conflicts in space

The spatiality of cultural heritage in the landscape is frequently the cause of dispute and outrage involving local communities. On a global scale conflicts in the landscape form part of social, economic, political and religious struggles between groups who have different interests with regard to the cultural heritage. It is a debate about identity and values, the vulnerable core of qualities that make up the contradictory attitudes of those who either cherish or despise the thought of having to live with the cultural heritage. Some would even consider dissonance to be a characteristic feature of the relationship between resource management and cultural heritage (Turnbridge and Ashworth 1996). My case study of such present-day conflicts, where two types of professional landscape management regimes were investigated (Lillehammer 2007, 2005, 2004, 2001), developed a particular method in order to overcome the dissonance between the two groups.

The overall objective was to investigate public attitudes towards cultural heritage in a rural district of south-western Norway (Figure 14.1), and to explore how these attitudes influenced the environmental management of the landscape. Notably, in this case the conflict between the two management groups was harsh and heavy, and had been so for a long time, which meant that the development of new methods suitable for analysing the hot social and political climate was required. The uncomfortable situation of dissonance in the landscape management made me decide on a research procedure from the phenomenological point of view of the practitioner. In order to stick to the practical side of the object of study, this is also how I will here present the process of searching for a suitable method.

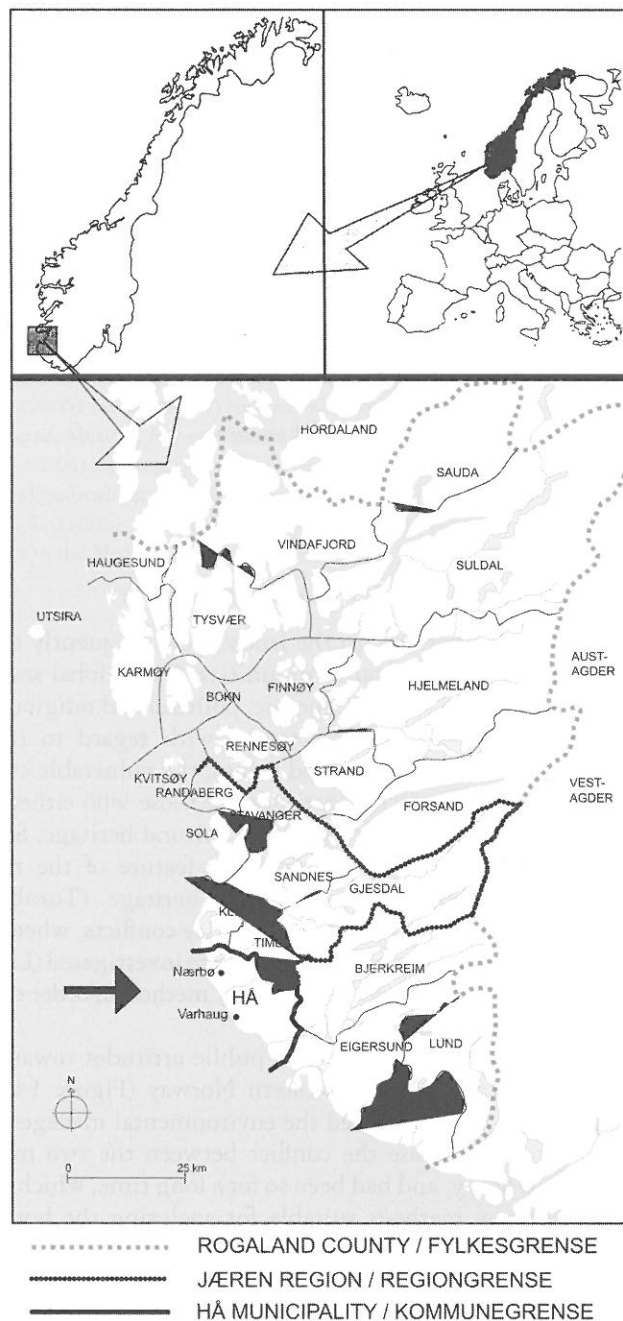


Figure 14.1 Location of the case study, Hå municipality of the Jæren region, Rogaland county, south-western Norway (source: Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger)

To start with my own point of departure, the initial idea, which remained influential throughout the study, was to use my qualification as an archaeologist and my early training as an undergraduate in art history and ethnology in the research. Apart from discussing phenomenology in the process of practising it (see Lillehammer 2005, 2004), my aim was to find an approach which could set aside problems already known to exist between the management groups. I expected the approach would open up new avenues for exploring the uneasy field of strained power relations between them, but which in the analytical process would need and allow a reflexive analysis to follow the investigation.

The approach was a matter of finding methodological applications suitable for this purpose, because in my case some of the means were already there. I had been awarded a scholarship from the Norwegian Research Council in support of the project which I had already initiated (Lillehammer 1996). General questions about the conflict had been formulated as a joint venture between two types of managers (Groups 1 and 2, i.e. farmers and environmental bureaucrats (including archaeologists)). Now, I was looking for theoretical and methodological approaches that could be used to study this in-between relationship of the two groups. I was sponsored by the Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge, and was happily located in the University Library. Day by day I contentedly handled and systematically recorded books of interest. One day I found myself in the geography section of the library, and it was there that I found what I was looking for. What it was that I discovered on the shelves, I will return to later.

The project

The research of this case study was to investigate 'Landscape conflicts: cultural heritage and cultural perception. "Fairy ring" monuments, out-lying fields and heath-land in Hå municipality of Rogaland, SW-Norway' (Lillehammer 2007). This is a theoretical and empirical study of how management of the cultural heritage and the environment is perceived by the two different interest groups of bureaucrats and farmers in the local society. The study is limited to a district where much of the cultural heritage and the environment surrounding it are often in conflict with agricultural land use and are therefore cleared away unintentionally or illegally by farming activities. The analyses include archaeological, palynological and geological investigations of a particular type of protected monument, which has been singled out to represent the cultural heritage specific to the rural district. To meet the demands of this scientific analysis, the category of monument had to be non-distinct in the environment and on the surface. To spot it, the managers need a special interest in the past landscape or specialist knowledge of its function and place in the cultural environment. Also, for preservation purposes the monuments and their environment must be vulnerable and threatened by specialised farming practice

and land use adapted to the local environmental conditions (Lillehammer 2007, 2005, 2004; Lillehammer and Prøsch-Danielsen 2001; Prøsch-Danielsen 2001; Prøsch-Danielsen and Simonsen 2000a, b).

The monuments chosen to fit these requirements are a group of mysterious earthworks (Figure 14.2a–b), the so-called ‘alvedans’, in English ‘fairy-circles’, or in Orkadian ‘fairy rings’ (Lillehammer 2005:103, fig. 3a–b). The earthworks had been recorded, investigated and debated as favoured objects of local folk belief and superstition since the 1820s. The monuments consist of an enclosure defined by a bank and a circular, oval, rectangular or U-shaped ditch in loose deposits. These are linked with a specific type of environment, the coastal heath-lands of south-western Norway, which has an Atlantic distribution (Steinnes 1988: 8–9; Kaland 1979; Skogen 1974). The set-up of the study was two-sided. It aimed firstly to increase the knowledge about the age, function and context of the earthworks in relationship to the environment, and to answer the question of continuity–discontinuity in the past landscape compared to the present-day landscape. Second, the aim was to gain a wider understanding of the cultural perceptions and attitudes among present managers of the rural landscape towards the protection of these monuments and their environment.

The interdisciplinary investigation revealed that the monuments selected for examination were the bases of haystacks in the marginal land of outfields dating to between the end of the Early Iron Age (cal. AD 410–50) and recent periods (AD 1835–c. 1970) (Lillehammer 2007, 2005, 2004; Lillehammer and Prøsch-Danielsen 2001; Prøsch-Danielsen 2001). It also showed that knowledge of the fairy myth tradition as well as that of the long and enduring tradition of original use was now extinct or almost dying out among the local farmers. The findings supported the information which was collected regarding attitudes towards the preservation in the landscape. There is a difference in cultural attitude between farmers and bureaucrats. The two professions of landscape managers represent interests that have the potential for conflicts in the future. Their perspectives differ; they have a different time perspective, both ‘backwards’ and ‘forwards’, as expressed in how they perceive farming as either a long or short history, in choice of value and in their perception of the landscape (Lillehammer 2007, 2005).

The idea of drawing landscapes

Here I shall not dwell on the details of this interdisciplinary collaborative study, but focus on the methods, which were used to carry out the second part of the study. In the first part I had asked about the pre-modern background to the historic relics, their environment and change of use (Lillehammer 2005: chapter 5; 2004). Now, however, I was looking for methods that could link the first part with the second part of the research. I was asking about the attitudes which formed the modern background for the preservation or destruction



(a)



(b)

Figure 14.2 Fairy rings: (a) Fairy ring in grassy field at summertime (photo: Lisbeth Prøsch-Danielsen), (b) Fairy ring in pasture at wintertime. A large stone is situated in the ditch (photo: Lisbeth Prøsch-Danielsen).

of the monuments in these people's environment. In particular I wanted to catch the cultural gaze of farmers towards outfields and outland (Lillehammer 2007) and to use this as the basis for understanding their attitudes towards environmental management, which the public perceive as most properly carried out by bureaucrats.

The initial plan was to interview both farmers and bureaucrats about their knowledge of the historic relics and their views on the management of the cultural environment which aim at preventing it from being further cultivated. The challenge was how to approach the problem of testing these recordings in relation to attitudes towards the marginal landscape of outfields and outland. As mentioned previously, I had brought myself as far as the shelves in the geography section of the University Library. I was browsing through an American handbook on human geography for planners of land use (Lowe and Pederson 1983). One chapter dealt with the issue of perceiving environments. Another chapter discussed the partitioning of space and the allocation of land in non-capitalist economies compared with the allocation of profit maximisation and competition in modern capitalist economies.

The outline in the handbook suited my approach well enough for dealing with a continuity/discontinuity pattern of land use which differed between a pre-modern and a modern landscape. In the handbook, I discovered six illustrations of cognitive mapping and understandings of the environment which caught my attention. Among these were two sketch maps of the city of Sunderland, England, two mental maps of Idaho Falls, in the USA, one map of crop distribution on a farm in central Spain and one model on the idealised zones of agricultural land use (Lowe and Pederson 1983: 34, figs 2–11; 36, figs 2–12; 224, fig. 11; 238, figs 11–14). In the end, I decided to copy some of the relevant pages and put them among the collection of 'bright ideas' I gathered systematically while doing the literature study.

Making them draw

Back in Norway, while making preparations for the round of interviews with the managers, I decided to give the handbook collection a second thought. I figured out that making the informants draw landscapes would combine well with the situation of interviewing them. Each interview should end with a free invitation to draw, but I had to consider what type of landscape. As the focus of analysis was on marginal land management, an approach that might get it all in one shot was to concentrate on a single motif. This type of motif had to be more or less familiar to both groups of managers. A motif showing the typical farm in the rural district, the so-called 'Jæren farm', would tie the whole land property of each farmstead together, including the marginal areas in the outfields and outland. The motif would also cover aspects laid down and marked on the official ordnance maps (*Økonomisk Kartverk*). The general

task of both groups should be to draw 'Jæren farm' as they saw it, and to name the inventory in the landscape. Their specific task should be to mark the location of cultural heritage remains, including fairy circles, and to mark the centre of the farm. In this way I expected the test to reveal their knowledge about the landscape distribution of ancient monuments and fairy circles and their perceptions of spatial locations most vital to the agricultural running of 'Jæren farm'.

Since the overall method was that of practising phenomenology (Lillehammer 2005, 2004), there would be no rules laid out for me to follow in this procedure. I did not know beforehand whether the procedure would be feasible or the results would end in complete failure. I decided to carry it out according to the above description in an experimental manner with both groups. I restricted myself to considering only the explanations given in the copies of reference literature on perceiving environments and partitioning space. These concerned the examination of distance as a dimension of images and the distance relationships that determine the arrangement of spatial schemata and the structure of mental maps (Lowe and Pederson 1983: 29). Cognitive maps are products of the mind's ordering of information. In general the conflicts of cultural heritage management often arise when farmers have initiated new plans for expanding the use of agricultural areas at the farms. The outcome of dealing with these plans is the result of outside decision-making by the heritage management. Therefore I anticipated various sets of landscape schemata in the mental ordering of the diverse conditions in the agricultural landscape, such as the distribution of buildings, land use, and natural and cultural resources in the landscape. However, I chose not to conduct an extensive critical reading about environmental knowledge with regard to theories, research and methods involved in such processes in preparation for the task. Instead I chose to make my way through the whole operation as freely and openly as possible to see what happened.

Nearly 80 per cent of the participants responded positively to the task of drawing the landscape of 'Jæren farm'. Only a few withdrew reluctantly from the task, giving excuses that ranged from being a bad draughtsman to being uninterested. Others were quite enthusiastic, performing the task at once, without any hesitation, and even producing three-dimensional images. Some of the participants sketched maps without even asking. Others stopped while struggling with the problem of solving the task given to them. When they discussed it with me, I made some suggestions about their own preferences, pointing at options such as sketching or mapping landscapes. The result came out as 97 per cent sketch maps (exemplified by Figure 14.3a), 2 per cent zone models (as seen in Figure 14.3b) and 1 per cent landscape sketches (Figure 14.3c). The sketch maps were rough drafts of landscape plans similar to the construction of ordinary maps. The zone models were drawings of principal landscape structures according to a zonation from the centre to the

While reading the passage I recognised a distinctive structure of spatial schemata which could separate mental maps into different types in terms of their relation to human behaviour in the landscape. This meant that based on their spatial schemata the drawings could be divided into two distinct groups: (1) a type of map for daily use in the immediate environment, that is, the domestic landscape near to a habitat or the habitat itself, and (2) a type of map for organisational information purposes, that is, the landscape of surveillance far from the habitat. In short, there could be at least two different cultural images presented on mental maps. Maps are likely to be characterised in terms of their origin and date, their position in the development of techniques for surveying and production, and their geographical accuracy. They are also assessed as historic documents with hidden meanings (Delano-Smith 2001; Harley and Laxton 2001). When analysed critically in their proper context, the mapping practice could link the information presented upon drawings to the management of a cultural landscape and the legitimisation or transaction of power over the land. Deliberate distortion or manipulation of map content for political or other purposes by individuals, state bureaucracy or the market can be traced through the history of maps (see Harley and Laxton 2001: 60–5). These factors become evident when maps are considered to show ownership to property, property rights and the relationship between territorial divisions of land and long-term structural changes in the agricultural transition from pre-modern to modern landscapes (see Lillehammer 2007).

While pondering the construction of perspectives in the landscape drawings, I decided to spread out the whole collection, and to look it over in order to see whether I could sense some lines and forms of patterns. I recognised some similarities and differences between the drawings, which were difficult to single out without the application of a more refined method. I then returned to the interviews and concentrated on defining the managers as draughtsmen more closely. I had prepared a questionnaire for each group beforehand (Lillehammer 2005: 252–5; 2004) which I had used as a mental guide to support me during the interviews. The sessions had been taped, and a short report on the atmosphere and setting together with an abstract of the essential keynotes in the conversation had been summarised right after each interview. Afterwards, transcripts of the tapes had been typed, then sorted out and filed together with the drawings.

Now I would continue by analysing systematically the social background of the managers and their relationship to place and farmsteads in the landscape. I went repeatedly through the whole series of questions focusing on keywords in the questionnaire, such as 'farming', 'being a farmer', 'cultural heritage', 'landscape protection', 'preservation of outfields', 'outland'. By looking for those elaborations of subtle and intersecting factors that converge to form a particular interview (Briggs 1986: 22–3), I could engage with the interviews in a way that deepened my understanding of the patterns and see them as the index of an ethical relation between conflicting and competing elements (Lillehammer 2005: 178; Levinas 1996). I found that the two groups of professions had different social and practical lifestyles. However, except for a very small

minority of bureaucrats, all shared a similar blending of official and private interests in their attitudes towards managing the landscape. The finds were disturbing from an ethical point of view. I had expected the bureaucrats to take a more objective stand to these questions than the farmers, and the results made me ask if some of these preferences were shown on the landscape drawings.

Next, I therefore decided to return to the drawings, looking in particular for spatial schemata in the landscape in order to compare the two groups of managers with each other. The drawings of the landscapes had been constructed as sequential arrangements of elements from a bird's-eye view without my instructions (see Figure 14.3 a–c). As the focus of the case study was on the preservation of cultural heritage remains in outfields and outlands, all the elements marked on the drawings were registered and ordered systematically, starting with the outskirts of the farm, followed by the outland/outfield, the infield, and then ending with the farmyard (Lillehammer 2005: 256–7; 2004).

The common references on the drawings by both groups turned out to be social, economic, legal, historic and geographic elements of the rural landscape (Lillehammer 2005: 200, table 10; 2004: 204, table 10). On the other hand, the landscapes differed from each other with reference to variation in details, such as place names, location of crop distribution, natural conditions and topography. Therefore, each group of managers had drawn landscapes that were distinct from each other (Lillehammer 2007, 2005, 2004). The analysis confirmed that the farmers had a more intimate relationship to their homesteads compared to the references of the bureaucrats, who – being outsiders – were more distant from the farms and had presented the landscape drawn from afar.

The strategy to follow from here was to define the landscape of 'Jæren farm' more precisely using the method of visual perception. I looked in particular for focal points in the landscape in correlation with the rectangular shape of the drawing sheet (Lillehammer 2005: 202–4, tables 11–15; 2004). The selection of focal points was based on two traditional models of integrated farming systems which included a centre and where the different economic, social and cultural parts complemented each other (Lillehammer 2007: 164–7). These focal points of interest were accommodated to include the draughtsperson's placing of farmyard, agricultural resource areas and archaeological heritage monuments in the landscape drawing of 'Jæren farm'. This included therefore locating and marking the perceived centre of the 'Jæren farm' as indicated by the draughtsperson's use of the paper size. In practice this was done by placing a grid system over the drawing and locating the centre at the crossing of the grid lines (Figure 14.4). It also involved locating the viewing position of the draughtsperson to establish whether a close or distant viewpoint was imagined when he or she was sketching the landscape (Figure 14.5).

Finally, the results were tested against the location of economic production areas and the distribution of archaeological heritage in comparison with the official ordnance maps (*Økonomisk Kartverk*), looking in particular for the

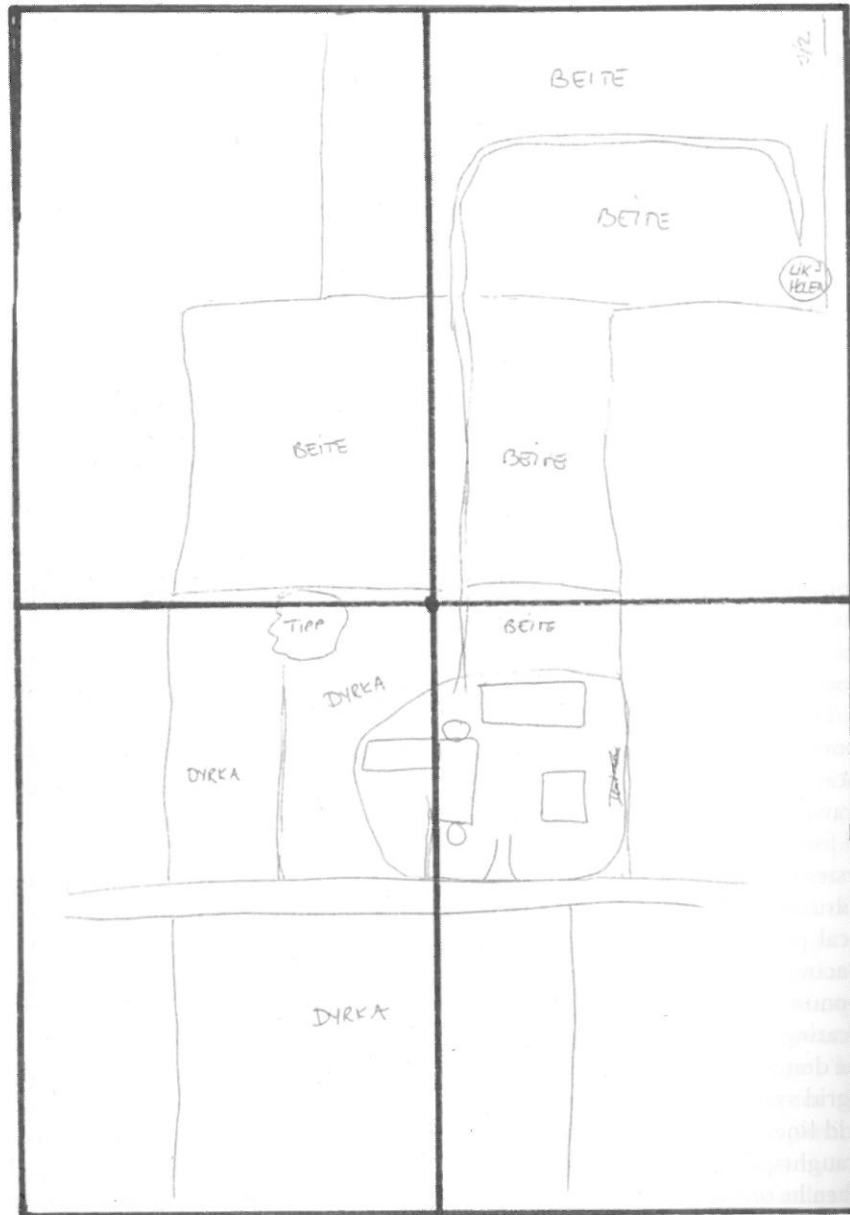


Figure 14.4. Marking the centre at 'Jæren farm' in the drawing of a sketch map according to a partitioning grid system

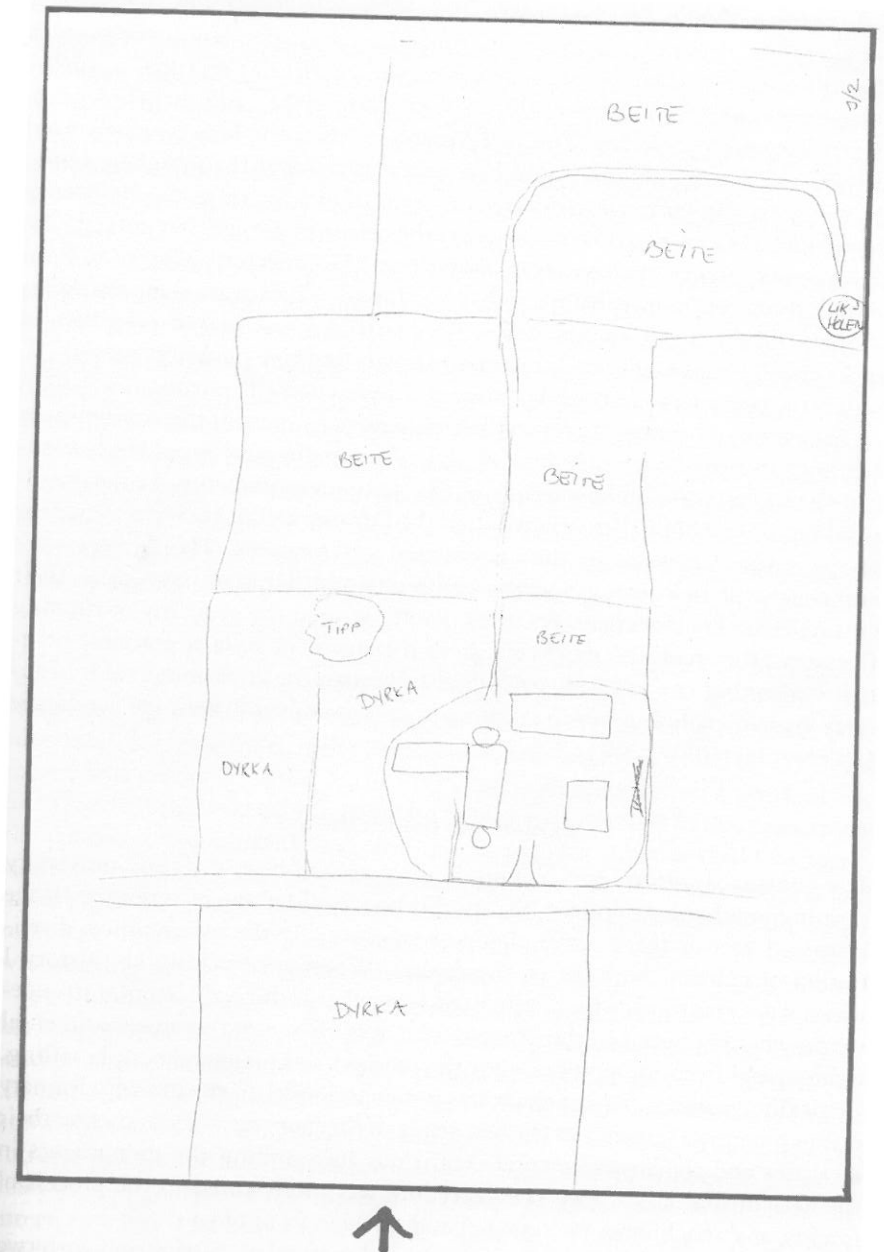


Figure 14.5 Location of the viewpoint position of the draughtsperson (position indicated by arrow) when producing a sketch map of 'Jæren farm'

distribution of cultural heritage remains in the drawings of the farmers (Lillehammer 2005: 207, table 16; 209, table 17; 2004). On the basis of these analyses I found that the two groups had cognitive landscape profiles that differed distinctly between economic–aesthetic and cultural historic–aesthetic values (Lillehammer 2005: 205, fig. 56; 2004), and that these were in conflict with each other. The analysis showed that the farmers rarely used the courtyard as the central point, but rather placed it at the periphery of the drawing. At the same time, whereas most of their drawings used a nearby viewpoint, the courtyard is perceived as the centre of the farm. In contrast, the bureaucrats, if they centred their drawing on the courtyard, viewed it from afar or, more commonly, from another viewpoint. There were some examples of them producing drawings where the courtyard was placed peripherally and a nearby viewpoint used, but the majority of their drawings placed the courtyard peripheral on the page and used a viewpoint from afar.

The perceived centre of cultural heritage management in the environment was not concurrent with the centre of agriculture in the landscape. The bureaucrats had a far better understanding of the central requirements of the agricultural management of 'Jæren farm' than the farmers had in their management of the cultural remains in the agricultural environment. The farmers were ambivalent or uninterested in the environmental heritage issue since their cultural gaze lay elsewhere. Focusing strongly upon the economy of running the farms, they had a far more consistent management style of practical-pragmatic planning of a bio-industrial landscape than the environmental bureaucrats had in planning the management of the cultural heritage landscape (Lillehammer 2007, 2005, 2004).

Explaining the method

The point of departure for drawing landscapes had been my early university training in ethnology and art history. Ethnology aided me in coping with the historical part of agricultural phenomena, especially the geographical distribution of cultural heritage in the region. When approaching art history I rediscovered methods which were used somewhat intuitively in order to experience what happened in the process. This was carried out in an experimental fashion, and from my point of view the method was plain and simple sailing. Critically speaking, the approach was less conscious than the interdisciplinary research method featured in the first study of the 'fairy ring' monuments, their localities and the environmental conditions surrounding the monuments in the agricultural landscape. The procedure was more suited to the process of forcing one's backbones to come out and rattle in front of you.

In retrospect, I combined the geographical method of distribution with two central methodological traditions in art history. One was the formalistic tradition derived from Heinrich Wölfflin (Wölfflin 1957), which expressed itself in the comparative analyses of surface patterns from the lines and volumes

in the drawings. The other was the iconographical tradition derived from Erwin Panofsky (1939), reflected in the emphasis on studying the underlying principles of the drawings in order to reveal the persuasion condensed in one work.

In this context I will comment on the second method, linked as it is with the first. In art history iconography developed as a method of looking at painting forms as a mode of literary representation. Due to the influence of the philosopher Ernst Cassirer, who wrote about symbolic forms, symbolic values were analysed in terms of what they imply within the imagery of a painting (Daniels and Cosgrove 2003: 1–4). Initially, I had begun my research by reading Cassirer (1994) to focus on the subject of cultural conflicts in the landscape. While writing this essay I was reminded of this particular relationship. How Cassirer influenced the approach of 'making them draw' is hard to tell in retrospect, except for his approach of 'reading what we see', and his symbolic thinking lingered in the deep recesses of my mind as a pre-thought. What I draw from the experimenting experience is that in the end the research method became my own accomplishment. Cassirer's thoughts made me look for structures underlying the patterns which governed the formal outlines of the drawings. This led me to interpret the symbolic levels embedded in the lines and forms of the landscapes, and to proceed even further by reaching for the areas governing the cognitive landscape of the managers.

Conclusion

In the end the results of the study suggest that both means and methods were successful. It is evident that the journey to Cambridge was worth all the time, money and energy invested in the visit. I actually found what I was looking for: a method that was easy to carry out for the participants. While examining the context I was working on I also discovered that my aim could be easily achieved in the analytical part of the research procedure. Thanks to the practice of the phenomenological approach, I had turned to the application of drawings more openly and freely than I would have in another more formal setting. I was working independently and on my own.

By linking the interviews with the methodological traditions of analysing landscapes in art history, the approach of formal and iconographic applications used on the collection of drawings is comparable to that of a diagnostician or the inspector in a criminal plot. The idea of maps as the manipulated form of knowledge of an empowerment of land use made it possible to approach the cultural practice of informants from a new angle, and to widen the scope of analysis. Not only did the method of drawing landscapes supplement the interviews, but it became the practical vehicle to look for meanings that were hidden on the surface, or difficult to reach only through the interviews.

In situations of strong spatial conflicts, such as between the agricultural and cultural heritage management on Jæren, the relationship between specialist professions is a paramount consideration. The lessening of tensions by having

fun together opens new avenues for transgressing the protective boundaries of cultural intimacy (Herzfeld 1997). The practical method of drawing landscapes has obtained far more general theoretical implications on landscape perception and power relations than was expected at the beginning of the research investigation. Evidently the outcome of the study demonstrates the close link between theory and method in being an innovative process of transformation. The potentiality of applying methods generated from the theory of different disciplines stresses the importance for Heritage Studies and archaeology continuing to explore and even further extend its means of investigation.

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