

SUMMARY OF EUCALAND PROJECT WP 3.

CLASSIFYING EUROPE: AN OUTCOME OF THE EUCALAND PROJECT

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One of the EucaLand project's more ambitious undertakings was to classify Europe's agricultural landscapes in Working Group 3. This was a difficult task because of the continent's geographical size and landscape diversity, time depth and dynamism. We limited the task to being not a classification of agriculture *per se* but of areas of landscape where agricultural influences past and present are strong enough to be perceived as dominant. This focus on a single facet of landscape helped, although it introduced other tensions with landscape's integrative character, and even with a shared ELC definition the meaning of 'landscape' itself is not always straightforward in a multi-disciplinary and multi-national group such as EucaLand.

Keeping sight of landscape's quintessentially perceptual and cognitive nature and of its fluidity and dynamism (ie how to make sure we classified landscape rather than just land, environment, land use or land cover) was a key problem. It was essential somehow to make transparently explicit the subjectivity of landscape ('an area as perceived by people ...' as the ELC says) - in other words, to acknowledge the ever-present observer(s) without whom there is only environment. As a step towards this, we recognised that we were classifying interpretations and perceptions not objects (i.e. it is a classification of the subjective). We based our classification on generalisation, creating classes and types that could be applied to relatively large areas of mixed character not a single character in tiny blocks of land.

One of our early decisions was that this would be a classification of cultural aspects of landscape. Past cultural and social decisions are very important to landscape but can become invisible within environmentally-focussed classifications. The EucaLand classification therefore pushed environmental factors such as soils, climate, and altitude (already the basis of several classifications) into the background as a deliberate inversion of the more normal environmental infrastructure / social superstructure model. This was not to deny the importance of environmental and geographic factors as the context for socio-economic processes and causes, but rather to focus on the nuanced human responses to them. Social processes and agricultural methods in any given area change through time even when environment does not, so the relationship between the two is not simple; an individual farmer might strictly follow the dictates of the soil, so to speak, but communities and higher level social groups may not, because social pressures are at play as well as environmental ones. Privileging cultural response makes time depth more accessible to us; it also adds a dimension of perception to the classification.

We tried to capitalise on the diversity of disciplinary and national perspectives present in the project by producing a proforma to capture participants' knowledge under the following headings:

- Identity (the names, scientific or common, already applied to a type of landscape)
- Patterns (the ‘aspect’ of an area of landscape, its form, what it looks like)
- Process (the human (agri)cultural processes that shaped landscape – what farmers actually did, and why, socially and legally; function, practice and custom, methods)
- Change (the impact of the passage of time on landscape, timescales.)
- Spatial Relationships (territories larger than farming community, resource grouping, ‘multiple estates’, villa/big house type estates, territorial sharing)
- Social Organisation (social relationships and structures, organisations, settlement patterns)
- Topography (underlying non-cultural aspects: physical geography and the shape of the land).

A hierarchical classification was devised that reflected the results of this data collection. This contained high level classes, types and a few sub-types. Classes and types have been given brief descriptions structured around four questions: What does a ‘Type’ look like? Why does it look like that? What is/was it connected with? What happened to it before and since? More detailed and local or higher (eg socio-economic patterns) types could later be added to this structure.

The classification does not yet incorporate agricultural practices operating on inter-territorial or non-areal scales such as transhumance, droving or other long distance inter-relationships of even pre-industrial market economies; this is for a future project. Mapping of the classification is also a task for the future, although experiments suggest that the classification will be applicable through remote data such maps, air photos and satellite imagery.

As it stands the classification consists of 10 classes and about 50 Types, although but no doubt some omissions will be found. The classes are:

1. Open fieldscapes
2. Enclosed fieldscapes
3. Modernised fieldscapes
4. Grazing
5. Wood pasture
6. Terraced landscapes
7. Drained land
8. Irrigated land
9. Arboriculture and viticulture
10. Non-agricultural

These are divided further into Types, for example, Class 1. Open Fieldscapes contains Types for Open arable fields Open mixed fields, Strip fields, Wooded fieldscapes, Forest fields, and Class 9 Arboriculture and viticulture contains Orchard Olives, Olive terraces, Vineyards. To provide flexibility some Types can belong in two classes (eg enclosed grazing in both class 2 and 4). For each type (eg Open mixed Fields) a selection of descriptive ‘key-words’ were selected (eg Ploughed, rotation, fallow, grazing, orchard, woodland, medieval, recent, modern) and for most types a few local or regional names by which the type is commonly known (eg Open fields, coltura promiscua).