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EDITORIAL



'More-than' approaches to landscapes of heritage in the Anthropocene

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Often filtered through either human-centred or nature-centred approaches, the imperative to protect the environment has been solidified by increasingly catastrophic reports of present and impending impacts of climate change. Under the lens of heritage, however, nature is often presented as a pristine, untouched wilderness either free from, or living in harmonious balance with, human intervention. This is in part due to the enduring preservationist narratives at the core of heritage ethics, asserting that natural and human-induced processes of change, loss, or decay threaten sites and landscapes seemingly suspended in time. Filtered through a cultural lens, it is not only the loss of nature in and of itself that has accelerated a sense of urgency in protecting natural landscapes, but also the loss of the human benefits that emerge from being in nature. Such perspectives have, however, been criticised for overlooking indigenous and local community concerns and experiences, as well as neglecting non-human actors within living landscapes. This indicates a need for alternate forms of thinking of how these landscapes, and nature in particular, are understood and encountered as heritage in a rapidly changing world. To scrutinise natural heritage futures more closely, this special issue therefore investigates “more-than” approaches to a wide range of heritage landscapes in the Anthropocene.

The topics covered herein are relevant to a wide range of disciplines, grounded theoretically in recent work from Anthropocene studies (e.g. Lorimer, 2015; Pétursdóttir & Sørensen, 2023; Venovcevs & Bangstad, 2022), critical heritage studies (e.g. Harrison et al., 2020; Harrison & Sterling, 2020; Shepherd, 2023), considerations of care (e.g. Jacobs & Wiens, 2024; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; van Dooren, 2014), more-than-human entanglements (e.g. Bubandt, Andersen, & Cypher, 2023; Haraway, 2016; Lorimer & Hodgetts, 2024; Tsing, 2015; Tsing, Swanson, Gan, & Bubandt, 2017), heritage ecologies (e.g. Bangstad & Pétursdóttir, 2022), and landscape geographies (e.g. Burlingame, 2024; Pettenati, 2023; Saul & Waterton, 2019). Many of the works cited above defy clear-cut categorisation, signalling a trend towards increasingly multi- and trans-disciplinary research within the humanities.

The papers included in this special issue have been selected from two sessions at the UK and Nordic Theoretical Archaeology Group conferences in 2022, run by members of the *Relics of Nature* project led by Þóra Pétursdóttir based at the University of Oslo and funded by the Norwegian Research Council. The original motivation for the sessions was to provide a platform to gather different perspectives on landscapes of heritage across disciplines, including geography, archaeology, ecology, and anthropology. The first session, titled *Ecologies of care: More than human approaches to heritage landscapes*, aimed to explore possibilities of care in the Anthropocene era. Participants and session attendees at Nordic TAG in Oslo were prompted with a range of questions, including: How can care for heritage changed or lost move beyond anguish and commemoration? Can loss be re-framed in a more affirmative light? And how can ecologies of care be configured to attend to multi-species relations, becoming more-than-human affairs? The

second session at UK TAG in Edinburgh expanded this to a wider net of 'more-than' approaches to heritage landscapes with a specific focus on environmental ethics. Contributions employed a range of methodologies and media to explore topics related to nature tourism, heritage management, the role of nature within cultural landscapes, and the cultural and ontological values that define natural heritage.

Each session attracted an overwhelming audience (to the point of exceeding the fire code capacities in our smaller allocated lecture rooms) and inspired a wide range of questions and engagement from the audience. Recognising the need for more discussion time after the first session, we invited Emma Waterton to serve as a discussant at our UK TAG session to provide a more robust summary of presentations and facilitate a more dynamic participation from the audience. While there may have been some initial scepticism surrounding our topic, such active engagement at both sessions indicated a growing interest in these questions and prompted our interest in disseminating the results from the sessions to a wider, even more interdisciplinary audience through the creation of this special issue.

The collection of articles and photo essays feature research perspectives from ecology, heritage, archaeology, phenomenology, and other disciplines that consider more-than-representational layers of knowing, researching, and writing, as well as more-than-human presences and considerations of care within a wide range of heritage landscapes in the Anthropocene. Many of our authors employed the strategy of 'thinking-with' in their approach to landscape. Christina Fredengren, for example, addresses the topic of agricultural soils through a heritage lens, touching on issues of sustainability and multi-species relations. Fredengren (2024, in this issue) argues that 'thinking with soils' in a heritage sense offers a means of challenging anthropocentrism in heritage practice, drawing attention to the sorts of 'agential cuts' that are made by different stakeholders, ultimately severing more-than-human connections. Jonathan Last, continuing to some degree on the theme of soils and disturbance, approaches heritage landscapes from the perspective of the European badger (*Meles meles*), a creature long reviled by British archaeologists for the havoc they wreak within historic landscapes. Championing these prolific diggers, Last (2024, in this issue) argues that to know a landscape, past or present, one must also include their non-human histories. Badgers and their impressive setts are therefore part and parcel of the historic landscapes that archaeologists and heritage practitioners endeavour to study and conserve. Katy Overstreet and Tim Flohr Sørensen take their research above ground, exploring how practices of naming, or becoming nameless, can shape landscapes (Overstreet & Sørensen, 2024, in this issue). Exploring the ruderal commons of Amager Fælled in Copenhagen, Denmark, an area of urban wilderness with a colourful and convoluted history, Overstreet and Sørensen discuss the discovery of the very rare military orchid (*Orchid militaris*). The naming of this species, along with others, has shaped the fate of the commons, altering redevelopment plans. At the same time, aspects of this landscape's past and present resist identification and categorisation, creating common ground upon which to contemplate 'contrasting possibilities of (un)knowability in the midst of Anthropocene world-making projects' (Overstreet & Sørensen, 2024, in this issue, p. 14).

Other authors engaged with landscapes of industrial extraction through considerations of policy, leading to various forms of contestation within socioculturally complex landscapes. Claire Nolan, Benjamin Gearey, and Rosie Everett, for example, discuss the rehabilitation process of post-industrial peatlands in Ireland, an initiative funded by the EU's *Just Transition Fund* (Nolan, Gearey, & Everett, 2024, in this issue). The policies and frameworks that drive this transition from industrial peat extraction to 'rewetted' wilderness and heritage assets are not without opposition. Teasing apart the intertwined factors of politics, policy, and tradition, Nolan et al. argue that these contested landscapes of extraction are inherently hybrid assemblages of past and present, human and non-human, and must be critically approached as such as a post-peat Ireland moves into the Capitalocene future. Alexa D. Spiwak similarly explores the nature-culture divide still present in UNESCO World Heritage policy, bringing into focus the ruderal ecologies that grow in the gaps between natural and cultural heritage. Investigating a disused slate quarry in Northwest Wales and the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape, Spiwak (2024, in this issue) critically addresses the role of the

cultural landscape category of the World Heritage list and makes a case for the inclusion of both 'weeds and waste' under the auspices of World Heritage designation (Tsing, 2015, pp. 5–6).

Several authors also stressed the importance of immersing themselves in their landscapes of study, employing phenomenological approaches—including, but not limited to, a great deal of walking. David C. Harvey has repeatedly traversed the Tarr Steps in Exmoor, using the so-called 'ancient bridge' as a case study for exploring more-than-critical practices of heritage landscaping (Harvey, 2024, in this issue). In his photo essay, Harvey muses on what is afforded by not only engaging *with* the repeatedly rebuilt stone bridge but also by being engaged *by* the bridge. He also explores themes related to the more-than-material and more-than-representational acts of moving through the landscape, be it rambling through open fields or following sanctioned foot-paths. Alex Boyd and Lesley McFayden's beautiful and evocative photo essay similarly proposes the rethinking of a former munitions factory on the Ardeer Peninsula of Scotland (Boyd & McFadyen, 2024, in this issue). Exploring the intersections of photography and archaeology, the authors demonstrate that instead of a derelict and forlorn place, the factory is full of life and song, both from the birds that now call the ruins home and from the echoes of munitionettes who pencilled song lyrics and portraits on the walls. Finally, Sanne Bech Holmgaard and Katherine Burlingame's paper offers an immersion into several key environmental monitoring landscapes in the High North of Norway, Sweden, and Greenland (Holmgaard & Burlingame, 2024, in this issue). While not an explicitly defined photo essay as the previous two pieces, the article features a series of collages highlighting the intentional and unintentional materialities left behind by different environing technologies and other anthropogenic impacts related to knowing global environmental change. The authors argue that the material legacy of such short and long-term monitoring and other scientific activities has created a distinct kind of Anthropocene landscape.

The theoretical and methodological breadth of the work featured in this special issue, as well as the enthusiasm displayed by our authors, the other presenters in our sessions, and our session attendees signal a clear call for *more*: more interdisciplinary perspectives, more collaborative approaches within and outside of academia, more novel conceptualisations of heritage in the Anthropocene, and more creative approaches to understanding the transitions and transformations that accompany the rapid climate change of our time. It is our hope that these articles inspire others to branch out across disciplinary boundaries, exploring new forms of knowing, researching, and disseminating landscape research.

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There is no available data reported by the authors.

Notes on contributors

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Alexa Deanne Spiwak is a doctoral candidate at the University of Oslo in the Department of Archaeology, Conservation, and History. Her research interests include industrial heritage, landscape studies, heritage policy and management, and natural-cultural entanglements.

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