

Landscapes and Societies in Medieval Europe East of the Elbe

Landscapes and Societies in Medieval Europe East of the Elbe presents the results of the fourth international conference of the interdisciplinary project “*Gentes trans Albiam* – Europe East of the Elbe in the Middle Ages,” held in 2010 at York University, Toronto, in cooperation with the University of Kiel and the German Historical Institute in Warsaw. The fifteen essays included in this collection examine how historical landscapes were perceived, experienced and transformed in the Middle Ages, in a region that stretched from the lands of the western Slavs in the Elbe area to Livonia and Staraja Ladoga in the northeast and Hungary in the south. The book is organized into four parts, each covering a different region and era: Central Europe in the early Middle Ages; Wagria in the central Middle Ages; Silesia, Poland and Hungary in the high Middle Ages; and, lastly, the Baltic Sea area in the high and late Middle Ages.

Drawing on evidence from the fields of archaeology, history, palaeobotany and palaeozoology, the case studies in this book offer a close look at the many environments of Europe east of the Elbe, and at the continuing interaction between natural landscapes and their conceptual and cultural counterparts. Using an interdisciplinary approach, the collection highlights the impact of changes of patterns of settlement during both the transition from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages and the period of colonization and social transformations in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Over these historical periods, human beings transformed the physical landscapes – hydrological, zoological, botanical and epidemiological – at the same time as they reshaped the human geography of the region. *Landscapes and Societies in Medieval Europe East of the Elbe* shows the growing importance of environmental history to understanding medieval Europe.

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Landscapes and Societies in Medieval Europe East of the Elbe

*Interactions Between Environmental Settings
and Cultural Transformations*

EDITED BY

Sunhild Kleingärtner, Timothy P. Newfield,
Sébastien Rossignol and Donat Wehner



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Foreword

This book presents the results of the fourth international conference of the interdisciplinary project “*Gentes trans Albiam* – Europe East of the Elbe in the Middle Ages,” founded in 2006 by Anne Klammt (University of Göttingen) and Sébastien Rossignol. The meeting was held on the 26th and 27th of March 2010 on the Keele Campus of York University in Toronto and was jointly organized by the Department of History of York University, the Graduate School “Human Development in Landscapes” of Christian-Albrechts University in Kiel, and the German Historical Institute in Warsaw. The conference brought together a group of scholars and doctoral students from North America (Canada, U.S.A.) and Europe (Germany, Poland, Estonia, Latvia) working in the fields of archaeology, history, palaeobotany and palaeozoology and specializing in East-Central and Northeastern Europe in the Middle Ages.

We would like to thank all persons and institutions who contributed to the realization of the conference and the book. Our profound gratitude goes to the keynote speakers, Professor Piotr Górecki (University of California, Riverside) and Professor Jüri Kivimäe (University of Toronto); to Professor Richard C. Hoffmann (York University) for his inspiration and support, and for summarizing the contributions of the conference with his concluding remarks; to all presenters who contributed their papers to the conference and the book; as well as to Professor Ulrich Müller (University of Kiel) and Professor Fredric Cheyette (Amherst College) for joining us at the conference. For diverse reasons, it has not been possible to include in the volume the contributions of Professor Kivimäe, Dr. Andris Šnē (University of Latvia), Ben Krause-Kyora (University of Kiel) and Dr. Corneliu Varlan (Université Laval). On the other hand, the joint contribution of Dr. Ulrich Schmölcke and Professor Hauke Jöns, who were not able to take part in the conference, is found in the following pages. Many thanks to Boris Vasiliev (Staraia Ladoga Historical-Architectural-Archaeological Museum) and Professor Heidi Sherman (University of Wisconsin-Green Bay) for making it possible for us to use the wonderful picture on the book cover.

We also want to thank Cristina Arrigoni Martelli (York University), Jennifer Bernadette Konieczny (University of Toronto), Eileen Küçükkaraca (University of Kiel), Dr. Karoline Mazurié de Keroualin-Müller (Le Pellerin, France)

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We should not forget to thank our host institution, York University, for providing us with the opportunity to hold the meeting in Toronto. Many York colleagues were extremely helpful at the different stages in the organization of this project, particularly with the applications for funding. Most of all, we are grateful to Professor Richard C. Hoffmann; to Professor Jonathan Edmonson, Chair of the Department of History; to Jean R. Levy, administrative assistant; and to Professor Colin C. Coates, Professor Carolyn Podruchny and Professor James P. Carley. The conference would not have been possible without their enormously helpful advice and experience.

We extend our sincere thanks to the sponsors of the conference, the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada/Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada, the Graduate School “Human Development in Landscapes,” and the German Historical Institute in Warsaw and its director, Professor Eduard Mühle. Further thanks go to the co-sponsors: the Network in Canadian History & Environment/Nouvelle initiative canadienne en histoire de l’environnement (NiCHE), the Canadian Centre for German and European Studies (York University), the Department of History (York University), the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (York University), the Ad Hoc Research Fund (York University) and the Centre d’études médiévales (Université de Montréal).

We are very thankful for the extraordinary support we received from the Department of Publications at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies (PIMS) in Toronto, especially to Fred Unwalla, who was available at every step of the process and showed interest in the project from the beginning, and are very pleased that the conference proceedings have been included in the Institute’s publishing program. We owe a special debt of gratitude to Nate Dorward, whose remarkable skills in editing, typesetting, and design have served to enhance the volume in every way. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada/Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada has graciously helped cover the costs of printing and production through a publication subsidy, and the German Historical Institute in Warsaw and the Graduate School “Human Development in Landscapes” have covered the costs of proofreading.

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January 2013

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