



**human development in landscapes**  
GRADUATE SCHOOL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KIEL

**BIWEEKLY COLLOQUIUM**  
**Monday, 30th of January 17.00**

**THE SHAPE OF THE LAND**  
**Prof. Tim Ingold, University of Aberdeen**

The term 'landscape' has its origins in medieval northern Europe, and refers literally to the shaping of the land in the practices of agriculture. Medieval land shapers were farmers and woodsmen, who 'scaped' the land with foot, axe and plough, and with the assistance of their domestic animals. I begin this paper by questioning the applicability of the term to the world of nomadic pastoralists, and of its oceanic counterpart – seascape – to the world of mariners, arguing instead that theirs is a world of land or ocean and sky, in which space is smooth rather than striated. The same distinction, between the smooth space of the earth-sky world and the striated space of the landscape, is also evident in different types of dwelling. I go on to show how there is an intrinsic connection between landscape and thing, referring to the many 'thing-sites' and burial mounds that pepper the landscapes of southern Scandinavia. These mounds, however, are not monuments. I show how the contrast between mound and monument bears critically on understandings of memory, and on how the modern sense of landscape differs from its medieval precursor. The modern sense of shaping the land has its roots not in agrarian practice but in architecture, and is understood as the imposition of ideal form upon materials supplied by nature. This imposition implies a relation of detached, optical projection between mind and world, by contrast to the close, haptic engagement entailed in physically working the land. It is because of this optical relation that the concept of landscape is often supposed to be infused with a visualist bias. I argue, however, that the opposition between the haptic and the optical, which distinguishes medieval from modern senses of landscape, crosscuts the sensory modalities of vision, hearing and touch. In the optical 'scapes' generated by the scopic regimes of modernity, light, sound and feeling are converted from dimensions of experience to mere vectors in the conversion of objects to images.

**Venue: Leibnizstraße 1, Seminar Room 204**