

The Archaeology of Erosion/ the Erosion of Archaeology Conference

Understanding erosion and sedimentation processes is fundamental in interpreting the archaeological record. From a macroregional perspective, these processes can generally be related to climatic cycles (glacial – interglacial – interstadial), and in the Holocene to increasing human activity with the development of agriculture from the Neolithic period onwards. On larger scales the study of these processes is of great importance for the assessment of the preservation potential of archaeological sites from all periods within the current landscape, and the way humans interacted with and had an impact on that landscape in the past. From a methodological perspective, the development of efficient survey strategies for example depends on a good insight in chronostratigraphy and geomorphology.

The general balance between natural and human influences in this cycle has been profoundly disturbed within the last century, with the industrialisation of agriculture as one of the main causes. We can truly speak of an ‘erosion of history’, estimating that more than 20% of the archaeological record has been eroded from the ‘50s onwards. The mitigation of this evolution, with developing proper evaluation, monitoring and management practices, with a suitable legislation to back this up, is a massive challenge for current archaeologists.

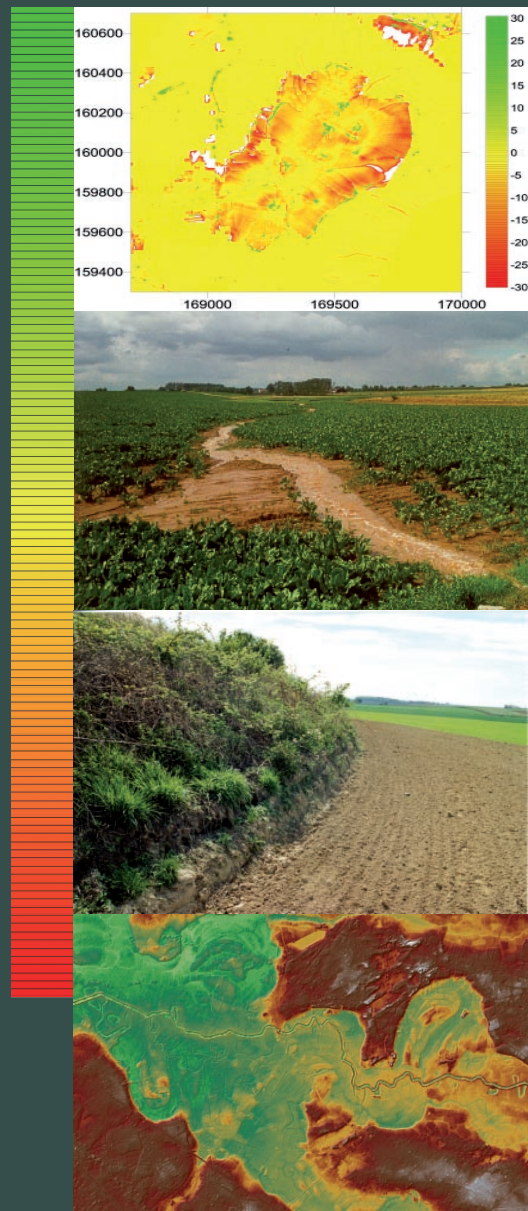
The ‘Archaeology of Erosion/ the Erosion of Archaeology’ Conference aims at bringing together international expertise in these fields. The focus is on six themes:

During two days presentations and discussions will focus on the following research topics:

- Geoarchaeological approaches in identifying human induced (pre-)historic erosion/ sedimentation processes.
- Evaluating and monitoring of erosion/ sedimentation processes on archaeological sites.
- Methodological developments (erosion/sedimentation modelling; remote sensing; experimental research...).
- The management of archaeological/geological vertical sections.
- The management of earthen monuments.
- Policy (European directives, national schemes, ...).

Next to this a full day of excursion is foreseen, visiting a number of (geo)archaeological sites in the provinces of Vlaams-Brabant and Limburg.

The Conference is hosted by the Flemish Heritage Institute (www.vioe.be), in collaboration with the Flemish Land Agency, and the Universities of Leuven and Ghent. More information can be found on www.erfgoed.net/erosion.



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