

Woodland Values in Zagori, NW Greece (19th–21st Century): Between Heritage and History

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Abstract

The present article exposes a conflict regarding the management of natural and cultural values through time, using the example of woodland management in Zagori (NW Greece) from the late 19th century to the present day (2018). The central question is how a cultural landscape now interpreted as significant enough for potential World Heritage nomination (2014 tentative list), was managed through time by the Greek State in a top down approach that led to a polarization between natural and cultural values. First, issues of commune woodland management and emic perceptions of values will be addressed, followed by an outline of state economic factors that shaped the national policies that replaced them. The local communities' reactions during this transformation will be addressed. Finally, it is suggested that such case studies are valuable educational material for heritage professionals, since they offer insights into the processes of site valorization, revealing historical factors, economic stakes, and legislative biases, while also touching upon stakeholder issues.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage Management, Heritage Transformation, Environment, Policy, Woodlands, Greece, Zagori, Vikos–Aaos UNESCO Global Geopark.

Historical background

The mountainous region of Zagori is situated in Epirus, Northwest Greece, close to the Greek–Albanian border (Figure 1). The municipality of Zagori contains 46 mountainous villages, spread over an area of more than 1000 square kilometers. The boundaries of the area are conventionally defined by the peaks of the Pindhos mountain-range (to the North–Northeast), the rivers Voidomatis (North) and Zagoritikos (East–Southeast), as well as by the Mount Mitsikeli and the Kalpaki plain (West). Based on the criteria that will be addressed below, Zagori is inscribed in the tentative list for World Heritage Nomination (Permanent Delegation of Greece to UNESCO 2014), but no management plan has been put forward yet, four years after the proposal.¹ Due

¹ Two years after the conference in Sighișoara—where this article was presented (2018)—the first steps towards the creation of the management plan are emerging. Therefore, Part Four of this article refers to the early steps of this effort (2014–2018). At the time, Zagori was destined to become a Mixed Site, but since 2019 the Ministry of Culture opted for the better suited framework of Cultural Landscape.

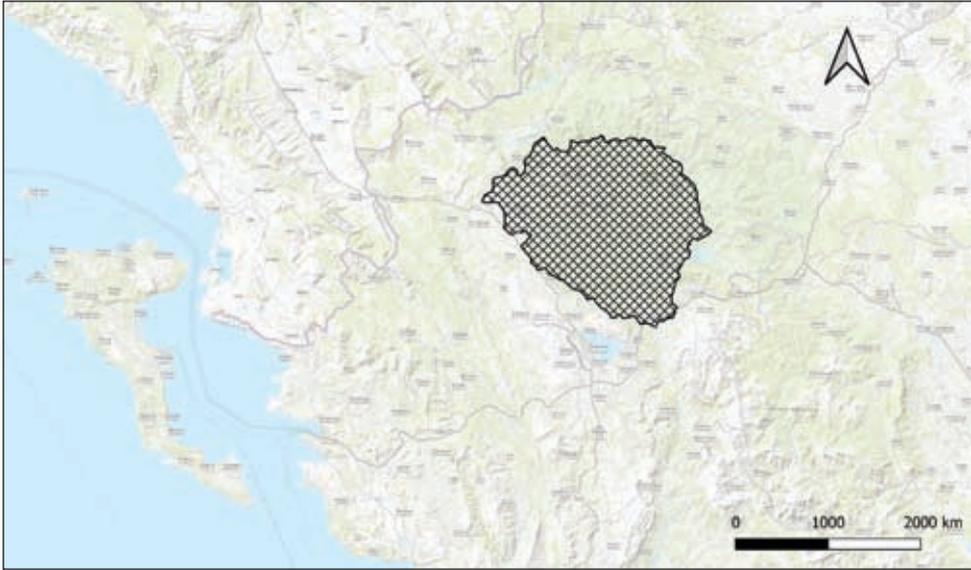


Figure 1. The region of Zagori, a few kilometers south of the Greek-Albanian border. Basemap: ESRI topographic, QGIS 3.10

to its remarkable geology, flora, and fauna, it was recognized as a National Park in 1974 and many segments of this landscape are protected under the Natura 2000 European legislation. It is also part of the Vikos-Aoos UNESCO Global Geopark, because of its extraordinary geological features that are observable on its massive limestone blocks and their interplay with Upper Paleolithic populations in the Voidomatis basin (Theodosiou et al. 2009). This fusion of different levels in legislation (National), protection (National and European) and directives (Natura 2000; UNESCO Geoparks) presents a rich framework that can be used to understand the ways institutional policy has affected the landscape—and, in the case of this article, especially the woodlands.

Zagori was incorporated into the Greek Nation–State in 1913, together with the rest of Epirus. Up to that point, local communities had been coping with the demanding montane landscape and the socio-economic environment of the Late Ottoman Empire. Belonging to the district (*qaza*) of Janina, the region (*nahiye*) of Zagori had adapted collectively to the demands of the administration. Every village handed over taxes collectively to tax farmers. The lump sum of taxation was collected by the head of every commune (*kotjabashi*) and each household had to provide a given amount based on production (Papageorgiou 1995). Taxes mostly consisted of tithes on products, extraordinary levies and the head tax, paid per capita by every Christian male. However, the montane environment did not allow substantial production and, although most of the

niches available for cultivation were deforested and converted into fields (Saratsi 2009: 59), households barely achieved subsistence. Therefore, paying taxes based solely on local yields would have been impossible. For this reason, already from the early 18th century (Dalkavoukis 1999), a percentage of the male population moved (seasonally and permanently) to the wider Balkans, mostly Wallachia, to work in various professions, specialized in arts and crafts and to send the surplus from their activities to Zagori, so that their families could cope with harsh winters, taxation and insufficient production. This form of movement, seasonal or permanent, is called “traveling” in the language of ethnography and forms the basis of the cultural values of Zagori. As émigré males accumulated substantial wealth, they also started to leave endowments for commonwealth constructions (bridges, churches, schools, etc.). This took the form of social competition and resulted in the creation of many of the extraordinary early modern architectural structures (Dalkavoukis 2015) that are the main cultural attractions of Zagori in the 21st century (Figure 2).



Figure 2. The three-arched stone-bridge of Plakidas (1866), one of the main touristic attractions of Zagori, a product of these historical processes. However, intense reforestation obscures the connecting pathways and these cultural landscape highlights frequently appear to connect two patches of forest. Only recently the District of Epirus began a massive effort to render the ancient paths accessible to visitors (see Gartzonikas 2020: 30-33). © Costas Zissis



1. “Traditional”² woodland management

Besides these elite monuments, Zagorians (people from Zagori) dwelled in a landscape shaped for the needs of upland cultivation, intermingled with communal woodland management and herding. In the Late Ottoman context, woodlands were divided into three categories: public woodlands (*miri koru*), groves belonging to pious foundations (*waqf*), communal woods (*baltalik*) and private coppices (*koru*) (Grispos 1973: 251; Seirinidou 2014: 69–87). Until the late 19th century, woodlands in Greece were on the margins of imperial interests (Seirinidou 2014), that focused on the resources needed for shipbuilding from the large forests of Syro–Palestine, Western Anatolia and the Black Sea (Mikhail 2017: 157–58). In contrast with these woodlands, which were assigned *miri* status together with the introduction of legislation prohibiting tree-cutting, hunting and herding (Mikhail 2017: 158), the *miri* woodlands of Greece were free to use, under *cibal-i mübaha* status (Seirinidou 2014: 79). Furthermore, numerous small-scale private coppices and commune woodlands were substantial enough to provide the necessary wood and leafy hay needed for household subsistence.

The year 1869 marks a definite historical break in the history of woodland management in the Ottoman Empire one which affected Zagori as well. As part of the *tanzimat* reforms, concise legislation on forests had been issued for the first time (Grispos 1973: 251–53). This legislation was ideologically aligned with the spirit of the reforms, representing an effort to synchronize the Empire with its Western counterparts. Forests and foresters played an important role in adjusting local communities and traditional small-scale and commune-based management practices to the logic of the capitalist mode of production. It is not a coincidence that in the same year as the introduction of forest legislation (1869) the Sublime Porte imposed a forester (*orman memur*) to Tsepelovo (Grispos 1973: 92), the appointed capital village of Zagori—as selected by the *tanzimat* reforms. According to this legislation, all woodlands, except the private ones, were subject to restricted access, for purposes of conservation. The legislation, together with the new, state-controlled management, introduced a tax, in the form of a tithe, on all products emerging from the woods, a new economic blow for the communities of Zagori that were accustomed to collecting wood, leafy hay and other products from communal woods without charge. Communal herding was subject to the approval of the forester, no longer regulated internally by the communes. The head of the village was obliged to create

² The term “traditional” is used to create a contrast with the “modern” management on behalf of the Nation–State, analysed in the following section. A more historically accurate framework would have been “communal woodland management”.

a census of the total number of animals and the forester would define the periods of the year when herding was allowed (Grispos 1973: 251-53).

However, even under the new legislation, the communes of Zagori, situated on the margins of the Empire, succeeded in obtaining the right to self-manage their woodlands to an extent. A large number of small-scale private woodlands (*koru* in Ottoman, *kouri* in the local dialect) and the communal forests were enough to provide the necessary wood and leafy hay for household subsistence. As in the earlier centuries, communal laws defined the logging period, the quantity of wood per family and the individual trees to be cut (Seirinidou 2014: 82). Likewise, communes defined restricted areas where intra-communal laws prohibited wood-cutting, coppicing and pollarding with penalties as strict as excommunication (Stara et al. 2016: 283-302; Saratsi 2009). In the same way, many wooded areas were protected by communities because they were situated in key locations to prevent soil erosion, that would threaten the existence of villages (Stara et al. 2016; Stara et al. 2015a; Stara et al. 2015b). In short, local communities managed their resources collectively, attaching cultural values to “sacred” groves (*vakoufika*), dedicated to saints, or “protective” groves acting against erosion. The perception of wood as an asset for monetary income, in modern economic terms, was rare and sporadic and communities did not possess a single word to describe forests, while woodlands were named according to the purpose they served (Nitsiakos 2015).³

2. “Modern”⁴ woodland management

Being marginal to the empire, the Zagori communes were able to manage their woods and other properties communally until their incorporation into the Greek Nation–State in 1913. That moment is the turning point in the history of woodlands for all of Epirus and Zagori, in particular. During King Otto’s reign, the new regime, issued legislation placing all woodlands belonging to communities and individuals under the supervision, management and protection of foresters on behalf of the state (law of 17.11.1836. Cited in Grispos 1973: 205). This piece of legislation affected all lands incorporated into the Greek Nation–State after the treaty of London, February 3rd, 1830, which therefore also affected Epirus.

³ From the second half of the 19th century, intensive logging became a common activity in the wider Pindus mountain range, and in the Eastern part of Zagori. Water sawmills operated especially in the village of Vovoussa until recently, and that particular Vlach commune adapted to profit financially from these specialized activities (see Dasoulas 2019).

⁴ Like the use of “traditional” above, the term “modern” could be replaced by the more accurate term “state”. The division between “traditional” and “modern” is maintained for reasons addressed below.



2a. Landscape change in Zagori and the Vikos-Aoos National Park: a history of abandonment

The decline in the use of hand-chopped wood for domestic fires and the abandonment of hillside agriculture, coupled with the decline of animal herding, the abandonment of nomadic pastoralism, and the sharp decrease in transhumant pastoralism, were the products of historical processes before the establishment of the National Park in Zagori (1974). The war against the Italians, on the eve of World War II, the burning of 29 villages by the Wehrmacht,⁵ followed by population extermination by the Edelweiss Alpinist Division in the village of Lyngiades (Meyer 2008), were the prelude to the depopulation of Zagori. The 1946–1949 Civil War that followed intensified the population decrease: villages were deserted, the mountains of Epirus became a central theater of the killings, and some of the harshest battles were fought in the vicinity of Zagori and the neighbouring Grammos mountain. Furthermore, the defeated members of the Democratic Army were driven out of the mountains, either migrating to the other side of the Iron Curtain, afraid of post-war reprisals or exiled to remote islands of the Aegean, if they remained. Out of those who returned in the 1980's, only a fraction resettled in the mountains and most of them found new homes in the fertile plains (Greene et al. 1998). By the end of the Civil War, the region obtained a new, modern, road system. Traditional economic practices gradually eroded, watermills closed, and hillside cultivation abandoned. The last critical population decrease took place in the 1960's when people from Zagori followed the general trend of *Gastarbeiter* and migrated to Northern and Western Europe, North America and Australia. The supposed effort of the Junta (1967–1974) to repopulate the Greek periphery failed to incorporate the mountainous areas in its planning and mountain herders were given interest-free loans to resettle in the lowlands. Zagori became part of the Vikos-Aoos National Park in 1974, a legislative action already put in motion by the Junta, the year before.

Legislation forbidding any economic activity in the forests, unless authorized by public agents, accelerated the process of reforestation. From the restriction of goat grazing, implemented by the Metaxas' dictatorship (Kyriakos 1940), to the centralized management of woodlands that replaced the communal system, coupled with the National Park framework, state measures facilitated the shift of cultural values to what is now branded as a "virgin forest".

In the economic planning of Modern Greece, areas such as Zagori, were never central to the debate. The income they were meant to generate was

⁵ The complete list can be found at the Municipal website: <https://cutt.ly/ldixbqJ> (Accessed 01.08.2020).

through the tertiary sector of the economy, namely through the development of tourism. Already in 1973, in a report of the Ministry of Agriculture, the forester highlighted the touristic potential of areas in Epirus such as Zagori, due to their geological formations, natural wealth and folkloric culture. For this potential, as he stressed, the importance of forests is obvious (Grispos 1973: 98).

3. Between “Traditional” and “Modern”: local communities in transition

State policies led to the transformation of a centuries-old viable small-scale economic model to a region of immense touristic attraction. This led to the transformation of the cultural landscape’s footprint, but the local communities never abandoned the region and witnessed this transformation first hand. A folklorist had been arrested twice by a forester while pollarding one of his privately-owned trees (Lazaridis 1972), an action prohibited as his trees were now subject to state monitoring. Some expressed complaints to the Greek Government or published books and pamphlets about the issue (e.g. Fanitsios 1968; Lazaridis 1972). It was even argued that the Ottoman Administration, those “infidel Turks”, were better suited for the job than the Greek Nation–State (Fanitsios 1968: 190). Although touristification, coupled with restrictions regarding woodland management, was gradually altering the landscape of Zagori, locals never went against the prospect of tourism. They even produced guides for visitors to follow and access the most beautiful parts, encouraging them to visit, as they believed this would render prosperity to the region once more (e.g. Saralis 1957). However, they resisted being deprived of their rights to the economic exploitation of their land for subsistence purposes, a process that was evolving hand in hand with touristification. They considered the public management of forests a “cunning plan to separate the human factor from the vital resource called woodland” (Fanitsios 1966: 169). They demanded the return of an agropastoral economic activity in the mountains of Zagori relying on the primary sector. Fanitsios, a folklorist, went as far as to suggest 12 points for sustainable montane development. Amongst other issues, he demanded (already in the 1960s!) the transformation of old watermills into small scale electricity-producing units, for the subsistence of some villages (Fanitsios 1966, an argument also raised in Dalkavoukis 2015). In today’s terms, it is hard to imagine a better practice for heritage management than having active communities suggesting solutions for sustainable development, asking in exchange only the right to live their ordinary lives.

Despite communities raising their voice, they were not heard. Since the late 1960s, the region has gradually been valued by tourists and promoted



by agencies as a hideout area, full of “virgin forests” untouched by humanity. However, even this touristy narrative is subject to periodic alterations. In the 1970’s, Zagori was considered the perfect place for the adventurous tourist (Greene et al. 1998: 353). They had the opportunity to roam in a beautiful cultural landscape with astonishing geological formations and enjoy the “primitiveness” of communities that had yet to develop an appropriate modern infrastructure. During the 1980s, this view was altered and the cultural landscape was no longer emphasized. The message promoted was based on two pillars: the “unspoiled” natural beauty and the traditional settlements, the authenticity of which was protected by building restrictions (for these restrictions, see Harisis 1979). Simultaneously, locals in Zagori could not afford the building costs required to maintain their houses in a traditional manner and complained to the authorities with fervour, but were considered as “backward” peasants who resisted the modernization that tourism brought about: to be modern in Zagori was to advocate one’s own traditionalism (Greene et al. 1998: 353).

However, even this traditionalism did not reflect the actual values of the Early Modern Zagori cultural landscape. This would imply an appreciation of centuries–old hillside agriculture, pre– and early–modern watermills and the rest of the archaeological remains of a highly efficient economic mechanism of coping with, and adapting to, the mountainous environment together with the cultural values assigned to woodlands. Traditionalism in Zagori took the shape dictated by the visitor’s experience, balancing “unspoiled” nature (which largely consists of abandoned agricultural land), and traditional nucleated settlements, which are reduced in size and deprived of their culturally significant and economically vital spatial surroundings. Capitalize E research, conducted in the 1990s, revealed that the concepts of environmental protection and cultural heritage were perceived as having been imported from elsewhere, by local communities (Greene et al. 1998: 353).

As shown earlier, they possessed their own, centuries–old communal regulations for the sustainable management of their environment and especially the woodlands. However, their practices managed and sustained a different cultural landscape. Today, kinship–based and reciprocal relationships between households and localities are broken and replaced by function–based ones, reliant upon tourism (Greene et al. 1998: 343).

The values of the cultural landscape have changed drastically, and at present, we witness this process in full scale. Dense vegetation has covered most of the landscape, replacing what could be regarded as a cultural landscape with young forests of prickly oak. Local knowledge of the cultural

significance of trees in the subsistence economy is, consequently, fading (Stara et al. 2015b). On the contrary, personal values attached to tree species by younger generations are rising (Stara et al. 2015b), as youngsters cannot identify themselves with woodlands in cultural terms, and connect with trees only as individuals. This shift of woodland perception from cultural to personal values highlights the transformation from an economic model of communal agropastoral labour to the tertiary sector of the capitalist economy and the different ways in which woodlands are experienced and appreciated. The cultural values, assigned to trees, are relevant to the concept of dwelling in a landscape (after Ingold 1993) that was regulated by communal laws. Personal values, conversely, are the result of seasonal or single-visit interaction, a product of tourism, hence culturally defined knowledge is replaced by individual experience. Over-forestation, being a result of preventive legislation and specific touristic branding, also threatens the nature of the Sacred Forests of Zagori⁶ and, in some cases, touristification has transformed centuries-old sacred trees into much-needed parking spaces (Stara, al. 2015a). It is gradually rendering the cultural values of the area invisible. As traditional tree-cutting management practices are discontinued, the composition of woodlands change and with it, the traditional cultural landscape will be lost, even when ancient sacred or managed trees continue to exist.

4. The Zagorochoria 2014 World Heritage Tentative List and Vikos-Aoos UNESCO Global Geopark

Greece announced the World Heritage List (hereafter WHL) candidacy of Zagori in 2014 (Permanent Delegation of Greece to UNESCO 2014). However, discussions on how to bring balance to the management of the cultural and natural assets of the region remain rare. Given the situation outlined above, it could be argued that the intended listing of the region as a Mixed Site would be difficult to pursue, due to the long-lasting erosion of cultural values and given the complexity of the intertwining of cultural and natural values, as in the case of woodlands. The following sections present a commentary based on the initial declaration (2014). However, since September 2019, and as this article is *in press*, the Ministry of Culture changed direction and decided to pursue the nomination of Zagori as a Cultural Landscape, instead of a Mixed Site. Therefore, the discussion below takes the form of an exercise, based on the Mixed Site (2014), hopefully revealing issues in need of reassessment.

⁶ The Sacred Forests of Zagori are inscribed on the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage since 2014 (AYLA 2019).



4a. Cultural (III and V) and natural (IX and X) criteria

According to the 2014 draft, Criterion III stated that cultural tradition in Zagori is interwoven with the particularity of the mountain landscape, being a prime example of a culture of self-sufficiency. Criterion V stated that the exceptional architectural tradition of Zagorochoria is organically linked to living traditions of social organization, worldviews and cultural practices. This statement overlooked the cultural aspects of the off-site (beyond village) landscape, such as the significant montane early modern archaeological landscape, the abundance of watermills, agricultural terraces, sacred and managed trees, etc. Furthermore, it addressed forms of organization that belong to the past, since, already in 2014, examples of the early modern cultural practices or social organization and material traces were very hard to identify in the seas of young evergreens that had covered most off-site agropastoral archaeological remains. Although the Sacred Forests of Zagori were addressed in the description as an example of sustainable development, the cultural values of woodlands were not addressed under the relevant criterion section (e.g. Saratsi 2005).

The draft recognized the native primary ecosystems, ancient beech forests, and information on the history and evolution of the *Fagus sylvatica* species (criterion IX) and sub-alpine biotopes that constitute habitats of rare and endemic plant species of particular ecological value as natural values, requiring protection and appropriate management (criterion X). Criterion VII was not addressed, although Zagori at present is part of the Vikos–Aoos UNESCO Global Geopark exactly because of the significant geomorphic and physiographic features it possesses.⁷

4b. Integrity and authenticity

According to the preliminary (and now outdated) document supporting its 2014 WHL candidacy as a Mixed Site, Zagori met the required authenticity and integrity criteria for both its natural and cultural heritage. Many Zagori villages, including individual buildings, have been designated by the Ministry of Culture and Sports as monuments, due to their historical and architectural value; thus authenticity and integrity in what concerns the cultural aspect of the mixed heritage site were addressed (Permanent Delegation of Greece to UNESCO 2014). Furthermore, “*the protection and management framework of the North Pindos National Park ensures the integrity of the natural monument (...) the definition of the protection zones and the determination of uses and building terms and restrictions (...) the Park is also subject to the regulations of Forestry Law and*

⁷ Criterion VII is addressed when the area contains superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.

European Legislation (...) since it includes 11 Natura 2000 sites” (Permanent Delegation of Greece to UNESCO 2014), thus meeting authenticity and integrity requirements, via restrictive legislation, such as that related to National Parks and Natura 2000 areas.

As outlined earlier, the designation of the protected areas in 1974 deprived local communities of their vital economic catchment, prohibiting communal grazing and woodland management. The formation of a landscape is a dialectic process bound to specific historical, social, economic and political parameters. Therefore, a natural landscape cannot remain stable, and integrity must be achieved through a constant reevaluation of values and application of relevant measures. The initial 2014 Zagori WHL document failed to acknowledge that prohibition is not synonymous with preservation and that such restrictions historically resulted in changes to precisely the natural values that they aimed to preserve.

Furthermore, preventive legislation leads to a devaluation of the cultural values that sacred forests possess. This draft did not reflect upon the groundbreaking Nara guidelines (ICOMOS 1994), and especially paragraph 11 thereof which acknowledges that values may differ even within the same culture. The prolonged intertwining of natural and cultural values in the landscape of Zagori was not addressed because the analysis of the values was undertaken from a “modernist” perspective, as the term is used in Part Two of this article. The interpretation was limited to the short-sighted valorization that the area received due to its touristic development after the 1980s. This narrative did not acknowledge the wider cultural landscape, focusing instead on the bipolar division between village (culture) and landscape (nature). Therefore, the statement that the management framework of the National Park ensures the integrity of the natural monument was problematic.

4c. Different management practices, conflicting values

Since the time of Alois Riegl (1982 [1903]), heritage professionals have been aware that different values of a site may be in conflict with one another and that subsequently, their management, to an extent, is an art and not a science. In the case of Zagori, the analysis of the woodland values incomplete because a culture of “traditional”, therefore communal, woodland management has been interpreted through a “modern”, therefore scientific perspective that sharply divides cultural and natural values. This interpretation led to the loss of the cultural value of trees, ranging from sacred to private or commune-owned, and from managed for leafy-hay or fire-wood to *klapsodendra*, or mourning trees; liminal points in the landscape relevant to the culture of mobility in Pindos, deeply interrelated with the traditions of Zagori.



Figure 3. Aerial image of Vikos village in 1945. The bright reflections evoke a landscape of fragmented agricultural possessions and extended grazing areas. © National Forestry Agency



Figure 4. Satellite image of Vikos village in 2018. Fields and goat-grazing areas have become young forests. © Google

The two following aerial images show the village of Vikos in 1945 and 2018, assisting in visualizing the argument. The gradual abandonment of traditional agropastoral practices led to the sharp alteration of a cultural landscape that nowadays is largely perceived as forest. This alteration has harmed mostly the cultural values of the “natural monument”, using the wording of the above statement, since arguably native primary ecosystems and ancient beech forests existed during the Ottoman period as well, and were not affected negatively by the agropastoral practices in the pre-, and early–modern *longue durée*. Likewise, the many endemic species of flora were not extinct due to any productive agropastoral activity (Saratsi 2009), contradicting the vague assumption that goat grazing destroyed the ecosystem.⁸

4d. The case of the Geopark

Based on the above analysis, the choice to register Zagori as part of the Vikos–Aoos UNESCO Global Geopark already in 2010 seems best-suited. Geopark conservation verification criteria focus solely on the geological aspect of heritage, leaving other heritages to be analyzed briefly, mostly regarding how they interact with geology. In contrast to a synthetic values analysis required for a WHL nomination, geology is timeless, and hazards may be monitored easier than with a Mixed Site (or a Cultural Landscape), as they are less dynamic and more predictable. Nevertheless, researchers have recently delved into the ways cultural and natural values become intertwined, in a way that could lead to more holistic approaches. For example, educational projects on the sacred forests (Stara and Vokou 2015) within the borders of the Geopark facilitated a move toward a synthetic understanding aiming to bridge cultural and natural woodland values. Approaches of this sort might point in the right direction while aiming for a WHL nomination.

Concluding remarks

Looking diachronically at the evolution of vegetation in Zagori from the 19th century to the present, we can understand the transformative nature of ecosystems and how they change from a period when communes were involved in the daily process of preservation to a top–down implementation of legislation altering the values of the place. From the historical perspective (20th century), Zagori can be used as a paradigm of deficient practices in heritage management, judging from the way local stakeholders were not heard when they demanded

⁸ Contrastingly, we possess indications that intensive reforestation caused by the abandonment of “traditional” agropastoral activities have affected negatively wild fauna habitats (Tsiakiris 2000) and the flow of water–currents (Green and King 1996).



sustainable cultural development. As outlined earlier, the designation of the protected areas deprived local communities of their vital economic catchment, prohibiting communal grazing and woodland management. The formation of a landscape is a dialectic process bound to specific historical, social, economic, and political parameters. Therefore, a so-called natural landscape cannot remain stable and integrity must be achieved through a constant reevaluation of values and application of relevant measures. The 2014 Zagori statement was the necessary first step but did not acknowledge that prohibition is not synonymous with preservation and that restrictions have consequences, many times transforming what they are supposed to preserve. Furthermore, preventive legislation led to the devaluation of the cultural values that sacred forests possess. Observing such processes historically, distanced from the empathy that temporality brings, leads to a better understanding of the processes of values creation that may assist to a holistic analysis and empower heritage managers with tools to interpret sites differently.

Finally, it encourages heritage professionals to realize that even natural values may be shaped by human (economic and cultural) agency. As this paper was being written (2018), although Zagori is part of a UNESCO Global Geopark, the area was allotted, together with the rest of Epirus, to the Energean Oil & Gas company,⁹ to start testing for potential fracking drills for shale gas extraction. Local communities opposed again to this change,¹⁰ as they did in the past when restrictive legislation was passed incorporating their woodlands in state forests, intending to enhance Zagori as a tourist destination. This time, the success story of tourism in the area was at stake, threatened by economic forces similar to those that converted a highly sophisticated agropastoral cultural landscape into an example of touristic excellence. The same economic forces that modernized the area, assigning to Zagori and other similar regions a prominent role in the tertiary economic sector in the strategic economic planning of the Greek Nation-State, are the ones pushing again to a transition that is more threatening to the environment and the heritage values than the previous alteration. During the 20th century transformation, local communities were not heard, as the national economic stake was high and had other targets. Today, the stake is similarly high, but this time the profit will mostly go to in-

⁹ Since 2017, Repsol farmed-in the entrepreneurial endeavour <https://tinyurl.com/ySz7x2kk> (Accessed 06.04.2019).

¹⁰ The Municipality council, despite the formal agreement on behalf of the state, denied access to the public lands of Zagori to the agents of the multinational companies, after a bottom-up movement against this prospect emerged in the region www.zagori.gov.gr/?p=17905 (Accessed 01.08.2020).

ternational corporate hands, benefiting the Greek GDP less than the previous transformation. Will locals be heard this time? And what is the role of heritage managers in this situation?

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Păduri din Zagori, nord-vestul Greciei (secolele XIX-XXI): între patrimoniu și istorie

Rezumat

Prezentul articol expune un conflict în ceea ce privește gestionarea valorilor naturale și culturale de-a lungul timpului, folosind exemplul gestionării pădurilor din Zagori (NW Grecia) de la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea până în prezent (2018). Întrebarea centrală este cum un peisaj cultural, interpretat acum ca fiind suficient de semnificativ pentru o nominalizare potențială a Patrimoniului Mondial (lista provizorie 2014), a fost gestionat de-a lungul timpului de către statul grec într-o abordare de sus în jos care a dus la o polarizare între valorile naturale și culturale. În primul rând, vor fi abordate problemele gestionării pădurilor comune și percepțiile de valori, urmate de o schiță a factorilor economici de stat care au modelat politicile naționale. Reacțiile comunităților locale în timpul acestei transformări vor fi, de asemenea, abordate. În cele din urmă, se accentuează că astfel de studii de caz constituie materiale educaționale valoroase pentru profesioniștii din domeniul patrimoniului, deoarece oferă informații despre procesele de valorificare a sitului, dezvăluind aspecte istorice, necesități economice și prejudecăți legislative, abordând în același timp problemele părților interesate.

Cuvinte-cheie: managementul patrimoniului cultural, transformarea patrimoniului, mediu înconjurător, politică, păduri, Grecia, Zagori, Geoparcul mondial UNESCO Vikos-Aoos.

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