



Traditional silvopastoral practices and their impact on landscape

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Silvopastoral systems are complex, integrated and intensively managed systems which combine trees, forage plants, livestock and man on the same land unit. Such systems resulted from complex ecological and socioeconomic conditions and have historically been able to provide people with fuel, food, medicines and other materials. In fact, silvopastoral systems have created characteristic landscapes in the Mediterranean area, known as dehesas in Spain, montados in Portugal, pascoli arborati in Sardinia, kouri in Greece etc. The silvopastoral systems of Greece have only recently been recognised and appear to be remnants of older pastoral systems that have been altered by more recent land use practices.

The present study aspires to uncover the meaning of landscape features and in particular remnants tree stands in relation to past land use practices and socioeconomic conditions in Lagadas County, near Thessaloniki in northern Greece. For the landscape analysis a research was conducted that included a thorough study of historical and cultural evidences, old Turkish legislations, cadastral maps, satellite images and air photographs. Also, a landscape description of the area and measurements of specific tree architectural elements (tree girth, tree height, crown initiation height and crown girth) was made.

It was found that traditional silvopastoral practices (e.g. pollarding) resulted in characteristic landscapes. It was also shown that these practices were associated with specific socio-economic activities (e.g. production, commerce and process) that sustained local economies in the past.