



Natural and Cultural Preservation – Complementary Endeavors through Soil Archive Research

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Soil is an excellent archive for the history of landscape components such as ancient topography, erosion and accumulation processes, and vegetation characterization. In special cases, the soil archive even preserves botanical faunal and mollusc assemblages, allowing for the production of an archive of organic species as well.

Long-term human activities in the past have left their imprints on certain landscape systems, leading to the formation of landscapes composed of both cultural and natural assets. The aim of this presentation is to suggest a conceptual model, based on the soil archive, which enables the preservation and sustainability of such environments.

The proposed area (eastern Mediterranean) underwent cycles of ancient site establishment and abandonment. When areas were occupied, the natural vegetation around settlements experienced human interventions such as woodcutting, grazing and horticulture. During site abandonment, these interventions ceased, resulting in vegetation regeneration, a reduction in biodiversity, increased fire hazard, etc. This ultimately led to the deterioration of the landscape system as well as the destruction of cultural assets such as ancient buildings and/or remnants.

In order to preserve and restore these sites, a conceptual model that combines both modern natural conservation strategies and restoration of traditional land-use techniques is proposed. This model provides a complementary approach to existing natural and cultural preservation efforts.