

Cultural landscapes in Natura 2000 sites: a route through Europe in support of cultural tourism

Constantinos Cartalis

Professor, University of Athens and Piraeus Bank Cultural Foundation,
ckartali@phys.uoa.gr

Panayotis Dimopoulos

Professor, University of Patras,
pdimopoulos@upatras.gr

Abstract

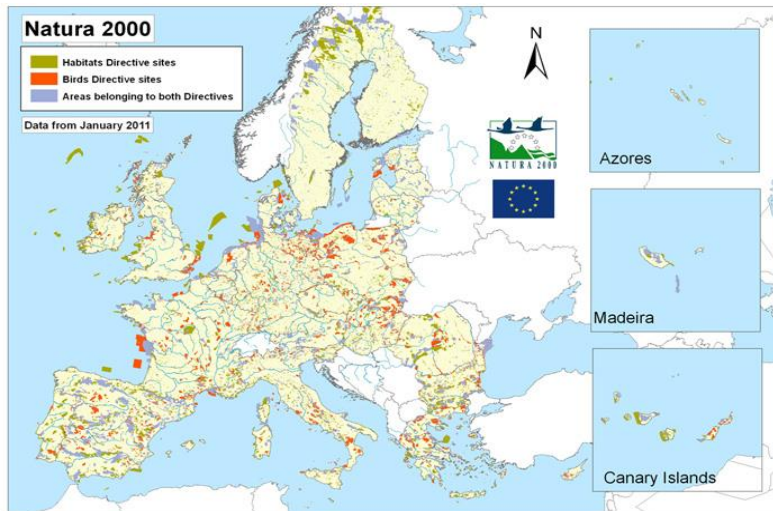
In line to the definitions of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO and of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) on cultural landscapes, this paper approaches cultural landscapes as physical areas with natural features and elements created and/or modified by human activity, with tangible or intangible cultural and historical patterns of evidence layered in the landscape and reflecting human relationships and interactions with that landscape. It concentrates to cultural landscapes in Natura 2000 sites (i.e. the network of 26,400 nature protection areas, comprising nearly 768,000 km² in the European Union), in an effort to link cultural and natural heritage. Taken that the development of sustainable and high quality tourism should also include products linked to cultural and natural heritage, the paper presents the elements of a policy for "Cultural Landscapes in Natura 2000 Sites" and demonstrates the potential for cultural tourism, by means of a route crossing several countries and connecting them in a common, cultural and environmental, narrative. The main elements, prerequisites and tools for this policy are presented, along with related case studies as well as a discussion on the role of local communities.

Keywords: Cultural Landscapes, Natura 2000, cultural tourism

The Natura 2000 network

Natura 2000 is the centrepiece of EU nature & biodiversity policy. Presently, the Natura 2000 network (Map 1) accounts for over 26, 400 sites referring to either the Birds or Habitats Directives (Council Directive 92/43, 1992), with a total surface area of about 986 000 km², comprising nearly 768 000 km² of land, and close to 218 000 km² of sea (EC 2013b). The terrestrial component of the Natura 2000 network represents 17.9 % of the EU-27 land territory encompassing 25,717 terrestrial sites (767,995 km²), whereas the

marine component of the Natura 2000 network covers about 4 % and is still under development (EC 2013b).



Map 1: Natura 2000 sites in the countries of the European Union.

The main aims of the Natura 2000 network are to:

- achieve continued protection of habitats and species of EU conservation interest and
- assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

The Natura 2000 experiment, within which the EU member states are working together toward a common conservation target regardless of political boundaries, is considered a visionary and cooperation-generating project.

Cultural Landscapes – Definitions and Criteria

No fixed universal definition of cultural landscapes exists. In general the application of this concept consists of two elements: the geographical location (landscape) and the historical impressions and beliefs (cultural) associated with that place. Cultural landscapes can vary in size whereas a critical precondition to identify a cultural landscape is to recognize the complex relationship people had or continue to have with the places they create and live in.

Rosler (2006) states that Cultural landscapes are critically at the interface between nature and culture, tangible and intangible heritage, biological and cultural diversity. According to

Taylor and Lennon (2011), Cultural landscapes are rural and urban settings (spaces) that people have settled or altered through time. They include cultural and natural elements of the ordinary, familiar, everyday landscape. The cultural landscape is a mosaic consisting of natural features and elements, physical components from a number of historic periods resulting from human activity and modification to the natural features, and patterns created in the landscape over time; these are layers in or on the landscape.

Human use of the landscape generally creates distinctive physical patterns, resulting in a cultural landscape that expresses past human attitudes and values. The places that are likely to be of significance are those which help an understanding of the past or enrich the present, and which will be of value to future generations (Vogiatzakis et al. 2008; Wu, 2010). Other values contributing to the significance of cultural landscapes have been proposed, including interpretative value, associative value and integrity of landscape fabric (Taylor, 2000; Papayannis, 2012), association with events or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the history of the nation, state, region or community or associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, possessing high artistic and cultural values and reflecting a close and shaping interaction between nature/environment and culture (Lennon, 1996; Mitchell and Buggey, 2000).

Main elements of a policy for a network of "Cultural Landscapes in Natura 2000 sites"

Main elements for developing a network of Cultural Landscapes in Natura 2000 sites are (Cartalis et al., 2014):

Element 1. Assess the values met in cultural landscapes in Natura 2000 sites:

- (a) The aesthetic value: measured by qualities such as form, scale, color, texture and material of the fabric (i.e. the physical evidence of the landscape).
- (b) The natural value: reflecting biodiversity (fauna and flora) and varying landscape patterns.
- (c) The historic value: relating to how a place has influenced or been influenced by an historic figure, event, phase or activity, or whether it was the site of an important event.
- (d) The scientific value: reflecting the importance of the place, its rarity, quality, or representativeness.
- (e) The social value: relating to the qualities which develop a bond to society.

Element 2. Define common criteria for shaping the network:

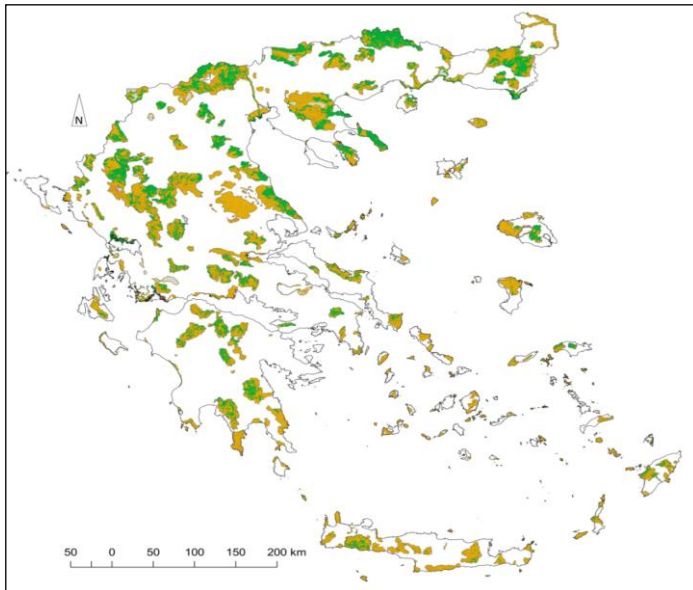
Group I on Cultural Heritage: presence of archeological sites, intangible heritage, historic/religious significance, ethnological value, aesthetic value of landscape, agricultural villages, traditional human settlements, landscape of high natural value, agricultural land, traditional agriculture;

Group II: on Natural Heritage presence of natural habitats falling under the 92/43 Directive, type of habitats depending on human activities, presence of flora and fauna.

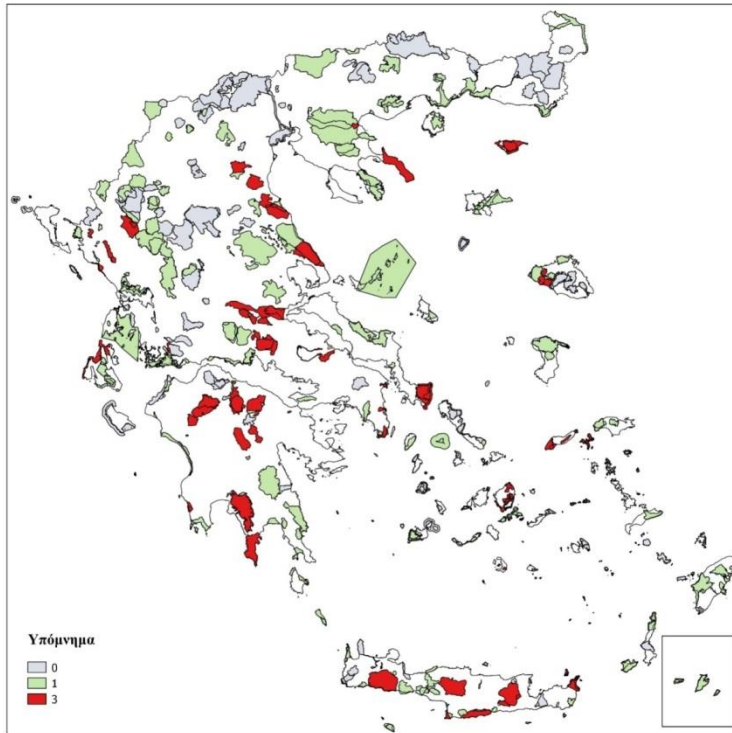
Element 3. Develop routes of cultural tourism for cultural areas (in Natura 2000 sites) satisfying common sets of criteria, e.g. the network of vineyards, the network of areas with mythological significance, the network of areas with intangible heritage, etc.

"Cultural Landscapes in Natura 2000 Sites" – an application for Greece

The elements described in Chapter 3 were applied for the NATURA 2000 sites in Greece. Map 2 presents a first chartographic definition of cultural landscapes in the Natura 2000 network in Greece, that is areas which reflect significant natural and cultural heritage. Map 3 in particular, presents an example of the application of Element 3, as cultural landscapes which exhibit significant mythological value form a cultural tourism route.



Map 2: A first definition of cultural landscapes in the Natura 2000 network. With green colour the areas where natural formations are recognized (forested areas and shrubland), whereas in yellow areas with strong presence of cultural landscapes.



Map 3: Cultural landscapes with significant mythological value – a dedicated cultural tourism route.

Summary

Building a network of sites across Europe on the basis of a common methodology, criteria and set of cultural and natural features, may favor better coherence than if the networks were only organized within each Member State.

A European network allows for taking into account cultural and natural diversity on the one hand, and cultural and natural heritage on the other. It supports an open view of the history of the ecosystem (natural landscape) and the state of the people living within or in the vicinity of the ecosystem.

Taken that the development of sustainable and high quality tourism should also include products linked to cultural and natural heritage, a network of "Cultural Landscapes in Natura 2000 Sites" demonstrates high potential for cultural tourism, by means of a route

crossing several countries and connecting them in a common, cultural and environmental, narrative.

Literature

- [1] Cartalis, C., Beriatos, E., Dimopoulos, P., Doukellis, P., 2014, *Cultural Landscapes in Natura 2000 sites: towards a new policy for the integrated management of cultural and natural heritage*, International Workshop on Cultural Landscapes in Natura 2000 sites, Athens and Stymfalia, www.piop.gr.
- [2] Council Directive 92/43/EEC, 1992, *On the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora*.
- [3] EC (European Commission), 2013b, *Natura 2000: managing sites in the Natura 2000 network*. Nature and Biodiversity Newsletter. EC, Luxembourg.
- [4] Lennon, J., 1996, *Cultural Landscape Management - Guidelines for identifying, assessing and managing Cultural Landscapes in the Australian National Parks*, Cultural Heritage Working Group.
- [5] Mitchell, N. and Buggey S., 2000, *Protected Landscapes and cultural landscapes: taking advantage of diverse approaches*, The George Wright Forum, vol. 17, no.1, 35-46.
- [6] Papayannis, T. and Howard P. (eds), 2012, *Reclaiming the Greek Landscape*, Med-INA, Athens, Greece.
- [7] Rossler, M., 2006, *World Heritage cultural landscapes*, Landscape Research, 31(4), pp. 333–353.
- [8] Taylor, K. and Lennon, J., 2011, *Cultural Landscapes: a bridge between culture and nature?*, International Journal of Heritage Studies, 17, 537-554.
- [9] Vogiatzakis, I.N., Pungetti, G. and Mannion, A.M. (eds), 2008, *Mediterranean Island Landscapes: Natural and Cultural Approaches*, Dordrecht, Springer.
- [10] Wu, J., 2010, *Landscape of culture and culture of landscape: does landscape ecology need culture?*, Landscape Ecol, 25, 1147-1150.