

Multipurpose trees in Zagori, NW Greece

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The idea

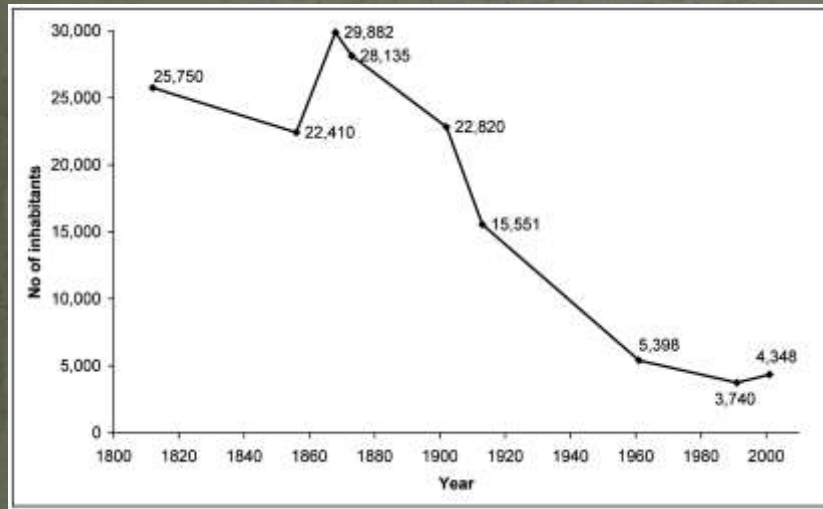
- To explore changing associations with nature derived from the valuation of common trees in a mountainous area
- To investigate the conceptualization of trees
- To understand and “read” landscape history through the management of trees studying tree species and form

The study area

Study area in Zagori, Epirus, NorthWest Greece



The people



The present population shows an **aging structure** with **falling birthrates** and **high mortality**.

Nevertheless, communities remain alive as people from elsewhere, mainly retired, continue to use ancestral villages as seasonal homes.

As a result the population in Zagori almost triples during the summer months.



*Black and white people's photos © André Bakker,
Collection "Faces in stone", <http://andrebakker.com>*

Ethnographic research

- 23 villages (3 ethnic groups)
- 120 informants
- 13 common tree species specimens (criteria: significance for everyday life, economic value, presence in the landscape, commonness, and symbolic associations)
- Tree scoring (1 lower to 5 higher)
- Free lists (lists of uses and values/ multiple statements for 1 tree allowed): 4511 statements



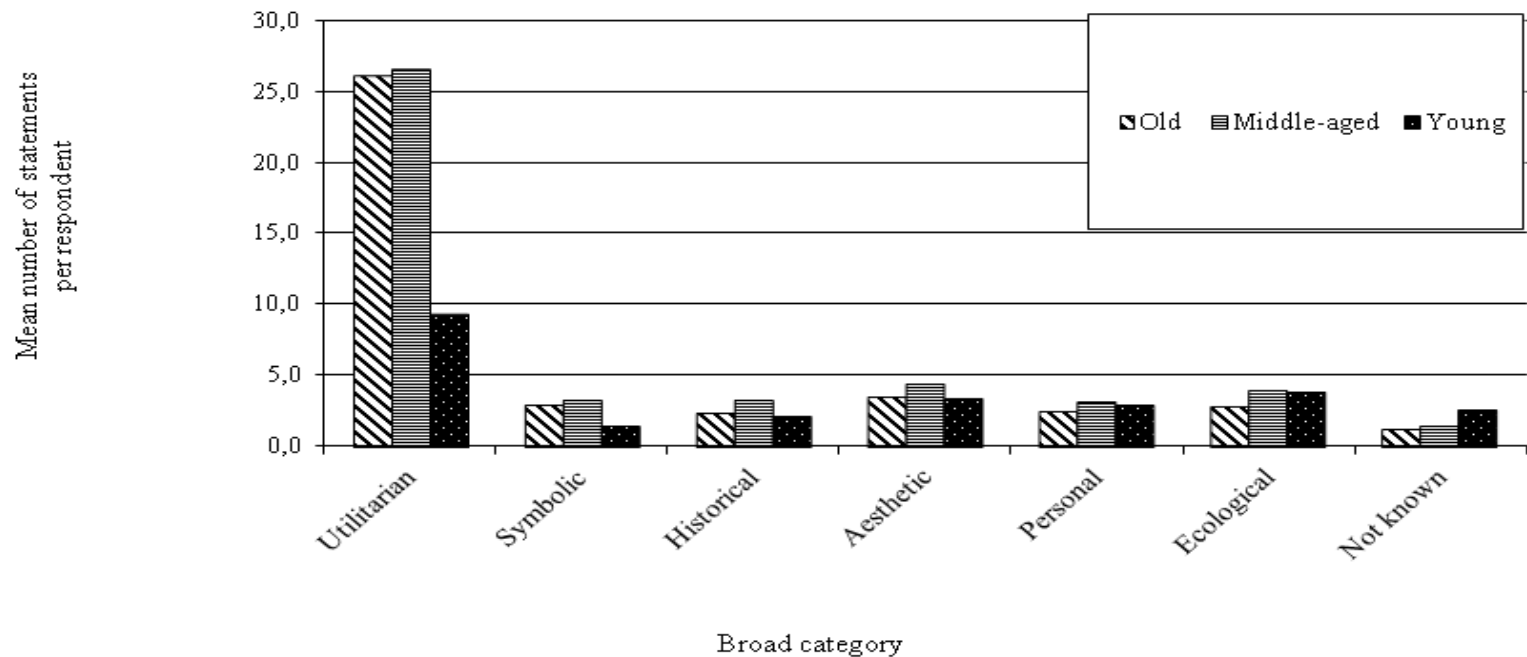
Results - Tree scoring

Tree species	Generation	Proportion of people in each generation giving each score to a species						Pearson Chi ²	Mean score	Change
		0	1	2	3	4	5			
<i>Hornbeam</i>	Old		4	9	37	35	15	**	3.5	Significant scoring loss: oaks, junipers, hornbeam, ash, maple, Mahaleb cherry, walnut
	Middle-aged	8	3	8	42	33	5.6		3.1	
	Young	50	20		20		10		1.3	
<i>Large leaved lime</i>	Old		4	3	12	26	55	*	4.3	Significant scoring gain in overall value: lime
	Middle-aged		3	3	8	39	47		4.3	
	Young					56	44		4.4	
<i>Oriental plane</i>	Old		1	1	12	28	57	NS	4.4	No significant scoring change: plane tree, black pine, fir, Cornelian cherry
	Middle-aged		8	3	14	17	58		4.1	
	Young					20	80		4.8	

Informants by age : < 40 y. =10; 40-69 y. = 36; > 70 y.=74; Total=120

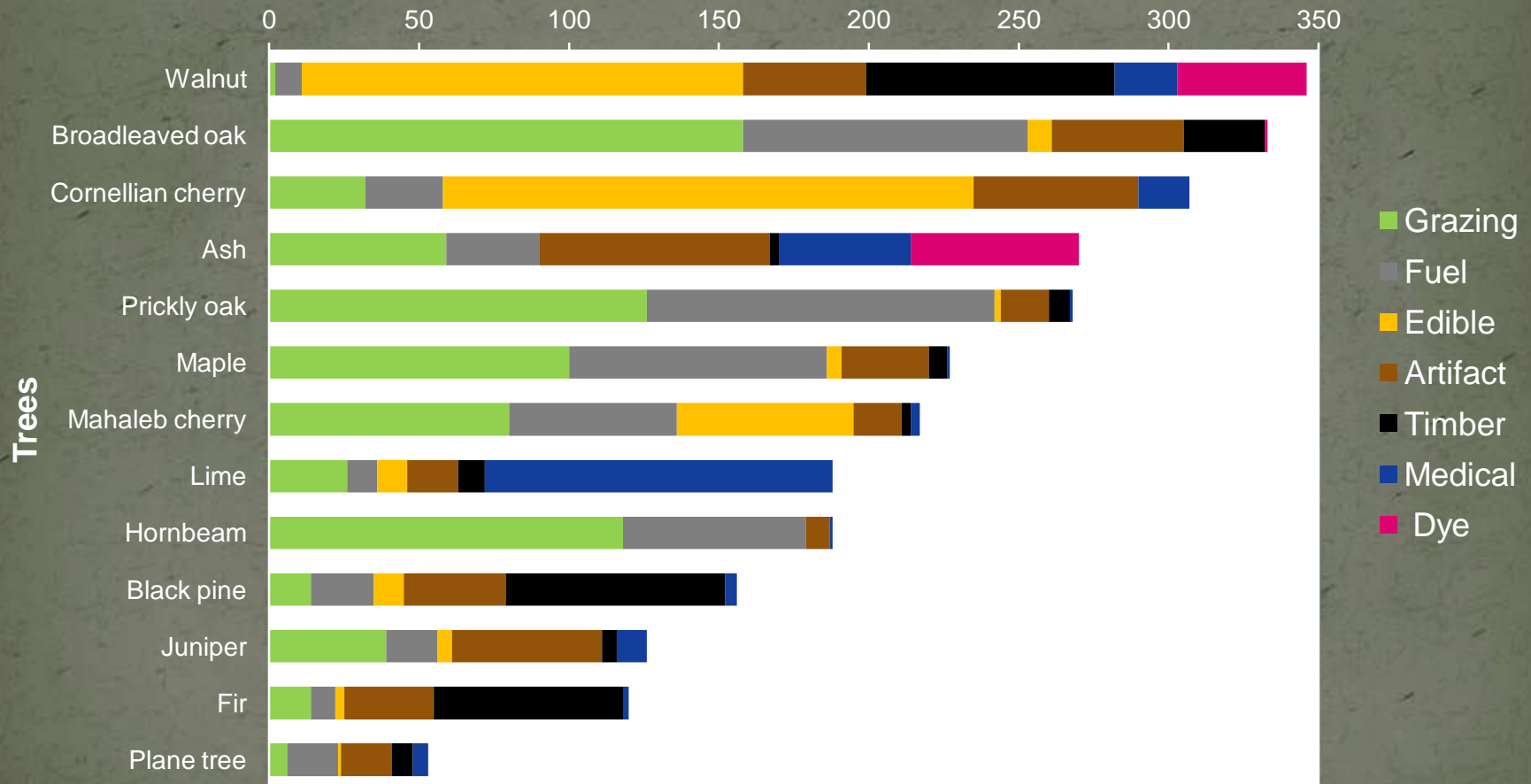
Results - Free listing (1)

Average number of statements in each broad category by generation



Results: Free listing (2)

No of statements



Timber, foliage fodder, fire wood, artifacts



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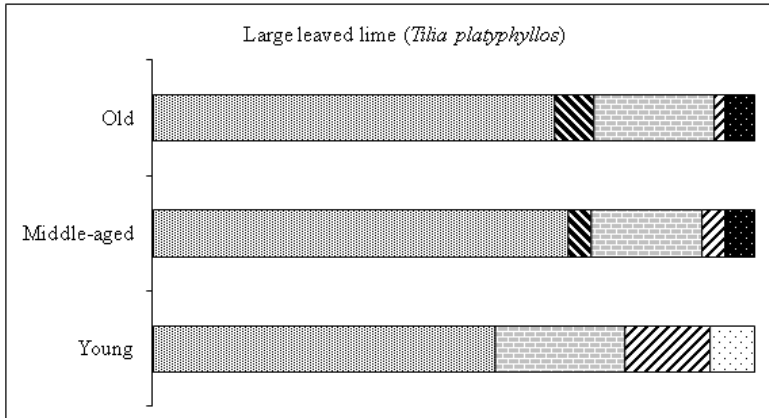
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Non-wood forest products



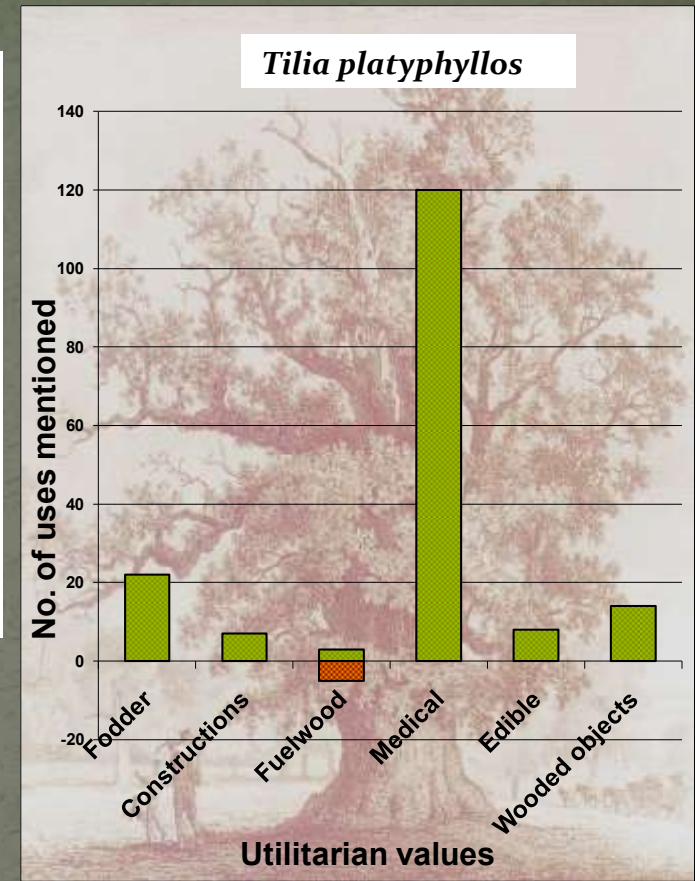
Large leaved lime – Valued more highly by younger generation



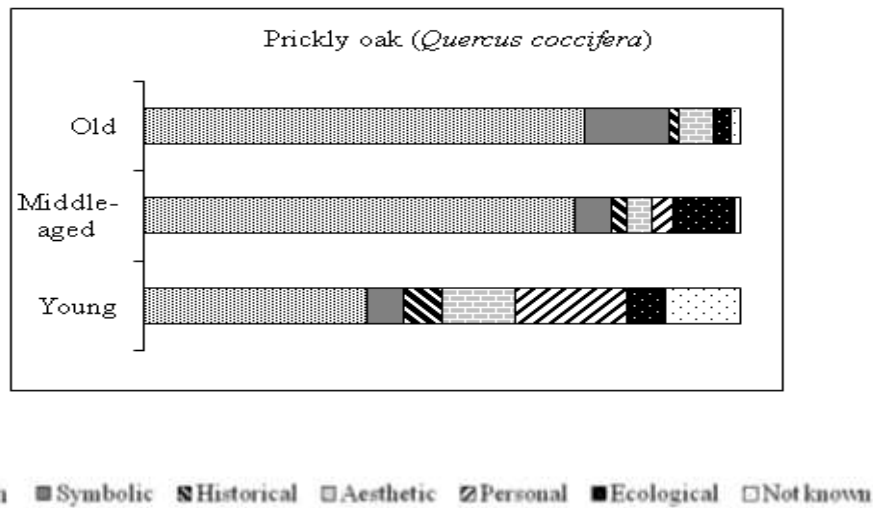
■ Utilitarian ■ Symbolic ■ Historical ■ Aesthetic ■ Personal ■ Ecological ■ Not known

Medical properties differentiate the lime from other NWFPs.

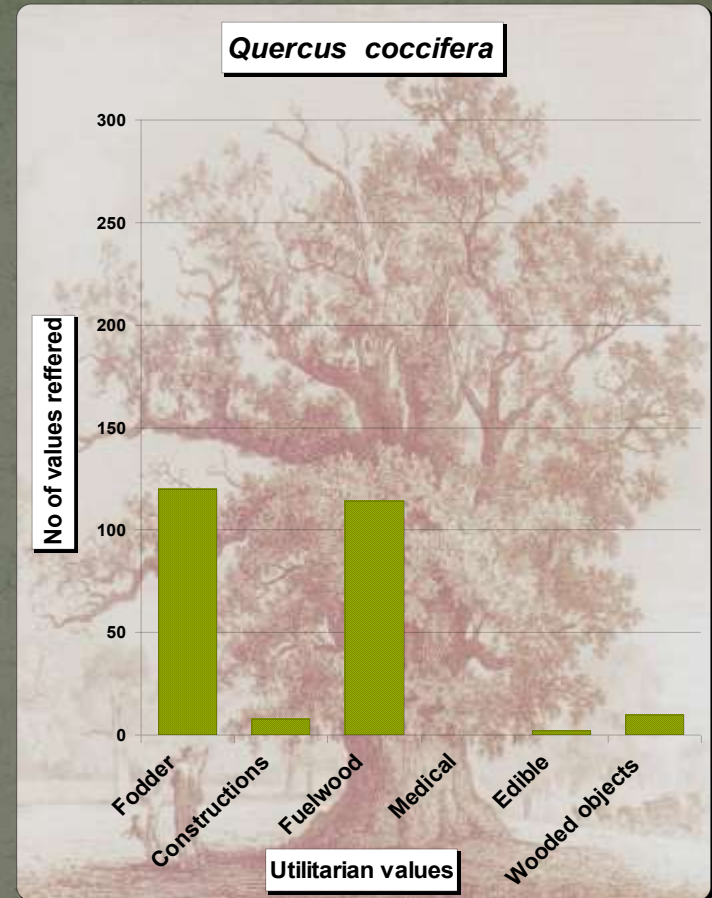
This is enhanced by the reappraisal of herbal medicine, “natural” wild foods and “traditional cuisines” which appears as a new lifestyle.



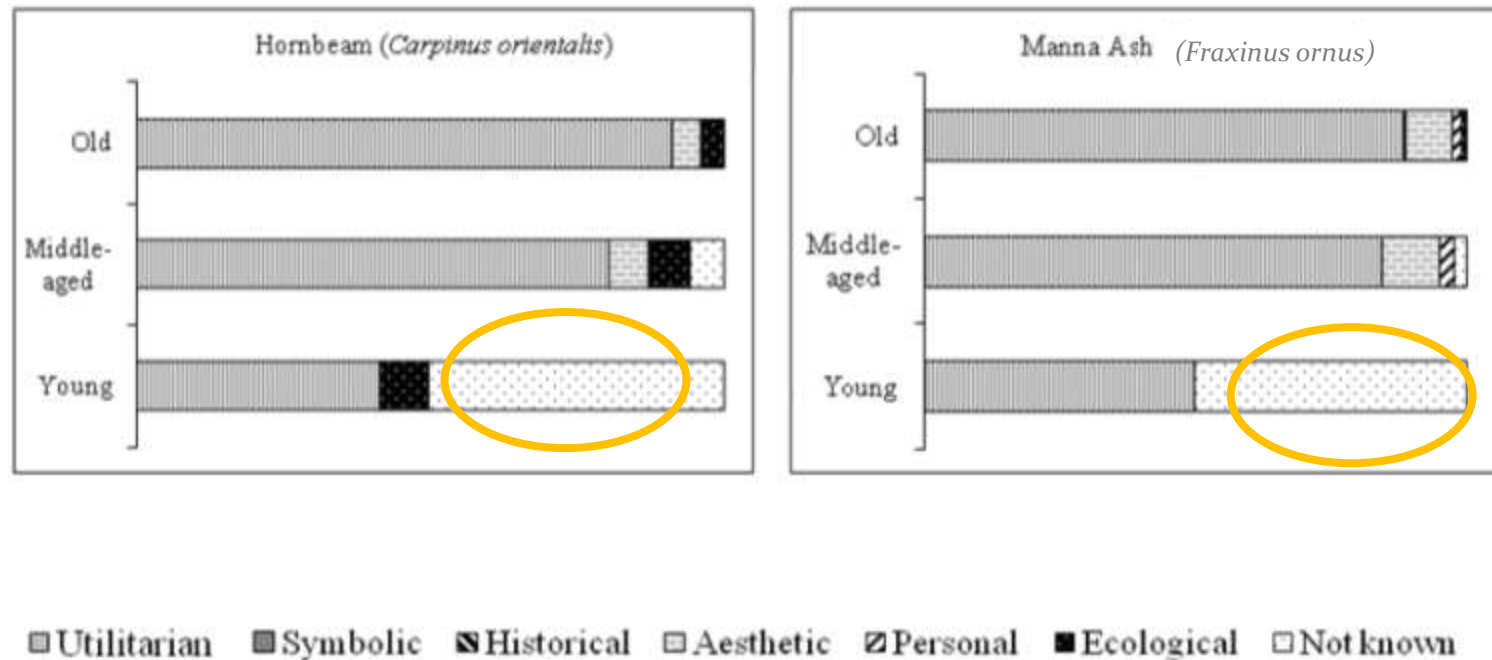
Prickly oak– Valued lower by younger generation



Species on which the local economy was based in the past and formerly cultural dominant trees are the ones that have most noticeably lost value



Mosaic plots of freelist categories where tree values are lower for young people who fail to recognise the species

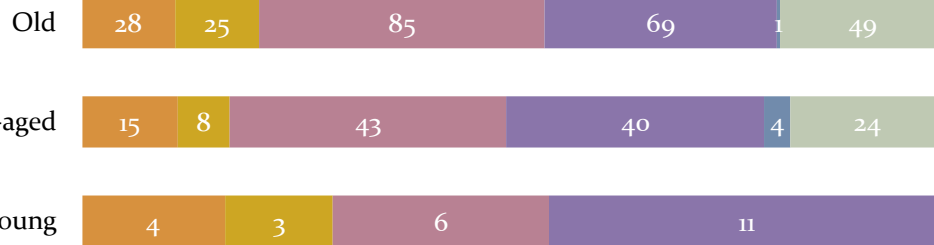


Species related to past lifestyles follow a procedure that begins with a decline of their use and pursued by the loss of use knowledge, identity and names.

Erosion of past lifestyles is leading to rapid loss of local knowledge, a common pattern thought the world and big challenge for modern conservation.

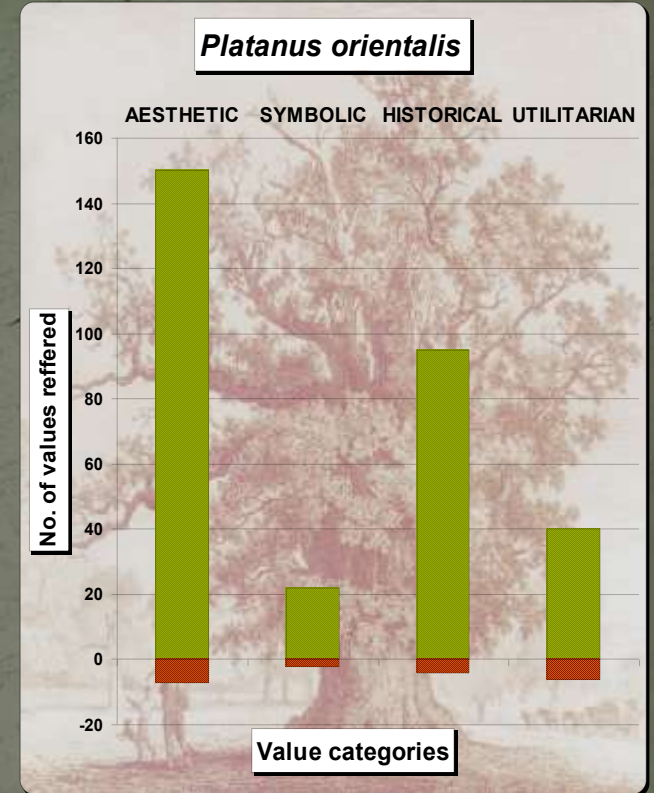
Plane tree is an exceptional tree which combines low utilitarian scores and a greater number of intangible values

Plane tree



Broad categories

■ Not known ■ Aesthetic ■ Ecological ■ Historical ■ Personal ■ Symbolic ■ Utilitarian



Personal values are increasing as the plane maintains a special meaning for residents, but also Diaspora villagers, who return to ancestral villages for annual summer festivals that take place under the plane tree shade and place the tree in the central point of their “imagined village”.

The plane has also a constant historical importance for the local community as it is thought to have been planted by village founders and thus functions as symbol of historical continuity.

Plane tree is Greek vegetation's most *social* tree



Tsepelovo, annual fiesta 1930. ©Th. Fragoulis, Rizareios Foundation



Conclusions

- In Zagori changing land use and lower dependency on local environments is reflected in a loss of local knowledge and changes in valuation of trees.
- Formerly cultural dominant trees are the ones that have most noticeably lost value and for which erosion of local knowledge is most dramatic.
- The species themselves are much less threatened than the knowledge about them. What is lost is their conceptualization, management practices and position in the cultural landscapes. I.e. deciduous oaks in present form young forests, but what is lost is their shredded forms.
- Traditional uses that support the new life style of natural foods and “traditional cuisines” are appreciated highly by young generation.