

Forgotten Archaeological Sites In Macedonia (Greece) As The Base For The Formation Of Ecomuseums: The Case Study Of Anthofyto (Kilkis)

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ABSTRACT: The term ecomuseum and its concept is defined as an introduction to analyze the intertwining it offers between nature and culture. The term forgotten archaeological sites refers to such sites that are currently underused by authorities and their potential remains unexplored. Ecomuseums and its practices through a combinational development of local manufacturing and primary production sectors, ecology and archaeology, under a small-scale tourism umbrella, give the opportunity for the economic revival of marginal regions (e.g. the case of Anthofyto). Further they offer to communities the opportunity to conserve aspects of heritage and values as they emerge from within a dedicated dynamic live process that seeks to preserve valorization of nature, inform and change attitudes encouraging groups and individuals to work together to contribute towards a common goal. Observations and recommendations are following on Anthofyto and other locations for potential ecomuseum development.

INTRODUCTION: Anthofyto name derives from “άνθη” anthe- flowers and “φυτά” fyta- or phyta- plants. Anthofyto (coordinates Longitude: 40.852827, Latitude: 22.711067, altitude: 50m asl) is a small village of approximately 300 residents and it is located in Pikrolimi municipality of the Kilkis prefecture in Macedonia regional unit of Greece. The nearest airport is located in the Thessaloniki city but there is also access through train from nearby areas and public transport such as bus. The old name of the village was Sari Pazar, during the Ottoman occupation, which later in 1928 was changed to Anthofyto. The locals are mainly preoccupied with agriculture, farming and small-scale industry and businesses. The locals are conducting a balanced, both contemporary but also traditional, lifestyle respecting their Thracian heritage, their Constantinople immigration memories and history “Ethnic cleansing and population exchange between Greece and Turkey 1923”, “Thracian genocide 6 April 1914” (Greek Genocide Resource Center personal communication), the Christian Orthodox religion and are in harmony with nature taking advantage of what it has to offer seasonally (e.g. various plants and vegetables, herbs, mushrooms, snails, game etc (Anthofyto Kilkis blog).

DISCUSSION: Prehistoric tumuli localities in the wider area of Kilkis are plenty and the found materials cover Mycenaean, Minyan, Macedonian and Byzantine ages. Anthofyto archaeological sites (Toumba A and B, of late bronze age (c. 1700-1100 BCE) (French 1966, 1967)) are not as “glamorous” (small site, small amount of retrieved artefacts) as other localities in Kilkis (e.g. Axioupoli, Europos, Horygi, Kolchida, Palaio Gynaikokastro, Palatiano) and as such their potential still remains unexplored and often keen to vandalism, looting and raiding (Ethnos journal 2020).

The geographical territory and sphere of activities in Anthofyto and the wider region have to offer a rich biodiversity and natural sceneries, gastronomy, custom celebrations, history, culture, and archaeology. The area has great potential for development of a plethora of touristic activities just to name a few cycling and walking trails, shrines and churches trails, military memorial trails, viewing points and nature photography, hunting and plant collection (either medicinal or for dietary reasons), agritourism and cottage industry (Greek: οικολογία), viticulture and oenology, creative studios and workshops, and therefore great potential for tourism (with restaurants and accommodation) and profit. Establishing an ecomuseum would most importantly protect against heritage and culture loss. Different routes and ecomuseum possibilities, each one with their own pros and cons, are suggested below (solo, intercultural, international).

WHAT IS AN ECOMUSEUM?

An “eco-museum” aims on the identity of a place, it requires local participation and intends to increase the welfare and development of a community. An ecomuseum is open (there are no walls), allowing the visitor to come in contact with and experience people and objects in their natural environment (no specific opening hours are required). Information is expressed on boards and signs located at various points within a designated area. An ecomuseum can present the present times showcasing biodiversity, activities and lifestyle, but it can also include an open-air ethnographic museum experience presenting the past. Both visitors and locals in this type of museum require openness, in homes, businesses and lands fields.

HOW WILL IT RUN?

- Both eco- and ethnographic- museum (open air)
- Studios, galleries, creative workshops for children and adults
- Small farmsteads operation where you can buy products made by farmers (seasonal offer/ limited availability)
- Coloured tourist trails
- Shrine trails
- Viewing points
- Integrated archaeological ruins, tumuli, churches
- Restaurants and places offering accommodation
- Seasonal gatherings / celebrations



**NATURE
BIODIVERSITY
GEOMORPHOLOGY**



**GASTRONOMY
LOCAL RECIPES
AGROTURISM**



**CULTURE
CUSTOM
CELEBRATIONS**



**HISTORY
HERITAGE**



**ARCHAEOLOGY
MONUMENTS
MUSEUMS**



Figure 1. Map of Greece, dark blue indicates Macedonia region and red star Anthofyto in Kilkis. B) Anthofyto Toumba A archaeological site. C) Red arrows show illegal excavations. Photo -B- copyright Ioanna Bachtsevanidou Strantzali, June 2020 after local survey. Image -C- retrieved from google maps (coordinates 40.8570147,22.7366717)

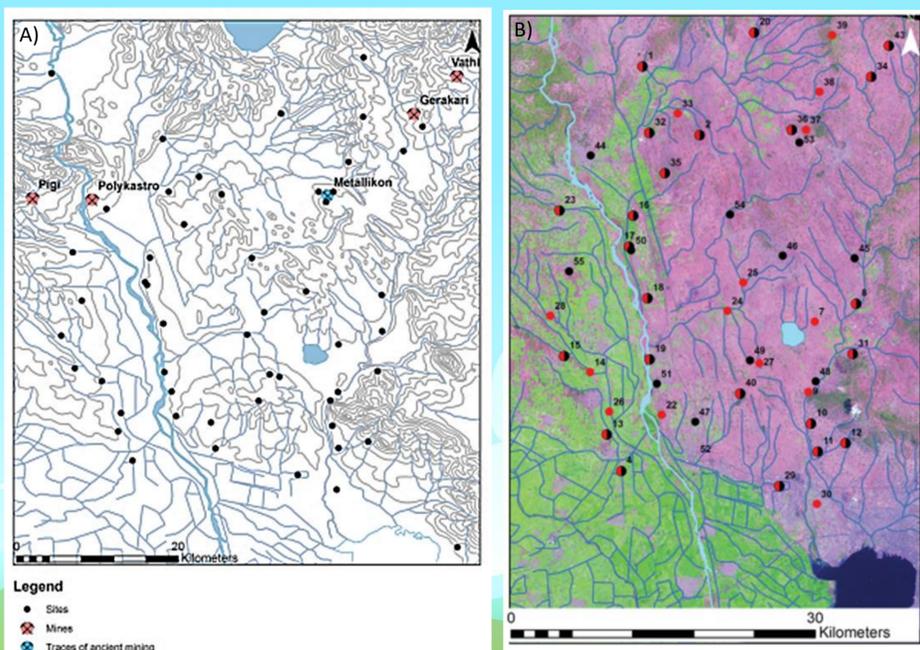


Figure 2. In this figure two images are presented, A and B after Aslaksen 2013, with the aim to give an overview and express the archaeological significance of the wider area surrounding Anthofyto were lie a great amount of archaeological ruins and tumuli but still remaining “forgotten” and unexplored of their touristic value. A) Distribution of Mycenaean pottery in the Lower Axios Area (after Aslaksen 2013). B) Map of the Bronze Age World with the of settlements in the Lower Axios Area (red dots = Bronze Age, black dots = Iron Age, red/black dots = multi-period sites – Bronze and Iron Age). The Lower Axios Area is shown on a USGS LANDSAT image built with band 3 (green: peak vegetation), 4 (red: vegetation slopes) and 5 (near infrared: biomass content and shorelines) shows wetlands and river-plain (green) – agricultural lands, above 40m (purple) and highland with less vegetation (dark purple) (after Aslaksen 2013)

SOLO
Natura GR1230006

INTERCULTURAL (Intercommunal)
Pikrolimni prefecture
Axios bangs

INTERNATIONAL
Peninsula of Haemus and Balkan routes
Eastern Thrace-Romylia (hometown)

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