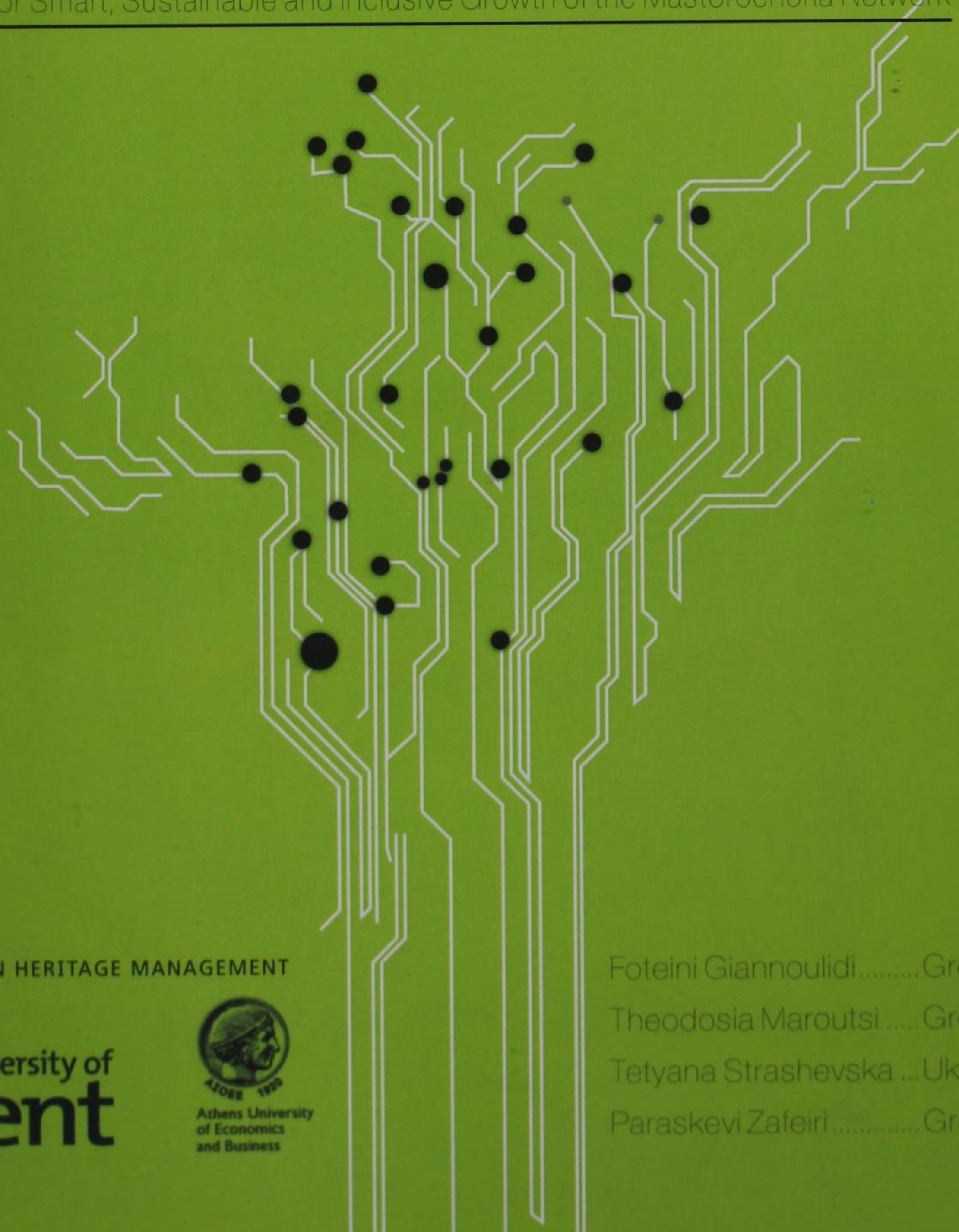


network Mastoro choria

MaNet: Strategic Plan

for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth of the Mastorochoria Network



MA IN HERITAGE MANAGEMENT
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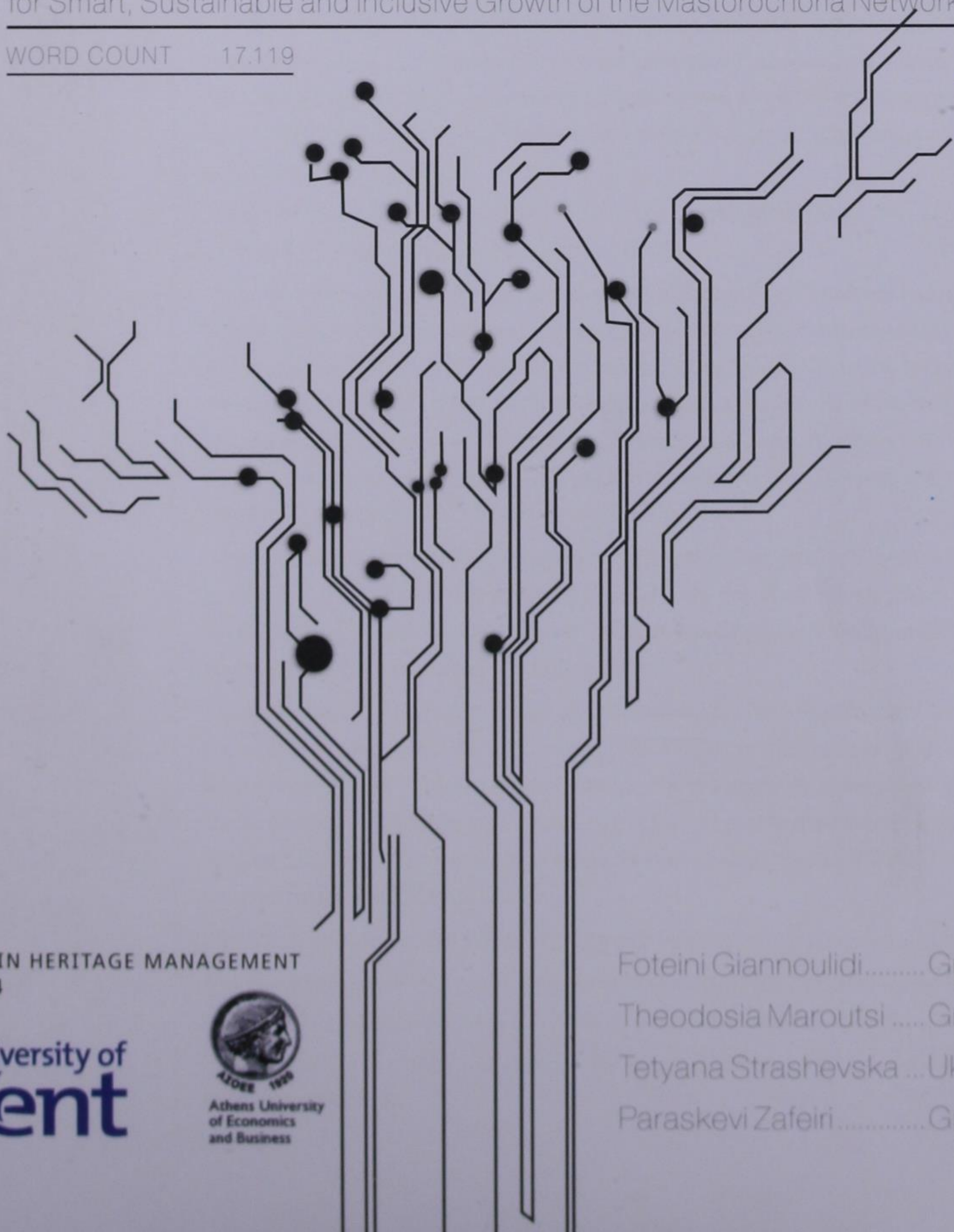
Foteini Giannoulidi Greece
Theodosia Maroutsi Greece
Tetyana Strashevskia ... Ukraine
Paraskevi Zafeiri Greece

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Kent



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and Business

Foteini Giannoulidi.....Greece
Theodosia MaroutsiGreece
Tetyana Strashkevka ...Ukraine
Paraskevi Zafeiri.....Greece

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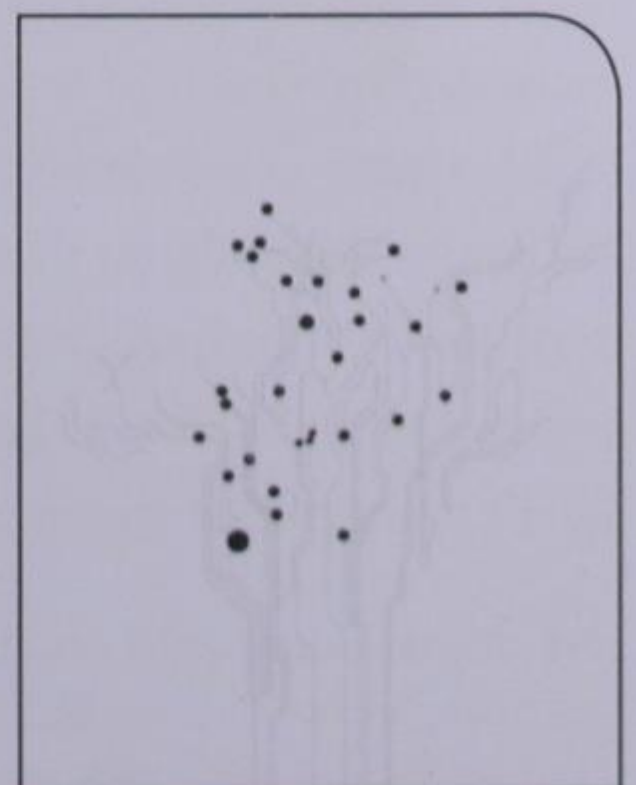
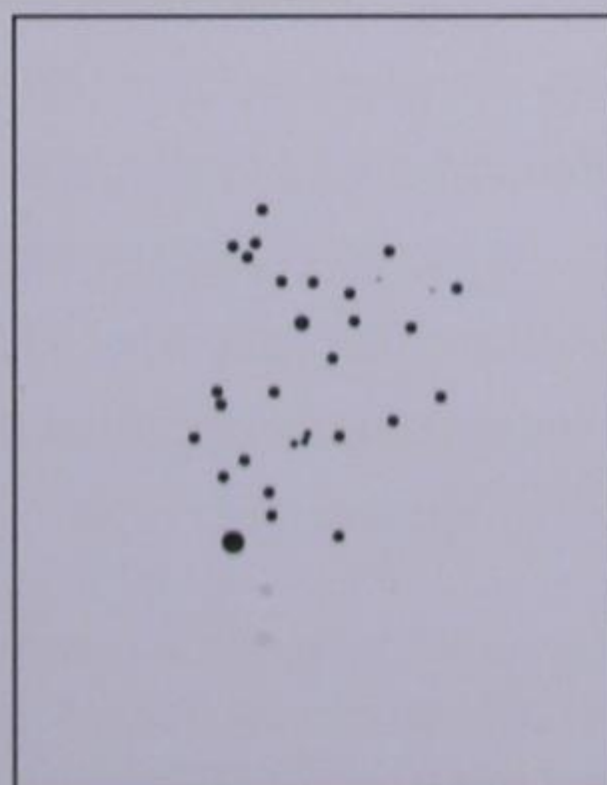
MANET: STRATEGIC PLAN

for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth of the Mastorochoria Network



Map 1

*All maps were designed by the authors of the thesis



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The area of 28 mountainous Mastorochoia villages¹ in the Northwest of Greece with Konitsa as the administrative centre is an outstandingly representative and coherent region of great cultural and environmental richness with high development potential. The diversity of the Mastorochoia area, the distinctive identity of local communities and the local knowledge are key assets for any development action, especially if we take into consideration the shift of European strategies from policies for reducing disparities towards policies with an objective to strengthen regional competitiveness focused on regional potential. A number of villages in this territory have been included in a series of development programs and initiatives at different levels. However, a precise look at the agendas has revealed a lack of comprehensive analysis and integrated evaluation of the assets and potentials of the Mastorochoia villages. From this point the MaNet Strategic Plan, instead of designing a series of proposals, aims to create a value-centred strategy for implementing strategies. The notion of 'strategy' is perceived nowadays as a sufficient method indissolubly connected with business environment, since the economic factor is claimed to be hegemonic for every decision. MaNet Project is a project that deals with the area, 'whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. Thus, it is necessary to go back to the original notion of the word 'strategic', as it was conceived by ancient Greeks. According to the etymology, the first part of the word is *στρατός* which takes its origin from the verb that means to broaden, to spread, to disseminate, the second part is *ἄγω*, which means to guide, to bring, to direct. The notion of guidance of spread elements is more than suitable for the MaNet project, which aims to guide the villages of Mastorochoia towards a smart, inclusive and sustainable growth. As in every kind of guidance, the success of MaNet depends on the knowledge about the area, analytical and synthetical skills. As a result, the scope of this thesis is to provide a necessary tool for evaluating and implementing any actions that beyond meeting their specific objectives, will contribute to achieving the goals of the wider schema for a smart, inclusive and sustainable growth of the area by interlinking of all projects and action and implementing cohesive and holistic approach. The notion of landscap, is the basis of an integrated evaluation of the heritage through the landscape experience. Following the common guidelines of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) for diverse landscapes, the strategy is based on understanding the landscape as a 'footprint of the society on nature' and on the recognition of local knowledge as a sophisticated set of concepts and practices by people who interact with the environment, which is significant for sustainable and inclusive growth. Local knowledge of the Mastorochoia villages is expressed in both tangible assets and intangible 'wisdom' that cannot be separated neither from the natural context nor from the community. As such, it has to be taken into account while considering any actions and measures. Another crucial notion for developing the strategy is Territorial Cohe-

1 Aghia Paraskevi, Aghia Varvara, Amarandos, Asimochori, Drosopigi, Elefthero, Exohi, Fourka, Ganadio, Gorgopotamos, Hioniades, Kastanea, Kefalochori/Likorachi, Langada, Molista, Monastiri, Nikanoras, Oxia, Pigi, Pirgos, Pixaria, Plikati, Pournia, Pysogianni, Theotokos, Trapeza, Vourbiani, Zerma/Plagia (Map 1).

sion, which according to the Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020, is 'a set of principles for harmonious, balanced, efficient, sustainable territorial development' -one of the objectives of the EU defined in the Europe 2020 Strategy. A multidisciplinary place-based approach and integration of natural, cultural, economic and land planning factors are considered indispensable. One of the key elements for fostering cultural, social and economic dynamism of the territory through traditional knowledge of the region is networking. The circulation of ideas between specialists at different levels ensures 'the social and territorial relevance of the European Landscape Convention and in achieving its objectives'. Furthermore, the networking contributes to the universality of the application of the strategy's tailored concepts and tools. Since sustainability is a connecting thread of all the national and European development projects and programs, the strategy perceives the long term planning as an indispensable element and points out the importance of monitoring the changing environments in order to gain advantage of the potential influences. Raising awareness of the landscape and fostering participation are regarded as fundamental for achieving sustainability. Consequently, the improvement of both has to be prioritized (Lecha-Marzo 2012:14-16,325; COPTA 2011; Babiniotis 2008:62,1663,1664; COE 2008:27-29,144; Fairclough 2002:6; Festas 2002:14; Science and traditional knowledge 2002).

Since the cohesive strategy for the Mastorochochia villages takes into consideration a wide range of legal guidelines and frameworks and is, moreover, based on integrated approaches, it can be transferred to other similar regions in Europe and worldwide. Worth mentioning is the fact, that the strategy does not draw up specific proposals for any decision level. Since there is no single and all-pervasive solution for securing smart, sustainable and inclusive growth for a territory, the development opportunities should be tailored to the features of the area.

1.2. METHODOLOGY AND INTERPRETATION OF MANET PHYSIOGNOMY

The fieldwork in the area of Mastorochochia had a scouting purpose and was aimed at the acquisition of experiential knowledge. The objective of the initial phase of the project was to explore as many environmental, natural and cultural aspects as possible, in order to record its actual state. According to the general principles of the guidelines for the implementation of the ELC '[t]he identification, description and assessment of landscapes constitute the preliminary phase of any landscape policy'. Thus the next phase, which is beyond the scope of this thesis, will include a profound and detailed survey, as well as profiling and prioritization, all of which need to be integrated with the MaNet Project as a whole. Since the basic prerequisite for understanding the physiognomy of a cultural landscape, like the Mastorochochia, is the determination of the geographical location and an acquaintance with the physical environment, the study adopted as a starting point the experiential analysis of the territory. In line with the ELC, this approach emphasizes the importance of the human nature factor as an interrelated body. Thus the following historical analysis departs from a traditionally academic introductory character. Instead, this analysis is a crucial tool for the identification and interpretation of the values of the area in its historical context. Essentially, the past is studied here

through the notion of 'ancient' which allows the identification of 'the necessary reference for the future'. This constitutes the foundation and basis for every planning action in the MaNet Project (Lecha-Marzo 2012:14; Nitsiakos 2008:11,22; Principe 2002:27-29; COE 2008:27; 2000:9; Hirsch & O'Hanlon 1995:2-5).

In addition to this initial spatial approach, the research hypothesis concerns a network, itself a notion that overcomes the traditional techniques and procedures of ethnography. An approach to a network demands a series of innovative practices that provides an opportunity to conceptualize Mastorochoia in a holistic way. Furthermore, the temporal dimension was examined both in the context of the slow time of big narratives and in relation to crucial milestones that drastically affected the communities and caused irreversible transformations. Within this context the in situ survey was conducted sporadically during different seasons, in a multi-sited and even transborder fashion, by interconnecting 'multiple socio-political sites and locations'. Inevitably, following the epistemological framework of ethnographic thought, the project moved from the notion of the field to the notion of the net. It adapted innovative scientific practices like 'a thick description² of the network, its dynamic and the interplay of relations between people, things, activities and meanings', as well as a theoretical framework that considers 'oral histories³ as methodological and analytical tools'⁴. The methodology chosen for the interviews as more appropriate for extracting crucial details and authentic ideas was mainly open, unstructured, in-depth interviews of participant observation (Kravva 2011:85-90; Torre 2002:20; Thomson 2000:3,23-24; Wittel 2000:2-3).

The first part of the MaNet Strategic Plan is thus devoted to the recognition of 'the fundamental role of knowledge'. Considering also the ELC suggestions⁵, the environmental analysis is partly based on these in situ observations, in tune with the multidisciplinary character of this project, and is also enriched with archival material and prior scientific research in various disciplines. Accordingly, the historical analysis embeds oral testimonies, which have in some way encapsulated all kinds of values from the area's past, while the analysis of the tangible monuments takes into account the most recent evaluations of the fieldwork findings. Finally, the interviews that were conducted, although limited in number, are of extreme importance. The MaNet Project concerns above all 'the people that in everyday life played a determinant role throughout history'. Through the use of the tools of the theoretical framework and with the aim of attaining a 'multisensory perception' of the Mastorochoia as a societal landscape, the people interviewed were a mixture of key informers, people with decision making power and a random selection of different

2 Quoting Greenblatt (1999) we use the notion of 'thick description' as 'the writing method proposed by Geertz that transcends the simple description of the 'mute act' present in the act of 'thin description' to give the act being described 'its place in a network of framing intentions and cultural meanings' (Panourgiá 2012).

3 Overall, oral histories, as defined by Thomson, 'provides a means for a radical transformation of the social meaning of history' (Thomson 2000:23-24).

4 Oral histories contribute in a significant way to illustrate the area of Mastorochoia as a 'crucial process in perceiving and evaluating the present'. Moreover, they can 'reveal the constant interplay between the national, the local and the personal' (Kravva 2011:91,101).

5 The ELC framework stresses the 'fundamental role of knowledge'. The perception of landscape by the public should also be analysed from the viewpoint of both its historical development and its recent significance' (COE 2008:27-28).

ages and genders (Lecha-Marzo 2012:17,26; Torre 2002:20-23; Ganiatsas 1996:103-105).

The second part presents a Strategic Plan for local protection and development of the Mastorochochia villages. The point of departures is the set of the territory's values and potentialities identified in the first part. The MaNet Project's vision is established by taking into consideration the relationship between nature, economy and quality of life of the inhabitants. The interrelated objectives of the Project are set in accordance with three mission axes. Comprehensive ESTEMPLE analysis of external macro environment and Porter's Five Forces of external micro environments have been performed in order to examine the influence of the external factors on implementing the Project as a whole and its parts. The method of external benchmarking was applied for the study of one-to-one methodologically compatible best practice of Nansa Valley in Spain, as a model project showcasing the comprehensiveness of territorial development and Gjirokaster for its geographic adjacency and territorial similarity to the area under study.

The third part deals with the implementation of the Project. First, a Legal and Advisory Body Framework has been developed after research in the legal bodies for related fields. Human Resource Policy with the aim to create high qualitative performance conditions has been designed. The method of selection was applied in order to define crucial elementary Steps that include Research Agenda, General Action Plan, Networking, and Awareness-raising of Local Communities. Additionally, the tools for Quality and Sustainability Assurance were designed using analysis of the related instruments for the projects and concepts of similar character. Risk Assessment, Forecasting and Monitoring, Control Mechanism have been described with adequate detail, so that they may be implemented in accordance with the objectives of the Project. Furthermore, the existing projects have been analysed by taking into considerations the hierarchy of established priorities in order to ensure achieving smart sustainable growth of the Mastorochochia area (COPTA 2011; Lecha-Marzo 2012; Torre 2002).

*All photos, except referred otherwise, are intellectual property of the authors



- 1:** In Trapeza we met Mr. Thoma Tsilifi, 85 years old, who was a carpenter
- 2:** Aghia Paraskevi is a vivid village with friendly permanent residents
- 3:** Nesip Skenduli demonstrates the preparation of coffee in his Museum-House in Gjirokaster
- 4:** Festivity of Ag. Paraskevi in Kastanea
- 5:** Traditional house surrounded by forest in Pysogianni



6



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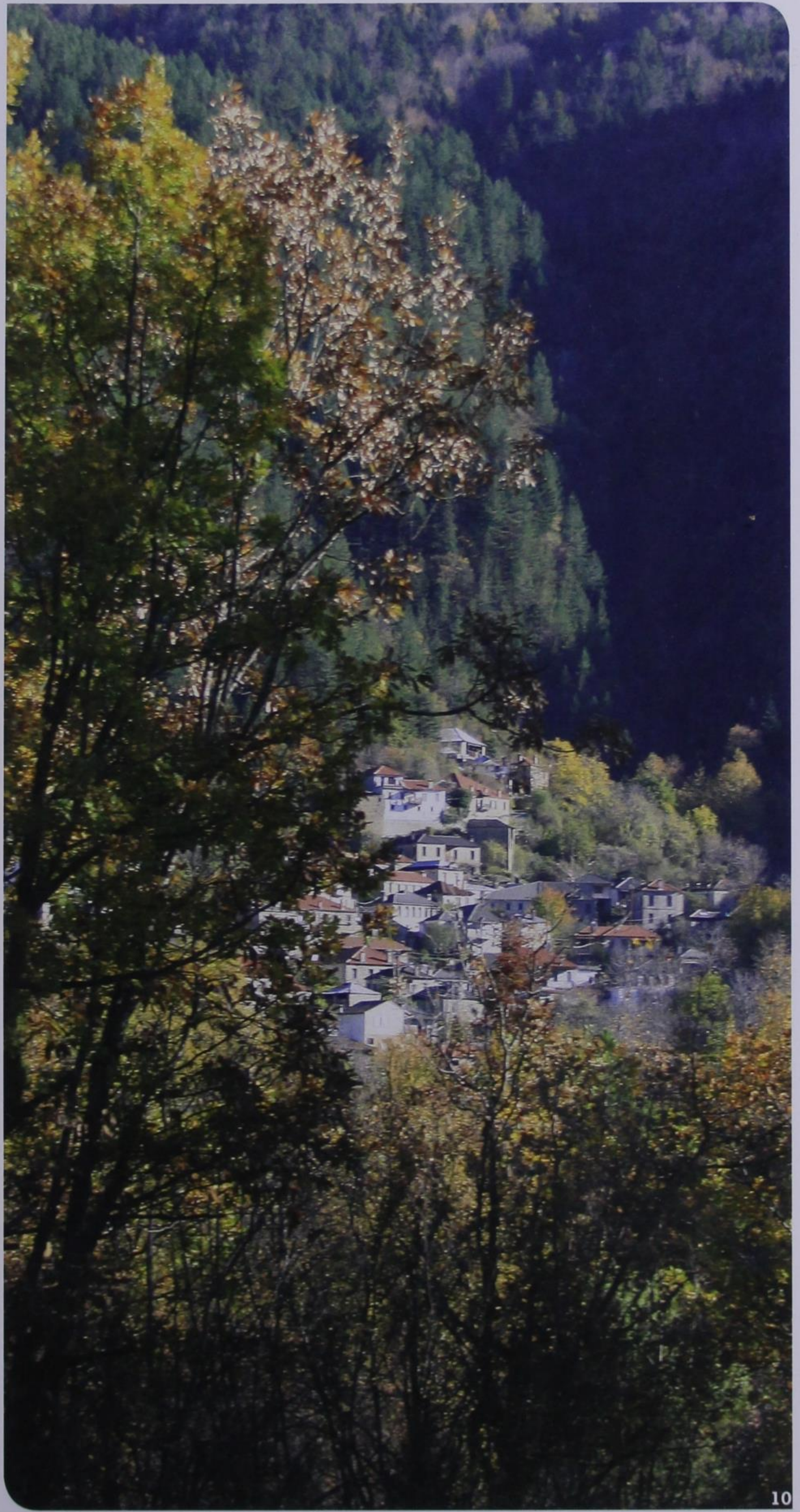


8



9

- 6: Gorgopotamos
- 7: Aghia Varvara
- 8: Monastiri
- 9: Vourbiani



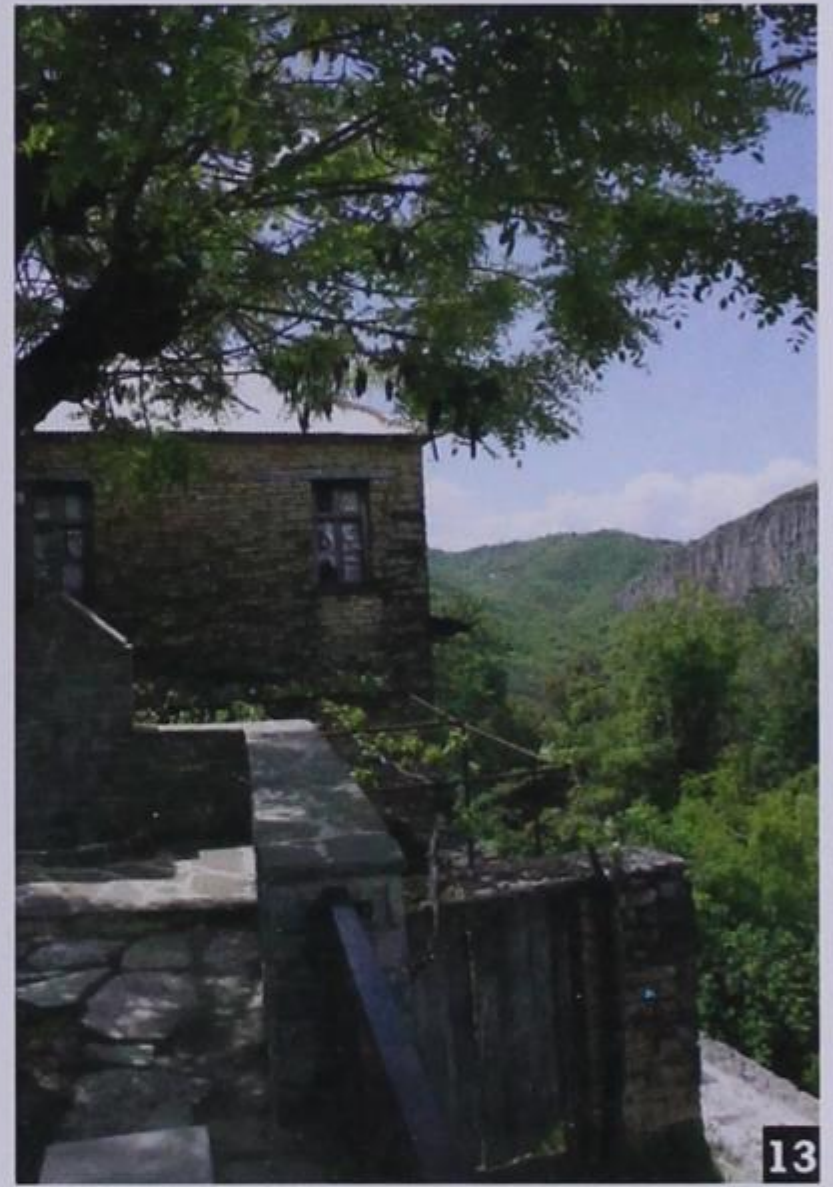
10: Kastanea



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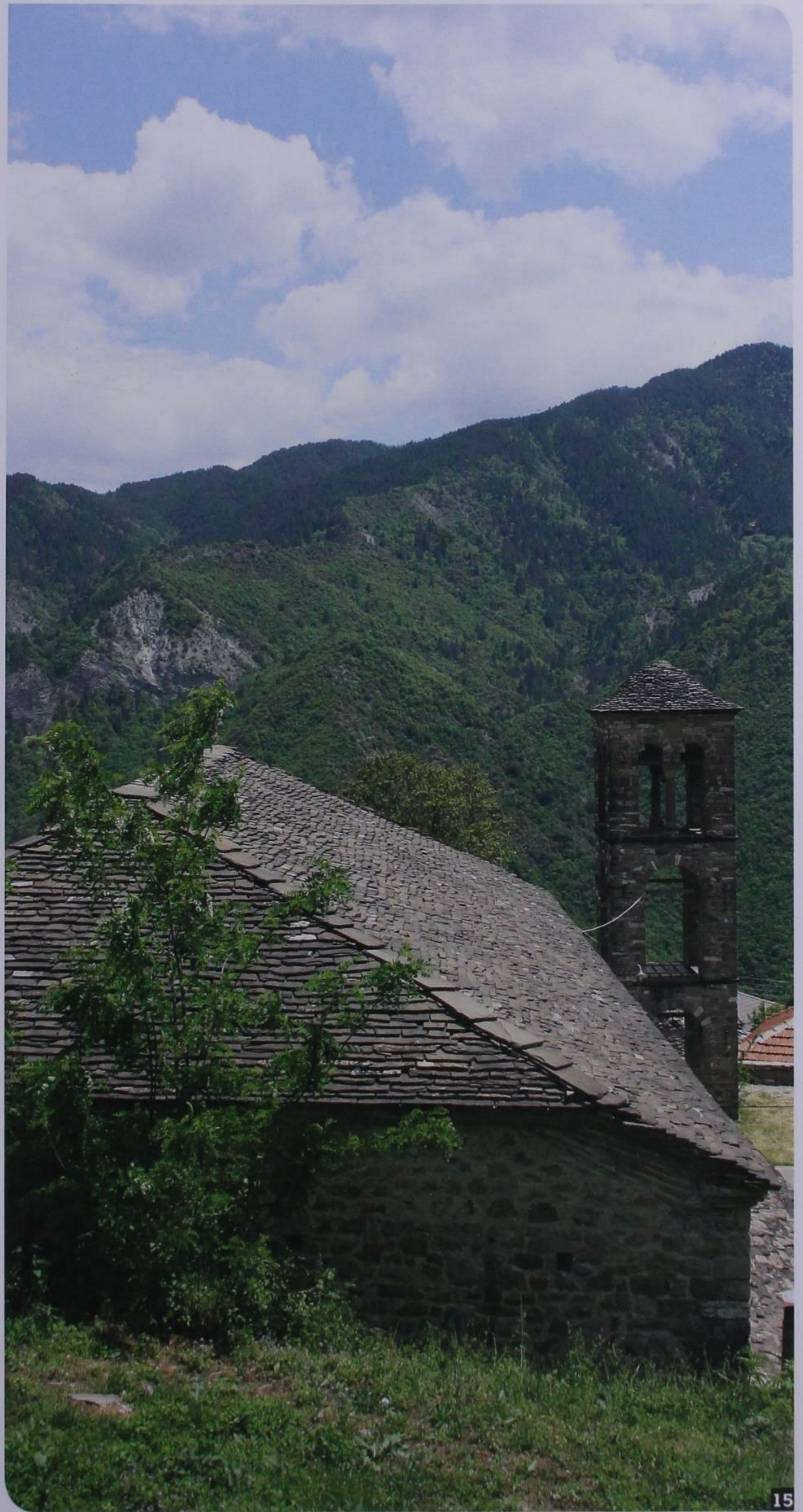


13



14

- 11:** Elefthero
(www.konitsa.gr)
- 12:** Likorachi
- 13:** Exohi
- 14:** Hiontades

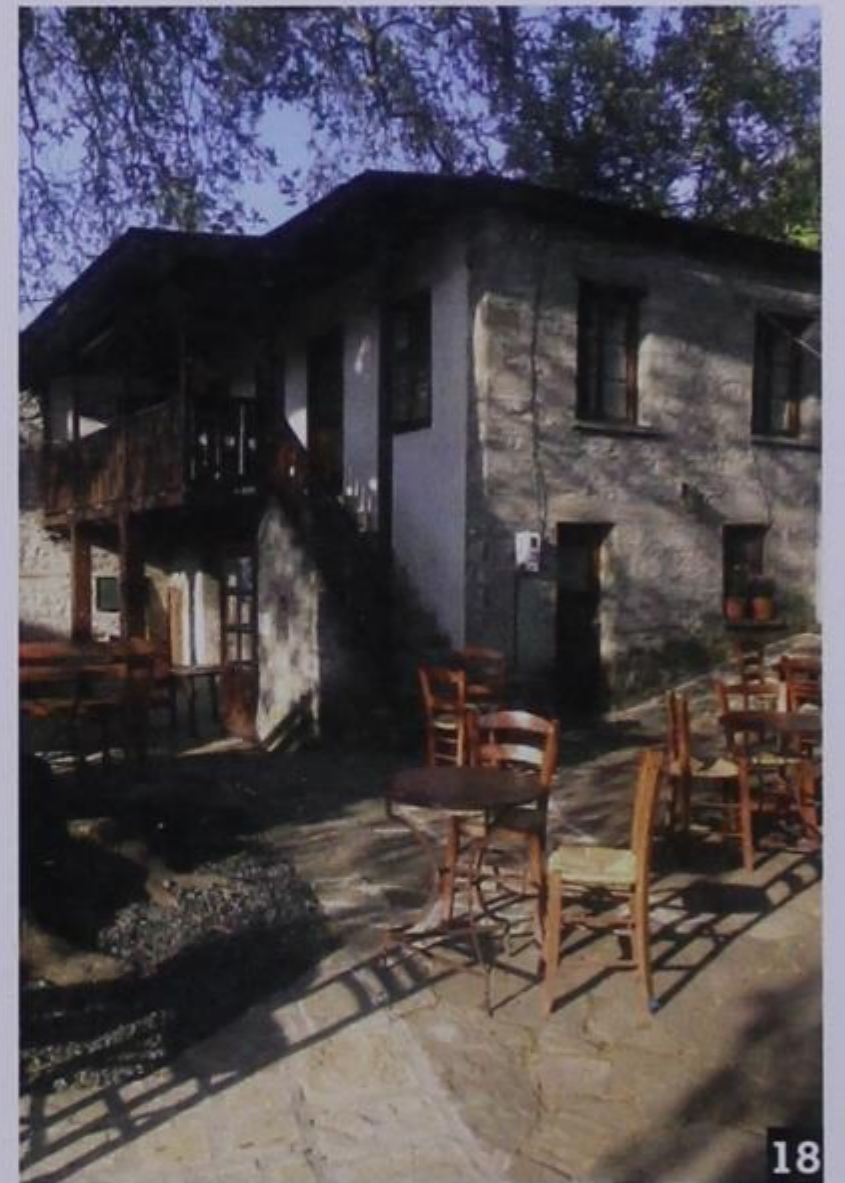




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18



19

- 16: Pirgos
- 17: Drosopigi
- 18: Ganadio
- 19: Fourka



20



21



22



23

- 20: Oxia
- 21: Langada
- 22: Trapeza
- 23: Zerma

