

SHARING CULTURES 2017

Proceedings of the
5th International Conference on Intangible Heritage



Edited by

**Sérgio Lira
Rogério Amoêda
Cristina Pinheiro**

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Montado intangible heritage in Southern Portugal

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ABSTRACT: The *montado* is a highly valued biocultural landscape, typical of the Iberian Peninsula Southwest, traditionally related with agro-forestry-pastoral systems where open formations of scattered cork, holm or mix oaks compose the arborous layer under which a rotation of crops/fallows/pastures is practiced. This aesthetically pleasing and biologically rich landscape, nowadays protected by Portuguese and European Law, is a type of continuing landscape, according to the World Heritage Convention classification. It provides not only important environmental functions and services but also cultural ones, in particular the heritage which includes natural structures as well as tangible and intangible cultural elements. The *montado* intangible heritage values should be emphasized: cork and wood craftworks; gastronomy; local traditions and knowledge as oaks pruning, cork harvesting and folk medicine; beliefs and legends related with religious events, agro-pastoral works or megalithic monuments and traditional artistic activities. The development of this intangible heritage can boost local socio-economic sustainability.

1 INTRODUCTION

Among the cultural Portuguese Landscapes with high heritage value, the *montado* landscape should be highlighted. This landscape is related with agro-silvo-forestry systems that have been shaped by man more or less since 2000 b.C. It integrates natural and cultural heritage, including tangible and intangible elements. Developing the intangible heritage can enhance the *montado* socioeconomic sustainability through tourism, education and place attachment whose growth counteracts depopulation. Moreover, this development contributes to the *montado* attractiveness, through local activities (artistic and museologic inc.) and to material and spiritual wellbeing for visitors and local people, which leads also to a better sustainability of the *montado*. An example of project which takes into consideration the intangible heritage is the *Montado* Great Route (Grande Rota do Montado), launched by the Intermunicipal Community of Central Alentejo – CIMAC whose aim is the implementation of ca. 1.000km of walking routes across the *montado* landscapes.

2 THE *MONTADO* AS A HERITAGE LANDSCAPE CASE

Cultural landscapes can be considered as ‘illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces,

both external and internal' (WHC, 2005, paragraph 47). This concept is then dynamic since cultural landscape is the product of a long-term, scientifically demonstrable nature/human interactive process (Fowler, 2006). Cultural landscapes are actually supported by natural environment, soils, water, vegetation and fauna, biodiversity. Biocultural landscapes integrates both natural and cultural elements that interact giving a particular character to the landscape that man shaped for centuries adding permanent disturbance into the system in order to maintain it in a particular balance. So biocultural landscapes are a particular case of heritage landscape where both natural and cultural values are present.

Montado's landscape is a particular case of biocultural landscape (Fig. 1). It's a multifunctional agro-forestry-pastoral system found mainly in the SW of Iberian Peninsula. A type of equivalent landscape can be found in the south of Spain called *Dehesa*. This system is characterized by an open tree stratum dominated by holm oaks (*Quercus rotundifolia*) and/or cork oaks (*Quercus suber*) or other kind of oak trees and an herbaceous layer dominated by annual species and some shrubs, that has been managed by man in a sustainable way for centuries.



Figure 1. Montado Landscape (author: Teresa Batista, 2014).

Protected landscape since 1999 (Decree-Law 140/99, April 24 – Annex B-1 republished by Decree-Law 49/2005, February 24; Directive 92/43/CEE, May 21 – Annex I; Decree-Law 169/2001, May 25, with alterations; Decree-Law 155/04, June 30), it is now in the Portuguese national list for the UNESCO World Heritage 2016 – Cultural Landscape application.

These multifunctional traditional landscapes are characterized by the persistence of native scattered vegetation throughout the landscape, constructing a heterogeneous mosaic from a variety of grazed, shrubby and cultivated land uses. This biocultural formation is 'one of the most aesthetically pleasing and biologically rich landscapes in Europe' (Pinto-Correia & Mascarenhas 2001). According to the World Heritage Convention classification, the *montado* landscape is clearly a type of continuing landscape (Batista et al 2015). The *montado* is also a

quite old land use system. According to Pinto-Correia and Fonseca (2009), the interventions in the *Quercus* forests remounted to 6000 b.C.. As Stevenson already stated in 1985 and 1988, the forestry-pastoral system has its origins between 2500 and 1500 b.C. (Batista et al. 2010).

3 THE INTANGIBLE HERITAGE OF *MONTADO* LANDSCAPE

3.1 *The montado natural and cultural heritage*

3.1.1 *Biocultural heritage*

The *montados* ecosystems, from an ecological point of view, are especially adapted to the less fertile soils and enable continuous profit without depleting (Fonseca, 2003). Different strategies concerning the use of plant resources promote the main forms of growth (Joffre et al., 1999). The forage resources depend on trees which act as water stress regulator for the herbaceous layer underlying but are also a resource in itself (*idem*). In addition, *montados* can allow the rain water infiltration into the soil by careful forest management and controlled grazing (Pinto-Correia & Vos, 2004). Moreover, native species of great agronomic interest grow naturally in *montados* and are very well adapted to that particular environment.

At the landscape scale, *montados* can show a variety of *facies*, due to the typological and tree density variability on the one hand and to the changing forms of under trees land use on the other. They therefore constitute a heterogeneous landscape mosaic maintaining a wide variety of floristic and faunistic species, endemic including (Pinto-Correia, 2000). This set of biophysical, structural and agricultural characteristics make *montados* very rich and important forest structures for biodiversity, particularly from the fauna standpoint.

Montados, especially of holm oak, have a great alpha and gamma diversity, although their fauna is not exclusive or specific as it exists in other habitat types (Onofre, 2007). Their conservation importance is mainly due to the high values of these diversities, the large area they occupy (ca. 338.000 ha) and the considerable number of threatened species (*idem*). Holm oaks *montados*, especially those with short pastures and fallows, have greater biodiversity than the *montados* with more developed shrubs or the oak forests (Onofre, 2007).

Regarding the floristic heritage, the highest species diversity is found in cork oaks *montados* in the Plio-Pleistocene sandy terrains of Western Alentejo. Many of these plants are endemic to Portugal, some vulnerable or at risk of extinction (Espírito Santo et al., 2005). In the holm oak *montados* of Alentejo inland, the best conservation conditions are generally on hills with rocky outcrops.

3.1.2 *Archaeological and architectonic heritage*

Regarding the archaeological and architectural heritage in the *montados* zones, there are often large structures. The megalithic monuments are very common on land with rocky outcrops. The two most important of the Iberian Peninsula are located in *montados* landscapes: the Big Dolmen of Zambujeiro, built between 4000 and 3500 b.C., in the transition period of the Final Neolithic - Chalcolithic, and the stone circle (cromlech) of Almendres (Fig. 2), a complex of menhirs built in the Neolithic period (5000-4000 BC.) (Mascarenhas & Rocha, 2011). Other important stone circles, dolmens and menhirs in the area of Évora, Pavia, Redondo and Reguengos (Central Alentejo) are also part of the *montados* landscape as well as numerous habitats of that period. In these landscapes also occur archaeological structures of other times as Roman *villae* (*Idem*).

In terms of architectural heritage, many farms are home to old mansions, some of which with elements of the Middle Ages or of the 16th century. Most of them date from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries as well as religious buildings with heritage value as convents and chapels (Mascarenhas & Rocha, 2011). The vernacular architectural heritage is also noted in many *montados* farms. It is a heritage concerning the houses of the farm workers, sheds, stables, barns, wells, threshing floors, and other types of rural structures such as old piggeries, mills and pens. Hydraulic structures like norias, dams, aqueducts, canals, cisterns and tanks are also very common in these farms (*Idem*).

Finally, it should be noted that the cultural heritage present in the *montados* does not only cover the tangible elements but also the intangible ones described below.



Figure 2. Almendres cromlech (author: José M. de Mascarenhas, 2015).

3.2 *Intangible heritage*

The values of *montado* intangible heritage occupy a prominent position within the system overall assets, allowing its development to have a significant positive impact on the socio-economic sustainability of the area, as will be seen in the following chapter. The intangible heritage elements are diverse and can be characterized as following:

3.2.1 *Craftworks*

Many craft traditions have passed from generation to generation providing a sense of identity and historical continuity, which allows local communities to perceive this art as a collective cultural heritage. The main products of this creativity are objects in cork, wicker, horn and wood, carved to the razor by the hands of the artisans, in most cases. The cork was a privileged support for wide use in the context of the material culture of rural areas, especially the “cochos”(type of bowl) and the “tarros”(type of container), indispensable tools in the shepherd's equipment. It also served as support for a very typical popular art of shepherds and cork workers. As an example we can mention the small sculptures depicting agricultural tasks, performed by the popular artists José Fernandes (Alcácer do Sal), Joaquim Espada (Évora) (Fig. 3) and Isidoro Verdasco (Évora).



Figure 3. Cork oak miniature (author: Joaquim Espada, photo author: Paula Mendes, 2017).

3.2.2 Gastronomy

The gastronomy related to *montado* is based mainly on black pork, and its superior quality products as sausages and hams, on beef meat, such as the traditional *montado* veal, and merino sheep, but also on small game species as hare, rabbit, red partridge and big game as veal and wild boar. Honey, mushrooms, wild plants for infusion and flavoring, artisanal jams and confectionery products are also valuable. Presently manufactured bread and cookies with acorn flour are produced on a *montado* farm (Fig. 4).

3.2.3 Local traditions and popular knowledge

The knowledge transmitted by shepherds and other *montado* workers throughout the generations is one of the most important intangible heritage that is at risk of being lost and deserves more attention in preservation. Among the ancestral techniques, the pruning of the oaks, responsible for the typical morphology of the *montado* trees, that promotes the spread of the seeds and the maximization of the shadow in the summer, and the drawing of the cork oaks that have several specifications namely the time of harvesting and the humidity and the technique, are the most common. But there are other knowledge less diffused as the extraction of oil from the mastic berry (*Pistacia lentiscus* L.) used in the lamps and much appreciated for its scent (Mascarenhas, 2017).

In the field of folk medicine, holm oak mosses were very useful for burns and foot blisters. The decoction of its bark gave a very useful tisane in the treatment of sore throat

(Salgueiro, 2004) but could also be used to treat stomatitis, chilblains, hemorrhoids and cracks. Its tannin was good to cure diarrhea and hemorrhages (Vermelho do Corral, 2014). As for the cork and holm oak acorns, they allowed to make a healthy coffee, once roasted and ground.

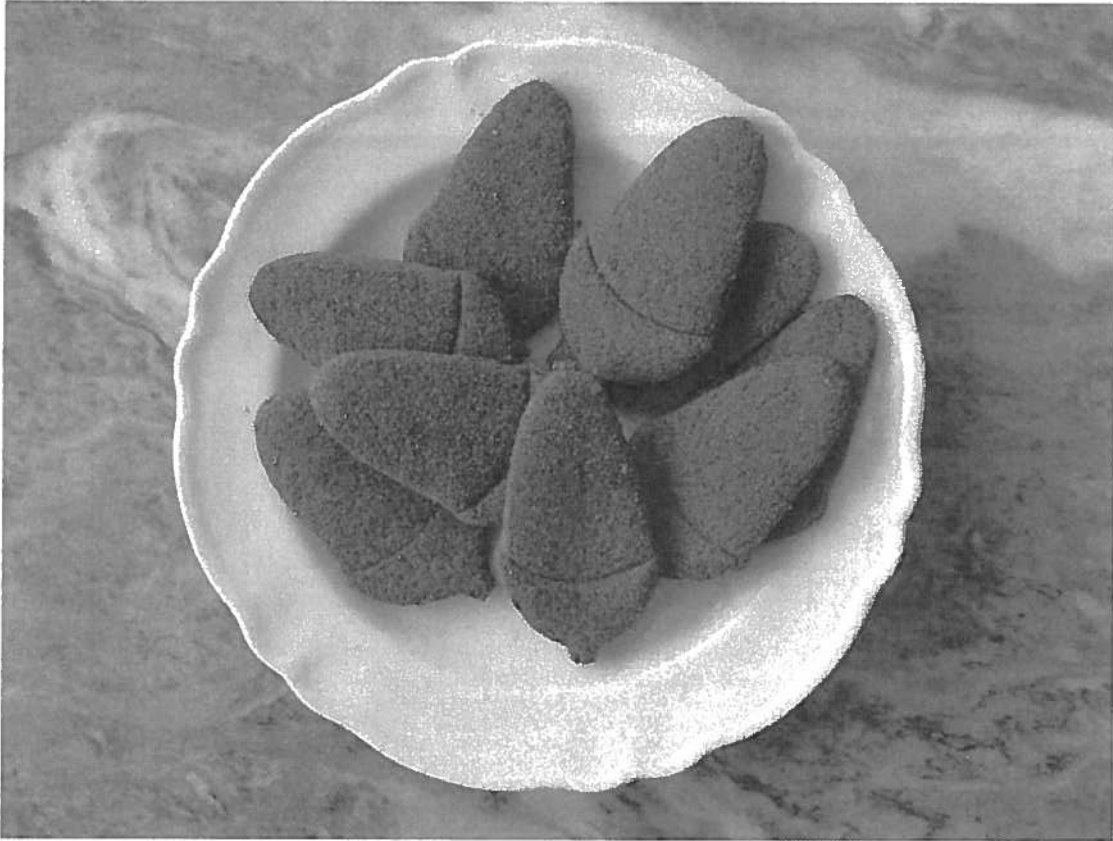


Figure 4. Holm acorn cookies (author: José M. de Mascarenhas, 2017).

3.2.4 *Beliefs and legends*

Due to their great longevity and size, the excellence of their morphology, the richness of their uses and their economic value, the oaks are outstanding marks of the places and landscapes in which they occur and are an integral part of the people's memory and cultural history, who have always devoted them a prominent place in legends and literature. During protohistory, oaks were regarded as sacred trees, as cosmic trees, that would link Earth to Heaven and Hell. The ancients also thought that eating oak acorns they could foretell the future, as the Latin poet *Lucanus* (36-65 AD) wrote (Rodrigues, 1998). Other *montados* plants have a magic-religious value: the artemisia, the rosemary, the marjoram and the lavender. The terebinth (*Pistacia terebinthus* L.) and the flax-leaved daphne (*Daphne gnidium* L.) would also have been sacred shrubs, according to the stories of the shepherds (*Idem*).

Among the many legends associated with the *montados*, a great part are related to the agropastoral activities that took place in them. This is the case, for example, of the legends of Saint Cornelius in Ossa Hills, Our Lady in Brotas, Saint Christopher and the Beja blazon. Others are associated with particular lithologic structures, such as potholes, like the Pego do Sino ones on the Tera stream, and caves, like Saint Quiteria's grave in the Holy Cave of Monfurado Hills. Legends are also linked with megalithic monuments, such as the one of the dolmen-chapel of Saint Brissos or Our Lady of Deliverance (fig. 5), related to the cult of the rain, a permanent concern of the people of Alentejo, with castles, such as the one of the enchanted Moorish woman of Giraldo Castle, or with historical events, such as the one of Saints Comba and Inonimatain Tourega, or the one of the foundation of a convent in Vaiamonte. But one of the most interesting, because of its affinities to Fatima, refers to the apparition of Our Lady of the Assumption on the top of a cork oak, in Messejana (Aljustrel).

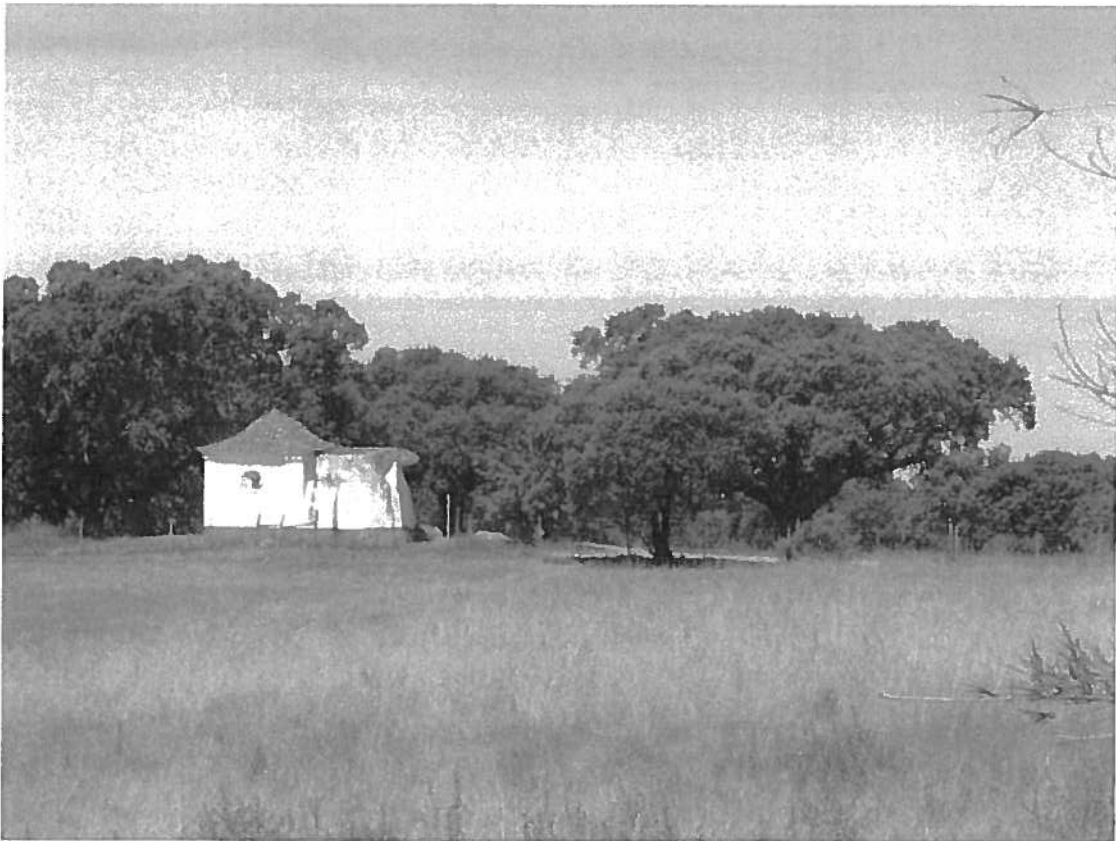


Figure 5. Dolmen-chapel of Saint Brissos or Our Lady of Deliverance. The dolmen, built between the IV and III millennium BC was transformed, in the seventh century, into a small chapel.(author: José M. de Mascarenhas, 2017).

3.2.5 *Montado landscape aesthetics and artistic inspiration*

The rural landscapes can be evaluated for their bucolic and aesthetic aspects, with no acknowledgment of the role of farming (Pinto-Correia et al. 2008). This is the expectation shared by foreign visitors staying for relatively short periods generally, who walk or go on bicycle or horse tours in the area. They can catch an impression based on the aesthetical and environmental quality of the landscape and appreciate natural and cultural heritage. As mentioned by Rob Miller (Miller, 2014), different lines and forms create different emotional responses in people. The gentle slopes of the Alentejo *montados* establish a unique visual experience. The cork and holm oaks dominating in a grand plan are the linear classic Alentejo; "a small group of cork and holm oaks between steep pastures combine with a more distant forest that extends as far as the eye can see" (Miller, 2014).

According to a recent study, the *montado* is an essential component of the Alentejo landscape for users in general, whether they are inhabitants, frequent visitors, tourists, hunters or land managers. Most of these users prefer the following composition: "20 - 40% of the landscape in view to be occupied by the *montado* with the remaining landscape covered by agricultural areas" (Surová et al., 2014, 22). This means the "preference for the landscape composition that appears today on a large scale in Alentejo: *montado* patches with changing densities of tree cover in combination with patches of open pastures, annual crops, or permanent crops such as vineyards and olive groves" (Idem, 22).



Figure 6. Oil painting on canvas of cork oak montado (author: António Saiote, 2014).

Since at least the 18th century the oak *montados*, in general, have been an inspiration source for the creation of pictorial works. Through painting, the *montados* become idealized and emotional landscapes. One only loves what one knows, and drawing and painting become means of privileged observation, re-interpreting nature and landscape through creative and sensorial looks that contribute to reinforce their identity (Saraiva, 2014).

Among the various painters who approached the *montado* in their works, one of the most prestigious was Carlos de Bragança (1863 - 1908), the King D. Carlos I of Portugal, author of the painting *O Sobreiro* (2005), by many considered a masterpiece, and reproduced by Silva and Monge (2005). Another renowned painter is the modernist Dordio Gomes (1890 - 1976), from Alentejo, whose paintings *Paisagem com sobreiros e cavalos* (1945) and *Mulheres Alentejanas or Mondadeiras* (1932) are to be highlighted.

Manuel Ribeiro de Pavia (1907-1957), a much esteemed neorealist illustrator, is the author of works, remarkable for their expressiveness, as the one called *Alentejanos* on the cover of the magazine *Panorama - Revista Portuguesa de Arte e Turismo*. 27, 1946. Although from the mid-1960s until now, there are numerous pictorial works that deal with the *montado*, we would like to mention three contemporary authors for whom the *montado* appears as one of the main sources of inspiration: António Saiote (1954-)(fig. 6), Manuel Casa Branca (1965 -) and Rob Miller (1954 -). These last two authors has even approached this subject at theoretical level (Casa Branca, 2014; Miller, 2014).

We should also mention one of the greatest Portuguese sculptors of today, João Cutileiro (1932-), who was inspired by one of the mythical trees of the *montado* in his sculpture made of different marbles, the *Sobreiro* (1992).

Panel tiles is another source of artistic creativity explored within the *montado* areas (Fig. 7) as well as Land Art, which has been present at the Safira Landscape Arts Festival (Fig. 8) which ran regularly between 2011 and 2015 in a farm close to the Safira abandoned village (Montemor-o-Novo municipality).



Figure 7. Section of tiles panel of Montemor-o-Novo Market (painting author: Clara Gomes, 50's; photo author: José M. de Mascarenhas, 2017).



Figure 8. "Azinheira Vermelha" (The Red Holm Oak) (Land Art author: Cristina Ataíde; photo author: Maria Cristina Soares, 2011).

4 THE IMPROVEMENT OF *MONTADO* LANDSCAPE DEVELOPEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

The traditional *montado* (agro-sylvo-pastoral system) it depends on a social system that sustain the extensive pastoral activity and property renting for cereal production purposes where the structure of the property in the area of the *montado*, the great farms (*latifundia*) prevail, for centuries owned by powerful families and religious. The work was guaranteed by employees; either permanent or temporary, most of them not owning any land (Mascarenhas & Rocha, 2010). The improvement of the quality of life standards, together with rural depopulation, caused the disappearance of cheap hand work laborers (idem). From the sixties on, the Portuguese farming population decreased irreversibly. Consequently, the hand-work became much more expensive, and the mechanical agriculture was highly developed, facts that were disadvantageous for the *montado* in general (Mendes, 2007 cit. by Mascarenhas & Rocha, 2010). Also, during the sixties and early seventies of last century, new contractual and social protection laws brought about an increase of the social security contributions. Consequently landowners dismissed employees, which favored rural exodus (Mascarenhas & Rocha, 2010). This was accompanied by negative impacts on heritage in general, particularly on the farm structures with vernacular interest that frequently were falling in a state of ruin, or destroyed by heavy machinery. The loss of this heritage can be considered as an ethnographic impoverishment since the vernacular structures represent also habits and customs of the daily life, religious and/or festive events and collective memories (Filipe & Mascarenhas, 2010). Nevertheless we assist in the last years to a strengthening of the *montado* socio-economic sustainability through the development of multifunctional activities where heritage plays an important role. The development of the intangible heritage in *montado* areas will give rise to the growth of the local identity and local affection, reinforcing the place attachment on the one hand, and to the promotion and diversification of local activities, favoring the improvement of the material well-being of the area and the local attractiveness, on the other hand.

Although there is no consensus regarding the definition of place attachment, allowing its distinction of close concepts, the positive affective bond between an individual and a specific place can be considered as valid definition, which constitutes for the individual an extension of himself (Debenedetti, 2005). Place attachment can be characterized “as having functional (place dependence), cognitive (place identity) and affective (place affect) aspects” (Halpenny 2010, 410). Place identity is a factor that not only contributes to the individuals' self-identity but which also translates the connection between an individual and a place or between an individual and the environment (Clayton, 2003 cit. by Halpenny, 2010). Place affect plays particularly an important role in the connection between individuals and places. This affective connection is highlighted in the framework of resource management, ecology and outdoor recreation (Halpenny, 2010). The exploration of all these place attachment elements as well as pro-environmental actions (behaviors) are important aspects to the promotion of the sustainable use of natural resources (idem). A greater place attachment, ie, a greater attachment to the local environment contributes to a lesser desire to emigrate, favoring the development of new activities in *montado* areas and creating therefore better socio-economic sustainability conditions.

The intangible heritage development in *montado* areas should be expansion part and diversification of local activities, in particular those related to heritage in general (natural and cultural heritage). The conversion of structures with vernacular character into interpretation centers or other types of museum spaces, will allow highlighting heritage values of the area. Elements of *montado* intangible heritage such as handicrafts, traditional artistic practices, religious and profane legends and practices, among others, can be developed through a suitable museological treatment that should, if possible, be complemented by the installation of restaurants or bars for knowledge of the local gastronomy heritage and other supporting touristic structures. These structures meant to the intangible heritage development should, as far as possible, be integrated into a larger project of developing heritage in its multiple facets. The holding of land art and walking art festivals may also be useful for the promotion of *montado* territories. The *montados* landowners are mainly interested in heritage development because this favors the creation of conditions of greater attractiveness which is obviously important to tourist exploitation. The creation of these conditions may also be of interest to the

inhabitants of villages set in *montado* areas. The creation of small businesses related to the tourist exploitation of the area, particularly the restoration and tourism of nature and heritage, could give rise to the creation of local jobs, thus helping to stop local depopulation and to revitalize depressed inland areas. This attractiveness strengthening can be then translated into better conditions to the local people material well-being.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The relevant importance of the montado landscape is in great part due to the symbolic meaning which derives from a specific historical context. A powerfully evocative process of abstraction occurs since montado is understood as a unique kind of place. Heritage landscapes serve as base mirrors of a culture's collective past and their reinvention for tourist consumption fixes them in socio-historical imaginations and helps to ensure their future protection (Johnson, 1996 cit. by Knudsen & Greer, 2008). Montado systems have a great economic value inherent to their nature, and the land-owners gradually incorporate new functions connected with rural recreation and tourism. To multiply the landscape uses can be a path to a more diversified economy and a higher social value of the region (Surová & Pinto-Correia, 2008). Intangible heritage development takes an important part in this activities diversification strategy towards the montado valorization and the creation of many alternative jobs. This contributes not only to the preservation and recovery of the natural and cultural heritage but also to the revitalization of the depressed inland rural areas. For example, the Montado Great Route is a specific project-case that will benefit the development of intangible heritage by allowing the users of the Central Alentejo trails to be connected with other important Portuguese and International routes. Furthermore the users will be given means to be able to better interpret the montado heritage values. This also contributes to a greater knowledge of the system and to increase the users' awareness of the need to preserve it. Therefore, both the regional dynamics and the synergies between the economic agents and the local population, stimulating sustainable tourism activities, are promoted. Last but not least, the local population wellbeing is improved, which leads to a lesser depopulation of this low density region.

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