



**NATIONAL INVENTORY
OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE
OF GREECE**

RECORD OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE ELEMENT

1. Brief presentation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage element

a. How is the element known to its bearers:

Community water management in Tórnos, Evrytania

b. Other denomination(s):

Management of natural resources as common goods.

Irrigation and water supply in mountain communities.

c. Brief description (Up to 100 words):

For centuries, the inhabitants of the community of Tórnos have used the rich hydrographic network of natural springs and mountain streams on the north-eastern slopes of Mount Panaitolikó to shape a sustainable, self-managed irrigation system for the agricultural land laid out in terraces (*pezoúles*). This has ensured food security for generations over time.

d. Field of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- Oral traditions and expressions
- Performing arts
- Social practices, rituals and festive events
- Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe (e.g. Management of local natural resources)
- Traditional craftsmanship

e. Area where the element is found (100 words):

The mountain community of Tórnos in Evrytania forms part of the geophysical setting of the catchment basins of the Torniótico and Prousiótico mountain streams. These streams flow into the Krikelopótamos gorge, and then into the Trikeriotis river. Finally, they empty into the Kremastá Reservoir in Evrytania.

f. Key words (50 words):

Lived sustainability, eco-dynamics, community-based management of natural resources, hydrological network, Intangible Cultural Heritage, communitarianism, self-management, self-sufficiency.

2. Identity of the bearer of the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage

a. Who is/are the bearer(s) of the element? (200 words)

The permanent residents of the mountain community.

b. Contact details

Name of bearer: Community of Tórnos, Evrytania

Address: Municipal Unit of Prousós, Tórnos, Postal code 36100

URL / website: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/202276634531649/?ref=share>

c. Additional information about the element:

People in charge

Name: Kléon Rízos

Capacity: resident of Tórnos, self-employed professional

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Name: Panagiótis Paleós

Capacity: resident of Tórnos, beekeeper and naturalist

E-mail: panospaleos@gmail.com

3. Detailed description of the Intangible Cultural Heritage element as it is found today (between 500 and 1000 words)

In defiance of the abandonment that has been afflicting the mountain communities of the Pindus range in Greece for decades, the mountain community of Tórnos has preserved its natural and man-made features. The bioclimatic conditions, geological formations and extensive undisturbed forests have guaranteed a steady water supply over the centuries. Like other communities at the southern end of the Pindus range, the community has a centuries-long history of mixed farming. Recognising the limitations of water and soil as natural resources, the inhabitants have transformed the surrounding land into terraced plots for cultivation. Despite the short growing season, these small holdings sustained mountain households by providing pulses, cereals, vegetables, fruit and wine.

The rational use of water was a necessary precondition: water was channelled in turn to the sown terraces through a network of reservoirs and ditches that everyone jointly maintained and preserved. The composition and slopes of the soil shaped their choices. Using materials provided by their natural environment, they built dry-stone walls, water reservoirs, supporting structures, bridges, fulling mills and a village watermill. Maintaining this network of irrigation, water supply and water-powered support for the agricultural production cycle is a collective endeavour, with each family contributing proportionally. The system was destroyed when the fascist occupying army burned down the fulling mill and the watermill in 1944. Despite the community's population shrinking, especially in the decades following the civil war and forced evacuation of settlements, as well as subsequent rural-to-urban migration, the irrigation infrastructure remains active thanks to the continued respect shown by the permanent residents. . They supervise the network persistently and carefully throughout the year, repairing damage from landslides, fallen trees

and sudden torrents, cleaning the ditches and maintaining the reservoirs and terraces. This ensures that the traditional terrace irrigation system continues to function at all levels of the cultivated land.

4. Space, facilities, and equipment associated with the performance/exercise of the Intangible Cultural Heritage element

As shown in the provided sketch, the source spring (*neromána*) is located at the highest point of the network in terms of elevation, and the stream runs alongside the cultivated plots from there. Each landowning cultivator is responsible for the maintenance of the sections corresponding to his property, as well as of the tanks he maintains for storing water as a reserve. The shared parts of the network that connect the properties within each neighbourhood are maintained by the group of residents who take care of them. Likewise, the fountains in each neighbourhood, as well as the waterfalls and the bridges, are regarded as matters of communal concern and care, so that everyone may enjoy them collectively. Just as they feel and act collectively with regard to the village church, so too do they for the fountains at Megáli Vrýsi and in the neighbourhoods of Tórnos. Their shared sense of responsibility also determines their practices, ensuring that the system operates for the benefit of all.

5. Products or associated tangible elements resulting from the practice of the ICH element

The fountains with their stone troughs, the stone-built water reservoirs, the stone bridges and the stone-built watermill together make up their shared heritage. The watermill was rebuilt in 2008 and brought back into operation by the permanent residents. Similarly, they look after and maintain the hand-built crossings made with local materials, as well as the network of footpaths that connect all the community infrastructure and neighbourhoods in the village. The terraced fields are maintained and cultivated by the families who remain in the village throughout the year as permanent residents.

6. Historical data on the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage (up to 700 words)

The history of the Tórnos community is closely linked to the history of human settlement in the wider area. Archaeological finds in the Ai-Sóstis area of Mikró Chorio Chelidónas date the first habitation of this mountainous region to the Neolithic period. The written documentation concerning the population growth in the surrounding mountains and its connection with the strong pastoral tradition and local economy is drawn from the manuscripts of the Holy Monastery of Proussos, which, as a monument of Byzantine art and religious tradition, sustained its existence — as well as its reconstruction after its destruction by the German Occupation forces — through the mountain communities that surround it.

Tórnos is connected to the monastery not only culturally but also economically, as a large forested area within the boundaries of the community falls under the monastery's management, and the historic pilgrims' path that linked the monastery with Thermo and Aetolia-Acarmania passes through the territory of Tórnos. The historic route is also linked to the memorial site of Mávri Spiliá (Black Cave) and the naturally fortified position of Apoklistra, which provided sanctuary to thousands of civilians during the Greek War of Independence in 1821.

7. The significance of the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage today

a. What is the significance of the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage for its bearers? (between 100 and 300 words)

The people of Tórnos share many traditional values relating to water management, whether they reside in the village permanently or not. Several Tórnos people in the diaspora maintain a house in the village and spend part of their holidays there. These residents share the efforts of the permanent inhabitants to preserve the water-management system, as they have observed the damage recorded both to the terraces that have been abandoned agriculturally and to the community infrastructure of access roads and paths, caused by the uncontrolled flow of water and streams during the long winter period and by the abrupt fluctuations in stream discharge.

The depopulation of mountain communities and the absence of primary productive activities, such as livestock farming and forestry have consequences that are critical for their survival.. Forest ecosystems that are no longer managed through traditional agroforestry practices are at risk from the accumulation of forest biomass. In recent years, climate change has manifested itself in the form of extreme weather events, such as prolonged droughts or intense rainfall. Combined with the long dry and hot season, these phenomena increase the risk of forest fires and threaten the primeval forests of remote mountain areas. This makes the need for the holistic management of our forest wealth ever more pressing, as this guarantees the hydrological cycle and water quality in mountainous Greece. Maintaining water quality is a national priority, as set out in the legal texts of the National Water Plan, in accordance with Directive 2000/60/EC on water, and in line with the quality-of-life requirements set out in the Greek Constitution. The community as a whole participated in the preparation of the submission for the inscription of its water management practices on the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage, recognising the beneficence of nature and conscious of its duty towards future generations.

b. What is the significance of the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage for contemporary Greek society? (between 100 and 200 words)

The community of Tórnos as a whole constitutes a landscape of collective identity (ethnoscape) and of rural cultural heritage. The rugged mountain relief, the rich hydrological network and the productive activities of its inhabitants have created a unique mosaic of high-value landscapes (multifunctional landscapes).

Preserving and actively using Tórnos' community irrigation system guarantees the viability of the rural mountain landscape. Its significance extends beyond the Greek mountain region to the entire Mediterranean basin, where effective water management is of vital importance given the threat of water scarcity caused by the climate crisis.

c. Was the community involved in preparing the registration of the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the National Inventory, and if so, how? (between 200 and 300 words)

The local community's participation is ongoing, both in the practical preservation and maintenance of the irrigation network, and in supporting awareness-raising activities such as hosting groups of students, teachers, visitors and

hiking groups. Preparing and requesting the inscription of the community irrigation system in the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Greece) is a natural continuation of this collective effort.

8. Preservation and Promotion of the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage

a. How is the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage transmitted to younger generations today? (between 200 and 300 words)

As this is an ongoing, everyday practice of lived sustainability, it is transmitted intergenerationally over time and concerns embodied knowledge shared by women and men in the community, which is taught to younger people through informal yet powerful forms of apprenticeship. In Tórnos, environmental education programmes for sustainability are implemented along the network of paths maintained in support of the irrigation system. Teachers from all over Greece and all levels of education are involved, as well as environmental education teachers from the European Erasmus+ Programme and international participants from the AGROMM Programme. Corresponding training courses in mountain agroforestry are delivered by the collaborating Laboratory of Agroforestry and Forest Soil Science of the Department of Forestry and Natural Environment Management at the Agricultural University of Athens in Karpenísi.

b. Measures for the preservation and promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage element that have been taken in the past or that are being implemented today (on a local, regional, or broader scale) (between 200 and 300 words)

Everyday life in the geophysical terrain of Tórnos requires the constant the constant safeguarding and maintenance of the land- and water-management system on the part of the inhabitants. Since 2007, the educational team of the Environmental Education Centre of Karpenísi has chosen Tórnos as a field site for its environmental education programmes. These programmes are offered and implemented each year with primary and secondary school pupils from all over Greece.

The permanent residents of Tórnos provide tireless voluntary support to the steadily growing numbers of casual visitors and targeted groups who come to walk the water trails throughout the year, and this support moves every visitor deeply. The Hiking and Naturalists' Association of Karpenisi supports the ongoing effort to maintain the paths and the threshing floors scattered throughout the forest zone of the village, which were cultivated with dryland cereal varieties for the inhabitants' subsistence only a few decades ago. The residents' volunteer group has also received formal recognition in the form of a Volunteer Award from the Department of Forestry and Natural Environment Management. With their support, the Laboratory of Agroforestry makes use of the well-preserved traditional agroforestry system in its inter-university research programmes. The association recently presented this system to Aimilia Drouga, the coordinator of the GIAHS programme in Greece for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), with a view to its inclusion in this global network of important agricultural heritage systems.

c. Proposed measures for preservation and promotion to be implemented in the future (on a local, regional, or broader scale) (between 300 and 500 words)

The described actions aim to highlight and safeguard the traditional irrigation and cultivation system on the Tornos terraces, given the pressure caused by the area's steadily declining population. This successful, living example demonstrates the sustainable use of natural resources, such as land and water, and shows that food security is a shared responsibility and a public good.

The European and global communities have set the goal of achieving sustainable and equitable societies through the sustainable and equitable management of natural resources, as well as local-scale production and consumption, with the aim of reducing the environmental and economic cost of food (European Green Deal, Farm to Fork Strategy). The self-sustaining cultivated terraces promoted and showcased by the community of Tornos, which are supported by its self-managed irrigation system and incorporate agroforestry practices and multifunctional systems of forest gardens and livestock farming, constitute a concrete and successful response to contemporary environmental and agricultural challenges.

9. Main Bibliography

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AYLA project. *Πιλοτικό εκπαιδευτικό πρόγραμμα «Αγροτικό Τοπίο»* [Pilot educational programme “Agricultural Landscape”]. Retrieved from: <https://ayla.culture.gr/pilotiko-ekpaideutiko-programma-agrotiko-topio/>

10. Additional Evidence

Annex of documentation

Includes: texts accompanying the visual and audio materials (drawings, photographs, sound recordings, videos, etc.) and cartographic mapping.

Online sources:

Department of Forestry and Natural Environment Management, Agricultural University of Athens (Karpenísi).

<https://dasologia.gr/>

Hellenic Agroforestry Network.

<http://www.agroforestry.gr/pages/gr/>

Environmental Education Centre of Karpenísi.

<https://kpe-karpen.eyr.sch.gr/>

Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS).

<https://www.fao.org/giahs/en/>

Hiking and Naturalists Association of Karpenísi.

<https://pezoporikos-karpenisiou.gr/>

Website created by Panagiótis Paleós on the nature of Tórnos and its people.

<https://tornosnature.blogspot.com/>

Website created by Kleon Rizos for the village.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/202276634531649/?ref=share>

The photographic material used comes from Panagiótis Paleós and Kléon Rízos.

11. Author's Details and Date of Submission

Names – capacity of authors

1. Kléon Rízos, permanent resident of Tórnos, self-employed.
2. Panagiótis Paleós, permanent resident of Tórnos, naturalist, beekeeper.
3. Vasilikí Láppa, teacher, forester, MSc in Ecology and Environmental Management, PhD candidate, Agricultural University of Athens, permanent resident of Karpenísi.

Place and date of drafting the form:

Tórnos, June 2022

12. Last Update

24 July 2022