



Afterword – virtually there

So, your impressions of Măgura Past and Present?

Well, I have never been to Măgura, perhaps I never will, but in thinking about, designing and compiling this book I am virtually there, at least in a conceptual and artistic way.

By reading the varied contributions and seeing the accompanying images and drawings, and by typesetting the book and designing the graphics, I have gained respect for and some, albeit limited, understanding of a Romanian village community and its relationships to its surrounding heritage. No substitute for being there, and, of course, in this book it is portrayed through the ideas, words and images of non-residents, of those who have intervened. But, short of actually visiting Măgura, the series of interventions presented in this book may be the closest I am able to get for now.

As an archaeological illustrator, experienced in working with colleagues to produce archaeological books and posters for diverse audiences, the invitation to work on this book was a welcome change. In ways not always possible in the production of archaeological literature, it has encouraged me to think about and allowed me the opportunity to explore a variety of artistic modes of expression and presentation that aim to disseminate and generate enthusiasm for ideas to do with the past, the present, heritage, people and place. Furthermore, and equally importantly, it has made me think more about the role of, and the valuable contribution made by, archaeological illustration. It is interesting that, in thinking of the integration of art and archaeology as being in some ways something new, we tend to overlook how fundamental art, at least in the form of archaeological illustration, has always been to archaeology and the presentation of landscapes and heritage. Art and archaeology are everywhere integrated: in, for example, books, leaflets, posters, signage and museum exhibitions. Much more could be done in recognition of this.

Without ever having been to Măgura, I am now an MPP project participant; an intervener entangled in transformative processes and one of those transitory interlocutors on the periphery. I am a member of that 'we', of that community, who survey, excavate, sample, analyse, draw and try to interpret and scientifically and artistically represent the simple but nevertheless challenging, and still as yet unanswered, questions: What is Măgura? And who do we think we are?

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