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The Persistence of the Forest

Travellers: The Persistence of the Forest

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My interest for the forest started with two observations: The first one was the fact that a quarter of the Zurich metropolitan area is covered by forest. Each location within the city of Zurich is a maximum of 3 Kilometers away from the nearest forest. The image of Zurich's urban landscape is dominated by the wooded moraine hillsides of the Uetli, Käfer, Zürich- and Zimmerberg, they surround the city and define its edge. The second fact that arose my interest for the forest was an article I read in 2015 about the forest, which included a survey about the question if forest protection should be relaxed. 10 percent were in favour of it, whereas 88 percent stated, "The forest is sacred to us". The total number of participants in the survey was more than 10'000. What attracted my attention was not only the sheer number of people for whom the forest was important, but also the use of the word "sacred". Somehow, it indicated a deeper relation between man and forest, one that wasn't purely pragmatic. I wondered how this perception of the forest influenced the urban development of it. How was it possible, that in a country like Switzerland, where utilisable land has always been seen as a scarce and limited resource, the forest became sacrosanct?

See also



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