Chapter 6: Conclusion

DOI: 10.4000/books.ifeagd.742
Publisher: Institut français d'études anatoliennes
Place of publication: Istanbul
Year of publication: 2014
Published on OpenEdition Books: 4 November 2014
Serie: Patrimoines au présent
Electronic ISBN: 9782362450396

This text was automatically generated on 27 April 2017.
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1 Old roads are the living witnesses of the histories and processes of change of regions in which they are located. They can be regarded as crucial means not only to better understand the ancient practices but also to the culture, archaeology, science, economics, law, architecture and even the current world today. Therefore, the overall protection and preservation of these kinds of roads together with their tangible and intangible evidences reflecting the past ways of life as common heritage values should be respected as a world scale responsibility.

2 As one of the recently developing heritage categories related with the issue, cultural routes can be used as a tool for the revaluation and revalorization of these kinds of historically significant old roads that have cultural accumulation on and around them. Cultural routes can bring unknown places into light, eases visits to these places improves economy of regions in which they are located. Accordingly, it can be said that this study was aimed at understanding the concept of cultural routes as a method to provide the conservation, preservation, maintenance and sustainable development of ancient roads through planning and management processes. In this respect, the concept of cultural routes in the meaning accepted throughout the study; represents interactive, dynamic and evolving processes of shared histories and life by presenting the rich diversity of contributions that characterized the communities. Since they include diverse physical, natural, social and cultural elements within their boundaries, cultural routes can be regarded as crucial utilizations for the conservation and preservation of heritage values. Therefore, they can be specified as a broad and a wide-ranging topic to build up a holistic understanding of a region that hosts an ancient road together with its cultural accumulation.

3 In order to reach a complete study regarding the planning and management of cultural routes, each cultural route should be evaluated in terms of their own structures. This process should begin with the analysis of internal and external dynamics of the study area. In order to comprehend and express the study area correctly in a clear way, all inputs must be examined by appropriate methods and tied in a correct hierarchy through constructing a holistic perspective considering the proposed natural, man-made, temporal, social and cultural, functional, visual and aesthetic, economic, administrative, meaning and spiritual contexts of cultural routes. Afterwards, evaluation studies should
be performed with the help of the data collected in an interdisciplinary field study. Finally, as the concluding phase of the process of planning and management of cultural routes, principles should be derived for different purposes, scales and types of projects. Together with these phases of research, documentation, evaluation as well as deriving principles and guidelines; key interest groups of the region have also significant shares in regaining the area as a cultural heritage asset. In addition, it should be noted that cultural routes as the cultural and natural heritage assets can only continue their life with the contribution and the participation of the people. Therefore, community involvement should also be stated as a crucial input for the process.

Because of the existence of rich and wide range of cultural accumulation assets dispersed through on and around it, the above-mentioned transformation process from an ancient road to a cultural route and the proposed conceptual model regarding the planning and management of cultural routes is discussed with the help of the selected case study: “the ancient road between Milas and Labraunda” in western Turkey, ancient Karia. Finally; a suggestion including objectives, statement of significance, general principles and preliminary decisions not only in macro but also in micro scale decisions are set forward with the help of spatial figures.

Accordingly, the case study enabled us to examine the proposed model for the planning and management of cultural routes with all the stages identified in a comprehensive manner: understanding the place, assessing the place and making decisions for the future of the place. In this respect, together with this kind of a cultural route realized for the road between Milas and Labraunda; not only the significance of Labraunda but also Milas will be reinstated. In addition, conservation, preservation, maintenance and sustainability of Labraunda and Milas will be increased. Visitors and researchers will be attracted with the improvements and interventions proposed for the region. Further, local residents living in the traditional settlements along the cultural route between Milas and Labraunda will be ensured. Therefore, this kind of a cultural route between Milas and Labraunda will shape and recreate not only the physical but also the social, spiritual and cultural importance of these two points and other archaeologically, architecturally, naturally and/or historically valuable settlements by attracting attention to them.

In conclusion, cultural routes should be regarded as a recently developing subject under the broad range of the subject of heritage conservation. This study analyzed the importance of ancient roads and the scope of cultural routes by presenting the meanings and ways of integrating ancient roads by transforming them into cultural routes under the broad scope of planning and management points of view under a common heading of. In particular, as reflected in the sample case study research - the road between Milas and Labraunda and the cultural accumulation on and around it - a cultural route project should be approached as crucial mechanism for the re-evaluation and revalorization of an ancient road in a comprehensive way. It searched the necessity of contribution of different stages into the mechanism of cultural route planning and management. With this regard, this research has presented the key phases of the transformation process by underlining its significance and ways of integration. In that sense, the main arguments of the paper can be listed as follows;

- Cultural routes should be respected as a useful tool for the continuous use of ancient roads.
- The concept of cultural routes can be defined as cooperating, active, varying and upgrading processes of communal histories and life as a complete picture by displaying the valuable
diversity of contributions that characterized the communities that they are located and communities that live within them.

• Cultural routes should not only be seen as media only for visitors and tourists, they should primarily be appreciated as a living environment for residents.

• Planning and management process of cultural routes - with the assistance of a multidisciplinary working group - should be structured on a threefold mechanism composed of understanding the place, assessing the place and making decisions for the future of the place.

• For the phase of “understanding the place”, natural, man-made, temporal, social and cultural, functional, visual and aesthetic, economic, administrative, meaning and spiritual contexts of cultural routes should be identified and documented in a holistic manner. In this respect, they should be managed with a group of people from different professions. Therefore, not only the people from archaeology, architecture, planning and conservation backgrounds, but also people from ecology, environmental science, anthropology, arts, sociology, geology, metallurgy and materials, human psychology and several similar associated disciplines should be included to the comprehensive mechanism of cultural route planning and management.

• For the phase of “assessing the place”, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats should be categorized and an overall evaluation should be comprised.

• For the phase of “making decisions for the place”, objectives, statement of significance and a general theme of the conservation project should be composed. These should be followed by the decisions and related scenario proposals.

This kind of a comprehensive study can be realized into an authoritative tool by relevant practical measures. In this respect, with the assistance of a further research including an extensive work by people from different professions with suitable legal interferences as well as the previously identified key interest groups and partners, this study can easily be used as a “Conservation and Management Plan” for the revival, revalorization and sustainable use of the road between Milas and Labraunda. With the help of the presence of the cultural route between Milas and Labraunda, the existing importance of Milas - thanks to Uzunyuva Project and other settlements located close to them with archaeological, architectural, natural as well as historical importance - will directly be increased by expanding all over the world. It should also be mentioned as a final point that this initiative comprehensive study can progress on deeper for each of the components of the cultural accumulation located along the road. Additionally, the proposed planning and management proposal for the road between Milas and Labraunda can be integrated into different ancient roads in different places with relevant modifications.