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THE EVALUATION OF CULTURAL ROUTES IN THE FRAME OF CULTURAL TOURISM

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Abstract

The cultural routes are the unique constructions of the respective assets and values of the cultural heritage within the designated geographical area. The major components striking the balance on the routes of culture can be summarized under the topics of tangible and intangible cultural inheritance elements and natural formations. As specified in the Regulation on Routes of Culture published by ICOMOS in 2008, the cultural routes can be seen in various geographies, thus differentiating by the history, symbolic characteristics, functions, forms, social environments and economic values from each other. When examined thoroughly, the cultural routes involve the historical towns, traditional life style, ancient settlements, monumental buildings of various civilization, natural environment and wild life depending on the main theme, function and scope of the cultural routes either of local, regional or national scale is an accession corridor, which is created in today's World or actually used within a certain period in the history, bearing the cultural or natural inheritance elements on it, thus coming into prominence thanks to this inheritance, as well as having the capacity to be improved with such objectives as conservation, rural and tourism development. In this declaration, the effects of natural and cultural assets on sustainable cultural tourism are going to be analyzed within 16 routes of culture that are registered by the Turkish Routes of Culture Union that are located in Turkey, including Lycia Road, St. Paul Road, Evliya Çelebi Road, Caria Road, Via Egnatia, Kaçkarlar National Park Hiking Trail, Frig Road, Prophet Abraham Road, Hittite Road, Kızılırmak Basin Gastronomy Road, Ağrı Mountain, Küre Mountains National Hiking Trail Route, İstiklal Road, Sarıkamış Walks, Istanbul as between two seas and Yenice Forest Roads.

Keywords: Cultural Route, Cultural Tourism, Natural and Cultural Landscapes, Historical Roads, sustainable tourism.

Introduction

“European Cultural Routes Programme” as organized by the Council of Europe in 1984 led the emergence of the term “Cultural Route”, including the first studies on Cultural Routes (Karataş, 2011). Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim's road is the first culture road that made to the World Heritage Lists of UNESCO in 1985. This road was accepted to be a world heritage in 1993. After then, the term “cultural route” was first brought forward in the meeting of World Heritage Committee, held at Madrid in 1994. Establishing the Institute of European Cultural Routes in 1994 and constituting the International Committee of Cultural Routes by ICOMOS has led up the non-physical cultural assets to be recognized as “World Heritage” as well, bearing an important theme (Karataş, 2011).

Discussion

Definition of Cultural Landscape and Cultural Routes

Specifically, in relation to huge, tangible and intangible, heritage, in recent years many development projects, especially in the inland areas, started with recognition of the Cultural Landscape and from the identification of Cultural Routes. Cultural landscape, as defines by the World Heritage Committee, are produced by long-term interactions between human and nature in indigenous societies (UNESCO,2015). In addition, cultural landscape result from consecutive reorganization of the land by indigenous peoples in order to better adapt the land's uses and spatial structures to meet the changing of society demands. They have been recognized as multifunctional landscapes that provide a multitude of services that benefit people: provisioning goods and products, regulating and supporting local resources, improving cultural services, etc. As a result, cultural landscapes have been highlighted for their importance in rebuilding a society that is in better harmony with nature. Therefore, cultural landscapes were added to the UNESCO world heritage site system in 1992, with the following definition. Cultural landscapes are cultural properties and represent the "combined works of nature and man. They are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their environment and successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal" (Campolo et al.2016).

In the contemporary world, cultural itineraries represent a competitive network of wisdom. In the international and European context, routes are competitive, recognizable and specific precisely due to their theme. The offer of various routes at the European level is exceptionally rich, which is why the choice of a theme for major cultural routes of Europe is defined by the basic criteria of the Council of Europe according to the Resolutions CM/Res (2010)52 and CM/Res (2010)53. Route development projects at the European level are subject to strict evaluation and selection. Equal criteria apply to routes of smaller territorial coverage, if the aim is to attract the attention of European travelers (Cojocariu, 2015). A cultural route has to function as a cultural tourism product as well by having all necessary product features and offering corresponding content, information and facilities for providing hospitality and accommodation services. A traveler taking the route wants to have fun, relax and taste local products; therefore, one has to be provided with all of the above. The selection of an attractive theme should be based on a historical principle as well as the principle of contemporaneity. In order to attract international guests, the cultural routes development projects should follow at least some of the research and development pillars, according to the following contents: cultural content, structural content, service content and associated content and accompanying activities. The contents and offer need to be identified, developed, organized and balanced along the route (Cojocariu, 2015). Cultural Routes "represent interactive, dynamic, and evolving processes of human intercultural links that reflect the rich diversity of the contributions by different people to cultural heritage" (CIIC, 2008). The cultural routes demonstrate, by means of journey through space and time, how the heritage of different countries and cultures contributes to a shared and living cultural heritage (Campolo et al. 2016).

Methodological framework of cultural routes impact assessment

The assessment of cultural routes development impact falls under the broader issue of measuring tourism activity effects. These effects are reflected in terms of labor employment, tax revenue, successful businesses, environmental conservation and cultural preservation at the level of local communities, but also at macroeconomic level, by the contribution to the economic growth and sustainable development. For measuring the impact of tourism destinations and their sustainability, a set of key indicators has been set by the European Commission (2013), divided into four sections: destination management, economic value, social and cultural impact, environmental impact.

Among these indicators:

- percentage of destination that has a strategy / action plan on sustainable tourism, with agreed mechanisms for monitoring, control and evaluation of development;
- percentage of enterprises / structures of the tourism destination using a voluntary and verified certification / labelling environmental measures / quality / sustainability and / or social responsibility;
- percentage of visitors satisfied with the general experience enjoyed at tourism destination;
- the percentage of visitors who are aware of the efforts towards maintaining the destination sustainability
- number of overnights stays (monthly);
- daily tourist expenditures (accommodation, food and drink, other services);
- the average length of overnight stays;
- monthly net use of tourist accommodation capacity (annual average);
- percentage of travel companies taking steps to purchase local goods and services;
- the number of tourists / visitors to 100 residents;
- percentage of destinations covered by a policy or a plan to protect cultural heritage;
- percentage of tourists / visitors who by different modes of transport to reach destination (public / private transport type);
- the average length (km) of travel by tourists to and from home / destination or average trip (km);
- percentage of tourism companies involved in climate change mitigation plans;
- waste volume produced by the destination (annually or monthly number of tons per resident);
- volume of waste recycled (or annual percentage resident);
- the percentage of treated wastewater from destination to at least secondary level before discharge;
- freshwater consumption in overnight stays compared to the rest of the population (water consumption per night / person);
- energy consumption per overnights stays compared to the local population (per night / person) (Cojocariu, 2015).

The classification of cultural routes

The classification of cultural routes is developed by examination of trail examples from different countries. Depending on the basic features of selected examples, like theme, function, context and content, a classification including historic roads and newly created trails, is developed. With respect to their thematic aspects, cultural routes existing today can be analyzed in two groups; (A) transportation corridors used in a period of history for a specific purpose and (B) itineraries which do not belong to past with its physical presence, but defined today by revaluation of cultural heritage and natural landscape along them. Below main characteristics of these two major groups and their sub- groups are summarized and each sub-group is described with selected examples (Karataş, 2011).

Table 1. The Classification of Cultural Routes (Karataş, 2011)

CULTURAL ROUTES					
A.			B.		
ROUTES USED FOR A SPECIFIC PURPOSE IN A PERIOD OF HISTORY			ROUTES DEFINED TODAY WITH THE USE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE AND INTENDED FOR:		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROMOTION OF TOURISM ACTIVITIES. ENSURING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE. 		
Types	A.1	A.2	B.1	B.2	B.3
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TRADE ROUTES PILGRIMAGE ROUTES MIGRATION ROUTES MILITARY ROUTES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ROUTES OF PERSONS WHO HAVE PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN HISTORY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HISTORICAL ROUTES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HISTORICAL AND NATURAL ROUTES
General Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly used in a period of history; cultural exchanges and journeys; population movements; continuity in space and time The route has its own dynamic and historic functionality, that there is a well defined purpose for the use of the route. Both tangible and intangible elements exist. <p>★ ★★</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only physical roads for travelling for a specific purpose like discoveries, invasions etc. There is not mobility of population and cultural exchange during a period of history. <p>★★</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made-up today; Defined by using historical and cultural heritage/ material by thematically relating them with a real or ideal link. Not a regularly used route in a period of history <p>★★</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made-up today; defined by using both historical and natural elements of a geography by thematically relating them with a real or ideal link. Offers both observing historical and natural elements, also doing outdoor sports (trekking, mountaineering etc.) <p>★★</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The specific purpose is doing outdoor sports like; trekking, mountaineering, cycling, horse riding, canoeing etc.
Examples	<p>Ex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silk Road Spice Road The Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes Via Maris (i.e. The Route Along The Sea) The Independence Way (i.e. Istiklal Yolu) 	<p>Ex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abraham's Route Evliya Çelebi's Way St. Paul Trail Route of the Alexander the Great Routes of 19th cent. travellers 	<p>Ex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH) European Route of Brick Gothic The Mozart Route Transromaica 100 Routes of Istanbul 	<p>Ex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Lycian Way The Don Quijote's Route The Hittite Way The Phrygian Way 	<p>Ex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Long Distance Cycle Trails Appalachian National Scenic Trail Yenice Forests Trails
<p>★ Complies with the definition of ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Cultural Routes (ICCR), ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes, 2008</p> <p>★★ Complies with the definition of European Institute of Cultural Routes, in case the route represents the European cultural values.</p> <p>→ For further information on given route examples, see APPENDIX A.</p>					

Cultural Routes in Turkey

Considering the natural, cultural and historical assets of our country has, it is interesting for Turkey to have only two cultural roads or walking trails, marked in the European standards. One of them is the Lycia Road, which was unclosed in 1999, while the other one is the St. Paul road, as a religious and historical route, unclosed in 2004. What they have in common is that both of them are a walking and exploration route with historical and natural diversity, as well as having attracting characteristics of alternative tourism activities. Since both routes are connected to the sea, yacht tourism can also be done. Scuba wreck diving can be done as an alternative tourism activity within the scope of the yacht tours in the coasts by Lycia Road. In 2012, the Association of Cultural Routes was established with the support of Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and today, reached to thanks to the studies & works of the association, the number of routes that have been marked and introduced reached to 17.

- Lycia Road, Hittite Road, Phrygian Road, Caria Road
- St. Paul Road, Prophet Abraham Road
- Istiklal Road
- Kaçkar Mountains,
- Küre Mountains,
- Ağrı Mountain
- Via Egnatia
- Evliya Çelebi Route
- Gastronomy Route
- Sarıkamış Route
- Yenice Forests

Thematic development axes have been designated within the scope of Tourism Strategy 2023 by the Ministry of Tourism AND Culture. The strategy, defined under the headline “Tourism development corridors”, is as follows: “It is the development of a certain route for tourism, based on certain themes, by restoring its natural and cultural texture.” Accordingly, the objective was to increase the attractiveness of tourism assets on regional scale, as well as developing the alternative tourism and providing guidance for investors. Diversification of transportation, and development of boutique hotel and B&B (bed and breakfast) are among the objectives in this line. 7 thematic tourism corridors that were identified are as follows:

- Olive corridor
- Winter corridor
- Religious tourism corridor
- Western Black Sea tourism corridor
- Tableland corridor
- Thracian culture corridor

Route planning to provide the opportunity for contacting with the local community is of importance, unlike the central administration works that stipulate tourism strategies on regional scale like tourism development regions, tourism axes, master plans. Route planning is a functional tool oriented designing tourism programmes, which focus on protecting and keeping the heritage alive, while considering the needs of local community. Therefore, it should be noted that the routes offer potentials for strengthening locality and horizontal relations (Tarihi Kentler Birliđi Vakfı ve ÇEKÜL, 2015).

Table 2: Local, National and International Cultural Routes in Turkey (Original, 2018).

Cultural Routes	Theme / Activity	Related Institution	Level
Lycia Way	Coastal, Cycling	Association of Cultural Routes	International
Prophet Abraham Path	History, Religion	Association of Cultural Routes	International
Via Egnatia	Culture, Peace	Association of Cultural Routes	International
St. Paul Trail	Nature, History, Horse riding	Association of Cultural Routes	National
Evliya Çelebi Way	Nature, History, Horse riding	Association of Cultural Routes	National
Caria Road	Coast, History	Association of Cultural Routes	National
Kaçkarlar National Park Hiking Trail	Nature	Association of Cultural Routes	National
Phrygian Way	History, Cycling	Association of Cultural Routes	National
Hittite Trail	History, Cycling	Association of Cultural Routes	National
Ađrı Mountain	Nature	Association of Cultural Routes	National
Küre Mountains National Hiking Trail Route	Nature	Association of Cultural Routes	National
Istiklal (Independence) Trail	Bicycle	Association of Cultural Routes	National
Sarıkamış Trails	Nature, Cycling	Association of Cultural Routes	National
Yenice Forest Roads	Nature	Association of Cultural Routes	National
Gastronomy Route	Cycling	Association of Cultural Routes	National
Between Two seas	Cruising	Association of Cultural Routes	National

Lycian Road

The Lycia Region, called Teke Peninsula today, is located along the southwestern coast of Anatolia. In ancient times, the region is defined by provinces of Caria in the west, Phrygia in the north and Pamphylia and the Antalya Gulf in the east (Harrison, 2001). Today, natural boundaries of the

peninsula are formed by Mediterranean Sea in the south, Dalaman Çayı in the west, Western Taurus Mountains in the north and Antalya Gulf in the east. According to Bayburtluoğlu, Lycia is the region that lays on a geography at the south of a line between Antalya and Fethiye bays (Bayburtluoğlu, 2004). A great part of Lycia falls within the boundaries of Antalya, and the rest falls within Muğla. Kemer, Kumluca, Finike, Demre, Kaş and Elmalı towns of Antalya and Fethiye of Muğla are forming administratively divided districts of the region.

Lycian road is a 509-km-long, old trading route. Today, it is a part of our modern life, after the project contest was organized by Garanti Bank in 1996 in order to reveal the national assets, and the project “Lycia Road” won the first place, as presented by Cate Clow, who is a citizen of UK. The hiking route was put into service in 1999, after a certain part of the pathways over the road were marked and mapped by volunteers and Cate Clow. Notwithstanding that some of the marks have locally disappeared, the whole track has been marked, and the maintenance works are carried out by supporting organizations and volunteers. The first part of Lycia Road, starting from Fethiye Ölüdeniz, goes up to Faralya Village, Butterfly Valley, Kabak Bay, Yedi Burunlar, Sdyma, Pınara, Letoon, Xanthos ancient cities and Patara with its thin sands. The second part of the route leads up to Antalya through Antiphellos/Kaş, Apollonia, Simena, Kekova, Mira/Demre, Limra and Yanartaş/Olympos & Faselis, with a fire, which has been burning for centuries. Named as “Lykia Road”, this route is recognized as the 4th longest in Europe, and 10th most beautiful hiking route in the world (Tarihi Kentler Birliği Vakfı ve ÇEKÜL, 2015).



Figure 1: Lycia Cultural Route (Anonym 1, 2018)

Prophet Abraham Path

Prophet Abraham has a significant place in the beginning of a spiritual and cultural tradition, which is shared by more than half of the world population in today's world. Despite having a history that hoes up to 4000 years before, to the Bronze Age, the story of Prophet Abraham is still remembered and celebrated in the sacred places and historical cities all around Middle East. The remembrance of Prophet Abraham is maintained the most probably by the people living in Şanlıurfa, located in the southeast of Turkey. According to a myth, Şanlıurfa is depicted as the city, where he was born and spent his childhood, and it has been recognized as a pilgrimage center for

over a thousand years. A structural complex comprising of caves, mosques, gardens and pools is, in fact, the city center, itself. By starting to walk from here, one can reach to Harran, as the starting point of Prophet Abraham's journey to Mekke and holy lands.

Urfa is a sacred city par excellence, built around a ritual complex of mosques, caves, and blessed carp pools marking the site where Abraham was born. Visitors will follow Abraham's footsteps through these ancient environs, and explore a mosaic of surrounding sites whose significance stretches both before and after the time of the patriarch. You might start in the capital city Urfa, where you can explore the famed pilgrimage sites of Balikligol and sample some of the city's celebrated cuisine. Or opt for the biblical city of Harran, where Abraham dwelt with Sarah before travelling on to the promised land of Canaan. The remnants of this era (the Well of Jacob, the city of Jethro) are tucked among the cotton fields and mud-brick homes of today's Arab and Kurdish villages. Within a days' walk of Harran lie several hilltop shrines that rise suddenly from the surrounding plateau; some, like the recently discovered archaeological wonder of Gobekli Tepe, are visible for miles around. This remarkable prehistory is rivaled by Urfa's historical treasures: the city was once home to pagans, Jews, Christians and Muslims, each of whom lent a distinctive flair to Urfa's contemporary culture, cuisine, and architecture (Tarihi Kentler Birliđi Vakfı ve ÇEKÜL, 2015).

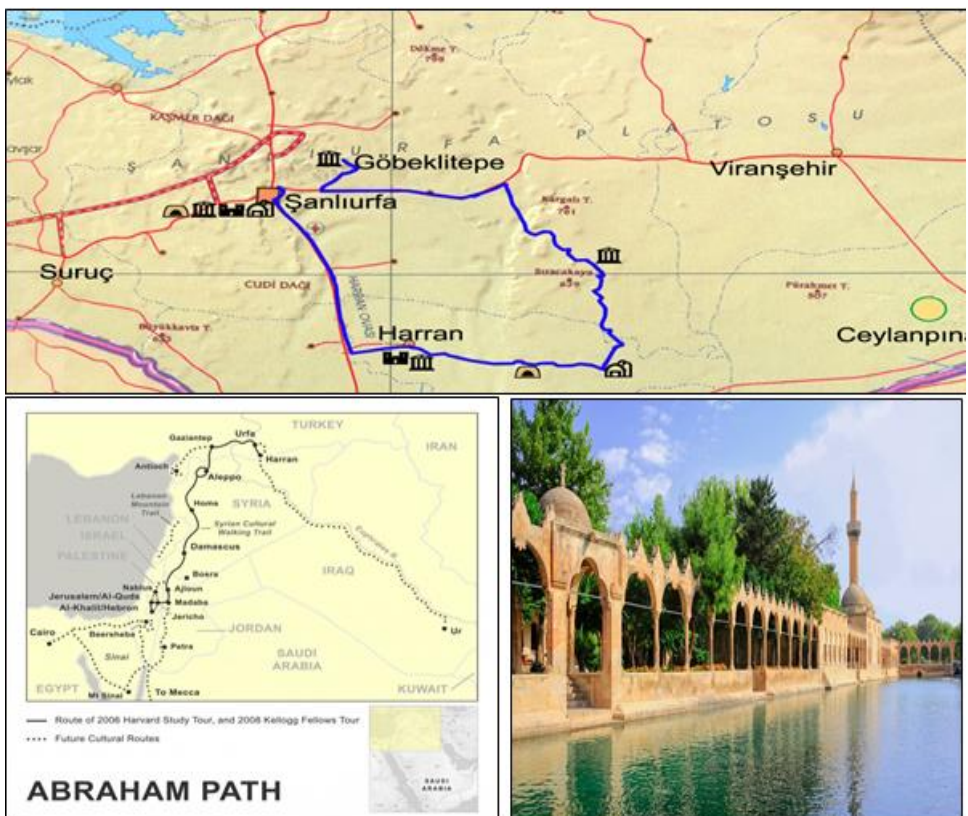


Figure 2: Prophet Abraham Cultural Path (Anonym 2, 2018)

Via Egnatia

The Via Egnatia has been such a road par excellence, being the connection between the western and eastern part of the Roman Empire. Built in the 3rd century BC (under consul Egnatius) as an extension of the Via Appia, it runs through the Balkans from Durrës (Dyrrachium) in Albania, through FY Republic of Macedonia and Northern Greece all the way to Istanbul

(Byzantium) in Turkey. Originally a military road, it served economic and social functions for more than two millennia. After the decline of the Roman Empire the Byzantines used and protected the road. After them came the Ottomans, who send their tax collectors and trade-karavans along its trail. Used by soldiers and later by crusaders, preachers and bandits, merchants and peasants on their way to the local market, tax collectors, karavans with up to two hundred mules and donkeys, loaded with skins, wines, wood and sulphur, the road served local as well as interlocal purposes. Many different ethnic groups made use of the Via Egnatia, and met each other along its trails, in its karavan-serails: Greeks and Jews, Vlachs and Pomaks, Turks, Venetians, Egyptians and Roma. Also, modern migrants travelled long it, for example the Evros-Greeks who left their country in the sixties and (many of them) came back in the last decade. So, the Via Egnatia - with intervals due to political or geographical trouble has been a real trans-Balkan highway (Anonym 3, 2018).



Figure 3. Via Egnatia Cultural Route (Anonym 4, 2018)

St. Paul Road

St. Paul Trail is the second longest road after Lycia way, as one of the marked walking trails of Turkey, one branch of which starts from Perge, while the other starts from Aspendos, reaching to Isparta – Yalvaç through Eğirdir Lake by aligning in the Adada ancient city near Sütçüler. This pathway, of which length is about 410 km, marked in the organization by Kardelen Karlı (Kate Clow) and Terry Richardson with the help of local residents in 2004, comprises of the route followed by Saint Paul, making great contributions for spreading the christianity, in Anatolia for spreading it to the tribes other than Jews in Jerusalem (Sarı, 2007).

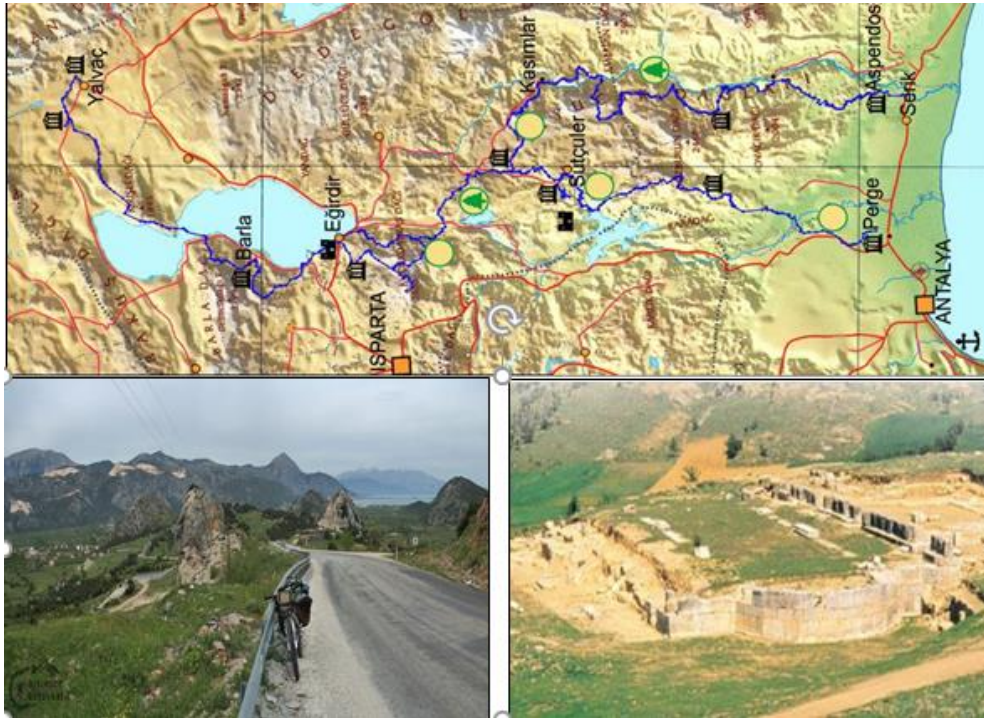


Figure 4: St. Paul Cultural Route (Anonym 5, 2018)

Evliya Çelebi Road

Evliya Çelebi was an Ottoman Turkish gentleman adventurer who travelled far and wide for over 40 years. Born in Istanbul, he made many journeys across the sultan's domains to the frontiers of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and the Middle East, and far beyond to the Habsburg emperor's seat at Vienna, towards the headwaters of the Nile, and to the Caucasus and Iran. Often, he travelled on official business, but also for pleasure. His observations on everyday life in the 17th century is a unique record of his times. Among his many accomplishments, Evliya was a scholar, raconteur, dervish, musician, and linguist. He dubbed himself 'World Traveler and Boon Companion to Mankind' and wore a ring inscribed 'The World Traveler Evliya'. He aimed to describe everything he saw on his journeys, and left a record of his wanderings in 10 large volumes, the *Seyahatname*, or Book of Travels. Following the first parts of his Pilgrimage journey taken in 1671, this road was opened in 2011, as the 400th birthday of Evliya, and declared by UNESCO as the celebration year of Evliya's life and what he accomplished. Evliya Çelebi Road passes through or near the regions of the most splendid and diversified landscapes, various villages, as well as towns and cities where the Ottoman Empire was established, thus having a history of great importance. The route follows locally the rivers, pathways, tractor and forest trails, floor-covered roads from Roman and Ottoman periods. The areas with rough ground surfaces are rarely seen. With a bridleway of 650km, it takes about 25 days, excluding the resting and visiting intervals. Not considering the plain grounds, the walking route is about 330 km long, which takes about 22 days to complete, excluding the resting and visiting intervals. (Anonym 6, 2018).

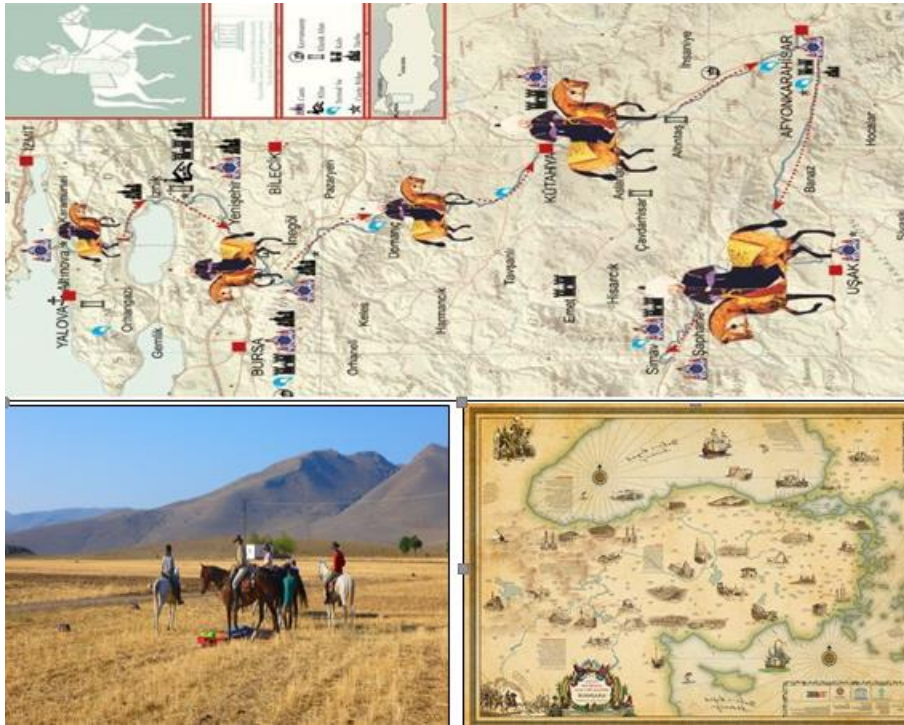


Figure 5: Evliya Çelebi Cultural Route (Anonym 6, 2018)

Carian Trail

The Carian Trail is an 800 km long distance walking path exploring Southwest Turkey through the modern provinces of Muğla and Aydın. The trail is named after the Carian civilization. On route you will discover a region rich in ancient ruins and history. Stone paved caravan roads and mule paths connect villages from the coast to a mountainous hinterland. Pine forest cloaks the mountain slopes whilst olive terraces and almond groves are an important part of the region's economy. (Anonym 7, 2018) Carian Trail, is the longest trekking route (820 km) in Turkey, covering the provinces Muğla and Aydın. Taking the name of Caria civilization, which lived on this area in the ancient times, this walking route, with its unique architecture, passes through a number of villages, untouched bays, hills full of olive and almond trees, as well as small and large ancient cities, some of which can only be accessed by foot.



Figure 6: Caria Cultural Route (Anonym 7, 2018)

Kaçkarlar National Park Hiking Trail

The Kaçkar Mountains are an extension of the Caucasus, and separate the Black Sea from Anatolia. Armenians and Georgians settled early in the Pontic Alps, now the Kaçkar, later building wonderful stone monastery churches hidden in the mountains. The Turks gradually occupied the area from the 11th century but area remained ethnically mixed; Turkish, Hemşin and Laz languages are still used (ÇEKÜL, 2018). Kaçkarlar is one of the few areas with regards to its bio-diversity. Here, you can find old and verdant forests, highlands, where once the bulls used to be grazed, three glacier masses and many glacier lakes, sharp basaltic peaks.



Figure 7: Kaçkarlar National Park Hiking Trail Cultural Route (Anonym 8, 2018)

Phrygian Way

Creating a shining civilization around 3000 years ago in the geography across AfyonKarahisar, Ankara, Eskişehir and Kütahya provinces (Phrygia), the trails of Phrygians, making a name with their legends, are long walking and biking routes in international standards at the present time. The total length of the road, comprising of three main routes, is 506 km; the whole route is marked with red and White colors in order to facilitate the tracking of road. Magnificent ancient roads, with a depth of 2 to 3 meters at certain locations, due to the tuff-rock structure of the region, and connecting the ancient areas in Phrygia (Gordion, Pessinus, Midas) to each other, constitutes the main theme of Phrygian road. Starting in three branches from Gordion (Ankara), Seydiler (Afyonkarahisar) and Yenice Çiftliği (Kütahya), and entering into the Phrygian soils, aligns in Yazılıkaya-Midas (Eskişehir) as the center of Phrygian civilization. The road follows the splendid routes where the magnificent monuments created by rock-scraping by Phrygians, and the unique works of Roman, Byzantine and Seljukian civilizations can be seen, while feeling the marginal touches of Phrygian alleys together with nature and history, as well as breathing the relaxing atmosphere in.

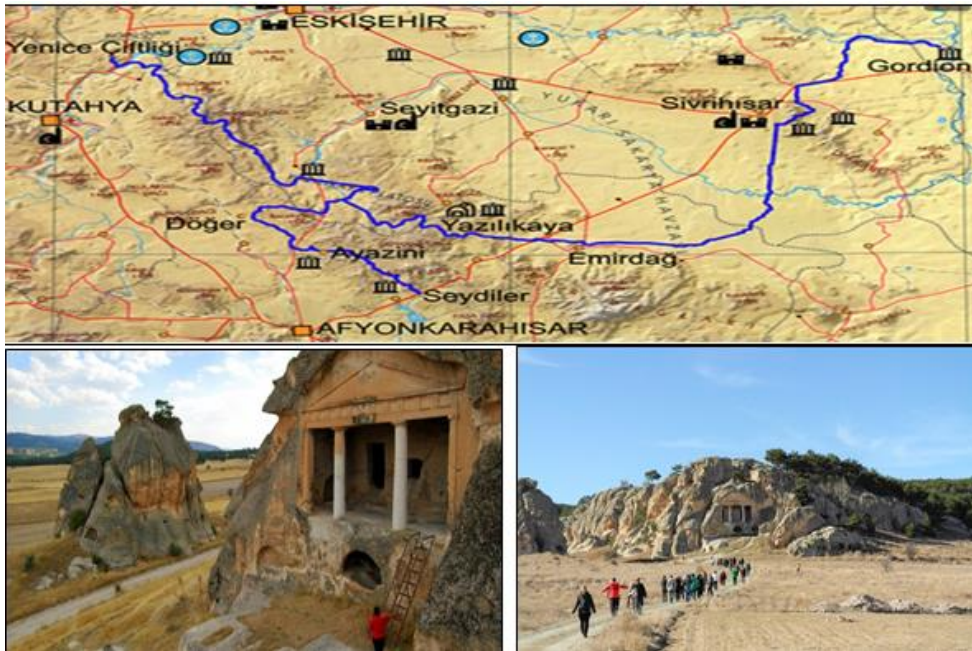


Figure 8. Frig Cultural Route (Anonym 9, 2018)

Hittite Trail

Hittite Trail was constituted by old migration and caravan routes in Alacahöyük – Shapinuva triangle, as one of the other important Hittite settlement areas of Çorum, including the Boğazköy-Hattuşa line within the World Heritage List of UNESCO. 17 tracks over the route, marked for 236 kilometers, reaches up to 380 kilometers with alternative routes. The total length of six mountain biking tracks is about 405 kilometers. The backbone of the routes is constituted by Boğazkale – Hattuşa – Shapinuva, Alacahöyük – Alaca – Shapinuva and Boğazkale – Alacahöyük routes. Alaca River Valley and İncesu Canyon covers the alternative routes. In the area, there are some other activities that are performed like canyoning, rock climbing, photo safari, handline fishing, caravan and camping, in addicting the walking and biking (Demirel, 2016).



Figure 9: Hitit Cultural Route (Çorum Valiliği, 2016)

Ağrı Mountain

Named as “Eğri Dağ” in old Turkic, “Küh-i Nuh” by Persians, Cebel-ül Haris (Ararat the Magnificent) by Arabs, Masik by Armenians, and Ararat by the Western societies, Ararat is the highest mountain of Europe and Turkey with an altitude of 5137 meters. It can be seen within kilometers of distance from Iğdır in the north, and Doğubayazıt in the south. With his little brother “Little Ararat” at the east with an altitude of 3896 meters, it rises majestically before Doğubayazıt. These two cones rising on a common bottom up to 2500 meters, are separated from each other by Serdarbulak Pass (2687 m) with a length of 14 kilometers. There are many tablelands on this pass over an old caravan road. Due to its geological location, and hosting the Noah’s Ark after the Biblical Flood, it is an important mountain (Demirel, 2012).

The cone of Mount Ararat is surrounded by several summits higher than 3000m. The slopes of all these mountains are covered with basalt blocks and lava flows, blown out by ancient volcanic eruptions. They harbor a variety of birds and rare wild flowers as well as small lakes. The area attracts mountaineers and nature lovers with several well-known mountaineering routes. Known as the “roof” of Turkey, the province of Ağrı includes four of Turkey’s highest summits: Greater Ararat 5137m., Mount Süphan 4058m., Lesser Ararat 3896m., Mount Tendürek 3533m. Süphan’s summit is in Bitlis but the north-eastern slopes are located within Ağrı province. Ararat walking routes include Greater Ararat, Lesser Ararat, Mount Süphan, Mount Köse summits and Balık and Küp high tarns (ÇEKÜL, 2018).



Figure 10: Ağrı Mountain Cultural Route (Anonym 11, 2018)

Küre Mountains National Hiking Trail Route

Such factors as genetics, species, natural diversity, existence of rarely seen and endangered species, age and maturity of the ecosystem and sensibility for external elements sets out the importance of an area in terms of natural conservation. The areas with high endemism level and increasingly exposed to natural loss, are named as Hot Point by the nature protectors in all over the world. (kdmp.gov, 2018).



Figure 11: Küre Mountains Cultural Route (Anonym 12, 2018)

Istiklal (independence) Trail

Wars of independence give rise to legends and symbols of national rebirth. The Independence Route connects the corners of a triangle which played an important role during Turkey's War of Independence. During the war, boatloads of arms and ammunition arrived at the port of Inebolu from Istanbul and Russia over a period of three years. A dirt road, built at the end of the 19th century by volunteers and convicts, connected the port of Inebolu to Ankara, and was a vital conduit for military supplies. The famous saying of Mustafa Kemal, "While my eyes scanned Sakarya and Dumlupinar (battlefields), my ears were at Inebolu" demonstrates the importance of the Independence Route, plied by the oxcarts carrying their burdens towards independence (ÇEKÜL, 2018). With a length of 105 kilometers in total, Istiklal Road reaches from Inebolu to Kastamonu, Çankırı and Ankara. 10 of 105 kilometers of the trail route is a pathway, while the rest is known to be ox-cart path (Ayaş, 2018).



Figure 12: Istiklal Cultural Route (Ayaş, 2018)

Sarıkamış Trails

Expanding over high plateaus found at altitudes of 1500 through 3000 metres, Sarıkamış falls to the southwest of Kars Province. Located at the edge of Kars Duzu (Kars Plain) besieged by Mounts Allahuekber, Soganli and Gullu, Sarıkamış is at the spot where the Anatolian peninsula transitions to Caucasia (Transcaucasia region). The settlement bears all geographical characteristics of Eastern Anatolia Region and its lands demarcated by Selim and Senkaya townships of Erzurum Province) from the north, Horasan and Eleskirt townships (of Erzurum) from the south, Selim and Kagizman districts from the east and Senkaya and Horasan population centers from the west (ÇEKÜL, 2018). The largest forested land of Kars, covered with wide plains and elevations up to 3.000 meters, is located in Sarıkamış district. "Sarıkamış Walking Trails" project has been carried into effect in order to make use of the tourism potential not only for simply winter, but for twelve months, while energizing the available dynamics. In addition to this project, walking trail routes have been established in Susuz Valley, around Boğatepe Ecotourism Village, as one of the most important tourism potentials of Kars

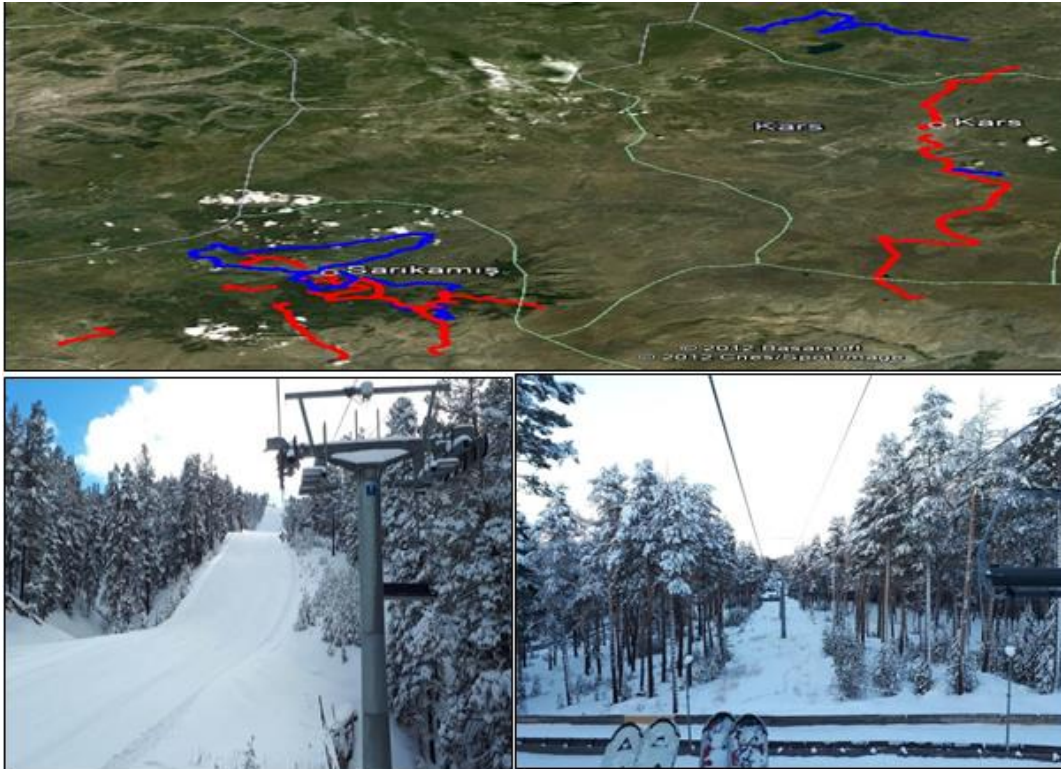


Figure 13: Sarikamiş Cultural Route (Anonym 13, 2018)

Yenice Forest Roads

In 1999 the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) designated one hundred “Hot Spots of European Forests” regions of extraordinary biodiversity requiring immediate protection. The Yenice Forest in Karabük Province, is one the nine “Hot Spots” in Turkey. The route was created as part of a project instigated by the Governorship of Karabuk and the Administrator of Yenice County in October 2009. 21 trails were marked along 210 kilometres, and together with the alternative trails the total route adds up to 396 kilometres. The trails are classified either as daytrips, short trips or long trips and include forestry roads and footpaths. Mountain bike trails total 292 kilometres. Trail marking is in accordance with the international “Grande Randonnée” system, with red and white paint markers and signposts mark the routes’ beginnings, ends and junctions. Later the trails are extended to Eskipazar (Karabük) including the ruins of Hadrianoupolis. 8 more paths have been added and the extension project is called ‘Trekking Routes from Nature to History – Eskipazar’ (ÇEKÜL, 2018).

Yenice Forests, with its monumental trees, which can be rarely seen in the world except for the tropical areas, verdant valleys, mountains up to the altitudes of 2000 meters, deep canyons, continuously gurgling rivers, surprising falls, wild life and botanical diversity, is recognized as a real ecotourism center for various outdoor activities. In addition to daily or camping walking trails and biking routes, such activities like canyoning, rock-climbing, bird watching, photo safari, botanical hiking, rafting and paragliding can be performed on this area, as well.



Figure 14: Yenice Forest Cultural Route (Anonym 14, 2018).

Gastronomy Route

Known in Roman times as Niconia, also referred to as Yankoniye, Trokmu and Gordiana, the Greek origin of the name Çorum is Dzorum. According to a study, the name Corum comes from a tribe connected to Üçok branch of the Oghuz Turks. A different concept, used for the first time in Turkey, was used to prepare the Kızılırmak Basin Corum Gastronomy and Walking Route project. In an ecotourism study, the cultural, historical and natural beauty of settlements along the Kızılırmak were evaluated and found to support a unique food culture. Along the route of the river, in the lap of nature, a steady flow of travellers make a ceaseless journey through time and space, borne by the currents of time, spreading this culture. As a result of the evaluation of Kızılırmak Basin for ecotourism, 190 kilometers of gastronomy and hiking trails are now marked. They are made up of 25 tracks, along with alternative routes, totalling 305 kilometers. Similar to other trails in Turkey, the trails include long walking routes of 37 and 52-kilometer length marked with red-and-white waymarks. There are 7 bicycle routes totalling 606 kilometers, generally following village and forest paths. A 702-kilometer section known as the Scenic Vehicle Road, begins at Hirfanlı Dam, near Kırşehir and passes through Kirikkale, Ankara, Çankırı, Corum, Samsun and Sinop provinces. Those who want to follow the northbound Kızılırmak from the town of Avanos in the province of Nevşehir can use parts of this route parallel to the river to reach the Black Sea littoral. Those who wish to see the historical values of Çorum can follow the 359-kilometer Culture Route. Thus, you can, on one journey, pass the ancient sites of Hattusa, Yazılıkaya, Alacahöyük, Corum Museum and the clock tower, Kapılıkaya, Osmançık Koyunbaba Bridge, Kandiba Castle, the Citadel and the Mosque of Hacıhamza Kargı, İskilip Castle and Rock Tombs, Ugurludag Resuloğlu ruins and Sungurlu clock tower. At the same time, all the bike routes and the Scenic Vehicle Road can be combined as a jeep safari route (ÇEKÜL, 2018).

Between Two seas

“Between Two Seas” is a four-day walking route in the near west of Istanbul, between the Black Sea and the Marmara Sea, which allows one to experience the threatening transformation of Istanbul on foot. The total length of the trail is 60 kilometers. The route composed of four 15-kilometre parts can

also be covered over four separate days. Layer by layer, the route progresses from the outermost periphery of the city to its center. It passes through rural and forest areas, and water basins to reach the center of the city. The trajectory passes through lignite mines, the area earmarked for the new airport, the road leading to the 3rd Bosphorus Bridge, excavation dump sites, industrial sites and housing areas, and also sites of cultural and historical significance such as the Yarımburgaz Cave, which is the oldest settlement in Istanbul, and inner-city vegetable gardens.



Figure 15: Between Two Seas Cultural Route (Anonym 15, 2018)

Conclusion

As a recently developing new concept, cultural routes represent systems that bear significant elements of cultural and natural heritage, thus requiring planning processes that are different than those for a single site. They can be designed as a tool for conservation of heritage, improvement of tourism sector and enhancement of development, while possessing the potential to be developed by revaluation of transportation corridors that were used in past for specific purposes, like migration routes, commercial corridors and military roads. In both cases, a cultural route or network constituted by several sub-trails, could be utilized for enhancement of heritage, especially through cultural landscapes in rural areas. Regarding characteristics of cultural landscapes that emerge with interaction of man and nature in time, route planning can be used as a tool for easing conservation processes of heritage, especially at regional scale. Interpretation and presentation of historical context at regional scale can be improved by using the connecting and mobile character of routes and networks. Hence, a system including elements of both historical and contemporary world can be developed to build up a holistic understanding of a region.

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