

Preservation Proposals for the Cultural Landscapes in context of St.Ioannis Theologos Monastery and the surrounding vineyards

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Abstract

In today, one of the most attractive cultural landscapes are wine routes, especially in Europe. In Turkey's Europe side called Thrace host the first organized wine route. The route has created by Thrace development agency and wine producers in 2013. One of the most noticeable place in the route is St.Ioannis Theologos monastery and surrounding vineyards in "Ganohora" region. Ganohora has a recognized history dating from the 1st century; it was a religious centre for Christians during the Middle Ages with its many churches and monasteries. In this monasteries, people produced wine for many years. Combined works of nature and humankind, they express a long and intimate relationship between peoples and their natural environment. The rich historical and cultural heritage and traditions of the wine route in combination with a unique natural environment make the Thrace an ideal place for cultural and natural tourism. The route passes through mountains, forests, and numerous micro-climates surrounded by three different seas (the Sea of Marmara, Aegean Sea, and the Black Sea). Its natural beauty enriched by the diverse culture and history, makes the region an exciting and delicious destination. This study is about an examination of this relations in the context of St.Ioannis Theologos monastery with the surrounding vineyards and develop conservation proposals.

Keywords: thrace, wine route, cultural landscape, management, cultural tourism, cultural routes

Historical Geography of Thrace

Thrace is a historical and geographic area in southeast Europe, centered on the modern borders of Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey. As a geographical concept, Thrace designates a

region bounded by the Balkan Mountains on the north, Rhodope Mountains and the Aegean Sea on the south, and by the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara on the east. The areas it comprises are southeastern Bulgaria (Northern Thrace), northeastern Greece (Western Thrace), and the European part of Turkey (Eastern Thrace).

Throughout its history Thrace has always been a territory that housed various civilisations due to its geographical position. With the absolute hegemony of the Roman Empire in the region since 1st century, and particularly with the founding of the New Rome as the Empire's new capital, the region's importance increased. Today within the borders of the Turkish Republic, the Eastern Thrace was an important military base for the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans during the 14th century and continued to be so throughout the long history of the Ottoman Empire.



Figure 1: The modern boundaries of Thrace in Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey

Introducing Thrace Wine Route and Relations between Cultural Landscapes

In relation to definitions of international organizations, cultural routes can be accepted as linking tools of heritage through areas at different scales, consisting evidences regarding historical associations of human activity and nature. In this manner, *cultural landscapes* emerge as bases for cultural routes, i.e. trails and networks. Therefore, the concept of cultural landscape and rationales for describing cultural routes depending on a significant landscape's characteristics are reviewed as a beginning to the discussion.

A cultural landscape is defined as the result of a cultural evolution of, or in the land. As stated by the European Landscape Convention of European Council, 2000, "*landscape*"

means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. A place, which witnessed to human activities and development throughout the history and bear traces of it at present, and whose nature affected these activities with its opportunities and restrictions, can be described as a cultural landscape. Within this scope, cultural trail description could be an effective tool in interpretation, preservation and presentation of these landscapes which possess elements of cultural and natural heritage at the same time and bear a multivalent character.

Routes developed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, local governments and/or tourism entrepreneurs and scientific studies have been becoming common in Turkey. Some examples of cultural routes in Turkey can be listed as; the Lycian Way, the St. Paul Trail, the Hittite Way, the Phrygian Way, the Route of Evliya Çelebi and the Route of Abraham at southeastern Anatolia. However, the only focus of this corridors proposal seems to be shaped by tourism purposes. Increase in accommodation facilities, sometimes by restoration of historic buildings, and improvement of tourism types are the major concerns of tourism development corridors.

Vines have been cultivated in Thrace since ancient times. Homer wrote about the honey-sweet black wine produced here in his *Iliad*, and generations of local farmers have capitalised on the rich soil, flat geography and benign climate of this region to grow grapes to be used for wine and spirit production. Ancient sources suggest that Thracians were among the best winemakers. During the middle Ages the Church took wine production under its protection such as the Monastery of St.Ioannis Theologos. (Külzer, 2009)

In late 2013 the Turkish government introduced new regulations on alcoholic drinks that made it illegal to advertise, publicise or sell alcohol over the internet. The wine industry initially went into shock, but it quickly realised that to stay viable it would need to look at alternative methods of marketing its products. One of the most innovative solutions was developed by a group of 12 boutique wine producers in this region, who banded together to devise the Thrace Wine Route in 2013. Inspired by Italy's hugely successful Strade Del Vino (Wine Roads) network, this local equivalent aims to entice visitors to visit Thracian vineyards, enjoy local gastronomy, investigate regional heritage and admire the area's stunning scenery. Guided tours of the vineyards are offered from the first 'bud breaks' in late April to the harvest in October. (Thrace Development Agency, 2013)

The route passes through mountains, forests and a variety of micro-climates surrounded by three seas (the Sea of Marmara, the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea). Eight of the vineyards have restaurants and cafes where local wine and food are matched, and three offer accommodation. One of the most touristic destination on the route is "Melen" vineyards because of the historical, cultural, social and natural values with the Monastery of St.Ioannis Theologos. (Figure 2)

production. But the winery of monastery isn't used for wine production. The wine production is made in a modern winery where is Hoşköy coast line by Melen company since 1990 which is own one of the local inhabitant. Total area of the landscape is 73000 m². The vineyard area is 53000 m² that mean it covers almost 75% of its all area. Rest of the area which is olive trees cover 18000 m². The monastery complex is almost 2000 m². However, as a cultural landscape the Monastery of St. Ioannis Theologos and surrounding vineyards is integrated into the Thrace wine route in 2013. When considering the other wineries in the Thrace Wine route, the only authentic winery is in Monastery of St.Ioannis Theologos. In this way, Monastery has an important and advantageous position and it can be a major and useful tool for preservation of the monastery complex.

Architecture of the Monastery of St.Ioannis Theologos and the condition of today

The monastery of St.Ioannis Theologos, in the Hoşköy district, is built in a hill very close to Hora River. It is far 1 km far away from Hoşköy which has coast side settlements. Historic evidence about the monastery is scant. The monastery was built by Friar Dionysius (Kalafatis) in 1865. He built over the remains of an older Byzantine monastery which, although the date of its building has not yet been discovered, is believed to pre-date the conquest of Istanbul (1453). It is known however, that before the Byzantine monastery was built, the land was used as a cemetery during the 5th and 6th centuries².



Figure 3: Monastery of St. Ioannis Theologos and Marmara Sea point from vineyards (Erşan, 2015)

² Ecclesiastical records from the Patriarchate of Istanbul.

The monastery is a complex buildings consisting of stone, in one or two storeys, enclosing a central courtyard on four sides, with the orphanage completing the enclosure on the west side also the entrance to the complex was located to the west side.

The monastery complex was in use until the early twentieth century. The monastery complex was lost its owners with forced immigration between Turkey and Greece in 1923. Great damage took place as the villagers removed all salvageable material, corner stones, and so forth. It was thus abandoned in a terrible condition in danger of complete collapse. Today, one of the local families who is owner of the Melen company which is used vineyards for vine production also own the monastery and surrounding vineyards. There is also non-commercial production from the olive trees in the territory such as olive oils. The family was synonymous with the cultural values and traditions of their own background. Their curiosity and enthusiasm would contribute to the sustainable preservation approach.

Dating of the monastery buildings reveals different building phases. The monks' dormitories and kitchen (south wing) (D) and winery (C) were older and contemporary with the chapel (B) and bell tower (A) (Figure 3). The east wing was probably built at a later stage when there was a need for more storage space, barn, and so forth. The east entrance, is dated to the twentieth century.

The condition of the orphanage and barn were rather good compared with the rest of the buildings. The monastery complex has main conservation problems such as serious structural deteriorations, lack of users, climatic conditions, vandalism. However, the east and south walls had serious and widespread structural cracks caused mainly by earthquakes. The main damage to the monastery buildings was the demolition of great parts of the walls and arches, the removal of all of the plasters and the weathering of individual stones (thresholds, jams, lintels etc.). These damages were due to the abandonment of the monastery during recent years, the destructive earthquake of 1912³, and the removal of the wooden elements (roof beams, lintels, window and door frames, etc.) as well as corner stones, which exposed the interior to the destructive weather elements. Wild vegetation that had grown within the mass of the walls also caused severe damage.

The monastery complex is considered a very important monument with great archaeological, historic, aesthetic and architectural values. However, it is the only surviving monastery in the Eastern Thrace. The monastery buildings preserve many of the characteristics of their original design, typical of the orthodox monastery architecture of

³ The 1912 Mürefte earthquake occurred on 9 August. It had an estimated magnitude of 7.8 and causing 216 casualties.[Bogazici University Kandilli Observatory and National Earthquake Monitoring Center (NEMC)]

Thrace (Courtyard settlement with the main covered entrance, simple and modest design concept, etc.). The harmonious co-existence of the monastery buildings in terms of materials, textures and proportions with the local environment is of significant importance.

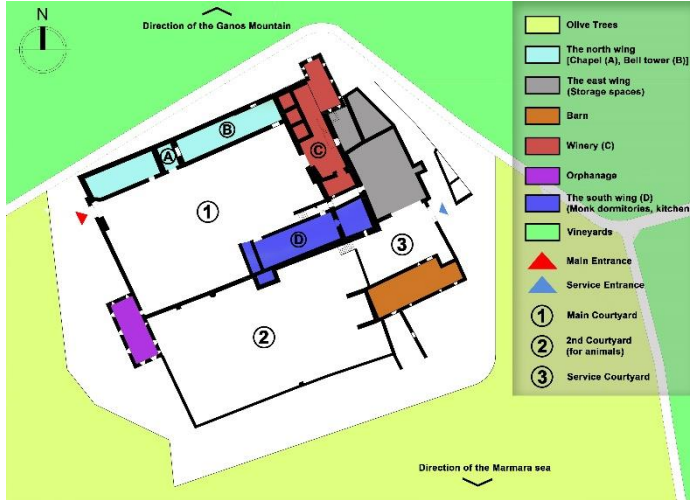


Figure 4: Illustrated site plan of the Monastery of St. Ioannis Theologos (Erşan, 2016)

Heritage Management Planning and Conservation Principles of the Heritage

The significance of a place embraces all the diverse cultural and natural heritage values that people associate with it, or which prompt them to respond to it. These values tend to grow in strength and complexity over time, as understanding deepens and people's perceptions of a place evolve. Understanding and articulating the values and significance of a place is necessary to inform decisions about its future. The degree of significance determines what, if any, preservation, including statutory designation, is appropriate under law and policy.

The environment of the Monastery of St.Ioannis Theologos contains an authentic and dynamic record of human activity. It has been shaped by people responding to the surroundings they inherit, and embodies the aspirations, skills and investment of successive generation. Each generation should therefore shape and sustain the historic environment in ways that allow people to use, enjoy and benefit from it, without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same.

Heritage management planning involves understanding and conserving the heritage values of a place. At the Monastery of St.Ioannis Theologos, this has not been an easy or smooth process. The heritage management planning activities are described broadly in

chronological order to assist in understanding each of the processes and which interests and authorities were the drivers. The relationships between the players are particularly important, as is the relative ability of municipality to influence government.

Today's visitors to heritage sites want to experience culturally important structures and artifacts in as real a context as possible. Visitors want to experience the elements and forms of construction in ways that will permit them to imagine the former characteristics of a monument that is now a ruin. Informed preservation and effective interpretation have become basic principles in the management of architectural and archaeological monuments. What is required is not simply conservation, but conservation framed by appropriate aesthetic judgment so that sites are exhibited most effectively. The revival and reuse of historic buildings is almost always recommended, provided however that these functions do not impair the structures and their nature as integral entities. According to the Venice Charter (1964), conservation is always facilitated by making use of buildings for some socially useful purpose.

However, when conserving abandoned historic monument such as Monastery of St.Ioannis Theologos, some of the questions arising are as follows. How much of the old should be preserved without any intervention? Is it better for an abandoned monument to be preserved as a ruin or to be restored completely as a living monument? How important is the reuse of an abandoned monument? The answers to these questions are complicated and differ in each case. Thus, the final decision for the restoration approach for a historic site of great importance, such as a monastery complex, should be based on the evaluation, assessment and hierarchy of its different values taking also into serious consideration economic and social factors.

The monastery of St.Ioannis Theologos can be evaluated as a rural settlement with the surrounding vineyards. The subject of preservation of rural settlements increasingly widespread in the global agenda. But in Turkey, theorizing to explain the values of the rural conservation and laws are not sufficient. (Kayın, 2012) Today, the monastery complex registered for worth to preserve as a building since 1990, not a cultural landscape with the surrounding vineyards and olive trees. With this regulations, these areas always open to a potential threats such as deterioration of silhouette, unauthorized settlements etc. Also for the sustainable preservation of the Monastery of St.Ioannis Theologos with the vineyards and olive trees as a cultural landscape should be developed buffer zones to avoid this kind of threats.

Also, a new developing concept recently, cultural routes represent systems that bear significant elements of cultural and natural heritage, so requires for planning processes different than for a single site. They can be designed as a tool for conservation of heritage,

improvement of tourism sector and enhancement of development such as relation between the Monastery of St.Ioannis Theologos and surrounding vineyards with Thrace Wine Route.

Conclusions

Considering route planning as a tool for promoting heritage, the first and most important aim for trail development is to preserve and sustain archaeological heritage, character of local settlements and natural landscape of the region such as Monastery of the St.Ioannis Theologos. Therefore, every action to be taken through route planning process should respect sustainability of cultural heritage throughout the region. Besides, being substantial material of a cultural route, elements of cultural heritage in the region, i.e. archaeological sites, vernacular settlement patterns, single historic edifices and so on, needs to be preserved and sustained for also continuity of trails network. Also enhancement of public awareness and participation of local people is an important aspect of any route planning process.

A cultural route that will be planned for a landscape, which possesses a multivalent character both with historical, cultural, social and natural values, basic concepts to be considered are mainly interpretation and presentation regarding the conservation of heritage.

The basic dilemma of whether to reuse an abandoned monastery or leave it in ruins is nonetheless always present and cannot be solved by denying the one or the other approach. To arrive at a decision of whether to preserve an abandoned monastery in a ruined condition or restore it completely (using traditional or contemporary materials), it is essential to initially consider with care the positive and negative consequences for each strategy. It is important to reuse and revive an abandoned monument, but this has to be done without seriously damaging any of its architectural, aesthetic, cultural, historic and symbolic values. The building can be functional, but the new use should not endanger its values. The aim of every intervention (leading to the revival of a monument or to its conservation in a ruin form) should be clarified and should emphasize the reality of each monument without changing it.

To sum up, conservation principles regarding preservation and sustainability of the cultural heritage and interpretation of the cultural landscape in Thrace Wine Route for a cultural route planning process can be listed as;

- The potential for some of these sites to be a part of seminary programs and ecotourism should be recognized. Where appropriate, programs should be created to make the community aware of these cultural heritage and how the heritage areas such

as the Monastery of St.Ioannis Theologos can be utilized to enhance the quality of life of both urban and rural residents,

- Considering the cultural landscape as a system constituted of historical and contemporary elements evolved in time and in the same natural environment, development of a thematic interpretation topic for Eastern Thrace region depending on historical periods with the emphasize on antiquity and starting out oral history projects,
- The rural settlements in preservation regulations and the rural settlements in the culture-nature integrity should be directly record; "Cultural landscape", "cultural landscape", "integrated conservation" concept should be mentioned in the legal basis. Without this regulations, these areas always open to a potential threats such as deterioration of silhouette, unauthorized settlements etc.,
- According to international charters and examples from the world, the decision to take a pragmatic approach and stabilize the ruin rather than to reinstate lost fabric resulted in carefully phased cycles of temporary works, clearance of rubble and consolidation of exposed masonry. This has enabled a stabilized ruin to be presented as a shell ready for the construction of a contemporary core building that will provide a sustainable future for the Monastery of St.Ioannis Theologos.

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