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ANCIENT WITNESSES OF THE SILK ROAD: THE CULTURAL TOURISM POTENTIAL OF HISTORICAL CARAVANSERAIS IN ANATOLIA

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ABSTRACT

The first possible example of the communication network that miniaturizes the world through the internet today is the Silk Road, which dates to ancient times. The main land route connects China via Turkestan and Iran to Mesopotamia and finally to the ports on the Mediterranean coasts. The Silk Road, which was actively used until the 16th century, lost its security due to the long conflicts in Asia and left its function to sea routes. Since the 19th century, the increase in railway transportation and the use of oil as fuel and the development of highways provided easy access to the abandoned areas on the Silk Road route. After the Chang'an-Tianshan corridor of the Silk Road was registered as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2014, many projects have been developed. This study discusses and aims to make an example of how the caravanserais on a route selected from the Anatolian Caravan Roads developed through the Silk Road can be brought into sustainable cultural tourism with a contemporary approach. The caravanserais on the Konya-Antalya/Manavgat route determined for this purpose were considered as a cultural route and a culture-tourism scenario was developed by use of digital technologies as well as contemporary conservation approach.

KEYWORDS: Anatolia, Caravanserai, Conservation, Cultural Route, Cultural Tourism, Maritime, Land, Silk Road, Sustainability.

1. INTRODUCTION

Silk Road is the name of historical trade route which is defined with the modern times perception and that delivers the richness of East in general terms to Europe which is defined as East in general (Fig. 1). Considering its history, as relatively new name, Silk Road was first used by German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen in 1877 as "Great Silk Road" (Çınar et al., 2014).

There is not an exact information regarding the date of Silk Road composition. Together with that there is a widespread perception that trade routes have started to form and develop since the beginning of settled life and therefore trade. If it is considered that some old road routes since ancient times have

been the transit routes of armies as well as trade, perhaps even before, there is an analogy between the history of other ancient road routes such as the King's Road, Spice Road and the history of the Silk Road routes. The history of the Silk Road dates back to IVth century B.C (Çınar et al., 2014). Some resources state that first trade travels started to take place in 200 BC (Sabancı, 2018). By the development of trade, the routes on the Silk Road developed as well. The construction of caravanserais, which were the stopover places of trade caravans on the roads, started in Central Asia in the 10th century and lasted until 19th century. As a result, a caravanserai network was formed, starting from China and extending to India, Iran, the Caucasus, Türkiye, North Africa, Russia and Eastern Europe (Ardıç & Çullu, 2017).



Figure 1. The Silk Road Routes (Url-1).

The inspiration source for the name of Silk Road, silk has been an important product since ancient times as it has been an indicator of social status (Ardıç & Çullu, 2017). Most of the western emperors were wearing silk clothes and the Egyptian queen Cleopatra opted for silk fabric in her dresses. Silk was not just only a valuable product in the West, but also an instrument in bilateral trade and interstate agreements (Budagov and Kurbanov, 2017).

Through Silk Road, it was not just silk but also a wide variety of products such as compass, paper and Chinese porcelain, metalware and spices were transported from east to west, meanwhile many products such as glassware and jewelry was marketed from west to east (Kuzmina, 2008; Bakırcı, 2014; Günay et al., 2019). Over time, the widespread production of the goods mentioned in Western countries is a proof

that the transfer of production method as well as product took place in this way. Thus, the Turks, learned silk production from Chinese, started cocooning activities in their cities with suitable climates and became the center of silk production. In Anatolia, Bursa still maintains this characteristic production. Also, the development of technology and fashion culture in the West, and the tendency to synthetic products have resulted in a decrease in interest of Eastern products (Budagov and Kurbanov, 2017).

It was not just trade playing role in the formation of Silk Road, but also significant figures, travelers, geographers, and dervishes who contributed to cultural richness were also important. The travelers were also interested in the intellectual and cultural exchanges in many cities on the routes that became educational and cultural centers over time (Ardıç & Çullu, 2017).

Thanks to that, science, art, architecture, literature, handicrafts, and technology were shared, and language, religion and culture interaction occurred. The information about those places which are provided by these people in their works, reveals the general picture of the Silk Road with its versatile and different

dimensions (Budagov and Kurbanov, 2017) (Fig. 2). Hence the Silk Road, which was a wide and multi-layered economic and cultural exchange system, is accepted as a pre-modern example of today's globalization (Ardıç & Çullu, 2017).

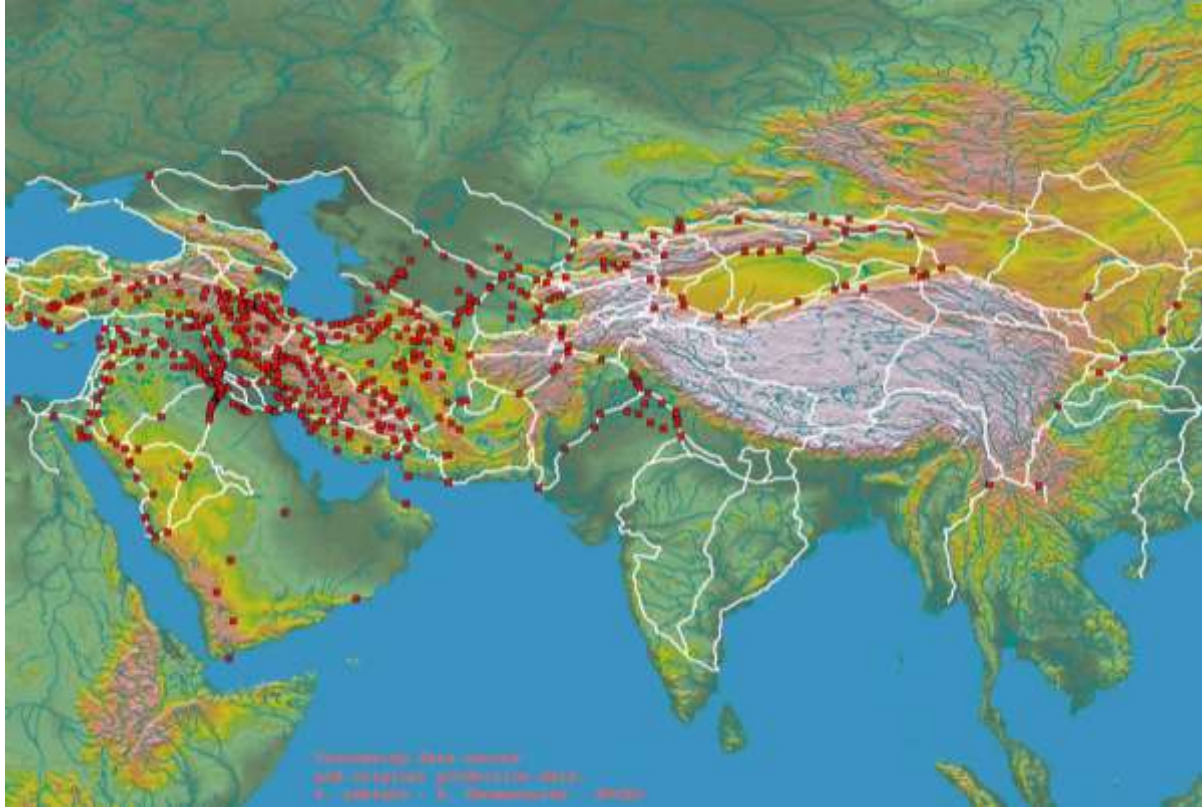


Figure 2. Caravan routes and caravanserais on the Silk Road (Url-2).

2. THE SILK ROAD IN ANATOLIA

In 1075, a new era has begun in Anatolia with the establishment of the Anatolian Seljuk State in Iznik. The Anatolian Seljuks attached great importance to the security of residential sites as well as the trade and the security of the trade routes. Between 1097 when Konya was the capital and the end of the Seljuk State in 1308, the patronage of the Seljuks constituted the backbone of the caravan routes (Sümer, 2009). In the same period, Sivas was an international trade center, Kırşehir and Kayseri, were other important cities of the Ahi organization, considering Anatolian trade tradition. Antalya and Sinop were the transfer hubs, which conveyed the port axes in the north and south, while Aksaray was the connection hub (Özcan, 2006). For this reason, as the most important transit route of the Silk Road in Anatolia in the 13th century, Konya-Aksaray-Kayseri-Sivas route was called the "Great Road" (Eravşar, 2011, p.18) (Fig. 3).

As a multi-layered economic and cultural exchange system, the Silk Road, and the stopovers on it played a major role in Anatolia's position as a bridge between

Eastern and Western civilizations by providing the scientific, technological, cultural, and intellectual interaction. The Silk Road has three entry points to Anatolia: Northern, Central and Southern. Northern part extends from Kars to the Black Sea ports and continues to the West by sea. The central part starts from Doğubeyazıt and reaches Istanbul through important historical cities in the middle of Anatolia such as Erzurum, Erzincan, Sivas, Kayseri, Konya and Iznik. The southern part enters from Cizre and extends to the ports of Antalya and Alanya (Kılıç ve Günel, 2013). Through the time, the Silk Road's main routes created a network by branching (Fig. 4).

In the Anatolian Seljuk period, certain changes, and new connections between the routes were formed in the three main routes of the Silk Road in Anatolia. Konya, which was the capital of the Anatolian Seljuks, also became the intersection of Anatolian trade routes in the 13th century since east-west and north-south routes developed throughout the city (Eravşar, 2011). In addition, secondary roads were built connecting these roads to other Anatolian cities. The caravanserais built on these routes are the footprints and

heritage of the Seljuk state living in Anatolia thanks to the Silk Road. The caravanserais and caravan routes were not built by chance, but by the conscious

policies developed by the Seljuk sultans to ensure security in the state (Eravşar, 2011).

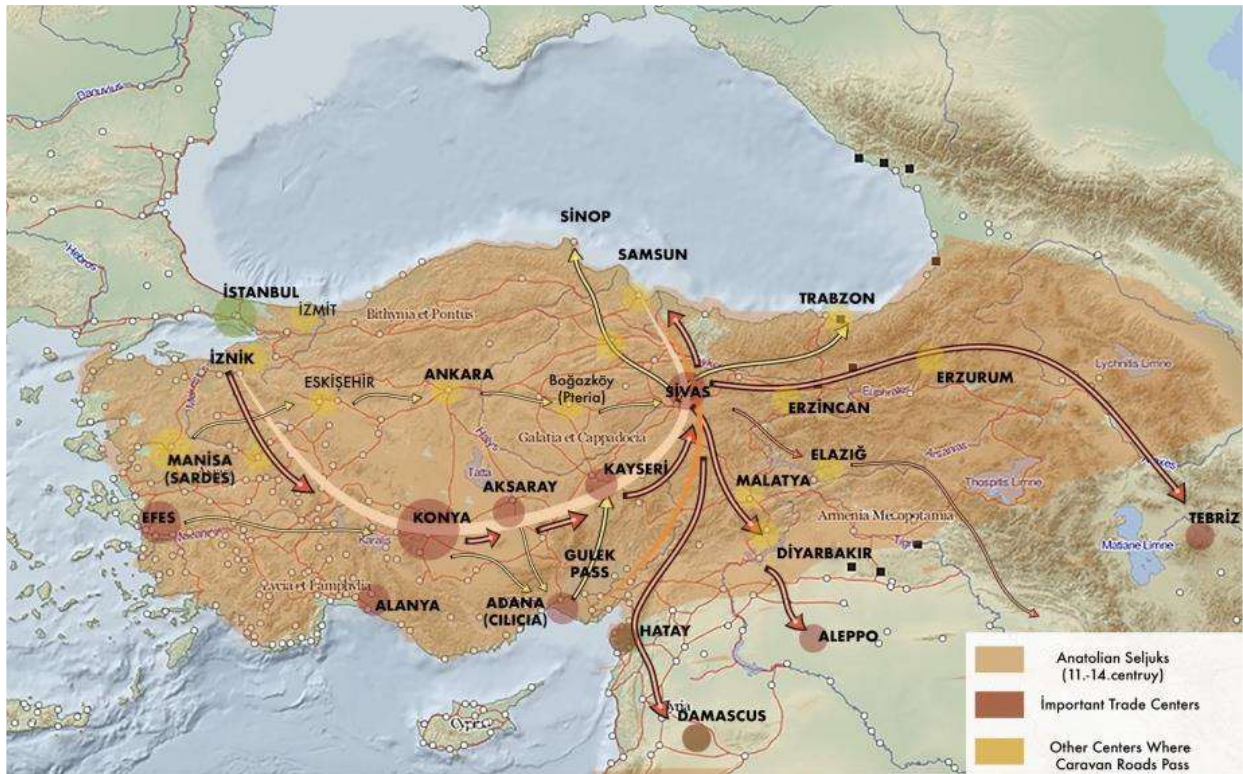


Figure 3. Anatolian Roads in the Seljuk Period (Darendeli & Binan, 2021).

In line with the changes in the borders of the state and progress policies during the Ottoman Period, trade routes also changed and developed. In this period, while some of the Seljuk routes of the Silk Road in Anatolia continued to be used, some of them were abandoned. The intersection point of trade routes during the Ottoman period was the capital, Istanbul.

Settlements such as Safranbolu and Beypazarı on the roads leading to Istanbul experienced their most vibrant and bright periods in terms of commercial, cultural, and architectural aspects during the Ottoman period. The biggest interaction points of the Silk Road in Ottoman cities were local inns and caravanserais.

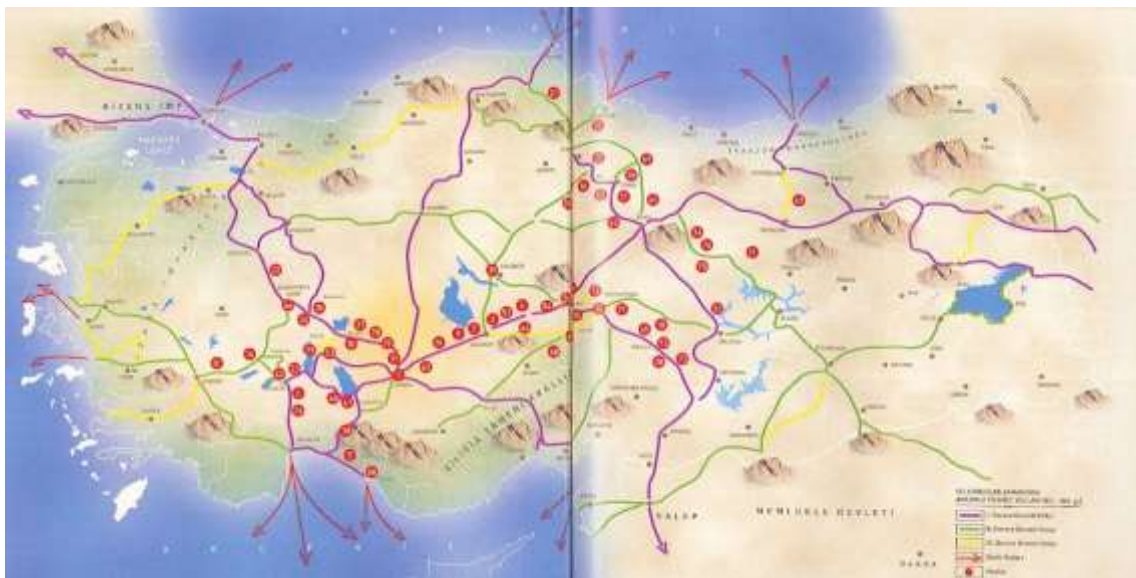


Figure 4. Anatolian trade roads and caravanserais in Seljuk Period (Eravşar, 2011).

3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HISTORICAL CARAVANSERAI ON THE SILK ROAD OF ANATOLIA

Caravanserais are buildings which were built for the passengers and caravans traveling from one place to another to stay safely at night and to provide the needs of themselves and their mount (Darendeli & Binan, 2021). Prior to the Seljuk's caravanserais, there were buildings for the same purpose on trade routes in Anatolia. In Roman times, *Mansiones Veredariorum* were public buildings built on the road at 75 km intervals, but they were ruined over time. They provided accommodation and security for the caravans as well as for the travelers, martialists and statesmen and they provided free service to state officials, while other passengers were charged a certain fee to stay (Asım & Burxanova, 2017).

The caravanserais, which started to be built in Anatolia with the Seljuk period (12th century) (Eravşar, 2011, p.12), were established within the *waqf* (foundation) system as a requirement of the state's administrative approach. They were usually built by rulers or wealthy people. The terms of use are determined in the *waqf* script documents. In the *waqf* system, guests and travelers could stay free of charge for up to three nights in the caravanserai without any ethnic or religious discrimination (Darendeli & Binan, 2021).

The word caravanserai is formed with the combination of Persian words "caravan" and "palace". The term was founded by western researchers and travelers. Anatolian Seljuks named these buildings as "han" (inn) and "derbend" (pass) (Eravşar, 2011, p.12). Caravanserais are also known as "ribat", with a reference to their architectural origin. The range buildings in Ma Wara'un Nahr (Transoxiana) and the large farm

buildings surrounded by walls in Turkistan were also used as ribat since they were suitable for the same function. The history of ribats is traced back to the 8th century (Köprülü, 1942; Berkol, 1973). Caravanserai and ribat have been used in the same sense since the 11th century in Ma Wara'un Nahr and Iran. As a matter of fact, the significant effects of the plan scheme of ribats were observed in Anatolian caravanserais and that similarity should be influenced the transformation of ribat into caravanserai (Eryavuz, 2022).

In the 11th century, the Anatolian caravanserai plan scheme was consisting of two parts of closed and open courtyard, which was developed by the Great Seljuks in the Iranian geography, Dihistan and Akçakel caravanserais are two good examples of that pioneered the Anatolian caravanserais (Eryavuz, 2022). The Great Seljuks adopted the caravanserai architecture from the Karakhanids and the Ghaznavids, however, there is no caravanserai from that period surviving till today (Karakuş, 2022).

In general, Anatolian caravanserais consisted of two parts, courtyard, and interior space with. Two-storey rooms were lined up around the open courtyard. There were barns, warehouses, and commercial spaces on the lower floor, as well as other service areas, and accommodation on the upper. In the middle of the courtyard there was usually a raised kiosk *masjid* (Darendeli & Binan, 2021). According to the plan typology classified by Yavuz (1976), the caravanserais could be listed as (Darendeli & Binan, 2021);

- *Closed plan caravanserais*
- *Closed plan caravanserais with courtyard*
- *Caravanserais with courtyard*
- *Concentric caravanserais.*

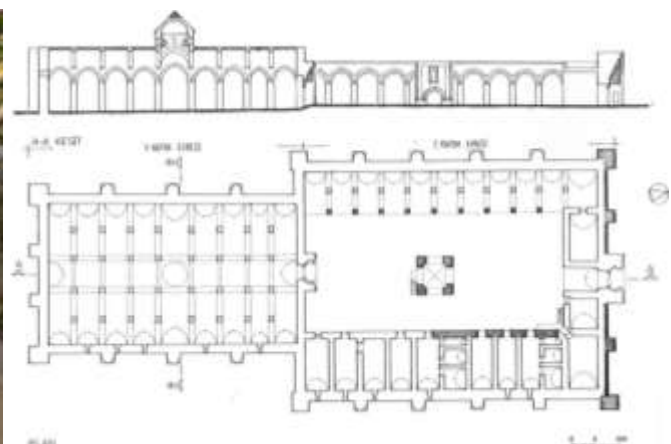


Figure 5. Sultan Han in Aksaray, (photo Url-3; plan Binan, 1990).

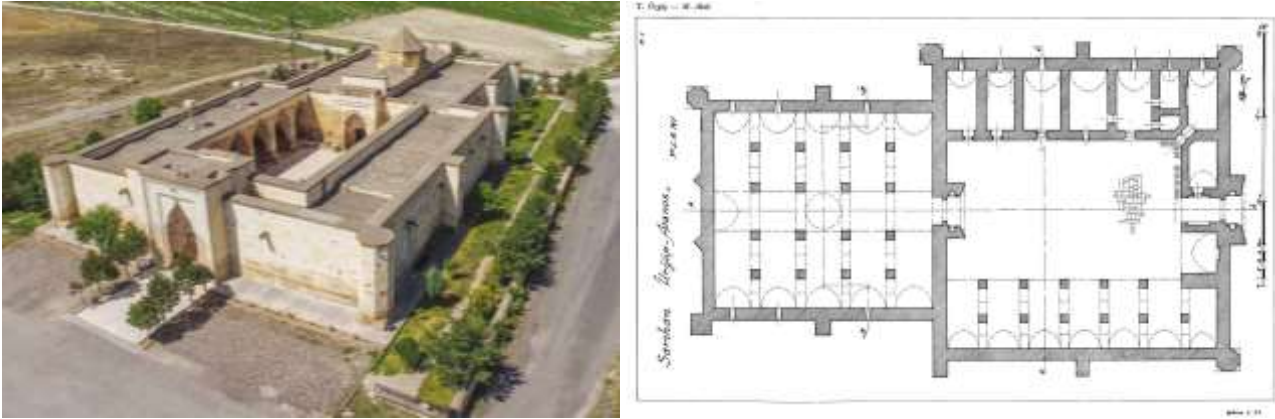


Figure 6. Sarı Han in Nevşehir (photo Bilici, 2016; plan Özgüç ve Akok,1956).

The closed and with courtyard caravanserai plan was generally used in Central Anatolia, which shows continental climate characteristics. Sultan Han, which was first built by Sultan I Alaaddin Keykubat in 1229, was one of the largest and most magnificent examples of this type of caravanserai, covering an area of 4680 m², it looks like a castle built on a flat land in Aksaray. The cut stone walls, are supported by buttresses situated at regular intervals. It had a two-part in plan, a courtyard of 50m × 62m and a closed space of 50m × 33m (Url-3) (Fig. 5). The han was first built as a fully closed building, however, after the fire in 1270, it was expanded in 1278 and the annex part with a courtyard was added. It is known that it was also repaired in the 14th century (Darendeli & Binan, 2021). Sarı Han of

Nevşehir in Cappadocia region is another good example for this type (Url-4) (Fig. 6).

Courtyarded caravanserai plan type was generally common in South and South-eastern Anatolia regions with hot climate, but examples are limited in number. It consisted of closed spaces placed in an axially symmetrical order around a large courtyard. Evdir Han which was built by Sultan Izzeddin Keykavus between 1210-1219, on the Antalya-Burdur Road is one of this type of caravanserai. The main exterior walls are made of cut stone and the roofing system of the spaces is rubble stone vault. Today, the portal, some parts of the main walls and some of it spaces have survived (Fig. 7).

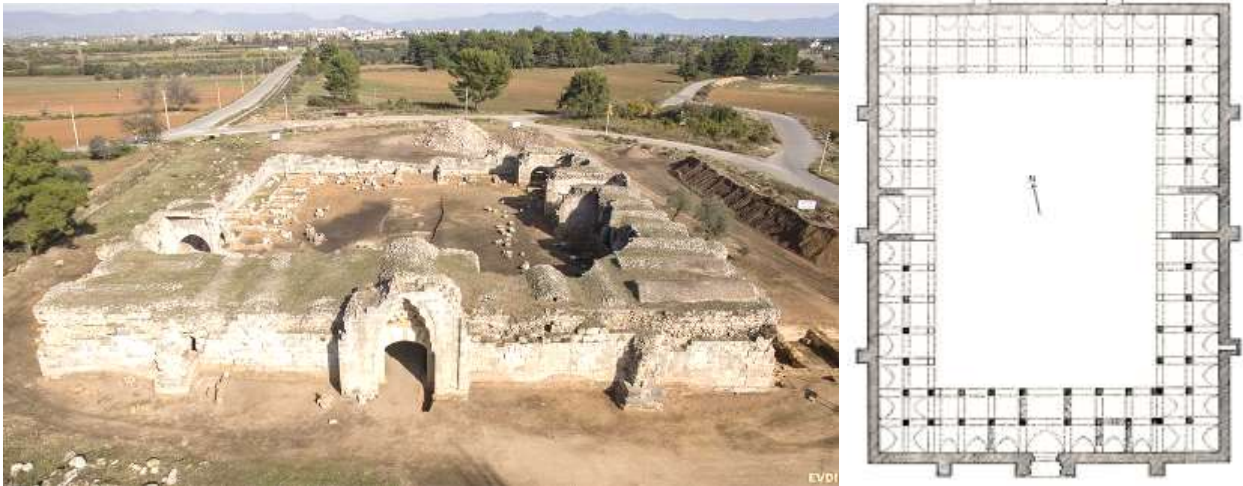


Figure 7. Evdir Han (photo Url-5; plan Erdmann).

Concentric planned caravanserais are very limited in Anatolia. They show highly developed and complex plan features, therefore each of them is considered original examples in terms of plan and construction. They were designed regardless of climate conditions. Alara Han in Antalya, Eshab-ı Khef Caravanserai in Kahramanmaraş and Mama Hatun Caravanserai in Erzincan are examples of this type (Darendeli & Binan, 2021).

According to its inscription panel, Alara Han was built in 1231 by Sultan I Alaaddin Keykubat. Its plan dimension is 34,5m × 45,0m and covering about 1600 m² area (Tükel, 1969; Bakkal, 2016) (Fig. 8). Eshab-ı Khef is the name of famous seven companions known as Seven Sleepers who are believers in Jesus. It is believed that they had slept about one hundred years in the cave on this point. Eshab-ı Khef Han is built next to the cave in a complex. The plan dimension of the

han is 27 m x 34 m and has a courtyard 8 m x 18 m (Fig. 9). Another caravanserai was built by Mama Hatun (khatun) who is the daughter of Izzeddin Saltuk II, the bey of Saltuk Beylik (principality) at the beginning

of 13th century within a complex. The caravanserai is the largest one of this type with its 51 m x 51 m dimension in plan (Denknbant, 2003) (Fig. 10).

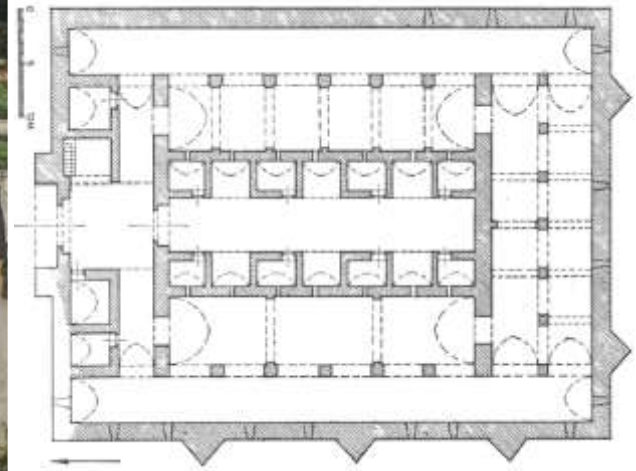


Figure 8. Alara Han (photo Url-6; plan Url-7 from Erdmann).

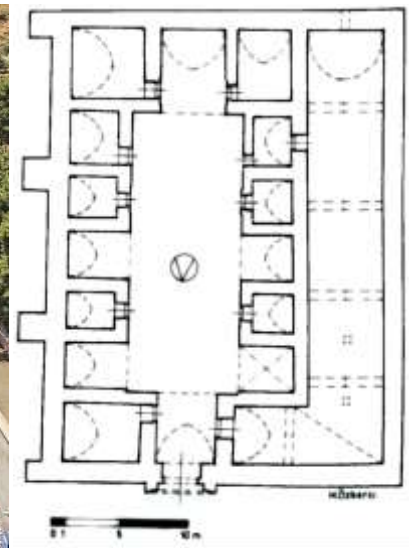


Figure 9. Eshab-ı Kelif Han (photo Bilici, 2016; plan Özkarcı, 2007).

After the collapse of the Seljuk State following the Mongol invasion in Anatolia, important and major inns were built in the second half of the 13th century. Çay Han, Durak Han and Kesikköprü Han are some examples that were built in this period following the same plan scheme of the sultan inns (Eryavuz, 2022). Because of the unstable atmosphere in Anatolia after the collapse of Seljuk state, trade activities mainly

shifted to the sea route that caused a significant decrease in the functionality of caravanserais. The development and change of trade routes in the Ottoman Period caused some Seljuk caravanserais to be left idle and some to change their functions. For instance, Kayseri Karatay Han was one of the Seljuk caravanserais that was converted into a zawiya during the Ottoman Period (Eryavuz, 2022).

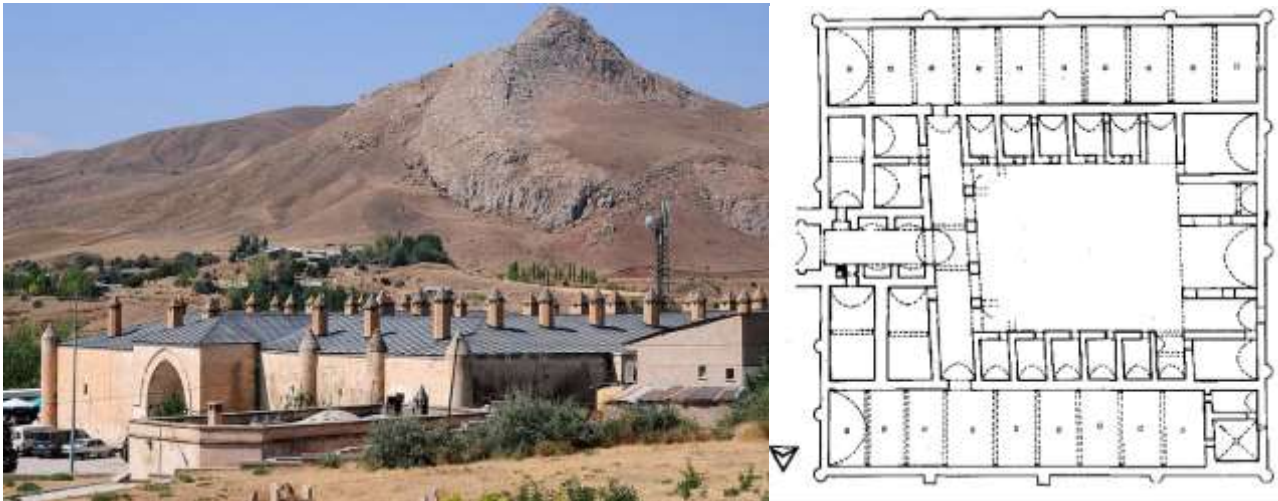


Figure 10. Mama Hatun Caravanserai, (photo Url-8; plan Yavuz, 1976).

The change of the cities and commercial structure in the Ottoman period also affected the caravanserai architecture and their location as well. While more emphasis was placed on the construction of inns within the cities, the caravanserais were either included in the complex programs within the city or were built as range caravanserais to revitalize uninhabited remote areas and settle strategic points close to the borders. In terms of architecture, the castle view was abandoned, the size shrunk, and the shops were opened to the outside. Ottoman caravanserais usually consisted of rooms arranged on two floors around a courtyard. Hüsrev Pasha Caravanserai (1527-28), known as the Deliller Inn in Diyarbakir, Edirne Rüstem Pasha Caravanserai (mid-16th century), Erzurum Rüstem Pasha Caravanserai (before 1560), Kuşadası Öküz Mehmet Pasha, Caravanserai (1618) and Lüleburgaz Sokullu Mehmet Pasha Caravanserai (1564) are examples of different practices of the plan scheme (Eryavuz, 2022). In Erzurum, an original architectural composition was designed by constructing the upper floor of the caravanserai in the form of covered bazaar.

As an example, to the Menzil (range) Caravanserais built during the Ottoman period, Sokullu Mehmet Pasha Caravanserai (1574) was located in the complex in Payas district of Hatay. After ensuring safety in road networks starting from the 17th century, ranges began to develop around the caravanserais on deserted roads. Ottoman Menzil Caravanserais consists of three or more naves, rectangular, closed spaces consisting of an entrance and piers behind the entrance. The spaces may be covered with a vault, flat earthen or wooden roof, depending on regional conditions and local architectural approaches. The Issız Han (1394) by the Ulubat Lake and the Mihal Bey Han (1418) in Bilecik are vaulted, the Hüsnü Sabuncu Caravanserai in Antakya (16th century) and

the Hüsrev Pasha Caravanserai in Bitlis Adilcevaz (16th century) with flat earth roofs are Ottoman period Menzil Caravanserais. In Edirne, Ekmekçizade Ahmet Pasha Caravanserai (1609-1610) and Bilecik Vezirhan Köprülü, Caravanserai (17th century) are among the Ottoman Menzil Caravanserais with wooden roofs (Cantay, 1986; 1988; Eryavuz, 2022).

In addition to the commercial ones, there were also caravanserais built for military purposes in the Ottoman Empire. Similar to the other caravanserais, these, were built as part of large complexes. El-Aman Han in Bitlis (mid-16th century), Öküz Mehmet Pasha Caravanserai in Niğde Ulukışla (1616-1619) and Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha Caravanserai (1670) (Çobanoğlu, 2004) in Kayseri İncesu are some examples of this type (Eryavuz, 2022). These caravanserais were located on the military expedition routes of the armies. According to sources, approximately 200 caravanserais were built in Anatolia during the Seljuk period while fewer were built during the Ottoman period. According to the digital archive records of the General Directorate of Foundations of Türkiye, the number of caravanserais that have survived from the Seljuk and Ottoman periods is 121, including the ones in the form of ruins (GDF - EVOS).

4. HISTORICAL CARAVANSERAI ON THE SOUTHWEST ANATOLIAN SILK ROAD

The caravan routes in Southwest Anatolia link the Ports of Alanya and Antalya to inner parts of and the north of Anatolia and the north. In this context, there exist four routes linking the following districts: Antalya-Denizli, Antalya-Burdur, Manavgat-Eğirdir and Manavgat-Beyşehir. Among those, the Manavgat-Beyşehir route is most important one which was used during Roman, Seljuk and Ottoman Eras. It links

the northern town Beyşehir and the southern town Manavgat (Fig. 11). Beyşehir is an Anatolian town which was re-founded by Kayqubad I during the Seljuk Era even its history goes back to earlier times. The Sultan commissioned a summer residence nearby called the Qubadabad Palace due to the cool climate of the region. The Eşrefoğlu Mosque, which is contemporary with the palace and in World Heritage Candidate List currently, is another important cultural heritage of Beyşehir which was a sandjak town during the Ottoman Era where princes were educated (Erdoğan, 1992). It is understood from the notes in the 'Seyahatname'- the Book of Travel- that the same route had also been used by the famous traveler İbn Battuta in 14th century (Tuncer, 2007, p.16).

On the Manavgat-Beyşehir caravan route, from south to north, four hans or caravanserais are located: Kargı Han, Eynif Tol Han, Ortapayam Han and Derebucak Tol Han, all of those belong to Seljuk Era. Most of the hans on this route are in ruin because the

road has not been used for centuries. Kargı Han and Eynif Tol Han is two decent examples to represent the current situation.

Kargı Han is located nearby the historical Beydiğın Village of Manavgat in Antalya, beside the Kargı River. The building was constructed in the first half of 13th century following the 'covered and with courtyard' typology. Having the exterior sizes of 51m x 49 m, the covered part has dimensions of 15m x 49 m (Özergin, 1965) (Fig. 12). While the northern part has covered barns, the east and south parts have both covered and semi-open spaces. Depending on the observations, it is understood that the building had several interventions throughout the history and thus the original plan scheme of the courtyard was disappeared (Bilici, 2013). The single-story building has hardly survived till present and the remains of Kargı Hamam (bath) nearby could be still observed as well (Fig. 12).



Figure 11. Anatolian Seljuk Caravanserais on southwest Silk Road and Manavgat-Beyşehir Road in the dashed blue line (Manavgat is in the coast) (Url-9).

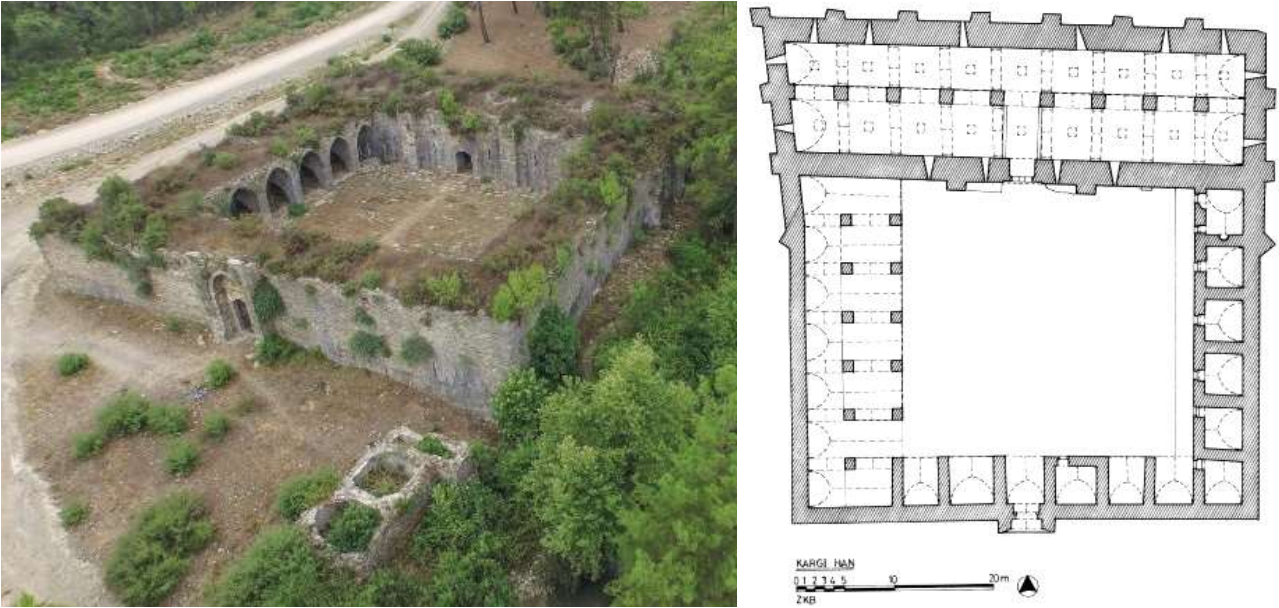


Figure 12. Kargı Han (photo Bilici, 2016; plan Bilici, 2013).

Eynif Tol Han which was built in Seljuk Era (12th – 13th cen.) is approximately 30 km far from Derebucak. The “tol” term means “stone masonry” or “stone arched masonry” and “Eynif” refers to the name of the place in which the han is located. There are more than one tol hans around the region. It is located on a

slope facing the Eynif Plain which is the habitat of the unique Yılıkı Horses. The plan type of one storey han is rectangular and probably closed. In the building local limestone was used and covered with vaults while it is in ruins today (Bakkal, 2016) (Fig. 13).



Figure 13. Eynif Tol Han, (Url-10 from I. Dıvarcı).

5. CURRENT STATUS AND CONSERVATION PROBLEMS OF CARAVANSERAIS

The transformation of trade routes and vehicles due to the governmental approaches throughout the centuries caused the abandonment of traditional caravanserai routes. Especially the rapid development of technology and construction of railways in 19th century, led to tend towards railway transportation from the highway transportation. Nevertheless, caravan trading was also continued to exist. However, in the first half of the 20th century, the abandonment of

caravan trading also caused the abandonment of caravan routes and in regard to, the caravanserais.

Furthermore, some of the caravanserais were unfortunately left under dam water, such as Altunapa Han (Fig. 14). Others could not resist to either not being used or not being protected from natural disasters and sometimes they have been even some sort of quarry for the houses of the close inhabitants. On the other hand, there have been some caravanserais which were repaired during the Ottoman Era and survived till present but at the end, they were used as storage and barns for long years because of losing their original functions (Asım & Burxanova, 2017).



Figure 14. Altunapa Han under the dam (photo Url-11, plan from Erdmann).

In the second half last century, Anatolian caravanserais were intended to be used for touristic services. The primary conservation / re-use examples in this context are carried out with 16th century ottoman Era caravanserais; Kuşadası Öküz Mehmet Paşa Caravanserai in 1968 and with Edirne Rüstem Paşa Caravanserai, in 1971. They were restored by the Directorate General of Foundations and were rented to a company as a hotel (Berkol, 1973). The conservation project of Rüstem Paşa Caravanserai in Edirne during 1967-1971 was rewarded by Aga Han prize in 1980 (Fig. 15). The flexibility of architectural formation of

Ottoman caravanserais and the location of both buildings in city centers related to intense tourism activities have been the main reasons for the re-use decision as a hotel. On the other side, the Seljuk caravanserais are incapable of serving for current residence necessities in terms of spatial features and room sizes. For this reason, they are considered much more suitable for functions like restaurant and multi-functional halls and for collective activities rather than private use (Berkol, 1973). For instance, the Kızılören Han in Konya is currently used as a restaurant.

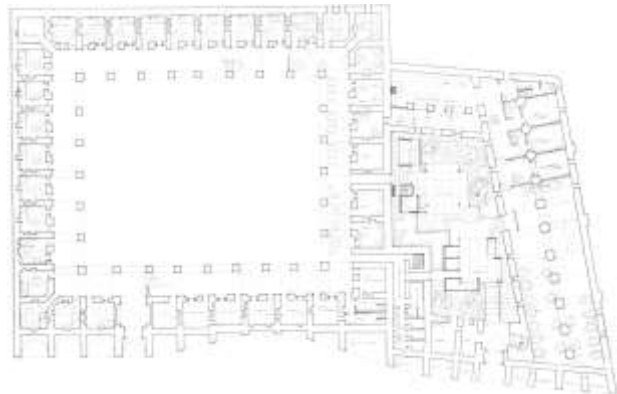


Figure 15. Edirne Rüstem Pasha Caravanserai, photo adapted from Hodod and Rastorfer (1983) by Demircan (2022); plan Çakırlar, (1974).

The main problem about re-use of Seljuk caravanserais for tourism functions is that they are located at uninhabited areas, outside the city center. Most of the caravanserais are visited as open-air museums, however, since the transportation routes change within the time, the caravanserais which stay out of the main routes demolish rapidly due to the environmental and natural/climatic reasons.

With the help of the protocol, signed between Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Directorate General of Foundations in 1982, some of the abandoned caravanserais and hans were aimed to be protected. The selected 17 caravanserais were taken into restoration program to be re-used as short-term residence and hotel. Regarding this;

In 1982, *Çeşme Kanuni Caravanserai, Aksaray Sultan Han, Alanya Kale Han, Alanya Şarapsa Han*

In 1983, *Antalya Kırkgöz Han, Diyarbakır Deliller Han, Denizli Akhan,*

In 1984, *Alanya Alara Han, Nevşehir Saruhan, Konya Zazadin Han,*

In 1985, *Kayseri Sultan Han and Karatay Han, Denizli Çardak Han, Bursa Issız Han,*

In 1986, *Antalya Evdir Han, Konya Horozlu Han, Aksaray Ağzıkara Han*

were planned to be restored in sequence (Bilecen, 1982). Among those, the ones which are located in city center such as Deliller Han still serve as a hotel. Zazadin Han, which is located on outskirts stepped into a rapid deterioration process due to the lack of investor after the restoration process. Horozlu Han has been used as a restaurant until 2006 but was emptied afterwards because of management difficulties (Erdemir, 2017). Şarapsa Han was used for a while after the restoration process, but abandoned again later, but fortunately, it started to serve again as an entertainment center in 1993.

Another project was released in 1993 by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism with the aim of restoring the Anatolian Caravanserais within the Türkiye borders under the frame of Silk Road Project. In this context, a protocol was signed between Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Directorate General of Foundations (GDF) on 22.02.1993, aiming the re-use of caravanserais for tourism activities. 11 caravanserais, which were part of cultural foundational heritage were given priority and restored by GDF. The mentioned caravanserais are as followed:

1- *Sultan Han (Aksaray -13th century)*

2- *Saruhan (Nevşehir / Ürgüp -13th century)*

3- *Şarapsa Han (Alanya -13th century)*

4- *Akhan (Denizli / city center -13th century)*

5- *Ağzıkara Han (Aksaray -13th century)*

6- *Alara Han (Antalya / Alanya -13th century)*

7- *Çardak Han (Denizli / Çardak -13th century)*

8- *Susuz Han (Burdur / Bucak -13th century)*

9- *İncir Han (Burdur / Bucak -13th century)*

10- *Alay Han (Aksaray -13th century)*

11- *Silâhtar Mustafa Paşa Han (Malatya / Battal Gazi -16th century)*

This project aimed to sustain and maintain the Anatolian caravanserais on Silk Road by converting them into touristic buildings with new functions. Public-private partnership model was decided for implementations (Url-12). According to the model, the company commits to pay rent to the Directorate General of Foundations (GDF) on condition with restoring and operating the building. The restoration implementation process and operating period are planned to be under the control of GDF. In accordance with the protocol, the investment procedure is approved by the Ministry Culture and Tourism.

Alay Han, Ağzıkara Han and Sultan Han in Aksaray and Saruhan Han in Nevşehir are the significant Seljuk caravanserais that were restored and re-used in the frame of Silk Road Project. Alay Han was abandoned in 19th century and was mostly demolished in 1930s. The open courtyard was completely disappeared, and a highway was constructed above while a part of covered spaces could survive. The implementations were started in 1995 and the highway was moved to 500 m away. The last restoration of the covered section was completed in 2008 and the open courtyard was revealed during the research excavations in 2022 (Ardıç and Çullu, 2017) (Fig. 16).



Figure 16. *Alay Han, before (Eroşar, 2017; photo I. Dıvarcı) and after (photo I. Simon, 2016) restoration.*

Ağzıkara Han (Hoca Mesut Castle) is located on Aksaray-Nevşehir Highway Route. However, it was left out of route due to the movement of the highway 2 km forward in 2004 (Fig. 17). The building was repaired by GDF in 1970-1975. Since 2007, it has been

using as a museum and shopping store after being rented by the inhabitants nearby (Ardıç and Çullu, 2017).



Figure 17. Ağzıkara Han, before (Eravşar, 2017; photo I. Dıvarcı) and during restoration (photo: I. Simon, 2015).

Sultan Han located on Aksaray-Konya Highway Route was commissioned by Kayqubad I in 1229. Afterwards, it was enlarged during the reign of Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev III in 1268 (Uluçam, 2009). It is one of the biggest caravanserais of Seljuk Era with its total area of 4680 m² including open and covered spaces. The stunning kiosk masjid in the courtyard and intense engravings/ornaments point out the wealth and power of the era. The building looks like a castle from the outside, which is also served as a military headquarter, so it was damaged during the wars

and invasions. After being abandoned in 19th century, the building was used as a stone material source by the nearby inhabitants for a long time. It was taken under conservation following a partial restoration by GDF in 1959-1968 (Uluçam, 2009). It was delivered to local municipality to be operated after restoration in 2017 and the restoration implementation was completed in 2019. Since then, the caravanserai has been using as a museum and traditional handcrafts workshops (Fig. 18).



Figure 18. Sultan Han, before (Url-13) and after (Url-14) restoration.

Sarı Han is located on Nevşehir-Kayseri Highway Route and was commissioned by Sultan Keykavus II in 1249. It has a total area of 2000 m². The building was

restored by GDF in 1991 and currently is used for special organizations with the permission of GDF (Fig. 19).



Figure 19. Sarı Han photo left (Bilici, 2016), right (Url-15).

6. DISCUSSION: REGENERATION POSSIBILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The project initiated by China in 2013 under the name of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) earlier as 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR) and aimed to connect important economical centers of Asia with Africa and Europe via land and maritime networks with modern constructions and infrastructures and thus revitalizing the historic Silk Road. This concept drew inspiration from the concept of the Silk Road established during the Han Dynasty 2,000 years ago - an ancient network of trade routes that connected China to the Mediterranean via Eurasia for centuries. The term 'belt' refers to all land and maritime transportation network elements such as highways, railways, petrol and gas pipelines that leads to London from Mid-China. The frame of the project was proposed to be wide and within time, it has been evolved to a global one. While being a global economic collaboration project, OBOR aimed to revitalize the historical Silk Road

on which Türkiye is also included - on 'Middle Corridor' - (Karagöl, 2017; Url-16; Url-17) (Fig. 20).

The project is supposed to improve the cultural relations of societies (Taşağıl, 2015). However, researchers think that the cultural mission of the project could be as strong as the economical mission (Sabancı, 2018). Türkiye is a vital country on Middle Corridor because of its strategic geography and location. On the middle corridor of the project, the aim of arrival of a train to London which takes off from China, presents a very important opportunity for Türkiye (Çakan, 2017). In this context, the realization of Edirne-Kars high speed train lane in Türkiye becomes a support for the Modern Silk Road Project. Thus, as in the past, modern cultural acquirments will take place with the focus of economic activities and the connection between tourism and creative economy grows stronger. It is clear that the war that started in the north of the Black Sea in 2022 and the trade that is being reshaped accordingly, increased the importance of the corridor where Türkiye is located.



Figure 20. China's Proposed New Silk Road Routes (Url-17).

Cultural routes are a type of travel that brings together a series of attractions with different characteristics which do not have sufficient attraction on its own and stimulates regional tourism because of the movement of visitors from one place to another (Richards, 2017; Kervankıran and Çuhadar, 2014). Considering each caravanserai as a separate property means that they are taken out of their context in which they

are stopovers on a route in their original form. Therefore, creating thematic routes within the caravan routes will enable the caravanserais to be brought into tourism with more meaningful and rich scenarios. In addition, it will be an approach that will add synergy to cultural tourism.

Alternative cultural routes that are to be created on Silk Road could be an effective way for revealing the

tourism potential of caravanserais especially of those which are far from main roads and on uninhabited areas. With the help of those alternative routes, the caravanserais that have no attractive feature themselves and that are almost to be sort of architectural archaeological ruins might be consolidated and taken into the tourism practice as a surprising stage for different activities. This could be achieved by use of visual and digital facilities. On this stage various activities such as recitals, fashion shows, concerts and exhibitions could take place.

The cultural tourism benefits the countries provided the enhancing cultural remains are properly studied, documented, and restored, a development in harmony to the environment and the society, apart of the educational dimension and academia. Here the role of non-governmental organizations linked to UNESCO and other world accredited organizations is considerable (Korka, 2022). Indeed, the cultural tourism is an asset for countries so much for cultural diplomacy as much as sustainability development goals. (Alghazawi et al., 2015; Haddad et al., 2021). Here the use of new technologies from natural sciences applied to cultural relics for documentation of age, technique, provenance, characterization etc, employing 3D systems and GIS as well as archaeometry techniques are a deemed necessary tool for any conservation and restoration project (Liritzis et al., 2015,

2020; Alexakis et al., 2022; Psalti et al., 2022; Levy et al., 2022).

The Manavgat- Beyşehir Route of Silk Road in Southwestern Anatolia might be considered for this aim with its rich potentials (Fig. 21). This route would increase the visibility and promotion of historical and cultural values of Qubadabad Palace and Eşrefoğlu Mosque which have been far from well-known routes in case Beyşehir is determined as the destination point. Additionally, Kargı Han and Eynif Tol Han on the same route would support the cultural tourism with different and dynamic scenarios (Fig. 21). They will present the opportunity to be in touch with the cultural and natural values such as local vernacular houses and natural habitat of wild horses on the route as well. Moreover, the route will make the travelers notice the intangible values such as local and historical tastes, local products etc. Apart from those, considering the suitable condition of the 22 km road between two caravanserais for hiking and observation points, addition of this section into the practice as Kargı Han-Eynif Tol Han Hiking Course would be a spectacular experience. This hiking course could be an interesting benefit for the cultural tourism in terms of contemporary interpretation of authentic caravan travel tradition of Silk Road and Anatolia. This way, a multi-layered and rich cultural observation and experience would be possible at the same time and place via cultural and natural heritage.

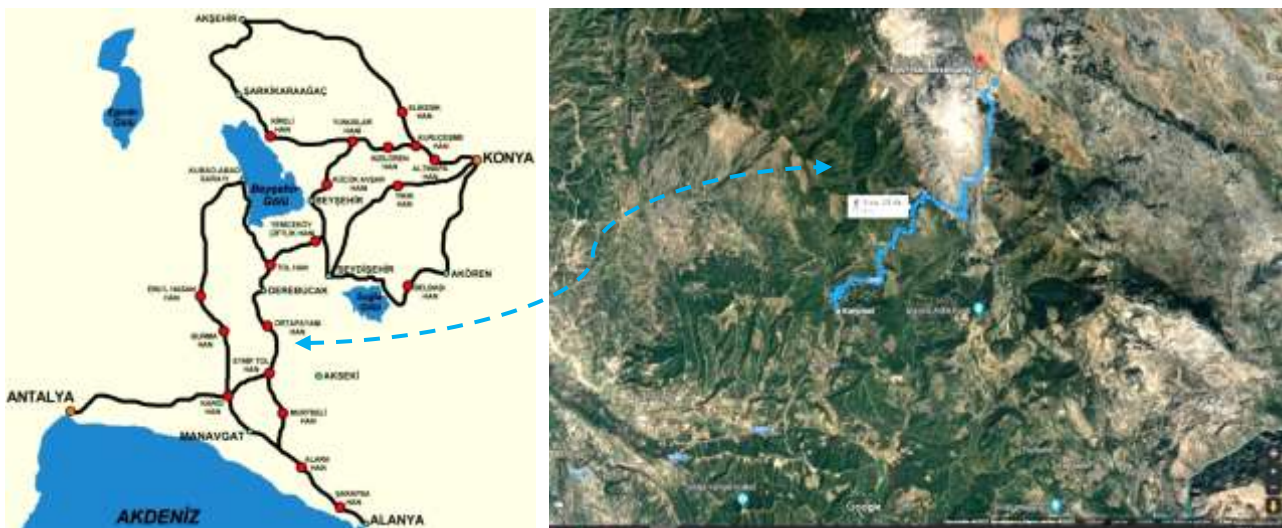


Figure 21. Southeast Anatolia (Kunduracı, 2017) and Kargı Han - Eynif Tol Han Caravanserai Routes (Google Earth).

7. CONCLUSIONS

Through its long history, the Silk Road was more than the trade by affecting cultural and technological exchange of civilizations. As an important part of the Silk Road, the Anatolian Silk Road routes, played an important role in development of the social, cultural and economic aspects during Roman and Byzantine

eras. The Seljuk Sultans put important benefit to enrichment of Anatolia in terms of economy and culture with the trade routes and caravanserais for enabling security on those routes. The road network of Seljuks was also used during the Ottoman Era with partial modifications and caravanserais in complexes were constructed even they are a few. The change of trade methods and routes due to the technological developments in 19th century, caused the abandonment of the

Silk Road and Anatolian caravan routes that was concluded leaving the caravanserais useless, under irresponsible use, without protection to natural conditions and human-based deteriorations.

Thanks to the recent repairs and cultural-touristic focused re-uses by the responsible establishments, some caravanserais are surviving fortunately. The systematic works on conservation of caravanserais started in 1970s and especially the 2000s have been the years in which Silk Road theme cultural and touristic projects were carried out. In this context, the projects in Türkiye are focused to revitalize the mostly protected areas on Silk Road or to add the caravanse-rais nearby those areas into the touristic development

programs. Unfortunately, this method causes the caravanserais which have less investment value to be left without care and to be demolished. However, the ongoing change in vision of current cultural tourism approach, the various interpretation of cultural tourism, presentation of Silk Road idea into the global market again, the conservation and presentation facilities that technology provides and the traditional connecting mission of Türkiye in between, creates opportunities for re-interpreting of rich natural-cultural-ethnographic potentials of Türkiye in a holistic approach. In this sense, the historical silk road awaits the discovery of its inspiring potential for the future.

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