

## TRADITIONAL-DAILY USED PATHS AS CULTURAL TRAILS. THE CASE OF IKARIA IN GREECE\*

**Economou Agisilaos**

*PhD National Technical University of Athens, Environmentalist*  
[aghs@mail.ntua.gr](mailto:aghs@mail.ntua.gr)

**Nikolaos Zikidis**

*Architect Engineer, National Technical University of Athens*  
[nikzik@teemail.gr](mailto:nikzik@teemail.gr)

### **Abstract**

*The present paper explores the possibility of characterizing and usage of such traditional utilitarian paths as cultural routes. As a case study a particular path on the island of Ikaria in Greece was chosen. The particular trail is only a small loop of the entire network of trails of the island. However, as shown by the research, both the plurality and quality of information and experiences offered is revealing, as it presents a variety of architectural, folklore, history, but also of environmental interest elements.*

*The method of analysis used for the purposes of the research is the in situ inventory along with observations and interviews with local residents. The data collected was documented on maps and analyzed by researchers. The research showed that the paths as elements of local culture support the organic connection between human-made habitat and the natural environment, constitute architectural historical events and therefore require special protection and utilization. At the end, proposals to preserve and enhance pathways and their connection to cultural elements are formulated, within the context of a sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** *traditional paths, cultural paths, paths in Ikaria*

### **1. Introduction**

The paths and trails constitute an element of coherence, connection and use of space. In the natural environment they contribute to the familiarization of the unknown. A path inside a forest or in the arid mountain top makes the space seem less foreign. For Lynch, paths are a key conceptual tool of interpretation (Lynch, 1960). For Hillier and Hanson is a methodological tool of analysis and interpretation of the social relations of a place (Hillier & Hanson, 1993). The paths are channels of transport of information, interconnecting elements of the nodes of human activity and the final data of establishment of occupancy. The existence and construction in space constitutes architectural structure. Whether it is urban or rural, the utility, morphology and structure of paths indicate the existence of individual and collective human activity "and by that meaning are included in the context of the law (Law 3028/2002, Article 2) (OJHR, 2002).

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Nowadays the tracks in inhabited place operatively connect the contrasting nodes (Salingaros, 2009). They are also self-cultural-social events. In a unique historical way, the paths serve sociability, organization, but also the organic connection of human-made environment with the physical one. However as we have already said they constitute architectural elements and also bear elements of the civilization of the place. Essentially therefore, apart from their utilitarian character trails play the role of cultural routes as well.

Currently, the cultural routes are utilized to reconstruct the history and perception of space. Using as a methodological tool the thematic areas, we re-approach the cultural resources through a conceptual continuity (Olive streets, historic trails in Athens, etc.). They recommend the "syntax" in a "text" (Karavassili & Mikelakis, 2007) that should be reread by visitors or residents to perceive the monuments, sites, landscapes, traditions and history in general. Consequently, cultural routes are a powerful methodological and management tool for the promotion of civilization of places. Alternative forms of tourism, education, collective actions, are some of the guidelines for a sustainable management of cultural resources using as a tool the cultural paths.

This paper investigates the possibility of the classification of such traditional utilitarian paths as cultural routes and their appropriate utilization. As a case study a particular path on the island of Ikaria in Greece was chosen. This particular trail presents a variety of architectural elements, folklore, history, and environmental interest. As will be shown below, paths as elements of local culture support the organic connection between human-made habitat and the natural environment, constitute architectural historical events and therefore require special protection and utilization.

The methodology used for the purposes of the research is in situ documentation and observation and interviews with local residents. The data collected was documented on maps and analyzed by researchers. Then an evaluation of the results and proposals for the maintenance and enhancement of trails, as well as their connection with cultural elements took place.

## **2. Ikaria**

Ikaria is located in Greece. It is an island of the North Aegean region. It belongs to the prefecture of Samos and since 2009 it constitutes a single municipality whose capital is Saint Kirikos. The island has a total of 80 settlements. The population of Ikaria, according to the census of 2011, is 9882 residents (GSA, 2012). During the summer months the population exceeds 24,000.

Nowadays, the use of the land on the island is divided as follows: Agriculture (50%), fisheries / aquaculture (5%), tourism / recreation (20%), urban / industrial / transport (5%), water management (including basin management) (10%), and not used (10%).

As far as the economy is regarded, 31% of people are employed in the primary sector, 21% in the secondary and 48% in the tertiary.

Ikaria is situated about 140 miles away of the capital of Greece, Athens (Melas, 2001). The shape of the island is elongated. Buondelmonti, traveler of the 15th century resembles the natural morphology of the island with the image of an inverted ship. The length of the island is 40 km. The maximum width is 10 km west and 6 km east. The perimeter of the island is 98 km and its surface is 267 km<sup>2</sup>.

Geomorphologically Ikaria is a mountainous island. It is intercepted in its entire length by the massif of Mount Atheras with floating peak height from 600 to 1041 m. (Melas, 2001). The

island has no lowlands except the small lowlands of Campos in the central part of the Lighthouse and the eastern part. The intense natural terrain creates small valleys ravines and plateaus, many of which are not visible from the sea.

The island consists of various rock formations as gnefsioeideis granite, mica schist's and marbles. The difference in morphology between the northern and southern side is perceived by the morphology, hydrography and vegetation (Ktenas & Marinos, 1969).

The minimum invaginations of the coastline can offer parsimonious natural docking. This fact, in combination with the strong winds blowing in the area makes the island inaccessible in several of its parts (Red, 2005). The intense geological terrain forming deep valleys and streams being run through by streams and rivers most important of which are Mirson, Harakas, and Halaris.

In Ikaria there are many healing springs, known since ancient times, which are considered to be worldwide unique (Papayannakis, 2010).

The croplands are formed with up-terraced land on steep slopes while in only a few spots small alluvial lowlands are created most important of which is the one in the main village of Campos (ancient Oinoi).

Ikaria's climate is Mediterranean (insular) with an average annual rainfall of 870mm. Fog and clouds are often formed in the highest peaks of the mountain of the island, called Athera, which contributes to the increase of air moisture even in the summer.

The island's size, morphology and environmental conditions required in the past the opening and use of pathways for the convenience of the residents. As time passed by and with the evolution many of these pathways were replaced by roads. However, many are those which still preserve their traditional construction.

### **3. Network of Paths on the island**

It could be argued that the scattered elements of the urban Ikarian landscape give the appearance of a discontinuity. However, wherever the living space on the island gives the dispersion image, at the same time it is organic and functional totally connected. The habits, customs, social relations but mainly the network on which all these were initiated formed the inhabited place space of the island. Despite all the adversities during the historical times, habitation was oriented aiming the familiarization of space.

The peculiarity of paths-pathways helps us to comprehend the rhythm of the Ikarian community. As these routes follow nonlinear forms, but bronchial type spatial alignments cyclically repeatable, the more effective "the conquer" of the site becomes and thus more powerful the continuity of the space, even if distances between nodes of the network is relatively large. This rhythmicity for Lefevre (2007) requires memory. And the memory of the repeatable motion through the known daily paths of the residents, ultimately gives meaning to the network of movements and routes in order to establish its spatial character. The village even if it is not bounded by presidential decrees or other legislation, remains clearly defined in the memory of the residents. The boundaries of residential units (villages, neighborhoods, etc.) which in Ikaria are more vague than in other places due to the idiosyncratic way of inhabitation is absolutely comprehensible to the residents through the tracks. **The paths define the spatial extent** (better more the range) of the village and its relative position in the wider area of the island. The name of

a village mainly refers to the area which the village uses (farming etc.) and less in the geographical region of the urban expansion.

In a nice way Stavridis (2010) showed that ".the repetition of actions, combined with a sense of permanency that characterizes spatial relationships, is presented as the condition that characterizes the living space." Ikaria is a good example of this theory. The paths taken as engravings of everyday life in the physical space, soil, contribute to the cohesion of people and space through the rhythm they involve or express. The place becomes intimate and known not by some morphological modeling (street number, town, city) but through **the memory** of the area. A letter addressed to a resident of Ikaria reaches its destination, even if it just contains the recipient's name and the name of the village in which he resides. The postman knows where someone lives, but mainly knows how to go and find him, meaning the route that should be followed up to his house. Even in an urban area where the coordinated determination was missing, there would be the necessity to develop network-of pathways -routes.



Map 1. The trails of the island in 1957 (Background map Mazari 1957)

#### 4. The route under research and its selection criteria

Until the 50s there were very few motorways on the island of Ikaria and the connection of settlements but also of the three major villages (Raches Mesaria-Evdilos, Saint Kirikos) was essentially prosaic. There were few cars that worked as taxies up to a vehicular road could be reached. The two major ports (Evdilos, Saint Kirikos) served the coastal connection of the island. The distances between most of the settlements were long and had to be traveled on foot. This fact led to the use of coastal and smaller ports (Armenistis Karkinagri) using small boats (lantzes). The interconnection especially of the largest coastal centers, was complemented also by the local coastal shipping with small boats (fishing boats), as much as the weather conditions allowed it. The North-South interconnection on foot was a small feat. Sometimes under harsh conditions (strong winds, fog, etc.) the route lasted several hours. Characteristics landmarks defined the few passages and oriented the walkers: a landmark was a small church (Saint Isidoros), a small building with a few basic supplies ("home of the midwife"), a natural formation ("black Louros"), a dangerous passage under the place name ("evil Katavasidi") or a medieval castle (castle Kapsalino).

Nowadays the road network in Icaria (primary and secondary) has expanded to the entire island. Many new roads were opened (most where was permitted by the terrain slope) on the traces of old paths, connecting with automotive all the settlements. Even in inaccessible and isolated areas, road construction is observed so as to serve even the minimum activity. The road network currently is being developed almost perimetrically in the island, apart from a point on the south side that still has not been completed.

Based on these data we chose to investigate a particular traditional utilitarian path in the center of the island of Icaria. The route is 32 km and was not replaced by a roadway, but fragmentary is still used by the residents. The criteria by which it was chosen are:

- The natural environment of the route
- The anthropogenic environment that emerges in the path
- Its position in the island in relation to anthropogenic and natural environment
- Its relationship with the wider network of paths
- Its relationship with the historical monuments
- Its current function (tourism-accessibility - condition-usage).

*The natural environment of the route*

- The Trail- route under examination ascends to an altitude of about 360 m to reach again in the same point, coming across this way with the majority of flora of the island. The relatively big differences in the microclimate, caused by the severe terrain, combined with the strong presence of water (springs, rivers), form a unique diversified natural environment in a relatively small geographical area.

In the geographical position where the path is located, the two main geological formations of the island are found. The one of the western Icaria (consisting almost exclusively by purplish gnefsiogranti) and the eastern (composed of sedimentary formations transformed or not). In the region which we refer to a system which consists of alternating semi transformed schist is developed with marbles and limestone. (Ktenas & Marinou, 1969), which gives a special geological interest even due to the variety of the surface rocks.

*The anthropogenic environment that emerges in the path*

Along the route scattered traces of human presence appear, most of which have now been abandoned. The water as the dominant natural feature of inhabitation, defined the areas of human interventions. Particular interest is presented around two key points: a watermill and the source of Kefalas. (Land name Alama). It should be noted that this source provides water until nowadays the largest part of the area of Messara and the port of Evdilos. This fact renders it as a wider landmark. Generally, the path is defined by three central points: a) the starting point of the main road, which is the lowest altitude point b) the village Droutsoulas c) the village Akamatra

Akamatra officially characterized as traditional settlement and is one of the most visited and cherished mountain villages of the island especially during the touristic seasons. It is situated at an altitude of 360m and is characterized by an architectural representative style of the housing tradition of the island.

The second important node of the route is formed by the village called Droutsoulas. Although it has so far been characterized by a presidential decree as a traditional settlement is

nevertheless remarkable. It is a much smaller settlement than Akamatra, at about the same altitude with it, but with fewer visitations. It is worth noting that while the village is difficult or not at all visible from the coastal zone, it is not true the other way around. Special position in the geo-textile terrain of the area (developed at the local ridge length) ensures the visual connection of the village with quite a large part of the north side of the island (visual range towards the north side of the island of about 11 km). The path in its development presents a high number of architectural and morphological elements but also of smaller technical projects such as small bridges, retaining walls, etc.

*- The position of the route in the island in relation to the anthropogenic and natural environment*

The area, where the route is found, is situated in the center of the island and close to one of the largest residential areas called Mesarias, place name of the wider area comprising the villages Xanthi, Akamatra, Steli, Petropouli Kosoikia. Messaria is one of the oldest and most developed residential areas of the island.

Although the route is circular, starting point was the one that begins near the estuary of the local river (Kerame), the central and most important highway of the island that connects Saint Kirikos with Evdilos and Raches. By this central road passe through almost all the visitors of the island who wish to visit the most famous touristic areas of Ikaria such as Armenisti and Na in the northwestern side. Also, just 1,5 km from the starting point of the route is located one of the largest ports of the island, that of Evdilos.

*-The connection with the wider network of footpaths*

From the village Droutsoulas the footpath continues towards the village of Arethousa through the village Foinikas and to the south side of the island. However, the most basic trail (and shortest from the region of Mesarias) to the south side is still (today as a motorway) from the village of Akamatra to Kosoikia and Manganiti.

Here we need to refer to a general observation resulting from the mapping of the paths. While within the residential units in the whole of the residential expansion in both the north and the south side of the island there is high connectivity between various nodes, the same does not exist between the two sides. This interconnection is via a nearly linear path along the ridge of Athera, where through five nodal points, the crossal (as to the shape of the island) movements are distributed. This was probably the result of both the steep and difficult approach of the south side, and of the discontinuity of arable ground on both sides of the areas along the top, that were attributed to the free grazing of wild goats.

*-The connection with the historical monuments*

The most direct correlation of the footpath is with the medieval castle of Koskina located at the top of Kefala. This can be accessed from a route that starts from the entrance of the village Akamatra. Also significant is the visual connection that exists in the biggest part of the route of the footpath with the chapel of Saint George at the top of the hill and into the castle which is a landmark of the location. Finally, of several points along the route there is a visual contact with the area of Campos, area of findings from the classical antiquity to the medieval years.

*- Current operation and usage of the footpath*

The geographic location, as well as the road linking of the nodes, makes the route easily accessible. The connection among the two main nodes, of the village Droutsoulas and the village Akamatra through highway that are connected to the main road network, radically changed the

functional form of the footpath. Although the physical and social functional needs of the villages are still extended and made thought the trail in a relatively small range around the settlements (farmland still cultivated, sheepfolds, etc.), the major part still remains unused. In some places natural vegetation interrupts the course of the footpath, while in others the natural erosion makes it inconspicuous. However, traces of long years process of people in this area is still clear and sufficient evidence of civilization. The section of the footpath Kerame- Droutsoulas was visited by children of the House of Greek Drivers in July 2011. The children, in collaboration with the Mountaineering and Hiking club of Ikaria worked for 10 days, cleared and marked the footpath. This fact indicates the recent interest in the development of the trekking tourism on the island.

### **5. Description of anthropogenic data of the route**

From the above it results that the route chosen meets all the criteria we set in a sense of the quantity of data. Additionally, although other areas are equally interesting, this area was well known to researchers.

The most important anthropogenic elements that you meet in the route are residential units, walls, small temples, threshing floors, a watermill, and irrigation-water supply sources.

#### ***Residential units***

The location Kerame, hereafter referred to as (K), a position that we placed the starting point of the route. It falls into the village Agia Kyriaki -Kerame, 1,5 km east of Evdilos. In this position a small river flows, whose alluvial deposits formed an area of vegetable crops until the delta, where a wetland creek-river type (Ramsar M), coastal with fresh water is formed. Species such as turtles and eels exist in there.

The houses of the settlement are scattered without a coherent core. The small church of Saint John serves as a landmark in the region and marks the site.

The settlement of Droutsoula, more coherent, is the second major node. Hereafter referred to as (D). Located at an altitude of approximately 370 m and is expanding almost linearly along the length of the local ridge in the direction North-South. The crops of the village are mainly developed in the Northwest since in the east the land is steep. Currently is linked with the central highway roads. Center of the village and wider landmark (visible from great distance) is the spire of the village's church (Aghioi Pantes) while the surrounding area of the church is considered to be social center (area of social events, festivals, etc.). The settlement is one of the oldest agricultural and livestock nature settlements on the island, with a small population today and mainly employed in the primary sector (mainly livestock). Organized by a side route network of roads -pavements where the central path is occupied by the highway. Of the villagers we were informed that Droutsoula begins, other than the footpath before us, another one to the castle of Koskina, a second for the ridge towards Saint Stathis and a third which connects the village with Arethousa (a village in the east of Droutsoula). It is an overgrown village, with buildings surrounded by small family farms on the model of Ikarian residential practice. Most buildings are stone built using plaster and with apparent use of masonry. The particular small scale of the settlement sizes (small size, single-storey buildings) in relation to other villages, its relative isolation of the biggest bands the oldness as well as the particularity of its location (viewing of a very large section of the north side), makes it one of the most interesting villages of the island.

In the third residential pole there is located the village of Akamatra which will be therefore referred to as (A). Quite larger village in extend as well as in population compared to the previous two, characterized as traditional with two other regions of Ikaria (Raches Lagada). (PD FEK961D /

12-9-2003). It is developed to a large extent (about 50 ha), following the typical Ikarian pattern of sparse construction and crop rotation and houses within the settlement. However in the meeting point of the three of the main streets, is formed the most central public space, the square of the village where there are shops and cafes where social events are organized. Of this center also starts the route-footpath to (K) and towards (D). The highway that connects the villages of the south side and the other villages of Mesarias passes thought in a short distance from its center, preventing the motoring from the core of the village. The building landscape is synthesized with several buildings of the 19th century and some much older. Although the village is considered to be mountainous, its architecture figure contains several simplified neoclassical elements introduced in the island, along with the commercial boom of the 19th century, and the following cultural extroversion of the residents. The surrounding area of the village is characterized as a landscape of outstanding natural beauty. (no. EIS / 4754 / 06.15.2002), along with the regions Pezi and Lagada of the area Raches.

### ***Retaining walls***

These are dry stone constructions made mainly with local materials. They differ both in morphology and in the construction system, according to the variations that one can find in rocks of the ground as well as their function. On the way that we examine the variety and alternation of rocks is great because of the location of the footpath in the junction of the two dominant geological formations of the island (Eastern-Western).

The usage of these retaining walls depends mainly on livestock both positive (management and control of sheep and goats) and negative (protection of crops from animals). Livestock remained a central element of the Ikarian economy and understanding of the system of the walls. A classification based on the purpose for which they were constructed is the following:

- a) Walls to hold the land in steep terrain, where arable land is formed. They are mostly near the settlements or where the existence of abundant water allows horticulture (for example the area of the watermill).
- b) Walls surrounding arable land, land for livestock (mainly pastures, i.e. areas at low altitudes for the grazing of animals in the winter) (late element of the Ikarian landscape) (Kapetanios) and areas for protection of bee-cells (Melissotopi or Melissokipi).

Although generally in Ikaria walls acquire curved shape following the natural terrain on the trail we are dealing with we meet in one point (a watermill) rectangular shape soil formation.

### ***Small Chapels***

Chapels are scattered along the trail. The route does not pass directly the area they are located, but within walking distance there is a visual contact with them from several places. These buildings, like elsewhere, act mostly as land names. The name of the Saint, to whom it is devoted also stands as the land name of a place (Saint George, Holy Cross, etc.). At the same time, also act as landmarks, directing and giving a measure of the distance covered.

### ***Threshing floors***

Characteristic feature of rural culture are the threshing floors which lie alongside the trail. They are usually placed next to small formerly arable land areas devoted to cereal grains (mainly barley), and clearly show their relationship with the footpath, as through it the transport was carried out. The slate material that exists in abundance, were used for laying the base and the circular definition of the threshing floor. The threshing floors also play the role of a landmark and often are linked with the name of the owner ("the farm of George the priest").

### ***Watermills***

The watermills are constructed in permanent positions (if possible) with water flow and were higher manufacturing quality buildings with special architectural, morphological, functional and social characteristics. They started being constructed in the mid 19th century as a result of the rising living standards and increasing demand for flour. Architecturally they consisted of a waterfall tower (hanged) on the main grinding floor, the space of water expansion and a place to stay, which functioned as a hostel. Their function was relatively simple and was based on the channeling of water through small aqueducts, the tower whose proper conical interior layout, which increased the outflow velocity at the bottom. This way gave the necessary kinetic energy to the vertical rotation axis and subsequently to the millstones. Morphologically the watermills were of a higher technical masonry buildings using mortar, particularly the waterfall tower. Secondary structures completed the complex. The watermill was a particular social site. It was a meeting and association place, but also a rest station of passers. In this sense, it was an important landmark. Today there are about 70 watermills still saved across the island (Kokkinos 2005). One of them is on the footpath we are dealing with.

### ***Sources***

One of the physical characteristics of the island is the existence of many natural resources. One of the most important sources of the island is situated in a place called Alama, in the northern flank of the peak Kefala. It is located at an altitude of about 350 m, and its water come from great depth. Provides with water, as has been said, to one of the largest residential sections of Mesarias and Evdilos and irrigates mainly small cultivations around Akamatra. It acts as a staging point and landmark of wider range because of its importance for the region. Supplies with constant flow the hydro streams flowing into Kerame. (K). Also is used by shepherds and walkers as a staging and resting point.

## **6. Recording and analysis of the data of the route**

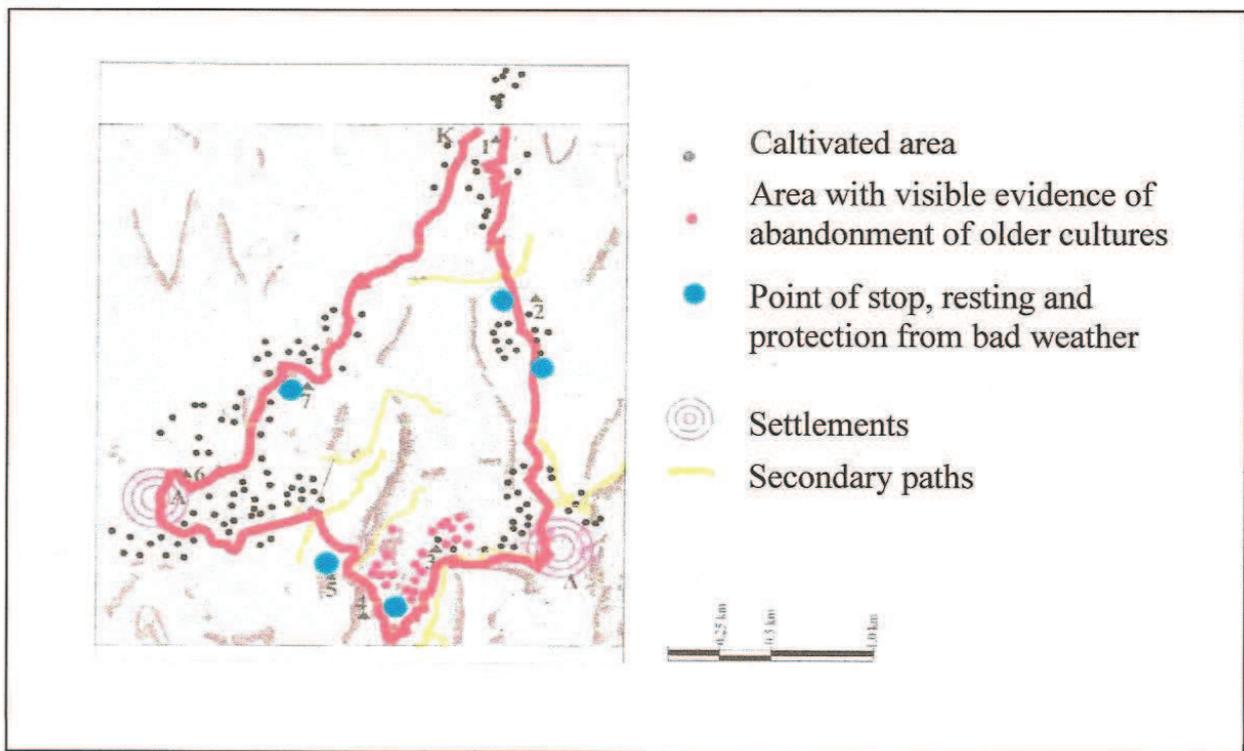
Explanations -methodology

- For the purposes of the research maps were created. The marking of habitation areas was set by reference to the existence of small residential units and cultures around them. Also, is not identical to the statutory definition of urban settlements (settlements of less than 2000 inhabitants), which is much smaller in size and of course does not include all the settlements.
- The centers of the settlements were defined wherever there are many social events. For example in the case of the village Akamatra, the role of the central square is played by a part of the main road running through the village.
- As landmarks several places of significant buildings that operate today are marked, such as the church of the Virgin in Lefainas Akamatra or operated once and still remain in memory of the residents as the old watermill we come along the road Droutsoulas-Akamatra. Still as landmarks, locations reported by residents as important of the route (such as resting points or reference for the route e.g. position "Glini" or "home of Ksiros are marked that 'specified in a way the area of the village towards in this direction).

The parameters used in the recording, and analysis of the data indicates:

- The visual sites or connections with the wider area and the nodes of the path for someone running the footpath.

- The quality and quantity of process of the soil of the footpath through a classification of four sub-parameters. In the context soil layer we consider the whole processing concluded in the route, such as small bridges, retaining projects, screeds etc. With the word processing is understood the degree and quality of technical projects aiming to build, support and preserve of the footpath.
- The inventory of boundary lines on either side of the path, which define the movement as optical barriers or edges.
- In the inventory of the altitudinal gradients on the way of the movement. Besides these parameters were recorded areas with apparent homogeneity, such as cultivated areas or areas with visible evidence of abandonment of older cultures. Also, major earliest traces of habitation which are now abandoned were noted, as well as "points of view". Also we recorded the rotation of "closed" and "open" areas along the route.



Map 2. landmarks and areas

Of the map is shown the expansion of the agricultural activities of the inhabitants of Droutsoula to the coast, while the part of the village Akamatra is abandoned. In contrast, around Akamatra crops are developing in fenced cultivations in sufficient extent.

The points of stops are placed in the middle of the distances among to the three main nodes (Kerame- Droutsoulas- Akamatra). Furthermore, these points constituted also a destination point for example position 4 where the existence of a functioning watermill served as a local center for both the two settlements. These points are still nowadays operating as resting areas for the current users of the footpath.

## **7. Results of the Research**

### ***Interviews***

For the purposes of the research and for the better recording of the data local residents were interviewed, younger and older, who knew the route. Of the community of Evdilos backgrounds and technical information was provided. Younger residents asked whether they knew the route or not, they told us that they now the route however they rarely use it. Most of them live in Droutsoula and use part of the path to go to nearby farms or their animals (domestic livestock). From Kerame they were using the path for the same reason, but also for "branch" (i.e. to cut branches, mainly koumaria so as to feed their domestic animals in the winter) (today this need is covered by commercial animal feed). The older people recounted personal stories and experiences. Thus, they suggested resting locations, the relation of the particular pathway with the secondary path network, the degree of difficulty of the route and its use. The connection Droutsoula with Kerame, and thus with the center of Evdilos, was more potent especially on the part of the residents of Droutsoula. It is noteworthy that a cause of transport was education as in Droutsoula after 1960 there was no school and the kids had to move up and down daily in Evdilos.

As far as the section Droutsoulas - Akamatra is concerned the social relations that existed between the two settlements were often reported. The residents of Droutsoula, the most isolated settlement of the wider residential network and significantly smaller, were using the path the days of the festivals, on social assemblages, etc. As we will see later on the on-site observation, this section of the path was more vital, though it was abandoned in the last years. But this must have been happening far in the past. In one description it is mentioned that this section during the war and the civil war was considered as an isolated passage and therefore safe.

The connection Akamatra - Kerame was considered to be important both for commercial purposes and for social reasons, since Akamatra was a center of social events with a broader reference to the island. Nevertheless the section of the path about 200 meters after point 7 towards Kerame followed an almost lateral course, which currently is interrupted by private fences and possibly trespasses. The path that today still continues from point 7 and later, was of secondary importance, fact that is established by improvements we see in it (Map 2).

### ***On spot observation***

With the help of the maps and after on spot observation, recording and analysis of the data we found that:

- The visual contact from the beach to the two villages is minimal to negligible. Conversely, from the location of the settlements and by a large part of the route, the visual contact towards the beach is great and wide. This seems to follow the residential model followed in the islands, where the goal was to hide the settlements from the sea and control the coastal zone.
- Minimum part of the path is visually "closed", while a small part is completely "open". The largest part can be seen side by side to the artificial or natural boundaries, leaving the view unobstructed in one direction side or the other.
- The Section from Kerame till Droutsoula is relatively well maintained and is used by the residents in the areas where there are crops from Kerame until Droutsoula. This is consistent with the fact of the gradual abandonment of grazing ground in the mountains.
- In contrast, the part of the path from Droutsoula until Akamatra has more processing. (Map.2). In this section one can find the elements with the most important role in the region (one watermill,

one of the major sources of northern Ikaria, the Alama, in position 5 (Map 2). This probably indicates a strong social cultural economic relationship between the two settlements in the past. However today it has the less maintenance.

- The anthropogenic or natural environment developed in the section Kerame-Droutsoulas is closer to the traditional land using model, where the zone of crops is a enclosed self-sustaining system, despite what appears in Akamatras- Kerame area.
- The architectural elements (walls, screeds footpaths, buildings) use materials which are in the nearby area (variety of rocks, etc.). For example, the laying of the path is made with marble wherever this material is found in abundance.
- The part from Akamatra - Kerame is the least used. Crops reach until about the 7-position in the side of Akamatra, while on the side of Kerame simply they do not exist. Its use by the residents is too small from point 7 towards Kerame, which is ascertained by the relevant processing witnessed by the ground floor. In the abandonment of this particular part of the footpath, has apparently contributed the paving of the road from Evdilos towards Akamatra (early 70s).

### ***Route description***

The footpath starts from the main highway in Kerame (see Map 3) (φ1) heading up until Droutsoula. In the beginning it crosses areas with small crops, trees, small vineyards developed mainly around the last houses of the village. At this point the trail is shady with a relatively limited view. (φ2) Occasionally among the trees, few houses of Akamatra are seen. In small enclosed courtyards we encounter few family pets. The footpath can be seen on the outskirts of the terraces, while in other points is supported by dry stone of local schistolith (φ3). After about 700 meters the landscape begins to change. The vegetation is lower, and much more we can spot mainly to the west, southwest. Lentisk dominates as well as holly and numerous aromatic shrubs. The smell of lavender is intense. The footpath is not strictly delimited, while it continues to maneuver between rocks and clumps of trees, alternating the shadow with light. At some point for a short distance, the ground floor is carefully laminated with stones (ntousemes) residue of earlier years (φ4).

Up to this point there is no visual perception of distance from the village Droutsoulas. However we know about a site that we will meet in the middle of the path. This small area, known as the place named Glini, was a landmark and crossroad for Ikaria. Indeed, after about an hour of walking, after a sharp bend in a closed point, you come across a plateau. On the right, just after the entrance to this "plateau", are the ruins of an old one-room stone building (φ5). It is an old structure called metochi which was designed to protect passers-by in case of bad weather. The slope here is small, allowing the formation of larger fields, mainly with olive trees (φ5α). Leaving the plateau of Glini, and ascending, the laying of the footpath for about 70 meters with large pieces of marble with superior technical construction is impressive (φ5β, φ5γ). Very close, under a large open area a circular schistolith has the use of a table for the passers (φ 6). Shortly after, on the left, and in about 50 m distance from the footpath, we see the small church "Nativity of the Virgin." (φ6α). The access to the temple from the pathway is not easy, although there is access from the nearby motorway. Then landscape quickly changes. The view is unobstructed to the east and partly to the south. Clearly we can see in the east the villages of Arethusa and Karavostamo (φ6β). The course ascends between the large granite rocks. Shortly after the footpath can be seen directly on a large horizontal natural white marble vein for about 120 meters (φ7, 7α) there are traces of minimum interventions to aiming the drainage of water. Here the landscape is completely open with few trees. In the south, in depth, the peak of Kefala can be seen while we can hardly see in the peak the location of the castle of Koskina (φ8). West the village of Akamatra can be seen and

behind that the mountain villages of Frantatou (φ8α). To the east the view is unobstructed and to the north we can see the port of Evdilos. (φ8β). The soil has a relatively small slope and from here we begin to understand the overall course which we will travel. Moving on, the construction and activities of the village Droutsoulas begin to appear. We see a small corral, nicely shaped benches, good paving of the footpath (φ9), vegetation and crops with intermediate cypress trees (φ9α).



Map 3. Cultural Route positions (source background: Terrain, Greek Cartographic Company).

Our course does not through the village. In order to visit it we should slightly deviate. The course we follow is intersected at one point with the highway that we follow for about 300m. Formerly the footpath crossed the central area of the village and the square (φ9β, φ9γ) in order to continue towards the village of Akamatra or east towards Arethousa. A local network of trails was organizing the area of the settlement. Today in the location of the central route the highway comes through, while the lateral loops still operate supporting the organization of the settlement. It should be noted that while the motorway is developed almost in parallel and in a short distance from the course of the footpath at no point other than the point of intersection there is visual contact with it.

Exiting the village, and following the old route we encounter a road of dirt that leads to the south and the castle. At the exit of the village there is a door (Poria) that closes the access of animals towards the cultivated land around the village (φ10). Immediately after there is a small stream on the left and a huge granite mass forming a natural wall-boundary. In its base there is a small cave that is said to have served as a hideout of the rebels during the Civil War. We observe partial traces of paving of the old path of irregular stones of marble and granite. The width is about 1.5m. The quality of the construction work reveals important data for the region (φ10α).

On the right side, about 500 meters from the village we come across a village, nowadays deserted, with about 6-7 buildings. The footpath in the past traversed this settlement. In all the buildings the roof is destroyed, while the walls are in good condition. Several of these are spacious, have inner and outer coating. Also, they have a developed rural environment, morphology (arches, niches, etc.) indicating prosperity and wealth (φ11, φ11α). You will see the terraces that held the soil for crops in an area of about 10 acres. Today there are few olive and almond trees. Next, the landscape of the footpath is presented without trees with low bushes, open and attackable by the strong south winds. The view is dominated by the mountainous volume of Kefalas with the castle on the top (φ11β, φ11γ), and west of the village of Akamatra outlined within walking distance, in the valley there is a seasonal river flow. Here we encounter the ruins of an old watermill (φ11α). In a small area around this spot and in slopes with steep gradients, the density and the configurations of areas for cultivation is impressive (φ12). They are built with local slate and technical perfection and dominate in the landscape. This spot serves as a landmark and sometimes as a center of social interaction.

The course continues uphill the water source of Alamas. The image of the wider region reveals pastureland. Left we encounter a small stone wall, typical Ikarian traditional rural architecture sample (φ12α). Opposite, to the east, we see the footpath we leave behind us and further we see the bell tower of the square, trade mark of the village Droutsoulas. The source we encounter supply with water and irrigate much of the region to the port of Evdilos (φ12β). It is a source inside a cave. Younger and older water supply projects and configuration for access reveal the importance of the area (φ12γ).

Until Akamatra the footpath crosses fenced crops (newer method of grazing in relation to the Community precincts we encountered in Droutsoula) offering panoramic views of the North-West - East arc (φ12δ). Just before entering the village (φ12ε) there is the junction with path (cycle) that leads to the castle of Koskina. The route lasted about three hours until the square of Akamatra's village (φ12σ, φ12ζ)

Point of orientation and the wider trade mark is the church of the Virgin Lefainas (φ12η). The footpath passes in front of the church, crosses the village between the orchards and follows the motorway for about 300 meters. It keeps on following the demarcation of orchards walls up a small source. There is a large two-storey residence which for the citizens served as a landmark.

Formerly it operated as a reference and resting area (φ13). For the current visitor is not particularly important, but can be considered as the limit of wider region of the village of Akamatra. Continuing the 'residential' landscape gradually gives its position the 'natural'. We again come across parts paved with stone, at certain points damaged or corroded (φ13α). Following the boundaries of old terraces we descend until we reach an old abandoned farm. In this "peaceful" landscape a central two-storey house (home of "mommy") can be seen (φ14, 15). This is one of the most characteristic examples of Ikarian 19th century architecture sample. A little further there is a smaller but much older ground floor property, situated within the limits of this small neighborhood. A marble slab in the floor of the courtyard has a Greek number engraved in it. Probably the date of manufacture (φ16). From here the view is relatively limited. However, we still see Droutsoula to the southeast, as well as the dense vegetation of the river in the valley on our right.

We will continue the course descending towards Kerame, among the dense vegetation of oaks and mastic (φ16α). The splashing of the water in the river, which maybe due to reverberation sounds intensely, informs us about the distance to the watercourse. After about an hour from Akamatra we are moving along the riverbed beneath the dense riparian vegetation (φ17). Almost next to the river we will find a small church, Taxiarchis, and two ruined circular stone buildings of particular good construction.

The course ends at the main motorway. However, the current visitor could continue to the confluence of the river to the sea (φ18).

## **8. Conclusions**

From the description, analysis and juxtaposition of the above data we came across some interesting results. First of all, the information collected show the usability and functionality of the footpath in relation to the settlements, the surroundings and the relationship between the settlements.

The morphological features and the perception of the wider area through this route highlighted the **organic connection** of the anthropogenic with the natural environment. In addition evidence of the **historical development** of areas wherever the path runs through were found. From this it is concluded that the footpath is a **structural element of architecture** for the under development area. It is an older structure that is maintained regularly and re-operates despite the sovereign development of the road network. Of course, part of it has been abandoned or replaced with dirt-bicycle path (the part from Droutsoula-Akamatra). Essentially it is a reuse option on the part of the residents and visitors, an older architectural element with different at every case terms. Support of family farm operations, hiking, recreation, tourism and cultural interest are some of the reasons of its current use. It would be of particular interest to record and analyze the role of the network of footpaths on a smaller scale, for example, in the internal organization of the settlements mentioned. (Droutsoula Akamatra-Kerame). This can be done in a subsequent research.

Nowadays tourism seems to redefine the function of footpaths, reversing any traditional function. Construed as a superstructure they form new spatial qualities and relationships between residential and non areas posing fundamental questions of reuse of the area. As far as the particular path-route we chose to study, the findings verified our initial hypothesis about the role and importance of the natural and anthropogenic environment. The research found that this footpath has a variety of cultural and natural resources and it may be defined as a cultural route. So it has the possibility to be developed for tourism and to contribute to the emergence of the particular cultural and natural characteristics of the island of Ikaria.

## **9. Suggestions**

Based on our initial position that one of the most basic elements of the cultural identity of a place is the network of routes for residents both inside and outside of settlements, we support that this network should be highlighted and protected. For this purpose we propose for the island of Ikaria:

- The creation of a specialized institutional protection framework [possibly extending the Presidential Decree 961 (OJHR, 2003)] of the network of footpaths, both outside and within settlements, aiming among other things to limit the phenomenon of uncontrolled opening of roads.
- Under the Master Plan (Spatial Plan and Housing Organisation Open City), Ikaria, responsibilities and complete procedures to be defined in this direction so as to record in the backgrounds of the maps the networks of the footpaths.
- Definition of compatible to the maintenance of footpaths as well as special Ikarian environment, building conditions.
- Regarding the particular footpath, we propose the maintenance and enhancement by applying the requirements of the program LEADER+ with the observation that special attention should be paid, so that any interventions respect the special character of the landscape, the morphology of the footpath, as well as the architectural and urban identity of the area. We also urge for the use of local materials (depending on the variety that appears on the island).

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