

EVENTS

seminars
roundtable discussions
exhibitions

for the 50th anniversary of **METU Graduate Program in Restoration**



Sagalassos - Ağlasun: A Case of Transforming and Transformative Heritage

26.12.2014 | 12:00
@ Faculty of Architecture
Kubbealti

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The Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project conducts interdisciplinary excavations and surveys in Southwest Turkey, near Ağlasun, Burdur, studying the ancient city of Sagalassos and its territory over the last 24 years. This presentation aims to bring out the response of this established archaeological research project to the contemporary call for a fundamental transformation in scientific targets and practice of the discipline, embracing the public interest and bringing on board social, ecological, economic as well as regulatory aspects of local development dynamics.

The Sagalassos Project started off as an ambitious and purely academic interdisciplinary structure where archaeology was the leading discipline setting the research agenda and providing a wide range of data through excavations and surveys to other disciplines such as geology, geomorphology, zoology and ecology. These disciplines had a supporting role for archaeology in its quest to shed light on a variety of aspects of the past, such as the social structure, economy, ecology, trade, religion, daily life, diet etc...

At the same time the Belgian excavation team had managed almost intuitively to establish good relations with the local community from the start, providing training, jobs, and cash flow into this rural micro-economy. The excavation and especially restoration projects conducted on the site transformed the nature of the relationship the locals had with the archaeological site, while the bonds with the locals as well as the problems and potentials of the contemporary society started to affect the way the project was conducted.

The project saw important economic, demographic and political change in the contexts it operated during the past two decades, so that the scientific team had reasons to reassess its position and role within the local community as well as in the micro-region and the bureaucratic and political structure it belonged to. The initial systematic efforts of community outreach and the sub-projects conducted since 2008 constituted the first steps towards a holistic cultural and natural resource management approach that the team aspired to internalize. Finally, an entirely new interdisciplinary project structure was formed in 2013 where the site is considered as a product of a larger cultural and natural landscape or a multi-scalar social-ecological system in strong need of appropriate (self-) governance, as well as social innovation processes and collective management practices. The 'newest archaeology' that the Sagalassos Project suggests involves the public benefits for sustainable development and operates by overlapping the methodologies of archaeology with social geography, ecology and spatial planning.

50 / seminar