

## A Key to Various Opportunities for the Development in Culture, Economy and Integration in Asia Minor: A Successful Archaeotourism Planning

### Anadolu'da (Küçük Asya) Kültür, Ekonomi ve Bütünleşme Gelişimi İçin Farklı Fırsatların Anahtarı: Başarılı Bir Arkeoturizm Planlaması

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*Abstract: Archaeotourism, a relatively new sub-branch, has played significant roles in the recently growing interest in heritage tourism. Critical heritage areas in different parts of the world have become great economic contributors to their host countries, generating job opportunity for many. However, the same thing is not valid for Asia Minor although it is unique as a huge area to host continual traces of ancient cultures from the Palaeolithic Age. A proper archaeotourism planning and environment management can be the key to cultural, economic and integrational development of the region, contributing to the overall wellbeing of Turkey.*

*Keywords: Archaeotourism, Archaeological Tourism, Tourism and Development, Tourism and Environment, Tourism Planning*

*JEL Classification: O13, O21, Z30, Z38*

*Öz: Turizmin nispeten yeni bir alt dalı olan arkeoturizm, miras turizmine son zamanlarda artan ilgide önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Dünyanın farklı bölgelerindeki kritik miras alanları, ev sahibi ülkelerde birçok kişi için iş fırsatı yaratmanın yanı sıra bu ülkelere büyük ekonomik girdi sağlayıcılar haline gelmiştir. Ancak, aynı şey Paleolitik Çağ'dan bu yana antik kültürlerin kesintisiz izlerini barındıran devasa bir alan olarak benzersiz olmasına rağmen, Anadolu (Asia Minor) için geçerli değildir. Uygun bir arkeoturizm planlaması ve çevre yönetimi, Türkiye'nin genel refahına katkıda bulunan, bölgenin kültürel, ekonomik ve bütüncül gelişiminin anahtarı olabilir.*

*Anahtar Kelimeler: Arkeoturizm, Arkeoloji Turizmi, Kültür/Miras Turizmi, Turizm ve Kalkınma*

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## 1. Introduction

The southwest part of Asia, a region of geographic significance from Asia to Europe is called Asia Minor in Latin, Anatolia in English and Anadolu in Turkish. As well as to present-day modern Turkish Republic, it has been a continual home to many successive ancient civilizations (Harmankaya & Tanındı, 1996; Sagona, 2015) who were the ancestors of modern humanity today. Stretching from the Paleolithic Era onwards, Asia Minor witnessed the firsts of humanity from the domestication of the very first animals and plants to the first houses or temples for the first time in the past of mankind (Erdoğan, 2020). Therefore there is much to see and feel in this part of the world regarding past cultures and what they produced. Archaeology has been one of the most successful branches of science in Asia Minor to develop fruitful works, so there are a lot of archaeological areas to visit and learn about antique cultures of almost every phases of the development of mankind. Thus, archaeotourism ventures in Asia

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Minor can serve a better chance for not only the curious tourists but also local and regional communities as well. Such developments can account for economical, socio-cultural and integrational aspects through a proper archaeotourism planning and management (Ross et al., 2017).

‘Archaeotourism’ (AT) standing for archaeological tourism is of primary goal to create visiting and experiencing ancient sites and historical places, whose motivating forces encompass the passion for and the interest in the past and its cultures having inhabited in a particular area (Srivastava, (2015). The term, the combination of two discrete words; archaeology and tourism, is directly related to tourism destinations that are based on archaeological heritage sites, monuments, and historic areas (Jusoh, Sauman & Ramli, 2017). AT may encompasses visitation to museums, places of historical significance, archaeological parks, and even attendance at traditional dances, festivals, and other events (Srivastava, 2015) as part of one’s tourist activities (Griffith & Griffith, 2012). For the tourists in such areas, there is need to interpret the dominant culture as well as the understanding ‘that racism, ethnocentrism, religious-ism, linguistic-ism, age-ism, able-ism, classism, sex-ism, and heterosexual-ism are all part of our past’ (Shackel, 2005). Therefore, AT as a significant component of heritage tourism is defined as tourist visits or touristic activities at celebrated areas including excavation sites (Pacífico & Vogel, 2012; Ramsey & Everitt, 2008; Ross, Saxena, Correia & Deutz, 2017; Willems & Dunning, 2015), where archaeotourists are also inspired by unique experiences created by these areas and their environments (Srivastava, 2015). Here it is seen that an archaeological site is a central piece in AT (Ross et al., 2017).

AT, classified under the wider terms cultural tourism and heritage tourism (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000; Hughes 2002; Richards 2001) has gradually been a totally new sub-discipline scientifically studied thoroughly differing from other forms of tourism industry (Avrami 2016; Darlow, Essex & Brayshay, 2012; Gullino, Beccaro, Larcher, 2015; Landorf 2019; Poullos 2014).

Tourism based on global cultural heritage has been the fast growing sector of the industry (Fabricius 2003; Poria et al., 2003; Prentice 2001), and the attractions that archaeological properties have provided has been one of the dominant actors in this (Erdoğan, 2020; Jusoh et al., 2017); however, it has also been the most badly affected from covid-19 pandemic. Except for the pause during the covid-19 period, AT has in recent decades become a major theme as a source of revenue for both public and private owners (Cleere, 2012) as a key element and a major factor in attracting overseas visitors (Goodall, 1997) for many countries.

In contrast to renewable cultural goods like music, art, dance and crafts-commodities to be

traded in the cultural heritage tourism industry, archaeological heritage, composing of critically fragile and non-renewable assets, is part of the national estate (Glazewski 2000) and conserved in the national interest (Wurz & Van der Merwe 2005). Apart from national states' managing capabilities, many NGOs like the ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter and the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society have also tried to design these critically important cultural heritage areas in the form of planning, managing and marketing (Özdoğan, 2006; Thierstein, 2019; Thomas, 2019).

By this way, sustainable development and utilization of sensitive archaeological resources gain internationalism in their nature of balancing the needs of the tourism industry and archaeological resource management (McKercher & Du Cross 2002).

If planned and managed properly, archaeotourism in Asia Minor is of huge potential to create cultural interactions between western and eastern cultures with an understanding of common heritage of humanity. Such creative initiatives in archaeotourism industry is likely to have a profound effect on the attitudes of peoples in both cultures towards each other, which will result in contributions to peace and economic recovery from hardships stemming from covid-19 pandemic.

## **2. Archaeotourism and the Cultural Development in Asia Minor**

AT has been quite a new phenomenon with inspirations only recently seen from a number of academic works (Douglas 2012; Jusoh et al., 2017; Ross et al., 2017; Srivastava, 2015; Walker and Carr 2013; Wurz & Van der Merwe 2005). Archaeological wealth is the primary source of attraction in this sort of tourism form. Certain parts of the world own critical archaeological assets belonging to human common heritage. One of such areas has been Asia Minor (Gündüz, 2020).

Asia Minor is located at a significant junction of Asia and Europe where the western part of Anatolia (Fig. 1). Therefore, 18000 years of continual human occupation and the archaeological traces left behind by these ancient cultures shed light into the understanding of cultural developments not only in this part of the world but in Eurasia as well. Those ancient cultures in these lands left behind so many archaeological assets without parallels anywhere that the discipline of archaeology began to be debated on wider concepts. With little information about the Palaeolithic Asia Minor (40,000- 20,000), less arbitrary starting points of Epipaleolithic and Mesolithic (20,000 - 6000) like Öküzini, Karain and Beldibi in the region (Düring, 2011), clear-cut settlements in the region range from 9000 BC (Özdoğan 1996; Thissen 2000) through Neolithic, Chalcolithic (Özbal, 2012; Mellink, 1975), Bronze Age, Iron Age, Hellenistic and Roman periods, through Byzantine, Ottoman and today modern-day Turkey. The

culture development in Asia Minor from prehistoric era constitutes a cultural coherent unity distinguishing from the cultural entities of neighboring areas (Düring, 2011).



Figure 1. Asia Minor and Some of Its Ancient Cultures  
*Source: Price (1984)*

Today, traces of these ancient cultures that are common heritage of humanity can be physically seen and visited in place in many parts of the region. AT, therefore, is critically important for this part of the world. It is based on the description of heritage attractions for cultural interactions through the time travelling to experience the past cultures. At the same time, AT in Asia Minor provides understanding of contemporary ways of life (Thierstein, 2019) in this critically important part of the world. Archaeology focuses on understanding past cultures through their products surviving to the present. As a consequence, AT based facilities both from the provider or consumer sides need to be culture oriented. By means of AT, boundaries and prejudices are dismantled and people become almost totally prone to connecting with their common heritage background while people interact between cultures through the ages. In this way, destination image and personality for AT areas become positively established like positive beliefs, ideas, impressions and originality, excitement and friendliness (Chen & Phou, 2013).

AT planning comprises of Public Archaeology which necessitates the local and provincial societies to take part in AT. It also requires integration of cultures through education, gastronomy, folklore, art, music and religion (Erdoğan, 2020). For example, local people in Asia Minor need to learn English to connect with people from different parts of the world, and thus they become aware of the priorities of foreign cultures and the same things will be valid for the tourist interacting with those indigenous local people. The rising education level of both the local people and the tourists (Cameron 1994), increased desire for experiences of cultures motivating tourists to increase their 'cultural capital' (Prentice 2001) and being away from

consumerism (Ouzman 2001) are some of the agents to develop cultural integrity in AT planning. Such cultural contacts are likely to produce clemency between the peoples of different cultures. A sustainable planning and management of AT areas integrated into such a functioning system (Comer, 2019:6) draws attention to encourage the discovery of local lifestyles and popularize archaeology.

### **3. Archaeotourism and Economic Development in Asia Minor**

AT is not a new phenomenon, but what is a newer phenomenon, though, is the intensity with which it is being used for economic development around the world (Giraud & Porter, 2010). Excluding the covid-19 period, more people have been visiting archaeological sites stemming from the recent enthusiasm in cultural heritage. This global booming interest is welcome and has many benefits such as economic gains for the communities associated with the sites (Mazzola, 2015). The economic impact of archaeology in some parts of the world has been significant. Heritage tourism in UK in 2002, for example, contributed £202.3 billion to GDP and this generated 386,000 job opportunities. It was estimated that by 2025 AT to the top 500 sites would be worth \$100 billion (Burtenshaw, 2019).

Economic benefits driven by AT depend on several factors like; the plan with a proper feasibility check, government tourism policy, the geography and management of the site and general state of the host country. Today, the widely accepted opinion that tourism can contribute the economic welfare of the nation or region holds true in many respects especially after seeing that over the last two decades, world cultural heritage tourism industry has received the highest share among all forms of global tourism (Giraud & Porter, 2010; Herrera, 2013; Oehmichen-Bazán, 2018). Economic valuation of AT with heritage landscapes has begun for many countries, local communities benefitting economically. All parties associated with popular archaeological sites in these countries sense that, given the public's interest, there is money to be made (Comer, 2012). However, this is not the case for Turkey in the current situation in spite of its great potential. The assets in Asia Minor are the treasures that are too valuable to be left only to archaeologists. Asia Minor is full of such unique assets just as an open archaeological museum with a very rich geography in terms of archaeological heritage. These assets are of great importance for the enthusiasts and the host countries. As a consequence, promoting the archaeological heritage of Asia Minor through AT planning will bring economic goodness to these properties (Erdoğan, 2020) as well as to the local people in the vicinity.

For the economic effect of these properties on the country's overall economic situation, there is need for more comprehensible organizations covering many specialists from different majors including archaeologists. A tourism product is created in archaeological works such as

surface surveys and scientific or rescue excavations. Even so, the archaeological works are carried far from proper archaeotourism planning. Archaeologists know little about the dynamics of tourism and tourism professionals are unfamiliar with the delicacy of archeological heritage assets. In this regard, it is imperative that co-creation perspectives of active participation of tourists (Minkiewicz, Evans & Bridson, 2014), providers and archaeologists (Moscardo, 1996) in the process of interpretation and making sense of the past be a part of a multidisciplinary team to devise an archaeotourism planning that can meet all the needs of all the actors involved (Erdoğan, 2020). If properly managed, AT together with the government grants will ensure the needed fund for the maintenance, surveillance and sustainability of such fragile and unique heritage components. These assets of common history of humanity are worth being looked after better. This will be succeeded more easily by more protective diligent and hospitable local people if AT activities in their vicinity provide them with better economic living standards. In this way looting will be controlled better and eventually come to an end, which will in turn augment the economic value of archaeological heritage areas. Otherwise, there seems almost no economic value from AT to contribute to the overall economic situation of the country other than the economic burden.

#### **4. Archaeotourism and Development in Integration of Cultures**

Apart from its economic benefit, AT can be used to realize social aims like integration of different cultures on common cultural heritage virtues, making archaeological entities more accessible to the general public (Comer, 2019). Social integration of Asia Minor with other cultures through AT can be sustained more easily since it has common heritage backgrounds of humanity. For this reason, almost any tourist coming from any part of the globe may find something as a part of her/his own past, so AT raises awareness of shared cultural heritage and encourages people to visit archaeological sites and historical places (Srivastava, 2015).

Social and technological developments have made tourism both easier to purchase and simpler to access. Tourism has thus turned into a form of integrational development of modern man for the new cultures and civilizations (Mazzola, 2015) as an intellectual personality and an alternative of fruitful recreational activity of a pleasant time that is not available in their daily environment. The more tourists prefer AT destinations in a broader interest group, the more people from different cultures begin to understand each other (Malcolm-Davies, 2004). Such interactions should not be downplayed as some of the archaeologists do (Smith, 2006) since the role of local communities and visitors can be critical in shaping and conserving AT areas for the sustainability. Different cultures produce different attitudes towards what should be done to survive AT areas as sustainable tourism destinations. Multinational culture

projects focusing on Asia Minor to maintain better dialogues between different cultures will serve this aim.

## **5. Results and Discussion**

Archeology has traditionally been attractive with its subject and research toward areas of inquiry to culture history and culture change through time and over space. Consequently, it would be logical to presuppose the archeological investigation of tourism as an entirely valid subject to pursue (Hunt, 2009). Not all archaeological assets are attractive to the mass tourists; however, common heritage elements that are studied under the principles of proper AT planning and management turn out to have more potential to attract more of mass tourists. When managed well at a local level too, AT can represent a boon to the community and may even revitalize ethnic pride (Scott & Miller 2012).

Stretching from the Paleolithic Era onwards, Asia Minor witnessed the firsts of humanity from the domestication of the very first animals such as dogs for hunting and warding and plants such as grains and cereals for the first time in the past of humanity. Avoiding creation of tourist traps and utilizing rich archaeological heritage in a harmless way, AT activities in Asia Minor can be facilitated through an active cooperation between archaeologists and tourism professionals. Only this way may the creation of Asia Minor be maintained as a tourism product. After all, “Few people are interested in archaeology the same way archaeologists are interested in it” (Holtorf, 2007: 20). For the last a few decades, AT professionals like archaeologists, historians, geographers, conservators, and geomorphologists have realized that it is high time to integrate into the public more directly than can be done by writing technical reports (Comer, 2012).

## **6. Conclusion**

Globally, the most historically and scientifically important, aesthetically spectacular, and thoroughly diverse with the representations of all the ancient cultures, Asia Minor is unique with its capability of being a model for archaeological heritage tourism. Appropriate planning and management covering conservation of natural and cultural entities with enriched alternatives like camping, rock climbing, picnicking, hiking, and other recreational activities such as those from agritourism and ecotourism will serve best choice alternatives to the rest of the world. Area Managers in Asia Minor are to device and implement master plans focusing on the resettlement of traditional communities, traditional knowledge and skills, cultural lifestyles and organized publicity for diverse, sustainable and responsible income generating opportunities. The key is the emphasis on promoting a holistic engagement and a holistic presentation of an

archaeological area, fostering social integration to different cultures of the world. When AT setting in Turkey achieves to combine the passion for the past with a sense of adventure, recreation and discovery through proper planning, aggressive promotion, and marketing activities at an early stage, gains for the visitors, the locals and for the country as well will commence. That's why, this paper is intended to start an enquiry into a relatively new sub-branch of tourism; archaeotourism and its great potential in Asia Minor as an operant source with economic, cultural and integrational opportunities for the development in the region.

All in all, archaeology potentially has a lot to offer to heritage tourism in the form of archaeotourism in Asia Minor through bridging the gap between the past and the present. It is conclusively clear that Asia Minor has been one of the rarest places on the earth with its wealth of archeological possessions from ancient cultures of humanity. This has made it an important place that can play a crucial role as a perfect model in the form of archaeological tourism. With this much potential, the region can attract tourists from out of its continental self.



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