

RESEARCH ARTICLE/ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

The contribution of archaeoparks to cultural heritage awareness: The case of Bursa Hisar

Rengin Beceren Öztürk¹  Arzu Çahantimur² 

¹ Assoc. Prof. Dr., Bursa Uludağ University, Faculty of Architecture, Architecture Department, Türkiye, e-mail: renginb@uludag.edu.tr

² Prof. Dr., Bursa Uludağ University, Faculty of Architecture, Architecture Department, Türkiye, e-mail: arzucahan@uludag.edu.tr

Abstract

The pressing need to protect archaeological sites amidst rapid urbanization is a global concern. These sites, vital to our cultural heritage, face threats from advancing urban development, especially in historically layered cities. Accurate understanding and contextualization of artifacts from various eras are crucial. Preservation efforts must extend beyond physical continuity and relics to include integration into urban socio-economic and socio-spatial contexts. This holistic approach aids in interpreting layered cities and promoting heritage awareness.

This study focuses on the ArchaeoPark initiatives in the Hisar Region, a significant part of Bursa's cultural landscape. It serves as an example highlighting the importance of preserving archaeological sites and their original artifacts within urban environments. This preservation and display within the city enhance the awareness and understanding of both residents and visitors regarding these valuable cultural assets. Public participation in heritage conservation fosters greater recognition of the importance of these sites, leading to more sustainable preservation efforts.

Bursa and its surroundings are key archaeological sites in Anatolia, showcasing a layered urban history. The chosen Hisar region has the potential to unveil this history, becoming a vital cultural heritage area in Bursa.

After stressing the importance of urban archaeological heritage conservation, the study delves into pertinent conservation methods. It introduces Bursa as a significant cultural landscape, emphasizing ArchaeoPark activities and excavated artifacts in the Hisar region. Lastly, it offers recommendations to boost the role of Hisar ArchaeoPark in cultural heritage awareness and preservation.

This study aims to contribute to efforts focused on increasing cultural heritage awareness, which is a vital aspect of heritage conservation and management, despite being a time-consuming process. The conservation and presentation of archaeological sites within urban areas, exemplified by the ArchaeoPark in the Hisar Region, play a pivotal role in safeguarding our cultural heritage for future generations.

Keywords: Archaeoparks, Heritage Awareness, Heritage Conservation, Sustainability, Bursa

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Corresponding Author/ Sorumlu Yazar:
Rengin Beceren Öztürk
E-mail: renginb@uludag.edu.tr



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1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of today's intense urbanization dynamics, there is a pressing need for intensive efforts towards the preservation and presentation of archaeological sites, which are cultural heritage assets facing a kind of 'urban invasion' threat. This situation is particularly crucial in layered cities that contain a multitude of different historical strata, as it is essential for accurately contextualizing artifacts from various periods and understanding their temporal relationships. The preservation of these layers should not only encompass their physical or morphological continuity and archaeological traces but also reflect their socio-economic and socio-spatial urban integrations. Achieving this comprehensive perspective on layered cities can facilitate their interpretation and raise awareness about the importance of heritage preservation.

In this study, the ArchaeoPark studies in the Hisar Region, which holds a significant place in the cultural landscape of Bursa, are taken as an example to emphasize the importance of preserving archaeological sites within urban areas and the artifacts excavated from these sites in their original locations for historical and cultural heritage studies. The preservation and exhibition of archaeological sites within the urban fabric and the artifacts they contain in their urban context enhance the spatial and contextual awareness of both the city's residents and visitors regarding these valuable assets.

Especially the ability of the public to follow and participate in cultural heritage conservation efforts leads to an increased recognition of the importance of heritage sites. Consequently, when these sites are more widely embraced, they can be sustained and conserved in a more sustainable manner (Nocca, 2017).

Bursa, together with its surrounding areas, is one of the significant archaeological focal points in Anatolia. When we examine the historical urban development of Bursa, which has hosted different civilizations, its layered structure becomes clearly evident. The reason for choosing the Hisar region in this study is its potential to decipher this layered structure, making it an

important historical and cultural heritage area located in the city center of Bursa.

After discussing the importance of conserving archaeological heritage within the urban fabric, which is a crucial component of cultural heritage, and exploring relevant approaches in the second section, the third section briefly introduces Bursa as a valuable cultural landscape. In this section, information is provided about the ArchaeoPark activities in the Hisar region and the artifacts unearthed during these excavations. In the fourth and final section, recommendations are developed to enable the Hisar ArchaeoPark activities to play a more effective role in increasing cultural heritage awareness and instilling a sense of heritage preservation. It is believed that this study can contribute to efforts aimed at raising and increasing cultural heritage awareness, which is a critical component of any cultural heritage conservation and management, albeit a time-consuming process.

2. CONSERVATION AND PRESENTATION OF URBAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THEIR ORIGINAL LOCATIONS

In this section, which discusses the importance of conserving archaeological heritage, a critical component of cultural heritage, within the urban fabric and the approaches to achieve this, various perspectives on in-situ conservation are briefly summarized. Different interpretations regarding ArchaeoParks and their integration into the city are also shared.

Archaeological sites contain cultural assets that reflect the products of ancient civilizations, whether above ground, underground, or underwater, along with the social, economic, and cultural characteristics of the periods in which they existed, spanning from the dawn of human existence to the present day. These sites serve as the memory banks of cities. They not only privilege cities by connecting them to their ancient past but also create a shared history for the urban population (Karabağ, 2010). Formun Üstü

One of the oldest documents that should be mentioned regarding the in-situ preservation

of archaeological heritage is the Swedish Declaration of 1666. This declaration, dated 1666, is considered an important historical document where, for the first time, an action is defined in relation to archaeological remains, stating that the removal of a monumental work or any part of it from its original location is only permitted if there is a security issue (ICOMOS, 1964) (ICOMOS, 1990).

At the General Assembly held by ICOMOS in Washington in 1987, the Charter for The Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas was adopted. In this charter the following issues were discussed; historic towns and urban areas are vulnerable places in the face of urban changes, they should be integrated into urban planning to be preserved, interdisciplinary collaboration is very important for proper preservation and conservation studies, the development of archaeological studies related to the history of the city or historic area to ensure the conservation of remains, and all urban residents should be informed and encouraged for their participation (Ahunbay, 2009). Forum Altı

The Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage, adopted by ICOMOS in 1990 in Lausanne, and the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage signed by the European Council in 1992 in Valletta, emphasize the national and international importance of archaeological heritage and the need to integrate conservation efforts into policies at various levels. While the primary focus is on the in-situ preservation of archaeological remains discovered during excavations, there is also an emphasis on the necessity of preventing adverse effects on the archaeological and scientific qualities when archaeological sites are open to public visitation (Ahunbay, Z. 2010; Madran, Özgönül 2005).

In Turkey, the primary document for the preservation of movable and immovable cultural assets is the Cultural and Natural Heritage Protection Law No. 2863, which came into effect in 1983 and underwent various amendments. However, the concept of urban archaeology becoming part of preservation-related legislation

in Türkiye occurred in 1993 through a decision principle numbered 338. Currently, there is a principle decision of the Cultural and Natural Heritage High Council, Decision No. 702, titled 'Conditions for the Conservation and Use of Urban Archaeological Sites,' which sets the principles for urban archaeological sites. In this decision principle, areas requiring special planning for preservation, including archaeological sites falling under the scope of Law No. 2863, as well as urban fabrics with characteristics that warrant protection and integrity, are defined as urban archaeological sites (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2009).

Another principle decision is Decision No. 37 of the Cultural and Natural Heritage High Council regarding the Preservation and Evaluation of Existing Archaeological Sites or Cultural Assets That Were Previously Unknown but Have Been Unearthed as a Result of New Development, Infrastructure Works, or Natural Disasters in Settlement Areas. In this decision, it is stated that, apart from long-term scientific archaeological excavations commissioned by the ministry, it is appropriate to investigate, excavate, clean, and exhibit immovable cultural assets that have been uncovered or excavated using scientific methods and preserved in situ to contribute to urban archaeology. If artifacts have identifiable architectural features, reflect the authenticity of their respective eras, or are part of the ancient urban fabric, it is considered appropriate to exhibit them in situ using suitable preservation methods (URL 1).

From prehistoric times onwards, Anatolian cities that have hosted various civilizations have continued to preserve the cultural traces left by different societies in their archaeological sites, coexisting with the urban fabric of today. Some examples of these include Konya Alâeddin Tepesi, İzmir Agora, Ankara Roman Bath, Ankara Augustus Temple, İstanbul Yenikapı, and many more (Savrum-Kortanoğlu, 2017).

Many of these archaeological sites are unearthed as a result of large-scale infrastructure projects. An important example of this is the Istanbul Marmaray-Metro Project, where excavations conducted by the Istanbul Archaeological

Museums between 2004 and 2011 revealed remnants reflecting different layers of the city (Figure 1). The preservation and exhibition of traces of various periods of urban life on the ground make the archaeological heritage much more meaningful and valuable.



Figure 1. The Marmaray Sirkeci Shaft Excavation Site (URL 2)

Another example of an urban archaeological site (in situ) in Istanbul is the Patriarchate Monastery dating back to the Middle Byzantine Period, located in the Küçükyalı district. This site encompasses approximately 6000 square meters and is surrounded by new buildings. Research on this site began with surface surveys in 2001 and was subsequently followed by excavations (Figure. 2) (Savrum-Kortanoğlu, 2017).



Figure 2. Küçükyalı arkeopark, Satyros Manastırı (URL 3).

Completing an inventory and creating a database of archaeological assets and all historical structures unearthed through excavations resulting from various development projects or existing within the modern urban fabric is crucial, especially in the planning phase of such projects. In countries like Turkey, where

urbanization is rapidly expanding, and as a consequence, projects are being carried out to meet the increasing needs of the city, it is essential to implement systematic practices for the preservation of archaeological heritage. These projects should not pose a threat to the cultural fabric of the city.

Furthermore, efforts should be made to integrate archaeological heritage found in urban areas with modern life. Inventories that demonstrate how traces of the past, which are planned to be incorporated into modern life, will fit into the city, and how they will integrate with the urban environment should be prepared. Urban planning should establish principles regarding both underground and above-ground archaeological assets, emphasizing the importance of harmonizing these historical elements with contemporary urban life (Madran&Özgönül 2005).

In recent years, both globally and in Türkiye, we have witnessed an increasing number of ArchaeoPark projects dedicated to the preservation and exhibition of urban archaeological sites. The concept of ArchaeoParks encompasses practices where cultural assets obtained through archaeological methods are displayed in their natural settings, with the primary aim of conveying the lifestyles, cultures, and architecture of past civilizations to people (Keskin & Tanaç Zeren, 2018).

McManus (1999) lists the characteristics of archaeological parks as follows:

- An archaeological park is a not-for-profit institution that emphasizes cultural value and is visitor-centric, with a strong focus on communication held to high museological standards. It centers around a core distinctive monument within a substantial area of cultural landscape that can be designated for interpretive purposes.
- It encompasses a large area with a distinct boundary, managed by the park authorities, and has a single controlled entry point for visitors.
- It is visitor-friendly, offering amenities such

as parking lots, landscaped paths, a café, and restroom facilities.

- It is effectively marketed as a prominent tourism attraction.
- Its primary purpose is conservation-oriented rather than solely oriented toward public service. An archaeological park should function as a dynamic, multifaceted entity with sophisticated on-site management and support from various stakeholders.

As mentioned, if an archaeological site is to be referred to as an “archaeological park,” it should encompass specially designed presentation and interpretation programs tailored to different visitor groups, educational initiatives (such as experimental archaeology, etc.), spatial arrangements (site museums, visitor centers, etc.), and appropriate infrastructure arrangements.

Naycı and Demirdelen (2018) emphasize that archaeological parks should be viewed as potentially significant management tools for striking a balance between the preservation priorities of the site and visitor management and site interpretation strategies. In today’s context, archaeological parks not only serve as recreational area arrangements but also provide intellectual access to delicate archaeological information through different settings and scientific techniques. In this way, archaeoparks not only enhance societal awareness but also shed light on the subject for professionals. An early example of regional archaeological parks designed for public access with recreational enrichment of archaeological remains, including the ancient Roman road, aqueduct, necropolis, and well-preserved monuments in a beautiful landscape, is the Via Appia Antica in Rome dating back to the 1930s. (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Via Appia Antica in Rome (URL 4).

In Türkiye, the terms “arkeopark” or “archaeological park” are frequently used in the definition of urban archaeological sites, and in many instances, there are adequate ways and signs to guide visitors in these areas. Naycı and Demirdelen (2018) suggest that an archaeological site located in a densely populated urban center is considered not only for its scientific importance that necessitates being “untouched” or “prohibited” but also as a means to introduce it to the daily lives of the residents by labeling it as a “park.”

Furthermore, numerous large-scale “archaeological park” examples can be found, including intricately preserved open-air areas, local museums, and reconstructions of ancient structures used to showcase past technologies and lifestyles to visitors. The Gordion Archaeological Park in our country can be cited as an important step toward ensuring the sustainability of archaeological, natural, and rural environmental values (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Gordion Archaeological Park(URL 5).

3. THE HISAR ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK EXAMPLE IN THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF BURSA

One of the significant historical urban landscape areas in Anatolia, which has hosted many civilizations over the centuries, Bursa, maintains its importance today as a valuable center of civilization, along with its tangible and intangible heritage elements. Recognizing and understanding the cultural assets of Bursa will help develop the awareness needed to preserve these values for the future. Ensuring the healthy transmission of our architectural and cultural heritage to the future relies on these values, which are reflections of the past, being recognized, understood, and used as guides by future generations. One important requirement for achieving sustainable urban development is the establishment of cultural heritage awareness and the development of urban consciousness. These can be achieved by dissecting the different layers created by the historical process in urban spaces and introducing them to the urban population.

Bursa has been home to many different historical layers, including the Bithynian period (600 BC - 74 BC), Roman period (74 BC - 395 AD), Byzantine period (395 - 1396 AD), the Ottoman period (1396 - 1923), which still leaves its traces, and the modern Republic of Türkiye period (1923 - present), which continues to develop.

Hisar Region, located within the historic city walls of Bursa, holds significant historical and cultural importance as the city's earliest settlement area, which was developed in Bithynian

period. This region not only hosts valuable monumental structures serving administrative and religious functions but also encompasses residential neighborhoods representing various civilizations. These residential areas bear traces of everyday life practices from relevant eras and serve as tangible reflections of the socio-cultural and economic characteristics of different civilizations. With its endangered residential fabric, Hisar Region stands as a highly valuable urban heritage area within the Bursa urban landscape, presenting to us the accumulated values of the city over centuries in different layers (see Figure 5).



Figure 5 . Hisar Region and the the location of the Archaeological Area (URL 6).

Within the valuable urban conservation area of the Hisar region, archaeological excavation work is still ongoing within an approximately 6,900 square meter area. Among the artefacts unearthed from the Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman periods are remnants of walls believed to belong to structures such as baths and markets, which played a role in shaping the cityscape during these different eras, as well as earthenware conduits used for water distribution in the city (see Figures 6-7).



Figure 6. Hisar Archaeopark (URL 7).



Figure 7. Hisar Archaeopark (URL7).

One of the remarkable discoveries at the Hisar Archaeopark is the Mitras Mosaic, believed to be around 1800 years old. What makes this mosaic truly unique is its portrayal of the sun's journey through the twelve major zodiac constellations throughout the year. Furthermore, the mosaic features intricate depictions of animals and nature, symbolizing the twelve months, zodiac signs, the four seasons, solstices, and equinoxes. At the mosaic's center, 'Mithra' symbolically represents the sun. (URL 8).

The archaeopark project, undertaken by the local government in collaboration with Bursa Uludag University, is currently ongoing. Archaeological excavation work has been completed, and landscaping efforts are being planned. Within this scope, it is reported by the authorities that a 400 m² library, a 200 m² reception building, a 90 m² mosaic exhibition area within the excavation site, and a 270 m² walking path will be constructed. In Figure 8, the three-dimensional architectural rendering of the planned archaeopark area can be seen.



Figure 8. The Three-Dimensional Architectural Rendering Of The Archaeopark Area (URL9).

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In contemporary societies, archaeological heritage faces diverse forms of destruction; however, there is a growing awareness of its significance, especially in developed nations. Archaeological heritage holds both national and international importance, prompting most countries to enact laws aimed at its preservation. The implementation of conservation plans for ancient settlements plays a pivotal role in safeguarding urban archaeological remains. Unfortunately, the rapid spread of urbanization, without consideration for historical urban structures, haphazard construction practices ignoring established standards, negligence in preserving archaeological remains, and a general lack of public awareness, have collectively contributed to the degradation of urban archaeological sites (Bayraktar, 2010).

The preservation and appreciation of a community's heritage are contingent on a multitude of activities that drive public awareness and cultivate a deeper sense of appreciation. As Srivastava (2015), puts stress on, the success of heritage conservation endeavors hinges on the comprehensive understanding and active involvement of the local community.

At this point, it is essential to understand that archaeological excavations transcend the exploration of past societies; instead they actively engage contemporary society in the pursuit of knowledge. In today's context, conservation extends beyond the mere preservation of cultural assets for future generations, adopting

the perspective of safeguarding “heritage for the future.” It goes beyond the protection of cultural objects, emphasizing the interpretation of cultural heritage’s significance, its place within cultural history, and the dissemination of this knowledge to modern society (Eres, 2013).

In this context, it is imperative for all segments of society to embrace and internalize the cultural assets from the past and actively participate in their preservation and maintenance. Furthermore, it is crucial for society’s interest to directly translate into economic contributions, primarily through tourism, ensuring the sustainability of preservation efforts.

Today, the practice of exhibiting cultural heritage as archaeoparks is prevalent, particularly in the ruins found in developed countries, primarily in Europe. Archaeoparks, often referred to as open-air museums, serve several purposes. They aim not only to preserve the cultural heritage of past civilizations but also to foster the integration of society with its cultural heritage. Furthermore, one of their core objectives is to raise awareness among communities about the importance of protecting and preserving cultural heritage (Gedik et al., 2019; Bayraktar, 2010).

In line with the studies conducted by Gedik et al. (2019) and Bayraktar (2010), it is evident that archaeoparks play a significant role in enhancing cultural heritage awareness among both local communities and visitors. Shankar B. & Swamy C. (2013) found out that activities such as heritage walks, workshops, competitions including debates, essay writing, and painting strengthen heritage awareness programs. Their analysis also recognizes the significance of networking among institutions, philanthropic or charitable organizations, heritage clubs, IHCN, UNESCO, NGOs, schools, and colleges.

Another approach that increases heritage awareness is the practice of experimental archaeology. Since the second half of the 19th century, various approaches that have emerged in archaeological studies with renewed perspectives have laid the foundations for experimental archaeology to better analyze the development and transformation processes of

vital phenomena from the past to the present. It is important to consider the aesthetics, functional aspects, artistic content, technological dimensions, and the impact on cultural life of an object in order to support and substantiate ideas related to its use in archaeological research (Türkoğlu, 2019). This sensory-oriented method not only facilitates an understanding of history but also enhances the overall appeal of the site. Experimental archaeology serves as an effective means to comprehend, document, and test hypotheses and processes discovered during excavations. Visitors actively engage with objects, gaining insights into how they functioned, were used, or produced. Through this interactive approach, visitors have the opportunity to learn about the past by experiencing it firsthand. In archaeological sites where experimental archaeology is applied, visitors encounter a glimpse of the past, presented through genuine artifacts and complemented by virtual information and reconstructions. While complete replication of historical events remains impossible, the educational value lies in confirming and deducing the accuracy of historical events through various methods (Eres, 2009).

Based on the expressions found in the literature and successful examples implemented in various archaeological sites around the world, it can be argued that the Hisar Archaeopark project will increase the awareness of both the local population and visitors regarding the historical and cultural heritage values of Bursa. Even media announcements and informative meetings during the excavation phase have gradually contributed to the development of this awareness. With the implementation and opening of the designed archaeopark project, it is inevitable that public interest will increase. However, it is understood from the evaluations in the literature that the archaeopark project should not be limited to spatial arrangements. In order for the Hisar archaeopark efforts to be more effective in increasing heritage awareness, as suggested by Eres (2009), the approach of experimental archaeology should be utilized. Interactive activities that enable visitors to have different experiences will not only increase

awareness but also enhance conservation awareness. Thus, healthy and sustainable heritage management efforts can be realized much more quickly with the participation of the public. Formun Altı

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