

MEMORY TRANSFER OR AMNESIA: THE ARCHAEPARK PROJECT OF GÖLPINAR HITTITE RESERVOIR

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INTRODUCTION

Landscapes are dynamic entities which change constantly through the interaction of their natural and cultural constituents. People attach cultural value to visible and invisible aspects of landscapes, and these values shape both the individual and social memory which relates to them. Alaca Höyük, a 3500-year-old Hittite mound settlement in Central Anatolia, is no exception. The fabric of this landscape also shapes memory of the practices that have shaped it, including farming and crops, management of water, and relationships to the surrounding landscape. These memories are also still valued in the daily life of local people. In this sense, the transmission of memory is important both for the preservation of this cultural landscape and for nature to flourish in this environment. Disjunctures in cultural landscapes may impede or obscure the transmission of their cultural heritage, impacting local societies' sense of belonging to the place and tending towards the homogenisation of space. For these reasons, the social and cultural transmission of landscape memory is of significance.

The study area, Gölpınar Hittite Reservoir, has a distinctive landscape character which is deeply intertwined with its social memory. The reservoir preserves elements of the traditional water management practices of the Hittite Empire and the surrounding gardens are examples of an historic landscape type distinctive to the region and the Hittite period. In this sense, the reservoir and surrounding area were incorporated into an archaeological park with the aim of preserving this heritage.

The starting point for this research was to understand how successful the Gölpınar archaeological park project has been in reflecting and communicating the historical and cultural memory of the site. In this context, we examined the approach to the archaeological park project and used it to identify basic site-specific evaluation criteria. We examined the archaeological park using these criteria within its landscape context, rather than focusing solely on the archaeological remains. Archaeoparks in Turkey are designed to provide a living experience of the heritage and an effective way to communicate heritage values: the study aims to assess the success of this type of heritage management through the example of Gölpınar Archaeological Park.

Historic Landscapes and Archaeological Parks

Historic landscapes are entities which reflect the cultural and natural processes that have created them, including land-use activities, cultivation practices, building traditions, as well as natural processes of climate and the environment. Rather being static objects, they imply multi-dimensional places which

connect layers of time and memory and include intangible as well as tangible elements. They are continuously interpreted, constructed and re-created by different cultures in the same area. Historic landscapes are therefore complex cultural entities with many physical and invisible aspects.

The main aims of archaeological parks in Turkey are to exhibit archaeological aspects of cultural heritage through a recreational design approach. Archaeoparks are thematically located between archaeological sites and cultural parks. They include archaeological objects, settlements, activity areas and modern services where visitors can experience the heritage they contain. However, they also serve as landscape parks, and so they have educational, recreational and leisure purposes.¹ They need to be designed through a multidisciplinary approach, since they include both archaeological remains and landscape features. In this context, their conservation and maintenance also need great care. Their design follows a three-step process of planning, designing, and management, which are also the main elements of landscape architecture projects.

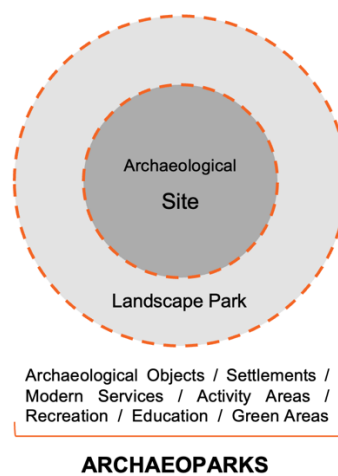


Figure 1. Aspects of Archaeopark Projects.

Memory Transfer within Archaeological Parks

Within the scope of this article, ‘memory transfer’ in archaeological parks means the way cultural activities of past societies are communicated and shared with visitors through the historic landscape of the archaeological place (Figure 2). This process of physical and perceptual engagement is designed to help visitors experience the heritage in a rich and satisfying way. The interaction with and experience of the landscape are essential in enabling them to develop a sense of place and place identity that emerges from engagement with the unique historical and environmental values of the area.²

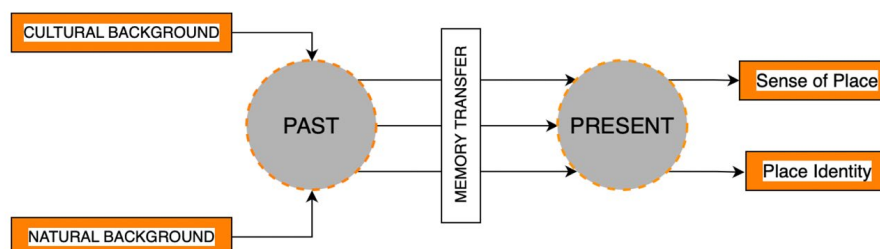


Figure 2. Memory transfer in Archaeological parks.

To achieve this type of engagement, it is essential to emphasize each landscape's specific cultural and natural characteristics. Although there are fundamental design principles, each archaeological park needs particular design criteria and strategies because each relates to a particular location and cultural context.

BACKGROUND TO THE GÖLPINAR ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK

Alaca Höyük is located 36 km to the northeast of the ancient capital of the Hittite empire at Hattusa (Boğazköy) in Çorum province, north-central Turkey (Figure 3). Alaca Höyük is one of the most important archaeological sites in Central Anatolia. Over the millennia has been an important center for diverse civilizations, and archaeological layers from various cultures shape the site beginning in the Chalcolithic Age, extending from the Early to Late Bronze Age/Hittite Period, and then from the early first millennium BCE to the early twentieth century CE (Figure 4).



Figure 3. The location of the research area.

The multi-layered nature of the site highlights its significance as an invaluable archaeological treasure, contributing to our broader understanding of human history and cultural heritage in Anatolia. Alaca Höyük is famous mainly for its Hittite settlement evidence, which is also visible on the site. Key features include the Sphinx Gate, the foundation of a Temple Palace, silos, a metal workshop, houses, a drainage system and tombs.

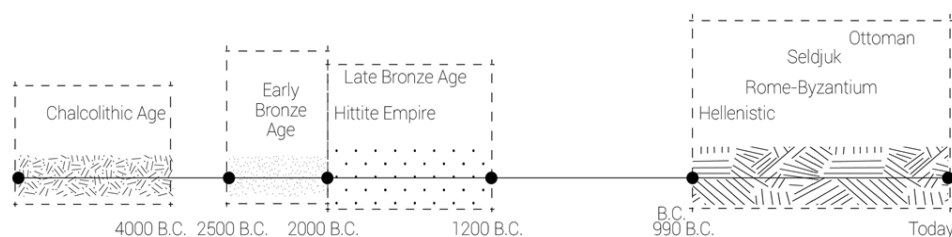


Figure 4. Cultural layers of Alaca Höyük.

The site was visited by various historical travelers. After being introduced to the wider world in 1835 by William J. Hamilton, the mound became a popular destination for scholars visiting Central Anatolia. Between 1833 and 1926, numerous researchers, including Charles Texier, Heinrich Barth, H.J. Van-Lennep, G. Perrot, E. Chantre, R.C. Thompson, and H.H. von der Orsten conducted research at the site. However, it was not until 1935 that formal excavations began at Alaca Höyük under the leadership of Hamit Zübeyir Koşay.

Alaca Höyük is surrounded by a modern village, fields, water resources, roads and pathways, other archaeological sites, and the Gölpınar Reservoir, which is dated to the period of the Hittite Empire.³ The region has a steppe climate, and the landscape has a creamy-brown colour, especially in summer. Around the Gölpınar Hittite Reservoir, however, the abundant water creates a verdant landscape. In this sense, the green landscape of Gölpınar is rather different to the fields surrounding the mound. The land use and shape of the plots is also different in the gardens of the reservoir since they are mainly used as *bağ-bahçe* (a Turkish word used to describe the character of vineyard-orchards). It is assumed that the gardens evolved during the historical era. This distinctive landscape character was also described by excavation team leaders over the course of the twentieth century: Arik commented on the green and fertile nature of Gölpınar compared to its surroundings,⁴ while Koşay (1954) noted that the gardens around the reservoir were used as a vineyard.⁵

Even though there has so far been no direct archaeological evidence, it seems likely that gardens around Gölpınar could have been used as vineyards during the Hittite Empire period (when the reservoir was first built), and that the vineyard-orchard were still here in Ottoman times. The fact that the region has endemic *Emir* grape species, in addition to other varieties, and the fact that grapes are frequently mentioned in texts from the Hittite period⁶ is also suggestive. However, no archaeobotanical research has been carried out in the area to date.

BASIC CRITERIA FOR ARCHAEO PARKS

During our research, we considered different approaches to archaeological parks and the goals set for them (Figure 5). According to the literature, enabling interaction and education are high priorities in the design of archaeological parks, in addition to the conservation and management of archaeological remains and landscapes. Some designers attempt to integrate interactions between visitors from the outset via social media platforms.⁷ Such approaches are especially important for the integration of new technologies, where designers focus on the revival of the past through various representation techniques, such as virtual reality.⁸ Creating a living environment through the reconstruction of structures (such as still-used Roman baths),⁹ land-use activities from the past (such as rice growing),¹⁰ and representing the picturesque landscape elements,¹¹ designers aim to strengthen the relationship between visitors and the site and makes it easier for them to understand how historic elements operated in their own context in the past. In addition, it is also considered desirable to increase interactions between visitors and local people, to raise public awareness, to increase the value of the region, and to emphasize the place's historic character.¹² Attempts to increase the interaction of tourists with the site and to reflect its archaeological values are also important in terms of strengthening the links with local people. Local people continue to shape the surrounding landscape, and it is they who ensure the continuity of the spirit of the place.¹³

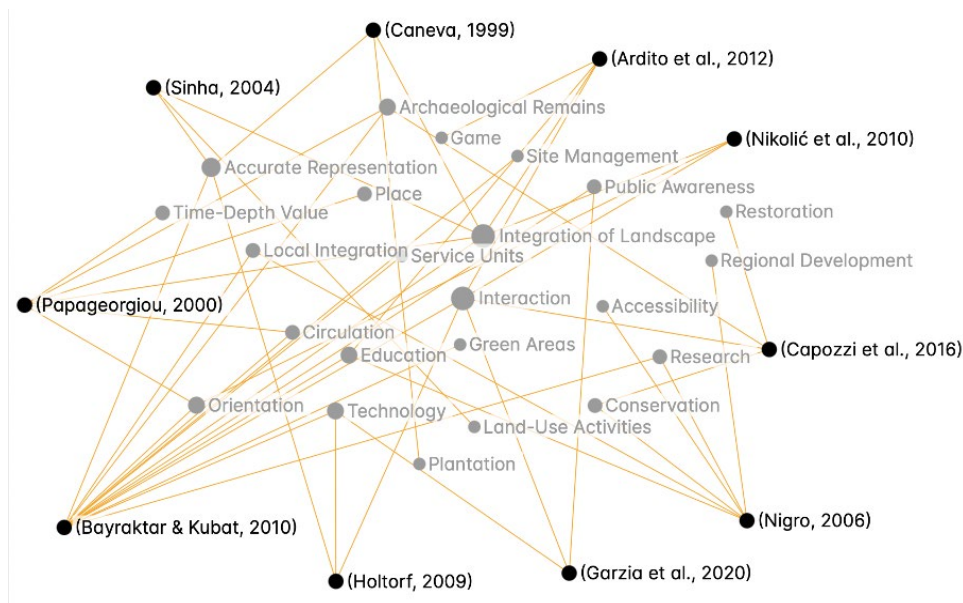


Figure 5. Literature network for archaeological parks.

On the other hand, some researchers emphasize the importance of emotional design aspects for archaeological parks, including the sense of arrival, orientation, and experience.¹⁴ In this sense, it is important that the archaeological park design provides visitors with a natural flow through the area within its spatial narrative. It is generally accepted that archaeological park projects will entail high construction, conservation, and management costs: some studies suggest that by combining interaction and education with "playing", the high economic costs required by designed activities in archaeological parks can be reduced.¹⁵ Archaeological parks also need planting design which is sympathetic to both the historical context and its recreational use, representing the natural and historic background of the area.¹⁶

As seen in the literature review, archaeological park needs different aspects and criteria to be addressed in the design and planning processes. In this context, it is important to remember that drawing on landscapes, with all their living and non-living actors, can help to perpetuate a characteristic sense of place.



Figure 6. Word cloud of the keywords for archaeological park design criteria.

The application of key design criteria can contribute to the development of successful archaeological parks. For example, where a sense of place-belonging is encouraged, archaeological parks will

continue to be protected by residents and visitors, as well as formal authorities, as shown by the example of with Turenscape's "Chengtoushan Archaeological Park" project.¹⁷ At the initial proposals for the design of Chengtoushan included removal of the rice fields surrounding the archaeological site. However, rice fields were an important element in the region's historic landscape character. Local people and visitors consequently objected to their removal and ensured the protection of the fields and their inclusion within the archaeological park and its programme of activities. Integrating landscape elements of this sort can also contribute to developing "experimental archaeology" in archaeological parks. As Papageorgiou notes, this concept emerged through examples like the "Sanglandet Lejre Archaeological Park". Here, activities designed for both adults and children help visitors to understand the archaeological value of the place. By taking part in a well-designed experimental archaeology concept, visitors almost feel they can pass through a tunnel into the past.

In Turkey, there is no archaeological park that has been designed and completed in a holistic way. There are examples such as Arslantepe Archaeological Park (Malatya), Aktopraklık Archaeological Park (Bursa), and Kaunos Archaeological Park (Muğla) where the process is underway. It is notable that no such park exists in the country, which is extremely rich in accessible archaeological sites.

Background of the Gölpınar Archaeopark Project

The planning phase of the archaeological park project was completed in 2015, and construction began in 2016. Carried out by the State Hydraulic Works (DSI), and the project's primary purpose was the reorganization and rehabilitation of the reservoir in a way that would allow tourist visits which reflected the Hittite period. The park area is located 2 km from Alaca Höyük and includes the Gölpınar Hittite Reservoir and surrounding gardens.

The project brief indicates that the archaeopark will include three parts: an activity area, an excavation area, and an educational area.¹⁸ The north part of the reservoir (activity area) is planned to house restaurants, workshops and accommodation. It is explained in the brief that all the buildings in the area are designed in the Hittite style. While the open areas between the buildings were designed with aromatic plants, parcels reflecting the agricultural production practices of the Hittite period were placed in the other open areas. The products obtained from these plots will be used in the preparation of the Hittite period dishes in the restaurant.

The south part of the project, which is assumed to have been former gardens, was expropriated to build the archaeological park, and the middle of the area was defined as an excavation area. Meanwhile, the western part of the area is designated as the camp area for the students. The outer ring has viewpoints and horse carriage roads.

After three years, the project construction phase stopped in 2018, as it was revealed that the contractor institution did not have the authority to execute the project. Furthermore, the construction firm abandoned the project for economic reasons. Consequently, historic agricultural production was interrupted as the fields were expropriated within the project area. As explained in detail above, the basic design criteria of the project are shown in Figure 7, which includes the criteria provided by the Gölpınar Archaeological Park in the keyword map from the literature.

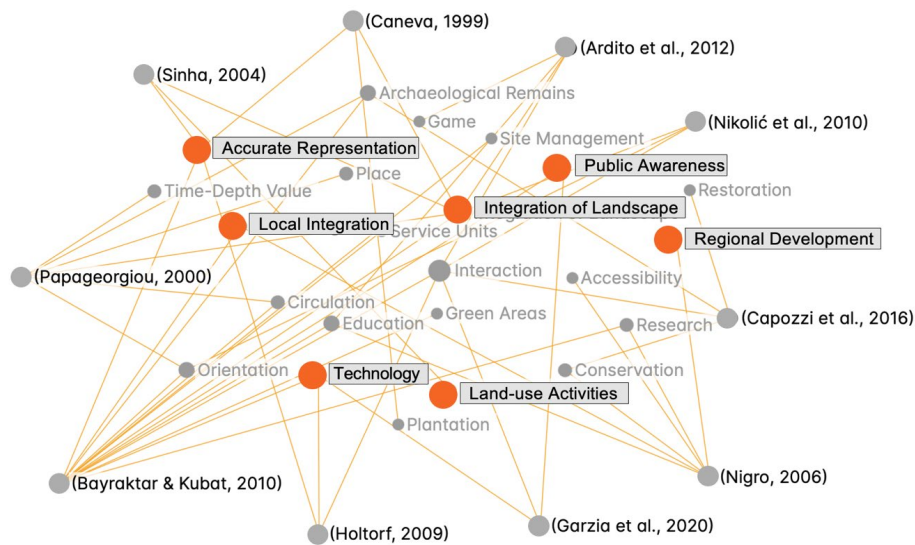


Figure 7. The main criteria set in Gölpınar Archaeopark.

CONCLUSION

The Gölpınar Archaeological Park project began with positive intentions. However, its problems stem from the lack of analysis of the place and the archaeological park concept. The main weaknesses in the design of the area relate to the following themes:

- Integration of landscape,
- Accurate representation of archaeological periods,
- Local Integration,
- Public Awareness,
- Regional Development,
- Land-use Activities,
- Technology.

The expropriation of fields within the scope of the park is one of the problems. The Gölpınar gardens are thought to be traceable back to the period of the Hittite Empire. As studied by Apaydın et al., the gardens include historic open and closed water channels as determined by geophysical methods. In this sense, the gardens are not only valuable for being agricultural areas. The way of using the land and its continuity constitutes a cultural heritage and a means of transferring ancient agricultural knowledge. Thus, the use of the fields by the farmers should be ensured. At the same time, visitors could participate in (supervised) agricultural practices in these areas. This could help ensure better engagement with design criteria including interaction with landscape and culture, and integration with local people, thereby contributing to public awareness and education. Selling local products through the other facilities in the archaeological park (e.g. the farm-to-table restaurant concept) could contribute towards local development. It is also important to encourage viticulture in the area and to include the products obtained from the vineyards system. Engaging with the landscape and its producers could enable continuity in memory production both for them and for visitors, which could provide richer and more satisfying experiences (emotionally and educationally) than the artificial "Hittite-style" constructed practices.

In light of archaeological research, the compatibility of the constructed Hittite structures with the park's archaeology is also problematic. The buildings have designed in a modern-vernacular interpretation that has become popular in recent years but is not a convincing reflection of Hittite

architecture. Modern vernacular examples can be innovative and culturally relevant in contemporary contexts. Although modern vernacular architecture has its benefits, it can present difficulties in terms of historical accuracy, authenticity, cultural and historical relevance, and preservation when used in an archaeological park that seeks to represent the past heritage of a specific era. In this sense, more attention could be paid to the accurate representation of the archaeological evidence through architecture.

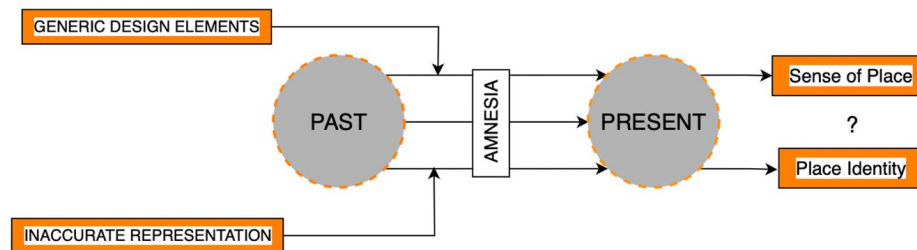


Figure 8. The resulting diagram of Gölpınar Archaeopark Design Approach.

In order to increase the cultural, social and economic development in the village, to raise awareness about the museum and archaeological site, and to provide a holistic representation, the village-museum-archaeological site areas also could have been included within the boundaries of the archaeological park. Indeed, instead of surrounding the archaeopark with physical barriers, it is suggested that the area be more open to the outside. The landscape of the neighborhood has a heterogenic character compared to the surrounding steppe vegetation with its lush green corridors around streams. Opening the landscape to the outside by removing the enclosure, creating hiking routes will help visitors and locals engage with the landscape in a more holistic manner. This will strengthen the sense of place in the archaeological park. A stronger sense of place belonging among locals and tourists will support and underpin sustaining processes outside the formal authorities.

To summarize, the Gölpınar Archaeopark project has generic design elements rather than features emphasizing the local identity, sense of place, and memory of the place. This has the effect of interrupting the transmission of memory and causes an "amnesia" problem. If the aim of the park is to transfer knowledge of the past (for example the Hittite period), the design programme needs to include a detailed examination and understanding of the period. Activities and objects, buildings, landscape scenes and even plant types could be turned into mnemonic devices (memorial objects) on a landscape scale.

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NOTES

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