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anemonDerginin ana sayfası: <http://dergipark.gov.tr/anemon>**Araştırma Makalesi • Research Article****Locals' Attitude towards Cultural Heritage Values: The Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe**

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Abstract: Cultural heritage is the individuals' living connections to the past based on the culture people all share. Individuals' thoughts, identities, surroundings, and the locations they dwell are all formed through our cultural background. Türkiye has a rich heritage of cultures. Among these heritages are the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe. They are the necropolis located near the ancient city of Sardis. They have been listed on the UNESCO Tentative List of World Heritage since 2013 and maintain a position in terms of geomorphological structure. This study investigates if the people living in the area consider the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe as touristic values. It also aims to figure out what they think about the protection of this heritage, the impact of the Bin Tepeler Tumulus on agricultural lands, and the efforts made by local governments to preserve the heritage. Data were obtained from 30 participants using the semi-structured interview technique. The data were analyzed with content coding and interpretations were produced. It was determined that the local people did not regard the tumuli as touristic attractions. It is recommended that a more comprehensive tourism planning approach be adopted in the region, including the active participation of the local people.

Keywords: Culture, Cultural Heritage, Lydians, Locals, the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe

Yerel Halkın Kültürel Miras Değerlerine Karşı Tutumu: Bin Tepe Tümülüsleri Örneği

Öz: Kültürel miras, bireylerin paylaştığı kültüre dayalı olarak geçmişle olan yaşayan bağlarımızdır. Bireylerin düşünceleri, kimlikleri, çevresi ve yaşadıkları yerlerin hepsi kültürel geçmişleri aracılığıyla oluşmaktadır. Türkiye hem soyut hem de somut açıdan zengin bir kültür mirasına sahiptir. Bu miraslar arasında, Manisa'nın Ahmetli ve Salihli ilçelerinde bulunan ve Lidya medeniyetinin krallarının ve soylularının mezarlarına ev sahipliği yapan Bin Tepe tümülüs mezarları da bulunmaktadır. Bin Tepe tümülüs mezarları, Sardes antik kentinin yakınında bulunan nekropol alanıdır. 2013 yılında UNESCO Dünya Mirası Geçici Listesi'ne dahil olan alan hem jeomorfolojik yapı hem turizm faaliyetleri açısından önemli bir konuma sahiptir. Buradan hareketle bu çalışmada, Manisa'nın Salihli ve Ahmetli ilçelerinde yaşayan yerel halkın Bin Tepe tümülüslerini turistik değer olarak görüp görmediklerinin tespiti amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniği kullanılarak 30 katılımcıdan veri elde edilmiştir. Elde edilen veriler içerik kodlaması ile çözümlenerek belirlenen temalar doğrultusunda yorumlamalarda bulunulmuştur. Çalışma sonucunda Bin Tepe tümülüs mezarlarının bulunduğu çevrede sosyal tesislerin olmaması, turizmle ilgili hiçbir faaliyet yapılmaması ve tümülüslerin iç kısımlarının halka açık olmaması nedeniyle yerel halkın tümülüsleri turistik cazibe merkezi olarak görmediği belirlenmiştir. Bölgede yerel halkın aktif katılımını da içeren daha kapsamlı bir turizm planlama yaklaşımının benimsenmesi tavsiye edilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kültür, Kültürel Miras, Lidyalılar, Yerel Halk, Bin Tepe Tümülüsleri

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Introduction

Culture is an interdisciplinary concept that encompasses all the material and spiritual values that societies have produced over time and transmitted from one generation to the next. At the same time, this material and spiritual existence constitutes the source of cultural heritage. Cultural heritage is regarded as the totality of values belonging to a society, including all kinds of physical artifacts inherited from past generations and desired to be left to future generations for various reasons (Öztürk and Caber, 2017). Generally addressing, cultural heritage can be explained as "the totality of all knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors that a person has created, accumulated, developed, enriched with new syntheses and transferred to future generations by ensuring their continuity throughout the time he has lived, and the objects that are part of this totality." In this instance, cultural heritage is a potent component and a significant source of wealth that, by educating people about their shared history, fosters a sense of cohesion and solidarity among society's members (Gümüşçü, 2018). Briefly, the concept of cultural heritage can be expressed as the whole of material and spiritual values that will be transferred to future generations (Çoban and Halaç, 2023).

On the other hand, cultural heritage is an extremely substantial resource derived from the civilization in which it exists. According to Akça (2017), the cultural heritage is a reflection of the accumulation of the society in which it is discovered, and these accumulations grow and coexist with the people who live within. Research on the preservation of cultural assets and its application to tourism greatly benefits from the cooperation of the local population (Okuyucu and Somuncu, 2012).

The UNESCO Tentative List of World Heritage, recently updated in 2023, comprises 79 heritages total—72 cultural, 4 mixed, and 3 naturals—that can be found in Türkiye (Unesco World Heritage List, 2024). The list was initially published in 1994. The Bin Tepeler Tumuli is one of the world heritages that Türkiye owns. The tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe belong to the Lydians. By creating the first currency in history, the Lydian culture ended the barter system. As part of Türkiye's cultural heritage, the tumulus graves of Bin Tepe, which are a part of this civilization and are listed on the UNESCO Tentative List of World Heritage, must be preserved and handed down to future generations. It is not possible to overlook these fundamental values. Sardis Expedition reports that the world's largest tumuli are found in the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe (Sardisexpedition, 2024). Although there are some limited numbers of studies concerning the tumuli in the context of tourism (Pekerşen et al. 2019; Coşkun and Okuyucu, 2022; Okuyucu and Somuncu, 2012; Güneş et al., 2019), it appears that they were mainly investigated in field of archeology by the several researchers. For example, Aksan (2015) sought to reinterpret in detail the finds from the tumuli in southeast Thrace, namely Kırklareli, Vize, Umurca, Uzun Hacı, Karakoç, Akören, Eriklice, and Bolayır. To preserve the grave's surroundings, each tumulus has undergone a comprehensive investigation. Additionally, Aral (2016) endeavored to locate remnants of the tumuli that had vanished from Ankara's urban fabric and looked into their appearances in cross-sectional research, historical aerial photos, and maps of the city. It also seeks to record the current state and applications of the tumuli that have been destroyed as well as those that have survived in the city. In addition, Yücel (2017) conducted research to highlight the richness that the tumuli of Malatya province contributed to the Anatolian lands. The tumuli of the ancient territory of Bithynia were also the subject of a thesis prepared by Bora (2015), which took into account the tumuli in relation to the body of archaeological literature already in existence. Furthermore, according to Ünan (2009), surveys and excavations were carried out in the center of Samsun, and as a consequence, numerous tumuli, including Töptepe, Büyük Kolpınar, Büyükoyumca, Atakent, Kuşçulu, Uzgur, Kalkancı, Toybelen, and

Dondortepe, were discovered. Baruthane and Dondortepe Tumuli were dealt with in the study. The tumulus graves of Bin Tepe, which are situated in the Manisa districts of Ahmetli and Salihli, were not examined in relation to tourism, in contrast to the previously stated research. Thus, the primary goal of this research is to provide Bin Tepe's tumuli the attention they deserve from a tourism standpoint. It is intended that the study will serve as a guide for local and regional managements as well other interested parties, in presenting the public's perspective, and that the results will be evaluated in light of the body of current literature.

Conceptual Framework

Culture, Cultural Heritage, and Their relation to Tourism

A particular set of people's beliefs, practices, and attitudes are collectively referred to as their culture. The Turkish National Committee of the International Council of Monuments and Sites assigned culture almost the same connotation. It is interpreted as any material and immaterial assets that have endured until the current day and are regarded to be a reflection of people's ever-evolving customs, knowledge, values, and beliefs that are not bound by a legal or equitable ownership relationship. Everything about the environment that has changed throughout time as a result of people and places interacting is considered cultural heritage (International Council on Monuments and Sites, 2013). Geography also has an impact on culture in a variety of ways, including the building materials used to construct structures in any natural setting where people live, as well as lifestyle choices and fashion sense. Variations in the natural environment are mirrored in culture, and culture has an impact on society as well as the environment. Culture is an environmental adaption of sorts. A people's culture is made up of both their prevailing values and beliefs as well as the mosaic of their lifestyles (Emekli, 2006, 53). As in the preceding example, Tuztaş (2004) underscores that culture was born in the earliest human communities and developed with them; hence, culture is only meaningful to societies. According to the World Heritage Convention (1972), cultural heritage incorporates concrete (material) phenomena like monuments, clusters of buildings, and (natural and man-made) locations that are "of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science". On the other hand, Fabbri et al. (2020) point out that the cultural heritage is made up of all the environmental traits that come about as a result of people and places interacting throughout time. Furthermore, cultural heritage is something that shapes people's identities and is a productive resource, according to Stern and Seifert (2010). Kurtar and Somuncu (2013) back up the notion that cultural heritage includes living but intangible assets like language, tradition, dance, music, and rituals, as well as historical cities and textures, cultural landscapes, monumental architecture, and archaeological sites.

According to Öksüz Kuşcuoğlu and Taş (2017), cultural heritage values can be viewed and assessed as an economic source of income for the cultural, social, and physical development of the regions in which they are concentrated. Some places have virtually solely relied on their cultural heritage to drive tourism since they have no other options. One of the most prominent and common tourism resources worldwide is cultural heritage (Timothy, 2014). Issues pertaining to cultural heritage and tourism are so tightly intertwined. This relationship may be understood from the effects of existing cultural heritage on tourism in Türkiye. Türkiye involves a geography rich with civilizations. It is not appropriate to use our tangible and intangible cultural heritage values solely to support the cultural economy in the tourism sector. Given that cultural resources constitute one of the primary resources that encourage tourism, it is crucial to use these elements correctly in the tourism sector (Aydoğdu Atasoy, 2018). Besides, Uslu and Kiper (2006) report that it is imperative that culture and tourism have a mutually beneficial relationship. If not, one would gradually vanish while the other will always take advantage of its resources. But the loss of one implies a threat to the other's continued existence.

Tourism and Local Communities

Tourism, serving as a catalyser, casts economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts on the destination through tourism development (Gnanapala and Sandaruwani, 2016, 61). However, to fulfil this aim and gain long-term success in tourism essentially depends on local communities' support (Chandralal and Palliyaguruge, 2010, 41). In turn, tourism activities should supply positive outcomes to locals. Türker et al. (2016) state that the quality of life of locals could be improved through tourism activities. In addition to that, tourism activities may increase locals' income, employment opportunities, and living standards, as well as contribute to friendship, tolerance, and a peaceful atmosphere. Additionally, to the authors, the protection of cultural and natural resources and the improvement of infrastructure are also positive impacts of tourism on local communities. On the other hand, although the impact of tourism activities on locals is generally considered positive, specific economic and environmental effects of tourism could cause negative impacts on host communities. For instance, while nature-based tourism or ecotourism activities contribute to the concept of nature protection, they also cause adverse economic outcomes for resource-extractive industries, supportive businesses, and the locals employed in those fields (Saarinen, 2019, 7). The absence of sufficient knowledge, skills, and capacity are the main barriers to locals actively participating in the tourism development process. Moreover, Sert (2019) exerts that it is critical to comprehend, track, and supervise the effects of tourism on the host community because local support is crucial to the success of the industry. The potential impacts of tourism are viewed favourably by the local population thanks to methods that attempt to educate and involve them in the process. As a result of inadequate participation tourism development process, locals are predisposed to suffer from poverty (Gnanapala and Sandaruwani, 2016, 66). Additionally, tourism activities lead to social impacts on locals, as given in Table 1 (Saarinen, 2019, 7-8).

Table 1. Positive and Negative Impacts of Tourism on Locals

| Positive social impacts of tourism | Negative social impacts of tourism |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment and income • Diversification of the local economy • Well-being/quality of life • Poverty alleviation • Better infrastructure and services • Revitalization of culture • Cultural learning • (Resource) conservation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource and land use conflicts • Increased inequalities • Higher living costs and inflation • Crime and other social problems • Acculturation • Commodification of traditions • Demonstration effect, change of lifestyle • Seasonal and low-paid employment |

Resource: Saarinen, 2019, 8.

Within the context of proper tourism planning and development both central and local governments unavoidably need to consider the benefits of locals. In this aspect, Rattan (2016) emphasizes the importance of eco-tourism, community-based tourism, and pro-poor tourism activities since they support the locals. As for the pro-poor tourism activities, they focus on the alleviation of poverty through the empowerment of local communities (Rattan, 2016, 11-12). Especially community-based tourism activities prioritize the empowerment of the local community for active participation in tourism management and development processes and try to think of ways to heighten the well-being of locals (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016, 1). Similarly, pro-poor tourism activities seek to provide economic, social, environmental, or cultural privileges for the locals and pay attention to the high employment of local people in tourism to enable active participation in the tourism management decision-making process (Zandi, 2020, 22).

Lydians

According to the research by Gürtekin-Demir (2014), the Lydians originally coexisted alongside people from a range of ethnic traditions in an area that was bordered to the west by Ionia, to the east by Phrygia, to the north by Mysia, and to the south by Caria. This central area expanded in the seventh and sixth century BCE during the Mermnad era, especially under the rule of Croesus (c. 560–546 BCE). Moreover, Payne and Wintjes (2016) assert that in the seventh and sixth century BC, the Lydians ruled over Western Asia Minor under the Mermnad dynasty. One of the greatest richest men in history, Croesus, the last Mermnad king of Lydia, continues to be discussed today. Coinage was supposedly invented by the Lydians, who are widely recognized for this fact. The research of Abedi (2018) indicated that the Lydians are among the civilizations that facilitated cross-cultural exchanges in politics, religion, and culture. They likewise possess traits from both East and West cultures. For the vast majority of the first half of the sixth century BC, Western Anatolian culture and art were concentrated on the Lydian civilization. They developed close relations with the Egyptian, Hellenistic, and Persian cultures. “As rich as Croesus” (known as Karun in eastern societies) is an aphorism that still refers to the opulence of the Lydian era. A significant portion of the Lydians is referred to as the “riches of Croesus” because of the discovery of gold, silver, bronze, and semi-precious stones in the royal tombs, along with a great number of specimens of jewellery, liturgical objects, and utensils. The Uşak Museum is home to these pieces (Aygün, 2018). The tumuli in Bin Tepe's tumulus tombs are those of the Lydian kings and nobility; they are buried in earth and have multiple burial chambers. The heights of the tumuli differ from one another, according to Anadolu Uygarlıkları (2024). And just as the Phrygians, the Lydian kings and nobility buried their dead in tumulus-style tombs—rooms concealed behind heaps of earth. Based on the significance of the deceased, different amounts of soil were heaped on top of the chamber. Kaymakçı (2014) argues that the Lydians largely embraced the Phrygian custom of tumulus burials.

The Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe

The tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe were built by the Lydians in the 6th or 7th centuries BC (Jeopark Belediyeler Birliği, 2017). The tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe, the elite Lydian tumulus cemetery, are located on the southern edge of Lake Marmara. The selection of the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe as the king's burial site was probably related to its easy visibility from Sardis and the Gediz Valley. This decision may also have been driven by the neighbouring Lake Marmara. Herodotus claims that the lake's profusion of springs provided food for the Lydian people. Following the Persian invasion, the aristocracy in Lydia would have been drawn to tumuli as a form of interment for the same reason (Roosevelt, 2006). The area is distinguished as a location of unique, enduring prominence by these tumuli, which are the most notable historical icons of Lydia and can be noticed from a distance. The largest tumulus cemetery in Türkiye is Bin Tepe, encompassing an area of roughly 74 square kilometres (Unesco World Heritage Centre, 2024). In comparison to the Giza Plateau in Egypt, the Bin Tepe tumulus tombs are substantially larger. As of 2024, only 115 tumuli remain, out of the minimum of 149 that existed in the 1940s. This is because some of them were destroyed by agricultural activity (Sardisexpedition, 2024). Lydia adopted the tumulus tradition from the Phrygians. In Lydia, tombs were hewn out of the solid rock. Doorways also existed in these chambers. A wall known as the “krepis” encircles the tumulus found in numerous Lydian tombs (Roosevelt, 2006). This site features the largest tumulus in the world, which belonged to the Lydian King Alyattes, who lived from 610 to 560 BC. Another tumulus is Karnıyark Tepe, which has been the subject of intermittent archaeological research since 1962, and many smaller tumuli and other sites have been partially excavated since then (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2024).



Photo 1. The Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe from the Izmir-Ankara Highway (Luke, 2010).

The Tumulus of Alyattes (Son of King Croesus)

The tumulus tombs of Alyattes, the largest tumulus in Bin Tepe, is the only monument of Lydian architecture mentioned in ancient sources and directly associated with a historical figure to date (Sardisexpedition, 2024). After ascending to the throne in roughly 610 BC, Alyattes ruled Lydia for fifty years, until his demise in roughly 560 BC. It implies that the construction on the tomb proceeded while he was still living. The tumulus is 60 meters high and has a diameter of 355–360 meters (Ratte, 1993). According to Vici (2024), the burial chamber was constructed prior to roughly 560 BC and is situated close to the hill's core. Robert Wood made the discovery of the tumulus in 1750. However, it was not until 1853 that the German researcher Ludwig Peter Spiegelthal managed to discover the burial chamber. Moreover (Ratte, 1993) puts forward that Spiegelthal was able to find numerous alabaster alabastron coins, fragments of Lydian (perfume container), and other ceramic vessels.



Photo 2. View of the Tumulus of Alyattes (Copyright Sardis American Archaeological Exploration/Harvard University)

Karnıyarık Tepe Tumulus

Karnıyarık Tepe is one of the three colossal tumuli in Bintepeleler, similar to the three pyramids of Giza (Sardisexpedition, 2024). Vici (2024) claims that earlier attempts have linked Gyges, the founder of the Mermnad Dynasty who lived in the early 7th century BC, to Karnıyarık Tepe. But neither Kırmutaf Tepe nor Karnıyarık Tepe have been positively associated with a single individual. Its area is nearly the same as that of the Great Pyramid of Giza, Cheops, with a diameter of 230 meters and a height of 53 meters on the southern side (Sardisexpedition, 2024). A distinctive characteristic of Karnıyarık Tepe is the crepis wall situated within the tumulus (Refer to Photo 4). A crepis wall encloses the tumulus. Three rows of blocks made of limestone encircle the crepis. On the main rock, the crepis is elevated. There is dirt, stone, or tiny chips in the spaces between the stones. Roughly wrought stones make up the majority of the crepis' stones. (Hanfmann, 1966: 4) The stones in the lower row are smooth and shaven. Many of the stone blocks are inscribed with signs that probably identify groups of workers responsible for different sections of the wall. Among these signs are two swastikas, "A" and "Θ", previously identified as "Gugu". The way the Lydians managed their labour force during the wall-building process can be witnessed by such kinds of mason signs and other particulars. At least seven separate groups of masons, each in charge of a particular segment or series of work, completed the wall; they were identified by signs throughout construction (Sardisexpedition, 2024).



Photo 3. View of Karniyarık Tepe (Copyright Sardis American Archaeological Exploration/Harvard University)



Photo 4. View of the Crepis Wall of Karniyarık Tepe (Copyright Sardis American Archaeological Exploration/Harvard University)

Methodology

Data Collection

The purpose of this study is to find out if the people living in the Manisa districts of Salihli and Ahmetli consider the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe to be of touristic value. It also attempts to determine what they think about the protection of this heritage, the impact of the Bin Tepeler Tumulus on agricultural lands, and the efforts made by the local government to preserve the heritage. Semi-structured interviews were employed, meaning that a qualitative data-gathering technique was carried out. The study data were gathered from Ahmetli and Salihli, where the researchers could conduct the interviews due to their familiarity with local people. Population estimates for Ahmetli and Salihli were 17,370 and 165,182, respectively (Manisa Valiliği, 2023). However, the quality of the sample matters more in qualitative research than its quantity (Baltacı, 2018). Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016) suggest that when the concepts recognized as the solution to the study question are repeated and the replies approach the saturation point, the sample can be sufficient. In this direction, the sample of the study techniques included the use of phenomenological research design and convenience sampling method. Ten residents of Salihli and twenty residents of Ahmetli were interviewed. The questions of the interview form were determined as the results of a comprehensive literature review by the researchers. Four academics serving for the Afyon Kocatepe University Tourism Faculty provided their expert comments in order to determine the final form of the questions. P1, P2, P3... and P30 were the codes assigned to the locals that were interviewed. The in-person interviews took place between March 25 and May 15, 2024, with a duration of around 25 to 30 minutes on average. Interviews were done during the data collection procedure with permission from the local population. The researchers filled out interview forms for each participant and wrote their responses on them. The data were analyzed with content coding and

interpretations were produced. The questions (except demographics) on the have been given at the end of the paper. Finally, a permission required to collect the data was obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board of Afyon Kocatepe University with the decision dated 20.03.2024 and numbered 2024/87.

Data Analysis

After conducting interviews with thirty individuals, content analysis was used to analyse data. The provided answers were coded to create themes. Only questions 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, and 14 consist of themes and coding, though, as not all questions offer the possibility to perform the processes.

Findings

Table 2. Findings Regarding the Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

| Participant | Age | Gender | Marital Status | Educational Status | Occupation | Duration of Residence in Ahmetli | Duration of Residence in Salihli |
|-------------|-----|--------|----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| P1 | 50 | Male | Married | High School | Farmer | 50 | |
| P2 | 34 | Male | Single | Secondary School | Farmer | 34 | |
| P3 | 30 | Male | Single | BA Degree | Farmer | 30 | |
| P4 | 35 | Female | Married | BA Degree | Construction Technician | 35 | |
| P5 | 51 | Male | Married | Secondary School | Tradesman | 51 | |
| P6 | 55 | Male | Married | Associate Degree | Retired | 55 | |
| P7 | 50 | Male | Married | High School | Tradesman | 50 | |
| P8 | 60 | Female | Married | High School | Retired | 60 | |
| P9 | 29 | Male | Married | High School | Agricultural Engineer | 29 | |
| P10 | 28 | Male | Single | BA Degree | Merchant | 28 | |
| P11 | 30 | Male | Single | BA Degree | Art Historian | 30 | |
| P12 | 44 | Male | Married | Primary School | Tradesman | 44 | |
| P13 | 49 | Female | Married | High School | Housewife | 49 | |
| P14 | 22 | Female | Married | High School | Housewife | 22 | |
| P15 | 26 | Female | Married | BA Degree | Teacher | 26 | |
| P16 | 37 | Male | Married | BA Degree | Civil Engineer | 20 | |
| P17 | 59 | Male | Married | Secondary School | Farmer | 59 | |
| P18 | 29 | Male | Single | BA Degree | Photographer | 29 | |
| P19 | 47 | Male | Married | Primary School | Tradesman | 47 | |
| P20 | 58 | Male | Single | High School | Retired | 58 | |
| P21 | 27 | Female | Married | High School | Sales Consultant | | 8 |
| P22 | 43 | Male | Married | Secondary School | Hairdresser | | 20 |
| P23 | 45 | Female | Single | BA Degree | Nurse | | 45 |
| P24 | 45 | Female | Married | BA Degree | Teacher | | 14 |
| P25 | 26 | Male | Single | High School | Sales Consultant | | 10 |
| P26 | 25 | Male | Single | Associate Degree | Sales Consultant | | 10 |
| P27 | 56 | Male | Married | High School | Tradesman | | 30 |
| P28 | 58 | Male | Married | Primary School | Retired | | 58 |
| P29 | 57 | Male | Married | BA Degree | Accountant | | 57 |
| P30 | 60 | Male | Married | Primary School | Retired | | 60 |

P= Participant

Table 2 shows the demographic data of the participants. When the findings were examined, it was observed that 22 out of 30 participants were male and between the ages of 25-60 while female participants were determined to be between 22-60. 9 out of 30 participants were single. As for the level of education of the participants, it was spotted that 12 of them had a bachelor's degree, 10 of them were high school graduates, 4 of them were middle school and primary school graduates. The largest occupational group was tradesmen. The participants' duration of residence in Ahmetli varied between 22-58 years, and the duration of residence in Salihli varied between 8-60 years.

Table 3. Visiting Status of the Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe and the Differences in Their Awareness

| Paid a visit | The differences in their awareness of protecting |
|----------------------|---|
| All the participants | Difference came out |
| | P4, P8, P10, P11, P12, P13, P15, P16, P18, P19, P20, P21, P23, P24, P25, P29, P30 |
| | No difference came out |
| | P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P9, P14, P17, P22, P26, P27, P28 |

P= Participant

In Table 3, you can find the answers to the question of “Have you visited the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe? If you have, has it been effective in creating differences in your awareness of protecting historical areas and the environment after the visit?” As a result, two groups were formed such as “those who indicated that it made a difference” and “those who indicated that it did not make a difference” regarding protecting historical areas/the environment after this visit. According to Table 2, 17 of the participants stated that there were differences in their awareness of protecting historical areas/the environment after the visit while 13 expressed that there were no differences.

Table 4. Acceptance of the Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe as a Tourist Attraction

| | |
|--|--|
| Those who accept them as a tourist attraction | P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P12, P15, P17, P20, P21, P23, P27, P29 |
| Those who do not accept them as a tourist attraction | P4, P5, P8, P9, P10, P11, P13, P14, P16, P18, P19, P22, P24, P25, P26, P28, P30 |
| The theme of not seeing as a tourist attraction | Coding |
| Tourism | Inadequacy of social facilities, Inadequacy of tourism activities, The interior of the tumuli not being open to visitors |

P= Participant

The answers given to “Are the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe a touristic attraction, if not, what are the reasons?” are given in Table 4 above. When Table 4 is surveyed, it is obtained that 13 of the participants accept the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe as a touristic attraction, yet 17 do not consider it as a touristic attraction. For example, participants numbered 16-22-24-25-26-28-30 stated their thoughts that “It is not a touristic attraction because there are no tourism activities in the region.” Participants 8-9-10-11-13-14-19 responded that “It is not a touristic attraction because we should see not only the exterior of the tumuli but also the interior and there are no tourism activities.”

Table 5. Consideration of the Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe as an Important Heritage

| Those who consider it as important | Those who do not consider it as important |
|---|---|
| P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P12, P15, P17, P20, P21, P23, P27, P29, P5, P8, P9, P10, P11, P13, P14, P16, P18, P19, P22, P24, P25, P26, P28, P30 | P4 |

P= Participant

Table 5 shows the responses to the question of “Do you think the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe are an important cultural heritage for future generations?” While there are 29 participants who think the

tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe are an important cultural heritage for future generations, there is only 1 participant who does not consider it as a major cultural heritage for future generations. Some of the responses belonging to P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6 are as follows: “It is capital for future generations because the first coin was minted here, they are in the UNESCO list, the tombs of the important Lydian kings and the world’s largest tumuli are located here.”

Table 6. Contribution of the Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe to the Promotion of Manisa

| | |
|--|--|
| Those who regard tumuli contribute to the promotion | |
| P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P12, P15, P17, P20, P21, P23, P29, P8, P9, P10, P11, P13, P14, P16, P18, P19, P22, P24, P25, P28 | |
| Those who regard tumuli do not contribute to the promotion | |
| P4, P26, P27, P30 | |

P= Participant

“Does the Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe contribute to the promotion of Manisa? If so, in what dimensions does it contribute?” was asked to participants and 26 of them worded that the region contributed to the promotion of Manisa in terms of tourism, culture, history and economy while 4 participants stated that the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe does not contribute to the promotion of Manisa. For example, participants 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 25 answered that “The tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe contribute to the promotion of Manisa in terms of tourism.”

Table 7. Role of the Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe in Preserving the Cultural Identity of Manisa

| | |
|--|--|
| Those who believe that tumuli play a role | P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, P9, P11, P12, P13, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20, P21, P22, P24, P25, P26, P27, P28, P29 |
| Those who believe that tumuli do not play a role | P7, P10, P14, P15, P23, P30 |

P= Participant

Table 7 shows the responses to the question “Does the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe play a role in preserving the cultural identity of Manisa? If so, what are they?” According to Table 7, the vast majority of participants think that the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe play a role in preserving the cultural identity of Manisa. Some of the responses given by participants P6, P20, P21, P22, P25 and P29 who think that the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe play a role in preserving the cultural identity of Manisa are as follows: “The tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe play a key part in preserving the cultural identity of Manisa because the largest tumuli in the world are here.” Other participants numbered P1, P4, P8, P12, P3, P26 and P28 indicated that ‘The tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe hold a role in preserving the cultural identity of Manisa because the first money was minted by the Lydians in this region and the barter system was ended.’

Table 8. Protection of the Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe by the Local Governments

| | |
|--|--|
| Those who think they are not protected | P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20, P21, P24, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30 |
| Those who think they are protected | P22 |
| Those who do not have any idea | P23, P25 |

P= Participant

Table 8 shows the responses to “What do you think about the role of local governments in protecting the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe?” The big majority of participants stated that the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe were not protected by local governments. For example, the responses of P1, P2, P3, P4, P5 include the following remark: “The measures taken by local governments to protect the region are not sufficient.”

Table 9. Impact of the Inclusion of the Tumulus Tombs in the UNESCO Permanent List

| Participants | Themes |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P8, P9, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P17, P18, P21, P22, P26 | promotion of the city /advertisement |
| P6, P7, P8, P10, P16, P19, P20, P22, P23, P24, P25, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30 | Activity in tourism |
| P7, P20, P27 | Economic contribution to the city |
| P18 | Branding of the city |

P= Participant

The participants were asked, “How would the inclusion of the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe in the UNESCO Final List contribute to the promotion of the region (Ahmetli and Salihli in Manisa)?” The participants’ replies to this question were based on the themes of “promotion/advertisement, mobility in tourism, economic contribution and branding.” The general answers to this question were as follows: “Manisa’s name is heard around the world and tourism is revived.”, “The promotion of Manisa increases and the number of both domestic and foreign tourists increases.”, “The number of tourists increases and contributes to economic growth.”

Table 10. Recommendation of the Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe to Visit

| | |
|--|---|
| Those who say it is worth visiting | P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P11, P12, P13, P15, P17, P18, P19, P20, P21, P22, P23, P25, P27, P28, P29 |
| Those who say it is not worth visiting | P4, P5, P8, P9, P10, P14, P16, P24, P26, P30 |

P= Participant

The answers given to “To what extent would you recommend visiting the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe to people around you, your guests/visitors coming to your business? Is it worth visiting?” are given in Table 10 above. Considering Table 10, it was determined that 20 of the participants thought it was worth visiting and recommended it to be visited. On the other hand, 10 of the participants stated that it was not worth visiting and did not recommend it to be visited. A group of participants voiced the reasons why it is not worth visiting and is not recommended as follows: “Lack of tourism activities, the interior of the tumuli not being open to visitors”, “Difficulty of access due to the presence of agricultural lands”. The answers by another group of participants who say that the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe is not worth visiting and they do not recommend it are as follows: “It is not worth visiting because there is no tourism activity, so I do not recommend it to be visited.”, “It is not worth visiting because the inside of the tumuli is not open to visitors; the inside of the tumuli should also be opened to visitors” and “It is not worth visiting because the area is not well-maintained”

Table 11. Potential Effect of Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe in Tour Programs

| | |
|--|---|
| Those who think the tourist numbers will increase | P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20, P21, P22, P23, P24, P25, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30 |
| Those who do not think the tourist numbers will increase | P4, P5 |

P= Participant

Table 11 shows the responses to “If the Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe were included in the tour program, would this increase the number of tourists coming to the region?” As Table 11 is studied, it is observed that 28 of the participants think that the number of tourists coming to the region would increase if touristic activities were included in the region while only 2 of the participants think that there will be no change in the number of tourists.

Table 12. Economic, Social, and Cultural Benefits of the Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe

| | |
|--|---|
| Those who think it will provide economic, social, and cultural benefits | P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20, P21, P22, P23, P24, P25, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30 |
| Those who do not think it will provide economic, social, and cultural benefits | P1, P4 |

P= Participant

Table 12 provides answers to the question of “If tourism activities were included in the Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe, would this provide economic, social and cultural benefits?” When Table 12 is evaluated, it is observed that all participants, except P1 and P4, think that it will provide benefits.

Table 13. Local People's Thoughts on Illegal Excavations and Determining the Measures Taken

| Participants' thoughts on illegal excavations | Theme |
|---|------------------------|
| P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20, P21, P22, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30 | Destruction |
| Participants' thoughts on the law enforcement forces | Theme |
| P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20, P21, P22, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30 | Technology Security |

P= Participant

The answers to the question of “What do you think about the effects of illegal excavations and treasure searches in the Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe region and the precautions taken?” are provided in Table 13. Some of the answers given by the participants to this question are as follows: “Illegal excavations are destroying the tumuli. Local governments are inadequate in terms of precautions. The gendarmerie is taking high precautions and is constantly patrolling the area” (P5). “Illegal excavations negatively affect not only the tumuli but also the agricultural lands. The gendarmerie fulfils its duty with measures such as patrols etc.” (P10). Moreover, P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P8, P9, P19 and P30 imply that “Illegal excavations are damaging our history. The gendarmerie is meticulously protecting the area and has taken very strict measures. They are patrolling very frequently and there is a drone application in the area.” Also, P7, P13, P21 and P22 add that “Our cultural heritage is being destroyed by illegal excavations. Since the tumuli are located in a very large area, it is difficult to protect them, but the gendarmerie's drone application is a good work.” Finally, P20, P26, P27, P28 and P29 express those illegal excavations are destroying the beauties of the country. They are threatening the history of Türkiye. The gendarmerie is monitoring this place with drones and is protecting the area with frequent patrols.”

Table 14. The Positive/Negative Effects of the Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe on Agricultural Lands

| Those who think it has a negative effect | Theme |
|--|---|
| P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P9, P10, P11, P13, P15, P17, P18, P24, P26, P27, P29 | Agricultural land Illegal Excavation |
| Those who do not think it has a negative effect | Theme |
| P7, P12, P16, P20, P28, P30 | Illegal Excavation Cultural |

P= Participant

Table 14 portrays the responses to question of “Do you think that the area where the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe spreads positively/negatively affects the agricultural lands?” According to Table 14, 6 of the participants think that the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe positively affects the agricultural lands while 17 participants stated that it has a negative effect. It was observed that 7 participants had no idea. The reason why 17 participants think that it has a negative effect is that since the agricultural lands are within the protected area, agricultural activities such as drilling, pipe laying, and planting crops cannot be carried out.

Discussion

Using semi-structured interviews, the study seeks to figure out the viewpoints of locals who reside in the Manisa neighbourhoods of Salihli and Ahmetli on the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe. Thirty persons underwent questioning in order to achieve this aim. Both content analysis and phenomenological research design have been employed for analysing the interview data. Research has been conducted to ascertain the perspectives of residents regarding the preservation, sustainability, and utilization of cultural heritage by tourists. For example, in their study, on the protection and sustainability of cultural heritage tourism values, Pekerşen et al. (2019) concluded that the majority of those who participated in the study stated that tourism will bring good developments, employment opportunities will increase with the continued development of the sector, tourism will increase activities in the village in social and cultural terms, and 92.9% of the local people stated that the good development of tourism will be possible with good planning. Similarly, in this study, if tourism activities are included in the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe region, the local people think that the number of tourists coming to the region will increase and the region will benefit economically, socially, and culturally. This result is parallel to the study conducted by Pekerşen et al. (2019). In addition, in another study conducted by Coşkun and Okuyucu (2022), 54.8% of the participants think that the urban cultural heritage in Odun Pazarı is sufficiently protected, while 45.2% think the opposite. Unlike this data, in this study, it was detected that almost all of the local people have the opinion that the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe are not protected by local governments. This result is different from the result of the study conducted by Coşkun and Okuyucu (2022).

In another study by Okuyucu and Somuncu (2012), it was intended to determine the perception and attitudes of local people in the protection of cultural heritage and its use for tourism purposes. They found out that the local people in Osmaneli district center are of the opinion that the cultural heritage is not sufficiently protected and that the local people have a positive attitude towards the protection of cultural heritage and tourism activities. Likewise, in this study, local people stated that the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe were not protected by local governments sufficiently while security forces (gendarmerie) took precautions such as drones and constant patrols. In addition, it was determined that local people had a positive attitude towards tourism activities because they thought that including tourism activities in the region would provide economic, social, and cultural benefits. These results are parallel to the study results conducted by Okuyucu and Somuncu (2012). Last of all, Güneş et al. (2019) conducted a study in Konya province to obtain the opinions of local people on the protection and use of cultural heritage within the scope of sustainable tourism. In this study, it was ended that 54.7% of the people stated that the cultural heritage in the city centre of Konya was not sufficiently protected, while 45.3% articulated that it was protected. In this study, since almost all of the local people stated that the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe region was not sufficiently protected by local governments, the results obtained from both studies show common features.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In recent years, tourism has been used as a tool in the protection of cultural heritage. In this context, the principle of protection-use has begun to be adopted in the protection of cultural heritage. However, this protection-use balance between cultural heritage and tourism must be ensured very well. Otherwise, it may cause the destruction or destruction of cultural heritage values (Coşkun and Okuyucu, 2022).

The primary purpose of this study is to obtain the opinions of the local people living in Salihli and Ahmetli districts of Manisa about one of the cultural heritage elements of Türkiye, the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe. In particular, the research was carried out to seek answers to various questions such as whether the local people consider the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe as a tourist attraction and whether the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe contribute to the promotion of Manisa.

As a result of the data analysis, it was determined that all participants had full knowledge about the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe. This information is very valuable in the context of the protection of cultural heritage assets. On the contrary to this fact, participants reported that the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe were not sufficiently protected by local governments while the law enforcement forces (gendarmerie) took some strong measures for the protection of the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe.

On the other hand, the inhabitants of the Tumulus Tombs of Bin Tepe region are in favour of both the inclusion of tourism activities and the preservation of cultural heritage. For local administrations, this might be viewed as an opportunity. Nonetheless, while a portion of the participants believe that the place is worthwhile and should be visited in its current state, a different portion of the participants disagree and believe otherwise so. Participants who did not recommend visiting expressed their opinions as *"It is not worth visiting because there are no tourism activities, so I do not recommend visiting it"* and *"It is not worth visiting because the inside of the tumuli is not open to visitors, the inside of the tumuli should also be opened to visitors."*

Still, the participants assert that the absence of these elements disqualifies the area from being regarded as a tourist destination in addition to making it unworthy of visitation. The great majority of residents of the Bin Tepe region think that adding tourism-related activities will boost tourism-related activities and help the region's economy, social structure, and cultural heritage. Consequently, the belief among the locals is that Bin Tepe's tumuli ought to incorporate tourism-related activities. There are agricultural lands in the area where the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe are located. The notion that the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe had a detrimental impact on agricultural areas was disputed by the participants. Because agricultural lands are within the protected area, also known as public domain, agricultural activities such as drilling, laying pipes, and planting crops cannot be carried out. In addition, illegal excavations carried out in the fields with the idea that there are treasures in the areas where agricultural lands are located cause the local people to think negatively about the tumuli of Bin Tepe. Based on the results of the study, some prominent suggestions that can be given are as follows:

Local governments (provincial/district municipalities, district governorship, governor's office) should develop joint projects on the protection of the region. It is advised that they help the law enforcement agencies (gendarmerie) as a result of these projects. A tiny kiosk or information kiosk can be set up in an appropriate location in the area as part of a collaborative project.

It is highly recommended that a more comprehensive tourism planning approach should be adopted in the area. Furthermore, it is more crucial than ever for local governments to involve the community in the planning process for tourism, particularly when it comes to safeguarding cultural heritage assets.

The gendarmerie operating in the Salihli and Ahmetli regions are in charge of a wide range of areas, not just the tumulus graves of Bin Tepe. The 74 kilometres of uneven ground covered by Bin Tepe's tumulus tombs is perceived by the locals as a challenging setting for their work, despite the gendarmerie's painstaking efforts and stringent security precautions. As a result, a modest gendarmerie station that solely serves to guard Bin Tepe's tumultuous tombs may exist. This will prevent unauthorized excavations from taking place near the tumulus tombs Bin Tepe.

It was found out that the majority of locals do not regard the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe as a touristic attraction due to the lack of social facilities and tourism-oriented activities in the region and the fact that the inside of the tumulus is not open to visitors. Hence, local governments should contact the necessary institutions/organizations and social facilities and tourism-oriented activities should be carried out as well as opportunities should be provided with the tourism businesses (food, beverage, accommodation) in a way that does not harm the texture of the region.

A large percentage of residents anticipate that adding tourism-related activities to the area will bring in more tourists. This suggests that as long as precautions are made to avoid harming the tumuli, festivals and promotional/advertising activities are permitted in the area. Because there are plenty of vineyards in Manisa, the community can market locally produced goods including molasses, jam, grape vinegar, and fresh or dried grapes. Additionally, local governments can exchange information about

tourism marketing, which will increase the effectiveness of tourism-related activities. The growth of rural areas and the regional economy will benefit from tourists purchasing locally made goods, providing inhabitants with another source of income. The increase in tourists' demand for these products is also important for sustainable rural development.

As it was discovered that there is a gap of awareness towards to cultural heritage assets among the locals, it is possible to run awareness campaigns regarding the Bin Tepe tumulus tombs, which were added to the UNESCO Tentative List of World Heritage in 2013, among the local population. It is crucial that local governments take the initiative in recognizing and preserving the global heritage.

To ensure that the tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe, which are currently on the UNESCO Tentative List of World Heritage, be included in the UNESCO Final List, it is advised that all pertinent parties—especially local governments—make greater efforts to promote and sell the site across the nation. The tumulus tombs of Bin Tepe are therefore believed to be one of the factors influencing regional growth and to have a positive impact on the local and regional economies.

As the agricultural fields are also located inside the protected location, the locals have voiced their complaints about agricultural practices. The district/provincial Agriculture and Forestry Directorate should conduct research in this regard to allay farmers' complaints.

Future research approaches have also been addressed. For instance, as the study sample consisted of only thirty residents of the Ahmetli and Salihli districts of Manisa, the sample size may be increased in further research. Moreover, this study was not intended to be quantitative research. In the future, research may take a quantitative approach. Additionally, the opinions of the locals regarding Bin Tepe's tumulus tombs—which are included on the UNESCO Tentative List of World Heritage—are the main focus of this study. Thus, it is also possible to look at the opinions and viewpoints of stakeholders who are not locals, such as travel agencies, restaurants, and hospitality businesses in the area. Lastly, research can be done in the future to ascertain how national and international tourists perceive their location, what they expect, and how they reassess their attitudes when they visit cultural heritage sites such as the Bin Tepe tumulus tombs.

Disclosure Statements

1. Declaration of the contribution of the researchers: The authors of this study state that each author has contributed to the research design, data analysis, writing, editing or supervision equally (25%).

2. Conflict of interest: There is no conflict of interest among authors.

3. Ethics Report: The permission required to collect the data was obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board of Afyon Kocatepe University with the decision dated 20.03.2024 and numbered 2024/87.

4. Research Model: The data of this research article were obtained from 30 participants using the semi-structured interview technique with convenience sampling. This technique was chosen to obtain detailed information. Then the data were analysed with content coding and interpretations were produced.

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The interview questions employed in the study are provided below:

- Age
- Gender
- Your Marital Status
- Education Status
- Profession (are you in the tourism sector, how long have you been in it)
- Income level (TL): 10,000-17,000 / 17,000-25,000 / 25,000-35,000 /35,000 and above
- How long have you been living in Ahmetli / Salihli?
- What do you know about the Tumulus Tombs of Bintepe?
- Have you ever visited the Tumulus Tombs of Bintepe? If so, did it affect your awareness of protecting historical areas and the environment after your visit? In what ways?
- Do you consider the Tumulus Tombs of Bintepe a tourist attraction, if not, what are the reasons?
- Do you think that the Tumulus Tombs of Bintepe are an important cultural heritage for future generations?
- Do you think that the Tumulus Tombs of Bintepe contribute to the promotion of Manisa? In what dimensions?
- Do you think the Tumulus Tombs of Bintepe have a role in preserving the cultural identity of Manisa? If so, in what ways?
- What do you think about the role of local governments in the protection of the Tumulus Tombs of Bintepe?
- How would the inclusion of the Tumulus Tombs of Bintepe in the UNESCO Definitive List contribute to the promotion of the region (Ahmetli and Salihli of Manisa)?
- To what extent would you recommend visiting the Tumulus Tombs of Bintepe to people around you, your guests/visitors coming to your business? Is it worth visiting? Why?
- Do you think if tourism activities were included in the Tumulus Tombs of Bintepe, would this increase the number of tourists coming to the region? In what ways?
- If tourism activities were to take place in the Tumulus Tombs of Bintepe, would this provide economic, social and cultural benefits? In what ways?
- What do you think about the effects of illegal excavations and treasure searches in the Tumulus Tombs of Bintepe region and the precautions taken?
- Do you think that the area where the Tumulus Tombs of Bintepe spreads has a positive/ negative effect on the agricultural lands? In what ways?