

ESMA DEMİRYÜREK A CRITICAL PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY APPROACH TO SAGALASSOS AND AĞLASUN Bilkent University 2025

A CRITICAL PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY APPROACH TO
SAGALASSOS AND AĞLASUN

A Master's Thesis

by
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Ankara
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SAGALASSOS AND AĞLASUN

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

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ANKARA

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AĞLASUN

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ABSTRACT

A CRITICAL PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY APPROACH TO SAGALASSOS AND AĞLASUN

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Since its inception in 1990, the Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project (Burdur, Türkiye) has been closely connected with the modern district of Ağlasun and its people. The Project adopted new considerations since the first decade of the 2000s in line with the changing paradigms within archaeology and emerging questions, such as to whom archaeology serves, who has the decisive power in issues regarding an archaeological site, and whether archaeologists should have responsibilities towards the general public. Thus, several public archaeological research and initiatives were designed, developed, and implemented at Sagalassos and Ağlasun to organize and facilitate the relationship between archaeology and people. In this thesis, the relationship between archaeology and people in Sagalassos and

Ağlasun, and these research and initiatives undertaken by the Project will be examined with a critical public archaeology. How economic, political, and social factors impacted the process and aftermath of these initiatives will be scrutinized in light of the thematic analysis of the interviews I conducted with people from Ağlasun in the 2024 excavation season, and with governmental actors in early 2025. Finally, I will discuss how such a follow-up research can be of guidance to future archaeological project design.

Keywords: Public archaeology, critical archaeology, Sagalassos

ÖZET

SAGALASSOS VE AĞLASUN'A KRİTİK TOPLUM ARKEOLOJİSİ YAKLAŞIMI

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1990 yılında başlayan Sagalassos Arkeolojik Araştırma Projesi (Burdur, Türkiye), modern Ağlasun ilçesi ve halkıyla her zaman yakından ilişkili olmuştur. 2000’li yılların ilk on yılından itibaren, arkeoloji içindeki değişen paradigmlar ve ortaya çıkan “Arkeoloji kime hizmet eder?”, “Bir arkeolojik alanla ilgili konularda karar verme yetkisi kimdedir?” ve “Arkeologların genel halka karşı sorumlulukları olmalı mıdır?” gibi sorular doğrultusunda Proje yeni yaklaşımlar benimsemiştir. Bu doğrultuda, Sagalassos ve Ağlasun’da arkeoloji ile insanlar arasındaki ilişkiyi düzenlemek ve iyileştirmek amacıyla çeşitli toplum arkeolojisi araştırmaları ve girişimleri tasarlanmış, geliştirilmiş ve uygulanmıştır. Bu tezde, Sagalassos ve Ağlasun’daki arkeoloji-insan ilişkisi ile Proje tarafından yürütülen söz konusu araştırmalar ve

giriřimler eleřtirel toplum arkeolojisi yaklařımıyla incelenecektir. Bu giriřimlerin sũreci ve sonuřları ũzerinde ekonomik, politik ve sosyal faktũrlerin nasıl etkili olduęu; 2024 kazı sezonunda Aęlasunlularla ve 2025'in bařlarında kamu kurumları temsilcileriyle geręekleřtirdięim gũrũřmelerin tematik analizleri ıřıęında deęerlendirilecektir. Son olarak, bu arařtırma gibi takip arařtırmalarının gelecekteki arkeoloji projelerinin tasarımına nasıl rehberlik edebileceęini tartıřacaęım.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Toplum arkeolojisi, kritik arkeoloji, Sagalassos

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION:

ENTANGLEMENTS OF A SMALL RURAL VILLAGE AND AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE IN TÜRKİYE

On November 22, 1975, a local newspaper of Isparta printed a short news piece on the ruins of Ağlasun, a district located in southwest Türkiye:

The road to Ağlasun Ruins will be paved with asphalt

A decision is made to appraise the ruins two kilometers away from the district of Ağlasun, which have great historical value.

According to the decision made by the Ağlasun Municipality, it is first stipulated that the two-kilometer road to the ruins will be paved with asphalt.

In the statement of the Ağlasun district Mayor Durmuş Varol, he expressed that 582 thousand liras were set aside to pave the road to the ruins with asphalt, which are two kilometers away from the village that shall draw the attention of local and foreign tourists, and foreign tourists will flock to Ağlasun as the road will be paved with asphalt (Eğirdir Göl Sesi Gazetesi, 1975).

Even before the excavations began in 1990, and the grandeur of Sagalassos was not as quite visible above the surface as it is today, the ruins of Ağlasun were perceived to bear great potential for economic benefit via (foreign) tourism, as well as of historical value, and necessary infrastructural attempts were initiated accordingly. The visual and human landscape of Sagalassos and Ağlasun has changed substantially since 1975; however, the expectations of tourism, economic benefit, and historical value remain as alive.

In 2024, Sagalassos received over 100,000 visitors for the first time (Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project, 2025: 79). Still, this long-awaited tourist boom does not translate into economic abundance for the locals of Ağlasun, who number approximately 3,500, and this number decreases year by year in line with the countrywide trend of rural-to-urban migration. However small the village may be, it and Sagalassos are situated in a knot within the entanglement of local and countrywide economic, social, and political realities. Locals of Ağlasun, local and wider governmental authorities, and the Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project (SARP) hold varying expectations regarding Sagalassos and its archaeology. Is it possible to fulfil all of these expectations? If not, how should they be prioritized?

There are no clear and straightforward answers to these questions; however, the entanglement of people and archaeology has found its place in the scholarship of archaeology, and the study of it is known as public archaeology. Public archaeology is defined by Akira Matsuda and Katsuyuki Okamura as “a subject that examines the

relationship between archaeology and the public, and then seeks to improve it.” (2011: 4).

This broad definition composes public archaeology in two phases: The first is the analysis of the nature of the relationship between archaeology and contemporary society, and the second is using this analysis in an effort to improve this relationship (Gürsu, 2019: 86).

Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project (SARP) has extensively examined this relationship since 2008, and sought to improve it with several public archaeology projects. It is yet another question whether these projects fulfilled their aims, what factors were impactful, and could understanding them aid future endeavors.

In my study, I engage with both phases. I attempt the first phase of understanding this relationship by situating Sagalassos, Ağlasun, and SARP with its public archaeology projects in the broader social, economic, and political milieu surrounding them. I attempt the second phase of improving this relationship by drawing on the findings from the first phase. Embarking on these considerations, my research question is as follows: How did economic, social, and political factors affect the relationship between people and archaeology, the course of previous public archaeology projects, and their impacts at Ağlasun/Sagalassos? Can studying these guide future interactions and the design and implementation of future projects?

This thesis is organized into seven chapters. The second chapter, which follows this introductory chapter, lays out the aims and methodology. Because broader theoretical and methodological issues should be understood grounded in a direct experience with people

(Gürsu, 2019: 86), the core of my methodology is the thematic analysis of the in-person and semi-structured interviews conducted with the locals of Ağlasun and relevant governmental institutions. The third chapter provides an overview of contemporary life in Ağlasun, the history of Sagalassos, and the history of research at Sagalassos, laying out the setting for the research. The fourth chapter provides the theoretical framework of (critical) public archaeology in which this research operates. The fifth chapter is an overview of the past public archaeology research and initiatives conducted under SARP. The core of the thesis is formed by the sixth chapter, which unfolds the findings from the thematic analysis and reveals the economic, social, and political entanglements in which Sagalassos and Ağlasun are situated. The final concluding chapter discusses the findings from the previous chapter and presents takeaways for the future.

CHAPTER 2

AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

The fundamental aspiration of this thesis is to investigate how archaeology can evolve into a more constructive practice for all those it impacts, ranging from local communities surrounding archaeological sites to academic researchers and the broader public, and to identify a path forward. The realm of this research is public archaeology—the subject concentrating on the relationship between archaeology and people, with the aim of facilitating it (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 4). This thesis will follow the theoretical frameworks and methodologies established within public archaeology as a discerned field, although perhaps all kinds of archaeology are directed at this aim, and, in fact, all archaeology is public archaeology (Grima, 2016: 50).

Public archaeology practice and literature have been cultivated substantially in Türkiye and elsewhere. Yet, there remains room for growth for critical perspectives transcending prescriptive practices and descriptive literature (Erciyas, 2022: 268), and using archaeology

to create positive changes in contemporary communities through addressing fundamental inequities (Westmont, 2022: 2). One such growing opportunity lies in conducting follow-up research on past public archaeology research and initiatives of an archaeological project to evaluate why they succeeded, fell short, or evolved in unexpected ways. Such a research can reveal the mechanisms a (public) archaeological project operates within, and can provide guidance for navigating these mechanisms better. This thesis aims to contribute to this endeavor.

2.1. Sagalassos/Ağlasun as a Case Study

Sagalassos and Ağlasun present a viable case study for the research questions outlined above, within the scope of a master's thesis, for several reasons. First, the archaeological activities here have a lengthy past, with the official initiation of a large-scale excavation in 1990 following five years of survey under the Pisidia Survey Project (Waelkens, 1993: 10). The relations between the archaeological project and the people of Ağlasun are thus well-established and promising in examining both short- and long-term, as well as small- and large-scale factors governing an archaeological project.

Secondly, public archaeology has been an official consideration of the project since the late 2000s, and several public archaeology projects have been designed and implemented (see Chapter 5). These facts enable an examination of how the archaeological project has perceived public archaeology, what outcomes and methodologies were prioritized, and the social, economic, and political factors that influenced the overall processes and

consequences of the public archaeology projects. Furthermore, there are several publications dealing with this examination (Torun, Ceylan, Shoup & Poblome, 2014; Torun, Moulaert & van den Broeck, in press; Torun, 2023). This thesis builds upon the inquiries in these publications while examining past public archaeology initiatives.

Finally, Sagalassos/Ağlasun sits at the crossroads of many intriguing topics. These include the role of archaeology in tourism and rural economic development, as well as the sustainability of both archaeological and financial projects. The site is also a window into the political dimensions of archaeology – how archaeological practice is shaped by contemporary politics and how archaeology is used in political rhetoric, as well as the problematization of foreign-led excavations in Türkiye as remnants of colonialism (see Öz Wood, 2017: 391-403). Sagalassos/Ağlasun also shows how archaeological things are active agents within social, economic, and political life. At the same time, the site remains central to traditional archaeological research, with over three decades of material studies contributing significantly to our understanding of the past.

2.2. Methodology

In this research, a qualitative methodology operating within a critical theoretical framework is adopted. My research question necessitated open-ended methods and techniques with in-depth returns to keep pace with the complex human milieu in which Ağlasun/Sagalassos is situated. While quantitative research on the relationship between people and archaeology has proved groundbreaking and necessary in Türkiye (Gürsu,

Pulhan & Vandeput, 2019), I did not opt for a quantitative methodology for this site-scale research in order to obtain deeper, more personal, and critical information.

There are three essential methods within my qualitative methodology. First, past public archaeology initiatives are interpreted within Matsuda and Okamura's theoretical public archaeology framework (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 1; Matsuda, 2019: 15-16). Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with people from Ağlasun and governmental institutions of Ağlasun and Burdur. Informal chats and participant observation accompanied these interviews. Third, the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

2.2.1. Preparation for the Interviews

Investigating the social, political, and economic factors surrounding archaeology is a complex endeavor. These factors are intertwined, and one cannot be handled without the other. Thus, the first methodological question that informed later decisions was how to formulate the data in an intelligible manner that would allow for categorization without hindering possibilities for overlaps.

Drawing on previous public archaeology initiatives at Ağlasun/Sagalassos, four main topics likely to emerge and dominate the data were identified: Local development, cultural encounters, perceptions of the past, and personal feelings. First, local development considerations were quite impactful in the design and implementation of the past public

archaeology initiatives (see Chapter 5), and the overall economic and social effects of an archaeological project in a rural area are well-documented in both Sagalassos and Türkiye (see Baltalı Tırpan, 2022) in general. Secondly, data regarding cultural encounters between locals and foreigners was expected to be dense and politically- and socially-informed due to the lengthy political debates on foreign institutions' and archaeologists' work at archaeological sites in Türkiye and the different social practices of archaeologists from big cities in Türkiye, other countries, and the people of Ağlasun. Thirdly, information regarding the local community's expectations from the past, which materializes as the archaeological site and the Project, was desired to be known. Based on previous initiatives, it was anticipated that they would emphasize Sagalassos as a revenue-generating instrument due to tourism, with scientific, sentimental, and political values secondary to this economic value. Finally, due to the long history of the local community's interaction with the ruins and the presence of the Project in Ağlasun for over 30 years, personal feelings were predicted to be relevant to understanding the factors surrounding Sagalassos/Ağlasun.

The next question regarding methodology was the method of collecting relevant information. Structured interviews in the form of questionnaires were considered based on their standardized answers, practicality, and successful employment in novel research on public opinion of archaeology in Türkiye (Gürsu et al., 2019: 90-91). However, due to the aim of this research to obtain deeper, more personal, and critical information and the relatively small sample size of interviewees, questionnaires were ruled out, and semi-

structured in-person interviews were chosen as the primary technique.¹ Participant observation, both at the archaeological site and in Ağlasun, was utilized to recognize patterns regarding the four topics and develop interview questions.

The interview questions were aimed at three ends: First, collecting information with critical relevance regarding the four topics; second, gathering background information about the interviewee that could be relevant to their perspective about Sagalassos, Ağlasun, and archaeology in general; and third, easing the interviewee for a more comfortable and open discussion. Three types of questions emerged to achieve these ends. The first set of questions was prepared before the interviews and was directed to all interviewees. These included inquiries on personal information such as age and occupation, and more detailed questions such as “Would you hang around at the site as a child, and what would you do there?” The second set of questions was also prepared before the interview and was tailored to the specific interviewee. For instance, an interviewee was an archaeologist, and she was asked whether growing up near Sagalassos impacted her decision to study archaeology. Finally, the third type of questions would arise during the chat with the interviewee, allowing for flexibility and a deeper understanding of the interviewee’s perspective.

The interviewees were chosen from people who were expected to have substantial knowledge about the relationship between Sagalassos and Ağlasun, as well as how the

¹ An Ethics Committee Approval for this research was obtained from Bilkent University Research with Human Participants Ethics Committee on June 7, 2024 (Committee decision/meeting number 2024_06_07_01, application number 563).

archaeological project is operated—this choice aimed at increasing the chances of receiving critical information regarding the four topics. Possible interviewees were approached before the interview, and the scope and aim of the research were explained. Overall, ten people were approached for a formal interview. Although all of them initially agreed to do interviews, one of them canceled due to difficulties in their personal life. A suitable location and time were chosen together with the remaining nine people. As the location can significantly impact the interviewee's comfort and, thus, the content of their output, a familiar place was selected for each of them (Abell & Myers, 2008: 154). A consent form was given and signed before the interview began (Appendix 1). The interviews were audio-recorded, and transcriptions were prepared later.

2.2.2. Overview of the Interviews

Nine formal interviews were conducted in the 2024 excavation season (Table 1). It was evident from the first interview that the interviewees were more comfortable and talkative when another familiar interviewee was present. This allowed for the emergence of topics that might have otherwise been overlooked and the expression of conflicting opinions in an amicable environment. Thus, some interviewees were grouped together, and a total of five rounds of interviews were conducted. Besides the formal interviews, two informal chats provided insight into the social aspects and politics of archaeology at Ağlasun (Table 2). These chats were with a nurse from and working at Ağlasun, and with a male worker employed by SARP, formerly employed by the Ağlasun Municipality. These were not formal interviews as the interviewees approached and talked to me casually.

The interviews were done in Turkish, which is the locals' and my native language. Two interviews were conducted at the guardhouse on site, two at the Roman Bath, two in the garden of the excavation house, and three in the kitchen of the excavation house. All of the interviewees have been working within the scope of the Project in different capacities. At the time of the interviews, the interviewees consisted of two guards, three workers, one archaeologist, one cook, one cook/guard, and one housekeeper. The gender distribution is five males to three females. The interviews lasted from 21 minutes to 90 minutes, with a total length of 203 minutes for the audio recordings.

Interview Details				Interviewee Details		
Interview Number	Date	Location	Duration	Interviewee Number	Occupation	Gender
1	21.08. 2024	Sagalassos guardhouse	01:07:50	P1	Guard	Male
				P2		
2	26.08. 2024	Roman Bath	00:20:31	P3	Worker	Male
				P4		
3	08.09. 2024	Excavation house garden	00:21:23	P5	Archaeologist	Female
4	27.09. 2024	Excavation house kitchen	01:30:56	P6	Cook	Female
				P7	Housekeeper	
				P8	Cook/guard	Male
5	27.09. 2024	Excavation house garden	00:33:08	P9	Worker	Male
Total	5 rounds of interviews		03:23:48 length of data	9 people		5 male, 3 female

Table 1: Overview of the interviews conducted during the 2024 excavation season

Chat Details			Person Details		
Chat Number	Date	Location	Person	Occupation	Gender
1	28.07.2024	Bus to Ağlasun	P10	Nurse	Female
2	26.08.2024	Doric Fountain	P11	Worker	Male
Total	2 chats		2 people		1 female, 1 male

Table 2: Overview of the informal chats during the 2024 excavation season

These interviews with people from Ağlasun revealed the need for divergent perspectives, especially those that are not parallel to the perspectives of the Project. For this reason, interviews were held in April 2025 with several governmental agents: The Burdur governor (*vali*), the Ağlasun district governor (*kaymakam*), the Burdur Municipality (*belediye*) Deputy for Cultural and Social Affairs, and the Ağlasun mayor (*belediye başkanı*) (Table 3). The former two were expected to bring perspectives in line with the governmental policies as they are appointed directly by the president of the Turkish Republic. The latter two were expected to bring perspectives in line with the political parties associated with their municipalities, which are subject to election by the people living in the municipality's area.

Interview Details			Interviewee Details	
Interview Number	Date	Location	Name	Position
1	15.04.2025	Interviewee's office	Tülay Baydar Bilgihan	Burdur Governor
2	15.04.2025	Interviewee's office	Metin Eyyüpkoca	Ağlasun District Governor
3	16.04.2025	Interviewee's office	Kemal Dönmez	Burdur Municipality Deputy for Cultural and Social Affairs
4	17.04.2025	Interviewee's office & garden of a restaurant	Ali Ulusoy	Ağlasun Mayor
Total	4 interviews		4 people	

Table 3: Overview of the governmental interviews conducted in April 2025

2.2.3. Analysis of the Interviews

Interviews conducted during the 2024 excavation season were audio-recorded with the interviewees' consent. Interviews conducted in April 2025 with governmental representatives were not audio-recorded, but notes were taken during and after the interviews. Excerpts that are considered useful for this thesis were translated into and presented in English. However, due to nuances that may be lost in translation, the original Turkish text of these excerpts is provided in Appendix 2.

Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data, following Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2021). The first step of the process involved familiarization with the data through the transcription of audio recordings from the 2024 excavation season interviews, as well as taking notes during and after the April 2025 interviews with governmental authorities. Familiarization was followed by identifying codes in the transcriptions and notes, i.e., potential common points. These common points were gathered under the umbrella categorizations of economic, social, and political factors. As foreseen, these factors were intensely intertwined and required constant cross-reference (see Chapter 6).

2.3. Limitations of the Research

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research's methodology. First, information regarding past public archaeology initiatives at Sagalassos/Ağlasun is primarily retrieved from publications by archaeological project members who were involved in these projects, as well as from interviews with current excavation members to a lesser degree. It should be noted that such publications cannot be unbiased.

Secondly, due to interviews conducted in the past at Sagalassos and Ağlasun, both as part of past public archaeology research and other research areas (for gastronomy tourism, see Ogun, İnanır & Kılınç, 2019; for irrigation and farming, see Mirhanoglu, 2023), it is possible that testing confound (Bernard, 2001: 111) has emerged over the years and/or during this research. This is particularly relevant given the small population size of Ağlasun, which increases the likelihood that the same individuals were interviewed over the

years. It is known that other researchers have interviewed some of the interviewees of this research in the past.

Thirdly, there are limitations due to the short-term nature of the excavation season interview period. This logistical restraint resulted in a limited number and variance of interviewed people. Furthermore, the power relations between the interviewed and the archaeological project produce another facet of probable bias in the research - the interviewees (except P5, who is an archaeologist in the project of the coordinator appointed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and is thus not employed by the SARP) are lower in the power hierarchy compared to the agents of the archaeological project in terms of administrative, economic, and scientific power capital. This factor might have extended to my personality as perceived by the interviewees: a student of their employer and a member of the archaeological project with physical characteristics in line with the perception of a “foreigner.” These facts, combined with the possible testing confound, might have led the interviewees to tell what they thought I or the archaeological project wanted to know, producing a deference effect (Bernard, 2001: 232).

The governmental agents' administrative, economic, social, and political authority helps mitigate the bias problem caused by power relations. However, interviews with them were also performative in nature, as the interviewees represented the stance of their institution, pledging their stakes accordingly.

CHAPTER 3

SAGALASSOS AND AĞLASUN

The relationship between the people of Ağlasun and the ancient site of Sagalassos and archaeology should be considered holistically, encompassing the area's geographical features, past and contemporary demographics, economic, social, and political life, and history of academic archaeological research.

Ağlasun is a district of the province of Burdur, located in the Lakes District of the Mediterranean Region of Türkiye (Figure 1). It is neighbored at its north and east by the province of Isparta, to the west by the central district of Burdur, at its southwest by the Çeltikçi district, and at its south by the Bucak district. It consists of nine villages and a district center, and extends to an area of around 308 km² (Ceylan, 2015: 5).



Figure 1: Ağlasun in the southwest Asian, north African, and southeast European context (map by the author)

Located in the Western Taurus Mountains, which extend in a northeast-southwest direction, Ağlasun sits on quite a hilly geography. Ağlasun's highest altitude is Mount Akdağ at its north with 2271 m, and the altitude decreases towards the south. The geography consists of mountains, hills, karstic plains separated by narrow and deep channels, and abundant water resources. The climate is a transition climate between Mediterranean and continental climates, in which the temperature and precipitation remain less than those of Mediterranean coasts, but more than those of the continental regions. The soil is mainly calcareous, and rich clay deposits are present in the area. The flora consists of Mediterranean forests, woodlands, and scrubs until the altitude of 1400-

1500 m, with Subalpine and Alpine flora above (Ceylan, 2015: 8-12). There is a monumental plane tree (*Platanus orientalis*), aged approximately 1200 years (Anıt Ağaçlar, n.d.), at Ağlasun village square.

Sagalassos is located approximately 7 km north of and uphill from the center of Ağlasun and stands at an altitude of 1450-1600 m on the southern slope of Mount Akdağ (Ceylan, 2015: 57). Sagalassos and Ağlasun are visible from one another (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Ağlasun as seen from Sagalassos (photo by the author)

3.1. Life in Ağlasun

In 2024, Ağlasun's population was estimated at 7,552, including its nine villages (Coğrafi İstatistik Portalı, n.d.). Approximately half of the population lives in the district center,

whereas the other half is dispersed in the villages (T.C. Burdur Valiliği, n.d.). Following the countrywide trend of rural to urban migration, the district of Ağlasun has been witnessing a steady decrease in population since 1990, which was at its highest of 11,505 that year, with a population of 5,252 at the district center (Ceylan, 2015: 13). Younger generations are especially driven out of rural life due to diminishing prospects in an agricultural life, and economic opportunities in cities (Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project, 2025: 79). People from Antalya and the surrounding regions come and stay at Ağlasun over the summers and sometimes winters as well, the number of whom the mayor of Ağlasun estimates to be around 2,000. Ağlasun Vocational School, a local college connected to the university in Burdur, attracts around 1,000 students each year as well (Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project, 2025: 89).

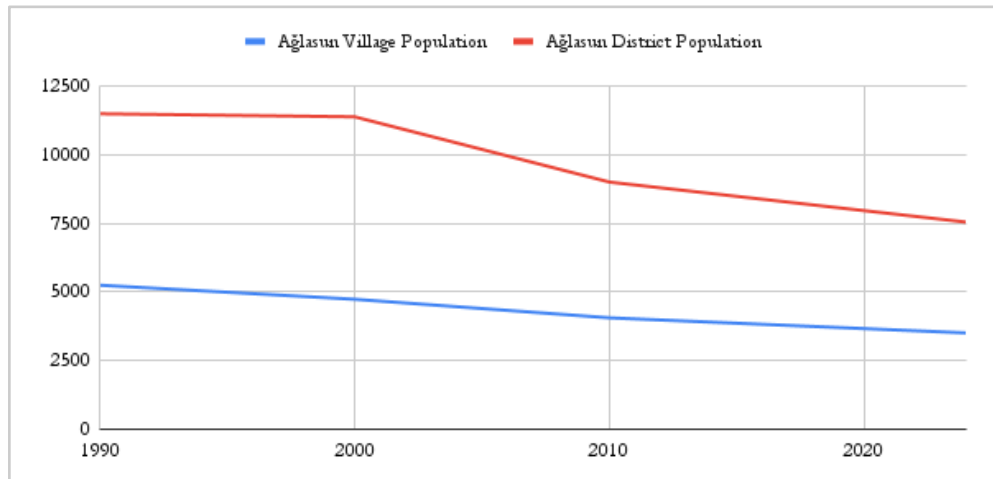


Figure 3: Changes in the population of the district and the village (after Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2025, and Ceylan, 2015)

People of Ağlasun are mainly preoccupied with agriculture (such as wheat, beets, cherries, and roses) and animal farming (such as sheep, goats, cows, chickens, bees, and trout) (Ceylan, 2015: 14-15). Because it is an agricultural area, most of the locals still refer to it as a village, even though it is administratively a district (Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project, 2025: 79). Agricultural activities are directed at subsistence rather than generating income through trade (Ceylan, 2015: 14-15). Forestry and women's handicrafts are also present as secondary means of livelihood (Ongun, 2023: 101). Selling their real estate in Ağlasun to investors has also become a source of income, and reason for emigration, for the locals (Kocabıyık & Loopmans, 2021: 486). Although Ağlasun is considered to bear significant alternative tourism potential due to attractions such as cherry, walnut, and rose products, local architecture, pottery production (Ceylan, 2015: 15), hiking, mountaineering, and eco-tourism (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d.), tourism is primarily of mainstream nature and centered around Sagalassos. Archaeological tourism does not provide a steady income for the locals, as many tourists come with single-day bus tours and spend only on eating (Ceylan, 2015: 15).

Ağlasun has a predominantly national- and Islamic-conservative population. In the latest presidential election in 2023, ca. 70% of the valid votes² were for the candidate of the Justice and Development Party (JDP, tr. *AKP*), the national- and Islamic-conservative ruling party. In the general local elections in 2024, in which the current mayor of the

² This percentage is of the second round of the presidential election, which was required as none of the candidates obtained the absolute majority of the votes countrywide. In the first round, 66% of the valid votes were for the JDP candidate in Ağlasun.

Ağlasun Municipality was elected, ca. 65% of the votes were again for the JDP, followed by the Nationalist Movement Party (NMP, tr. *MHP*) with ca. 29% (Yüksek Seçim Kurulu, n.d.).

3.2. History of Sagalassos and Ağlasun

Sagalassos is renowned today for its Roman monumental buildings and history. However, the site's and the region's history dates back to thousands of years before (Vandam, 2019: 17), and settlement, albeit fragmentary and not always continuous, carries on up until contemporary Ağlasun

3.2.1. Prelude to Sagalassos

The Dereköy Highlands, situated 7 km east of Sagalassos, produced the earliest evidence for human activity in the area, which were Middle Palaeolithic (120,000-45,000 BCE)

Levallois artifacts (Vandam, Willett & Poblome, 2017: 323-325). The area was occupied by periodic hunter-gatherer camp sites. How these sites relate to the Neolithization process of the area remains unclear (Vandam, 2020: 19-20).

The Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods (7000-5500 BCE) exhibit a strong continuity in the area. These periods are well-known due to Hacilar, an extensively studied site in the Burdur Plain, located to the west of Sagalassos (Vandam, 2020: 20). The Neolithization process in the area took place earlier than 6500 BCE, and appears to have begun without

trial and error; however, the details of this process are not yet clear. The settlement pattern is of closely situated settlements in favorable areas (Vandam et al., 2019: 1).

Traces of human activity in the area are lost for approximately 1,500 years, from around 5500 BCE, during the Middle Calcolithic and early Late Calcolithic periods. It is a period of transition in which many Early Calcolithic sites were abandoned. Environmental changes might have impacted this behavior, since the earliest human impact on the Ağlasun pollen record dates to the fifth millennium BCE, albeit there are no sites to verify this yet (Vandam, 2020: 21-22).

The fourth millennium BCE is better known by virtue of excavations at the Burdur Plain, especially Kuruçay Höyük, which revealed significant Late Calcolithic (4200-3100 BCE) evidence. The number of settlements is high compared to prior periods, indicating an increasing population, which might have led to increased complexity later in the Bronze Age (Vandam, 2020: 22).

The Early Bronze Age (3100-2000 BCE) saw an increase in complexity in the area. Early Bronze I Hacılar Büyük Höyük presents as the first site to surpass the size of a village, measuring 6.7 ha (Vandam, 2020: 24-25). There are indications of specialization within the society, such as the introduction of grape cultivation, which requires more intense labor (De Cupere et al., 2015: 10). Signs of human activity are again mostly lost after 2400 BCE,

until the Iron Age, except for some nucleated settlements dating to the Middle and Late Bronze Age (Vandam, 2020: 22).

3.2.2. 5th-1st Century BCE Sagalassos

The earliest archaeological evidence at Sagalassos dates to the late Achaemenid Period (Mitchell & Vandeput, 2013: 100). A considerable community settled at Sagalassos by the end of the 5th century BCE (Poblome & Daems, 2019: 59-60). The origins and precursors of Hellenistic Sagalassos are not yet fully clear (Mitchell & Vandeput, 2013: 100).

However, it is known that there is another settlement in the area at Düzen Tepe, less than 2 km from Sagalassos (Vanhaverbeke, 2010: 118). Sagalassos and Düzen Tepe follow a wider regional pattern, in which similar areas on slopes, hilltops, and mountains were settled in. Settling at higher altitudes is a precursor to later Middle Hellenistic urbanization in Pisidia (Poblome & Daems, 2019: 61).

The earliest datable structural evidence at Sagalassos is of the construction of the terracing walls on the northern slopes of the later Eastern Suburbium. These were likely related to Late Achaemenid agricultural activities. For pottery-making and possibly earthen building construction, clay quarries were located in the area that would later become the Upper Agora and the Roman Potters' Quarter (Poblome & Daems, 2019: 64).

Alexander the Great conquered the Achaemenid Empire in 334 BCE, and allegedly took Sagalassos in 333 BCE, which made it and the Pisida region part of the Hellenistic world.

Although Alexander's biographer considers Sagalassos "not a small *polis*," the present evidence does not suggest a break from Achaemenid development. The Upper Agora, smaller compared to its later Roman counterpart, was laid out in the 2nd century BCE. Two spoliated fragments of inscriptions and a retaining wall preserved are attributed to this period. The fragments testify to the formation of a local political community, and some institutional development, and indicate that the public would gather at the Upper Agora (Poblome & Daems, 2019: 65). The first monumental building of Sagalassos was constructed on its east side in the first half of the second century as well (Talloen & Poblome, 2016). Urbanization expanded with the grouping of potters south of the Upper Agora (Poblome et al., 2013: 194), an urban fortification belt (Talloen, Albayrak & Poblome, 2018: 101), and more monumental buildings in stone. By the early 1st century BCE, Sagalassos had become a fully developed urban community (Poblome & Daems, 2019: 68).

3.2.3. 1st Century BCE to the 7th Century CE

Pisidia came under the rule of Amyntas in 39 BCE, and following his death, it was incorporated into the Roman province of Galatia by Augustus in 25 BCE. Under his reign, the city expanded and was adorned with new structures, such as the Northwest Heroon, the Lower Agora, the Apollo Klarios temple, and the Bouleuterion, significantly changing the city's appearance.

This transformation continued under Tiberius. The Lower Agora was connected to the southern city gate by a colonnaded street. A bath complex was also built. In the meantime, the local elite dedicated honorific monuments for emperors and imperial families, in return for which honorific statues would be erected in the city squares and the Colonnaded Street. The first Sagalassian family to earn Roman citizenship did so under Claudius, by virtue of at least four dedications, three of which were arches, to the Julio-Claudian family. Similarly, another citizenship was granted to a person who introduced a cult for the Flavian imperial house, which was housed in the shrine of Apollo Klarios. In Flavian and Trajanic times, further construction occurred, such as the transformation of Apollo Klarios into an Ionic *peripteros*, elite dedications including five monumental fountains, and water infrastructures (Waelkens, 2020: 86-89).

Building activities were further intensified under Hadrian's reign as he most probably promoted Sagalassos to the status of *neokoros*, the center where all Pisidians would practice an imperial cult. Sagalassos thus attracted visitors and delegations from elsewhere in Pisidia as it hosted festivals and games. These new constructions included the largest sanctuary of Pisidia, which was completed after his death and was dedicated to Antoninus Pius, the Imperial Baths, the construction of which was completed under Severus, and the theatre with a capacity of 7,000 people, the Neon Library that was erected for an honoured benefactor and his family, and the Antonine *nymphaeum* financed by him (Waelkens, 2020: 92-94).

Under Severus, ongoing building activities at the Imperial Baths and the Odeion were completed.. From 220 CE onwards, new constructions funded by the elite decreased, but instead, new games were financed by them. Towards the end of the 4th century, the Neon Library and the *gymnasium* on the Upper Agora were burned down and demolished (Waelkens, 2020: 94-95).

Sagalassos witnessed a renewed prosperity in Late Antiquity, and its appearance was modified through public dedications and building activities (Vanhaverbeke, Martens, Waelkens & Poblome, 2004: 251). For instance, a new city wall was built, the Imperial Baths were renovated, and an enormous urban palace was built around the beginning of the 5th century by the newly emerging super-elite. These extensive building activities were halted towards the middle of the 6th century, after which Sagalassos gradually lost its urban character and became rural (Waelkens, 2020: 94-95).

3.2.4. After the 7th Century CE Earthquake

A large earthquake struck Sagalassos around the middle of the 7th century, destroying the urban settlement. Survivors nevertheless continued to live among the ruins at multiple locations in the area. Throughout the century, occupation became centralized around the partially dismantled imperial cult center, which was subsequently fortified. A barrier wall was constructed later in the century, possibly in response to invasions, and the flow to and from the earlier city center was disrupted. This fortified settlement lived on as a Byzantine *kastron* until the 13th century (Waelkens, 2020: 95-97).

The territory of Sagalassos went through a turbulent period between the mid-11th century and the 13th century CE. In the 1040s, it witnessed excursions of Turkic nomads. As the Byzantines sought to strengthen their eastern boundaries, they battled with the Seljuks and took control of the Rum lands in the 1070s. In 1095-1098, Crusaders weakened the Seljuk power in Anatolia, and the northern part of the Kybrraioton theme, including Sagalassos, became a buffer zone between the Byzantines and the Seljuks. The Byzantine rule over large areas in Anatolia was terminated with the Battle of Myriokephalon in 1176, and the territory of Sagalassos went under the rule of the Seljuks of Rum by the early 13th century (Erkal, 2019: 43-44). By the mid-13th century, it was significantly depopulated and deterritorialized (Ottoni et al., 2016: 8), and continuous occupation ceased. Archaeological evidence ceased after the Late Antique and Byzantine periods, and reemerged in the Late Ottoman Period (Erkal, 2019: 41).

Ağlasun became visible in official Ottoman documents in the second half of the 15th century, first as a townlet (*nahiye*) and then as a judiciary district (*kaza*) (Karaca, 2014: 62). This *kaza* was not permanently inhabited until the early 16th century, and the population consisted of yoruks. The 16th century witnessed a rebellion by Shiite yoruks in Southwest Anatolia, in which Ağlasun was also taken and pillaged, followed by an intervention by the Ottoman army in the shape of forced depopulation. The late 16th and early 17th centuries witnessed another revolt induced by environmental crisis, which led to emigration out of Ağlasun and depopulation (Erkal, 2019: 51).

By the 18th century, Ağlasun had become a growing agricultural settlement. According to Arundell, the number of households was thirty at this time, while Charles Texier reported one hundred, accompanied by a population of pastoralists. The number of households had increased to one hundred ninety by the early 20th century, and locals of Ağlasun were selling their agricultural products in Burdur, Isparta, and Antalya (Erkal, 2019: 53-57).

3.3. History of Research at Sagalassos

First European observations of the ruins of an ancient site at Ağlasun date to 1706 when Paul Lucas, a French traveler, came across the ruins of the city (Lucas as cited in Bracke, 1993: 15-16). These ruins were later identified as Sagalassos in 1824 by F.V.J. Arundell (Waelkens, 2011: 63). The locals of the area likely knew the presence of the ruins even though there are no known local or official written sources indicating this before 1706.³

Other notable visitors to Ağlasun and Sagalassos include Charles Texier and Charles Fellows, who noted the use of *spolia* in the Ağlasun cemetery (Erkal, 2019: 53).

First elaborate scientific research at Sagalassos was carried out in 1884 and 1885 by Count Karol Lanckoroński, a Polish lawyer, art historian, and archaeologist, and his multidisciplinary team (Torun & Poblome, 2015: 73). Lanckoroński's work was an essential reference for future research of Daria De Bernardi Ferrero, who studied the

³ Current locals of Ağlasun knew the presence of the ruins before the archaeological project began as they would spend time in the area, such as grazing the goats there. It is reasonable that this was the case prior to 1706 as well.

theatre in 1966 and 1969 (Ferrero 1969), and Robert Fleischer, who studied the Northwest Heroon in 1972 and 1974 (Fleischer, 1979). A regional survey in Pisidia began in the early 1980s under the direction of Stephen Mitchell. Sagalassos was one of the seven cities surveyed during the initial phase of the Pisidia Survey Project, conducted between 1982 and 1996, along with Pisidian Antioch, Cremna, Ariassos, Panemoteichos, Kaynar Kale, Sia, and Döşeme Boğazi. The survey organically prompted excavations at Sagalassos, and thus SARP (Mitchell & Vandeput, 2013: 98-99).

A rescue excavation was initiated in 1989 to excavate exposed kiln dumps in the Potters' Quarter, an extensive area of ceramic manufacture located at the urban core of the site. A monumental building was recorded for the first time in 1990 during a survey, which was the Late Hellenistic Doric Nymphaeum. It later became the first building to be uncovered and restored during excavations (Mitchell & Vandeput, 2013: 99).

Since its initiation in 1990, SARP has adopted a processual-environmental approach to archaeology, in which it sought to document the history of human settlements as well as the ecology of the territory (Torun et al., in press: 15). Its scale, concept, objectives, and methodology of research have evolved immensely since, especially through an expanding repertoire of specialized scientific techniques to study the material and environmental history of the site and its territory (Mitchell & Vandeput, 2013: 99). From 2008 onwards, this repertoire gradually included public engagement and public archaeology (Torun et al., in press: 15; see Chapter 5).

CHAPTER 4

PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY: WHEN, WHY, WHAT?

Engagement with the past predates the establishment of archaeology as an academic discipline. Traditional historiographies of archaeology often present a teleological and linear narrative, considering archaeology to have emerged from earlier antiquarian perspectives. In this narrative, earlier engagements with the past are viewed as mnemonic, pre-archaeological practices, or even superstitious and ignorant (Hamilakis & Anagnostopoulos, 2013: 81; Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 71-72). This narrative is rooted in the milieu in which archaeology emerged as an academic discipline, and is indicative of how archaeology is positioned in relation to people throughout its disciplinary history. Public archaeology, which studies this positioning, has been established as an academic discipline relatively recently. Public archaeology, as well as related terms such as community archaeology and archaeological ethnography, is continually deliberated and renegotiated in its definitions, theorizations, aims, and best practices. Considering that archaeology is essentially about the interest of contemporary communities in the past, and

individuals and groups can have differing agendas, it follows that there is an abundance of academic and non-academic perspectives on what archaeology is, what it should aim for, who relates to it, and how.

4.1. The Emergence of Public Archaeology

The past has always been interesting to people, and archaeology has been interesting and impactful to people other than archaeologists (Schadla-Hall, 2006: 75). The relationship between people and archaeology, however, was overlooked by archaeologists for a long time as they did not consider it relevant to the study of the past. As it was increasingly recognized that this relationship should be scrutinized in its own right, the study of it was established as the academic discipline of ‘public archaeology’ in the 1970s and 1980s and intensified in the 1990s and early 2000s (Schadla-Hall, 1999: 154). This chronology has its roots in the complex political and social milieu in which academic archaeology sprouted (Grima, 2019: 5), where archaeology was avowedly scientific, objective, and apolitical, after which it gradually spread to an increasingly extensive public (Schadla-Hall, 2006: 75). Public archaeology did not emerge homogenously across the world. It rose at different times in different countries (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 1), with varying agendas and implementations. It was initially conceived in association with cultural resource management in the USA in the 1970s, later spreading to other Anglophone countries, such as Britain and Australia, and beyond the realm of cultural resource management. Archaeologists from the non-Anglophone world became interested in public archaeology around the beginning of the 21st century (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 7). Diverse public

archaeologies have emerged and continue to appear across the world, reflecting the diversity in the theory and practice of archaeology, as well as the even greater diversity of ways of engaging with the pasts and legislations governing archaeological activities (Matsuda, 2019: 13).

The emergence of public archaeology as an academic discipline can be connected to three factors. First of all, the advancement of archaeological theories drew attention to the reality that archaeologists are not the only interested and affected group by archaeology. In particular, postprocessual archaeology addressed the link between contemporary ideologies and archaeological interpretations and practices, as well as the possibility of their multiplicity, including those that are not based on archaeological methods and methodologies. Secondly, its emergence is closely related to the postcolonial discourse on the politics of the past (Gathercole, 1990). The interpretation and management of archaeological heritage have been a pressing discussion in countries with colonial histories, such as the USA, where the archaeological heritage in question belonged to still-living communities. Thirdly, the liberal-capitalist and market-driven economy led to the development of and commodification within the heritage industry (Hamilakis & Anagnostopoulos, 2013: 8) while driving the archaeological practice to be financially and publicly more accountable (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 8).

These factors are not uniformly applicable to the archaeology of every country (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 8), as the trajectory of archaeology varies in each, which is closely related

to their social, economic, and political histories. Nevertheless, the expansion of the liberal capitalist economy is a global phenomenon that has been influencing the trajectory of archaeology and public archaeology worldwide. Archaeologists need to justify the expenditure of their work, which is provided by public funds and/or private sponsors. They expect not only scholarly work but also benefits for the public, which should be demonstrable on paper (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 8-9) and justify expenditure on archaeology (Little, 2012: 403).

Another aspect is the reality that international excavation projects in economically disadvantaged countries, some of which are notable for their material heritage, such as Türkiye, are directed by archaeologists from economically advantaged countries. This is the legacy of colonial archaeology, even if the disadvantaged country has not been politically colonized. This drove critical and reflexive archaeologists to implement public archaeology initiatives alongside the core archaeological research, which ranges from outreach and collaborative work with local communities to ethnographical and sociological research on the relationship between archaeology and locals (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 9-10; see Baltalı Tırpan, 2022).

4.2. Defining the Term

The term “public archaeology” was coined by McGimsey in 1972 (Merriman, 2004: 3) to mean archaeologists’ efforts to record and preserve archaeological remains that were threatened by development on behalf and with the support of the public (Matsuda &

Okamura, 2011: 2), and it was related to cultural resource management in contrast with academic archaeology and its concern with wider research questions (Merriman, 2004: 3).

The definition and scope of public archaeology have undergone significant changes since 1972, with an abundance of unique approaches today. The essential reason for this abundance is that the terms “archaeology” and “public” have different meanings in various cultures and countries, as well as among archaeologists. There are several reasons why “archaeology” does not denote a single thing everywhere, every time. The theoretical basis for archaeology varies globally. For instance, archaeology has been influenced by anthropological thinking in North America, whereas in Europe and elsewhere in the world, it is associated with history (Hodder, 1991: 10). Processual and post-processual theories also influenced the agenda of archaeology. The practice of archaeology is contingent upon the economic and socio-political conditions under which archaeologists work, thus varying depending on the country, or even the city and archaeological site. The meaning of archaeology is also not a monolith; it differs for each public and is contingent upon archaeology’s history of development in the local context, such as being a colonizing or colonized nation (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 2-3), and changes with time.

The word “public” bears another ambiguity. It has two distinct yet interconnected meanings in English, referring to public archaeology. The first refers to the officialdom, in other words, the state and its institutions. The second refers to the group of individuals who engage with culture (Merriman, 2004: 1). As public archaeology as an academic

discipline was established and developed in the Anglophone world, the rest of the world needed to find a suitable translation to introduce it to their own archaeologies. The ambiguity in the term's meaning led to various solutions in different languages. In Japanese, the phonetic transcription of the word "*paburikku*" was adopted, as the conventional translation was much closer to "officialdom." In Chinese, two translations are adopted to mean "archaeology of the public" and "shared archaeology" (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 3-4). The Turkish term, *toplum arkeolojisi*, means "archaeology of the society" or "community archaeology," which is much closer to "the people." The meaning of "public" and the accompanying translations reflect the social and political contexts that influence discourses on the past and archaeology. The meaning of "officialdom," which is the official provision and control over archaeology, applies to presumably every country; however, limiting public archaeology's definition to this would exclude many possibilities of public archaeology, especially providing space for different groups' own accounts of the past (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 4) and their participation in archaeological epistemology and practice. The second meaning of "public" encompasses different opinions and debates, defines the public as an active force, and yet is unpredictable and conflictual. It is a shorthand term to describe the vast diversity of people who are not professional archaeologists (Merriman, 2004: 2).

By virtue of these ambiguities, multiple definitions and scopes have been proposed for public archaeology. Tim Schadla-Hall, for instance, suggested in 1999 that public archaeology "is concerned with any area of archaeological activity that interacted or had the

potential to interact with the public - the vast majority of whom, for a variety of reasons, know little about archaeology as an academic subject” (Schadla-Hall, 1999: 147). Whereas the journal *Public Archaeology*, which began its publishing life in 2000, considers itself “an arena for the growing debate surrounding archaeological and heritage issues as they relate to the wider world of politics, ethics, government, social questions, education, management, economics and philosophy” (Taylor & Francis Online, n.d.).

Matsuda and Okamura suggest a broad and inclusive definition to accommodate potential diversities: Public archaeology is a subject that examines the relationship between archaeology and the public and seeks to improve it (2011: 4). The efficacy of this definition lies in the opportunity for the public archaeology researcher to define the nature of archaeology, its public aspect, and the improvement it aims to achieve based on their agenda. They further consider public archaeology to consist of perpetual and inextricable research and action. Taking actions informed by research, as opposed to mere observations, is an essential element of public archaeology (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 4).

4.3. Theorization of Public Archaeology

The theorization of public archaeology is contingent upon its perception relative to archaeology. If public archaeology is regarded simply as applied archaeology, where archaeology is applied to social issues such as education, development, and site preservation, its theorization could be considered unnecessary or limited to only its methodologies. In this trajectory, public archaeology is not an essential component of

archaeology, and the latter can operate without being informed by or discussing the former. On the contrary, if it is considered that relations with the public are inherent to and indivisible from any form of archaeology, its theorization should go beyond methodology and should address how archaeology is positioned in relation to the public (Matsuda, 2019: 13).

There are multiple models of public archaeology emerging from varying concerns, aims, and applications. The first frameworks to explain how archaeology and archaeologists relate to the non-archaeologist public were suggested by Nick Merriman and Cornelius Holtorf in the early 2000s (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 5; Merriman, 2004: 6-7; Holtorf, 2016: 107). Merriman identified two modes of engaging with the public within academic archaeological discourse. The deficit model emphasizes the public's lack of interest in and wrong or lacking information about archaeology. This model of engaging with the public derives from professional archaeology's need to separate itself from non-professionals (Merriman, 2004: 6-7), which can ultimately be associated with authoritative knowledge (Hamilakis & Anagnostopoulos, 2013: 66). The multiple perspective model extends beyond archaeology's own benefits and aims to encourage the public's self-realization, enrichment, reflection, and creativity through archaeology. It centers the agency of the public (Merriman, 2004: 6-7).

Holtorf proposes three models (2016: 107), which constitute a refinement of Merriman's ((Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 5), which are the education model, public relations model,

and democratic model. His education model corresponds to that of Merriman, whereas the public relations model is aimed at upholding archaeology's public image to encourage social, political, and economic support for it. While these two models consider the public as an object to which information and actions are directed, the democratic model recognizes that archaeology should address the needs and desires of non-archaeologists and be subject to their political scrutiny. Holtorf contends that the choice between these models is a choice between political philosophies, as it reveals the imagined human beings (Holtorf, 2016: 107).

Matsuda and Okamura proposed refinements to their models. They suggest that Merriman's multiple perspectives and Holtorf's democratic models actually entail two approaches: multivocal and critical. Both are leftist in theory (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 5) as they challenge the *status quo* in archaeological knowledge and practice. The difference between them is parallel to that of hermeneutic and critical epistemologies in archaeological theory (Hodder, 2002: 78-79).

Based on hermeneutic epistemology (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 6), according to which the arbitrariness and creativity of culture cannot be tamed within an analytical framework (Hodder, 2002: 79), the multivocal approach seeks to identify and acknowledge the diversity of interpretations of the past emerging from various contexts of contemporary society (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 6). Multivocality, structured by relations of power, privilege, and experience (Shepherd, 2005: 3), should not settle for a simple plurality and

engage different voices to tell a complex but whole story, including the tensions between them (Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Ferguson & Gann, 2011: 241). In a public archaeology project that espouses multivocality, this dichotomy would be reflected in the nature of the project, which could be on the spectrum between participatory and collaborative (Chambers, 2004: 205). Participatory projects are designed by archaeological or heritage professionals and are top-down in nature. The community can access archaeology, but cannot have control over it. On the other hand, collaborative projects involve archaeologists and the public working together, with the community's goals and interests driving the archaeological project (Matthews, 2008: 194).

The critical approach, based on critical epistemology, goes beyond hermeneutic epistemology to situate knowledge claims about the past within the context of the production of the knowledge and asks whose benefit a particular interpretation serves and how (Hodder, 2002: 79; Hamilakis, 1999: 74). It engages with the politics of the past by aiming to reveal and challenge the socio-political mechanism that supports certain archaeological interpretations and practices. The interpretation under the spotlight could be that of a socially privileged group, in order to understand and counter their socio-political domination (Faulkner, 2000: 29) or a socially marginalized group to facilitate their socio-political recognition (McDavid, 2004: 51).

These approaches are not mutually exclusive, neither in theory nor in practice, and are not uniform everywhere. The decision of which approach to prioritize results in a unique form

of public archaeology in each context and is indicative of how archaeology operates and is situated in a society (Matsuda & Okamura, 2011: 6-7).

4.4. Public Archaeology in Türkiye

Public archaeology as an academic research area arrived relatively recently in Türkiye, with the first academic endeavors initiating right at the beginning of the new millennium.

Engagement of the non-specialist public, as well as governmental attention given to the relationship between people and the past, undoubtedly predate academic research.

In Türkiye, the public's imagination of and engagement with archaeology takes on a wide array of tangible and intangible, compatible and conflicting shapes, from living with and among archaeological objects and ruins to actively creating new narratives of the past, from self-assigned guardianship to treasure hunting, illegal excavations, and smuggling, from places of remembrance to of tourism, and from national pride in the international arena to evading the past or contemporary foreigner. The non-specialist public considers the intangible, artistic, and scientific values to be the most significant aspects of archaeological assets, whereas the economic and political values subordinate these values, according to a countrywide public opinion poll on archaeology conducted in 2018. 82% of the respondents of this poll considered archaeological remains as part of their culture (Gürsu, Pulhan & Vandeput, 2019: 97-106). Considering the extensive number of archaeological sites in Türkiye, which is 25.353 as of the end of 2024, as reported by the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums, and the diverse ways people are imagining

and engaging with archaeology, studying the public's relationship with the past presents the most interesting.

4.4.1. Academic Public Archaeology Research and Practice

The term “public archaeology” is relatively recent in Türkiye; however, the field's concern with relating archaeology to people has always been conspicuous in the archaeology of Türkiye. In the first half of the 20th century, following the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the building of the new Turkish Republic, archaeology was instrumentalized in creating and disseminating an ideology of national pride and identity by formulating an ethnohistorical theory that related Sumerians and Hittites to the Turks and integrating it into the new state's ideological framework (Özdoğan, 1998: 116). On the other hand, one of the earliest examples of community engagement endeavors in the archaeology of Türkiye is Halet Çambel's work in Karatepe-Aslantaş in the late 1930s (Gürsu, 2019: 87). She involved local communities in the sustainable management of the site by consulting their wishes and needs, and led the establishment of an open-air museum and a national park (Özdoğan & Başgelen, 2010: 19-20).

The relationship between archaeology and people gained academic traction in Türkiye since the beginning of the 21st century, which was first marked by the establishment of the *Toplumsal Arkeoloji Platformu* (Public Archaeology Platform) in 2003 (Gürsu, in press: 26). Since then, various research and initiatives focusing on this relationship have been administered. The bulk of these are specific to an archaeological site, such as that of

Çatalhöyük (Atalay, 2010; Shankland, 1999), Kerkenes (Baltalı Tırpan, 2022), Komana (Erciyas, 2021; Erciyas, 2022), and Sagalassos (Torun, Moulaert & van den Broeck, in press; Torun, 2023; Torun et al., 2014). Beyond these site-specific endeavors, a countrywide research on the opinion of the public towards archaeology was conducted for the first time in 2018 under the Safeguarding Archaeological Assets of Turkey (SARAT) Project (Gürsu et al., 2019: 36).

An indicator of the increased academic traction in archaeological research and projects is the subsequent publications of the annual International Symposium of Excavations, Surveys and Archaeometry. Of the 50 reports published in 1990, only 5 mention visitors, whereas none mention the public or local communities. Of the 112 reports in 2014, 33 mention visitors, and 7 mention the public and local communities (Gürsu, 2019: 87). The latest published reports are of the 133 excavations and surveys performed in 2019 and 2020 (Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü, 2022). 16 mention tourism and visitors, whereas 9 mention the contemporary public and local communities. 7 address the relationship between archaeology and people in a specific subsection within the report. These subsections deal with different aspects of this relationship, which are cultural heritage education (Rose & Salzmann, 2022: 384; Beyazıt et al., 2022: 332; Branting et al., 2022: 160), tour routes (Soykal Alanyalı & Erkoç, 2022: 196; Beyazıt et al., 2022: 332; Korkut et al., 2022: 342) and guiding (Branting et al., 2022: 160), exhibitions (Hüryılmaz, Bilgen & Bilgen, 2022: 334; Smith, 2022: 57) oral history (Beyazıt et al., 2022: 332), and museum activities (Hüryılmaz et al., 2022: 334; Smith, 2022: 58). However, even though

there has been a *prima facie* increase in the emphasis placed on this relationship since 1990, it is still not a core part of any archaeological project from the beginning (Hamilakis & Anagnostopoulos, 2013: 73), and present initiatives follow the premises of mostly the educational and simple plurality multivocal models of public archaeology.

4.4.2. Governmental Approaches to the Relationship

The relationship between archaeology and the public in Türkiye underwent a change in the last three decades due to the general neoliberalism-dominated economic and political mood (Gürsu, 2019: 82), directly influencing the conceptualization of the relationship between archaeology and people in state rhetoric and policies.

The issue of management and representation of cultural heritage gained traction due to factors such as the increasing role of tourism in the national economy and the growing state effort to increase archaeological sites on the UNESCO lists. A result of this was the emergence of the site management plan as a new concept and tool. Becoming an official state policy in 2004 by incorporation into the Law of Conservation of Cultural and Natural Property (T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü, n.d.; Gürsu, 2019: 81), management sites are conservation and architectural sites with their surrounding interactive areas, and management plans are drafted to protect them by gathering central and local administrations and civil society organizations (Article 3(a)(10-11)). This way, regulating archaeology's relationship to people became embedded in the state laws and policies.

Currently, the Turkish government currently centers the economic potential of archaeology in the form of tourism when approaching this relationship. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism's recent "Golden Age of Archaeology" and "Heritage for the Future" policies reflect this situation. In 2023, the Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mehmet Nuri Ersoy, announced that the state aims to spread tourism throughout the year, as archaeology creates "products" to offer tourists aside from the traditional sea, sand, and sun. The preferred methodology for this is to extend excavations to the whole year and expedite them as accelerated excavations will turn into cultural tourism and, hence, income (Ersoy, 2023). The appointment of Turkish coordinators to foreign-led archaeological projects is a key apparatus within this scheme, as coordinator-led teams can work year-round, as opposed to the short-term nature of the work of foreign-led teams (see 6.3.3). It is noteworthy that the official discourse views archaeology as a commodity and largely overlooks potential intangible values, such as pride, sense of belonging, well-being, and cultural rights.

CHAPTER 5

PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY AT SAGALASSOS AND AĞLASUN

Ağlasun and Sagalassos have a long-standing relationship. In his travels in 1706, Paul Lucas noted that the locals of Ağlasun named the ruins as *Bodrum*,⁴ which is a generic name commonly used in the Ottoman period for ruins with vaulted substructures, such as Sagalassos' theatre and imperial baths (Erkal, 2020: 53).⁵ The current population engaged with the site before the initiation of the excavations. For instance, goats were herded in the area of Sagalassos (interview with P9, September 27, 2024) and elementary school trips to the theatre, where singing contests among pupils were held, were organized (chat with P10, July 28, 2024). There are several spoliated building materials, such as bricks and stones, in contemporary architecture. The name *Bodrum* is still remembered by the current population, as well as other local names used for different areas of the site, such as *Araplar*⁶

⁴ "Bodrum" can be translated into English as "basement."

⁵ For instance, Pednelissos, another Pisidian city, is known also known as Bodrumkaya ("rock basement") by the locals (Işın, 1998: 111-112).

⁶ Turkish for "Arabs."

for the stadium, and *Pencereli*⁷ for the rock-cut tombs (interview with P2, August 21, 2024).

Their relationship became more complex with the site's increased recognition, as more stakeholders with similar or conflicting expectations became increasingly involved. The ever-fluctuating economic, social, and scientific milieu is also adding another layer to this complexity. All archaeological projects, including Sagalassos, must adapt to these fluctuations and consider the expectations of all stakeholders to benefit from cultural and natural resources in a balanced manner. To this end, archaeological heritage management policies began to be devised and implemented at Sagalassos (Torun et al., 2014: 157-158).

Sagalassos was inscribed into the UNESCO Tentative List in 2009. It was considered to bear outstanding universal value as it exhibited an important interchange of human values with its urban planning and architecture, and held an exceptional testimony to pottery-making tradition with at least a thousand years of continuity. The fact that the site has not been over-intervened upon by archaeology, conservation, or tourism was considered an asset of the site. It was urged that the sensation of an “untouched” landscape should be preserved (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d.).

During its initial twenty years (1990-2010), the SARP had a limited but mutual, positive, and balanced relationship with the local community. Projects directed towards public

⁷ Turkish for “with windows,” due to the window-like appearance of the rock-cut tombs.

archaeology began in 2008. These projects were devised and implemented together with the local community, with the Project leading.

5.1. Public Archaeology Research in 2008-2009

2008 marks the first year SARP initiated public archaeology research. This research aimed to determine the current situation by understanding the perceptions developed over the last 20 years by the local stakeholders of the site and the Project (Torun et al., 2014: 159), as well as the expectations, problems, and potentials of utilizing cultural heritage. In this respect, interviews were held with major local stakeholders such as the municipality, district governorship, Ağlasun Vocational School, and the Minibus Cooperative (Torun, 2023: 159).

The interviews revealed several pressing needs and problems, such as the insufficient awareness of the locals about the sustainable utilization of cultural and natural resources, the insufficient communication of results obtained by the Project with the local people that could increase this awareness, the migration of the young population out of Ağlasun, the lack of touristic infrastructure in Ağlasun and thus the lack of visits there by Sagalassos visitors, the inability to understand the site outside of excavation season, the distance from Burdur Museum to Ağlasun and the site, and the problems regarding the communication between Ağlasun Vocational School and its accommodation architecture (Torun et al., 2014: 159).

The interviews revealed mostly positive experiences and feelings about the archaeological site. Middle-aged and older members of the local community reminisced about their childhood and adolescence, during which they would graze their animals, play, and sleep at the site before the excavations started. They were currently interested in the site not for the archaeological remains but for the water sources, herbs, scenery, and cool temperatures. On the other hand, women were dependent on their husbands to go up to the site. The relationship of the local community with the site drastically changed with the excavations, as it became a place that was no longer incorporated into their daily lives, so much so that the local name of Bodrum was slowly forgotten. Nevertheless, some of the locals were proud to be part of the *anastylosis* projects and would take their outside visitors to see the site and their work (Torun, 2023: 511).

The interviewees remarked that their expectations regarding a drastic increase in tourism in Ağlasun were not fulfilled as the visitors to Sagalassos were not stopping by at Ağlasun, which in turn prevented the improvement of tourist services such as accommodation and restaurants. The only initiative regarding tourism at the time of the research was the “Ağlasun Sagalassos Culture and Tourism Improvement Association.” It was established in 1996 but became inactive over time (Torun, 2023: 512).

Preliminary research was also conducted in 2008 about the visiting experience at Sagalassos. Most of the 9,237 visitors from Türkiye were people in the region who knew about Sagalassos and visited there on their own. There was no tourist guide at the site in 2008,

and the Belgian team members who voluntarily gave guided tours at the site would not conduct them in Turkish. The research revealed that both the Turkish and foreign visitors who did not attend the guided tours thought the site to be fascinating, but they could not learn sufficiently about the site and the walking routes. Especially Turkish visitors found the information panels to be insufficient in number and too hard to understand (Torun, 2023: 513).

Based on the outcome of this public archaeology research, a project was devised in 2009 to make the first tangible steps to resolve some of the detected fundamental problems (Torun et al., 2014: 159).

5.2. The Sagalassun Project (2009-2011)

The Sagalassun Project was launched in 2009 with the aim of establishing a non-governmental organization that would function as an umbrella body for activities related to tourism in Ağlasun (Torun, 2011: 148). The Sagalassos Excavations and Ağlasun Vocational School devised the project “Protection and Sustainable Use of Resources: Future for Youth in Rural Areas” and received a grant from the World Bank as part of the Development Marketplace Competition in 2009 (Torun, 2023: 513). The project targeted the youth between the ages of 15 and 24 and essentially communicated the research at Sagalassos by relating it to contemporary life through the visitor center and local association in Ağlasun, the home-hostel program, the establishment of the Cultural

Heritage and Tourism department at the Ağlasun Vocational School, and the creation of tour routes and navigation systems (Torun et al., 2014: 159).

The inactive weigh house for beet-carrying vehicles at the old beet collection space was renovated and converted into a visitor center by the Ağlasun youth and Vocational School students. The center was named “Sagaleri” after a competition within the school and used as a space for exhibitions such as Sagalassos photographs, the use of rocks in the architecture of the ancient city, archaeozoology, and the ecology of the region in the past. Guided tours of the exhibitions were held for different groups such as Ağlasun women, children, youth, and the excavation team, and were combined with breakfast at and a tour of Sagalassos (Torun, 2023: 514). It was observed that breakfasts, tours, and chats were more successful than print material. In addition to Sagaleri, the youth were also engaged with the then-inactive association by placing them in its administrative positions via amendments to its charter (Torun et al., 2014: 159).

A program for home hostels in Ağlasun was initiated to facilitate tourism in the district. There was already such a program in the past, during which some visitors came to and stayed at Ağlasun as part of an agrotourism project conducted by the Buğday Association for Supporting Ecological Living, independent from SARP. The economic benefit of this program was limited in Ağlasun. In a follow-up research to this program in Ağlasun, 71% of interviewees stated that they did not experience an increase in their income levels (Karabatı, Doğan, Pınar & Çelik, 2009: 134-137). Nevertheless, some Ağlasun women

expressed their interest in continuing home-hostel services during the breakfast activities.

Their addresses were collected in a database (Torun, 2023: 515), and some more visitors thus came and stayed at the district with this program (Torun et al., 2014: 159).

The Cultural Heritage and Tourism Department was established at the Mehmet Akif Ersoy University's Ağlasun Vocational School. It aimed to create a more lively and organic connection between the school and Ağlasun and provide long-term sustainability to the archaeological heritage management efforts (Torun et al., 2014: 160). The department was expected to research and conduct projects on the natural and cultural resources of Ağlasun, and the academic staff to support locals of Ağlasun by supporting their initiatives, providing necessary networks, and raising their awareness. The first enrollments occurred in the 2013-2014 academic year, with 80 students, and it became the most crowded department of the school. The academic team and the students were expected to become a key group for the tourism potential of the district (Torun, 2023: 515). Although Ağlasun Vocational School's Cultural Heritage and Tourism Department had a strong start, its popularity declined over time. The department's ties with the Ağlasun Sagalassos Culture and Tourism Improvement Association loosened, and it turned inward after Salih Ceylan was dismissed from his post as department head. The full enrollment of 80 students in the 2013-2014 academic year dropped to 41 in 2016, 31 in 2017, 12 in 2018, and 1 in 2019 (Torun, 2023, 516). The department was not available for enrollment in 2020 (Ölçme, Seçme ve Yerleştirme Merkezi Başkanlığı, Yükseköğretim Kurulu, n.d.). A new department of Tourism and Travel Services has been newly established under Ağlasun Vocational

School, beginning education in the 2024-2025 academic year (Ölçme, Seçme ve Yerleştirme Merkezi Başkanlığı, Yükseköğretim Kurulu, n.d.).

The expected increased touristic activity did not occur in the short term as the World Bank project expired, the Association did not have sufficient motivation and resources, and the excavation team was present in Ağlasun only for eight weeks in the summer (Torun, 2023: 516). Nevertheless, the project provided a platform for communication with previously uncontacted local and regional stakeholders, including the Governorate, Directorates for Forestry, Agriculture, and Culture, and the Development Agency. The similar or conflicting expectations of the stakeholders were thus better understood. It also facilitated better communication between the Sagalassos Project team, the Ağlasun Vocational School, and the Ağlasun people (Torun, 2023: 514).

5.3. The West Mediterranean Development Agency (BAKA) Project (2012-2013)

Ağlasun Vocational School and Ağlasun Municipality collaborated on a joint project that was awarded a grant supporting alternative tourism by the West Mediterranean Development Agency (BAKA) (Torun, 2023: 516) in the 2011-2012 academic year. The project was implemented in 2012 and 2013, and aimed at accelerating the resolution of previously detected problems (Torun et al., 2014: 160) such as infrastructure issues, utilizing the region's tourism potential, responding to the demands of the local community and visitors, and overall reestablishing the archaeological site's and modern settlement's historical and geographical continuity (Torun, 2023: 516).

The problems with communicating information about Sagalassos and Ağlasun continued to be addressed over the course of these two years. Information panels were placed at various locations on the site to communicate information that visitors would not otherwise understand. The texts on the panels were in Turkish, English, and Flemish, with French accessible via QR codes. They were redacted by a professional specialized in cultural communications and brought to a level a middle or high school student could understand. More engaging images were chosen, such as exciting discovery moments, small finds with a story, and the before-and-after of the specific location the visitor is at. Voluntary tour guides and architects created tour routes that incorporated important monuments with stone quarries, ceramic workshops, and necropolises (Torun, 2023: 517-518). Four booklets were published: A tour guide of Ağlasun and Sagalassos, of Ağlasun only (Shoup & Torun, 2012), a trekking, climbing, and cycling routes guide of Ağlasun (Aydingün, 2012), and a Sagalassos visitor's guide (Waelkens & the Sagalassos Team, 2012). Ağlasun and Sagalassos were incorporated into these routes together in line with the aim of reestablishing continuity. Visitors were encouraged to spend time in Ağlasun as well as Sagalassos, and attention was drawn to Ağlasun's local architecture and modern graveyards that merge with ancient necropolises (Torun, 2023: 516). These innovations in communicating information were considered the most successful part of the BAKA Project (Torun, 2023: 517-518). The cycling routes are no longer maintained by the municipality and are currently inoperative.

Another focal point of the BAKA Project was cultural, rural, and nature tourism as alternative tourism (Torun et al., 2014: 160). The home-hostels initiative of previous years continued. The three most interested families were chosen, and the necessary funding for renovating their houses' bathrooms and kitchens was provided to them. Potential visitors were instructed in the booklets to contact these home-hostels via the Burdur Municipality. However, only one of the families continuously had guests as part of the project in the following years (Torun, 2023: 516-517). A camping and caravan parking ground was added as another accommodation option at Ağlasun. The local gastronomy was studied in the summer of 2012, and a selection of local dishes was presented to visitors. This selection was then adopted by the municipality and included in the menu of the district's first boutique hotel. A new visitor and product sale center was opened at a more convenient location in the district, where local and touristic products would be sold (Torun et al., 2014: 160-161). After these efforts to increase tourism, a meeting was held with travel agencies that bring foreign tourists to Sagalassos. The agencies were of the opinion that it was impossible to convince tourists who come for a mainstream sea and sun vacation to spend time or stay in Ağlasun (Torun, 2023: 520).

The project's output was made available digitally and free of charge on a website, along with additional bilingual videos about the archaeological site's history and the Sagalassos Project. This website later became obsolete, and most of the contents were transferred to the website of the Sagalassos Foundation (Sagalassos Vakfı, n.d.), established in 2014, and to a video streaming platform (Sagalassos Project, 2013; Torun, 2023: 520).

5.4. The Visitor Center Project (2012-2016)

The final stage of the BAKA Project involved constructing a visitor center at the entrance to the ancient site. The center was funded by the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums (Torun, 2023: 520). The project of the center was developed by the Sagalassos team and had as its core principle the conservation of the harmony the site has with the geography, as well as the feeling of discovery and place visitors have at Sagalassos (Torun et al., 2014: 161). Due to unauthorized changes by the contractors, the building turned out to be significantly different from the original project. It is nevertheless compatible with the geography and the visitor experience (Torun, 2023: 521).

BAKA provided a separate fund in 2015 for information communication at the new visitor center and a 3D model of the ancient site. A professional in exhibitions, content creation, and design contributed to the center's interior design. The exhibition contained information and visuals that were not included on the information panels at the site. It highlighted the pre-excavation landscape, the initial years of the excavation, and the contributions of the Ağlasun people. Parts of the exhibition targeted children specifically via a colorful and mobile system that is lower in height and utilized cartoon characters and explanations of certain words. A mobile panel system is also present at the visitor center for movie screenings and temporary exhibitions (Torun, 2023: 522).

5.5. Transition to Local Development Research (2013-2017)

The projects until 2013 emerged in response to practical and acute problems and were implemented by stakeholders such as the Sagalassos Project team and the Ağlasun Vocation School. They fulfilled the basic requirements of the archaeological site and provided the initial push for the development of tourism. Public archaeology was regarded as an interface between the archaeological site and its benefactors, as opposed to a core research area, within the Sagalassos Project. However, efforts towards local development require the contributions of all stakeholders at each stage of the process, from identifying a problem to inventing and implementing a creative and sustainable solution. In the end, the projects until 2013 were implemented top-down and remained as solutions to practical problems (Torun, 2023: 521).

The Sagalassos Project transitioned into a different stage of interdisciplinary research in 2013, with the inclusion of social geography and planning in the research agenda. Ağlasun was studied within the context of decentralizing development planning in Türkiye, in which the central power was being transferred to local actors. In 2016, participatory workshops with different groups were organized in Ağlasun. These workshops revealed more complex problems than those detected in the public archaeology research of 2008-2009 related to health, education, unemployment, eldercare, women's rights, and infrastructure. Thus, it was understood that all stakeholders should gather together in creative processes to deal with these problems (Torun, 2023: 523). A micro-scale development plan was envisioned with BAKA, which was discontinued due to the coup

attempt in 2016, further emphasizing the need for trust, democracy, and transparency amongst institutions and people to have antifragile development projects (Torun et al., in press: 44).

5.6. 2017 Onwards

After the coup attempt, the Sagalassos Project decided to focus on the continuity of archaeological research, as its discontinuity would cause more harm to Ağlasun than any deficits in tourism. Thus, the previous plan that envisioned a multivocal and participatory creative process was put on hold (Torun, 2023: 523). Since 2017, no project has been specifically initiated to facilitate the relationships between Sagalassos and Ağlasun. There are, nevertheless, other enterprises regarding Sagalassos and the wider public.

The information panels and guiding system were updated in the 2020 summer season by virtue of a grant from the Republic of Türkiye Ministry for Culture and Tourism. The same panel system was also implemented in the center of Ağlasun, giving information about the monumental plane tree (Torun, 2023: 518-520).

An exhibition was held at Yapı Kredi Culture and Arts in 2019 and 2020, accompanied by an exhibition catalog. More interviews were held with Ağlasun people within the scope of this exhibition, following the interviews in 2008. The personal connections of the team members were found to go beyond the economic benefits provided by the project. The

younger members especially considered the project to be an opportunity to meet and befriend people from around the world (Torun, 2023: 524-525).

The number of visitors at Sagalassos did not demonstrate a drastic change until 2015 despite excavations, *anastylosis*, and a positive visitor experience (Torun, 2023: 522). The situation changed for visitors from Türkiye in 2015 as travel agencies began advertising Sagalassos as a destination. The previous preparations for tourism within the scope of the Sagalassos Project had limited influence on this increase. As for visitors from foreign countries, there was a limited increase between 2011 and 2014, presumably due to the Sagalassos exhibition in Tongeren, Belgium, which attracted approximately 145.000 visitors. This increase is thought to be negatively affected by Türkiye's external and internal security problems, such as the civil war in Syria, the 2015 Ankara bombings, and the 2016 coup attempt (Torun, 2023: 523-524). In 2024, Sagalassos was visited by over 100,000 tourists for the first time. This demonstrates an increasing socioeconomic impact (Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project, 2025: 79), which creates space for increasing scrutiny by political actors in turn.

CHAPTER 6

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

In this analysis chapter, the relationship of people to archaeology in Ağlasun and Sagalassos, and past public archaeology initiatives' aims, methods, implementation, and outcome trajectories, which are outlined in the previous chapter, will be analyzed through thematic lenses identified in the interviews. This approach seeks to construct a deeper understanding of the entanglement of district- and country-scale economic, social, and political factors in shaping the relationship between archaeology and the people of Ağlasun and Sagalassos.

For the sake of heuristic clarity, I consider economic factors those relating to means of livelihood, and the production and distribution of these means; social factors as structures and dynamics of interpersonal relations; and political factors as the distribution of power and the centralized governance of who gets what, when, and how. Nevertheless, the

interviews accentuated that these domains are inseparably entangled in lived experience and imagination.

6.1. Economic Factors: Sagalassos as a Source of Income and Economic Frustration

Themes related to economic realities were identified as the most prevalent in the interviews with both the locals of Ağlasun and the governmental institutions. This prominence is reflected in the goals and trajectories of past public archaeology initiatives. Following the initial public perception research conducted in 2008–2009, which identified a lack of awareness around sustainable cultural resource use, lack of touristic infrastructure, and youth emigration as key problems between the relationship between people and archaeology (Torun et al., 2014: 159), subsequent initiatives were designed around the idea that Sagalassos, as a touristic cultural destination, should generate tangible economic benefits for Ağlasun.

Their main aims were thus to create or enhance income-generating opportunities in both the short and long term. In fact, the Sagalassos Project's (2009-2011) goal was to regulate tourism activities under a unified organization (Torun, 2011: 148), and the BAKA Project (2011-2013) built upon further utilizing the tourism potential by supporting alternative tourism (Torun, 2023: 516), while its last component of building the visitor center (2012-2016) aimed at enhancing the visitor experience (Torun et al., 2014: 161). After the discontinuation of local development projects following the 2016 coup attempt (Torun et al., in press: 41), SARP shifted its priority towards maintaining its own continuity,

considering that the cessation of archaeological work would likely cause the most tremendous economic loss to Ağlasun (Torun, 2023: 523). These initiatives' economic goals were partially fulfilled during each project's lifespan, but they lost their momentum over time.

There are two overarching economic themes that shape the relationship between Ağlasun and Sagalassos, and consequently, the public archaeology initiatives in question: (1) Sagalassos and the archaeological project ensuring and promising employment, insurance, and income opportunities for the locals of Ağlasun, and (2) Sagalassos not fulfilling the desired or promised economic benefits.

6.1.1. Employment, Insurance, and Touristic Income Opportunities

Sagalassos is an actual or potential bearer of economic benefit for both the locals of Ağlasun and the local governmental institutions of Ağlasun and Burdur. Their priorities, however, differ from one another.

For the locals, the meaning of economic benefit lies heavily on employment and insurance by virtue of SARP, while potential indirect touristic income also exists in their imaginations of the future. The former must be an effect of the changes in the agricultural policies of Türkiye in the last decades. In the early 2000s, protections for agricultural livelihoods, such as intervention buying and input subsidies, were strived to be gradually abolished from Turkish agricultural policies in line with international agreements that

uphold product competition. For Ağlasun, it meant the end of sugar beet and rose farming with a guaranteed income subsidized by the state (Torun et al., in press: 36), the replacement of family-scale agricultural practices by large-scale agriculture, and emigration to more urbanized areas. In fact, selling land to investors is becoming the leading economic practice and income source of Ağlasun, replacing agriculture (Kocabiyik & Loopmans, 2021: 486). Locals can thus view the employment and social security opportunities created by the Project as gateways to an economically secure future, at a time when governmental support for their livelihood is being withdrawn and prospects for them and their children are uncertain.

As elegantly summarized by a worker employed by SARP, “Sagalassos is our factory without a chimney, it is our source of labour and income.” (Recep Doğutaş, foreman and “local phenomenon,” 49 years old, as cited in Poblome & Cleymans, 2019: 190-191). A male worker likened the relationship between Ağlasun and Sagalassos to that of Türkiye and Germany due to the participation of the people of the former in the workforce of the latter:

Of course, Sagalassos, let me say, is like the Germany of Ağlasun. ... If you ask why, I'd say because many people retired from here, from working and being insured here (interview with P3, August 26, 2024).

Similarly, another male worker considered employment and insurance as the most important aspect of Sagalassos' presence in Ağlasun:

There is no insurance priority at a place that has the status of a village. ... One of the biggest contributions of Sagalassos is the initiation of insurance. The biggest contribution to the local population (interview with P9, September 27, 2024).

Apart from their employment at SARP, workers benefited from further employment opportunities at excavations elsewhere in Türkiye (Torun et al., in press: 21-22). The guards elaborated on this opportunity as:

People who worked here also worked in other excavations. They taught how to glue stones where they went. They taught how to cut blocks to the workers there. Things spread out from here (interviews with P1, August 21, 2024).
We also went to other ancient cities after here. We went for restoration work at Patara, Perge, Klaros (interviews with P2, August 21, 2024).

The touristic potential of Sagalassos is recognized and appreciated by the locals as well, even though it was a less frequent testimony. One of the guards at the site had initiated a private enterprise in the past in order to generate income via tourists, although it fell through without being realized (see 6.3.3):

I rented a place over there [gesturing towards the road coming up to the site]. ... I was going to build bungalow houses. ... Not for myself. For example, folks would come to sell local products. I would sell tea, soup. This was the intention. Or buses would stop at the parking lot. ... How could this happen? You will win, I will win, they will win, they will invest. I mean, for tourism ((interview with P2, August 21, 2024).

On the other hand, the governmental perspectives on economic benefit rely almost solely on income that could be produced by visitors to the archaeological site. It is noteworthy that while discussing how Sagalassos could contribute to Ağlasun, representatives of both

Burdur and Ağlasun governmental institutions focused on enhancing external tourism at Sagalassos without referencing the direct economic benefit of the excavations in Ağlasun. Only the Burdur governor (interview with Tülay Baydar Bilgihan, April 15, 2025) and the Deputy for Cultural and Social Affairs at Burdur Municipality (interview with Kemal Dönmez, April 16, 2025) briefly stated that tourists should also stop by in Ağlasun for direct monetary transactions. Such a brief reference did not arise during interviews with the governmental institutions of Ağlasun (see 6.3.2).

Employment and insurance were identified as important benefits to the local population in past public archaeology research and initiatives (Torun et al., in press: 22), however, creating opportunities for long-term employment were not considered an aim nor a method in any of them. This is reflected in another prominent theme present in the interviews, which is the economic frustration emerging in relation to Sagalassos.

6.1.2. Frustration from Unfulfilled Economic Desires

The potential economic benefit Sagalassos bears in the form of employment, insurance, or touristic income, and the inability to realize this potential is a source of frustration for both the locals of Ağlasun and the governmental institutions. Due to their different priorities in income opportunities, their frustrations take divergent forms as well.

The frustration of the locals of Ağlasun was centered around the lack of long-term, secure employment opportunities under SARP. According to one of the male workers,

Sagalassos is “a location where everybody wants to work, but it’s short, month-wise, as it lasts for 2 months” (interview with P4, August 26, 2024). This was further elaborated by another worker as follows:

There is work for a 2-month, 2.5-month period. People have to support their families, but a 2-month work does not satisfy people. The reason me and [P4] are here for a long time is that [P4] also guarded the excavation, and I was a ticket seller. For this reason, we helped them with restoration each year and worked. This is how we continued. If there weren’t continuous work, perhaps we wouldn’t be here either (interview with P3, August 26, 2024).

This frustration with the lack of long-term work is linked to Ağlasun youth’s disinterest or inability to be employed in the archaeological project, which contributes to the changes in the demographics of the district (see 6.2.2). As a worker puts it:

A child born and raised within the borders of Ağlasun either goes to brick factories or farms, helps their families. In this sense, there is a youth quota. If you say, ‘let’s increase the Sagalassos worker quota to 80,’ we can’t find this number from Ağlasun (interview with P9, September 27, 2024).

The inability of most locals of Ağlasun to provide long-term economic stability by virtue of Sagalassos is connected to the fact that there is a non-negligible distance from Ağlasun to Sagalassos, and there are no appealing features for tourists to visit and/or stay in Ağlasun.

According to a worker:

The 5, 10, 15, 20, however many people work [at the Project] – they are the ones to earn. There is the *Yörük Çadırı*⁸ of the [Ağlasun] Municipality. They rented that cafeteria from the Ministry. Otherwise, [Sagalassos] receives one hundred thousand visitors. So, there is no one supporting their homes with the money they earn from

⁸ Turkish for “Yoruk’s Tent” – the name of the restaurant located near to the archaeological site.

here. Why not? A person comes, either buys from [the buffet in front of Sagalassos], or does business with the *Çadır* (interview with P2, August 21, 2024).

The initiatives had considered this reality, and put making Ağlasun a more appealing destination for tourists in their agenda via enterprises located in the district itself, such as building a visitor center (Torun et al., 2014: 159) and organizing the home-hostels (Torun, 2023: 515) in Ağlasun, and reinvigorating the local association (Torun et al., 2014: 159). However, the same problem with the lack of sufficient income continued, and in turn led to the obsolescence of these initiatives, creating a vicious cycle. For instance, during meetings of the BAKA Project, travel agencies had stated that it was not possible to convince mainstream sea-and-sun tourists to spend meaningful time in Ağlasun (Torun, 2023: 520). This was a problem at the visitor center in Ağlasun, as testified by one of the guards:

It's very hard. For example, the municipality started a public education center, called 'Women's Handwork.' The products the women there made were sold [at the visitor center] as well. They said that the women should wait there. They waited for a couple of years. Of course, we come to the point I mentioned earlier: Because the visitors didn't go there, or tours or buses, they don't sell. They have pictures taken under the plane tree and leave. Directly to Isparta, Antalya, or whatever. There is no setting for sales. They waited, waited (interview with P1, August 21, 2024).

The revived association went through a similar loss of momentum. Although the association still exists today, it is not active due to economic considerations:

The head of the association is in Isparta. He holds the general assembly once a year, but it's not active for the past 5-6 years. He wants to appraise it as well, but no one is

interested, because that work is voluntary work. You need to have empty hands. The income is the association's, not theirs (interview with P1, August 21, 2024).

The frustrations of the governmental institutions, on the other hand, are centered around the unattained potential touristic gain. While all of the governmental institutions addressed the wish to increase it, the mayor of Ağlasun's disappointment with the present economic benefit for Ağlasun via tourism was intense (interview with Ali Ulusoy, April 17, 2025). It was noteworthy that, in contradiction with the locals of Ağlasun, the mayor, who is also a local of Ağlasun, was of the opinion that the unfulfillment of the touristic economic potential was caused by SARP. The acute impediments caused by SARP were their disapproval of an car park project to be constructed on the protected site in order to provide space for incomers, and the slow pace of the excavations unsuitable for speedy *anastylosis* compared to the Turkish coordinator team working at Sagalassos. This perspective has its roots in negative approaches to foreigners' presence in Türkiye (see 6.2.1), and is in line with the contemporary governmental archaeological policies (Erciyas, 2014: 271), which consider archaeology as a core department of the 'factory without a chimney,' and prioritize speed and visual commodity over scientific vigor (see 4.4 and 6.3.2).

6.2. Social Factors: Presence of Foreigners, the Youth, and Local Will

Considerations of social dynamics as a result of or affecting the relationship between archaeology and Ağlasun were frequent in the interviews, albeit not as prominent as the economic themes. Similar to the prominence of economic considerations in both the

interviews and past public archaeology initiatives, this secondary frequency was also paralleled as a runner-up consideration in the goals and trajectories of past public archaeology initiatives. The antecedent public archaeology research had identified interpersonal issues such as insufficient communication between SARP and the locals and the emigration of Ağlasun youth (Torun et al., 2014: 159). The Sagalassos Project (i.e., “Protection and Sustainable Use of Resources: Future for Youth in Rural Areas”) was directly addressing the issue with the youth (Torun, 2023: 513) by mobilizing them to attain economic goals, whereas the breakfasts, tours, and chats with the local population presented as the most successful methods as part of the project (Torun et al., 2014: 159). The later BAKA Project, which was discontinued in 2016, also incorporated participatory workshops in Ağlasun in order to enhance the communication between locals and SARP (Torun, 2023: 523).

With the interviews, three social themes shaping the relationship of people and archaeology were found: (1) The unwanted or welcomed presence of foreigners in archaeology and Ağlasun, (2) the discrepancy between the expectations of youth and what Sagalassos and Ağlasun can offer, and (3) insufficient local will to meet potential economic benefit from Sagalassos.

6.2.1. Presence of Foreigners

The presence of foreigners as archaeologists is perceived in contradictory ways as part of the social dynamics of Ağlasun. On the one hand, the foreigners’ right to and responsibility

of excavating a salient archaeological site in Türkiye for decades is treated as a problem both from local and governmental perspectives (see 6.3.1). When asked about locals' perceptions on the presence of a foreign archaeological team, an archaeologist, who is also a local of Ağlasun, employed in the Turkish coordinator excavations at Sagalassos, shared her observations of archaeology at Ağlasun and Türkiye:

Here's the thing: Why are foreigners excavating in our country? I hear this a lot. But I think they are like siblings: Let there be Turkish too, let there be foreigners too. In a very nice way. ... Everybody is talking about this, but this is true not only here. It's the same in another place. This is the conversation. ... Why are foreigners working in our country? We are here, why don't we do it? (interview with P5, September 8, 2024)

According to the governmental perspective of the mayor of Ağlasun, who used a more supportive rhetoric when talking about the Turkish coordinator team (see 6.1.2), the negative perceptions were mutual between locals and foreigners, as both the locals and foreigners could not break free of the prejudices they have towards each other. However, he did not elaborate explicitly on the nature of these prejudices (interview with Ali Ulusoy, April 17, 2025).

While the idea that excavations should be Turkish exists, there are also wishes for joint excavations, as exemplified by the archaeologist's statement. Another worker echoed this statement, referring also to barriers of communication between locals and foreigners:

There's this thing: Foreigners are not that bad, but [there is a problem with] communication, language, because we don't know English. They don't know

Turkish either. We have to have a guide or a translator. I mean, it might be good if there are the Turkish. It might be joint [work], it might be together (interview with P4, August 26, 2024).

On the other hand, interviews with locals testified to a welcomed presence of foreigners in Ağlasun. In interviews prior to this research, Sagalassos was presented as a cultural bridge between people from different countries (Ahmet Ay, foreman and bus driver, 43 years old, as cited in Poblome & Cleymans, 2019: 190-191), similar to how Türkiye is considered a cultural bridge between different countries in public and official rhetoric, and was considered “not only a source of income for the inhabitants of Ağlasun, but also a site which allows you to meet the inhabitants from all four corners of the world” (Furkan Ay, worker and son of Ahmet Ay, 19 years old, as cited in Poblome & Cleymans, 2019: 190-191). A worker considered personal relations between locals and foreigners as one of the biggest contributions of Sagalassos to Ağlasun:

But what did Sagalassos contribute, not personally, for Ağlasun? When we look objectively, Ağlasun was an introverted Anatolian village. ... [About] the thing with cultural composition, I saw this in Sagalassos: We are Muslims, we have a certain group identity. It comes from childhood. But what Sagalassos contributed to us is ‘humanity first.’ The rest is secondary: language, religion, other stuff. This is one of its biggest contributions (interview with P9, September 27, 2024).

Nationalist sentiments are commonplace in Ağlasun, noticeable from the results of the latest elections, where parties with nationalist rhetoric (JDP and NMP) were consistently the most voted ones (Yüksek Seçim Kurulu, n.d.; see 3.1). These sentiments create a dichotomy of approaches to the presence of foreign archaeologists and the project’s presence in Ağlasun from the locals’ perspective. The local JDP government’s and the

wider JDP government's perspective, however, are leaning towards the negative side of this dichotomy, with uprooting foreign archaeological projects and replacing them with Turkish-led ones being a recently set goal (see 6.3.3).

6.2.2. Discrepancies Between Ağlasun Youth and Sagalassos

Obstacles related to the youth of Ağlasun have been present in Ağlasun for around two decades, demonstrating a local example of a larger, country-wide issue of emigration of youth from rural to urban areas (Şeker, Ayyıldız & Aydın, 2025: 8) to enhance livelihood opportunities and living standards (Şeker et al., 2025: 1). These obstacles were addressed with past public archaeology initiatives, with economy-driven emigration at its core. Interviews with locals echoed the perspective of past public archaeology research and initiatives, with some more nuance. Governmental institutions did not reference these demographic issues in their interviews.

As mentioned before, one of the core issues is the lack of interest and/or ability of the youth to participate in work related to the archaeological site due to economic concerns (interview with P9, September 27, 2024; see 6.1.2). According to another worker, “The whole generation is like that right now. Everybody wants to study and become something. They don’t want to work in jobs like that.” (interview with P1, August 21, 2024). Aside from economic concerns, there seems to be an emotional dissociation of Ağlasun youth from Sagalassos:

You know what else about the youth? They don't have the will to learn. They'll show up until the evening. ... They just want the daily wage. [They wait for] the evening and the daily wage. ... So, there is no devotion now. They don't do it with pleasure. They don't adopt it. The current generation is like that (interview with P2, August 21, 2024).

The youth's (lack of) emotional connection to Sagalassos stands in contrast to the older community's, which is quite romantically exemplified by one of the workers as follows:

The meaning of Sagalassos cannot be expressed in words. You have to experience it. Sagalassos doesn't exist without me and I do not exist without it. It is a part of me, like a loved one (Hasan Aynalı, stonemason-restorator and guard of the site, 45 years old, as cited by Poblome & Cleymans, 2019: 190-191).

While the emigration of or a lack of emotional connection of the older community may not have been an influence on the trajectories of past public archaeology initiatives, the insufficient will of locals of Ağlasun influenced them.

6.2.3. Insufficient Local Will

A core root of insufficient local will to utilize methods of income other than direct employment under SARP is the aforementioned vicious cycle in which tourists did not stop by in Ağlasun and generate direct income for the locals that led to the loss of momentum of the actions taken as part of public archaeology initiatives at the center of the district, which in turn worsened the former issue (see 6.1.2). However, there is another component that was termed as "laziness" by a worker in an interview prior to this research (Ahmet Ay, foreman and bus driver, 43 years old, as cited in Poblome & Cleymans, 2019:

190-191), echoed in present interviews by another worker who used to be involved with the association:

When I was dealing with the association, we couldn't establish something to provide tourism and infrastructure in Ağlasun. The prior heads of the association, and the current ones, we gather, 'what to do, what to make, what to prepare.' But the rest is not coming. Materiality, loss, continuously. Let's make a square in Ağlasun, a bazaar, a place. Small shops, ateliers. The citizen, I mean, locals of Ağlasun, shall come, sell their produce or handwork. They shall make different purchases, etc. Tours shall stop by. It should become known, people should learn about here. This was said and said, but nothing was done. This could not be overcome, for years, maybe for fifteen years (interview with P1, August 21, 2024).

“Laziness” might be a component of insufficient will; however, when interviews are considered holistically, frustrations with economic expectations (see 6.1.2) and interruptions from local politics (see 6.3.1) seem to be feeding into the loosening of willpower, creating another vicious cycle for locals and public archaeology initiatives.

6.3. Political Factors: Archaeology Interrupted by Politics, Politics Interrupted by Archaeology

Politics is embedded in the daily and long-term operation of archaeological projects.

However, political factors and means of dealing with them are not always made explicit, published, or incorporated into the design of public archaeology initiatives. While there were frequent straightforward utterances regarding economics and interpersonal relations in connection with Sagalassos and Ağlasun in the interviews, this was not the case with ideas regarding authority over archaeological matters.

Nevertheless, three themes are conspicuous in the interviews: (1) Local politics causing interference to potential local benefit, (2) archaeology's primary assigned role as a commodity on the governmental level, and (3) "local and national"⁹ governmental archaeological policies.

6.3.1. Local Politics Interrupting Potential Local Benefit

Democratic governmental institutions acquire their legitimacy through the support of their voters, as well as the fulfillment of their responsibilities towards the areas of their authority. From this perspective, the utterances of the two guards regarding local power games and the resulting frustration are important.

According to one of them, who was involved with the reinvigorated association for a while, one of the reasons why the plans for the association did not succeed was disagreements with local authorities:

I took over and we completely renewed the charter. The charter was completely renewed as [the association] could sell and invest the income to the association, so they could buy other products and circulate them. So, we made a sales office in Ağlasun. We waited there for a while as members of the association. ... The municipality was barely helpful (interview with P1, August 21, 2024).

The aforementioned private initiative of the other guard to build bungalow houses near the archaeological site was halted due to disagreements with local political actors, even though he did not delve into the particulars of these disagreements:

⁹ *Yerli ve milli* in Turkish, a common figure of speech used by the government.

Particularly, we couldn't overcome a political thing. ... But we couldn't overcome this for the past thirty-four years, and we can't. Not possible with this mindset. No, not possible. The man is saying that his municipality should win. No one else—not Ahmet, Mehmet (interview with P2, August 21, 2024).¹⁰

It is an ironic point that while the governmental perspective on the unfulfilled economic potential of Sagalassos in relation to Ağlasun is that it is caused by the foreign archaeological project (see 6.1.2), some local perspectives are that the governmental interruptions are causing the unfulfillment of the economic potential (Torun et al., in press: 43).

6.3.2. Archaeology as a Touristic Commodity

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism and local governments' priorities in terms of culture and archaeology lean towards economically valuable and sensational discoveries as they are considered more desirable for tourism (see 4.4.2), thus significantly increasing restoration projects all over Türkiye. In fact, archaeological heritage in Türkiye is considered at risk of destruction by aggressive investment activities, which ironically include the tourism sector (Erciyas, 2014: 281-283), which aims to increase economic benefit from archaeological sites in the first place. This priority was reflected in the interviews with the representatives of governmental institutions, all of which had heavily focused on the tourism potential of Sagalassos (interview with Tülay Baydar Bilgihan, April 15, 2025; interview with Metin Eyyipkoca, April 15, 2025; interview with Kemal Dönmes, April 16, 2025; interview with

¹⁰ The names here do not refer to particular people. It is a figure of speech employed to talk about unspecified people, perhaps even regular people who do not hold an office. In this case, P1's utterance could be understood as a wider criticism of the ruling party and their governmental policies.

Ali Ulusoy, April 17, 2025), rather than its scientific potential or immaterial contributions to the community or wider society.

At the governmental level, archaeological projects are occasionally considered a hindrance to development in Türkiye (Erciyas, 2021: 103) when the project's archaeological policies are not in line with the government's, even if they include their own versions of economic and social local development plans. This sentiment of hindrance was evident in the interview with the Ağlasun Mayor as he was frustrated with SARP's rejection of the car park project, belated reconstruction of Sagalassos' theatre, and slow excavation pace, as he considered those were the requirements for tourism (interview with Ali Ulusoy, April 17, 2025). The focus on tourism serves as the reason for the utilization and instrumentalization of the "local and national" rhetoric in archaeology — a theme that emerges in both the social and political domains.

6.3.3. “Local and National” Archaeology

The last two decades have witnessed the growth of Turkish nationalism in identity politics (Erciyas, 2014: 284) as the current ruling party JDP's interests intersect with the nationalistic right, which promotes their shared interests and their expression (Erciyas, 2014: 274). A manifestation of this process is the increased and new use of the decades-old populist motto “local and national” in the official rhetoric of the JDP government (Şengül, 2021: 52-53). The ambiguous and fluid nature of this rhetoric allows it to be used pragmatically in various contexts, especially in technology, agriculture, and industry

(Şengül, 2021: 52-53; Torun et al., in press: 31). While the increase in use of this rhetoric can be traced back to the reappearance of the dichotomy of the East and the West after 2001 (Duru & Koparal, 2019: 199), staying in its (blurry) boundaries creates the sensation of a group identity by being situated against the “other,” who could be foreigners and/or traitors (Şengül, 2021: 63). However, rather than aiming at creating unity among people part of this group, this official rhetoric aims at securing the position of the authority (Duru & Koparal, 2019: 196).

The increasing prominence of Turkish nationalism in identity politics translates into the cultural realm as well (Erciyas, 2014: 274), as archaeology is legally owned by and under the authority of the state (Erciyas, 2014: 284). The “local and national” rhetoric is embedded in cultural discourses (Şengül, 2021: 52), including archaeology and the past (Duru & Koparal, 2019: 195).¹¹ The Ministry of Culture and Tourism’s current “Golden Age of Archaeology” and “Heritage for the Future” policies, which envisage a Turkish coordinator for every foreign-led archaeological project (see 4.4), is a prominent manifestation of this rhetoric. The overall decrease in the number of foreign-led excavations and surveys, and the increased gap between the total numbers of Turkish- and foreign-led excavations and surveys throughout the years are also an indication of nationalizing archaeological practice in Türkiye (Figure 4). In fact, in terms of Sagalassos, the provincial Director for Culture for Burdur had expressed as back as in 2013 that he

¹¹ For instance, a national and religious-conservative newspaper notably aligning with the current ruling party JDP headlined the establishment of the Turkish Institute of Archaeology and Cultural Heritage by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Gaziantep Municipality as “Local and national move in the field of archaeology” as the Institute will also focus on Turkish and Islamic archaeology (Olgun, 2021).

personally wished for the abolition of all foreign excavation projects in Türkiye (Torun et al., in press: 31).

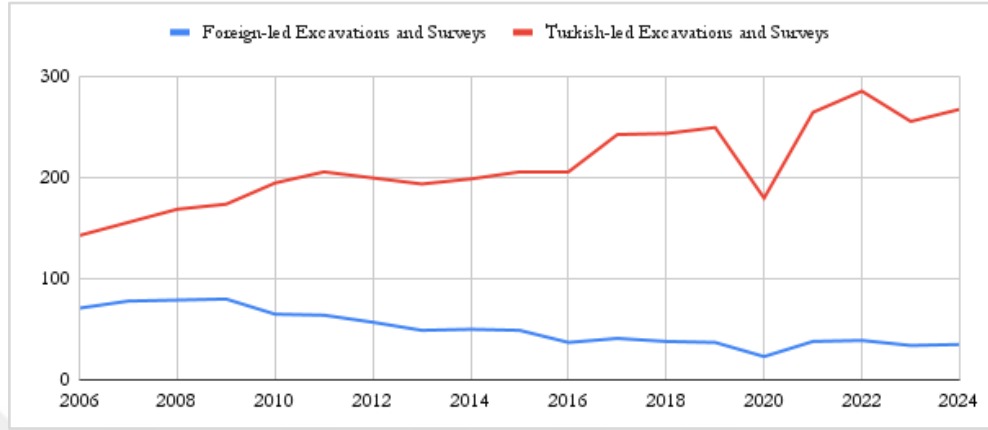


Figure 4: Numbers of foreign- and Turkish-led excavations and surveys in Türkiye from 2006 to 2024 (T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü, n.d.)

Nationalist identity politics materialized in a simple sentence uttered by a worker employed under SARP, who had recently left work at the Ağlasun Municipality: “The [Ağlasun] Municipality is not fond of a foreign-led excavation.” (chat with P11, August 26, 2024).

However, considering the interviews with governmental representatives and their focus on tourism and economy (see 6.3.2), the Mayor is not fond of SARP not because it is a foreign-led project, but rather due to frustrations regarding economic needs and wishes.¹²

The “local and national” rhetoric and the Turkish coordinator team are thus instrumentalized by local and countrywide authorities for touristic and economic policies,

¹² In fact, he remembered the first director of the Project, Marc Waelkens, rather fondly (interview with Ali Ulusoy, April 17, 2025).

as opposed to fulfilling ideals of nationalism, which is a concern for some locals of Ağlasun (interview with P5, September 8, 2024; see 6.2.1).



CHAPTER 7

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

THE NATURE OF THE ENTANGLEMENT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

7.1. Findings

Before arriving at concluding remarks and future hopes and plans, the research question should be reiterated once more: What are the economic, social, and political factors governing the relationship between archaeology and the people at Sagalassos and Ağlasun, including the trajectories of past public archaeology research and initiatives?

The analysis of the interviews provided a straightforward answer to this question at first glance: economic concerns about the future. This is true not only for the duration of this research but also for past public archaeological research and the design and implementation of subsequent initiatives. Furthermore, the social and political factors that were determined to govern this relationship are also centered around this simple reality.

The most visible themes in these interviews were Sagalassos and Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project being a source of actual and potential economic benefit, and also frustration, both from the Ağlasun locals' and governmental perspectives. The most visible social aspects governing this relationship have been the presence of foreigners, the gap between the youth and Sagalassos, and the reluctance of the locals. Although they constitute just a couple of threads within a complex web of interpersonal relations and are more nuanced than what has been ostensible in this research, these social aspects also circle back to economic concerns at the end: The foreigners' presence is accustomed to, and sometimes even welcomed, by the locals due to the lengthy presence of the Project in Ağlasun, whereas the unfavorable perception of the political actors can be traced back to economic frustrations. The gap between the youth and Sagalassos is just one piece in the broader scheme of rural-to-urban migration and the ageing of the local population. The reluctance of the older community to participate in the implementation of the past initiatives is connected to imminent economic concerns, and sometimes, local political obstacles. The latter, accompanied by the official assigned role of archaeology as a commodity and "local and national" rhetoric and practice, constitute the most visible political factors governing this relationship. It was seen that the state's primary concern regarding archaeology is that it is a product to be offered and (figuratively) sold, and the "local and national" rhetoric and practices, which are naturally connected to the presence of foreign archaeologists in Türkiye, are instrumentalized to attain this economic concern.

Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project did arrive at a similar answer in past research and initiatives, and navigated their trajectories accordingly. However, going one step wider than this “straightforward” answer, the main issue with the loss of momentum for these initiatives was their nature. First of all, public archaeology was not considered a core practice of the archaeological project, but was regarded rather as a secondary preoccupation. These initiatives were of a top-down nature (Torun et al., in press: 43) that settled on a simple participatory multivocal model in which the locals of Ağlasun, who were thought to be beneficiaries of these initiatives, did not have a real say in the future of their relationship with archaeology and Sagalassos. The Project and archaeologists remained as mediators to create benefit linked to archaeology for the locals, rather than being capacity-builders so that they could have tools at their disposition to create this benefit (Westmont, 2022: 10). Of course, there are some realities beyond the power of an archaeological project. For instance, the top-down nature of these initiatives is partially a product of the funding needs of the Project, which are received from external institutions that have specific expectations from project designs and demonstrable outcomes. Furthermore, an archaeological project cannot be completely immune to countrywide social phenomena such as rural-to-urban migration, unexpected political instabilities such as the coup attempt or the revocation of excavation permits (Torun et al., in press: 44). Nevertheless, collaborative approaches have the potential to create more sustainable and resilient relationships in such circumstances, as they will be tailored to the needs and wishes of locals, as opposed to prescribed and descriptive requirements imposed by external institutions or the state.

However, because economic concerns are currently at the center of the relationship between archaeology and people at Sagalassos/Ağlasun, and past research and initiatives have fallen short of true collaboration, it does not mean that this will always be the case. Human beings and human relationships are subject to constant change. What matters for Sagalassos and Ağlasun, and for archaeology in general, is how we choose to look at and engage with this relationship. This brings to the second part of my research question: Can studying these factors inform future interactions and the design and implementation of future projects?

Taking a second step further from the answer above, I arrive at a broader conclusion that employing a critical approach to (public) archaeology is good practice and necessary for an archaeological project. Here, a critical approach means trying to understand and challenge structural inequities to create a better archaeology for everyone (Westmont, 2022: 2).

Then, this broader finding of this thesis answers the second part of the research question: Yes, studying these factors can inform future interactions and the design and implementation of future projects, and this study should be done by intentionally employing a critical approach. Overall, employing a critical approach to the (public) archaeology at Sagalassos and Ağlasun demonstrated that project design and implementation should be intentionally grounded in theory, and particularly a critical and reflexive one. Otherwise, what has been done before remains on paper, with diminishing to no positive impact on the material world, and future research and initiatives cannot surpass the limits that have been achieved before. Having employed a critical approach, there are

some takeaways from the past for the future of (public) archaeology at Sagalassos and Ağlasun.

7.2. Future Directions

It is now evident that holding contemporary living communities in mind as a secondary concern to traditional archaeological research, and settling at simple community outreach, education, or engagement is not sufficient for an archaeological project to be relevant, sensitive, and beneficial to these communities, though it may be an aim of the archaeological project. If this shall remain an aim of the Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project, it should move away from following the traditional archaeological scheme where material studies are at the center, and should strive to transform into a project of total ethnography – it should encompass the present including its relationship to the past, but beyond that with all aspects of the life of the community (Hamilakis & Anagnostopoulos, 2013: 75).

Ağlasun locals' relationship to archaeology is governed by realities beyond their direct engagement with the past, or what represents the past, such as visiting the archaeological site or being employed by the Project. Understanding and navigating these realities, such as youth emigration, agricultural policies, and local politics, and overcoming emerging and changing obstacles through a collaborative and total ethnographical approach shall allow the creation of a more nuanced and constructive research agenda, and turn archaeologists into capacity-builders rather than mediators. It is an asset that the Project already has

interdisciplinarity at its center, and there is a long-standing and vibrant past of research with contemporary communities in and beyond archaeology, and this can be a (re)starting point.



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APPENDIX 1

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

SİZİ DİNLEMELİK İSTİYORUZ: AĞLASUN VE SAGALASSOS HAKKINDA NE DÜŞÜNÜYORSUNUZ?

KATILIMCILAR İÇİN AYDINLATILMIŞ ONAM FORMU

Araştırmanın Amacı

Türkiye’de pek çok arkeoloji projesi, civarda yaşayan insanların kazıyla ilgili istek ve ihtiyaçlarını anlamaya, bunlara mümkün mertebe cevap vermeye çalışır. Sagalassos Arkeoloji Projesi de 1990 yılından beri Ağlasun’da yaşayan kişileri dinlemek için uğraşmaktadır.

Bu yıl Ağustos ve Eylül aylarında yapacağım tez çalışmamda Sagalassos Projesi’nde nelerin iyi yapıldığını, nelerin daha iyi yapılabileceğini, nelerin değişmesini istediğinizi anlamak için sizi dinlemek istiyorum. Böylece gelecek yıllarda hem sizin hem de arkeolojik kazı için daha yararlı bir proje tasarlayabiliriz.

Araştırmanın Kapsamı

Araştırmanın amacı doğrultusunda Ağlasun’da yaşayan veya yıl boyu ya da mevsimlik olarak arkeolojik alanda çalışan kişiler ile görüşeceğim.

Katılmak istediğiniz takdirde Ağlasun ve Sagalassos hakkında sohbet edeceğiz. İsteddiğiniz takdirde ilçede veya arkeolojik alanda önemli bulduğunuz, sevdiğiniz, sizin için anlamı olan noktaları ziyaret edeceğiz. Sohbet veya ziyaretin ne zaman olacağını ve süresini sizin uygunluğunuza göre birlikte belirleyeceğiz.

Araştırmacı

Bu araştırma, İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent Üniversitesi Arkeoloji Bölümü’nde yüksek lisans öğrencisi olan Esmâ Demiryürek tarafından, Sagalassos Kazı Direktörü Peter Talloen ile İngiliz Arkeoloji Enstitüsü Yardımcı Direktörü Işıl Gürsu danışmanlığında yürütülmektedir.

Katılımın Yarar ve Zararları

Katılımınız tamamen gönüllüdür. Katılmayı reddedebilirsiniz. İsteddiğiniz zaman, sebep belirtmeniz gerekmeden bana haber vererek katılmaktan

vazgeçebilirsiniz. Gerekli görüldüğü takdirde verdiğiniz bilgiler araştırma dışında bırakılabilir.

Bu araştırmaya katılmanın sizin için öngörülebilir hiçbir zararı yoktur. Katılım sonucunda duygu ve düşüncelerinizi aktarmaktan ve Sagalassos Arkeoloji Projesi'ne yön vermekten dolayı iyi hissetme şeklinde yararınız olabilir.

Gizlilik

Araştırma sonucunda elde edilen bilgiler hukuka uygun olarak bilimsel amaçlarla rapor edilecek ve yayımlanacaktır. Katılımınız hâlinde rızanız olmayan hiçbir kişisel veriniz toplanmayacaktır ve başkalarıyla paylaşılmayacaktır. Siz talep etmediğiniz sürece gerçek adınız tezimde yer almayacaktır.

Okuduğunuz ve araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ettiğiniz için teşekkür ederim. Şimdi veya başka bir zaman herhangi bir sorunuz, endişeniz olduğunda benimle iletişime geçebilirsiniz:

Telefon:

E-posta: esma.demiryurek@bilkent.edu.tr

Katılımcı Rızası

Yukarıda yer alan ve araştırmadan önce katılımcıya verilmesi gereken bilgileri okudum. Araştırmanın kapsam ve amacını, katılımcı olarak yapacaklarımı anladım. Araştırma hakkında yazılı ve sözlü açıklama aşağıda yer alan araştırmacı tarafından yapılmış, katılımın bana yarar ve zararları anlatılmış ve kişisel bilgilerimin korunacağı hakkında yeterli güven verilmiştir. Bu koşullarda araştırmaya kendi isteğimle katılmayı kabul ediyorum.

Bu formdan iki tane imzalanacaktır. Biri araştırmacıda, biri sizde kalacaktır.

Katılımcı Adı ve İmzası:

Tanık Adı ve İmzası: *“Katılımcı araştırmaya gönüllü olarak katılmaktadır.”*

Araştırmacı Adı ve İmzası:

Tarih:

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW EXCERPTS IN TURKISH

Excerpts are ordered according to the interviewee and the succession of appearance in the text:

Excerpts from the interview with P1:

Bütün buradan giden başka arkadaşlar da başka kazılarda çalıştı. O gittikleri yerde taş yapıştırmasını öğretti. İşte taş kesmesini öğretti oradaki çalışanlara. Yayıldı yani buradan her şey.

Isparta'da başkanı. Genel kurulu yapıyor yılda bir sefer ama aktif değil beş altı yıldır. O da değerlendirmek istiyor ama kimse ilgilenmiyor. Ama o iş gönüllü işi, biraz elin boş olacak. Gelir derneğin oluyor, onların olmuyor.

Bütün nesil öyle şu anda. Herkes okuyup da bir şey olmak istiyor. Böyle işlerde çalışmak istemiyor.

Ben dernekte de şeyken, uğraşırken, Ağlasun'da turizm ve altyapı sağlayacak bir şey kuramadık. Önceki başkanlar da olsun, şimdikiler de olsun, toplanıyoruz: "Ne yapsak, ne etsek, nasıl bir şey hazırlasak?" Ama gerisi gelmiyor işte. Maddiyat, zarar sürekli. Ağlasun'un içinde bir meydanlık, bir pazar, bir yer yapalım. Şu küçük dükkanlar, atölyeler. Vatandaş, yani, Ağlasunlu gelsin, yetiştirdiği ürünü veya yaptığı el emeğini satsın. Farklı farklı alışveriş yapsın falan. Turlar oraya uğrasın. Yani tanınsın, millet burayı öğrensin. Denildi denildi, hiçbir şey yapılmadı. Yani o aşilamadı. Yıllarca yani, belki on beş yıldır.

Ben devraldım da tüzüğü komple yeniledik. Tüzük komple yenilendi. Satış yapabilir, satışın gelirini de derneğe yatırım yapabilir, yani başka ürünler alıp sirkülasyon yapabilir diye yaptık. İşte Ağlasun'un içine bir satış ofisi yaptık. Bir ara orayı bekledik, dernek üyeleri olarak bekledik. ... Belediye yardımcı oldu, olmadı.

Excerpts from the interview with P2:

Biz başka antik kentlere de gidiyorduk buradan sonra mesela. Patara'ya, Perge'ye, Klaros'a; oralarda restorasyon çalışmalarına gittik.

Ben şurada yer kiraladım. ... Bungalov yapacaktım. ... Kendime şey değil. Mesela halk yöresel ürünler getirip satacak. Ben de orada çay çorba satacağım. Yani niyet buydu yani. Ya da otoparkta otobüs duracak. ... Ha bu nasıl olabilir? Ya siz kazanacaksınız, ben kazanacağım, o kazanacak, yatırım yapacak. Yani turizme yönelik.

Şimdi burada çalışan 5, 10, 15, 20 kaç kişi varsa onlar kazanıyor. İşte belediyenin Yörük Çadırı var. Şu kafeteryayı işte bakanlıktan kiraladılar. Onun haricinde mesela yüz bin ziyaretçi alıyor burası. Yani buradan kazandığı parayla evini geçindiren yok. Neden yok? Ya geliyor adam, ya buradan alıyor, ya çadırdaki iş yapıyor.

Çok zor oluyor. Mesela belediye halk eğitim kursu açtı, "Kadın El Emekler," diye. Oradaki kadınların yaptığı ürünler de orada satıldı. Dediler ki orada kadınlar beklesin. Birkaç yıl onlar bekledi. Tabii, işte, burada demin ki konuştuğumuzda geliyoruz. Gelen ziyaretçi oraya sapmadığı için, turlar veya otobüsler satmadan direkt basıp geçiyor. Çınaraltı fotoğraf çekiliyor, geçiyor. Direkt Isparta, Antalya, neyse. Satış yapacak bir ortam, bir şey yok. Onlar bekledi, bekledi.

Bir de şu var gençlerde, ne var biliyor musun? Öğrenme isteği yok yok. Akşama kadar görünür. ... Sadece yevmiye olsun, akşam olsun da yevmiye olsun. ... Yani, şu an bir özveri yok. Seve seve yapmıyor, benimsemiyor. Yani şimdiki nesil öyle ya.

Ama yani başta bir siyasi şeyi aşamadık ya biz burada. ... Ama bunu biz var ya, otuz dört yıldır biz bunu aşamadık, aşamayız. Mümkün değil. Bu zihniyet ile. Olmaz. Olmaz yani. Adam diyor ki benim belediyem kazansın diyor. Başka yani Ahmet Mehmet kazansın diye, öyle bir şey değil.

Excerpts from the interview with P3:

Tabii Sagalassos, şöyle söyleyeyim, Ağlasun'un Almanyası gibi bir yer. ... Almanyası gibi yani. Niye dersin, çünkü, birçok insan buradan emekli oldu: Burada çalışmaktan, sigortadan.

Ya şöyle söyleyeyim, şimdi burada bir 2 aylık, 2,5 aylık çalışma olduğu için. İnsanlar ailesini geçindirmek zorunda ama 2 aylık bir iş de tatmin etmiyor insanları. Hani bizim [P4] ile burada uzun süre kalmamızın sebebi, [P4] bekçilik yaptı kazıda, ben de gişe görevlisiydim. Biz onun için her yıl burada restorasyonda onlara yardımcı olduk, çalıştık. O şekilde devam ettik yani. Hani biz de devamlı bir iş olmasaydı, belki biz de burada olmayacaktık.

Excerpts from the interview with P4:

Yani herkesin çalışmak istediği bir yer ama şeyi kısa, ay olarak, 2 ay sürebildiği için.

Şöyle bir şey var: Yabancılar da çok fena değil ama irtibat, dil, İngilizce bilmediğimiz için... Onlar da Türkçe bilmiyor. İlla bir rehber veya tercüman olması gerekiyor. Yani Türkler de olsa iyi olabilir, ortak da olabilir, beraber de olabilir.

Excerpt from the interview with P5:

Şu şey var mesela: Neden ülkemizde yabancılar kazıyor? Bunu çok duyuyorum. Ama bence kardeş gibi, yani onlar, Türkler de olsun, yabancılar da olsun. Gayet güzel bir şekilde... Herkesin ağzında bu var ama bu sadece bura için geçerli değil. Bu başka bir yerde de de aynı şekilde. Bu muhabbet dönüyor. ... Ülkemizde niye yabancılar çalışıyor? Biz varız, neden biz yapmıyoruz?

Excerpts from the interview with P9:

Köy statüsü olan bir yerde sigorta bir önceliği yok. ... Sagalassos'un en büyük katkılarından bir tanesi sigortalılık başlama. Yereldeki nüfusa en büyük katkısı.

Yani, doğan yetişen çocuk Ağlasun sınırları içerisinde, işte, tuğla fabrikaları var ya, ona gidiyor ya da tarımla uğraşıyor, ailesine yardımcı oluyor. O konuda da bir gençlik kotası var. Yani, şu an ki dersiniz, "Sagalassos'u 80 kişi işçi kotasına çıkaralım." dersiniz, Ağlasun'dan bu sayıyı bulamayız yani.

Ama Sagalassos şimdi birey olarak değil, Ağlasun için ne kattı? Objektif olarak baktığımız zaman şu var, daha önce Ağlasun kendi içine kapanık bir Anadolu, köy...

Köy diyelim yani. ... Bir de o kültür yapısı ıvır zıvırı var ya, Sagalossos'ta şunu gördüm ben: Hani Müslümanız, belli bir grup benliği var. Çocukluktan gelen bir şey. Ama bize Sagalossos'un kattığı ilk önce insanlık. Gerisi ikinci, dil, din, ıvır zıvır konular. En büyük kattığı şeylerden bir tanesi bu.

