



Araştırma Makalesi

## Yozgat İli, Alişar Köyü'nün Ekoturizm Kapsamında Değerlendirilmesi

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Ekoturizm,  
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**Öz:** Uluslararası Doğa Koruma Birliği, ekoturizmi doğayı ve kültürel kaynakları anlayarak korumayı hedefleyen, düşük ziyaretçi etkili, yerel halk katılımı ile yöreye sosyo-ekonomik yarar sağlayan, bozulmamış doğal alanlara çevresel açıdan sorumlu seyahat ve ziyaret olarak tanımlamaktadır. Ekoturizm, doğal ve kültürel kaynakları koruyarak, sürdürülebilir turizm anlayışı içinde turizme konu olan alanların sürdürülebilir gelişimine katkıda bulunmalıdır. Türkiye, zengin coğrafi özellikleri, doğal ve kültürel değerleri ile alternatif turizm türleri için büyük bir potansiyele sahiptir. Bu bağlamda sürdürülebilir kalkınmaya ve yerel kaynak yönetimine katkı sağlayan ekoturizm faaliyetleri de önemli olmaktadır. Alişar Köyü, Yozgat İli'nin Sorgun İlçesi'ne bağlı, merkeze 61 km. uzaklıkta bulunan bir yerleşmedir. M.Ö. 3200 – 2600 arası ilk yerleşimin görüldüğü Alişar Höyüğü gibi önemli bir miras alanının burada bulunması Alişar Köyü'nü önemli kılmaktadır. Bu makalede Alişar Köyü'nün ekoturizm kapsamında, kırsal ve kültürel turizme katkı sağlayan bir yerleşim olarak değerlendirilme olanakları irdelenecektir. Öncelikle Alişar Köyü doğal ve kültürel değerleri ile tanıtılacak; daha sonra potansiyel ekoturizm olanakları irdelenerek, yörenin çevre duyarlı turizm amaçlı kullanımı ve gelişimi için ekoturizmin ilkeleri doğrultusunda çözüm önerileri geliştirilecektir.

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## The Evaluation of Yozgat Alişar Village in the Frame of Ecotourism

### Article Info

**Abstract:** The International Union for Conservation of Nature defines ecotourism as environmentally responsible travel and visit to unspoiled natural areas, which aims to protect nature and cultural resources by understanding, low visitor impact, providing socio-economic benefit to the region with the participation of local people. Ecotourism should contribute to the sustainable development of the areas subject to tourism in case of sustainable tourism by preserving natural and cultural resources. Turkey is a potential country as far as its rich geographical features, natural and cultural values are concerned for

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such alternative tourism types. In this context, ecotourism activities, which make a great contribution to sustainable development, gains importance. Alişar Village is a settlement in the Sorgun District of Yozgat Province, at a distance of 61 km from the city center. The presence of an important heritage site such as Alişar Tumulus, where the first settlement was seen between 3200 and 2600 BC, makes Alişar Village important. In this article, the evaluation of Alişar Village as a settlement contributing to rural and cultural tourism within the scope of ecotourism is aimed. In this context; first of all, Alişar Village was introduced with its natural and cultural values then, ecotourism possibilities of Alişar Village were examined and solution were proposed in the frame of ecotourism principles so that the location can be used and developed for environmentally conscious tourism purposes.

## 1. Introduction

Alişar Village is a settlement located in Sorgun District of Yozgat Province, 61 km away from the center. The feature that makes Alişar Village special is that it dates back to BC. Alişar Mound, where the first settlement was seen between 3200 and 2600, is found here. Alişar Village is an important heritage site with its architecture reflecting traditional Turkish culture and socio-cultural structure.

The implementation of ecotourism in Alişar Höyük in Yozgat Province, Alişar Village and its immediate surroundings, which has been a settlement since 4000 BC, where trade started and where writing was first used in Anatolia, will be an important step for the rural development of the region. In this sense, first of all, the current situation of Alişar Mound and its settlement was evaluated with its natural and cultural characteristics, and the current situation of the area was revealed. Suggestions and opinions have been given for the implementation of ecotourism.

For many years, tourism in Turkey has been identified with coastal areas. However, in many countries of the world, many regions that have no or very little touristic value have been turned into areas that will create potential for tourism by preserving their organic texture or natural values very well or by some visual intervention and landscape design. In this sense, Anatolia, as a country with different characteristics and natural-cultural values with each region, has sufficient potential without even the need for such an intervention. What needs to be done here is to protect the historical texture and adequate infrastructure, as well as green areas, archaeological and urban sites, and many natural values rich in biodiversity, which create potential in terms of tourism, and exhibit them in an integrated manner into ecology.

The concept of sustainability, which emerged with the aim of preserving the ecological balance, recognizing the negative effects of tourism activities on natural and cultural resources, understanding that tourism endanger its own future and based on longer-term use, nature tourism, low-impact tourism, soft tourism, natural life tourism, green Tourism types, which are called by different names such as tourism, environmentally friendly tourism, special interest tourism, appropriate tourism, responsible tourism, partnership-based tourism, rural tourism, sustainable tourism, alternative tourism, ecotourism, and all of them have the same basis, have emerged (Uçkun ve Türkay, 2003; Akşit, 2007; Akpınar ve Bulut, 2010).

## 2. The Concept and Scope of Ecotourism

Ecotourism is defined by the International Ecotourism Society (TIES) as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and promotes the well-being of local people”. According to the definition of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCH), ecotourism is

environmentally responsible travel and visitation to unspoiled natural areas that support conservation by understanding nature and cultural resources, have low visitor impact, and provide socio-economic benefits to local people (Kurdoğlu, 2001; Akpınar ve Bulut, 2010).

The concept of ecotourism is a phenomenon that comes to the fore with the sustainability discussions. For sustainable development and at the same time, ecological and economic decisions are handled together, protecting natural areas and rural areas from the negative environmental effects of tourism as tourism areas of the future, and participating in touristic activities in nature in the context of current tourism activities, where there are no environmental problems (Atabay, 1998; Özbey, 2002; Akpınar ve Bulut, 2010). In rural area; It is aimed to develop alternative tourism activities by directing the population whose main economic occupation is agriculture in regions where natural and/or historical attractions are located to a certain extent, in a way that can accommodate visitors while continuing their agricultural activities (Yürük, 2003; Akşit, 2007; Akpınar ve Bulut, 2010). Recreational activities and the determination of the time they will spend these activities depend on the preferences of the individuals (Yazici and Temizel, 2020). In this sense, accessibility is also important. For ecotourism activities, easy-to-reach areas will be preferred more and people will be able to spend their time comfortably in this area.

When the characteristics of ecotourism are examined;

Tourist type: It consists of people who like to travel to natural areas and cultural environments, who want to learn and appreciate local cultures and regions.

Location: Usually includes natural, sometimes protected areas or culturally rich regions.

Activities: Based on the use of resources with the least impact on the environment and the promotion of environmental education.

Facilities: Requires the use of environmentally friendly technologies and local resources.

Development approach: It is based on combining economic development and conservation objectives.

Development processes: They should have minimal negative impacts on society and the environment and involve the active participation of local people. In addition, it should provide economic benefits to the local people (Pratiwi, 2000; Demir and Çevirgen, 2006; Sungur, 2012).

Ecotourism communities combine conservation awareness and sustainable travel concepts. This requires those who implement or participate in ecotourism activities to comply with the principles of ecotourism. Ecotourism principles are:

- Minimizing the impact on the environment and ecology,
- Creating an environmental and cultural awareness and respect,
- Providing positive experiences to visitors and local people,
- Providing direct financial benefits for protection,
- Providing and strengthening financial benefits for local people,
- Creating a sensitivity regarding the political, environmental and social structure of the host country (Sungur, 2012; <http://www.ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism>).

According to Sadler (1990) and Wight (1993), an ideal sustainable ecotourism model is based on 9 basic principles. According to these principles, ecotourism;

- It should not reduce environmental resources and should be sensitive to the environment,
- It should provide primary, participatory and enlightening experiences,
- It should cover the training of the parties (local communities, government, non-governmental organizations, industry, visitors) before, during and after the trip,
  - It should encourage awareness of the real values of the resource; conditions and boundaries must be properly defined.
- It should develop an understanding and act in sync between the state, non-governmental organizations, industry, scientists and local governments before and after the events,
  - It should promote moral and ethical responsibilities and behaviors towards the natural and cultural environment for all parties,
  - It should provide long-term benefits (be it conservation, scientific, social, cultural or economic) to the resource, the local community and the industry;

- Ecotourism activities should be sensitive to the environment in internal activities as well as external resources (Sungur, 2012).

### 3. Material and Method

In this study, data were collected about Alişar village of Sorgun district of Yozgat province, which has important natural and cultural assets in terms of ecotourism and is thought to contribute to the economy (Figure 1.). The features related to the area have been revealed with the data obtained from the literature reviews, interviews with the local people and observations.



Figure 1. The Study Area, Alişar Village

By collecting data about Alişar Village, natural, cultural, historical etc. features have been revealed. After the data were collected, an evaluation was made with SWOT analysis. In important settlements with tourism potential, it should be possible to take measures to keep up with the age by revealing the current situation of the area, and design and applications should be allowed. In the strategic management process, it is also very important to prepare, implement and evaluate the steps to be taken in this regard. SWOT analysis, which is described as SWOT analysis as Turkish abbreviation, is a form of analysis used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the individual or a business, to identify threats and opportunities arising from external environments and to take precautions or actions against them. With the SWOT analysis applied in Alişar Village; It is necessary to update the current situation of the changing conditions, the demands of the people, and the tourism-oriented development at certain periods.

### 4. Research Findings

In this section, the natural and cultural characteristics of Alişar Village in Yozgat are evaluated.

#### 4.1. Natural Environment Features

Yozgat, which has approximately 2% of Turkey's territory, has Sivas in the east, Kayseri, Nevşehir, Kırşehir in the south, Kırıkkale in the west and Amasya, Çorum and Tokat provinces in the north and its total surface area is 14,123 km<sup>2</sup> (Bulut, 2000). Most of the landforms in and around Yozgat, which is at an altitude of 1300 m above sea level, are plateaus. The average height of this plateau varies between 1200-1400 m. There are mountains and hills that are not very high on the Bozok Plateau. The mountains in the east and northeast of Yozgat are curved mountain ranges that are generally not very high. The area covered by the plains in and around Yozgat is small. Plains are generally formed in valley

floors and depressions that break up the Plateau surface. The most important water resources of Yozgat and its surroundings are Kızılırmak, Delice River and their tributaries. In addition, this region is very rich in terms of groundwater. Groundwater in the region rises above ground as a source in various places. The semi-arid continental climate of the Central Anatolia Region is dominant in Yozgat and its surroundings. Summers in the region are hot and dry, and winters are cold and rainy. The temperature differences between night and day are quite high (Ünsal, 2016). When evaluated in terms of demographics, it is seen that the village population is gradually decreasing.

The climate in Sorgun, which has a long winter season, is continental. It has harsh and dry cold. Spring is rainy and summer is dry. Autumn is the most beautiful season. The hottest months are July and August. In these months, the temperature fluctuates between 25-30 degrees. In winter, it is -2 to -10 degrees. Annual precipitation average is between 45-50 kg. Snow mostly falls in January, February and March and its thickness reaches 60 cm from time to time. Due to the fact that the district is on the plain and is open from all sides, it is open to winds blowing from all directions. Poyraz wind blowing from the northeast and Iodos wind is mostly seen (Umut, 2006).

Endemic plants in Yozgat: 213 Genus and 399 Species belonging to 56 Families have been identified, 70 of these 399 species are endemic. In addition, 69 of these 399 species are subspecies and 48 of them are at the variety level. As a result of the examination of the fauna species of Yozgat Province, the fauna species were examined in three sections as mammals, birds and reptiles. As a result of the examination, 4 types of mammals, 9 types of birds and 3 types of snakes were identified. Some of these are Fox, Rabbit, Dormouse, Squirrel, Wild Boar, Golden Eagle, Little Hawk, Crab, Starling, Mountain Crow (Anonim, 2014).

#### 4.2. Natural Environment Features

Excavation was carried out between 1927-32 by a team under the direction of Hans Henning von der Oste from the University of Chicago in Alişar, which is located on the border of Yozgat Province and 204 km east of Ankara and 85 km southeast of Ankara. The importance of the excavation is that it is one of the exemplary applications where systematic excavations were made and the Central Anatolian stragrapy was extracted. The importance of Troy in Western Anatolia is equivalent to the importance of Alişar in the Central Anatolian Region. Alişar Village and Mound are shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Alişar Village and Mound (Anonim, 2022a)

During the excavations, skeletons buried in jars belonging to the Chalcolithic period, terracotta pottery, seals, human and animal figures well worked on stone and bone were found. During the period when the mound was first settled (3200-2600 BC), the area looks like a simple village with its rectangular plan, mud-brick walls and flat-roofed houses. In the next period, it is seen that the city has an inner castle, the houses were built according to a certain plan, and some of the walls were plastered from the inside and outside. During this period, the city was surrounded by walls. It is also understood that cultural exchange with Mesopotamia started in this period (Kinal, 1987).



**Figure 3.** Settlement Detail From The Mound (Anonim, 2022b)

In the third period, the two walls, namely the inner castle and the outer castle, were strengthened and the area of the inner castle was expanded. This period is between 2200-2000 BC and continues until the Hittite age. The settlements of Alişar Mound can be seen in Figure 4.2.2. When it comes to the fourth period, between 2000-1500 BC, Alişar became a big city. Unlike the old bronze age, the Hittites settled in the lower city. The lower city has the character of the old Hittite era and was strengthened by a large wall. The city has been strengthened with wide-planned castle gates, underground roads and towers in places, making it defensive. The mound, which did not lose its importance in the Great Hittite era (1400-1200 BC), became a small settlement area again. In the fifth period, between 1200-700 BC, the Hittite - Phrygian culture is seen in Alişar. After this period, the lower city has lost its importance. After that, the artifacts unearthed in the city revealed the weight of the Phrygian culture. Although the citadel was rebuilt on its old foundations in this era, the citadel wall of the first building level belonging to the 19th century BC was destroyed by a fire (Kinal, 1987).

The Chalcolithic age is defined by vessels in which geometric shapes consisting of latticed lines, crosses and zigzags on a black background are filled with a white or yellow paste and embroidered. When it comes to the Bronze Age, there are geometrically patterned chessboards, wavy lines, zigzags, equilateral triangles vessels, which are called Kappadokian ceramics, drawn with dark brown or black paint on a red-brown slip (Kinal, 1987). The city was ruled as a state until the middle of 3000 BC (Akture, 1997). Although Alişar Mound is a regional settlement with local characteristics, it is understood that

commercial relations were established with Southeastern Europe and Mesopotamia in terms of pottery and figures (Sevin, 1999).

It is known that there have been settlements in Yozgat Province since the Chalcolithic period (5500-3000 BC) as a result of the excavations and surface researches carried out to date. In particular, the number of settlements started to increase from the Middle Chalcolithic (4500-4000 BC) and Late Chalcolithic (4000-3500 BC) Periods.

If the settlements and artifacts in Yozgat Province are analyzed chronologically;

- Middle and Late Chalcolithic Periods
- Bronze Period (3000-1200 BC),
- Hittite Period (1800-1200 BC),
- Iron Age (1200-700 BC),
- Phrygian Period (750-680 BC),
- Med Period (700 BC)
- Persian Period in Anatolia (540-333 BC),
- Hellenistic Period (330-30 BC),
- Galatian Period (280-25 BC),
- Roman Period for Anatolia (30 BC - AD 395),
- Byzantine Period (395-1453 AD),
- Anatolian Seljuk Period (1060-1308 AD),
- Ottoman Period (1299-1923 AD) (Ünsal, 2016)

If we look at the historical processes, Alişar Mound has been a settlement in all periods and is an important center in terms of historical richness.

### 5. Suggestions and Conclusion for Alişar Village

There are many tourism activities that can be evaluated within the scope of ecotourism in Turkey. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are given in Table 1 by performing a SWOT analysis of the area in line with the findings. Within the scope of this research, tourism activities suitable for the region for ecotourism purposes were evaluated for the natural and cultural values of Alişar Village.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Presence of Alişar mound, one of the largest mounds in Central Anatolia Region, in the area	Local people do not have sufficient knowledge and awareness of conservation awareness
Presence of many mounds and tumulus in the area	Gradual decline of the village population
The area has an undisturbed landscape potential	Decrease in agriculture and livestock activities
The topographic structure is suitable for daily recreational activities.	The fact that the village people do not directly participate in tourism
The area is located on the main road route	Increase in illegal excavations in the mound
Being close to Yozgat province	Failure to carry out excavations by experts in the field
Being close to Kayseri province	Bad images resulting from illegal excavation

To be accessible Local culture still exists. Active use of agricultural lands	Insufficient promotion and advertisement of the area Lack of accommodation units
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
The high tourism potential of the nearby settlements (close to Sarıkaya Roman Bath, Hattusha Antique City and Kaman Kalehöyük...) Increasing interest in ecotourism Presence of thermal water resources The richness of the food culture of the region	Environmental pollution The dents formed as a result of illegal excavation in the mound Destruction of natural areas

**Table 1.** SWOT Analysis of Alişar Village

- **Historical/Archaeological Site Cultural Tourism:** Alişar Village, with its Alişar Mound, is an ideal settlement for ecotourists interested in cultural assets. It is one of the rare places in Yozgat Province, which has been inhabited continuously since 5500 BC (Chalkoltic Age), according to scientific archaeological studies. Therefore, the main tourism potential in the research area is cultural assets and historical values. The mound area, which will create cultural awareness, is an important attraction point for tourism. The local people will benefit from tourism sufficiently by opening them to tourism by exhibiting the remains that will be unearthed as a result of surface surveys and excavations.
- An archaeological park is proposed in the area by making the necessary arrangements in line with the data and findings obtained from the excavation in this area. It is a great advantage that Alişar Mound is close to the ancient city of Hattusa and Kaman Kalehöyük and is on the main road route. Alişar Mound, which is the most important cultural resource for Alişar Village, should be integrated with other archaeological sites in the vicinity and included in tour itineraries and its recognition should be increased.
- **Nature Walks (Trekking):** The region, which is located in the Kızılırmak arc in Alişar Village and includes rich forest areas, is a suitable region for trekking within the scope of ecotourism with its climate and topographic characteristics. Nature sports associations to be established throughout the province will help to make these sports more conscious, accompanied by trained guides. Thus, ecotourists will be able to learn about the natural and cultural resources in the region along the hiking trails; will be able to experience natural vegetation and wildlife.





Figure 4. General view of Alişar Mound (Blasweiler, 2012)

- **Bicycle Tourism:** In parallel with nature tourism, where interest is increasing rapidly in Turkey as in the world, bicycle tourism offers an alternative for ecotourists with tours organized by travel agencies, especially in rural areas that have preserved its natural structure. Alişar Village and its surroundings are also suitable for such activities.
- **Agriculture and Farm (Agro) Tourism:** Agriculture and animal husbandry are carried out as an economic activity in Alişar Village. The number of visitors who want to experience and live the natural life directly, especially in farms for ecotourism, is increasing. Turkey has a great potential in this sense (Tunç and Saç, 1998; Çağatay vd., 2002; Akpınar and Bulut, 2010). When evaluated from this point of view, this type of tourism will offer a different alternative for ecotourists who will come to this region.
- **Photo Safari:** Alişar Village is a suitable place for photos with its untouched nature and landscape features, immovable cultural assets, its mosque and tomb, local life culture, traditional quality, food and people.
- **Local Handicrafts:** As in many sub-settlements in Turkey, there are some traditional handicrafts in Yozgat. However, in Alişar Village, carpet weaving and weaving, which are on the verge of disappearing over time, need to be revived. These traditional handicrafts will also contribute economically to the local people within the scope of ecotourism activities; will support sustainable development.

To date, no comprehensive study has been conducted to evaluate the alternative tourism potential in Alişar Village. In this context, a tourism master plan that takes into account the environmental characteristics of Alişar Village should be prepared first.

In Alişar Village, sustainable settlements and employment opportunities should be created in line with the ecotourism approach, and the tourism sector should be brought to an active sector within the scope of Yozgat province. Tourism in Alişar Village should be supported by sustainable environmental policies. The areas to be brought to tourism with the understanding of sustainability should be supported by public institutions and organizations. Tourism should be developed as multifunctional and dimensional, and public, private and non-governmental organizations should be made aware of the promotion of tourism. National and international collaborations regarding the tourism sector should be strengthened and effective domestic and international promotion and marketing should be carried out. Quality workforce should be provided by raising awareness of local

people through tourism education. Necessary infrastructure and environmental problems should be resolved with the contributions of the local government and the private sector.

As a result of the research, it has been determined that Alişar Village has a suitable potential for ecotourism with its natural and cultural heritage, and these features will easily contribute to the diversification of tourism in the Yozgat region.

Remains found as a result of the excavations carried out by a team under the direction of Hans Henning von der Oste from the University of Chicago between 1927-32 in Alişar Mound are exhibited in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara. If the excavations are continued, the new remains to be found are of great importance in terms of transferring the past of the region to the future and bringing it to culture and tourism. In this context, tourism-oriented activities of Alişar Village, whose natural potential is seen to be limited for ecotourism activities, should be aimed at recognizing and discovering archaeological and cultural values. The necessary accommodation facilities should be provided for the visitors who are interested in visiting and seeing interesting places rich in cultural assets and have this awareness in this region. For this purpose, traditional houses should be converted into hostels. Actions for the most effective use of the tourism potential, which will introduce the tourism resources of Alişar Village, whose natural, rural and cultural riches have not yet been evaluated, to the world and provide a source of economic development to the region, should be implemented rapidly. For this, the cultural assets in Alişar Village and the archaeological site should be introduced to the local people and conservation awareness should be created. Necessary trainings should be given about Alişar Mound and its surroundings and guides should be trained. The tour routes including the village and the mound area should be determined and functionality should be gained. Archaeological finds (ceramics, objects, etc.) should be made an income generating element for tourism. An organization should be established for the sale of local products (village eggs, tarhana, etc.). Local products should be branded and their recognition should be increased. Antique period foods should be found and sold. In order to inform the visitors about the prehistoric period settlement pattern and housing characteristics, a sample bronze age housing structure should be built at the entrance of the protected area, near the Alişar Mound, with the characteristics of the period. Traditions and customs should be determined and kept alive with the visitors. Endemic plants in the region should be identified and promoted and protection measures should be taken.

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