

## IS HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT FOCUSED ON THE LANDSCAPE ITSELF OR THE HISTORY OF LANDSCAPE?

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### Abstrac

Under the European Landscape Convention (ELC), each country is required to identify, classify, plan, protect, and manage its landscapes while analyzing the pressures causing changes. Landscape assessment studies have primarily focused on existing natural and cultural landscapes. However, evaluations that reveal historical identity, historical value, and trace their development and transformation processes have been under represented and often insufficient. Specifically, the historical and heritage dimensions of landscapes are often inadequately addressed in landscape planning. In this context, the Historical Landscape Assessment (HLA), which analyzes long-term interactions between human activities and natural processes, and examines the traces left by human influence, has gained significant importance. According to the ELC, landscape is an area perceived by people, shaped by the interaction of natural and/or human factors, and is closely related to HLA. The aim of this study is to highlight common misunderstandings about HLA. By discussing landscape assessment methods focused on the past, present, and future, this study emphasizes the importance of HLA, which defines the biography of historical landscapes that have endured over time, possess temporal depth, and demonstrated resilience to change. HLA evaluates the temporal depth of landscapes that have survived to the present day, focusing on more than just their history. Addressing the similarities and differences between HLA and landscape character assessment, this study proposes an integrated and holistic approach to landscape evaluation. By contributing to the correction of misunderstandings, this study can set an example approach for promoting a different perspective on HLA.

**Keyword:** Landscape historical assessment, landscape biography, temporal depth

### TARİHİ PEYZAJ DEĞERLENDİRMESİ PEYZAJIN KENDİSİNE Mİ YOKSA PEYZAJIN TARİHİNE Mİ ODAKLANIR?

#### Özet

*Avrupa Peyzaj Sözleşmesi (APS) kapsamında her ülke, peyzajlarını tanımlamalı, sınıflamalı, planlamalı, korumalı, yönetmeli ve değişime yol açan baskıları analiz ederek değerlendirmelidir. Peyzaj değerlendirme çalışmalarında genellikle mevcut doğal ve kültürel peyzajlar ele alınırken, peyzajların tarihi kimliği ve değerini ortaya koyan, tarihsel gelişimlerini izleyen değerlendirmeler eksiktir. Özellikle peyzaj planlama süreçlerinde, peyzajların miras yönetimi ve tarihi boyutları yeterince dikkate alınmamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, insan faaliyetleri ile doğal süreçlerin etkileşimlerini inceleyen ve peyzaj üzerindeki insan etkilerini analiz eden Tarihi Peyzaj Değerlendirmesi (TPD) önem kazanmaktadır. APS'e göre; peyzaj, doğal ve/veya insan faaliyetlerinin etkileşimleri sonucu şekillenen ve insanlar tarafından algılanan bir alan olarak tanımlanır ve TPD ile doğrudan ilişkilidir. Bu çalışma, TPD hakkındaki yanlış algıların düzeltilmesini amaçlamaktadır. Dün, bugün ve geleceğe yönelik peyzaj değerlendirme yöntemleri ele alınarak, zamansal derinliği olan ve değişimlere direnç göstermiş tarihi peyzajların biyografisini tanımlayan TPD'nin önemi vurgulanmaktadır. TPD, peyzajların tarihini değil, günümüze ulaşabilen peyzajların derinliğini değerlendirir. Bu çalışma, mevcut yanlış algıların düzeltilmesine katkı sağlayarak, TPD'ye farklı bir bakış açısı getirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.*

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Tarihi peyzaj değerlendirilmesi, peyzaj biyografisi, zamansal derinlik

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## 1. Introduction

In 1995, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with the support of several European countries, published the report *"Parks for Life."* This report emphasized the necessity of conserving natural and cultural landscapes and highlighted the importance of establishing an international convention to ensure the sustainable management of rural landscapes (Herlin, 2007; Ortaeřme, 2007). In this context, various initiatives were undertaken by the Council of Europe with the aim of establishing a comprehensive legal framework for the protection, management, and planning of landscapes (Herlin, 2007; Demir and Demirel, 2018). As a result of these efforts, the European Landscape Convention (ELC) was signed on October 20, 2000, at the Council of Europe Landscape Protection Conference held in Florence. The ELC is highly significant as it represents the first international treaty to bring landscape issues onto the global agenda. The Convention serves as an international instrument that seeks not only the protection of natural landscapes but also the sustainable management of all types of landscapes, including rural and urban landscapes. It conceptualizes landscape as an integrated entity comprising natural, cultural, and historical components, and underscores that landscape protection should not be limited to areas of exceptional beauty, but should encompass landscapes of all scales and qualities (Herlin, 2007).

The natural, cultural, aesthetic, tourism, and recreational values of landscapes are adversely affected by unsustainable human uses. This situation leads to a decline in the intrinsic values of landscapes (Uzun et al., 2018; Atik et al., 2021). In order to prevent unsustainable uses and to develop appropriate solutions, the European Landscape Convention (ELC) requires each country to identify, protect, manage, and enhance its landscape values (Ortaeřme, 2007; Eetvelde and Antrop, 2009).

Within this framework, the ELC aims to establish a common language at local, regional, and international levels (Uzun et al., 2018). The protection and management of landscapes should be addressed not only in terms of aesthetic values but also within cultural and societal contexts (Demir and Demirel, 2018; Erdoėan et al., 2020). In this regard, the ELC promotes the participation of diverse stakeholders to ensure sustainable landscape management (Atik, 2009). In accordance with the ELC, signatory countries are required to define their national landscape policies and to integrate these policies with national economic, agricultural, tourism, nature conservation, industrial, cultural heritage, and environmental strategies (Herlin, 2007; Ortaeřme, 2007; Olwig et al., 2016).

Turkey has signed the European Landscape Convention (ELC). Officially entering into force in 2003, the Convention provides a legal framework for the protection, management, and planning of landscapes in Turkey. As with all signatory countries, Turkey has committed to identifying the landscapes within its territory, determining their characteristic features, and analyzing the pressures causing changes upon these landscapes (Demir and Demirel, 2018; Balta and Atik, 2022). Within this scope, the identification and assessment of Turkey's natural and cultural landscape values are addressed through landscape character analysis and evaluation processes (Uzun et al., 2018; Atik et al., 2021; Belen and řahin, 2021). Turkey possesses a rich heritage of historic landscapes; however, studies aimed at identifying historic landscape values and the processes of their transformation over time are still in their early stages (Belen and řahin, 2021; řengür and Nurlu, 2021). In this context, the scope of Turkey's landscape assessment (TLA) studies should be further expanded to include historic landscape components. Nevertheless, it has been indicated that the existing studies exhibit significant shortcomings, particularly in terms of

methodologies for historic landscape assessment, and that a more systematic approach is required (Demir and Demirel, 2018; Belen and Şahin, 2021; Şengür and Nurlu, 2021).

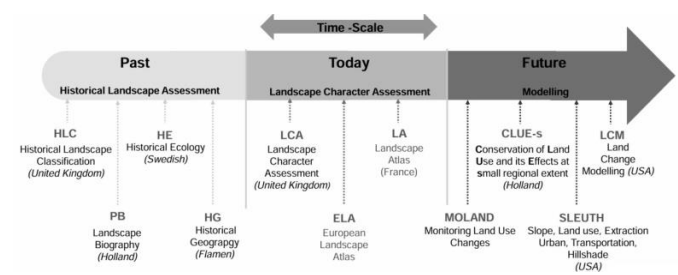
The assessment of historic landscapes is not limited to the preservation of individual structures or natural elements; it also involves multidimensional analyses, such as the evaluation of historic spatial organizations, the historical transformations of land use, and the temporal changes in human–landscape interactions (Fairclough and Macinnes, 2003). In this regard, it differs from the classification of historic landscapes typically addressed by archaeologists. Within this context, interdisciplinary approaches aimed at identifying landscape history are of great importance, requiring the integration of Geographic Information Systems (GIS)-supported analyses, the digitization of historical maps, and the incorporation of archaeological and historical data that reveal the cultural continuity of the landscape (Harrison, 2010; Demir and Demirel, 2018; Fairclough et al., 2018). Harmonizing landscape character assessment and historic landscape assessment studies in Turkey with international standards and integrating them within the holistic framework envisaged by the ELC are of critical importance for future landscape planning processes.

According to the ELC, research and projects conducted in Turkey have not been integrated into the legal process and have primarily focused on landscape character assessment studies. However, there are small-scale studies within the scope of historic landscape character assessment. These studies, however, lack an integrated approach to landscape character assessment. This study, which questions the perspective of historic landscape assessment, focuses on what historic landscape character assessment is and what it is not. In this context, the study discusses an assessment process that examines the traces

and changes of the landscape from the past to the present, revealing the temporal depth of these traces. Historic landscape assessment does not focus on the history of landscapes, but rather on the reflections of the temporal process of the landscape. The similarities and differences with the often-confused landscape character assessment process are also explained. As a result, historic landscape assessment requires the evaluation of resilient landscapes that have persisted to the present, rather than examining the history of landscapes. This study, which addresses the biography of landscapes through historic landscape assessment, may serve as an exemplary approach for considering historic landscape character assessment from a different perspective.

## 2. Landscape Assessment of Past, Today and Future

Landscape assessment studies are conducted across different temporal scales and levels, including local, regional, national, and international contexts. These studies aim to analyze the processes of change extending from the past to the present and to develop projections for the future (Figure 1).



*Figure 1: The methods of Landscape assessments (Nurlu and Turner, 2019).*

Historical landscape analyses are referred to using different terminologies in various countries, but similar approaches are adopted methodologically. Historical landscape evaluation studies include identifying the landscape patterns preserved from the past to the present and their classification and analysis. For instance, the method known as "Historic

Landscape Characterisation (HLC)" in Europe is an important approach for determining and preserving historic landscape character (Turner and Crow, 2010; Nurlu and Turner, 2019).

The evaluation of contemporary landscapes, on the other hand, is carried out within the framework of landscape character analysis and evaluation methods. In this context, although different terminologies exist in various countries, landscape character analyses are conducted based on similar methodological foundations (Winterburn, 2008; Nitavska, 2011; Long, 2013; Tudor, 2014; Balta and Atik, 2022). In this context, the method known as "Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)" in the United Kingdom aims to define specific character areas by analyzing the natural and cultural elements of the landscape.

Landscape evaluation studies aimed at the future are based on modeling approaches developed with consideration of land use dynamics and environmental variables. In this context, spatial analyses and scenario-based modeling techniques are utilized to predict landscape change processes and develop sustainable planning strategies (Olwig et al., 2016; Nurlu and Turner, 2019; Erdoğan et al., 200). Specifically, ecological modeling and Geographic Information System (GIS) based simulation techniques are commonly applied in landscape management for future planning.

Landscape evaluation studies conducted across various temporal scales and levels must be approached with an interdisciplinary perspective and executed within a holistic methodological framework. These studies necessitate the integration of data and analytical methods from diverse disciplines such as ecology, geography, history, landscape architecture, urban, and regional planning. An interdisciplinary perspective enables a more comprehensive assessment of landscape dynamics, revealing the interactions between components such as ecosystem services,

biodiversity, cultural landscape elements, and land use changes.

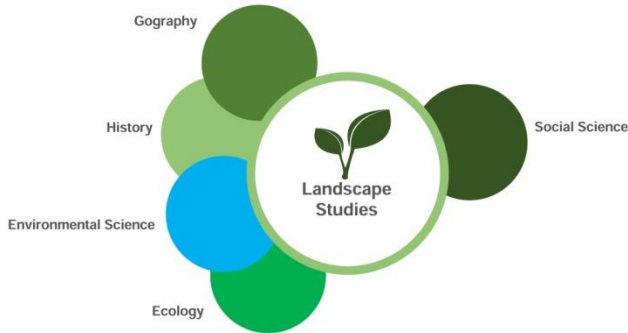
### **3. Historical Landscape Assessment (HLA)**

Landscape studies require a holistic approach that encompasses various disciplines such as social sciences, geography, ecology, environmental sciences, and history. In this context, heritage management and archaeology significantly contribute to understanding the impacts of historical processes on landscapes and shaping conservation policies (Lambrick et al., 2013; Fairclough et al., 2018; Nurlu and Turner, 2019).

Landscape studies require an interdisciplinary approach, integrating diverse fields such as social sciences, geography, ecology, environmental sciences, and history (Figure 2). In this regard, heritage management and archaeology play crucial roles in understanding the effects of historical processes on landscapes and shaping conservation strategies (Demir and Demirel, 2018). Particularly, landscape planning encompasses not only aesthetic and functional dimensions but also the social, ecological, historical, and geographical aspects of the area. An interdisciplinary approach aids in better comprehending the complex structure of landscapes (Crow and Turner, 2009; Scazzosi, 2010). Specifically, the effects of historical processes on landscapes play a critical role in determining the evolutionary structure and cultural identity of a landscape (Fairclough and Macinnes, 2003; Winterburn, 2008; Kolen et al., 2015). In this context, heritage management and archaeology provide fundamental reference points for understanding the historical and cultural layers of a landscape. Heritage management is essential for achieving the conservation and sustainability goals of landscapes as it protects values passed on to future generations by addressing both cultural and natural heritage (Harrison, 2010; Demir and Demirel, 2018). Archaeology, on the other hand, allows us to uncover the traces of past human



settlements and activities on landscapes, thus facilitating a better understanding of the characteristics of historical landscapes (Fairclough and Macinnes, 2003; Kolen et al., 2015). Therefore, the interaction between these disciplines is critical in developing conservation strategies that consider not only the natural but also the cultural values of landscapes.



*Figure 2: Landscape studies (Fairclough and Macinnes, 2003)*

Historical landscapes encompass cultural landscapes that have undergone change due to human use or intervention, characterized by distinct spatial patterns. These landscapes have been shaped over time through the interaction of human activities and environmental processes, and they require special consideration in landscape planning and conservation efforts (Fairclough and Macinnes, 2003; Turner, 2006).

Historical landscape character, on the other hand, can be defined as the entirety of historical, cultural, mythological, and archaeological elements that distinguish one landscape from another (Turner, 2006; HeriScape, 2017). This character includes elements such as land use passed down through history, structural components, spatial organizations, and traditional knowledge systems. Historical landscape character is a concept used to identify and define traces of human influence within a landscape. These traces encompass enduring impacts of human activities, represented through elements such as land parcels, settlements, land boundaries, land patterns, buildings, monuments, planted forests, wetlands, roads, quarries, mines, and factories

(Turner, 2006; Winterburn, 2008; Belen and Şahin, 2021). These traces are visible in every part of the landscape and often reflect a structure shaped over temporal depth.

The analyses conducted within the framework of Historical Landscape Assessment (HLA) have revealed that many landscape forms have been shaped by human influence over time, and these changes play a significant role in defining the identity of historical landscapes. Historical landscape assessment analyzes the long-term impacts of human activity on the environment, identifying land use changes, spatial organizations, and cultural heritage elements (Turner, 2006; Harrison, 2010; Olwig et al., 2016). This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the historical development of a landscape by tracking its temporal depth, the changes that have occurred from the past to the present. In the definition of historical landscape character, the historical source value, interest, and unique historical character of urban, rural, and maritime landscapes are determined. This process yields crucial data on the evolution of the landscape (Demir and Demirel, 2018).

In this context, historical landscape analyses offer a holistic approach to understanding past land use patterns, cultural continuity, and ecological changes, thereby contributing to the shaping of landscape planning and conservation policies. The concept of "human perception" within the landscape definition in the ELC is directly related to historical landscape assessment. The way in which people perceive a particular landscape and how this perception has evolved over time plays a critical role in the process of landscape character analysis and assessment. This process adopts a human-centered approach, allowing for a deeper analysis of the historical dimension of the landscape. Ultimately, this assessment provides valuable insights into the historical and cultural values of the landscape, contributing significantly to the development of

conservation strategies (Demir and Demirel, 2018; Fairclough and Herring, 2016).

The assessment of historical landscapes is not limited to the examination of the physical environment but also requires the analysis of socio-economic and cultural dynamics. As defined in the APS, historical landscape assessment is closely related to areas shaped by the reciprocal interaction of human and natural processes. This assessment reveals the historical and cultural layers of the landscape, adding a deeper historical dimension to landscape character analysis and evaluation processes (Turner and Crow, 2010; Demir and Demirel, 2018; Fairclough and Herring, 2016). In this context, methods such as historical documents, maps, archaeological excavations, and local oral history studies are of critical importance in understanding the formation processes and spatial organization of historical landscapes. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach in landscape studies allows for the integrated consideration of the landscape's natural, cultural, and historical components, facilitating the development of sustainable management strategies. This ensures the protection of both ecosystem services and the comprehensive evaluation of historical landscapes.

In accordance with the APS, each country is undertaking efforts to identify the natural and cultural landscape values within its borders. However, it has been determined that the elements that reveal the historical identity of landscapes and the cultural traces carried from the past to the present have not been adequately assessed during this process. To address this gap, the classification and assessment of historical landscapes have been developed. This method analyzes the landscape structure and usage patterns of a region extending from the past to the present (Winterburn, 2008; Şengür and Nurlu, 2021). In this way, the historical landscape character is defined, and the historical layers of existing landscapes, historical land

uses, present-day landscape patterns, and the unique features of these areas are revealed. This assessment method, also referred to as the temporal depth of the landscape, aims to identify historical traces on the landscape and analyze spatial changes. Typically applied to large-scale areas, these studies contribute to the development of conservation policies and the creation of sustainable landscape management strategies, with applications across various scales, such as national parks, rural landscapes, and settlement areas (Crow et al., 2011; Fairclough et al., 2018). By conducting historical analysis of landscapes, these studies reveal how landscapes have evolved from the past to the present and the types of human activities associated with this evolution. Such studies provide valuable data and methods for landscape planning and conservation.

### *3.1. What is historical landscape assessment? what is not?*

HLC emphasizes that landscapes are living and dynamic entities. It allows for an understanding of the current landscape and the unveiling of the evolutionary process it has undergone over time. In this context, it traces a significant portion of the historical traces that are present in the landscape today. Historical landscape assessment focuses not on the history of landscapes, but on the impact of the temporal process on the landscape. This can be explained by the concept of "temporal depth." Temporal depth refers to the extended period of time required to better understand the historical development processes of landscapes and the effects of human activities on these processes. This concept aims to identify the complex processes that have shaped the landscape and the changes in the historical context. HLC does not only examine historical elements, but also the transformations these elements have undergone over time and their relationships with functional and social changes. Therefore, unlike other assessment methods, HLC is not simply a

static inventory (Fairclough and Macinnes, 2003; Crow et al., 2011; Şengür and Nurlu, 2021).

In order to properly understand and interpret temporal depth, it is necessary to define the various and complex landscapes shaped by human activities in the past. The changes that landscape components have undergone over time or the continuity of the current landscapes form the essential elements of this process. HLC not only reveals the evolution of landscape components over the historical process but also aims to establish a connection between the current presence of these components and their historical context. Existing landscapes carrying traces of the past should be evaluated by grasping the depth of time. This approach focuses on the analysis of landscapes that still bear traces of the past today, rather than landscapes that existed in the past. It examines the changes in the landscape over time and their reflection in the present, helping us to understand the continuity of the landscape (Crow et al., 2011; Fairclough and Herring, 2016; Fairclough et al., 2018). As a result, the concept of temporal depth is considered a fundamental component in landscape character assessments and sustainable landscape management, bridging the past and future of landscapes through these elements. Monitoring landscape changes provides guidance in both conservation and development processes.

HLA should not be limited to specific areas, protected regions, cultural heritage sites, or conservation areas (Harrison, 2010; Demir and Demirel, 2018; Belen and Şahin, 2021). Instead, all landscapes should be considered, with the historical and cultural dimensions of each landscape being revealed. This holistic approach allows for the examination of the various characteristics of landscapes at different scales. Historic Landscape Characterization (HLC) not only facilitates the understanding of traditional structures but also makes significant contributions to the development and preservation of landscapes at local, regional,

and national scales (Turner and Crow, 2010; Tudor, 2014; Fairclough and Herring, 2016). Through efforts that highlight the historical character, HLC ensures the integration of the cultural and natural values from the past into contemporary landscape planning (Winterburn, 2008; Lambrick et al., 2013; Fairclough et al., 2018). In this way, the historical quality of natural and cultural landscapes is enhanced, steering them towards a more sustainable and preservable future.

Historical landscape assessment typically covers large areas such as national parks and regions at the provincial and district levels. These areas hold significant importance as landscapes formed by the combination of both human activities and natural processes. This assessment is not limited to conservation areas or monuments. By evaluating the historical landscape characters identified through HLC, it contributes to our understanding of the changes and resilience of landscapes that have survived from the past to the present (Kolen et al., 2015; Fairclough and Herring, 2016).

In cultural landscape assessment, not only landscapes shaped by humans but also human activities on natural and semi-natural landscapes are taken into account. The impacts of human activities on landscapes are examined in conjunction with natural processes, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis. In this context, the changes in landscapes, both past and present, should be analyzed not only for conservation purposes but also to understand and define the reasons behind these changes (Scazzosi, 2010; HeriScape, 2017; Nurlu and Turner, 2019; Erdoğan et al., 2020).

In historical landscape assessment, it is essential to emphasize the importance of the perspectives of both experts and local communities. Local communities serve as a valuable source in understanding the historical significance of landscapes and how historical characters have been carried into the present. Local knowledge and experience regarding the

ongoing pressures of change from the past to the present are necessary for more accurately analyzing the processes of landscape change (Crow et al., 2011; Erdoğan et al., 2020; Şengür and Nurlu, 2021).

The transparency and accessibility of historical landscape assessment processes also play a critical role. Landscape assessments should follow a clear and understandable process, making the results easily usable by others. This allows the data obtained to be effectively utilized by various stakeholders and researchers. Historical landscape assessment should be conducted not from a single perspective, but through a multidisciplinary approach (Fairclough and Herring, 2016; Demir and Demirel, 2018). Such studies should be designed in a way that they can be easily integrated with other planning processes and databases. These studies should be usable not only in the academic field but also in practical planning processes.

Historical landscape assessment aims to influence decisions regarding future landscape development and management. This method has strong potential for application in various fields, including spatial planning, land management, agriculture-environmental policies, landscape policies, local differences, and community-based initiatives (Fairclough and Herring, 2016; Nurlu and Turner, 2019). Furthermore, landscape research also has a significant impact on education and communication fields. In other words, the HLC process adopts an approach in which human interaction is dominant. In this process, the human factor influencing the shaping of landscapes is typically evaluated through elements such as settlements, agricultural activities, and transportation networks. The information provided by historical landscape assessment contributes not only to understanding contemporary landscapes but also to shaping future landscape management strategies.

Historical landscape assessment (HLA) studies are typically interpretive and provide evaluations on the characteristic features of landscapes both past and present, rather than offering definitive conclusions (Fairclough and Herring, 2016; Belen and Şahin, 2021; Şengür and Nurlu, 2021). Therefore, these studies adopt a flexible and dynamic approach, rather than relying on sharp and definitive statements. The research contributes to other planning and evaluation processes by offering strategic insights to decision-makers regarding the potential future of landscapes (Demir and Demirel, 2018; Nurlu and Turner, 2019; Erdoğan et al., 2020). However, rather than providing a set of absolute recommendations, these studies offer general guidance on the evolutionary processes of landscapes. In this process, landscape character types that are adaptable to change, resilient to threats, and responsive to opportunities are classified and assessed. These character types are analyzed based on their capacity to adapt to environmental, cultural, and social changes, providing guiding information for sustainable landscape management.

### *3.2. The importance of historical landscape assessment*

Historical landscape assessment (HLA) is an important tool for enhancing the historical quality of natural and cultural landscapes at national, regional, and local scales. The two key criteria of HLC are the perception-based assessment of landscapes and the presence of landscape changes over time. By considering these two elements, the HLC approach enables a more comprehensive understanding of the historical evolution of landscapes and the impacts of this evolution (Scazzosi, 2010; Kolen et al., 2015). Furthermore, it is observed that landscape character types show varying levels of resilience to changes over time. Some landscape character types are more resilient to changes, while others may be more vulnerable (Nitavska, 2011; Uzun et al., 2018). This allows



for the analysis of the continuity and fragility of landscape characters in temporal processes, thereby aiding in the strategic decision-making for landscape management and conservation.

One of the primary objectives of HLA is to understand the changes in landscapes and land use decisions caused by human influence over time. In this context, Lambrick and others (2013) and Kolen et al. (2015) have highlighted the role of the human factor in the evolution of landscapes and its significance in this process. HLC provides insights into how landscapes have shaped over time by examining the balance between continuity and change, and the impacts of decision-making processes over the years on landscapes. Identifying the traces of past landscapes that have survived to the present plays a crucial role in understanding the evolution of landscapes in historical and cultural contexts. In this sense, historical landscapes do not merely reflect the history of a specific period but also carry the traces of the evolutionary processes they have undergone. HLC enhances and complements landscape studies by adding a historical dimension to landscape analysis. This approach contributes to the preservation of not only the natural values of landscapes but also their historical, cultural, and archaeological values (Fairclough and Herring, 2016; Nurlu and Turner, 2019). Historical Landscape Assessment stands out as a critical tool in enhancing the effectiveness of landscape management and land use decisions, providing practical inputs at the local level, and ensuring these processes are more sustainable and suited to local conditions.

The elements that define historical character can vary across different landscapes, but all of these elements contribute to environmental databases, leveraging existing resources rather than creating new databases (Fairclough and Macinnes, 2003; Demir and Demirel, 2018). This facilitates the integration of HLA with other landscape evaluation studies. The data used in HLC studies is typically based

on GIS, which allows for easy correlation with other spatial data. Such data is adaptable at national, regional, and local levels and can be integrated with different datasets. This feature enables various analyses, allowing connections to be made between historical development and environmental data, such as biodiversity (Fairclough and Macinnes, 2003). In this context, the effects of historical landscapes on the natural environment can be analyzed by comparing them with data on biodiversity, land use, land cover, pastures, agriculture, mining, and other relevant environmental factors. Compared to archaeological techniques, HLC stands out as one of the most effective methods in explaining the historical character of landscapes. This approach, through large-scale studies, reflects the historical values of landscapes, clearly outlining changes and characteristics during specific historical periods. Notably, monuments, heritage sites, and national architectural heritage are significant components of historical environmental records. These areas are analyzed through a temporal depth framework, detailing the changes from the past to the present and their effects on the landscape (Fairclough and Macinnes, 2003; Demir and Demirel, 2018). This assessment process allows for a broader understanding of the historical character of landscapes, placing them in a wider cultural and ecological context.

HLA is a crucial component of the Landscape Character Assessment process and plays a critical role in general landscape character evaluations. This assessment not only aids in understanding the aesthetic value of a landscape but also its cultural and historical significance. Historic landscapes play a pivotal role in the formation of a sense of place and identity among individuals, and their evaluation fosters increased public awareness (Fairclough and Herring, 2016; Demir and Demirel, 2018).

The contribution of historic landscapes to regional and local development plans, as well as the strategic environmental assessments tied to

these plans, is substantial. In this context, HLA serves as a fundamental guide for the preservation of heritage values (Scazzosi, 2010; Turner and Ceow Belen and Şahin, 2021; Şengür and Nurlu, 2021). Furthermore, the integration of cultural and natural landscape values during the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is essential (Demir and Demirel, 2018). This process aims to maintain ecological and cultural balances by considering the various components of the landscape.

HLA is a significant tool that helps local communities understand the historical origins of the landscapes in which they reside and enhances their sense of belonging to these landscapes. This process aims to deeply examine the relationship between local communities and their environment, their interest in their origins, and their perceptions of historic landscapes (Olwing et al., 2016; Fairclough et al., 2018). Specifically, by providing information about these landscapes in a way that strengthens local cultural and historical ties, it contributes to reinforcing social belonging.

The revitalization of rural settlements also benefits significantly from HLA, especially in the design of small towns and villages. Historic landscape assessments guide the sustainable reconstruction of such settlements. Moreover, they make important contributions to sustainable landscape management issues such as the renewal of rural areas, the development of wooded areas, and the diversification of agriculture (Nurlu and Turner, 2019). HLA also provides guidance in the design of traditional rural settlements, windmill fields, and green infrastructure systems. The sustainability of such settlements and infrastructures must be developed in harmony with the historical landscape values. Additionally, HLA can serve as a crucial tool in the development of heritage and tourism strategies (Kolen et al., 2015; Belen and Şahin, 2021). These strategies provide the

necessary data for the development of local action plans and coastal area management. By offering information on natural and archaeological heritage sites, architectural conservation areas, and natural conservation areas, HLA creates an effective roadmap for the management and preservation of these sites.

The significance of HLA lies in its addressing a situation where information related to cultural identity and landscape character remains limited, and these deficiencies have not been fully addressed in current landscape character analysis studies. In this context, objectives such as the recording of changes and the analysis of the forces and pressures that transform landscapes are often not fully met. According to Fairclough and Herring (2016), HLA, which addresses these gaps, has been defined as the cultural biography of the landscape. This definition allows for a deeper understanding of the evolution of the landscape over time and the impacts of this evolution within a cultural context.

Finally, HLA facilitates the preservation of both functional and symbolic landscape values by relating landscape character types that are economically and socially significant (Demir and Demirel, 2018; Fairclough et al (2018). This approach opens the way for landscapes to be valuable both ecologically and culturally, providing a meaningful landscape experience for both local communities and visitors. In this context, the contributions of HLA to research and projects provide significant direction for landscape planning and management processes at the national, regional, and local scales, serving as an effective tool.

### *3.3. The general stages of historical landscape assessment*

The character assessment of historic landscapes is a comprehensive process consisting of several stages. These stages are determined through a method that is based on scientific foundations while considering local features and cultural contexts. The stages of the

character assessment of historic landscapes include the collection and analysis of data related to the study area, the mapping and description of historic landscape characters, followed by their evaluation, and the creation of a technical report containing management and conservation recommendations in line with the objectives. Finally, the process concludes with monitoring stages (Fairclough and Macinnes, 2003; Fairclough and Herring, 2016; Demir and Demirel, 2018).

### 3.3.1. *Data collection and analysis stages*

The first stage of the character assessment of historic landscapes is the collection of data related to the study area. These data encompass both natural and cultural components and are typically derived from sources such as historical documents, archaeological data, local knowledge, and existing landscape features. Additionally, spatial data about the landscape can be collected using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and remote sensing data. These data are then subjected to detailed analyses for landscape assessment research.

### 3.3.2. *Character mapping and description stages*

Following the data collection phase, the subsequent stage entails the mapping and detailed description of the characteristic features of the historic landscape. This stage involves the visual representation of the elements that define the historical and cultural attributes of the landscape. Within this framework, the processes undergone by the landscape throughout its history are analyzed, and the specific historical periods from which the landscape has evolved are identified, thus establishing its temporal depth. The boundaries of the landscape, significant architectural structures, natural areas, and anthropogenic elements are delineated on the maps. The mapping process serves to visually represent the diverse characteristic features of the landscape and their spatial

distributions, thereby facilitating a clearer understanding of the landscape both for specialists and the general public. Furthermore, this process contributes to the monitoring and analysis of landscape changes over time, from historical to contemporary contexts.

### 3.3.3. *Evaluation stages*

Upon the completion of character mapping and description, the collected data and maps undergo an evaluation process. This evaluation constitutes an analytical procedure aimed at determining the value of the historic landscape. The assessment takes into account the cultural, historical, ecological, and aesthetic values of the landscape, considering its heritage and continuity from past to present. The evaluation is generally conducted according to national and international conservation standards, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the landscape's significance. This stage facilitates the identification of elements of the landscape that require protection and those areas that may require further enhancement.

### 3.3.4. *Management and conservation recommendations*

Following the evaluation stage, recommendations for the conservation and management of the historic landscape are developed based on the findings. These recommendations may include improvements aimed at ensuring the sustainable management of the landscape, protection strategies, as well as the necessary legal frameworks and regulations. Public participation plays a critical role in the conservation of historic landscapes; thus, the recommendations are designed to promote local community involvement and raise awareness about the importance of preserving the landscape. Additionally, conservation plans are focused on maintaining the biological diversity, ecosystem services, and cultural values of the landscape in a sustainable manner.

### 3.3.5. *Monitoring stages*

The final stage involves the monitoring and continuous updating of the evaluation and management strategies of the historic landscapes. Monitoring aims to track changes within the landscape, evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed management strategies, and update future conservation plans accordingly. This stage plays a vital role in ensuring the long-term preservation and sustainability of the landscape. Monitoring is typically conducted through short, medium, and long-term programs, which involve regular site visits, data collection, and comparisons with prior analyses. Furthermore, the monitoring data is made accessible to public authorities, local governments, and other stakeholders to ensure transparency and encourage societal participation in the preservation process.

## 4. The Relationship Between Historical Landscape Assessment and Landscape Character Assessment

Historic Landscape Assessment (HLA) and Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) are vital tools in understanding the characteristic features and evolutionary processes of contemporary landscapes. These studies reveal how historic landscapes have differentiated and evolved over time, analyzing the transformation of landscapes from the past to the present (Fairclough and Macinnes, 2003; Nurlu and Turner, 2019; Balta and Atik, 2022). While LCA typically reflects contemporary and recent landscapes, with geographical and geomorphological features being key determinants, HLA spans a broader temporal range, tracing the evolution of landscapes from the past to the present, thus emphasizing the temporal depth of the landscape.

The HLA approach has been adapted from LCA studies, and both share numerous similarities. These similarities are especially evident in spatial and map-based approaches, with both methods relying on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technologies. HLA

studies complement the elements of LCA, establishing a significant connection between the two approaches. The similarities in classification and evaluation strategies demonstrate that both methods provide a robust foundation for landscape analysis and management. However, HLA, unlike LCA, has a broader field of application, making it both an integrative approach and one that can be used independently. Whereas LCA is typically employed in rural and semi-rural areas, HLA is more commonly applied in urban and peri-urban contexts, where human activities are more prominent (Fairclough and Macinnes, 2003; Erdogan et al., 2020).

The integration of Historic Landscape Assessment (HLA) into Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) plays a crucial role in identifying the forces that drive changes in landscapes and in defining landscape management policies. Both approaches utilize spatial definitions and comprehensive analyses to determine the characteristic features of landscapes, highlighting the presence of a historical landscape character in every place. However, in LCA studies, landscape character areas and landscape character types are classified and evaluated (Tudor, 2014; Balta and Atik, 2022). The data obtained from HLA studies are typological, and when evaluated in terms of scale, integrating them into landscape character areas produces more effective solutions. Furthermore, both approaches initially analyze the data, followed by an evaluation stage. This stage provides a more detailed understanding of the processes of landscape change and the factors influencing these processes (Fairclough and Macinnes, 2003; Demir and Demirel, 2018). Consequently, both approaches offer practical and effective tools in areas such as landscape analysis, environmental policies, heritage management, and planning.

It has been suggested that combining HLA with LCA yields more effective results (Fairclough and Herring, 2016). Understanding

the temporal depth of landscapes and the forms of change that have occurred from the past to the present, along with the perception of these changes, is essential for accurately defining the character of a landscape. This understanding plays a critical role in landscape analysis. These two assessments complement each other, thereby enabling more comprehensive and in-depth landscape analyses (Fairclough and Herring, 2016).

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Within the framework of temporal depth, Historic Landscape Assessment (HLA) studies, which aim to define the historical character of landscapes bearing traces of human influence, focus not on identifying past landscapes or determining the historical narrative of the landscape but rather on evaluating those landscapes that have survived from the past to the present and are therefore resilient. These studies utilize GIS and provide a complementary contribution to general landscape character assessment works.

The integration of HLA with landscape character analysis ensures the comprehensive definition of all landscape features and facilitates the creation of shared databases at national, regional, and local levels. By evaluating the values and changes of landscapes that have endured from the past to the present, it contributes to the development of an updated, dynamic, and flexible landscape planning approach. HLA data enable the definition of landscape character areas, making it possible to plan landscapes according to the characteristics of these areas. This, in turn, allows for the easy integration of outputs into other planning processes, enabling the adoption of effective and sustainable planning decisions through a multidisciplinary approach.

The accurate assessment of historic landscapes, both increases local communities' awareness of cultural heritage and enables more informed shaping of local development and tourism strategies. Proper processing of such

data will lay the foundations for a planning process that will strengthen both the conservation of the landscape and the community's connection with its past. In Turkey, in addition to geographical features, the identification of historical landscape identities in defining landscape character areas is of critical importance for both achieving a deeper understanding of the current landscape and ensuring the future sustainability of these areas. In this regard, landscape character assessment and historic landscape assessment play a significant role, particularly in the development of conservation and management strategies. As a result, when historic landscape assessment and landscape character assessment are used together, they establish a solid scientific foundation for landscape planning by creating a shared database at national, regional, and local levels.

In Turkey, within the scope of APS, it is of great importance to identify not only the distinct geographical features but also the historical landscape identities of these areas when defining landscape character areas. APS processes require the evaluation of the findings obtained from historical landscape assessment studies, considering national and international legal frameworks. The results obtained should be transferred to the relevant authorities in accordance with national legal procedures and regulations. For healthy and sustainable landscape assessment studies, the integration of their outputs into the Landscape Character Assessment process is crucial. This integration plays a critical role in determining landscape character types, their protection, and the development of tourism strategies. Additionally, it is essential to ensure the integration of HLC and LCA outputs into spatial planning processes. In this context, it is recommended that historical landscape assessment studies be included in the landscape atlas work to be carried out in 26 basins. A multidisciplinary and holistic approach must be adopted. This involves



forming a team from various professional disciplines such as history, geography, architecture, forestry and agricultural engineering, planning, landscape architecture, sociology, anthropology, ecology, biology, and archaeology to create a database on historical landscape character. Archiving data and documents bearing traces of human influence from past periods and updating existing historical landscape character types as long as these data are available is important. In addition to natural and cultural landscape values, increasing awareness of historical landscape characters will not only raise the consciousness of the local community regarding the areas in which they reside but also contribute to the protection and promotion of the region they live in.

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