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### **CULTURAL LANDSCAPE VALUES OF GOKCEADA (IMBROS)**

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#### **Abstract**

Gökçeada has cultural landscape values that have been shaped with the limited physical conditions and cultural factors of being an island and also reflect the relationship between man and nature from past to present. However, the physical, economic and social balances that have changed in the recent years cause these values to be damaged and even destroyed. One of the most important reasons for this destruction is the lack of awareness about conservation. The concept of "cultural landscape", which attracts attention to the interaction between "nature" and "culture", used to define and protect areas that represent the development processes of cultures and settlements shaped by social, economic and cultural influences under the certain physical conditions brought by the natural environment. In this paper, Gökçeada's natural and cultural values will be considered and defined within the concept of cultural landscape which provides an integrated view to all components of these values.

**Keywords:** Gökçeada, Cultural Landscape, Cultural Landscape Values, Cultural Heritage, Conservation, Integrated Conservation

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#### **1. Introduction**

The concept of cultural landscape, which draws attention to the interaction between nature and culture, is used for defining and preserving the areas that reflect the improvement processes of culture and settlements shaped by social, economic and cultural influences under certain physical conditions brought by the natural environment. Cultural landscapes are dynamic, living and changing environments, which include the areas where traditional production techniques have recently changed, as well as the areas created by traditional methods, techniques, knowledge and practices. The concept of cultural landscape provides both an integrated approach for conserving the areas formed by the joint contributions of mankind and nature; and a sustainable approach for managing their improvement and change.

As a result of being an island settlement Gökçeada was shaped by the limited physical conditions and cultural influences. Therefore, it has distinctive cultural landscape values that reflect the relationship between mankind and nature from past to present. However, recent changes in physical, economic and social balances cause these values to be damaged or even destroyed. One of the most important reasons for this destruction is the lack of adequately developed awareness of conservation. In this paper, it is aimed to discuss and define the

natural and cultural heritage values of Gokceada in the context of cultural landscape concept that provides an integrated approach to all components of these values.

## 2. Gokceada (Imbros)

Gokceada, which is the biggest island of Turkey with regard to the surface area, is situated at the the entrance of Dardanelles (Strait of Canakkale) in the north of the Aegean Sea which is the connection point between Asia and Europe (Figure 1). Because of its strategic position, the island has been continuously inhabited since the Stone Age. According to the ancient sources, the island was first ruled by Pelasgians (Herodotos, 2004; Oberhummer, 1898). After the Pelasgians, Persians took the sovereignty of the island and its surroundings (Herodotos, 2004; Mellink, 1988). The island has changed hands many times in the following years and has entered the dominion of the Athenians, Romans, Byzantines, Genoese, Venetians and Ottomans (Miller, 1921; Kritovulos, 2007; Orhonlu, 1972; Aziz, 1973).

The Ottoman Empire lost Gokceada, which had been under its rule for many years, between the years 1912-18 during the Balkan Wars and World War I. After the War of Independence and with the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, the governance of the island was left to the Republic of Turkey (Kucuk, 1998; Meray, 2002).



**Figure 1. The location of the island**

**Source:** Prepared by authors based on Google Earth Web (2018)

Although the island has been ruled by different civilizations throughout the history, Greeks have been the majority of the local people of the island (Kahraman, 2005). The cultural, religious and ethnic structure of the region has remained largely unchanged during the Ottoman Empire (Kahraman, 2005).

In the period of the Republic of Turkey, the population of the island has not experienced a large increase, but its demographic structure has changed<sup>1</sup>. Within the scope of population policies implemented in this period, inhabitants from Anatolia were first settled in 1945 to the island. Those who arrived after the 1960s were settled in the newly planned villages

<sup>1</sup> It is observed that the Greek population that had constituted the majority in the island has decreased over time. The population of 6555 Greek 157 Turk in 1927 has changed as 5487 Greek 289 Turk in 1960, 2576 Greek 4030 Turk in 1970, 472 Greek 7138 in 1985 and 300 Greek 7200 Turk in 1990 (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2015).

(Kahraman, 2005; Ministry of Public Works and Settlement, 1984)<sup>2</sup>. The changes of political, economic and social balances caused by the Cyprus Problem and the process of population exchange based on the Treaty of Lausanne, even though Gokceada was excluded from the process, have been effective in reduction of Greek population that has been living on the island for many years.

From past to present, social, economic and cultural factors have been part of the natural and physical structure of the island. For this reason, the change in these conditions has also affected the physical environment, and the loss of social and cultural diversity has damaged the physical environment that has been shaped by these factors for many years.

Nowadays, Gokceada is in a new process of alteration with the rechanging social, economic and political balances. Inhabitants who had left the island over the past years started to show interest in coming back. They began to spend especially summer and important religious days in Gokceada, and a part of them returned permanently to the island in this process. Along with the developing tourism potential, the demand for the island from big cities and from the region is increasing day by day. As a result, there is a big increase in the population of the island during the summer season. Therefore, the pressure on the physical environment, natural resources and cultural values increases. Despite the changes, Gokceada still preserves its authentic rural fabric.

The earliest measures taken regarding the preservation of Gokceada's values are directed towards traditional settlements and monumental structures in these settlements<sup>3</sup>. It is known that apart from the individual registration decisions, Conservation Boards have taken natural, archaeological and urban site decisions to protect natural and cultural values of Gokceada. However, it seems that the decisions are inadequate to protect the traditional rural character of the island. The approach to the conservation is limited to site decisions, and also the continuous and integrated relation of structures or settlements with nature and nature with culture has been ignored.

### **3. The Cultural Landscape Concept**

"Nature" and "culture" that are the two main research areas of the conservation field on an international scale, have been discussed for many years on the basic conservation frameworks defined as natural and cultural heritage. From the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, new ideas and new terms were developed in order to protect the fields in the intersection of nature and culture. "Cultural landscape" is one of these newly developed terms.

UNESCO (2015) defines<sup>4</sup> cultural landscapes as "combined works of nature and of man" and "illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal", and also assesses in three different categories according to the features they have.

The Venice Charter (1964), which recognizes the necessity of integrated conservation of urban and rural textures and the Amsterdam Declaration (1975) that brought the concept of "integrated conservation" to the agenda are the important and early documents about the conservation of the areas formed by the interaction of nature and culture.

The numerous doctrinal texts such as Burra Charter (1979), Florence Charter (1982) and Rio Declaration (1992) drew attention to the need for the preservation of rural areas and landscapes with all of their tangible and intangible elements. The addition of the definition of the cultural landscape to the World Heritage Convention by UNESCO (1992) constituted a

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<sup>2</sup>Yenibademli, Ugurlu, Sahinkaya, Eselek and Sirinkoy are the villages that were established as planned in the island after 1960s (Ministry of Public Works and Settlement, 1984).

<sup>3</sup> The earliest decisions were taken by GEEAYK with the decision no 11.06.1983 / 15147 for individual registrations.

<sup>4</sup> There are also other definitions of cultural landscape developed by national and international institutions such as IUCN, Concil of Europe, A.B.D National Park Service, Parks Canada.

milestone in the conservation of these areas. Since 1992, cultural landscape examples added to the World Heritage List raised awareness to preservation of the areas with similar characteristics around the world. Accordingly, the number of cultural landscape examples in the List has increased. In addition, international institutions' efforts to prepare doctrinal texts about the conservation of cultural landscape areas have accelerated. "The Recommendation on the Integrated Conservation of Cultural Landscape Areas" dated 1995 is one of the most important texts on this subject (COE, 1995).

It is possible to say that the scope of the concept of cultural landscape has expanded in the course of the recent discussions and studies. The European Landscape Convention (2000) and the Faro Convention (2005) approved by the Council of Europe have brought a human rights-based approach to the conservation of cultural heritage and cultural landscapes (COE, 2000; COE, 2005; Dincer, 2013). In 2011, Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach has come forward with the recommendation of UNESCO on the Historic Urban Landscape (UNESCO, 2011). Finally, terms of rural landscape and rural landscape heritage took part in the "Principles Concerning Rural Landscapes as Heritage" prepared by ICOMOS and IFLA (2016). All of these terms do not change the classification of UNESCO, yet they are the approaches that enrich the scope and perspective by clearly defining the components of the areas constituting the categories.

#### **4. Evaluation Criteria of Cultural Landscape Areas**

Criteria for the selection of cultural landscape areas that have begun to be assessed in the context of World Heritage is also among the important topics of discussion. Different criteria have been defined by the institutions working in the conservation field.

According to the examinations of UNESCO experts on the cultural landscape examples in the World Heritage List, landscape values such as mountains; water; forests; lakes, rivers and sea views are among the dominant characteristics in the selection of these areas (Fowler, 2003). In addition to these, continuity of lifeway/land-use, towns and/or villages, buildings, farming/agriculture, local identity and religious culture are the other characteristics that have been taken into consideration in the selection of cultural landscape areas. Also, in the assessment of Madran and Alptekin (2009), almost the similar characteristics are included with different expressions. Among these, the criterion of taking reference from surrounding life which emphasizes the intangible heritage attracts attention.

#### **5. Gokceada (Imbros) as a Cultural Landscape Area**

People who have been living in Gokceada for many years have got accustomed to meet all their needs to maintain their lives from the surrounding environment and have learned to optimize the things they acquire from the nature by doing agriculture and husbandry, using the materials they find from nature for building shelters, choosing the most suitable location for settlements and creating common spaces for their cultural and social needs.

According to the research, it is understood that the present values of Gokceada meet the criteria that are top priority in the selection of cultural landscape areas. In order to define the cultural landscape values of the island, a classification system specialized on the values of the island has been developed based on the UNESCO's and Madran and Alptekin's (2009) assessments. According to this system, cultural landscape values of Gokceada are classified into 9 groups as continuity of lifestyle and land use, traditional settlements and building types; archaeological values; agriculture and farming activities; forest areas, lake and lake views, sea and sea views; special fauna and flora species; special geological formations; references to religion, mythology, traditions and customs; rarity and protected areas.

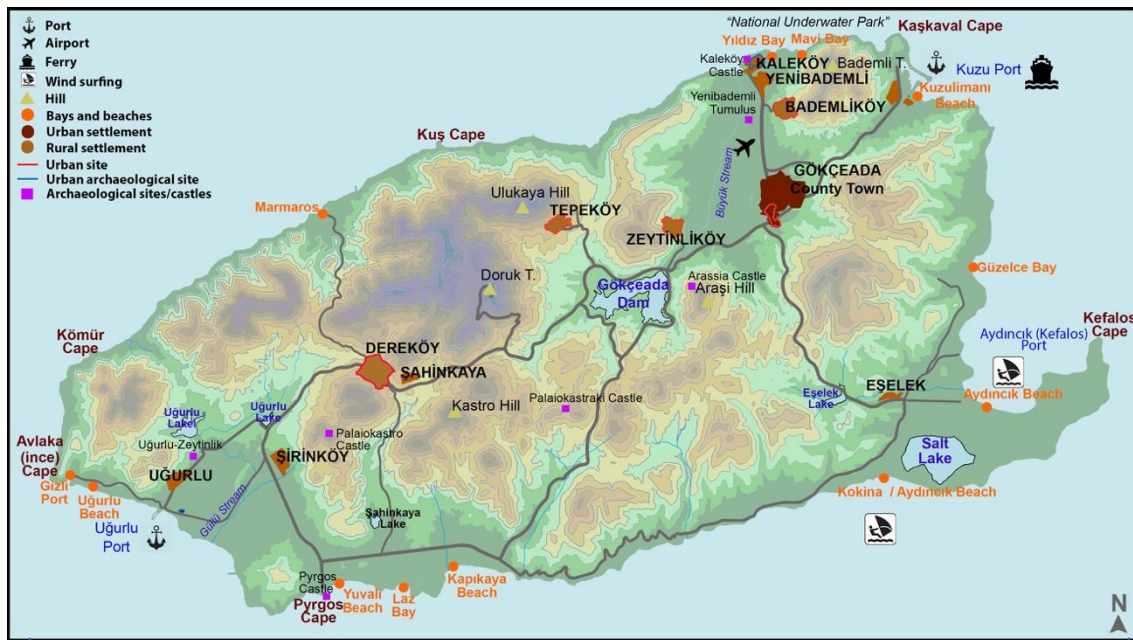
##### **5.1. Continuity of Lifestyle and Land-use, Traditional Settlements and Building Types**

Today, historic traditional villages are the most representative elements of the cultural landscape values of Gokceada. Settlements in the island are the places where the culture is in

the foreground in the interaction between nature and culture and the cultural properties are clearly deciphered.

The settlement types and areas have been affected and changed by the historical development of the island. In Byzantine period, the settlements protected by a castle expanded towards the outskirts with the increase of the population and when the pirate attacks increased, they became lots of small and scattered settlements in the interior and relatively safe parts of the islands (Ousterhout and Held, 2000; Kahraman, 2005). After the increase of security measures on the island with the Ottoman rule, scattered settlements have come together and formed larger settlements (Emecen, 2002). Most of these settlements are the villages on the island that have reached today.

Apart from Gokceada (Cinarli) which is the only settlement in urban scale and county town of the island, the traditional historic settlements of the island are Kalekoy, Zeytinlikoy, Tepekoy, and Derekoy (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. The map of the settlements and environmental values**

Source: Prepared by Authors based on Gokceada Municipality (2013)

These organically developed settlements still preserve their authentic rural texture that comprises of traditional buildings constructed of masonry or timber frame systems with natural materials like stone and/or wood due to the requirements of inhabitants and the needs of social and cultural life (Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Traditional settlements of the island; Bademlikoy and Derekoy**

Source: Guler (2014a)



Among the traditional buildings, residential buildings occupy a predominant place in the settlements. Residential buildings, which repeat each other in terms of materials and techniques, seem to be evolved according to the users' requirements and economic level (Figure 4).



**Figure 4. Traditional residential buildings of the island**

Source: Guler (2014b)

Along with the residential buildings also the churches, chapels, mosques, schools, olive oil and soap ateliers, mills, fountains and laundries, shops and coffeehouses, barns, bridges are the part of island's daily life and culture and together they constitute the types of traditional structures on the island (Figure 5; 8;14-15).



**Figure 5. Zeytinlikoy Church and a chapel**

Source: Guler (2014c)

The relation between the settlements and surrounding environment and nature is very strong. The hillside settlements that are formed due to the factors like security or wind and also to benefit from farmlands and to be close to the water supplies reveal this strong relationship. The vineyards, orchards, olive groves and agricultural areas on the slopes surrounding the settlements are also the sources that sustain the settlements. Also, these activities carried out on terraces maintain protection against erosion.

## **5.2. Archaeological Values**

Due to being a security zone for many years, the archaeological values in Gokceada, which has been inhabited since early dates, started to be revealed by the excavations and surveys at the end of the 20th century. According to the research, it is understood that there are fortresses located between Kalekoy fortress in the northeast and Pyrgos castle in the south in the island as a part of the defense system dated back to the Byzantine period (Figure 6) (Ousterhout and Held, 1997).



**Figure 6. Kalekoy Castle (top), Pyrgos Castle (bottom)**

**Source:** Guler (2014d)

In the south of the island near the Kokina zone, there are rock carved sarcophaguses which are considered to belong to the Roman period (Figure 7) (Huryilmaz, 2006). In addition to the remains from the Hellenic, Roman and Byzantine periods throughout the island, remains dated from the Paleolithic period to the early Bronze Age were found especially in the eastern part (Harmankaya and Erdogu, 2001). Archaeological excavations of Yenibademli Hoyuk started in 1996 and Ugurlu-Zeytinlik started in 2009 are still in progress today (Huryilmaz, 2017; Erdogu, 2017).



The population of the settlements in Gokceada has changed and evolved until nowadays, while the population of some settlements has increased<sup>5</sup> considerably because of their transformation from a neighborhood to the center, some of the settlements have lost their population due to the earthquakes or the high winds<sup>6</sup>. It is understood that these settlements, which are mentioned in the sources but could not reach to the present day, are waiting for the researches to be conducted.

Gokceada has also played an important role in the recent history and during the First World War, when the British army headquarters were located on Kefalos Bay of the island (Australian War Memorial, 2015). Although it is known that there are various ruins in the bay and its surroundings, nowadays it is quite difficult to see its traces<sup>7</sup>.



**Figure 7. The stone carved tombs**

**Source:** Guler (2015a)

### **5.3. Agriculture and Farming Activities**

In Gokceada, agricultural areas are the places that the interaction between nature and culture come into prominence and become most visible. Agricultural activities on the island which have collective hillside settlements are carried out in more fertile and flat lands around the settlements. The inhabitants of the island migrate from their villages in summer when the field work is intense and settle in the dwellings located near the agricultural areas and called “dam” in Turkish and can be translated as “barn” to English (Figure 8) (Theoharis, 2013).

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<sup>5</sup> Panayia (Gokceada), which was the center of the island in the 16th century and a neighborhood of Balyanbolu, was quite developed and crowded in the 19th century. (BOA, 1530, p.42-50).

<sup>6</sup> It is known that there are settlements such as the village of Lysini, which was abandoned due to earthquakes and strong winds before the 17th century (Moustoksidis and Bartholomeos, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> As stated in the decision (19.01.2011/5251) of Canakkale Regional Board of Cultural Heritage Conservation, there are the graves of soldiers held captive during WWI and the remains of ships that sank at the Kefalos Bay.





**Figure 8. Old and modern photographs of the barns (dam)**

Source: KAME (2013) & Guler (2015b)

From past to present, agriculture is one of the main livelihoods in Gokceada which has fertile soil (Figure 9). In addition to grain products, traditionally produced olive is the main production of the islanders. Along with the forests, pastures and agricultural areas, olive trees, which are intensified on the slopes around the settlements, are one of the dominant elements in the natural landscape.



**Figure 9. Olive cultivation in Gokceada**

Source: KAME (2013)

It is known that the vineyards are located in the surrounding areas of the settlements as well as fruit trees as a landscape element, although the number of them decreases today (Figure 10) (Theoharis, 2013).



**Figure 10. Tepekoy village and farmland, olive groves and Gokceada Dam around the settlement**

**Source:** Gokceada Town Governership (2014)

Husbandry is one of the main livelihoods in Gokceada. The small ruminant breeding is very common in the island; there is a small number of people who made bovine breeding. If the family is engaged in husbandry as well as agriculture, the barn structures are used also for this purpose (Theoharis, 2013).

Gokceada has suitable conditions for organic agriculture with its positive characteristics such as sheltered and controlled agricultural areas, lack of using chemical drugs and fertilizers for many years. In the recent years, the island has become one of the important centers in organic agriculture and husbandry with the provided opportunities by Government<sup>8</sup>.

#### **5.4. Forest Areas, Lake and Lake Views, Sea and Sea Views**

Gokceada attracts attention with its natural values. Arid hills are the first things to see when looked from afar, but at the interior regions of the island valleys and plains exist. These regions, where water resources are also present, are quite green.

It is seen that forests intensify in the northwest region and in the middle part where rich water resources exist and pastures are in majority at the other regions of the island's lands. The settlement areas cover a very small part of the total land. The interaction of the island culture with natural areas is also remarkable. From past to present, the inhabitants have benefited from natural resources of the island to supply their needs of sheltering and/or food.

At the southern shores of the island, there are extensive beaches suitable for swimming and water sports. Along with the development of tourism, small-scale tourism facilities were constructed at the beaches such as Kefalos, Kokina and Yuvali. Also, in the other parts of the

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<sup>8</sup> The objective of Gokceada-Bozcaada Agricultural Settlement and Development Project started in 1993 is to increase the production of organic olives and olive oil; honey; wine; fruits and vegetables and develop beekeeping husbandry, viticulture.



island, where large sandy beaches do not exist, there are some bays preferred by tourists who want to dive especially because of the underwater richness such as Yildiz Bay and Mavi Bay.

In the southeast of the island, there is another important natural value called Salt Lake (Figure 11). It is known that the Salt Lake in Kefalos Cape, which was thought to be an independent island in the past and conjoined with the island in time, was abandoned due to transportation difficulties after being used as saltern until the WWI (Yucel, 1968; Moustoksidis and Bartholomeos, 2010).



**Figure 11. The Salt Lake**

**Source:** Guler (2014e)

### 5.5 Special Fauna and Flora Types

Gokceada has a special ecosystem due to being an island settlement. Because of the limited natural interaction area for many years, specific fauna and flora species are developed in the island. Although Gokceada is located at the North Aegean, it contains the plant species that belong to the Mediterranean climate such as holy oak, daphne, carob, oleander, thyme and chaste (Yucel, 1968). However, the island is located in the border region where the climate changes, temperature averages and amount of precipitation are separated from the Mediterranean climate (Yucel, 1968).

The island is also a special region in terms of underwater richness. There are endemic plant and animal species between Yildiz Bay and Mavi Bay in the northeast<sup>9</sup>. Also, Gokceada is one of five priority monk seal conservation areas in Turkey<sup>10</sup>. The caves of the Mediterranean monk seal, which is threatened on a global scale, can be observed in the island.

The Salt Lake in the southeast of the island provides a suitable environment for wintering and breeding for many coastal and migratory bird species due to marine water sources and moderately high and sheltered environment. Among these birds, there are a significant number of flamingos and himantopus himantopus (Doga Dernegi, 2015).

Among the livestock that have been bred for many years on the island, there is a species called "Imbros sheep" specific to the island. This special species grown also in the mainland of Canakkale is under protection with various scientific studies (Konyali *et al.* 2004).

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<sup>9</sup> Gokceada underwater park includes plant and animal species such as descending arthropods, knidles, water algae, leather spines, sea meadows, fishes and sponges (TUDAV, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> The Island has been declared as the Mediterranean Monk Seal Conservation Area with the decision numbered 24.12.1993 / 8990 of the General Directorate of Environmental Management.

## **5.6. Special Geological Formations**

Numerous geological formations are observed in the volcanic structure of the island which has a very rugged and steep structure and shows great changes in a short distance. Especially the formations, constituted by the effects of wind and waves over the years from the soft rocks in the northern coasts where the steep cliffs are located, are remarkable and exhibit views specific to the island. The formations at the Kalekoy Port, Yildiz Bay and Kaskaval Cape can be given as examples for these formations. The formation at the Kaskaval Cape, which is the subject of various stories among the people, is called as “Cheese Cliffs” because of resemblance to the overlapping cheese molds (Figure 12).



**Figure 12. The rock formations in Kaskaval Cape**

**Source:** Gokceada Town Governership (2014)

## **5.7. References to Religion, Mythology, Traditions and Customs**

### **5.7.1. Religious Culture**

Gokceada has a multicultural structure where different ethnic groups live together and the inhabitants live according to their own custom. Although the majority of the Greek population has migrated after the changes occurred, traditions and customs are trying to be maintained by inhabitants who still live in the island and return to the island in the summer season. Contemporarily, the effects of this culture are still very strong in the physical environment and landscape of the island. Each of the traditional settlements has one or more churches. Also, the chapels that are located around the settlements in rural areas still exist today, although some of them have demolished and disappeared. Rituals and special days are still held in the chapels that are cared and cleaned by the inhabitants of the island.

The former inhabitants come to the island in their “Name Day” and try to be present in the chapel of Saint which is associated with their name and also attend to the Virgin Mary Fair that is celebrated on the 15th of August (Figure 13).





**Figure 13. The Virgin Mary Fair in the past and today**  
Source: KAME (2013)

The Greek population also assembles on important religious days such as Easter or Saint's Day on the island and holds ceremonies. The island is quite crowded especially at the Virgin Mary Fair with those who want to watch the ceremonies (Figure 13).

#### 5.7.2. Fountain and Laundry Culture

The other important parts of the social life on the island are the fountains and laundries that exist in each village. Laundries are places created by covering the fountains, where women come together and wash clothes on certain days (Figure 14). These places also provide socialization and are used for various special and religious activities.

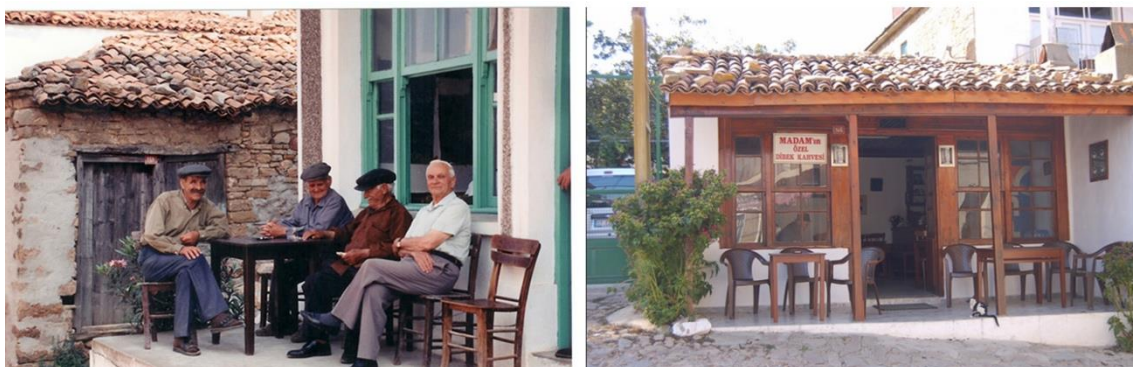


**Figure 14. The laundry of Derekey**  
Source: Guler (2014f)

#### 5.7.3. Coffee House Culture

In the past, each of the settlements in the island had a large number of commercial facilities that met the needs of the inhabitants. Coffee houses had a special place among these facilities (Figure 15). Coffeehouses are the places to come together for inhabitants. Especially in winter, entertainments, important days and weddings are celebrated in these places. In traditional settlements where face-to-face relations remain important, coffeehouses are important communication centers that people become aware of each other.

These structures are usually located in squares within organic fabric in villages. More than one coffeehouse can be found in the same square. There were several coffee houses in the traditional villages of the island in the past like seven coffee houses in Zeytinlikoy (Yurtseven, 2012).



**Figure 15. Traditional coffeehouses**

Source: Guler (2014g)

#### 5.7.4. Food Culture

Olive, olive oil, wine, ground coffee called dibek, honey, cookies with almond, pudding with gum mastic are among the traditional tastes of the island. Nowadays, these products are produced organically on the island. Also, the unique food culture of the island is trying to be maintained. Traditional food from the region is served in the special ceremonies and celebrations. A kind of meal called “kourkouta/keskek”, which is prepared in the boilers at the laundries or village squares, is among the traditional tastes of the island.

#### 5.8. Rarity

Gokceada has many distinctive natural and cultural landscapes/views with its green areas, water resources, geological formations, underwater richness, wide beaches, natural beauties such as bays and also historical and cultural values.

Another rare feature of the island is the wind. Tourism opportunities have developed in recent years in connection with the wind. The southern part of the island, which is wind-consumed most of the year, is quite suitable for water sports such as surfing and preferred by lots of tourists from domestic and abroad. Kefalos beach at the south of the island is one of the few centers in Turkey for surfing (Figure 16)<sup>11</sup>.



**Figure 16. Wind surfing at Aydincik Beach**

Source: Guler (2015c)

<sup>11</sup> Izmir-Alacati, Izmir-Urla, Mugla-Gokova, Mugla-Bodrum, Istanbul-Kilyos, Balikesir-Ayvalik, Balikesir-Cunda are some of the other centers for surfing in Turkey.

The island offers rich possibilities for those interested in bird watching. Especially the Salt Lake is very suitable for this activity because it is a habitat for different bird species and is in the migration routes of migratory birds. Salt Lake is also visited within the scope of health tourism with the idea that sulfurous soil at the bottom of it is good for rheumatic pains (Figure 17).



**Figure 17. Health tourism and bird watching at the Salt Lake**  
Source: Guler (2013)

### 5.9. Protected Areas

There are extensive natural, cultural and archaeological sites in the island. The historic traditional settlements of the island are under protection with individual registration decisions<sup>12</sup> started in 1980s and urban site decisions<sup>13</sup> in 1990s. The documentation and registration works in the settlements are still in progress today.

Most of the forest areas are protected as natural sites. In addition, some plane trees throughout the island are protected as a monument<sup>14</sup>. It is observed that the fertile areas and olive fields that have been used for many years in the island are also identified as agricultural areas and land use character should be protected<sup>15</sup>.

Natural habitats such as Gokceada Dam and Salt Lake have been declared as natural sites. In addition, Salt Lake with the island's north coasts is listed in the "Turkey's Significant Natural Areas" according to the research of the Nature Society (Doga Dernegi, 2015). The area between Yildiz Bay and Mavi Bay, which is prominent with endemic plant and animal species, has been declared underwater national park by TUDAV (1999, 2012). This area is the first and only example in Turkey as an underwater park.

Kalekoy and Pyrgos castles have been protected as archaeological sites<sup>16</sup> since 1985. In the following years, areas such as Yenibademli Tumulus, Ugurlu-Zeytinlik region, Trapezya Tumulus and various other areas with ruins such as Kefalos Port and the ruins of the castle in Derekoy were declared as archaeological sites<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> The decisions of GEEAYK numbered 11.06.1983/15147 and TKTVYK numbered 17.10.1985/1548.

<sup>13</sup> The decision of Bursa Regional Board of Cultural Heritage Conservation numbered 15.08.1991/1932.

<sup>14</sup> It is known that the plane tree in front of the school in Kalekoy is the first registered tree in the island by the decision of Bursa Regional Board of Cultural Heritage Conservation No. 16.11.1992 / 2813. The plane trees next to the Bademlikoy laundry and at Tepekoy-Spilya are the other monumental trees in the island.

<sup>15</sup> Balikesir-Canakkale 1/100.000 Environmental Plan.

<sup>16</sup> The decisions of TKTVYK numbered 17.10.1985/1548.

<sup>17</sup> The decisions of Bursa Regional Board of Cultural Heritage Conservation numbered 16.11.1992/2813 and Canakkale Regional Board of Cultural Heritage Conservation numbered 25.09.2009/4541 and 29.06.2015/2420.



## **6. Conclusion**

Considering the prominent criteria in the selection of cultural landscape areas in the world, it can be said that Gokceada is an important cultural landscape area, with its distinctive natural and cultural values, comprised of joint contributions of nature and humanity. However, cultural landscape values of Gokceada are under threat due to insufficiencies in the conservation approach of cultural landscape areas, which should require a special attention.

When all of the components of cultural landscape areas considered, it is clear that a multidimensional conservation approach should be developed in order to take measures against the threats. It is thought that the threats, not only to the built environment, which is one of the two components comprised of the cultural landscape, but also to the other component (nature) and to the demographic, social and economic features that shape the daily life and local culture, should be evaluated as a whole.

Threats to Gokceada's cultural landscape values can be classified into two groups as nature-based and human-based. The direct impacts of natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, cyclones or indirect impacts of abrasive nature conditions to cultural heritage over time can be given as samples for nature-based threats. The problems like lack of maintenance, abandonment, and vandalism; challenges like social transformations, economic depressions, changes of demographic structure or other conflicts caused by current political or legal regulations can be evaluated as human-based threats against to cultural and natural heritage.

Gokceada has been confronted with too many social transformations and challenges from past to present. Among these, population movements are the most influential, transformative and drastic factors on island's physical, cultural or natural environment throughout the history. Abandonment of villages on the island does not only threaten the cultural heritage and physical environment but also endangers cultural landscape values that exist together with the local people and customs, traditions, and also intangible heritage. Due to the depopulation process, the historic buildings in traditional settlements, built by traditional building materials such as stone, wood, brick, and adobe, have been deteriorated, gradually neglected and turned to ruins over the years because of the lack of required maintenance. On the other hand, with the increasing demand for tourism, a number of new settlers have been started to live all around the island and they started to transform the island's traditional structure. The increase of uncontrolled and unqualified repairs on traditional buildings caused by the new population constitutes another threat to cultural heritage.

New concepts and developments in the conservation of rural areas and cultural landscapes in international scale have not been understood yet in Turkey and it causes various challenges in the conservation of Gokceada's cultural landscape values. While various reforms have been done over years in the current Conservation Law No. 2863, in which "cultural assets" and "natural assets" notions have been defined but the integrated relationship between them has not been mentioned, there is still no regulation about cultural landscape areas. With one of the recent reforms, the conservation of natural and cultural assets has become even more complicated. In particular, with the Decree No.648 (2011), the decision-making power on natural and cultural heritage has been strictly separated and the authority on natural sites was taken from Ministry of Culture and Tourism and transferred to the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization.

Furthermore, the challenges experienced during the implementation of the existing legal regulations and policies also threaten cultural landscape values. For instance, although conservation master plans of registered sites should be completed in three years by relevant local governments<sup>18</sup>, only plans of the two of registered urban sites (historical villages of Gokceada center and Kalekoy) on the island have been completed since 1990 <sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> The Article 17 of the Protection Law No. 2863 changed by the Article 42 of Decree Law No. 648.

<sup>19</sup> The decision of Canakkale Regional Board of Cultural Heritage Conservation numbered 23.05.2001/354.



Documentation and registration process is going on in other historical villages, which were also declared as urban conservation sites in 1990.

Tourism, which continues its development in line with the upper scale plans, also poses a threat to the cultural landscape values of the island. Increasing demand of tourism creates excessive pressures on limited natural resources and cultural values of the island. Therefore, multidimensional development plans, which concentrate priorly to these values, should be prepared for sustainable development and prevention of the possible threats.

It is thought that with the addition of cultural landscape definition to the conservation law in Turkey, the authority confusion about the protection of cultural and natural assets separated from each other with precise lines after recent changes, can be solved and evolved to a contemporary holistic approach in accordance with the world. At a meeting of ICOMOS Turkey National Committee in 2012, the conservation issues of Cappadocia, one of the important cultural landscape areas of Turkey listed in UNESCO World Heritage List, and cultural landscape concept was discussed. It was officially advised to lawmakers that the cultural landscape definition should be added to the conservation law immediately (Kahya, 2017). In this direction, a cultural landscape definition was made (ICOMOS National Committee of Turkey, 2013). It is thought that after the addition of cultural landscape definition to the current conservation law, registration of Gokceada as a cultural landscape area will be an important step for the protection of the island's distinctive values.

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