YazıBursa: documenting the typographic heritage of public space

YazıBursa: documentação do patrimônio tipográfico do espaço público

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vernacular typography, typographic heritage, public space, Bursa, critical heritage studies

Situated within Critical Heritage Studies (CHS), this study examines the vernacular typographic heritage of the Osmangazi and Yıldırım districts of Bursa, Türkiye, and documents and foregrounds these artefacts as a basis for their future preservation and conservation through the YazıBursa project. A qualitative, multi-method fieldwork approach (2021–2026) produced a georeferenced inventory of 306 hand-lettered artefacts across five inductively derived categories: nameplates, signs, warning and information signs, window signs, and wall signs, documented via GPS coordinates, photographs, and descriptive records. Nameplates are concentrated in residential areas and signs in commercial areas, an association rather than a causal relationship with neighbourhood function and social history. Read through critiques of the Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD), these artefacts document the presence of vernacular typography in everyday urban life. The Typographic Inventory Management Model (TIMM) is proposed as a four-phase framework in which the first phase (documentation and data collection) is implemented directly.

tipografia vernacular, patrimônio tipográfico, espaço público, Bursa, estudos críticos de patrimônio

Sob a perspectiva dos Estudos Críticos de Patrimônio, este artigo examina as manifestações tipográficas vernaculares dos distritos de Osmangazi e Yıldırım, em Bursa, Turquia. Documentam-se e destacam-se esses artefatos como base para sua futura preservação e conservação por meio do projeto YazıBursa. Uma abordagem qualitativa de campo e multimétodo (2021–2026) gerou um inventário georreferenciado de 306 artefatos desenhados à mão, distribuídos em cinco categorias derivadas indutivamente: placas de identificação, letreiros, sinalizações de aviso e informação, inscrições em vitrines e inscrições em paredes. Tais categorias foram documentadas por meio de coordenadas GPS, fotografias e registros descritivos. Constatou-se que as placas de identificação concentram-se em áreas residenciais e os letreiros em áreas comerciais, uma associação com a função do bairro e a história social e não uma relação causal. Analisados sob a ótica das críticas ao Discurso Autorizado do Patrimônio, esses artefatos documentam a presença da tipografia vernacular na vida urbana cotidiana. Assim, propõe-se o Modelo de Gestão de Inventário Tipográfico (Typographic Inventory Management Model, TIMM) como um framework de quatro fases, das quais a primeira (documentação e coleta de dados) é implementada diretamente.

1 Introduction

Public spaces accessible to all support social interaction and cultural expression, showcasing the diversity of graphic design practices (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2015; Lupton, 1996, p. 15). The typography filling city streets functions as both verbal text and a privileged graphic and visual recording format (Huerta, 2011). While fulfilling practical functions such as guidance and identification, these artefacts also contribute aesthetic and cultural value, resisting visual homogenisation.

Heritage is a process that shapes the past according to current needs, influencing identity and values. It encompasses monuments and historical structures, as well as intangible elements such as traditions, languages, rituals and handicrafts (Smith, 2006; UNESCO, 2003). Similarly, typographic heritage includes the tangible and intangible elements of typography's artistic and design practices throughout history (Marshall, Moglia & Savoie, 2012). It operates as an aesthetic element and a symbolic marker of urban identity, fostering a sense of belonging (Smith, 2006, p. 44). In an age of global homogenisation, vernacular typography reinforces Relph's (1976) concept of an authentic place.

Despite the central role of typography in shaping urban identity and public spaces, artefacts featuring vernacular letterforms are often excluded from Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD): they are "often only taken into account as part of valuable buildings or monuments, and its status within heritage policies is uncertain" (Farias, Lessing & Bulegato, 2024, p. 454). Rooted in local craftsmanship, vernacular aesthetics and ephemeral urban practices, typographic heritage often fails to meet the outstanding universal value criteria emphasised by UNESCO's (1972) World Heritage Convention: official policies rely on material permanence as a benchmark, whereas typographic artefacts are fragile, transient and embedded in everyday urban life, and the Venice Charter's uniform principles conflict with their socially embedded, locally derived nature (International Council on Monuments and Sites [ICOMOS], 1964). Such tensions reveal how heritage policies risk reinforcing a top-down, expert-led paradigm that overlooks communities' social agency in defining what counts as heritage (Waterton & Smith, 2010). In de Certeau's (1984) terms, the sign painter's craft can be understood as a tactical practice that operates within the dominant urban order without institutional sanction, shaping local identity from below. This study situates vernacular letterforms within heritage studies, arguing that their preservation demands approaches beyond traditional AHD paradigms (Smith, 2006; Waterton & Watson, 2013); however, this critique remains largely conceptual. Existing initiatives show that vernacular typographic heritage can be documented through field-based, geographically referenced approaches: Studies in Sakarya combined field documentation with a location-based digital inventory, and subsequent work has further documented the city's sign painting and typographic heritage (Yıldırım, 2020; Ertürk, 2025). Such documentation, however, has not yet been consistently linked to a systematic, transferable framework for translating inventory data into significance

assessment, conservation prioritisation and long-term management. Significance assessment, prioritisation and management methodologies do exist in heritage practice more broadly, but they have rarely been extended to vernacular typography, a heritage category that is small-scale and sits at the boundary between the intangible and the material-spatial. Similarly, there remains limited evidence that they have been organised around geographically referenced typographic inventories.

Bursa, the first capital of the Ottoman Empire, emerged as a major centre of crafts and trade in the 14th century. Its historic commercial district and Yıldırım neighbourhood preserve this heritage through numerous buildings dating from the Ottoman period that were used for commerce and crafts (Cagaptay, 2022). Devastating changes such as the 1855 earthquake that destroyed a large part of Bursa (Cagaptay, 2022, p. 8) and the 1958 fire that affected almost the entire Grand Bazaar (Budakoğlu, 2003), the typographic heritage produced using traditional methods, and its creators, remain an important part of the city's cultural continuity, though this heritage is gradually disappearing due to a lack of protection from local governments, globalisation-driven uniformity, and urban transformation. The study addresses three research questions: How are surviving vernacular typographic artefacts distributed across the Osmangazi and Yıldırım districts? What spatial associations can be observed between this distribution, neighbourhood function, and social history? What typographic and material characteristics distinguish the five categories of surviving artefacts identified in the inventory? Based on these findings, the study also proposes TIMM, a conservation management framework for transforming geographically referenced documentation into a systematic framework that extends beyond the AHD.

This study makes four contributions: an empirical, georeferenced inventory of vernacular typographic heritage in a Turkish urban context; an inductive, multi-method documentation protocol and coding scheme adaptable in principle; a theoretical application of CHS showing that systematic documentation can recognise heritage independently of AHD frameworks; and the TIMM, a four-phase conservation management framework.

2 Studies for the protection of typographic heritage in public spaces

The growing international recognition of typographic heritage as a dimension of urban cultural identity has produced a range of responses differing in institutional basis, methodological orientation, and conservation logic.

Civil society and advocacy networks form the most grassroots dimension of this landscape. The Iberian Network in Defence of Graphic Heritage, founded in 2020, brings together local initiatives across Spain and Portugal to document, publicise and, in some cases, restore commercial lettering (Red Ibérica en Defensa del Patrimonio Gráfico, n.d.; Kassam, 2021; Santatipo, n.d.), while the Ghostsigns initiative in the UK and Ireland maintains a publicly accessible online archive of painted advertising signs (Carletti, 2011). These networks' flexibility and community embeddedness generate public

interest without institutional mandates, but cannot convert documentation into conservation outcomes without sustained funding or legislative support. Publicly supported heritage programmes address this limitation by anchoring typographic heritage within institutional and legal frameworks, though they tend to narrow the scope of what qualifies. Lisbon's Lojas com História programme (n.d.) combines legal protection, financial support and a digital catalogue to safeguard culturally significant commercial premises, while Historic England's (2025) High Streets Heritage Action Zone project has restored hundreds of shop fronts as part of heritage-led regeneration. These programmes generate measurable outcomes, but their eligibility criteria favour architecturally or commercially significant premises. Documentation and digital archive projects occupy a position between civic advocacy and institutional protection, reflecting a drive towards methodological standardisation. Ireland's Kilkenny Traditional Shopfront Signage Project publishes standardised field records via the Digital Repository of Ireland, proposing a reproducible approach to documenting vernacular fascia signs (Maher Ring, 2023; Digital Repository of Ireland, 2024), while Farias, Lessing & Bulegato (2024) identified and categorised over three hundred instances of vernacular letterforms in Venice, providing an empirical dataset and methodological framework. These projects make vernacular heritage institutionally legible and publicly accessible, but documentation alone does not ensure physical survival or translate into conservation priorities.

Conservation and restoration initiatives move beyond documentation to focus on the physical maintenance of typographic heritage: Neon Museum in Nevada combines restoration with exhibition programming and oral history collection (Neon Museum, 2023), while the Main Street America integrates conservation with cultural tourism across multiple American cities (Ebersole, n.d.). These approaches recognise the need for active maintenance and craft knowledge, but they require substantial, sustained funding and specialist expertise most civic or local government actors cannot reliably secure. A further approach treats typographic heritage not as an object of preservation, but as cultural knowledge to be passed on. Japan's Noramoji Project archives photographs of handmade local scripts and releases them as open-source typefaces (Sugita, 2019), while Mexico's Encuentro Rotulismo Tepito celebrates traditional sign painting as a living cultural practice through public exhibitions (Secretaría de Cultura, 2024), underscoring that documentation alone cannot offset this loss without community support.

UNESCO's 2003 Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage may indirectly accommodate sign painting as craft knowledge, but neither it nor Türkiye's Law No. 2863 explicitly protects vernacular typographic artefacts, leaving local governments to prioritise visual standardisation over systematic preservation (Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kanunu, 1983). Türkiye's 12th Development Plan (2024–2028) aligns heritage conservation with SDG 11 targets on cultural safeguarding and inclusive urban planning, yet the structural gap remains: existing approaches are reactive, selectively scoped or insufficiently integrated across documentation, assessment, prioritisation and long-term management (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Strateji ve Bütçe Başkanlığı, 2023). This review reveals the absence of an integrated

framework spanning documentation, assessment and management, a gap this study addresses through the TIMM, grounded in fieldwork across Bursa's Osmangazi and Yıldırım districts.

3 Methods

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to document the vernacular typographic heritage of Bursa, with a focus on the historic neighbourhoods of the Osmangazi and Yıldırım districts. These areas were chosen due to their central location, historical character, and ongoing craft and commercial traditions. Rather than defining the study area in advance, it was established through fieldwork: neighbourhoods were explored on foot and only those containing at least one qualifying hand-lettered sign were included. Not every street was covered. Therefore, the inventory should be understood as a purposive sample rather than a complete record. Spatial frequencies reflect what has survived and been documented rather than density, for which no area denominator is available, or historical prevalence, for which no baseline data exists. Any relationship to neighbourhood function is therefore interpretive rather than causal. Here, the term *concentration* does not refer to a statistically tested spatial pattern, but to the raw number within the documented sample. The final study area covered 49 neighbourhoods out of a total of 207 in the two districts (136 in Osmangazi and 71 in Yıldırım), covering the historic centre of Bursa and its immediate surroundings.

The fieldwork consisted of repeated exploratory walks, carried out intermittently by the author between 2021 and 2026. These walks were opportunistic and weather-dependent rather than scheduled, beginning in the historic central districts of Osmangazi and Yıldırım and gradually expanding outwards. As the study was not a statistically representative, street-by-street survey, the exact number and dates of individual visits were not recorded and cannot be reported. Instead, an iterative strategy was employed, whereby field visits continued until category saturation was reached. This was assessed qualitatively: subsequent visits produced examples only within the five existing categories, with no new types emerging.

Following Finizola, Coutinho, and Santana (2018), vernacular typographic artefacts are understood as letterforms made through manual and artisanal processes, outside formal graphic design training; hand-lettered specifically refers to letterforms applied by brush as part of the sign painting craft, including hand-gilded lettering. Carved and relief lettering, machine-cut letterforms such as vinyl, and stencilled forms were all excluded.

Inclusion criteria were vernacular, hand-lettered artefacts; digitally produced or mass-printed signs were excluded. Each artefact's GPS coordinates, photographs, and descriptive attributes were recorded on an online map (Google Maps).[1] This prevented duplicate entries, as any find that matched an already recorded coordinate was excluded. Five categories emerged inductively from the material, namely *Nameplates*, *Signs*, *Warning and Information Signs*, *Window Signs*, and *Wall Signs*. Nameplates identify the name of a building, generally an apartment building, mounted at or near

1 https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/3/edit?mid=1gLIfsmohlruDl_cblDEOnKpJTRqQvkY&usp=sharing [The map is continuously updated. The inventory (Note 2) reflects data collection as it stood prior to manuscript submission.]

the main entrance. Signs identify or advertise commercial establishments, typically indicating the name or type of business and mounted above an entrance. Warning and information signs convey cautionary, directive or informational content without identifying a specific building or business. Window signs are lettering applied directly onto a shop window's glass, distinguishing them from signs mounted on a separate panel. Wall signs are lettering that is painted or applied directly onto a building's exterior wall or façade rather than onto a dedicated panel or window. Categories were assigned according to each object's primary communicative function and physical placement; when an object combined more than one category, it was classified by its dominant function. Each artefact was documented in an online inventory (Google Sheets)[2] through eight fields: name, type, district, neighbourhood, coordinates, features, year of manufacture (if known), signature (where present).

2 https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nZ_s6alqsXtJqOBJN8vKxcxHUY3FkPvpGD7jUvJoLIM/edit?usp=sharing

All coding was conducted by the author, which limited the study through the absence of inter-rater reliability assessment. The TIMM was developed inductively from operational needs identified through documentation, categorisation, mapping, assessment, and synthesised into the four-phase framework.

4 Results

The inventory of Bursa's typographic heritage was organised into five categories: *Nameplates*, *Signs*, *Warning and Information Signs*, *Window Signs*, and *Wall Signs*. Each record included the eight fields described in Methods.

In the absence of an internationally standardised classification system for hand-lettered forms, and to compensate for the absence of inter-rater reliability testing, Chart 1 presents the complete, inductively developed coding scheme applied to the typographic style and material properties of the works. This makes the coding process traceable and reviewable, as it specifies the operational description of each code and the decision rules used to resolve ambiguous or borderline situations. This explicitness follows Krippendorff's (2004, p. 19) criterion that replicable coding be governed by rules "explicitly stated and applied equally to all units of analysis".

Chart 1 Coding scheme.

Code	Operational definition	Coding rule / borderline cases
Serif	Letterforms with clearly identifiable serifs.	Minor decorative extensions do not qualify.
Sans-serif	Letterforms without serifs.	Irregular hand-lettered edges do not exclude this category.
Slab-serif	Letterforms with broad, block-like serifs.	Narrower or tapered serifs are coded as Serif.
Cursive	Handwritten or script-like letterforms.	Decorative flourishes alone do not qualify.
Display	Letterforms designed primarily for decorative or attention-getting purposes.	A decorative Serif is not automatically Display.
Coloured	Lettering in any colour other than black, white, or the natural colour of the sign material.	Coded independently of typographic style; multicoloured lettering receives one code.

Chart 1 Coding scheme. (continued)

Code	Operational definition	Coding rule / borderline cases
Shaded	A distinct drop-shadow effect positioned behind or below the lettering to create a sense of depth.	Requires a visible offset shadow; an outline alone does not qualify.
Gilding	Lettering executed using gold leaf.	Gold-coloured paint is not coded as Gilding.
Ghost sign	Hand lettering that has visibly faded, deteriorated, or partially disappeared over time.	Ordinary weathering without substantial loss does not qualify.

Multiple coding principles

Coding principle	Rule
Multiple typographic styles	If different letterform styles occur within one artefact, each represented style is coded separately.
Multiple visual/material features	Coloured, Shaded, Gilding, Ghost sign are coded independently and may co-occur.
Frequency calculation	Frequencies indicate feature occurrences, not distinct artefact totals.

The Sema Apartment's nameplate is coded as slab-serif, for the blocky serifs in *Sema*, and as sans-serif, for the plainer letters in *APT. No. 6*, illustrating the principle that each style is coded separately when multiple letterforms appear within one artefact; its gilded letters likewise receive a separate gilding code, since visual and material characteristics are coded independently of typographic style. The Tırpancı Apartment's nameplate, by contrast, is coded as cursive for its fluid, handwriting-like letters, with a separate coloured code for its blue lettering on a black background (Figure 1). As classification relied on the presence or absence of clearly observable formal and material features, no artefact was assigned a feature that could not be visually confirmed. The Koruyucu Apartment's nameplate showcases diversity, combining gold-leaf lettering with a design that is likely the construction company's logo.



Figure 1 Examples of different nameplates found in Bursa (Photos were taken by the author).

In this coding scheme (Chart 1), ghost sign refers to a hand-lettered sign whose lettering has faded or deteriorated, indicating an advanced state of physical decline (Roberts & Reed, 2021), and should be distinguished from the Ghostsigns documentation project discussed above (Carletti, 2011). Throughout, *Ghostsigns* (capitalised, one word) refers to that project, while *ghost sign* (lowercase, two words) refers to the condition-based category used here.

Table 1 Distribution of vernacular typographic artefacts by category and district.

Category	Total	Osmangazi	Yıldırım
Nameplates	205 (66.99%)	156 (76.10%)	49 (23.90%)
Signs	78 (25.49%)	67 (85.90%)	11 (14.10%)
Warning & Information Signs	7 (2.29%)	6 (85.71%)	1 (14.29%)
Window Signs	11 (3.59%)	7 (63.64%)	4 (36.36%)
Wall Signs	5 (1.63%)	5 (100.00%)	0 (0.00%)
Total	**306**	**241** (78.76%)	**65** (21.24%)

Taken together, nameplates and signs make up 92.48% of the inventory, showing that hand-lettered signs concentrate in these two dominant categories, with the remaining three rarely represented. Osmangazi accounts for a much larger share (n = 241, 78.76%) than Yıldırım (n = 65, 21.24%); wall signs are represented only in Osmangazi (n = 5), while window signs are more evenly split, with 7 examples in Osmangazi and 4 in Yıldırım. Counts refer to documented surviving artefacts, not estimated original density or historical totals.

The neighbourhood distribution of the surviving inventory shows a concentration of documented artefacts within several residential and commercial areas (Table 2). Nameplates are the most geographically widespread category, spread across 39 neighbourhoods, with the highest concentrations in Maksem, Çırpan, and Hocaalizade. Signs are more spatially concentrated, occurring mainly in Kayhan, Tuzpazarı, and Alacamescit. The remaining categories (Warning and Information Signs, Window Signs, and Wall Signs) are rarely seen.

Table 2 Typographic and cultural characteristics by artefact category.

Category	Number (%)	Typeface	Features	Neighbourhood	Signatures
Nameplates	205 (66.99%)	Sans-serif (111), Cursive (54), Serif (27), Slab-serif (15), Display (11)	Gilding (113), Coloured (70), Shaded (60), Ghost sign (28)	Maksem (15), Çırpan (14), Hocaalizade (14)	27
Signs	78 (25.49%)	Sans-serif (76), Cursive (19), Serif (17), Slab-serif (5), Display (2)	Coloured (61), Shaded (14), Ghost sign (8), Gilding (4)	Kayhan (9), Tuzpazarı (7), Alacamescit (6)	19
Warning & Information Signs	7 (2.29%)	Sans-serif (7)	Coloured (5), Shaded (1)	Alacamescit (2), Orhan Bey (1), İntizam (1)	0
Window Signs	11 (3.59%)	Sans-serif (10), Serif (2), Cursive (2)	Gilding (7), Coloured (3), Shaded (2)	Kayhan (2), Kurtoğlu (2), Namazgah (2)	2
Wall Signs	5 (1.63%)	Sans-serif (5), Cursive (1)	Coloured (4), Ghost sign (3)	Doğanbey (1), Hocaalizade (1), Kemerçeşme (1)	0

5 Discussion

These uneven district figures should be considered in relation to the morphology of the study area. Bursa's historic core is located primarily in Osmangazi (Batuman & Erkip, 2017, p. 831), whereas Yıldırım is largely comprised of detached or low-rise residential areas which typically lack nameplates. The high proportion of shop signs in the inventory provides a typographic record of the city's commercial dynamism and continuity. However, this category has undergone constant renewal due to socioeconomic factors, such as the Great Bazaar Fire of 1958 (Budakoğlu, 2003), the decline of traditional trade and the evolution of retail.

The lower representation of other signs may reflect their greater physical fragility and earlier removal during urban redevelopment, a hypothesis that this cross-sectional inventory cannot test directly without a historical baseline. According to Relph's (1976) concept of *placelessness*, this is consistent with the replacement of locally distinctive visual elements by standardised commercial forms.

Taken together, these neighbourhood patterns suggest an association between the distribution of surviving typographic heritage and Bursa's socio-spatial structure. The observed concentration of surviving nameplates along the Maksem-Çırpan-Hocaalizade axis, and of commercial signs along the Kayhan-Tuzpazarı-Alacamescit corridor, appears to correspond with locally reported differences in the historical character of these areas: the former is described primarily in residential terms, while the latter is associated with commercial and craft activities. While this pattern is

consistent with the idea that neighbourhood function and social history influence the conditions under which such works remain visible, this study does not establish a causal relationship. These zones can be understood, following Lynch (1960), as districts with distinguishable characteristics whose typographic concentrations may both contribute to, and be shaped by, their social histories.

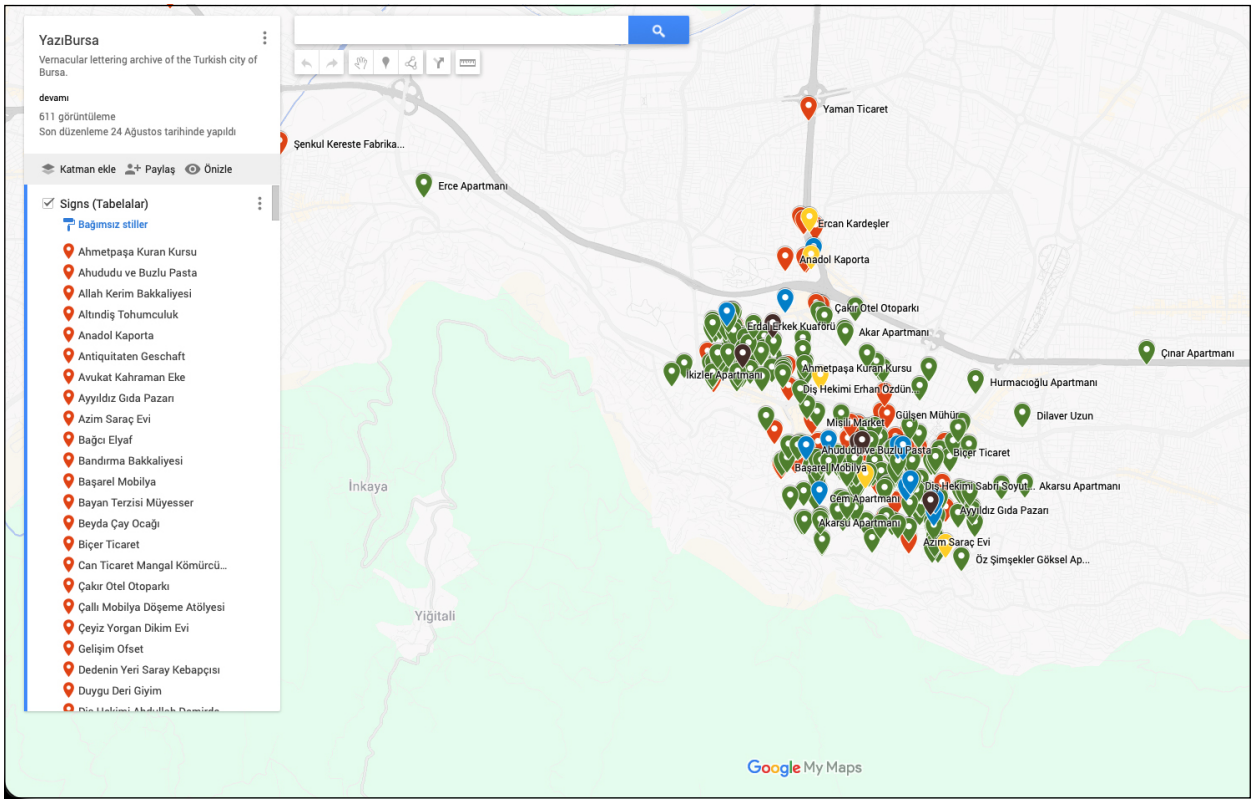


Figure 2 Online map featuring typographic artefacts alongside photographs and location-based information.

Lettering in the urban environment operates simultaneously as textual information and spatial marker, communicating a place's cultural positioning to its inhabitants (Fleischmann, 2011). By recording each artefact's precise location, the inventory relates objects to the city's historical morphology and neighbourhood-based social practices, revealing spatial relationships conventional catalogues might overlook. The inventory is organised through two linked, publicly accessible platforms: a structured Google Sheet containing the artefacts' attributes, and a georeferenced Google Map that allows users to explore their locations through photographs and markers. Beyond the CHS framework, the inventory functions as an information system whose field structure and platform choices carry their own consequences for access, standardisation, and long-term maintenance. Its eight-field schema serves as a metadata structure, but unlike the Kilkenny project, it is not housed in an institutional repository (Digital Repository of Ireland, 2024; Maher Ring, 2023). Reliance on Google services creates

platform lock-in risks. Together with the accessibility limitations and the TIMM's Phase 4 monitoring cycle, this makes metadata standardisation and platform-independent archiving priorities for institutionalisation. In doing so, the inventory reflects the Burra Charter's principle that conservation records should be made publicly available (Australia ICOMOS, 2013, p. 9).

The absence of these artefacts from Türkiye's official heritage inventories is consistent with the broader bias towards expert-led, monument-centred definitions of cultural value that CHS scholars attribute to the AHD (Waterton & Smith, 2010). The online map addresses this bias by linking artefacts to neighbourhood functions and urban history while enabling different users to engage with the data. Researchers can identify spatial and typological patterns, designers can compare formal variations, local authorities can set conservation priorities through TIMM, and communities can locate artefacts without specialist training. Yet, unlike civic or institutional initiatives elsewhere, Bursa's typographic heritage has received no formal support, while the limited survival of vulnerable categories such as wall and window signs underscores the urgency of the proposed management framework.

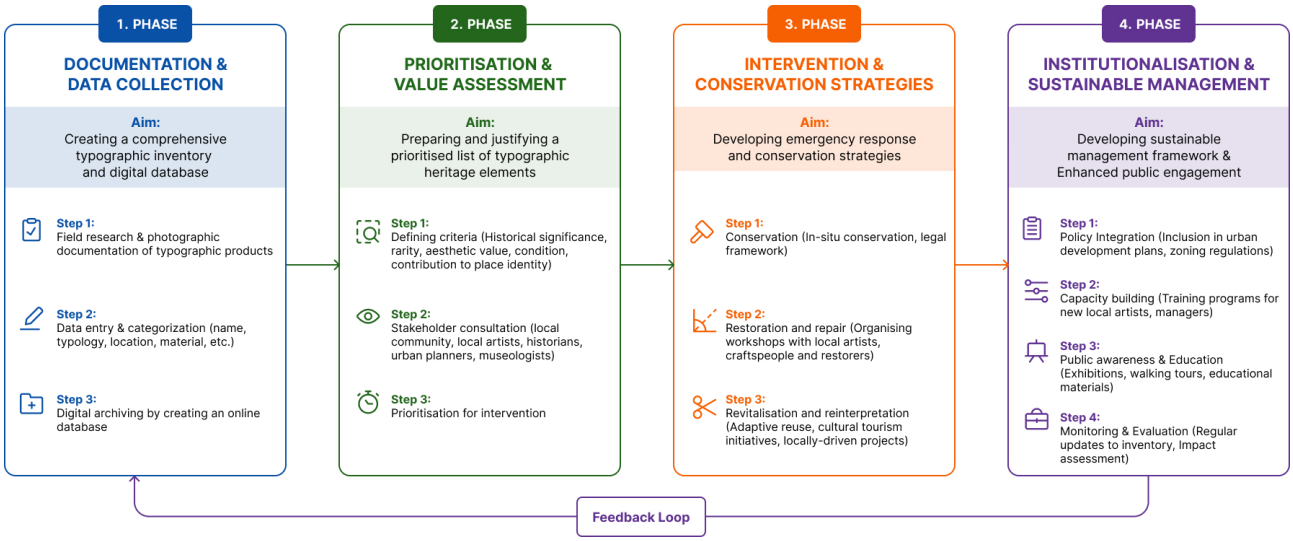


Figure 3 Typographic Inventory Management Model (TIMM).

Figure 3 presents the TIMM as a four-phase cyclical framework with varying empirical grounding. Phase 1 was implemented here, while Phases 2–4 propose a sequence derived from findings. Documentation and Data Collection (Phase 1) formalises the fieldwork, eight-field coding scheme (Chart 1), and linked Google Sheet and Map. Prioritisation and Value Assessment (Phase 2) draws on category rarity, condition, and relationships with neighbourhood functions. Its stakeholder consultation step was not part of this study but is proposed for future implementation. Intervention and Conservation Strategies (Phase 3) is intended to use artefact distribution and condition to identify conservation priorities and proposes workshop-based repair, extending the craft-transmission

approaches of the Noramoji Project and Encuentro Rotulismo Tepito. Institutionalisation and Sustainable Management (Phase 4) responds to the legal gap identified in literature by proposing integration into planning frameworks. Public awareness builds on researcher, designer, authority, and community pathways established through the online map, while monitoring feeds new observations back into Phase 1 via a feedback loop, making the framework cyclical and adaptable.

Compared with existing approaches, the TIMM is intended to stand out by bringing four functions together. Civic advocacy and knowledge-transfer projects such as Red Ibérica, Ghostsigns, Noramoji, and Encuentro Rotulismo support documentation and craft continuity, but do not link survey data to conservation priorities. Public programmes such as Lojas com História (n.d.) and Historic England (2025) are closer to TIMM's institutional phase, but focus on architecturally or commercially significant premises. Documentation projects in Kilkenny and Venice largely address only TIMM's first phase. The Burra Charter Process is the closest procedural parallel, but it assumes that heritage has already been identified. The TIMM works earlier in the process, building the evidence needed for undesignated typographic artefacts to enter heritage management. The transferability of its coding scheme and the practical feasibility of moving from documentation to prioritisation are supported by parallel work in Sakarya (Yıldırım, 2020; Ertürk, 2025), where the first phase of a comparable model has been implemented.

6 Limitations

Because the study was conducted by a single researcher, some categorical decisions, including category-saturation judgements, may not be reproducible by another researcher using the same scheme. Findings should not be generalised beyond Osmangazi and Yıldırım without comparable documentation elsewhere. Because the inventory is cross-sectional and lacks a baseline for tracking heritage loss, category frequencies cannot be taken as evidence of historical prevalence or the reasons for disappearance. The fieldwork was also undated and non-exhaustive, and its focus on neighbourhoods containing at least one qualifying artefact prevents assessment of seasonal patterns or artefact absence in unsurveyed areas. Although the study draws on CHS principles, the documentation process was researcher-led and did not formally include residents' or practitioners' perspectives. Access is further limited by reliance on internet-based tools: screen-reader and colour-vision compatibility have not been tested, and English-language descriptions may be difficult for some local users.

7 Conclusion

The findings provide a case study that contributes to critical engagement with the AHD in two interrelated ways. First, at an empirical level, the documented material remains largely absent from official heritage inventories and

conservation practices in Türkiye, a finding consistent with CHS critiques of the AHD's preference for monumentality and permanence (Smith, 2006; Waterton & Smith, 2010). Secondly, theoretically, the spatial distribution of the 306 artefacts shows an association rather than a causal relationship with neighbourhood function. This supports Smith's (2006) view that heritage value is not an intrinsic property of objects, but rather a socially produced condition. Future research could extend the inventory methodology to other historically significant Turkish cities to analyse regional variation in vernacular typographic heritage. Longitudinal monitoring, using the current dataset as a baseline, would make it possible to quantify the rate of typographic heritage loss and evaluate the impact of conservation measures. Participatory documentation approaches, including community-led recording and oral history work with practising and retired sign painters, would strengthen the CHS dimensions of future projects and give voice to the human knowledge embedded in the surviving material record.

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