

Available online at [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

ScienceDirect

Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 140 (2014) 138 – 144

---

---

**Procedia**  
Social and Behavioral Sciences

---

---

PSYSOC 2013

# Cultural Heritage Conservation In Traditional Environments: Case Of Mustafapaşa (Sinassos), Turkey

Ümmügülüm Ter <sup>a</sup> \*, Koray Özcan <sup>b</sup>, Sedef Eryiğit <sup>c</sup><sup>a</sup> Selcuk University, Faculty of Architecture, Department of City and Regional Planning, Konya 42075, Turkey<sup>b</sup> Selcuk University, Faculty of Architecture, Department of City and Regional Planning, Konya 42075, Turkey<sup>c</sup> Selcuk University, Faculty of Architecture, Department of City and Regional Planning, Konya 42075, Turkey

---

## Abstract

Traditional settlements which have to be conserved and sustained due to their cultural, social, economic, archaeological and aesthetic values contribute much to perceptibility of cities by transferring the emotion, thought, social life and background of the time when established. Since different cultures coincide, leading to a variety and this is reflected in the space, Turkey has a rich, cultural and natural heritage together. Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) is an authentic settlement with its spatial characteristics shaped by this rich culture in Turkey. This study aims to contribute to transfer cultural heritage to next generations with suggestions relating to conservation of planning experiences on spatial characteristics deriving from Mustafapaşa (Sinassos)'s natural and cultural heritage values. In this regard, spatial characteristics and authentic identity values are defined in the study in the first part, and then in the following, evaluation of conservation of cultural heritage by giving the details of planning and implementation experiences for conservation.

© 2014 Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>).

Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of PSYSOC 2013.

*Keywords:* conservation, cultural heritage, traditional environment, Mustafapaşa (Sinassos)

---

## 1. Introduction

It is the common problem among people today that cultural and natural heritage people created with nature has been conserved throughout thousands of years of the civilization history. Industrial revolution and technological advancements afterwards, rapid urbanization and population growth turned living environments full of cultural and natural heritage into unhealthy places, and caused nations to have an identity problem on the verge of the 21st

---

\* Corresponding Author: Ümmügülüm Ter. Tel.: +090-332-223-2218  
E-mail address: [uter@selcuk.edu.tr](mailto:uter@selcuk.edu.tr)

century. These negative developments have required certain effective measures to take for the use of cultural heritage by conserving and transferring it to the next generations by improving (Ter, 2002).

Mustafapaşa settlement, takes place in Cappadocia region, listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as cultural and natural site in 1985. The geological structure of Capadocia region impacted its historical background, and human structure influenced the formation of the physical environment. From the documents obtained from Nevşehir Cultural and Natural Heritage Protection Board and Mustafapaşa Municipality, it can be understood that there are 115 registered buildings in urban sites. In these sites works of civil architecture formed by rock carvings and masonry houses, and monumental public buildings such as church-chapel, mosques, madrasas, caravanserais and bridge also take place.

The purpose of this study in which Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) settlement which has a rich cultural heritage is exemplified is to contribute to transfer cultural heritage to next generations with suggestions relating to conservation of planning experiences on spatial characteristics deriving from Mustafapaşa's (Sinassos) natural and cultural heritage values.

## 2. Historical Perspective

Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) and Cappadocia regions have been settled by people due to their suitable agricultural lands and ore beds since Neolithic times. The first settlement in Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) whose historical development dates back to 3000 BC cannot be identified. Called Sinassos in the 19th century, Mustafapaşa settlement lies on a valley extending in the north-south direction between Avra Mount (Rafes) in the east and Oylu Mount (Elevres) in the west. It is known that the region, the original name of which is not exactly known, has been named "Sasima", "Levidis", "Assuma", "Sunasyun", "Sinason", and "Sinassus" at various times. The fact that it has been called by many names shows that it has housed a lot of different cultures throughout the history. Sinassos became a Christian settlement after the Roman Empire adopted Christianity. It can be seen from the records which date back from the beginning of the 17th century to the end of the 19th century that Christian-Cypriot and Turkish-Muslim population resided together in Sinassos which maintained the feature of being a settlement protecting Greek culture during Ottoman Empire. According to the Centre for Asia Minor Studies Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) settlement consisted of 12 neighbourhoods, 8 of which were inhabited by Greeks, 3 of which by Turks, 1 of which was by Greeks and Turks together (Balta, 2005).

The people from Sinassos became rich with the contribution of the privileges and the rights for the minorities at the end of the 19th century. In that period Sinassos played an important role in revival of Orthodoxy in Cappadocia region (Kostof, 1979). Religious and educational structures on sociocultural needs of both two nations were given enormous importance in their communal settlement (Balta, 2005). The attempts at structuring show that the settlement was an important place for an educational and religious centre for Orthodox-Christian Greeks (Nakracas, 2005; Augustinos, 1997). The people from Sinassos who earned a living by trade relations with İstanbul showed their richness by building mansions and religious places (Pekak, 2009).

It is possible to say that the period between 1923-1925 was breaking point for Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) settlement in functional, sociocultural and economic aspects. Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) district with its natural and cultural heritage values has an authentic identity which has to be protected at both the international and the national level due to being an exchange settlement whose sociocultural and economic infrastructure changed totally following the mutual exchange of the population of Turks and Greeks.

## 3. Spatial Characteristics of Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) settlement and its identity values

Natural and cultural landscape values have played a key role in shaping spatial characteristics of Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) and forming its identity.

### 3.1. Natural Landscape Analysis

Fairy chimneys and especially valleys account for natural values in Mustafapaşa settlement which carries the characteristics in the region. Places such as one or two storey rock-carved houses located on steep slopes and cliffs, and warehouse, monasteries and churches highlight the characteristics of valleys. Some parts of these kinds of places are used as houses and warehouses today (Özbay, 2007). The natural elements of the settlement's urban

pattern and extending in the north-south direction, these valleys are Gibos Valley, Bey Deresi Valley, Dere Sokak Zafer Street where there are a number of monasteries and churches. The valleys integrated with others, have the values of natural and cultural heritage at silhouette-view level in the region.

Nearly 1 km long, Gibos Valley, which lies in the south-west of the town, is the deepest and the most effective valley in the settlement. The steep and deep structure of its eastern part bounded by the Maraş Bridge provides a view of the canyon for the settlement. The continuation of Gibos Valley, Beyderesi Valley is 1.5 km long. 3 storey rock-carved monastery and church of Agios Vassilios sacred to Christians is located in the valley. The width of Beydere valley provides a natural landscape feature with its silhouette formed by rich plateaus and fairy chimneys. Including one of the major arteries that provides a connection with the southern city and divided by ancient Maraşoğlu Bridge, Manastırlar Valley (Dere Street- Zafer Street) consists of less inclined slopes and ends with St. Nicholas Monastery Complex in the southwest of the settlement (Özbay, 2007) (Fig. 1).



Fig.1. Tradational Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) settlement and integrated valleys (Özbay, 2007)

The sustainable rock walls which make up the slope surfaces of valleys are the most important elements which offer the visual values of the settlement. The pathways on the upper sides of the valleys along with the peaks where large areas such as Atatürk Hill take place are major landscapes in the sunlight-rich settlement (Özbay, 2007).

Golgoli Hill and its surroundings are other important areas with dominant silhouette characteristics in the settlement. Lying to the 14-km-southwest of the settlement, Golgoli Hill and its surroundings are used as picnic area today, played an important part in social life during the pre-conversion period.

### 3.2. Cultural Landscape Analysis

The fact that Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) has housed many different cultures with its characteristics of the geographic region in which it is located has enriched the cultural heritage of the settlement. Unique residential architecture of the settlement, the typology of the pattern, religious structures and examples of other civil architecture play an important role in forming cultural landscape and identity (Fig. 2).

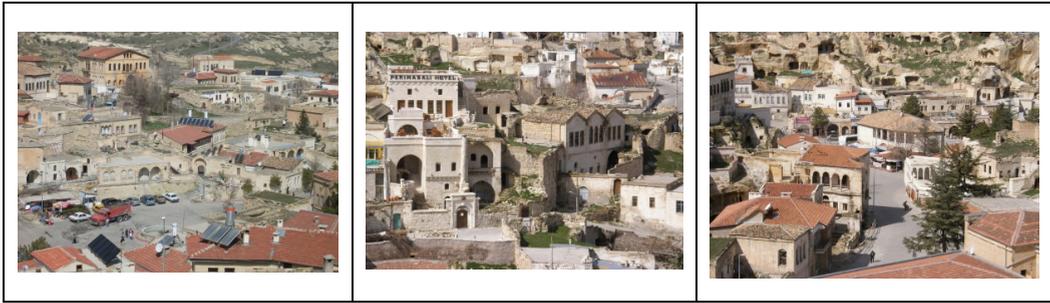


Fig. 2. Cultural landscape of Mustafapaşa (Sinasos) Settlement (Original 2009)

Throughout the history Mustafapaşa (Sinasos) houses have varied greatly ranging from rock-carved houses, composite structures, big houses to mansions. Rock-carved houses, which date back to BC 2000 and were used as shelters, are known to have been used for settlement until the 19th century. The economic situation in Sinasos was continuously improving, and new units were added to rock-carved houses, leading to composite structures. In the period of the end of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century when they kept İstanbul maritime trade under control, the people's welfare in Sinasos increased, infrastructure investments were made in the settlement, and the number of facilities to improve social structure such as educational, cultural institutions and charities rose. The fact that male population worked in İstanbul and in Europe caused the settlement to be used as a summer resort. Financially satisfied Greeks formed a banking system so as to organize social and other activities; they spent on establishing social structures such as schools, hotels, churches, baths, and bridges. Besides, they organized public theatre performances at boys' schools and girls' schools, and the Greeks applied the most advanced programme of the period. They made masonry-built houses and mansions decorated with rich stone. Many structures like Haralambos Mansion, Canseverler Mansion, Gül Mansions, Dimostri Mansion, Bingos' House, Asmalı Konak located in Mustafapaşa (Sinasos), the architectural character of which began to change at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, are today used for education, hotels, hostels and TV series of shots (Özbay, 2007) (Fig. 3).

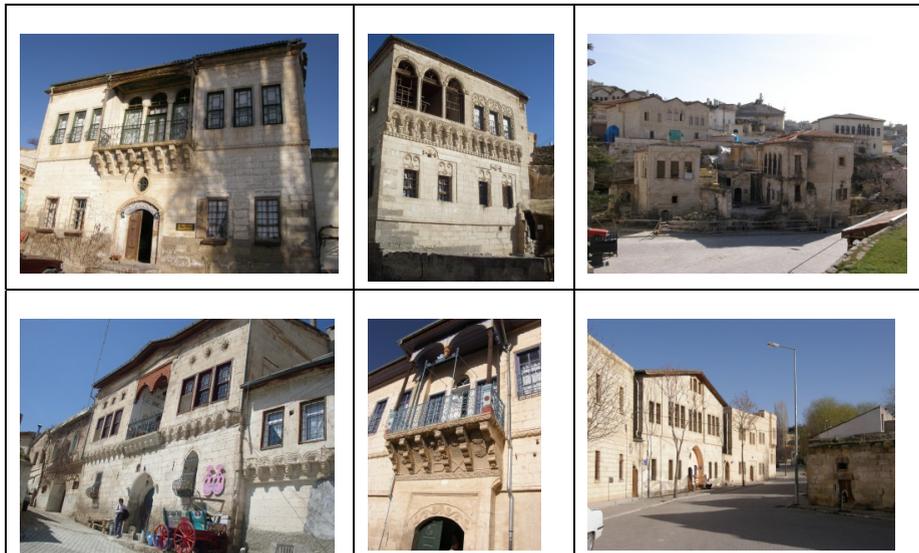


Fig. 3. Masonry houses (Original 2009)

The following churches are the most featured ones that are known in the region; carved 3 floors Saint Vasilios Church, known as the only rock church to have been pictured until the beginning of the 20th century in Cappadocia; Saint Nicholas-Heleni Church, located in the centre of the town and claimed to be built in 1729 during the period of Sultan Ahmet rule according to the inscription on the front door; Saint Nicholas Monastery, known to have been

built in the 8th or 9th century and used until the exchange; Sinasos Church, made by carving rocks; Chapel of St. Basil, located in Gomeda Valley and fairy chimneys near the town; Chapel of St. George near Damsa Stream (Özbay, 2007).

The other historic values of the town are the following ones; Cami-i Kebir (Aşağı Cami - 1601) near the town; Sıpahtı Mosque located on the northwestern slope of Gibos Valley; Şeyh Ali Mosque. Nowadays used as Vocational High School of Cappadocia, Mehmet Şakir Paşa Madrasa and Maraşoğlu Bridge are the examples of civil architecture of unique values (Fig. 4).

Another important element of cultural landscape and identity of the settlement is the unique residential architecture which is harmonious with the natural landscape. Physical and sociocultural factors play an important role in forming residential architecture. Square or rectangular formed houses comply with the natural landscape, while architectural elements have an image of extension of the landscape. Undetectable carved residential units do not have an adverse effect on the landscape, whereas volcanic stone, clay and wood which make up the surface of the house comply with the landscape. The mobility, freedom of residents' forms, and different composition of the settlement provide continuity, viability and integrity for urban view (Berk, 1990).

Structures which stand against each other and which are made near a courtyard set the general characteristics of the unique pattern of the settlement. Garden pavilions varying in the pattern are dispersed. Way-wall-building-courtyard relations in Ottoman Anatolian cities can be seen in Mustafapaşa (Sinasos) urban pattern in the same way as combined with rock carved structures. This homogeneous settlement pattern is enriched by big garden mansions and quality public buildings (Özbay, 2007).

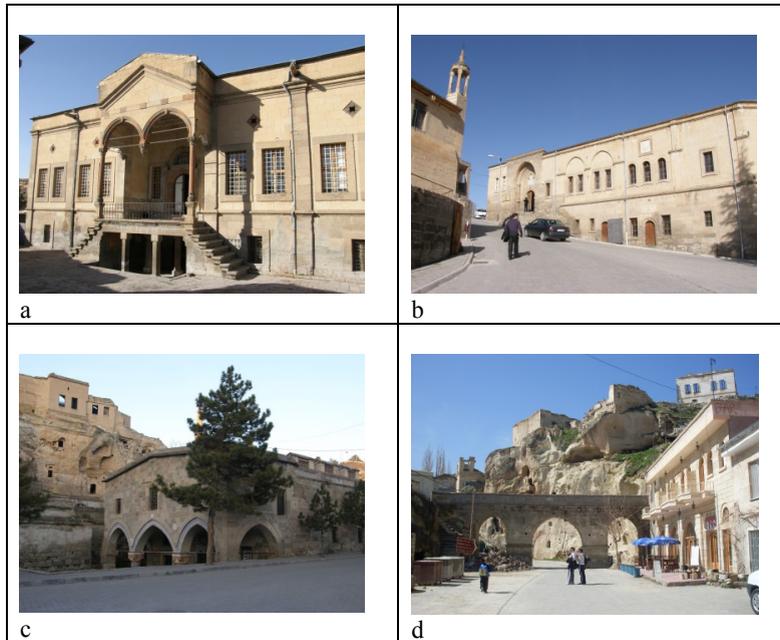


Fig. 4. a. Vocational High School of Cappadocia b. Mehmet Şakir Paşa Madrasa c. Saint Nicholas-Heleni Church d. Maraşoğlu Bridge

#### 4. Planning for Conservation and Implementation Experience of Mustafapaşa (Sinasos)

The first attempts to plan Mustafapaşa (Sinasos) settlement began with Cappadocia Tourism Region Environmental Organization which aimed to organize the region with tourism purposes. The first development plan for the settlement was prepared in 1974, but it was not applied. Cappadocia Environmental Organization Plan prepared to set sanctuary in Cappadocia region in 1976 and to establish tourism infrastructure was accepted in 1981.

In Cappadocia Environmental Organization, areas in the west of Mustafapaşa (Sinasos) settlement were declared as an Area of Development. According to the plan made in a scale of 1:25.000, decisions on tourism potential of

Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) settlement were made. Especially the upper slopes of Beydere Valley were regarded as "Tourism Settlement Zone" and 3 or 4-star hotels were thought to be built (Anonymous, 2004). Up to now only a 3-star hotel - Gomeda Hotel - could be built within this purpose; seven 4-star hotels thought to be built according to the plan took place in city centres and on high areas of the settlement. Built according to the plan to improve tourism instead of thinking about natural, historical and cultural values of the settlement, Gomeda Hotel can be noticed for being contrary to natural characteristics of the settlement and its unique silhouette. In this respect, it is a chance to protect historical and natural values that planning decisions were not completely carried out.

While Environment Plan was being prepared, decisions were made on development regulations for the whole Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) settlement and technical infrastructure services. It is remarkable that no policy on a sustainable natural and cultural heritage was made within the regulations. In this case, a 20-metre street especially in settlement and a road pattern including highly minimum a width of 10 metre-roads were recommended with development regulations, and these planning decisions were mostly applied. In road places made by demolishing buildings and walls nearby while roads formed by the human scale and topography were being enlarged; original construction gauge was changed considerably. Flood prevention projects prepared as well as such planning activities had an unfavourable effect on silhouette and visual quality of street space. For example, the connection between Madrasa and Aşağı Kebir Mosque was cut off, and Saint Nicholas-Heleni Church remained below the road level with the roads raised up to 2-2,5 metres. Due to demolishing and rebuilding activities, the original pattern typology was broken (Özbay, 2007).

According to Law No. A-3462 in 10.04.1982, as amended by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, High Council of Immovable Monuments and Antiquities, the valleys in and near Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) settlement are classified as first and third degree natural sites, and the first steps were taken to conserve and sustain cultural values after the settlement was assessed as urban conservation area status. Later on, according to Law No. 1124 in 12.11.1999, as amended by High Council of Immovable Monuments and Antiquities, an area of approximately 50,00 hectares surrounded by first and third degree natural sites were accepted as urban conservation area.

Academic studies on documenting and protecting cultural heritage of Mustafapaşa (Sinassos), and restoration services to prepare tourism infrastructure, conservation and use traditional houses were started in 1997, and still continue. Current Conservation Plan, the preparation of which was started in 2002, was accepted in 2003. With Conservation Plan made to protect cultural heritage of Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) settlement, Environment Plan (1:25.000), Master Plan (1:5.000), Development Plan (1:1.000) and Urban Design Projects (1:500) were also completed. It can be seen that with planning decisions, certain historic buildings were into facilities for tourism, while some traditional buildings were converted into educational institutions so as to balance conservation and use (Özbay, 2007).

## 5. Conclusion

Various cultures, in every period of the history, have created richness and variety by forming new syntheses. For this reason, Anatolia, centre of the history of civilization, has become the junction where almost every period has intersected. In this cultural mosaic like in many settlements in Turkey, natural and cultural heritage values in Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) also create a collective memory and an authentic identity.

The main factor in the protection of cultural heritage values Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) historical settlement possesses is that plans made regardless of protection concern have not been applied. Planning activities for protection starting in especially 2003 became the major step of conserving and sustaining cultural heritage, and transferring it to the next generations, within the approach of sustainable protection. Sensitive approach of the local government to the protection of natural and cultural heritage, documentation of cultural heritage, acceleration of restoration work, bringing construction decisions on protecting silhouette formed by natural and cultural values and increasing its visual effect, activities of developing the awareness of local conservation within the concept of Local Agenda 21 programmes, and scientific and technical infrastructure provided by Cappadocia Vocational High School all play an enormous role in the protection of cultural heritage of Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) and contribution to its popularity in the world-wide by specifying unique spatial characteristics.

As stated in Amsterdam Declaration (1975), historical environments formed by cultural heritage of a nation instil awareness of their history and future into nations. Cultural assets different civilizations formed at various times in the history are unique cultural values which may not be copied. In this heritage, the biggest right belongs to the future; therefore, the protection of historical environments and transferring them to the future is not only a necessity,

but a common responsibility the members of a society have to shoulder.

## References

- Ter, Ü. (2002). *Konya kenti açık ve yeşil alan varlığı içinde tarihi kent merkezinin kentsel tasarımı üzerine bir araştırma*, Doktora Tezi, Ankara Üniversitesi, Ankara.
- Balta, E. (2005). *Sinasos: mübadeleden önce bir Kapadokya kasabası*, Bir Zamanlar Yayıncılık, İstanbul.
- Kostof, S. (1979). *Caves of God: The monastic environment of Byzantine Cappadocia*, MIT Press, Massachusetts.
- Nakracas, G. (2005). *Anadolu ve rum göçmenlerin kökeni*, 167–168, Kitabevi Yayınları, İstanbul.
- Augustinos, G. (1997). *Küçük asya rumları*, 69-73, Ayraç Yayınları, İstanbul.
- Pekak, M.S. (2009). *Mustafapaşa (Sinasos), Konstantin ve Helena Kilisesi, Kilise I, Kilise II, Kilise III, Kilise IV, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Cilt 26, Sayı 1.
- Özbay, A. (2007). *Kapadokya'nın uyuyan güzeli: Mustafapaşa–Sinasos mevcut durum raporu ve eylem planı*, 21, M Grup Matbaacılık A.S, Kayseri.
- Berk, Ö. (1990). *Ev pansiyonlarda standart oda üretim araştırması ve Mustafapaşa (Sinasos) Örneği*, Yüksek lisans tezi, İTÜ, İstanbul.
- Anonymous (2004). *Nevşehir il çevre durum raporu*, sf; 64-65, Nevşehir Valiliği Yayınları, Nevşehir.