



Mustafapaşa, Türkiye Officially recognized as a Best Tourism Village
by UNWTO in 2021

MUSTAFAPAŞA

BEST TOURISM VILLAGE

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CAPPADOCIA
UNIVERSITY



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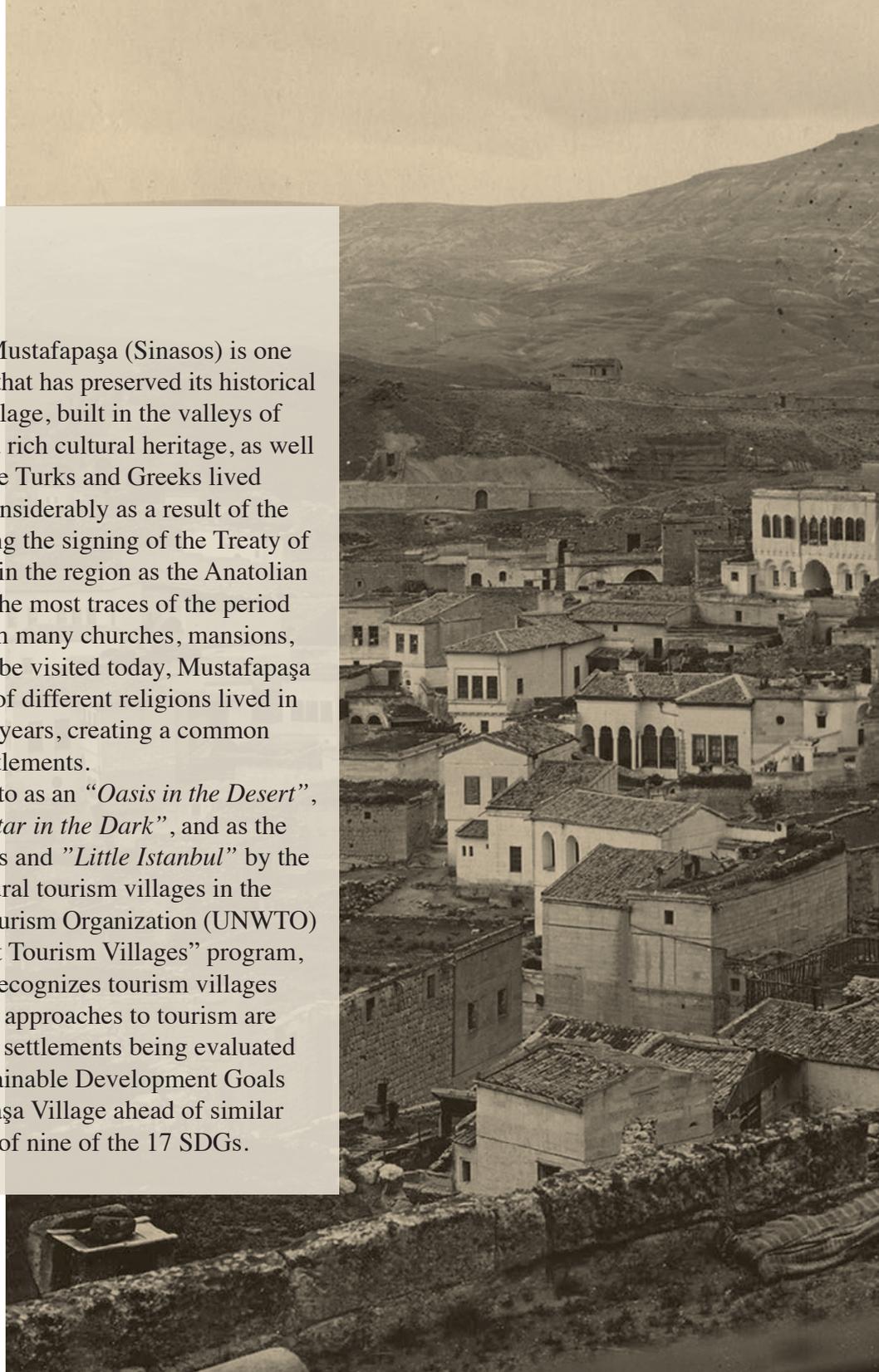
T.C.
ÜRGÜP
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CAPPADOCIA
AREA DIRECTORATE

Mustafapaşa

Located in the heart of Cappadocia, Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) is one of the rare settlements in Cappadocia that has preserved its historical and natural texture. This charming village, built in the valleys of Cappadocia, has an ancient past and a rich cultural heritage, as well as great natural beauty. Sinassos, where Turks and Greeks lived together for centuries, transformed considerably as a result of the population exchange in 1924 following the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne. It occupies a special place in the region as the Anatolian settlement that has retained possibly the most traces of the period prior to the population exchange. With many churches, mansions, madrasahs and mosques that can still be visited today, Mustafapaşa is a concrete example of how people of different religions lived in peace and tranquility for hundreds of years, creating a common culture that produced magnificent settlements.

Mustafapaşa, which has been referred to as an “*Oasis in the Desert*”, an “*Island in the Ocean*” and as a “*Star in the Dark*”, and as the “*Athens of Asia Minor*” by the Greeks and “*Little Istanbul*” by the Turks, was declared one of the best rural tourism villages in the world by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in December 2021. The “World's Best Tourism Villages” program, launched in May 2021 by UNWTO, recognizes tourism villages around the world in which innovative approaches to tourism are adopted in rural areas, with candidate settlements being evaluated based on the United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNWTO selected Mustafapaşa Village ahead of similar destinations as a result of its meeting of nine of the 17 SDGs.





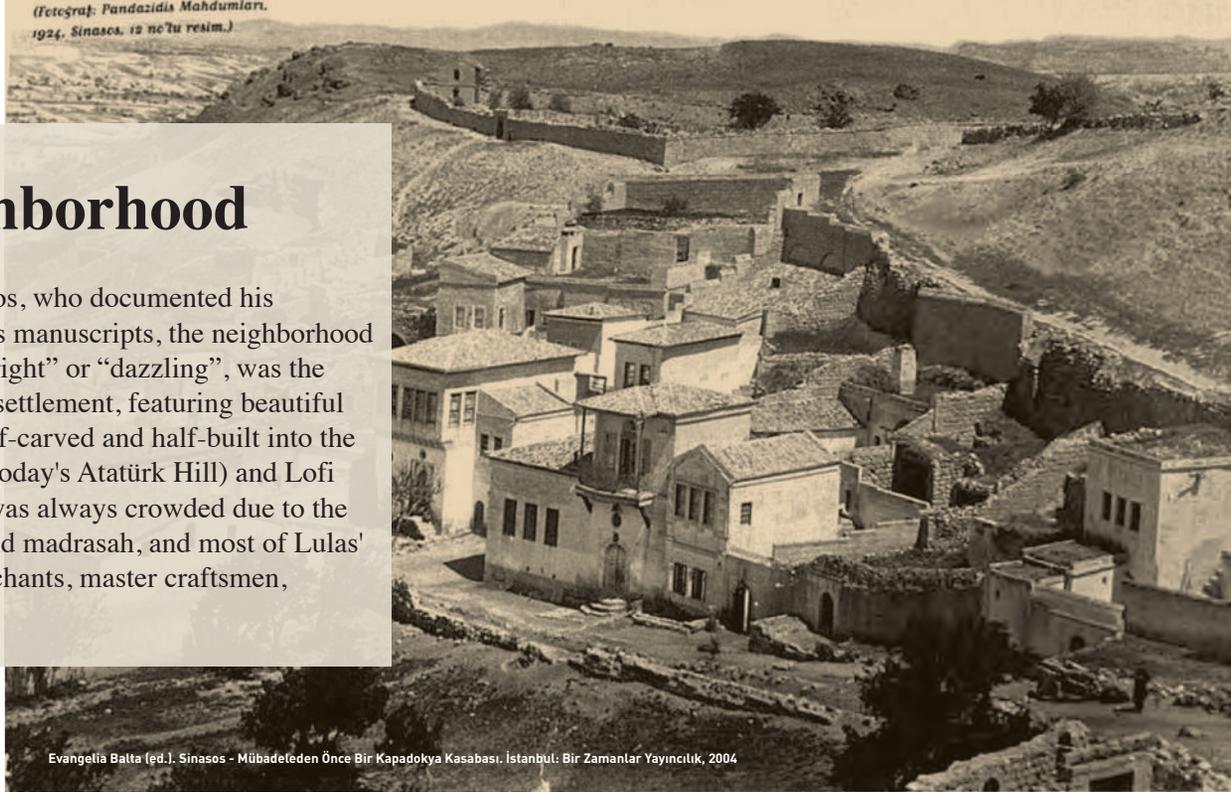
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(Fotoğraf: Pandazidis Mahdumları,
1924. Sinasos. 12 no'lu resim.)

Lulas Neighborhood

According to Serafim Rizos, who documented his memories of Sinasos in his manuscripts, the neighborhood of Lulas, which means “bright” or “dazzling”, was the most beautiful part of the settlement, featuring beautiful stone houses that were half-carved and half-built into the foothills of the Melenge (today's Atatürk Hill) and Lofi Hills. The neighborhood was always crowded due to the presence of the mosque and madrasah, and most of Lulas' residents were caviar merchants, master craftsmen, foremen and kocabaşılar.



Evangelia Balta (ed.). Sinasos - Mübadeleden Önce Bir Kapadokya Kasabası. İstanbul: Bir Zamanlar Yayıncılık, 2004



Serafim Mansion

1

Serafim Mansion, built in 1853 by the grandfather of Serafim Rizos, who left behind valuable information about the village. Part of the mansion that is privately owned today serves as a hotel with the name “Serafim”. The inscription over the original entrance door of the mansion reads: *“Oh, son of Adam, if you are friendly, welcome. But if you are hostile and have ill intentions, stay away from this gate! (This mansion) is mine today; tomorrow it will be someone else's. It will never belong to anyone – 1853”.*

Evangelia Balta (ed.). Sinasos - Mübadeleden Önce Bir Kapadokya Kasabası. İstanbul: Bir Zamanlar Yayıncılık, 2004

2 Old Greek House

The Old Greek House mansion, which featured in the TV series “Asmalı Konak”, was constructed in 1876 by a Greek builder named Yarha Vasil. The house was purchased by the ancestors of the Öztürk family in 1938 and has been operated as a hotel and restaurant by the same family since 1992 under the name “Old Greek House”. Among the several murals in the mansion, the most striking is the one based on Pierre Auguste Cot's “Springtime” (1873).



Institute Mansion 3

These two mansions were originally built separately, today function as the KÜN Institute Building. Some of the rooms on the ground floor are built out of masonry, while others are carved out of the rock. After entering through a door with a triangular pediment and going upstairs, one encounters an interesting wall painting in which the figure of Eros is depicted next to a young woman sitting by a fountain wearing a wedding dress. The painting was created in 1908 by Meletiades, the most famous painter in the village.



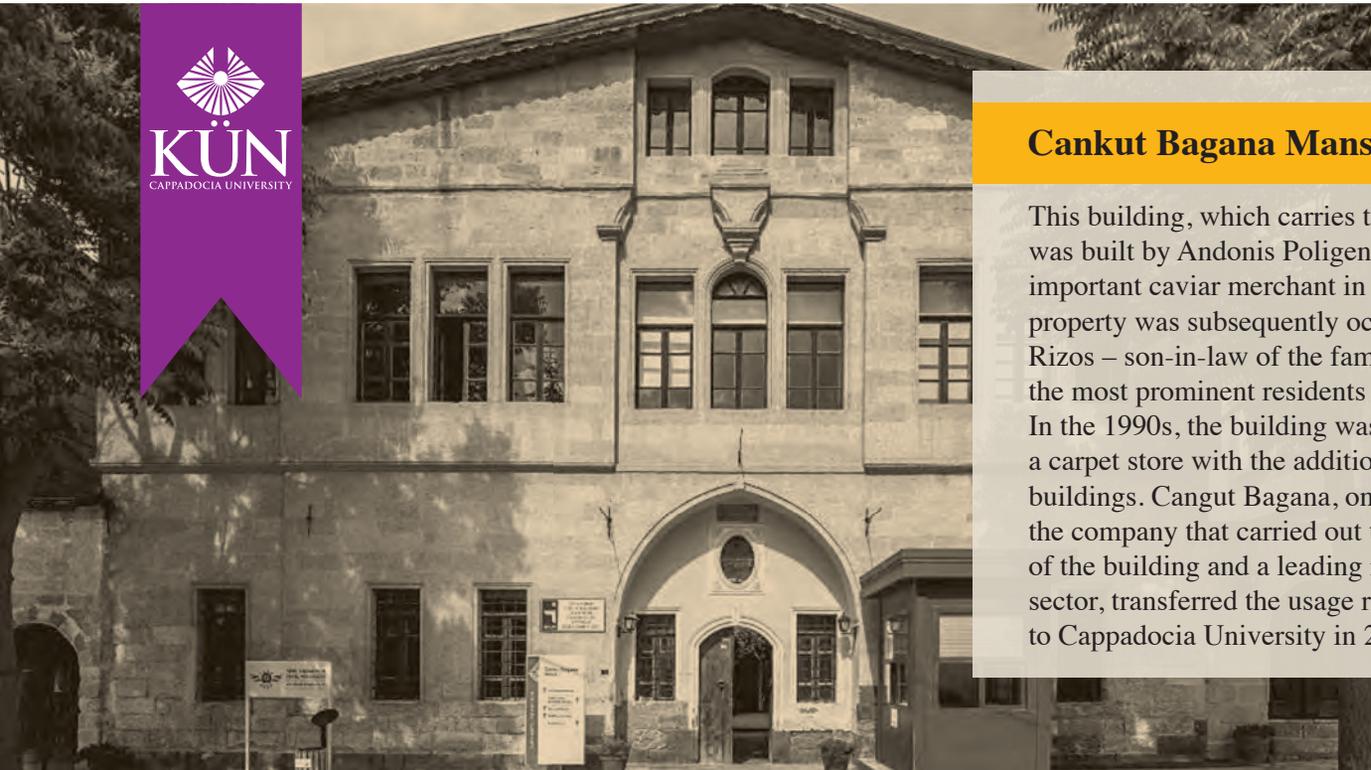
4 White Mansion

This building, constructed in around 1880 by a Greek builder named Çoka, is referred to as the "White Mansion" by the villagers due to its exterior color. On the upper floor is a veranda – one of the most important and characteristic spaces in traditional Ottoman house architecture. Architectural plastic ornaments resembling lace on the arches of the façade and around the windows reflect a fine example of stone carving by the skillful stonemasons of the region.



5 Cankut Bagana Mansion

This building, which carries the date 1900, was built by Andonis Poligenidis, who was an important caviar merchant in Istanbul. The property was subsequently occupied by Serafim Rizos – son-in-law of the family, and one of the most prominent residents of Mustafapaşa. In the 1990s, the building was transformed into a carpet store with the addition of further buildings. Cangut Bagana, one of the partners of the company that carried out the transformation of the building and a leading name in the tourism sector, transferred the usage rights of the building to Cappadocia University in 2016.



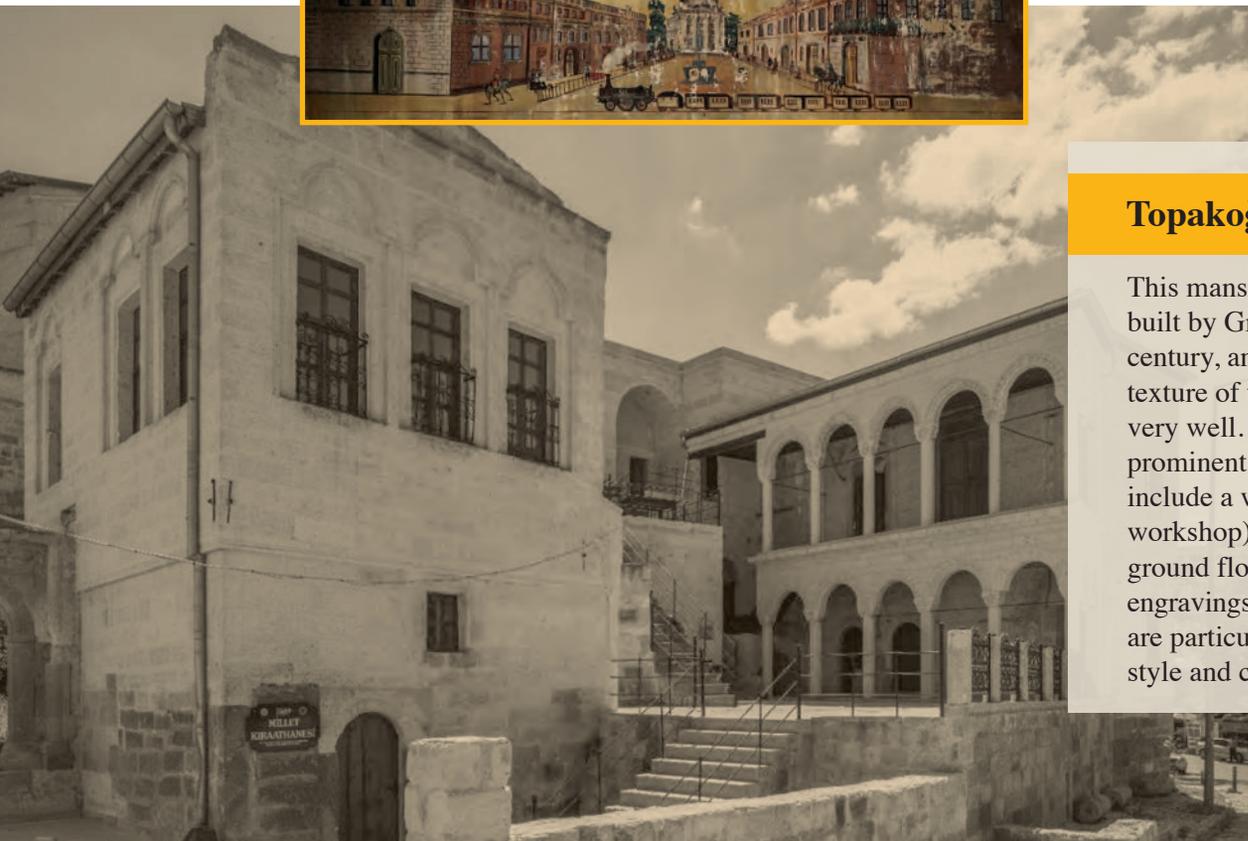
6 Madrasah of Mehmet Şakir Pasha

This building is considered to be the most magnificent example of Ottoman architecture in Mustafapaşa, and was built in 1899 by Mehmet Şakir Pasha of Egypt, according to an inscription. The madrasah throughout its history had many different functions, serving in time as a mansion, a military facility and a carpet store. Today, the building functions as one of the educational buildings of Cappadocia University. The crown gate of the madrasah, which is particularly ornate for its period of construction, is considered a masterpiece of the master stonemasons of the region.



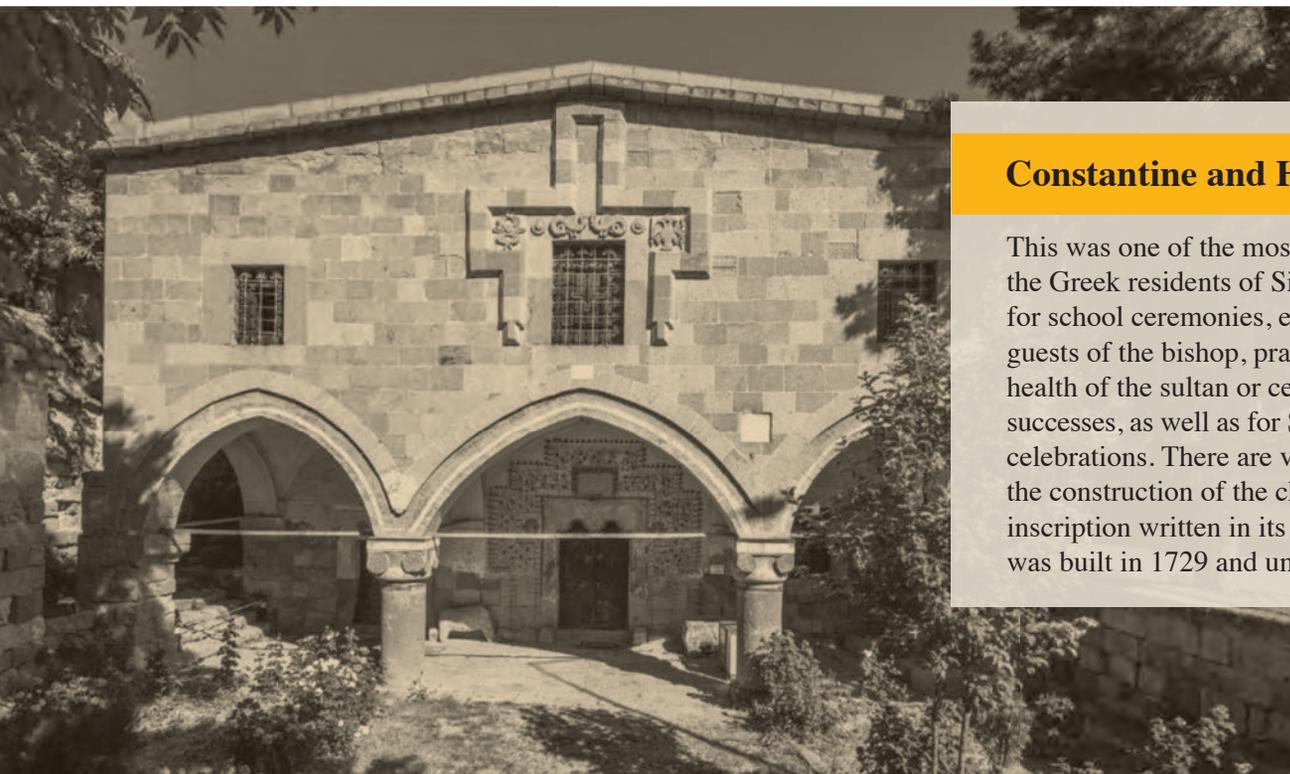
7 Topakoğlu Mansion

This mansion is rumored to have been built by Greek Pope Danil in the 19th century, and reflects the residential texture of the period in Cappadocia very well. The stone building contains prominent stone-carved spaces that include a winery and *bezirhane* (oil workshop) in the basement and on the ground floor, and lace-like stonework engravings. Murals inside the mansion are particularly special in terms of style and content.



8 Marika Mansion

This mansion is assumed to have been built by Hacı Merkuris in the 19th century. Marika, who gave her name to the mansion, was one of the young Christian women who stayed in the village after marrying a Turkish man during the population exchange. The current owner of the mansion, Cavit Çelebi, still tells this sad story like it was yesterday. An inscription on a door inside the house seems to belong to Marika, although it does not coincide with the timeframe of the story: *“Patience is great medicine for those who know how to use it. 1914.”*



Constantine and Helena Church 9

This was one of the most important churches of the Greek residents of Sinasos, and was used also for school ceremonies, events welcoming the guests of the bishop, prayer ceremonies for the health of the sultan, or celebrations of military successes, as well as for Sunday masses and holiday celebrations. There are various legends linked to the construction of the church. According to the inscription written in its own narrative, the church was built in 1729 and underwent repairs in 1850.

10 Cappadocia Art and History Museum

The mansion that houses the Cappadocia Art and History Museum dates back to around 1850 and was constructed by a Greek resident of the village known as Maymunoğlu. In the building, the original structure has been maintained to a considerable extent. Architectural and ornamental elements as the elaborate stonemasonry works, the tandoori, and the cabinet and sofa, as well as the murals, draw considerable attention. Today, the building hosts cultural and artistic activities hosted by the Cappadocia Art and History Museum.



Maraşoğlu Bridge 11

Dergos Stream used to flow beneath this stone bridge, which connects the two neighborhoods of Gavras and Yeni Mahalle. According to the Ottoman and Greek inscriptions on the bridge, it was constructed by Vasilios Maraşoğlu in 1865: *“Like a link that connects two separate parts/I connect the two neighborhoods of the town/But like the symbol of a glorious victory/I immortalize the virtue of our fellow countrymen/God rest the soul of Vasilios Maraşoğlu, 1865”*.

12 St. Nicholas Monastery Church

Known to have existed since the 18th century, this monastery was dedicated to St. Nicholas, one of the most revered saints in the Christian world. The building had a very important place not only in the religious lives of the people of Sinasos during the Ottoman period, but also in their social lives. It was believed that the water flowing from the fountain, which took the form of a *shadirvan* in the courtyard of the church, had healing powers, and it was not just the Greeks who drank this water to rid themselves of disease – as the Turkish community also indulged in it.



Haralambos Sultanidis Mansion / Administrative Building 13

Built by Haralambos Sultanidis in 1892, this is one of the most magnificent examples of civil architecture in Cappadocia, based on its architectural design and decor. The mansion has hosted various functions in its history, operating as a guesthouse, a primary school and a hotel after the population exchange, and has been used as the KÜN Administrative Building since 2005. The entrance to the mansion features an interesting mural with the title “*Assassination of the Russian Prince*” by Kostis Meletiadis, one of the village’s most famous painters.



Cappadocia University

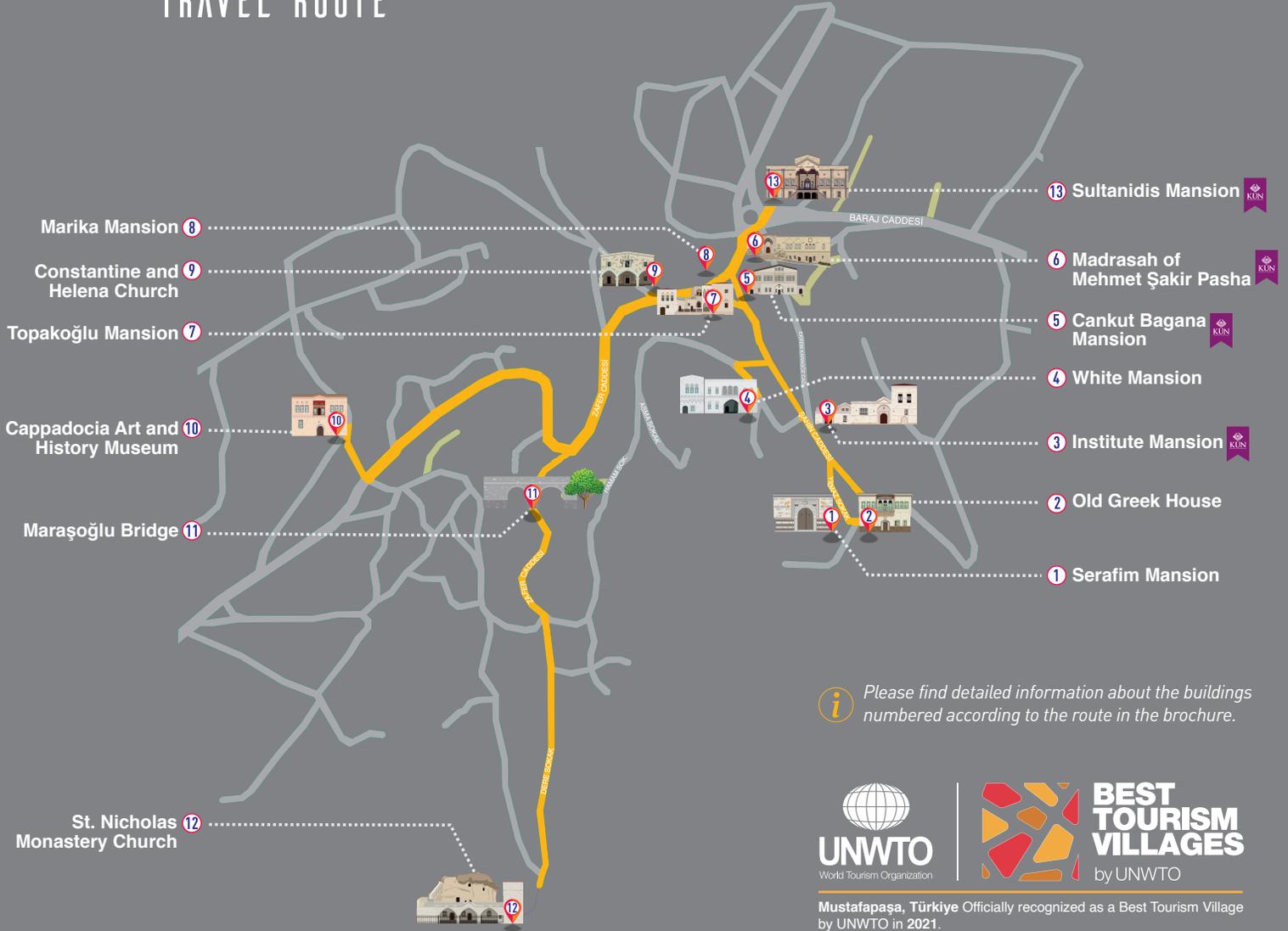
Cappadocia University (KÜN) was established in Central Anatolia, in Mustafapaşa Village, Ürgüp in 2005, away from the big cities. The University was conceived by of a group of intellectuals and local development volunteers who considered universal science and free thought to be indispensable, prioritizing sustainable development and an environmentally conscious life. KÜN, which started its educational life with 68 students in five vocational associate degree programs, brought together a body of academicians and administrative staff who believed in this dream and was supported by the local administrators of Mustafapaşa and others who believed in the project. It served as a vocational school between 2005 and 2017 and gained the title of university in 2017. Cappadocia University offers 35 associate degree, 40 undergraduate and graduate programs to approximately 6,000 students.

KÜN aims to achieve economic growth through the continued provision of existing resources by improving the welfare in its region. Campus development is planned in line with this principle. The Mustafapaşa campus, where the University's headquarters are located, is being developed based on the existing building stock of the village and by protecting its unique cultural heritage. KÜN, the educational and administrative units of which are housed in historical buildings, meets its classroom needs by renting and renovating existing buildings in Mustafapaşa, and does not construct new buildings unless absolutely necessary. Mustafapaşa campus is structured as a “widespread campus”.

KÜN has been carrying out its structuring and development in line with sustainable development goals since the day it was founded. The University provides services to the progress and development of the region in many areas, such as the protection of Mustafapaşa's cultural heritage through restoration, in-village landscaping, facade design, the protection of stray animals, renewable energy, a waste management program, programs to reduce water use and food waste, the creation of local employment, lifelong learning opportunities, regional education scholarships and development of hot air ballooning.



MUSTAFAPAŞA TRAVEL ROUTE



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