

Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire

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However, the family's fortunes waned over the course of the 19th century as Christian merchants began to undercut them commercially and establish relationships with the Europeans. The antagonism between the Christian and Jewish communities in the region was part of the backdrop for the DAMASCUS AFFAIR in 1840. Later in the century, some members of the extended Farhi family settled in Cairo, while others went to New York. The family's history illustrates the success that a non-Muslim family could enjoy in the Ottoman Empire by pooling its resources. At the same time, it highlights the limitations they faced politically as non-Muslims, with little legal recourse when engaged in disputes with Muslims in Muslim courts of law.

Bruce Masters

Further reading: Thomas Philipp, "The Farhi Family and the Changing Position of the Jews in Syria, 1750–1860." *Middle Eastern Studies* 20 (1984): 37–52.

Fatih mosque complex (Fatih Külliyesi) The Fatih, or "Conqueror," mosque complex was a religious and social building of unprecedented size and complexity built in Istanbul between 1463 and 1470 by the order of Sultan MEHMED II (r. 1444–46; 1451–81). It was the first monumental project in the Ottoman imperial architectural tradition. Displaying important influences from Byzantine, Italian, and Turkic architectural traditions, the *külliye* established the new imperial style of Ottoman architecture, marking the transition from state to empire and from provincial to global power.

The mosque complex was built by the royal architect Atik Sinan (Sinan the Elder). It was the largest *külliye* up to that time, covering an area of 3,400 square feet (320 square meters). Fatih Camii, or the Mosque of the Conqueror, was at the center of a complex that included eight madrasas and a porticoed courtyard. Eight buildings in front of the madrasas served as shops and as accommodations for travelers; revenue from these sources provided financial support for the complex. In addition to these buildings, there were two minarets, an *imaret* or soup kitchen, a CARAVANSARY, a library, a primary school, a hospice, a fountain, a kiosk, and an asylum, as well as the tombs of Mehmed II and his wife. The complex also included two large bazaars, a *saraçhane* or harness shop, and the largest BATHHOUSE (hammam) ever constructed, all of which belonged to the WAQF, or pious endowment, that founded the complex. It was often called "the Conqueror's complex" because it was constructed in part to commemorate the conquest of Constantinople (renamed ISTANBUL) in 1453.

The *külliye* articulated, renewed, and imperialized the earlier Ottoman architectural tradition in which the buildings were located throughout the city, as in EDİRNE

and BURSA. In Istanbul, the buildings of the complex were arranged around a monumental mosque according to a rational, geometric, highly structured site plan. Although the mosque stood at its center, the complex was not limited solely to a religious function; it was an integral part of the social, political, and educational activities of the new Ottoman capital. Mehmed II put into place a repopulation policy that aimed to balance the non-Muslims in the city. As part of this policy, the first Muslim inhabitants of the city were encouraged, to settle in the Fatih district that came into being around the complex, which also served these newcomers.

The central mosque of the complex, Fatih Camii, was neither the first imperial mosque nor the first mosque in the city built by Ottomans. When construction began in 1463, there were already several small mosques in Istanbul. However, the Conqueror's mosque was built on a strategic site, on the crown of the third of the seven hills of Istanbul. Its monumental scale and hilltop location made it highly visible, and its silhouette gave the city's skyline a distinctive Muslim character. Moreover, it was located on the second most sacred Christian site in Constantinople; the Church of the Holy Apostles—the imperial burial place of the Byzantine emperors—stood on this site until its destruction in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade. By putting his own tomb on the same site, Mehmed II followed the Byzantine imperial funeral tradition. In doing so, he proclaimed himself both sultan and *kayser-i rum* (Caesar of Rome).

The Fatih complex was damaged by earthquakes in 1509 and 1766. BEYAZID II (r. 1447–1513) restored the complex after the first earthquake (1509). However, the second devastated the complex; the only elements that remained standing were the mihrab (a niche in the wall of a mosque that indicates the direction of MECCA), the bases of the minarets, and the walls of the courtyard remained standing.

Judging from contemporary engravings, miniatures, and memoirs, the first mosque had been influenced by other Turkoman mosques built in Anatolia and by the HAGIA SOPHIA, the ancient Byzantine imperial church. It was an experiment in the search for a new imperial architecture incorporating new and foreign forms. The plan for the mosque took some inspiration from classical Byzantine basilica plans. Its dome was 85 feet (26 meters) in diameter, a size only surpassed by the dome of Hagia Sophia. Unlike Hagia Sophia with its single central dome and two semi-domes of the same diameter, the first Fatih mosque had one central dome supported by a single semi-dome of the same diameter on the *qibla* (direction of Mecca) side and suspended on four arches. The second mosque, which was built (1771) by MUSTAFA III (r. 1757–74) after the 1766 earthquake, was built on a square plan. It has one central dome supported by four semi-domes.

The structure is unique among imperial mosques because of its internal fountain. The four madrasas, or religious colleges, on the northern side form the Karadeniz Medreseleri (Black Sea Colleges), while those on the southern side make up the Akdeniz Medreseleri (Mediterranean Colleges). The complex's medical systems (a hospital with 14 rooms and its own kitchen and an asylum) were staffed by Jewish doctors. Neither the madrasas nor the medical complex survived the 1766 earthquake. The bathhouse and harness shop that formed part of the *küllüye* were destroyed in a fire in 1916.

Even though the *küllüye* lost some of its component parts, the rest of the complex, including the tombs, madrasas, and primary schools, continued to be used, although for different purposes. The central building of the *küllüye*, the mosque, remains one of the foremost monuments of Istanbul and continues to function as a public mosque with funeral services for important individuals in present-day Turkey.

Nuh Yılmaz

Further reading: Godfrey Goodwin, *A History of Ottoman Architecture* (Baltimore, Md: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971); Mehmed Agha-Oğlu, "The Fatih Mosque at Constantinople." *Art Bulletin* 12, no. 2. (1930): 179–195.

fatwa (fetva) Fatwa is a term of Arabic origin (*fetva* in Ottoman Turkish) that refers to the issuing of a judicial ruling by a Muslim religious scholar. In theory, any Muslim scholar may issue a fatwa on a hypothetical question that has been put to him by a plaintiff, but in practice, a fatwa is only issued by those religious scholars recognized by their peers as legal authorities or appointed by the sultan to the post of mufti. A fatwa ruling is based on the scholar's understanding of Islamic law, although the author of the ruling may cite the sources he used to reach his ruling. In the Ottoman Empire the most important fatwas were those issued by the *Şeyhülislam*, or chief justice of the empire. Such rulings were issued in response to specific legal queries that could be submitted by anyone in the Empire. Once a ruling had been delivered, it could be entered as evidence in a court case upon which it had bearing and could serve as a legal precedent for future cases.

Typically, a plaintiff would construct the question so as to elicit a favorable response. The judge at the court where the case was being heard did not have to accept the fatwa of the *şeyhülislam* as definitive, but it was a rare judge who would risk incurring the wrath of the chief justice by ignoring his opinion. This was especially true in regions that were within the effective control of the state and where the judges were graduates of the imperial madrasas. Further afield—in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt—the fatwas of the *şeyhülislam* in Istanbul were not

given the same regard. However, in the provincial courts local muftis were equally important in shaping the character of the law as practiced. The fatwas issued by prominent jurists were frequently copied and could be found in the personal libraries of religious scholars and members of the Empire's judiciary.

Ebussuud Efendi (d. 1574), who served SÜLEYMAN I (the Magnificent) (r. 1520–66) and SELİM II (r. 1566–74) between 1545 and 1574, was undoubtedly the most notable *şeyhülislam*. Ebussuud's fame is partly due to the quality of his responses. It is also partly due to the fact that Süleyman's reign has been viewed by later generations as a halcyon age of Islamic justice, with Ebussuud regarded as the most judicious of men. For this reason, even centuries after his death, his fatwas continued to influence Ottoman jurisprudence and the collection of his rulings helped to establish definitive opinions for the Ottoman legal establishment.

Bruce Masters

See also SHARIA.

Further reading: Colin Imber, *Ebu's-su'ud: The Islamic Legal Tradition* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997).

finances and fiscal structure The Ottoman fiscal structure had three phases: the classical period until the 1790s; the transitional period of 1793–1839; and the TANZİMAT or reform era beginning in 1839. The first period was characterized by the existence of a single central treasury, the imperial treasury (Hazine-i Amire). It was created with the aim of financing all the expenses of the central government while shaping the fiscal structure. The second period coincided with the beginning of Western-inspired reforms. The military reforms of SELİM III (r. 1789–1807) and MAHMUD II (r. 1808–39) necessitated the creation of additional treasuries to finance new, modernized armies. The creation of these new treasuries brought a period of transition in which the Ottoman fiscal system began to operate with multiple treasuries. The system then underwent a more fundamental change with the Tanzimat reforms in 1839 that signaled the modernization and replacement of traditional fiscal policies.

THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

The earliest documentary reference to a separate and relatively specialized office controlling revenues and expenses comes from the reign of BAYEZİD I (r. 1389–1402), with the first survey registers and initial steps toward centralization of the bureaucracy. Unfortunately, not much is known about the structure and functioning of Ottoman fiscal institutions before the codification of Ottoman laws in the late 1470s. This law code—known as the Law Code of the Conqueror, referring to MEHMED