



KONYA (ICONIUM)

KONYA (Ar. Qunia, L. Iconium, Gk. Ikonion), a city in central Anatolia, present-day Turkey (lat 37° 52' N, long 32° 29' E) with a population of 2,180,149 in 2017.

Hardly anything of the Roman and Byzantine city remains in the modern city of Konya; the Byzantine church of Hagios Amphilochus, known locally as Eflatun Camii (Eflatun Mosque), was destroyed in the 1920s (Eyice). Many spolia were used in the Saljuq rebuilding of the late antique and Byzantine city walls, together with new carvings. Documented in Charles Texier's (1802-71) engravings in the early 19th century, the walls included inscriptions with quotations from the *Šāh-nāma* (q.v.) along with reliefs of angels, dragons, and other animals in addition to Roman spolia (Yalman, 2011; Redford, 1993); they were razed in the late 19th century.

Throughout the Middle Ages, Konya was situated on important caravan routes connecting the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, and Iran to western Anatolia (Taeschner). In the late 11th century, Konya fell to the Saljuqs, and it was soon established as the capital of the Rum (Anatolian) Saljuqs as they consolidated rule in central Anatolia (see [SALJUQS iii. SALJUQS OF RUM](#)). The monuments within the citadel, encompassing the 'Alā-al-Din Mosque (PLATE I), founded in the 1190s and largely rebuilt in the 1220s (Redford, 1991; Asutay-Effenberger), the mausoleum of several Saljuq sultans, and the remains of a kiosk (Sarre, 1936; McClary) that was part of the sultans' palace, are the most important sites to understand the late 12th- to early 13th-century city. As for the kiosk, built during the reign of Qilij Arslān II, (r. 1156-92), dendrochronological study of timbers from the extant lower section suggests a date of circa 1174



(Kuniholm, pp. 132-33). With this date, the minā'i (haft rang) tiles found in the debris are the earliest securely dated tiles of that type in both Anatolia and Iran (McClary, pp. 30-32), a fact that matters in the debate over whether [Saljuq art](#) (q.v.) in Konya was largely a derivative of Great Saljuq production in Iran or innovative in its own right.



PLATE I. 'Alā'-al-Din Mosque and ruins of Saljuq belvedere, Konya. Photograph: Patricia Blessing, 2010.

In the second quarter of the 13th century, sultan 'Alā'-al-Din Kayqobād I (r. 1220-37) shaped Konya as the capital of the Saljuq realm as part of a larger, centralizing effort (Redford, 1993; Yalman, 2011; 2012). In part, this effort is described in Nāṣer-al-Din Ḥosayn [Ebn Bibī's](#) (q.v.) Persian chronicle of the Rum Saljuq dynasty, written in the 1280s under the patronage of the [Il-khanid](#) (q.v.) vizier '[Alā'-al-Din 'Aṭā-Malek Jovayni](#) (q.v.; Ebn Bibi, tr. 1956; 2007), in which the author claims that the sultan was largely responsible for the rebuilding of the city walls.



PLATE II. Interior view of the *kânaqâh* in the mosque complex of Şâḥeb 'Aṭâ Faḡr-al-Din 'Ali, Konya. Photograph: Patricia Blessing, 2010.

After the Mongol conquest of Anatolia in 1243, Konya continued to be an important urban center into the 1280s. Crucial in this continued importance was the patronage of notables, such as Jalâl-al-Din Qarâtây (d. 1254) and Şâḥeb 'Aṭâ Faḡr-al-Din 'Ali (d. 1285), who were able to operate with relative freedom under Mongol rule (Blessing, 2014a, chap. 1; on Qarâtây's extensive foundation document, see Turan). Shrines were important features of the architectural landscape. The shrine of Jalâl-al-Din Rumi (q.v.; d. 1273), but also the mosque and mausoleum of Şadr-al-Din Qunawi (d. 1274), a disciple of Ebn al-'Arabi (q.v.; 1165-1240), along with a *kânaqâh* (q.v.) attached to Şâḥeb 'Aṭâ Faḡr-al-Din 'Ali's mosque and mausoleum (PLATE II), were sites of religious life, in addition to numerous madrasas (see [EDUCATION iv.](#)). The Mevlevi (Mawlawiya) site (PLATE III) had first been built soon after the death of Rumi's father Moḥammad b. Ḥosayn Balḡi in 1231, but nothing of this early phase remains (Uzluḡ; Meinecke, II, p. 343). During Rumi's lifetime, an important patron was Gorji Kâtun (Turk. Gürcü Hatun) (d. 1286), a widow of the Saljuḡ sultan Ġiāt-al-Din Kayḡosrow II (r. 1237-46). After her first husband's death, she married Mo'in-al-Din Solaymân Parvâna (d. 1277), one of the most powerful administrators under Mongol rule and a political rival of Şâḥeb 'Aṭâ Faḡr-al-Din 'Ali. While Mo'in-al-Din Solaymân Parvâna is not documented as a



patron in Konya, his wife was an important supporter of Rumi and his followers, as documented in Šams-al-Din Aḥmad Aflāki's (q.v.; d. 1360) 14th-century hagiography of the Mevlevis (Küçükhüseyin; Aflāki). This relationship is also reflected in letters between Rumi and his patrons (Rumi, tr., 1963). Thus, Konya retained its importance in the 13th century both as a religious center and as the burial site for the Saljuq sultans, even after the Il-khanids had largely assumed power and given more importance to, for instance, Sivas (Blessing, 2014a, chap. 2).



PLATE III. View of shrine complex of Jalāl-al-Din Rumi, Konya.
Photograph: Patricia Blessing, 2010.

With the decline of Il-khanid influence in central Anatolia in the early 14th century, Konya came under Karamanid (an Anatolian Turkmen dynasty) rule. For them, Konya took a secondary place compared to Larende (modern Karaman), where most of the Karamanids' foundations were built (on the architecture, see Diez, Aslanapa, and Koman). Nevertheless, the Karamanids were important patrons of the Mevlevi shrine in Konya, a site they expanded in the late 14th century (Meinecke, vol. 2, p. 344). The complex relationship between the Karamanids and the Ottomans had implications for Konya in the 14th and 15th century. The full-fledged war of the mid-15th century led to Ottoman victory in 1474, and the conquest of the entire Karamanid realm (Yıldız). Mehmed II (r. 1444-46 and 1451-81), who had conquered

Constantinople in 1453, decided to deport inhabitants of Konya and Larende to repopulate his new capital (İnalçık, p. 238), and parts of the city of Karaman were destroyed. This triumphalism also led to a certain neglect of the region; the shrine of Jalāl-al-Din Rumi only received sustained Ottoman patronage beginning in the reign of Bayezid II (r. 1480-1512). Thereafter, the Mevlevi order remained a powerful political force within the Ottoman context into the 19th century (Neumann). Other medieval monuments in the city remained in use throughout the Ottoman period, as documented in šari'a court records (Atçeken) and new buildings such as the Selimiye Mosque (1558-67) were added (Necipoğlu, pp. 63-65; Karpuz, 2002; 2003; Baş).

The construction of the Baghdad railway as a result of close collaboration between the German and Ottoman Empires in the late 19th and early 20th centuries affected Konya, which was located on the new line. When German art historian Friedrich Sarre (1865-1945) travelled throughout Anatolia for the first time in 1895, the railway was under construction and only reached as far as Afyon Province (Sarre, 1896, pp. 17-18; on Sarre, see Blessing, 2014b; Pancaroğlu, 2011). A decade later, the line had passed Konya and reached as far as Karaman. For the increasing number of European art historians and archaeologists traveling in the area, this meant easier access to central Anatolia (Christensen). For the Ottoman antiquities authorities under the leadership of Osman Hamdi (1842-1910), it meant a higher risk of objects disappearing (Shaw). In Konya, the most famous case is that of the tiled meḥrāb of the late 13th-century Bey Hekim Mosque. It was still in situ during Sarre's first visit in 1895, and sold off on the art market in 1908 and 1909; for the most part, the fragments reached the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin where they were first assembled for display in 1965 (Enderlein). Sarre's publications (1896; 1921; 1936) on Konya, early studies of the city's medieval monuments, along with German consul Julius Harry Löytved-Hardegg's (1874-1917) book on its Arabic and Persian inscriptions (Löytved, discussed in Yoltar-Yıldırım) remain essential references. In Sarre's publications, a point emerged that would become highly significant in the historiography (see Blessing, 2014b): Sarre examined Saljuq architecture in Konya as part of a larger study of Persian architecture that also included monuments in Iran and Central Asia (Sarre, 1901-10; Sarre 1921 is a reprint of the section on Konya). Thus, the monuments are integrated into a framework of Persian architecture and culture, a narrative that persists but also clashes with the framework developed in Turkey beginning in the 1930s of the Anatolian Saljuqs as



inherently Turkish (Redford, 2007; Pancaroğlu, 2007). In more recent studies, both frameworks are somewhat dissolved, yet a placement of the Rum Saljuqs within a Persianate context alongside their Great Saljuq ancestors in Iran tends to be foregrounded in the English-language literature on the subject (Canby et al., 2016).

In the mid-20th century, the work of local historian İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı (1896-1984) was decisive in its push to document the extant monuments and record disappearances in the rapidly urbanizing environment of central Anatolia. His book on Konya (Konyalı) with its historical photographs, transcriptions of inscriptions, references to archival documents, and local narratives about buildings is a crucial resource to understand what disappeared or changed from the 1940s to the 1960s, a period of far-reaching transformation in many Anatolian cities (Tören; Danielson and Keleş). The city was subject to rapid demographic growth in the 20th century: from circa 47,000 in the 1920s, the population surpassed 150,000 in the 1960s and by 2000 had reached 760,000 (Tuncel, p. 188).

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