Published: May 22, 2023
Last Updated: February 22, 2026

KONYA III. MONUMENTS

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 ʿAlā-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 *mināʾi* (*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. ʿAlāʾ-al-Din Mosque and ruins of Saljuq belvedere, Konya. Photograph: Patricia Blessing, 2010.

In the second quarter of the 13th century, sultan ʿAlāʾ-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 Bībī's (q.v.) Persian chronicle of the Rum Saljuq dynasty, written in the 1280s under the patronage of the Il-khanid (q.v.) vizier ʿAlāʾ-al-Din ʿAṭā-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 ḵānaqāh in the mosque complex of Ṣāḥeb ʿAṭā Faḵr-al-Din ʿAli, 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 Jalāl-al-Din Qarāṭāy (d. 1254) and Ṣāḥeb ʿAṭā Faḵr-al-Din ʿAli (d. 1285), who were able to operate with relative freedom under Mongol rule (Blessing, 2014a, chap. 1; on Qarāṭāy's extensive foundation document, see Turan). Shrines were important features of the architectural landscape. The shrine of Jalāl-al-Din Rumi (q.v.; d. 1273), but also the mosque and mausoleum of Ṣadr-al-Din Qunawi (d. 1274), a disciple of Ebn al-ʿArabi (q.v.; 1165-1240), along with a *ḵānaqāh* (q.v.) attached to Ṣāḥeb ʿAṭā Faḵr-al-Din ʿAli's mosque and mausoleum (PLATE II), were sites of religious life, in addition to numerous *madrasa*s (see EDUCATION iv.). The Mevlevi (Mawlawiya) site (PLATE III) had first been built soon after the death of Rumi's father Moḥammad b. Ḥosayn Balḵi in 1231, but nothing of this early phase remains (Uzluk; Meinecke, II, p. 343). During Rumi's lifetime, an important patron was Gorji Ḵātun (Turk. Gürcü Hatun) (d. 1286), a widow of the Saljuq sultan Ḡiāṯ-al-Din Kayḵosrow II (r. 1237-46). After her first husband's death, she married Moʿīn-al-Din Solaymān Parvāna (d. 1277), one of the most powerful administrators under Mongol rule and a political rival of Ṣāḥeb ʿAṭā Faḵr-al-Din ʿAli. While Moʿin-al-Din Solaymān Parvāna 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 (İnalcık, 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 *šariʿa* 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).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Šams al-Din Aḥmad Aflāki, Manāqeb al-ʿārefin, ed. Tahsin Yazıcı, rev. 2nd ed., 2 vols., Ankara, 1976–80; tr. John O'Kane, as The Feats of the Knowers of God (Man āqeb al-ʿarefin), Leiden and Boston, 2001.
Idem, Ariflerin Menkıbeleri, tr. Tahsin Yazıcı, 2 vols., Istanbul, 2006.
Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger, "Konya Alaeddin Camisi Yapım Evreleri Üzerine Düşünceler," Middle East Technical University – Journal of the Faculty of Architecture 23/2, 2006, pp. 113–22.
Zeki Atçeken, Konya'daki Selçuklu Yapılarının Osmanlı Devrinde Bakımı ve Kullanılması: Konya Şer'iyye Sicil Kayıtlarına Göre, Ankara, 1998.
Ali Baş, "Konya'daki Osmanlı Camileri," in Yusuf Küçükdağ, ed., Osmanlı Döneminde Konya, Konya, 2003, pp. 251–76.
Tuncer Baykara, "Konya," Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi XXVI, Istanbul, 2002, pp. 182–87.
Patricia Blessing, Rebuilding Anatolia after the Mongol Conquest: Islamic Architecture in the Lands of Rūm, 1240–1330, Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, Vt., 2014a.
Idem, "Friedrich Sarre and the Discovery of Seljuk Anatolia," Journal of Art Historiography 11, 2014b, pp. 1–20.
Claude Cahen and George Goodwin, "Konya," Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, eds., P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W. P.

Heinrichs (consulted online on 2 July 2018, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0529).
Sheila R. Canby, Deniz Beyazit, and Martina Rugiadi, eds., Court and Cosmos: The Great Age of the Seljuqs, New York, 2016.
Peter H. Christensen, Germany and the Ottoman Railways: Art, Empire, and Infrastructure, New Haven, 2017.
Michael N. Danielson and Ruşen Keleş, The Politics of Rapid Urbanization: Government and Growth in Modern Turkey, New York, 1985.
Ernst Diez, Oktay Aslanapa, and Mahmut Mesut Koman, Karaman Devri Sanati, Istanbul, 1950.
[Ebn Bibi] Nāṣer-al-Dīn Ḥosayn b. Moḥammad Ebn Bībī, al-Aw āmer al-ʿalāʾiya, ed. Adnan Sadık Erzi, as El-Avâmirü'l-ʿAlāʾiyye fī'l-Umūri'l-ʿAlā'iyye, Ankara, 1956.
Idem, Selçuknâme, tr. Mükrimin Halil Yinanç, 2nd ed., Istanbul, 2007.
Volkmar Enderlein, "Der Miḥrāb der Bey Hakim Moschee in Konya: Ein Denkmal und seine Geschichte," Forschungen und Berichte: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz 17, 1976, pp. 33–40.
Semavi Eyice, " Konya'nın Alâeddin Tepesinde Selçuklu Öncesine Âit Bir Eser: Eflatun Mescidi," Sanat Tarihi Yıllığı 4, 1970-71, pp. 269–302.
Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevılik, Istanbul, 1983.
Halil İnalcık, "The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City," Dumbarton Oaks Papers 23/24, 1969/1970, pp. 229–49.
Haşim Karpuz, "Konya: Mimari," Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi XXVI, Istanbul, 2002, pp. 189–93.
Idem, "Konya'da Osmanlı Mimarîsi," in Yusuf Küçükdağ, ed., Osmanlı Döneminde Konya, Konya, 2003, pp. 237–50.
İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı, Âbideleri ve Kitabeleri ile Konya Tarihi, Konya, [1964] 1997.
Şevket Kücükhüseyin, Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung im Prozess kultureller Transformation: Anatolische Quellen über Muslime, Christen und Türken (13.-15. Jahrhundert), Vienna, 2011.
Peter Ian Kuniholm, "Dendrochronologically Dated Ottoman Monuments," in Uzi Baram and Lynda Carroll, eds., A Historical Archaeology of the Ottoman Empire: Breaking New Ground, New York, 2000, pp. 93–136.
Julius H. Löytved, Konia: Inschriften der seldschukischen Bauten, Berlin, 1907.
Richard P. McClary, Rum Seljuq Architecture, 1170–1220: The Patronage of Sultans, Edinburgh, 2017.
Michael Meinecke, Fayencedekorationen seldschukischer Sakralbauten in

Kleinasien, 2 vols., Tübingen, 1976.
Gülru Necipoğlu, The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire, Princeton, N.J., 2005.
Christoph K. Neumann, "19'uncu Yüzyıla Girerken Konya Mevlevî Asitanesi İle Devlet Arasındaki İlişkiler," II. Milletlerarası Osmanlı Devleti'nde Mevlevîhâneler Kongresi: Tebliğler, special issue of Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi 2/2, 1996, pp. 167–79.
Oya Pancaroğlu, "Formalism and the Academic Foundation of Turkish Art in the Early Twentieth Century," Muqarnas 24, 2007, pp. 67–78.
Idem, "A Fin-de-Siècle Reconnaissance of Seljuk Anatolia: Friedrich Sarre and his Reise in Kleinasien," in Zainab Bahrani, Zeynep Çelik, Edhem Eldem, eds., Scramble for the Past: A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753-1914, Istanbul, 2011, pp. 399–416.
Scott Redford, "The Alaeddin Mosque in Konya Reconsidered," Artibus Asiae 51/1-2, 1991, pp. 54–74.
Idem, "The Seljuqs of Rum and the Antique," Muqarnas 10, 1993, pp. 148–56.
Idem, "'What Have You Done for Anatolia Today?': Islamic Archaeology in the Early Years of the Turkish Republic," Muqarnas 24, 2007, pp. 243-52.
[Rumi] Jalāl-al-Dīn Rumi, Mevlânâ Celâleddin—Mektuplar, tr. Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, Istanbul, 1963.
Friedrich Sarre, Reise in Kleinasien, Sommer 1895: Forschungen zur seldjukischen Kunst und Geographie des Landes, Berlin, 1896.
Idem, Denkmäler persischer Baukunst: Geschichtliche Untersuchung und Aufnahme muhammedanischer Backsteinbauten in Vorderasien und Persian, 3 vols., Berlin, 1901-10.
Idem, Konia: Seldschukische Baudenkmäler: unter Mitwirkung von Baurat Georg Krecker und Dr. Max Deri (Denkmäler Persischer Baukunst Teil I), Berlin, 1921.
Idem, Der Kiosk von Konia; mit 18 Lichtdrucktafeln, Berlin, 1936.
Wendy M.K. Shaw, Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire, Berkeley, Calif., 2003.
Franz Taeschner, "Die Entwicklung des Wegenetzes und des Verkehrs im türkischen Anatolien," Anadolu Araştırmaları 1/2, 1959, pp. 169–93.
Charles Texier, The Principal Ruins of Asia Minor, London, 1865.
Tolga Tören, Yeniden Yapılanan Dünya Ekonomisinde Marshall Planı ve Türkiye Uygulaması, Istanbul, 2007.
Metin Tuncel, "Bugünkü Konya," Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi XXVI, Istanbul, 2002, pp. 187–89.
Osman Turan, "Selçuklu Devri Vakfiyeleri III—Celâleddîn Karatay Vakıfları ve

Vakfiyeleri," Belleten 12, 1948, pp. 17–170.
Şahabettîn Uzluk, Mevlânanın Türbesi, Konya, 1946.
Suzan Yalman, "Building the Sultanate of Rum: Memory, Urbanism and Mysticism in the Architectural Patronage of Sultan 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad (r. 1220–1237)," Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2011.
Idem, "'Ala al-Din Kayqubad Illuminated: A Rum Seljuq Sultan as Cosmic Ruler," Muqarnas 29, 2012, pp. 151–86.
Sara Nur Yıldız, "Razing Gevele and Fortifying Konya: The Beginning of the Ottoman Conquest of the Karamanid Principality in South-Central Anatolia, 1468," in A. C. S. Peacock, ed., The Frontiers of the Ottoman World, Oxford, 2009, pp. 307-29.
Ayşin Yoltar-Yıldırım, "Seljuk Carpets and Julius Harry Löytved-Hardegg: A German Consul in Konya in the Early 20th Century," in Géza Dávid and Ibolya Gerelyes, eds., Thirteenth International Congress of Turkish Art: Proceedings, Budapest, 2009, pp. 747-57.