

The Süleymaniye Mosque

The Süleymaniye Mosque (Turkish: Süleymaniye Camii) is a grand mosque in Istanbul, Turkey. It was built on the order of sultan Suleiman I (Suleiman the Magnificent) and was constructed by the great Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan. The construction work began in 1550 and the mosque was finished in 1557. It is considered to be a kind of architectural answer to the Byzantine Hagia Sophia, commissioned by the Emperor Justinian. The Hagia Sophia, converted into a mosque under Mehmed II, served as a model to many other Ottoman mosques in Istanbul. Sinan's Sulimaniye is a more symmetrical, rationalized and light-filled interpretation of earlier Ottoman precedents, as well as the Hagia Sophia. It is possible that dialogue between Italy and Istanbul contributed to Sinan's enthusiasm for symmetrical and rational forms, as promoted by writers like Alberti. The Suleymaniye plays on Suleyman's self-conscious representation of himself as a 'second Solomon.' It references the Dome of the Rock, which was built on the site of the Temple of Solomon, as well as Justinian's boast upon the completion of the Hagia Sophia: "Solomon, I have surpassed thee!" The Suleymaniye, similar in magnificence to the preceding structures, asserts sultan Suleyman's historical importance. The structure is nevertheless smaller in size than its older archetype, the Hagia Sophia