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Appointment and Dismissal of Muftis between 1718-1869 in the light of the Ottoman Law-Court Registers (Bulgarian Archives)

(Abstract)

Muftis are the religious and legal experts in the Muslim societies. One of their main functions was to issue legal opinion and thereby influence the decisions of the judges and political authorities. They served as such in the Ottoman Empire. The judges generally concluded the cases in the light of fatwas. In other words, muftis were important figures in the Ottoman religious and legal system. For this reason, it is important to find out their appointment and dismissal procedure to their official posts. This article outlines the historical background and the qualification of the Muftis. Afterwards, it analyses their appointment and dismissal decrees recorded by the judges in their law court registers which have been preserved at the St. St. Cyril and Method National library of Bulgaria.

Keywords: Mufti, Islam, law, expert, Ottoman Empire