fatwa (pl. fatawa). the legal opinion of a mufti. This opinion is not binding.

Grand Mufti. the mufti on whom a government confers the highest authority to issue legal opinions. In the Ottoman Empire, the mufti of Istanbul was the highest mufti, called şeyhülislam. The office of the grand mufti in a local state first emerged in the Ottoman khedivate of Egypt. In the new Arab polities of the interwar period, the office of grand (“state”) mufti imitated the Egyptian solution.

Hanafi. one of the main four interpretations of Islamic law, the most authoritative body of legal thought in the Ottoman Empire and the official one in Egypt from the 1850s.

imam. (in the legal-constitutional sense) the highest authority in the Muslim community, the caliph.

khedive. a ceremonial title of the highest Ottoman imperial grandees; the special rank of the governor of Egypt in the Ottoman Empire between 1867 and 1914.

khedivate. a distinguished status granted to the Egyptian province of the Ottoman Empire between 1867 and 1914.

mufti. a Muslim jurist who can issue a legal opinion (fatwa) as an answer to a question about a problem. A meta-constitutional interpreter of Muslim law.

qadi. a Muslim judge, with notary functions. In the Ottoman Empire, each province had a chief judge, sent from Istanbul.

şeyhülislam. the mufti of Istanbul, the highest imperial Ottoman jurist.

Shari’a Court of First Instance, Supreme Shari’a Court. the institutionalized qadi courts, the second being subordinate to the first, between 1880 and 1955 in Egypt; first unique to the khedivate of Egypt, later introduced elsewhere.

sultan. the ceremonial title of the emperor of the Ottoman Empire; not a legal term although Muslim jurists often used it to mean “imam.” The title was also used by the ruler of Egypt under the British protectorate (1914–1922) and by the ruler of Najd (1921–27). Many other Muslim rulers from East Asia to Oman to Morocco and sub-Saharan Africa have used the title.
wali al-amr. the “person in charge,” the designation of the administrative functions of the imam in the vocabulary of Islamic law.

waqf. a pious endowment of private property in Islamic law; any sane and legally free private person may create one, and in theory it is perpetual.