

History of Anatolia Turkey: Timeline - Chronology of Anatolia-Turkey-Türkiye



The history of Anatolia (often referred to in historical sources as Asia Minor) can be roughly subdivided into: **Prehistory of Anatolia** (up to the end of the 3rd millennium BCE), **Ancient Anatolia** (including Hattian, Hittite and post-Hittite periods), **Classical Anatolia** (including Achaemenid, Hellenistic and Roman periods), **Byzantine Anatolia** (later overlapping, since the 11th century, with the gradual Seljuk and Ottoman conquest), **Seljuk Turks Anatolia**, **Ottoman Turks Anatolia** (14th–20th centuries) and the **Contemporary Modern Turks Anatolia**, since the creation of **the Republic of Turkey**.

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Prehistory of Anatolia

Prehistory of Anatolia encompasses the entire prehistoric period, from the earliest archeological records of human presence in Anatolia, to the advent of historical era, marked by the appearance of literacy and historical sources related to the territory of Anatolia (c. 2000 BCE). In 2014, a stone tool was found in the Gediz River that was dated with certainty to 1.2 million years ago. The 27,000 years old homo sapiens footprints of Kula and Karain Cave are samples for human existence in Anatolia, in this period. Because of its strategic location at the intersection of Asia and Europe, Anatolia has been the center of several civilizations since prehistoric times. Neolithic settlements include Çatalhöyük, Çayönü, Nevalı Çori, Hacilar, Göbekli Tepe, and Mersin. [i](#)

Paleolithic Peoples.....+500000-8000

Mesolithic Peoples.....8000-5500

Neolithic Peoples.....5500-4000

Chalcolithic Cultures.....4000-3300

Ancient Anatolia

Early Bronze Age

Bronze metallurgy spread to Anatolia from the Transcaucasian Kura-Araxes culture in the late 4th millennium BCE, marking the beginning of the Bronze Age in the region. Anatolia

remained in the prehistoric period until it entered the sphere of influence of the Akkadian Empire in the 24th century BCE under Sargon I. The oldest recorded name for any region within Anatolia is related to its central areas, known as the "Land of Hatti". That designation that was initially used for the land of ancient Hattians, but later became the most common name for the entire territory under the rule of ancient Hittites. The interest of Akkad in the region as far as it is known was for exporting various materials for manufacturing. While Anatolia was well endowed with copper ores, there is no trace as yet of substantial workings of the tin required to make bronze in Bronze-Age Anatolia. Akkad suffered problematic climate changes in Mesopotamia, as well as a reduction in available manpower that affected trade. This led to the fall of the Akkadians around 2150 BCE at the hands of the Gutian. [i](#)

Sumers

[Sumer and Sumerians, Kings of Sumer and Akkad \(transanatolie.com\)](#)

[i](#)

Akads

[Sumer and Sumerians, Kings of Sumer and Akkad \(transanatolie.com\)](#)

[i](#)

Hattians

[Hatti Civilization \(2500-2000 B.C.\) \(transanatolie.com\)](#)

Prushanda-Purushattum-Acemhoyuk

[Acemhöyük \(Ancient Anatolian City of Acemhoyuk-Aksaray\)
\(transanatolie.com\)](http://transanatolie.com)

[i](#)

Babylons

[The Isin-Larsa and Old Babylon Period \(transanatolie.com\)](http://transanatolie.com)

[i](#)

Middle Bronze Age

The Old Assyrian Empire claimed the resources for themselves after the Gutians were vanquished, notably silver. One of the numerous Assyrian cuneiform records found in Anatolia at Kanesh uses an advanced system of trading computations and credit lines.

[Assyria: The core of the Assyrian Empire of antiquity encompasses the areas of Northern Iraq, North-Western Iran, South-Eastern Turkey and North-Eastern Syria, and Lebanon.
\(transanatolie.com\)](http://transanatolie.com)

The Hittite Old Kingdom emerges towards the close of the Middle Bronze Age, conquering Hattusa under Hattusili I (17th century BCE).

[Ancient Anatolian Civilizations: The Hittites \(transanatolie.com\)](http://transanatolie.com)

The Anatolian Middle Bronze Age influenced the Minoan culture on Crete as evidenced by archaeological recovery at Knossos. [i](#)

Old Assyrians-Purushanda-Purushattum-Acemhoyuk

[Acemhöyük \(Ancient Anatolian City of Acemhoyuk-Aksaray\)
\(transanatolie.com\)](http://transanatolie.com)

i

Hittites

[Ancient Anatolian Civilizations: The Hittites \(transanatolie.com\)](http://transanatolie.com)

i

Assyrians

[Assyria: The core of the Assyrian Empire of antiquity encompasses the areas of Northern Iraq, North-Western Iran, South-Eastern Turkey and North-Eastern Syria, and Lebanon. \(transanatolie.com\)](http://transanatolie.com)

i

Late Bronze Age

The Hittite Empire was at its height in the 14th century BCE, encompassing central Anatolia, north-western Syria as far as Ugarit, and upper Mesopotamia. Kizzuwatna in southern Anatolia controlled the region separating Hatti from Syria, thereby greatly affecting trade routes. The peace was kept in accordance with both empires through treaties that established boundaries of control. It was not until the reign of the Hittite king Suppiluliumas that Kizzuwatna was taken over fully, although the Hittites still preserved their cultural accomplishments in Kummanni (now Şar, Turkey) and Lazawantiya, north of Cilicia.

After the 1180s BCE, amid general turmoil in the Levant associated with the sudden arrival of the Sea Peoples, the

empire disintegrated into several independent "Neo-Hittite" city-states, some of which survived until as late as the 8th century BCE. The history of the Hittite civilization is known mostly from cuneiform texts found in the area of their empire, and from diplomatic and commercial correspondence found in various archives in Egypt and the Middle East. [i](#)

Iron Age

Beginning with the Bronze Age collapse at the end of the 2nd millennium BC, the west coast of Anatolia was settled by Ionian Greeks, usurping the related but earlier Mycenaean Greeks. Over several centuries, numerous Ancient Greek city-states were established on the coasts of Anatolia. Greeks started Western philosophy on the western coast of Anatolia (Pre-Socratic philosophy).

The Phrygian Kingdom essentially came into being after the fragmentation of the Hittite Empire during the 12th century BCE, and existed independently until the 7th century BCE. Possibly from the region of Thrace, the Phrygians eventually established their capital of Gordium (now Yazılıkaya). Known as Mushki by the Assyrians, the Phrygian people lacked central control in their style of government, and yet established an extensive network of roads. They also held tightly onto a lot of the Hittite facets of culture and adapted them over time.

Shrouded in myth and legend promulgated by ancient Greek and Roman writers is King Midas, the last king of the Phrygian Kingdom. The mythology of Midas revolves around his ability to turn objects to gold by mere touch, as granted by Dionysos, and his unfortunate encounter with Apollo from which his ears are turned into the ears of a donkey. The historical record of Midas shows that he lived approximately between 740 and 696

BCE, and represented Phrygia as a great king. Most historians now consider him to be King Mita of the Mushkis as noted in Assyrian accounts. The Assyrians thought of Mita as a dangerous foe, for Sargon II, their ruler at the time, was quite happy to negotiate a peace treaty in 709 BCE. This treaty had no effect on the advancing Cimmerians, who streamed into Phrygia and led to the downfall and suicide of King Midas in 696 BCE. [i](#)

Phrygians and Lydians

[Phrygia - TransAnatolie Turkey](#)

The twelfth to ninth centuries B.C. were a time of turmoil throughout Anatolia and the Aegean world. The destruction of Troy, Hattusas, and numerous other cities in the region was a collective disaster that coincided with the rise of the aggressive Assyrian Empire in Mesopotamia, the Dorian invasion of Greece, and the appearance of the "sea peoples" who ravaged the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean.

The first light to penetrate the dark age in Anatolia was lit by the very Phrygians who had destroyed Hattusas. Architects, builders, and skilled workers of iron, they had assimilated the Hittites' syncretic culture and adopted many of their political institutions. Phrygian kings apparently ruled most of western and central Anatolia in the ninth century B.C. from their capital at Gordium (a site sixty kilometers southwest of modern Ankara). Phrygian strength soon waned, however, and the kingdom was overthrown in the seventh century B.C. by the Cimmerians, a nomadic people who had been pursued over the Caucasus into Anatolia by the Scythians.

[Lydia \(transanatolie.com\)](#)

Order was restored in Anatolia by the Lydians, a Thracian warrior caste who dominated the indigenous peasantry and derived their great wealth from alluvial gold found in the tributaries of the Hermus River (Gediz Nehri). From their court at Sardis, such Lydian kings as Croesus controlled western Anatolia until their kingdom fell to the Persians in 546 B.C. [i](#)

Mycenean civilization

The Aegean coast of Anatolia was an integral part of a Minoan-Mycenean civilization (ca. 2600-1200 B.C.) that drew its cultural impulses from Crete. During the Aegean region's so-called Dark Age (ca. 1050-800 B.C.), Ionian Greek refugees fled across the sea to Anatolia, then under Lydian rule, to escape the onslaught of the Dorians. Many more cities were founded along the Anatolian coast during the great period of Greek expansion after the eighth century B.C. One among them was Byzantium, a distant colony established on the Bosphorus by the city-state of Megara. Despite endemic political unrest, the cities founded by the Ionians and subsequent Greek settlers prospered from commerce with Phrygia and Lydia, grew in size and number, and generated a renaissance that put Ionia in the cultural vanguard of the Hellenic world.

At first the Greeks welcomed the Persians, grateful to be freed from Lydian control. But when the Persians began to impose unpopular tyrants on the city-states, the Greeks rebelled and called on their kinsmen in Greece for aid. In 334 B.C., Alexander the Great crossed the Hellespont, defeated the Persians at the Granicus River (Biga Çayı), and during four years of campaigning liberated the Ionian city-states,

incorporating them into an empire that at his death in 323 B.C. stretched from the Nile to the Indus.

After Alexander died, control of Anatolia was contested by several of the Macedonian generals among whom his empire was divided. By 280 B.C. one of them, Seleucus Nicator, had made good his claim to an extensive kingdom that included southern and western Anatolia and Thrace as well as Syria, Mesopotamia, and, for a time, Persia. Under the Seleucid Dynasty, which survived until 64 B.C., colonists were brought from Greece, and the process of hellenization was extended among the non-Greek elites.

The Seleucids were plagued by rebellions, and their domains in Anatolia were steadily eaten away by secession and attacks by rival Hellenistic regimes. Pergamum became independent in 262 B.C., during the Attalid Dynasty, and won fame as the paragon of Hellenistic states. Noted for the cleanliness of its streets and the splendor of its art, Pergamum, in west-central Anatolia, derived its extraordinary wealth from trade in pitch, parchment, and perfume, while slave labor produced a food surplus on scientifically managed state farms. It was also a center of learning that boasted a medical school and a library second in renown only to that of Alexandria. But Pergamum was both despised and envied by the other Greek states because of its alliance with Rome. [↓](#)

Maeonia and the Lydian Kingdom

Lydia, or Maeonia as it was called before 687 BCE, was a major part of the history of western Anatolia, beginning with the Atyad dynasty, who first appeared around 1300 BCE. The succeeding dynasty, the Heraclids, managed to rule successively from 1185–687 BCE despite a growing presence of Greek influences along the Mediterranean coast. As Greek cities such as Smyrna, Colophon, and Ephesus rose, the Heraclids became weaker and weaker. The last king, Candaules, was murdered by his friend and lance-bearer named Gyges, and he took over as ruler. Gyges waged war against the intruding Greeks, and soon faced by a grave problem as the Cimmerians began to pillage outlying cities within the kingdom. It was this wave of attacks that led to the incorporation of the formerly independent Phrygia and its capital Gordium into the Lydian domain. It was until the successive rules of Sadyattes and Alyattes, ending in 560 BCE, that the attacks of the Cimmerians ended for good. Under the reign of the last Lydian king Croesus, Persia was invaded first at the Battle of Pteria ending without a victor. Progressing deeper into Persia, Croesus was thoroughly defeated in the Battle of Thymbra at the hands of the Persian Cyrus II in 546 BCE. [i](#)

Classical Anatolia

Achaemenid Empire

By 550 BCE, the Median Empire, which had existed for barely a hundred years, was suddenly torn apart by a Persian rebellion. As Lydia's king, Croesus had a large amount of wealth which to draw from, and he used it to go on the offensive against the Persian king Cyrus the Great. In the end, Croesus was thrust

back west and Cyrus burned the Lydian capital Sardis, taking control of Lydia in 546 BCE.

The remaining kingdom of Ionia and several cities of Lydia still refused to fall under Persian domination, and prepared defenses to fight them and sending for aid from Sparta. Since no aid was promised except for a warning to Cyrus from their emissary, eventually their stance was abandoned and they submitted, or they fled as in citizens from Phocaea to Corsica or citizens from Teos to Abdera in Thrace.

The Achaemenid Persian Empire, thus founded by Cyrus the Great, continued its expansion under the Persia king Darius the Great, in which the satrap system of local governors continued to be used and upgraded and other governmental upgrades were carried out. A revolt by Naxos in 502 BCE prompted Aristagoras of Miletus to devise a grandiose plan by which he would give a share of Naxos's wealth to Artaphernes, satrap of Lydia, in return for his aid in quashing the revolt. The failure of Aristagoras in fulfilling his promise of rewards and his conduct disturbed the Persians, so much so that he resorted to convincing his fellow Ionians to revolt against the Persians. This revolt, known as the Ionian Revolt, spread across Anatolia, and with Athenian aid, Aristagoras held firm for a time, despite the loss in the Battle of Ephesus. The burning of Sardis in 498 BCE enraged Darius so much that he swore revenge upon Athens. This event brought down the hammer upon Aristagoras as the Persian army swept through Ionia, re-taking city by city. It was the eventual Battle of Lade outside Miletus in 494 BCE that put an end to the Ionian Revolt once and for all.

Although the Persian Empire had official control of the Carians as a satrap, the appointed local ruler Hecatomnus took advantage of his position. He gained for his family an autonomous hand in control of the province by providing the Persians with regular tribute, avoiding the look of deception. His son Mausolus continued in this manner, and expanded upon the groundwork laid by his father. He first removed the official capital of the satrap from Mylasa to Halicarnassus, gaining a strategic naval advantage as the new capital was on the ocean. On this land he built a strong fortress and a works by which he could build up a strong navy. He shrewdly used this power to guarantee protection for the citizens of Chios, Kos, and Rhodes as they proclaimed independence from Athenian Greece. Mausolus did not live to see his plans realized fully, and his position went to his widow Artemisia. The local control over Caria remained in Hecatomnus's family for another 20 years before the arrival of Alexander the Great. [i](#)

Hellenistic Anatolia

[Hellenistic Monarchs down to the Roman Empire - TrandAnatolie Turkey \(transanatolie.com\)](#)

Alexander the Great

In 336 BCE, King Philip of Macedon was unexpectedly killed, making his son Alexander the new ruler of Macedon as he was very popular. He immediately went to work, raising a force large enough to go up against the Persians, gathering a navy large enough to counter any threats by their powerful navy. Landing on the shores of Anatolia near Sestos on the Gallipoli in 334 BCE, Alexander first faced the Persian army in the Battle of the Granicus, in which the Persians were effectively routed. Using the victory as a springboard for success, Alexander

turned his attention to the rest of the western coast, liberating Lydia and Ionia in quick succession. The eventual fall of Miletus led to the brilliant strategy by Alexander to defeat the Persian navy by taking every city along the Mediterranean instead of initiating a very high-risk battle on the sea. By reducing this threat, Alexander turned inland, rolling through Phrygia, Cappadocia, and finally Cilicia, before reaching Mount Amanus. Scouts for Alexander found the Persian army, under its king Darius III, advancing through the plains of Issus in search of Alexander. At this moment, Alexander realized that the terrain favored his smaller army, and the Battle of Issus began. Darius's army was effectively squeezed by the Macedonians, leading to not only an embarrassing defeat for Darius, but that he fled back across the Euphrates river, leaving the rest of his family in Alexander's hands. Thus, Anatolia was freed from the Persian yoke for good. [i](#)

Wars of the Diadochi and division of Alexander's empire

In June 323 BCE, Alexander died suddenly, leaving a power vacuum in Macedon, putting all he had worked for at risk. Being that his half-brother Arrhidaeus was unable to rule effectively due to a serious disability, a succession of wars over the rights to his conquests were fought known as the Wars of the Diadochi. Perdikkas, a high-ranking officer of the cavalry, and later Antigonos, the Phrygian satrap, prevailed over the other contenders of Alexander's empire in Asia for a time.

Ptolemy, the governor of Egypt, Lysimachus, and Seleucus, strong leaders of Alexander's, consolidated their positions after the Battle of Ipsus, in which their common rival Antigonos was defeated. The former empire of Alexander was divided as such:

Ptolemy gained territory in southern Anatolia, much of Egypt and the Levant, which combined to form the Ptolemaic Empire; Lysimachus controlled western Anatolia and Thrace, while Seleucus claimed the rest of Anatolia as the Seleucid Empire. Only the kingdom of Pontus under Mithridates I managed to gain their independence in Anatolia due to the fact that Antigonus had been a common enemy. [i](#)

Seleucid Empire

Seleucus I Nicator first created a capital city over the span of 12 years (299–287 BCE) worthy of his personage, Antioch, named after his father Antiochus. He concentrated also on creating a large standing army, and also divided his empire into 72 satrapies for easier administration. After a peaceful beginning, a rift occurred between Lysimachus and Seleucus that led to open warfare in 281 BCE. Even though Seleucus had managed to defeat his former friend and gain his territory at the Battle of Corupedium, it cost him his life as he was assassinated by Ptolemy Keraunos, future king of Macedon, in Lysimachia.

After the death of Seleucus, the empire he left faced many trials, both from internal and external forces. Antiochus I fought off an attack from the Gauls successfully, but could not defeat the King of Pergamon Eumenes I in 262 BCE, guaranteeing Pergamon's independence. Antiochus II named Theos, or "divine", was poisoned by his first wife, who in turn poisoned Berenice Phernophorus, second wife of Antiochus and the daughter of Ptolemy III Euergetes. Antiochus II's son from his first wife, Seleucus II Callinicus, ended up as ruler of the Seleucids after this tragedy. These turn of events made

Ptolemy III very angry, and led to the invasion of the empire (the Third Syrian War) in 246 BCE. This invasion leads to victory for Ptolemy III at Antioch and Seleucia, and he grants the lands of Phrygia to Pontus's Mithridates II in 245 BCE as a wedding gift. [i](#)

Parthia and Pergamon before 200 BCE

Events in the east showed the fragile nature of the Seleucids as a Bactrian-inspired revolt in Parthia begun by its satrap Andragoras in 245 BCE led to the loss of territory bordering Persia. This was coupled with an unexpected invasion of northern Parthia by the nomadic Parni in 238 BCE and a subsequent occupation of the whole of Parthia by one of their leaders, Tiridates. Antiochus II Theos of the Seleucids failed to end the rebellion, and therefore a new kingdom was created, the Parthian Empire, under Tiridates's brother Arsaces I. Parthia extended to the Euphrates river at the height of its power.

The kingdom of Pergamon under the Attalid dynasty was an independent kingdom established after the rule of Philetaerus by his nephew Eumenes I. Eumenes enlarged Pergamon to include parts of Mysia and Aeolis, and held tightly onto the ports of Elaia and Pitane. Attalus I, successor of Eumenes I, remained active outside of the boundaries of Pergamon. He refused protection payment to the Galatians and won a fight against them in 230 BCE, and then defeated Antiochus Hierax three years later in order to secure nominal control over Anatolia under the Seleucids. The victory was not to last as Seleucus III reestablished control of his empire, but Attalus was allowed to retain control of former territories of Pergamon.

The dealings with Attalus proved to be the last time the Seleucids had any meaningful success in Anatolia as the Roman Empire lay on the horizon. After that victory, Seleucus's heirs would never again expand their empire. [i](#)

Roman Anatolia: Rome and the Byzantine Empire

[Ancient Rome \(transanatolie.com\)](#)

The last of the Attalid kings bequeathed Pergamum to his Roman allies upon his death in 138 B.C. Rome organized this extensive territory under a proconsul as the province of Asia. All of Anatolia except Armenia, which was a Roman client-state, was integrated into the imperial system by A.D. 43. After the accession of the Roman emperor Augustus (r. 27 B.C.-A.D. 14), and for generations thereafter, the Anatolian provinces enjoyed prosperity and security. The cities were administered by local councils and sent delegates to provincial assemblies that advised the Roman governors. Their inhabitants were citizens of a cosmopolitan world state, subject to a common legal system and sharing a common Roman identity. Roman in allegiance and Greek in culture, the region nonetheless retained its ethnic complexity.

[Roman Empire \(transanatolie.com\)](#)

In A.D. 285, the emperor Diocletian undertook the reorganization of the Roman Empire, dividing jurisdiction between its Latin-speaking and Greek-speaking halves. In 330 Diocletian's successor, Constantine, established his capital at the Greek city of Byzantium, a "New Rome" strategically situated on the European side of the Bosphorus at its entrance to the Sea of Marmara. For nearly twelve centuries the city, embellished and renamed Constantinople, remained the capital

of the Roman Empire--better known in its continuous development in the East as the Byzantine Empire.

Christianity was introduced to Anatolia through the missionary activity of Saint Paul, a Greek-speaking Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, and his companions. Christians possibly even constituted a majority of the population in most of Anatolia by the time Christianity was granted official toleration under the Edict of Milan in A.D. 313. Before the end of the fourth century, a patriarchate was established in Constantinople with ecclesiastical jurisdiction over much of the Greek East. The basilica of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom), whose construction in Constantinople was ordered by Emperor Justinian in 532, became the spiritual focus of Greek Christendom.

Although Greek in language and culture, the Byzantine Empire was thoroughly Roman in its laws and administration. The emperor's Greek-speaking subjects, conscious of their imperial vocation, called themselves *romaioi* --Romans. Almost until the end of its long history, the Byzantine Empire was seen as ecumenical--intended to encompass all Christian peoples--rather than as a specifically Greek state.

In the early seventh century, the emperor in Constantinople presided over a realm that included not only Greece and Anatolia but Syria, Egypt, Sicily, most of Italy, and the Balkans, with outposts across North Africa as far as Morocco. Anatolia was the most productive part of this extensive empire and was also the principal reservoir of manpower for its defense. With the loss of Syria to Muslim conquest in the seventh century, Anatolia became the frontier as well as the heartland of the empire. The military demands imposed on the Byzantine state to police its provinces and defend its frontiers were enormous, but despite the gradual contraction of the empire and frequent political unrest, Byzantine forces generally remained strong until the eleventh century. [i](#)

Roman intervention in Anatolia

In the Second Punic War, Rome had suffered in Spain, Africa, and Italy because of the impressive strategies of Hannibal, the famous Carthaginian general. When Hannibal entered into an alliance with Philip V of Macedon in 215 BCE, Rome used a small naval force with the Aetolian League to help ward off Hannibal in the east and to prevent Macedonian expansion in western Anatolia. Attalus I of Pergamon, along with Rhodes, traveled to Rome and helped convince the Romans that war against Macedon was supremely necessary. The Roman general Titus Quinctius Flamininus not only soundly defeated Philip's army in the Battle of Cynoscephalae in 197 BCE, but also brought further hope to the Greeks when he said that an autonomous Greece and Greek cities in Anatolia was what Rome desired.

During the period just after Rome's victory, the Aetolian League desired some of the spoils left in the wake of Philip's defeat, and requested a shared expedition with Antiochus III of the Seleucids to obtain it. Despite warnings by Rome, Antiochus left Thrace and ventured into Greece, deciding to ally himself with the League. This was intolerable for Rome, and they soundly defeated him in Thessaly at Thermopylae before Antiochus retreated to Anatolia near Sardis. Combining forces with the Romans, Eumenes II of Pergamon met Antiochus in the Battle of Magnesia in 189 BCE. There Antiochus was thrashed by an intensive cavalry charge by the Romans and an outflanking maneuver by Eumenes.

Because of the Treaty of Apamea the very next year, Pergamon was granted all of the Seleucid lands north of the Taurus mountains and Rhodes was given all that remained. This seemingly great reward would be the downfall of Eumenes as an effective ruler, for after Pergamon defeated Prusias I of Bithynia and Pharnaces I of Pontus, he delved too deeply into Roman affairs and the Roman senate became alarmed. When Eumenes put down an invasion by the Galatians in 184 BCE, Rome countered his victory by freeing them, providing a heavy indicator that the scope of Pergamon's rule was now stunted.

The interior of Anatolia had been relatively stable despite occasional incursions by the Galatians until the rise of the kingdoms of Pontus and Cappadocia in the 2nd century BCE. Cappadocia under Ariarathes IV initially was allied with the Seleucids in their war against Rome, but he soon changed his mind and repaired relations with them by marriage and his conduct. His son, Ariarathes V Philopator, continued his father's policy of allying with Rome and even joined with them in battle against Prusias I of Bithynia when he died in 131 BCE. Pontus had been an independent kingdom since the rule of Mithridates when the threat of Macedon had been removed. Despite several attempts by the Seleucid Empire to defeat Pontus, independence was maintained. When Rome became involved in Anatolian affairs under Pharnaces I, an alliance was formed that guaranteed protection for the kingdom. The other major kingdom in Anatolia, Bithynia, established by Nicomedes I at Nicomedia, always maintained good relations with Rome. Even under the hated Prusias II of Bithynia when that relationship was strained it did not cause much trouble.

The rule of Rome in Anatolia was unlike any other part of their empire because of their light hand with regards to government

and organization. Controlling unstable elements within the region was made simpler by the bequeathal of Pergamon to the Romans by its last king, Attalus III in 133 BCE. The new territory was named the province of Asia by Roman consul Manius Aquillius the Elder. [i](#)

The Mithridatic Wars

The Mithridatic Wars were preceded by infighting that drew Rome into a war against Italian rebels known as the Social War in 90 BCE. Mithridates VI of Pontus decided that it was time to strike in Anatolia while Rome was occupied, overrunning Bithynia. Though he withdrew when this was demanded of him by Rome he did not agree to all Rome's demands. As a result, Rome encouraged Bithynia to attack Pontus but Bithynia was defeated. Mithridates then marched into the Roman province of Asia, where he persuaded Greeks to slaughter as many Italians as possible (the Asiatic Vespers). Despite a power struggle within Rome itself, consul Cornelius Sulla went to Anatolia to defeat the Pontian king. Sulla defeated him thoroughly in and left Mithridates with only Pontus in the Treaty of Dardanos.

In 74 BCE, another Anatolian kingdom passed under Roman control as Nicomedes IV of Bithynia instructed it to be done after his death. Making Bithynia a Roman province soon after roused Mithridates VI to once again go after more territory, and he invaded it in the same year. Rome this time sent consul Lucius Licinius Lucullus to take back control of the province. The expedition proved to be very positive as Mithridates was driven back into the mountains.

The failure of Lucius Licinius Lucullus to rid Rome once and for all of Mithridates brought a lot of opposition back at home, some fueled by the great Roman consul Pompey. A threat by pirates on the Roman food supply in the Aegean Sea brought Pompey once again to the forefront of Roman politics, and he drove them back to Cilicia. The powers granted Pompey after this success allowed him to not only throw back Mithridates all the way to the Bosphorus, but made neighboring Armenia a client kingdom. In the end, Mithridates committed suicide in 63 BCE, and therefore allowed Rome to add Pontus as a protectorate along with Cilicia as a Roman province. This left only Galatia, Pisidia and Cappadocia, all ruled by Amyntas in whole, as the last remaining kingdom not under a protectorate or provincial status. However, in 25 BCE, Amyntas died while pursuing enemies in the Taurus mountains, and Rome claimed his lands as a province, leaving Anatolia completely in Roman hands. [i](#)

Christianity in Anatolia during Roman times

Jewish influences in Anatolia were changing the religious makeup of the region as Rome consolidated its power. In about 210 BCE, Antiochus III of the Seleucid Empire relocated 2,000 families of Jews from Babylonia to Lydia and Phrygia, and this kind of migration continued throughout the remainder of the Empire's existence. Additional clues to the size of the Jewish influence in the area were provided by Cicero, who noted that a fellow Roman governor had halted the tribute sent to Jerusalem by Jews in 66 BCE, and the record of Ephesus, where the people urged Agrippina to expel Jews because they were not active in their religious activities.

The blossoming religious following of Christianity was evident in Anatolia during the beginning of the 1st century. The letters of St. Paul in the New Testament reflect this growth, particularly in his home province of Asia. From his home in Ephesus from 54 AD to 56 AD he noted that "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word" and verified the existence of a church in Colossae as well as Troas. Later he received letters from Magnesia and Tralleis, both of which already had churches, bishops, and official representatives who supported Ignatius of Antioch. After the references to these institutions by **St. Paul**, the Book of Revelation mentions **the Seven Churches of Asia: Ephesus, Magnesia, Thyatira, Smyrna, Philadelphia, Pergamon, and Laodicea**. Even other non-Christians started to take notice of the new religion. In 112 the Roman governor in Bithynia writes to the Roman emperor Trajan that so many different people are flocking to Christianity, leaving the temples vacated. [i](#)

Anatolia before the 4th century: Peace and the Goths

From the rule of Augustus onwards until that of Constantine I, Anatolia enjoyed relative peace that allowed itself to grow as a region. The emperor Augustus removed all debts owed to the Roman Empire by the provinces and protectorates there, making advanced progress possible. Roads were built to connect the larger cities in order to improve trade and transportation, and the abundance of high outputs in agricultural pursuits made more money for everyone involved. Settlement was encouraged, and local governors did not place a heavy burden upon the people with regards to taxation. The wealth gained from the peace and prosperity prevented great tragedy as powerful earthquakes tore through the region, and help was given from the Roman government and other parties.

Through it all was produced some of the most respected scientific men of that period- the philosopher Dio of Bithynia, the medical mind of Galen from Pergamon, and the historians Memnon of Heraclea and Cassius Dio of Nicaea.

By the middle of the 3rd century, everything that had been built by peace was being threatened by a new enemy, the Goths. As the inroads to central Europe through Macedonia, Italy, and Germania were all defended successfully by the Romans, the Goths found Anatolia to be irresistible due to its wealth and deteriorating defenses. Using a captured fleet of ships from the Bosphorus and flat-bottomed boats to cross the Black Sea, they sailed in 256 around the eastern shores, landing in the coastal city of Trebizond. What ensued was a huge embarrassment for Pontus — the wealth of the city was absconded, a larger number of ships were confiscated, and they entered the interior without much to turn them back. A second invasion of Anatolia through Bithynia brought even more terror inland and wanton destruction. The Goths entered Chalcedon and used it as a base by which to expand their operations, sacking Nicomedia, Prusa, Apamea, Cius, and Nice in turn. Only the turn of the weather during a fall season kept them from doing any more harm to those outside the realm of the province. The Goths managed a third attack upon not only the coastline of western Anatolia, but in Greece and Italy as well. Despite the Romans under their emperor Valerian finally turning them away, it did not stop the Goths from first destroying the Temple of Diana in Ephesus and the city itself in 263. [i](#)

Byzantine Anatolia

[Byzantium: Byzantium Overview - TransAnatolie Turkey](#)

The constant instability of the Roman Empire as a whole gradually made it more and more difficult to control. Upon the ascension of the emperor Constantine in 330, he made a bold decision by removing himself from Rome and into a new capital. Located in the old city of Byzantium, now known as Constantinople after the emperor, it was strengthened and improved in order to assure more than adequate defense of the whole region. What added to the prestige of the city was Constantine's favor of Christianity. He allowed bishops and other religious figures to aid in the government of the empire, and he personally intervened in the First Council of Nicaea to prove his sincerity.

The next forty years after the death of Constantine in 337 saw a power struggle amongst his descendants for control of the empire. His three sons, Constantine, Constans, and Constantius were unable to coexist peacefully under a joint rule, and they eventually resorted to violent means to end the arrangement. A short time after taking power, a purge of a majority of their relations began and the blood of Constantine's progeny flowed. Eventually Constans came after and killed Constantine II near Aquileia, but was soon removed and himself murdered by his own army. This left Constantius II as the sole emperor of the Byzantines, but even this would not last. Despite supporting his cousin Julian as commander of the armies in Gaul, events soon forced Julian to ignore Constantine's orders to move eastward with his armies and to head straight for Constantinople to claim the imperial purple. The death of Constantius II in Tarsus resulted in a bloodless transfer of power in 361. Julian did not survive but a scant year and a half thanks to a Persian spear, but during that time he tried to revert what progress Christianity had made after the founding of the empire. Even

on his deathbed he was supposed to have said "Thou hast conquered, Galilean.", a reference to Christianity besting him.

The threat of barbarian invasion and its effects upon the Roman Empire in the west carried over into the east. After a short rule by the emperor Jovian and a joint rule of both empires by Valentinian II in the west and Valens in the east, the young emperor Gratian made what was to be a very fortunate decision. He chose the favored general Theodosius I to rule with his as a co-emperor, granting him authority over all of the domains of the Byzantine empire in 379. This proved to be a wise decision with regards to the survival of his newly obtained dominion, for he immediately set about healing the religious rifts that had emerged during the insecurity of past years. The practice of Arianism and pagan rites were abolished, and the standards set by Constantine in Nicaea were restored by law. By 395, the year in which the Roman Empire was officially divided in half and the aptly named Theodosius the Great died, the east was so strong that it could now be considered an equal.

The Byzantine Empire was the predominantly Greek-speaking continuation of the Roman Empire during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Its capital city was Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul), originally known as Byzantium. Initially the eastern half of the Roman Empire (often called the Eastern Roman Empire in this context), it survived the 5th century fragmentation and fall of the Western Roman Empire and continued to exist for an additional thousand years until it fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. [i](#)

Persian intervention

The Sassanid Persians, after having fought centuries of wars against the Byzantines and at their peak sieged Constantinople together with the Avars (Avar Turks), paved the way for a new threat to enter onto the scene; the Arabs. [i](#)

Arab conquests and threats

Arab attacks throughout the empire reduced significantly the territory once held under Justinian. [i](#)

The Crusades and their effects

The four crusades that involved the Byzantines severely weakened their power, and led to a disunity that would never be successfully restored. [i](#)

Breakaway successor states and the fall

The newly forming states of the Turks gradually squeezed the empire so much that it was only a matter of time before Constantinople was taken in 1453. [i](#)

Turks

[Turks, Origins, Turkish \(Turkish Language\), Turkish Empires, Turkish Philosophers \(transanatolie.com\)](#)

The first historical references to the Turks appear in Chinese records dating around 700 B.C. These records refer to tribes called the Hsiung-nu (an early form of the Western term Hun), who lived in an area bounded by the Altai Mountains, Lake Baykal, and the northern edge of the Gobi Desert, and who are believed to have been the ancestors of the Turks (see fig. 3). Specific references in Chinese sources in the sixth century A.D. identify the tribal kingdom called Tu-Küe located on the Orkhon River south of Lake Baykal. The khans (chiefs) of this tribe accepted the nominal suzerainty of the Tang Dynasty. The earliest known example of writing in a Turkic language was found in that area and has been dated around A.D. 730.

Other Turkish nomads from the Altai region founded the Göktürk Empire, a confederation of tribes under a dynasty of khans whose influence extended during the sixth through eighth centuries from the Aral Sea to the Hindu Kush in the land bridge known as Transoxania (i.e., across the Oxus River). The Göktürks are known to have been enlisted by a Byzantine emperor in the seventh century as allies against the Sassanians. In the eighth century, separate Turkish tribes, among them the Oguz, moved south of the Oxus River, while others migrated west to the northern shore of the Black Sea. [↓](#)

The Seljuks Turks Anatolia and Anatolian Turks Beyliks

[Turks: Seljuqs, Seljuks, Anatolia, Turkish Architecture, Humanizm, Mevlana \(transanatolie.com\)](#)

The population of Anatolia and Balkans including Greece was estimated at 10.7 million in 600 CE, whereas Asia Minor was

probably around 8 million during the early part of Middle Ages (950 to 1348 CE). The estimated population for Asia Minor around 1204 CE was 6 million, including 3 million in Seljuk territory. The migration of Turks to the country of modern Turkey occurred during the main Turkic migration across most of Central Asia and into Europe and the Middle East which was between the 6th and 11th centuries. Mainly Turkic people living in the Seljuk Empire arrived in Turkey during the eleventh century. The Seljuks proceeded to gradually conquer the Anatolian part of the Byzantine Empire.

The House of Seljuk was a branch of the Kınık Oğuz Turks who resided on the periphery of the Muslim world, north of the Caspian and Aral Seas in the Yabghu Khaganate of the Oğuz confederacy in the 10th century. In the 11th century, the Turkic people living in the Seljuk Empire started migrating from their ancestral homelands towards east of Anatolia, which eventually became a new homeland of Oğuz Turkic tribes following the Battle of Manzikert on August 26, 1071.

The victory of the Seljuks gave rise to the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, a separate branch of the larger Seljuk Empire and to some Turkish principalities (beyliks), mostly situated towards the east which were vassals of or at war with Seljuk Sultanate of Rum. [i](#)

The Great Seljuks

The Turkish migrations after the sixth century were part of a general movement of peoples out of central Asia during the first millennium A.D. that was influenced by a number of

interrelated factors--climatic changes, the strain of growing populations on a fragile pastoral economy, and pressure from stronger neighbors also on the move. Among those who migrated were the Oguz Turks, who had embraced Islam in the tenth century. They established themselves around Bukhara in Transoxania under their khan, Seljuk. Split by dissension among the tribes, one branch of the Oguz, led by descendants of Seljuk, moved west and entered service with the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad.

The Turkish horsemen, known as gazis , were organized into tribal bands to defend the frontiers of the caliphate, often against their own kinsmen. However, in 1055 a Seljuk khan, Tugrul Bey, occupied Baghdad at the head of an army composed of gazis and mamluks (slave-soldiers, a number of whom became military leaders and rulers). Tugrul forced the caliph (the spiritual leader of Islam) to recognize him as sultan, or temporal leader, in Persia and Mesopotamia. While they engaged in state building, the Seljuks also emerged as the champions of Sunni (see Glossary) Islam against the religion's Shia (see Glossary) sect. Tugrul's successor, Mehmet ibn Daud (r. 1063-72)--better known as Alp Arslan, the "Lion Hero"--prepared for a campaign against the Shia Fatimid caliphate in Egypt but was forced to divert his attention to Anatolia by the gazis , on whose endurance and mobility the Seljuks depended. The Seljuk elite could not persuade these gazis to live within the framework of a bureaucratic Persian state, content with collecting taxes and patrolling trade routes. Each year the gazis cut deeper into Byzantine territory, raiding and taking booty according to their tradition. Some served as mercenaries in the private wars of Byzantine nobles and occasionally settled on land they had taken. The Seljuks followed the gazis into Anatolia in order to retain control over them. In 1071 Alp Arslan routed the Byzantine army at Manzikert near Lake Van, opening all of Anatolia to conquest by the Turks.

Armenia had been annexed by the Byzantine Empire in 1045, but religious animosity between the Armenians and the Greeks prevented these two Christian peoples from cooperating against the Turks on the frontier. Although Christianity had been adopted as the official religion of the state by King Titidates III around A.D. 300, nearly 100 years before similar action was taken in the Roman Empire, Armenians were converted to a form of Christianity at variance with the Orthodox tradition of the Greek church, and they had their own patriarchate independent of Constantinople. After their conquest by the Sassanians around 400, their religion bound them together as a nation and provided the inspiration for a flowering of Armenian culture in the fifth century. When their homeland fell to the Seljuks in the late eleventh century, large numbers of Armenians were dispersed throughout the Byzantine Empire, many of them settling in Constantinople, where in its centuries of decline they became generals and statesmen as well as craftsmen, builders, and traders.

The original Seljuks, who swarmed out of Central Asia in the first half of the 11th century.

Toghril Beg.....	1037-1063
Alp Arslan.....	1063-1072
Malik Shah I.....	1072-1092
Mahmud I.....	1092-1095
Berk Yaruq.....	1095-1104
Malik Shah II.....	1104-1105
Mohammed.....	1105-1118
Abul Harith Sanjar.....	1118-1158

Fragmented into local spheres of influence, most eventually taken by the Mongols. [i](#)

The Rum Seljuks - Sultanate of Rum

Within ten years of the Battle of Manzikert, the Seljuks had won control of most of Anatolia. Although successful in the west, the Seljuk sultanate in Baghdad reeled under attacks from the Mongols in the east and was unable--indeed unwilling--to exert its authority directly in Anatolia. The gazis carved out a number of states there, under the nominal suzerainty of Baghdad, states that were continually reinforced by further Turkish immigration. The strongest of these states to emerge was the Seljuk sultanate of Rum ("Rome," i.e., Byzantine Empire), which had its capital at Konya (Iconium). During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Rum became dominant over the other Turkish states.

The society and economy of the Anatolian countryside were unchanged by the Seljuks, who had simply replaced Byzantine officials with a new elite that was Turkish and Muslim. Conversion to Islam and the imposition of the language, mores, and customs of the Turks progressed steadily in the countryside, facilitated by intermarriage. The cleavage widened, however, between the unruly gazi warriors and the state-building bureaucracy in Konya.

A large state taking up most of the interior of modern Turkey. The name stems from the Turkish attempt to pronounce the word "Roman", meaning the old Byzantine territories. From 1243 the Rum Seljuqs were Persian Mongol vassals.

Suleiman I.....	1077/8-1086
To the Great Seljuqs.....	1086-1092
Qilich Arslan I.....	1092/3-1106/7
Malik Shah I.....	1106/7-1116/7
Masud.....	1116/7-1156/7
Qilich Arslan II.....	1156/7-1192
Kai Khusrau I.....	1192-1195/6 d. 1210
Suleiman II.....	1195/6-1204

Qilich Arslan III.....	1204
Kai Khusrau I (restored).....	1204-1210
Kai Kaus.....	1210-1219/20
Kai Qubadh.....	1219/20-1236/7
Kai Khusrau II.....	1236/7-1245
To the Persian Il-Khans.....	1243-c. 1308
Mu`in al-Din Süleyman.....	1256-1277
Kai Kaus II.....	1245-1257/8 with...
Qilich Arslan IV.....	1248/9-1264/5 and...
Kai Qubadh.....	1249/50-1257/8
Kai Khusrau III.....	1264/5-1282/3
Masud II.....	1282/3-1284/5
Kai Qubadh III.....	1284/5-1284/5
Masud II (restored).....	1284/5-1292/3
Kai Qubadh III (restored).....	1292/3-1293/4
Masud II (re-restored).....	1293/4-1300/1
Kai Qubadh III (re-restored).....	1300/1-1302/3
Masud II (re-re-restored).....	1302/3-1305
Kai Qubadh III (re-re-restored).....	1305-1307/8
Masud III.....	1307/8

Complete fragmentation of authority, coterporous with similar failure of Ilkhanate control, complete by 1336. Thereafter, Anatolia as a whole is enveloped by growing Ottoman hegemony. [i](#)

The Crusades

The success of the Seljuk Turks stimulated a response from Latin Europe in the form of the First Crusade. A counter-offensive launched in 1097 by the Byzantine emperor with the aid of the crusaders dealt the Seljuks a decisive defeat. Konya fell to the crusaders, and after a few years of campaigning Byzantine rule was restored in the western third of Anatolia.

Although a Turkish revival in the 1140s nullified many of the Christian gains, greater damage was done to Byzantine security by dynastic strife in Constantinople in which the largely French contingents of the Fourth Crusade and their Venetian allies intervened. In 1204 these crusaders installed Count Baldwin of Flanders in the Byzantine capital as emperor of the so-called Latin Empire of Constantinople, dismembering the old realm into tributary states where West European feudal institutions were transplanted intact. Independent Greek kingdoms were established at Nicaea and Trebizond (present-day Trabzon) and in Epirus from remnant Byzantine provinces. Turks allied with Greeks in Anatolia against the Latins, and Greeks with Turks against the Mongols. In 1261 Michael Palaeologus of Nicaea drove the Latins from Constantinople and restored the Byzantine Empire, but as an essentially Balkan state reduced in size to Thrace and northwestern Anatolia.

Seljuk Rum survived in the late thirteenth century as a vassal state of the Mongols, who had already subjugated the Great Seljuk sultanate at Baghdad. Mongol influence in the region had disappeared by the 1330s, leaving behind gazi amirates competing for supremacy. From the chaotic conditions that prevailed throughout the Middle East, however, a new power emerged in Anatolia--the Ottoman Turks. [i](#)

Mongol invasion

On June 26, 1243, the Seljuk armies were defeated by the Mongols in the Battle of Kosedag, and the Seljuk Sultanate of Rûm became a vassal of the Mongols. This caused the Seljuks to lose their power. Hulegu Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan founded the Ilkhanate in the southwestern part of the Mongol Empire. The Ilkhanate ruled Anatolia through Mongol military governors. The last Seljuk sultan Mesud II, died in 1308. The

Mongol invasion of Transoxiana, Iran, Azerbaijan and Anatolia caused Turkomens to move to Western Anatolia. The Turkomens founded some Anatolian principalities (beyliks) under the Mongol dominion in Turkey. The most powerful beyliks were the Karamanids and the Germiyanids in the central area. Along the Aegean coast, from north to south, stretched Karasids, Sarukhanids, Aydinids, Menteşe and Teke principalities. The Jandarids (later called Isfendiyarids) controlled the Black Sea region round Kastamonu and Sinop. The Beylik of the Ottoman Dynasty was situated in the northwest of Anatolia, around Söğüt, and it was a small and insignificant state at that time. The Ottoman beylik would, however, evolve into the Ottoman Empire over the next 200 years, expanding throughout the Balkans, Anatolia. [i](#)

[The Emergence of Ottoman Empire \(Osmanli Imparatorlugu\), Halil Inalcik \(transanatolie.com\)](#)

Ottoman Turks Anatolia

[Ottomans \(transanatolie.com\)](#)

The Ottoman Empire

Documentation of the early history of the Ottomans is scarce. According to semilegendary accounts, Ertugrul, khan of the Kayi tribe of the Oguz Turks, took service with the sultan of Rum at the head of a gazi force numbering "400 tents." He was granted territory--if he could seize and hold it--in Bithynia, facing the Byzantine strongholds at Bursa, Nicomedia (Izmit), and Nicaea. Leadership subsequently passed to Ertugrul's son, Osman I (r. ca. 1284-1324), founder of the Osmanli Dynasty--better known in the West as the Ottomans. This dynasty was to endure for six centuries through the reigns of thirty-six sultans (see Sultans and Viziers).

Osman I's small amirate attracted gazis from other amirates, who required plunder from new conquests to maintain their way of life. Such growth gave the Ottoman state a military stature that was out of proportion to its size. Acquiring the title of sultan, Osman I organized a politically centralized administration that subordinated the activities of the gazis to its needs and facilitated rapid territorial expansion. Bursa fell in the final year of his reign. His successor, Orhan (r. 1324-60), crossed the Dardanelles in force and established a permanent European base at Gallipoli in 1354. Murad I (r. 1360-89) annexed most of Thrace (called Rumelia, or "Roman land," by the Turks), encircling Constantinople, and moved the seat of Ottoman government to Adrianople (Edirne) in Europe. In 1389 the Ottoman gazis defeated the Serbs at the Battle of Kosovo, although at the cost of Murad's life. The steady stream of Ottoman victories in the Balkans continued under Bayezid I (r. 1389-1402). Bulgaria was subdued in 1393, and in 1396 a French-led force of crusaders that had crossed the Danube from Hungary was annihilated at Nicopolis.

In Anatolia, where Ottoman policy had been directed toward consolidating the sultan's hold over the gazi amirates by means of conquest, usurpation, and purchase, the Ottomans were confronted by the forces of the Mongol leader Timur (Tamerlane), to whom many of the Turkish gazis had defected. Timur crushed Ottoman forces near Ankara in 1402 and captured Bayezid I. The unfortunate sultan died in captivity the next year, leaving four heirs, who for a decade competed for control of what remained of Ottoman Anatolia. By the 1420s, however, Ottoman power had revived to the extent that fresh campaigns were undertaken in Greece.

Aside from scattered outposts in Greece, all that remained of the Byzantine Empire was its capital, Constantinople. Cut off by land since 1365, the city, despite long periods of truce with the Turks, was supplied and reinforced by Venetian traders who

controlled its commerce by sea. On becoming sultan in 1444, Mehmet II (r. 1444-46, 1451-81) immediately set out to conquer the city. The military campaigning season of 1453 commenced with the fifty-day siege of Constantinople, during which Mehmet II brought warships overland on greased runners into the Bosphorus inlet known as the Golden Horn to bypass the chain barrage and fortresses that had blocked the entrance to Constantinople's harbor. On May 29, the Turks fought their way through the gates of the city and brought the siege to a successful conclusion.

As an isolated military action, the taking of Constantinople did not have a critical effect on European security, but to the Ottoman Dynasty the capture of the imperial capital was of supreme symbolic importance. Mehmet II regarded himself as the direct successor to the Byzantine emperors. He made Constantinople the imperial capital, as it had been under the Byzantine emperors, and set about rebuilding the city. The cathedral of Hagia Sophia was converted to a mosque, and Constantinople--which the Turks called Istanbul (from the Greek phrase *eis tin polin* , "to the city")--replaced Baghdad as the center of Sunni Islam. The city also remained the ecclesiastical center of the Greek Orthodox Church, of which Mehmet II proclaimed himself the protector and for which he appointed a new patriarch after the custom of the Byzantine emperors.

The ancestors of the Ottomans (Osmanli, Uthmanli) were Oghuz Turks who followed the victorious Seljuqs into Anatolia in the 11th century. The Ottoman state began as a Ghazi Kingdom based in old Bithynia, on the fringes of the Mongol dominated regions of central Anatolia. As Ilkhanate authority waned, Ottoman power grew and, successfully vanquishing other Ghazi domains, they became the new Power of the region.

Osman I.....	1293-1324
Orhan.....	1324-1360
Murad I.....	1360-1389
Beyazid I Thunderbolt.....	1389-1402
Mehmet I.....	1402-1421 with...
Isa (in Bursa).....	1402-1406 and...
Suleyman (in Rumelia).....	1402-1410 followed by...
Musa.....	1410-1413
Murad II.....	1421-1444 d. 1451
Mehmet II the Conqueror.....	1444-1446 d. 1481
Murad II (restored).....	1446-1451
Mehmet II the Conqueror(restored)	1451-1481
Beyazid II.....	1481-1512
Selim I the Grim.....	1512-1520
Suleyman I Law-giver.....	1520-1566
Selim II the Sot.....	1566-1574
Murad III.....	1574-1595
Mehmet III.....	1695-1603
Ahmed I.....	1603-1617
Mustafa I.....	1617-1618 d. 1623
Othman II.....	1618-1622
Mustafa I (restored).....	1622-1623
Murad IV.....	1623-1640
Ibrahim.....	1640-1648
Mehmet IV.....	1648-1687 d. 1693
Suleyman II.....	1687-1691
Ahmed II.....	1691-1695
Mustafa II.....	1695-1703
Ahmed III.....	1703-1730 d. 1736
Mahmud I.....	1730-1754
Osman III.....	1754-1757
Mustafa III.....	1757-1773
Abdulhamid I.....	1773-1789
Selim III.....	1789-1807
Mustafa III.....	1807-1808
Mahmud II.....	1808-1839
Abdulmecid.....	1839-1861
Abdulaziz.....	1861-1876
Murad V.....	1876

Abdulhamid II.....1876-1909 d. 1918
Mehmet V.....1909-1918
Mehmet VI.....1918-1922 d. 1926

[i](#)

Ottoman Institutions

At the apex of the hierarchical Ottoman system was the sultan, who acted in political, military, judicial, social, and religious capacities, under a variety of titles. He was theoretically responsible only to God and God's law--the Islamic seriat (in Arabic, sharia), of which he was the chief executor. All offices were filled by his authority, and every law was issued by him in the form of a firman (decree). He was supreme military commander and had official title to all land. During the early sixteenth-century Ottoman expansion in Arabia, Selim I also adopted the title of caliph, thus indicating that he was the universal Muslim ruler. Although theocratic and absolute in theory and in principle, the sultan's powers were in practice limited. The attitudes of important members of the dynasty, the bureaucratic and military establishments, and religious leaders had to be considered.

Three characteristics were necessary for acceptance into the ruling class: Islamic faith, loyalty to the sultan, and compliance with the standards of behavior of the Ottoman court. The last qualification effectively excluded the majority of common Turks, whose language and manners were very different from those of the Ottomans. The language of the court and government was Ottoman Turkish, a highly formalized hybrid language that included Persian and Arabic loanwords. In time Greeks, Armenians, and Jews were also employed in state

service, usually in diplomatic, technical, or commercial capacities.

The day-to-day conduct of government and the formulation of policy were in the hands of the divan, a relatively small council of ministers directed by the chief minister, the grand vizier. The entranceway to the public buildings in which the divan met-- and which in the seventeenth century became the residence of the grand vizier--was called the Bab-i Ali (High Gate, or Sublime Porte). In diplomatic correspondence, the term Porte was synonymous with the Ottoman government, a usage that acknowledged the power wielded by the grand vizier.

The Ottoman Empire had Turkish origins and Islamic foundations, but from the start it was a heterogeneous mixture of ethnic groups and religious creeds. Ethnicity was determined solely by religious affiliation. Non-Muslim peoples, including Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, were recognized as millets (see Glossary) and were granted communal autonomy. Such groups were allowed to operate schools, religious establishments, and courts based on their own customary law. [i](#)

Selim I and Süleyman the Magnificent

Selim I (r. 1512-20) extended Ottoman sovereignty southward, conquering Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. He also gained recognition as guardian of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

Selim I's son, Süleyman I (r. 1520-66), was called the "lawgiver" (kanuni) by his Muslim subjects because of a new codification of seriat undertaken during his reign. In Europe, however, he was known as Süleyman the Magnificent, a recognition of his prowess by those who had most to fear from it. Belgrade fell to Süleyman in 1521, and in 1522 he compelled the Knights of Saint John to abandon Rhodes. In

1526 the Ottoman victory at the Battle of Mohács led to the taking of Buda on the Danube. Vienna was besieged unsuccessfully during the campaign season of 1529. North Africa up to the Moroccan frontier was brought under Ottoman suzerainty in the 1520s and 1530s, and governors named by the sultan were installed in Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. In 1534 Kurdistan and Mesopotamia were taken from Persia. The latter conquest gave the Ottomans an outlet to the Persian Gulf, where they were soon engaged in a naval war with the Portuguese.

When Süleyman died in 1566, the Ottoman Empire was a world power. Most of the great cities of Islam--Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, Damascus, Cairo, Tunis, and Baghdad--were under the sultan's crescent flag. The Porte exercised direct control over Anatolia, the sub-Danubian Balkan provinces, Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia. Egypt, Mecca, and the North African provinces were governed under special regulations, as were satellite domains in Arabia and the Caucasus, and among the Crimean Tartars. In addition, the native rulers of Wallachia, Moldavia, Transylvania, and Ragusa (Dubrovnik) were vassals of the sultan.

The Ottomans had always dealt with the European states from a position of strength. Treaties with them took the form of truces approved by the sultan as a favor to lesser princes, provided that payment of tribute accompanied the settlement. The Ottomans were slow to recognize the shift in the military balance to Europe and the reasons for it. They also increasingly permitted European commerce to penetrate the barriers built to protect imperial autarky. Some native craft industries were destroyed by the influx of European goods, and, in general, the balance of trade shifted to the disadvantage of the empire, making it in time an indebted client of European producers.

European political intervention followed economic penetration. In 1536 the Ottoman Empire, then at the height of its power,

had voluntarily granted concessions to France, but the system of capitulations introduced at that time was later used to impose important limitations on Ottoman sovereignty. Commercial privileges were greatly extended, and residents who came under the protection of a treaty country were thereby made subject to the jurisdiction of that country's law rather than Ottoman law, an arrangement that led to flagrant abuses of justice. The last thirty years of the sixteenth century saw the rapid onset of a decline in Ottoman power symbolized by the defeat of the Turkish fleet by the Spanish and Portuguese at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 and by the unbridled bloody succession struggles within the imperial palace, the Seraglio of Constantinople. [i](#)

Köprülü Era

Ottoman imperial decadence was finally halted by a notable family of imperial bureaucrats, the Köprülü family, which for more than forty years (1656-1703) provided the empire with grand viziers, combining ambition and ruthlessness with genuine talent. Mehmet, followed by his son Ahmet, overhauled the bureaucracy and instituted military reforms. Crete and Lemnos were taken from Venice, and large provinces in Ukraine were wrested temporarily from Poland and Russia. The Köprülü family also resumed the offensive against Austria, pushing the Ottoman frontier to within 120 kilometers of Vienna. An attempt in 1664 to capture the Habsburg capital was beaten back, but Ahmet Köprülü extorted a huge tribute as the price of a nineteen-year truce. When it expired in 1683, the Ottoman army again invaded Austria, laying siege to Vienna for two months, only to be routed ultimately by a relief force led by the king of Poland, Jan Sobieski.

The siege of Vienna was the high-water mark of Ottoman expansion in Europe, and its failure opened Hungary to reconquest by the European powers. In a ruinous sixteen-year war, Russia and the Holy League--composed of Austria, Poland, and Venice, and organized under the aegis of the pope--finally drove the Ottomans south of the Danube and east of the Carpathians. Under the terms of the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, the first in which the Ottomans acknowledged defeat, Hungary, Transylvania, and Croatia were formally relinquished to Austria. Poland recovered Podolia, and Dalmatia and the Morea were ceded to Venice. In a separate peace the next year, Russia received the Azov region.

The last of the Köprülü rulers fell from power when Mustafa II (r. 1695-1703) was forced by rebellious janissaries to abdicate. Under Ahmet III (r. 1703-30), effective control of the government passed to the military leaders. Ahmet III's reign is referred to as the "tulip period" because of the popularity of tulip cultivation in Istanbul during those years. At this time, Peter the Great of Russia moved to eliminate the Ottoman presence on the north shore of the Black Sea. Russia's main objective in the region subsequently was to win access to warm-water ports on the Black Sea and then to obtain an opening to the Mediterranean through the Ottoman-controlled Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits. Despite territorial gains at Ottoman expense, however, Russia was unable to achieve these goals, and the Black Sea remained for the time an "Ottoman lake" on which Russian warships were prohibited. [i](#)

External Threats and Internal Transformations

During the eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was almost continuously at war with one or more of its enemies--Persia,

Poland, Austria, and Russia. Under the humiliating terms of the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kaynarja that ended the Russo-Ottoman War of 1768-74, the Porte abandoned the Tartar khanate in the Crimea, granted autonomy to the Trans-Danubian provinces, allowed Russian ships free access to Ottoman waters, and agreed to pay a large war indemnity.

The implications of the decline of Ottoman power, the vulnerability and attractiveness of the empire's vast holdings, the stirrings of nationalism among its subject peoples, and the periodic crises resulting from these and other factors became collectively known to European diplomats in the nineteenth century as "the Eastern Question." In 1853 Tsar Nicholas I of Russia described the Ottoman Empire as "the sick man of Europe." The problem from the viewpoint of European diplomacy was how to dispose of the empire in such a manner that no one power would gain an advantage at the expense of the others and upset the political balance of Europe.

The first nineteenth-century crisis to bring about European intervention was the Greek War of Independence (1821-32). In 1827 an Anglo-French fleet destroyed the Ottoman and Egyptian fleets at the Battle of Navarino, while the Russian army advanced as far as Edirne before a cease-fire was called in 1829. The European powers forced the Porte to recognize Greek independence under the London Convention of 1832.

Muhammad Ali, an Ottoman officer who had been designated pasha of Egypt by the sultan in 1805, had given substantial aid to the Ottoman cause in the Greek war. When he was not rewarded as promised for his assistance, he invaded Syria in 1831 and pursued the retreating Ottoman army deep into Anatolia. In desperation, the Porte appealed to Russia for support. Britain then intervened, constraining Muhammad Ali to withdraw from Anatolia to Syria. The price the sultan paid Russia for its assistance was the Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi of 1833. Under this treaty, the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits

were to be closed on Russian demand to naval vessels of other powers.

War with Muhammad Ali resumed in 1839, and Ottoman forces were again defeated. Russia waived its rights under the 1833 treaty and aligned itself with British efforts to support the Ottoman Empire militarily and diplomatically. Under the London Convention of 1840, Muhammad Ali was forced to abandon his claim to Syria, but he was recognized as hereditary ruler of Egypt under nominal Ottoman suzerainty. Under an additional protocol, in 1841 the Porte undertook to close the straits to warships of all powers.

The Ottoman Empire fought two more wars with Russia in the nineteenth century. The Crimean War (1854-56) pitted France, Britain, and the Ottoman Empire against Russia. Under the Treaty of Paris, which ended the war, Russia abandoned its claim to protect Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire and renounced the right to intervene in the Balkans. War resumed between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in 1877. Russia opened hostilities in response to Ottoman suppression of uprisings in Bulgaria and to the threat posed to Serbia by Ottoman forces. The Russian army had driven through Bulgaria and reached as far as Edirne when the Porte acceded to the terms imposed by a new agreement, the Treaty of San Stefano. The treaty reduced Ottoman holdings in Europe to eastern Thrace and created a large, independent Bulgarian state under Russian protection.

Refusing to accept the dominant position of Russia in the Balkans, the other European powers called the Congress of Berlin in 1878. At this conclave, the Europeans agreed to a much smaller autonomous Bulgarian state under nominal Ottoman suzerainty. Serbia and Romania were recognized as fully independent states, and the Ottoman provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina were placed under Austrian administration. Cyprus, although remaining technically part of the Ottoman

Empire, became a British protectorate. For all its wartime exertions, Russia received only minor territorial concessions in Bessarabia and the Caucasus. In the course of the nineteenth century, France seized Algeria and Tunisia, while Britain began its occupation of Egypt in 1882. In all these cases, the occupied territories formerly had belonged to the Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman Empire had a dual economy in the nineteenth century consisting of a large subsistence sector and a small colonial-style commercial sector linked to European markets and controlled by foreign interests. The empire's first railroads, for example, were built by foreign investors to bring the cash crops of Anatolia's coastal valleys--tobacco, grapes, and other fruit--to Smyrna (Izmir) for processing and export. The cost of maintaining a modern army without a thorough reform of economic institutions caused expenditures to be made in excess of tax revenues. Heavy borrowing from foreign banks in the 1870s to reinforce the treasury and the undertaking of new loans to pay the interest on older ones created a financial crisis that in 1881 obliged the Porte to surrender administration of the Ottoman debt to a commission representing foreign investors. The debt commission collected public revenues and transferred the receipts directly to creditors in Europe.

The 1860s and early 1870s saw the emergence of the Young Ottoman movement among Western-oriented intellectuals who wanted to see the empire accepted as an equal by the European powers. They sought to adopt Western political institutions, including an efficient centralized government, an elected parliament, and a written constitution. The "Ottomanism" they advocated also called for an integrated dynastic state that would subordinate Islam to secular interests and allow non-Muslim subjects to participate in representative parliamentary institutions.

In 1876 the hapless sultan was deposed by a fetva (legal opinion) obtained by Midhat Pasha, a reformist minister

sympathetic to the aims of the Young Ottomans. His successor, Abdül Hamid II (r. 1876-1909), came to the throne with the approval of Midhat and other reformers. In December of that year, on the eve of the war with Russia, the new sultan promulgated a constitution, based on European models, that had been drafted by senior political, military, and religious officials under Midhat's direction. Embodying the substance of the Young Ottoman program, this document created a representative parliament, guaranteed religious liberty, and provided for enlarged freedom of expression. Abdül Hamid II's acceptance of constitutionalism was a temporary tactical expedient to gain the throne, however. Midhat was dismissed in February 1877 and was later murdered. The sultan called the empire's first parliament but dissolved it within a year.

Unrest in Eastern Rumelia led the European powers to insist on the union of that province with Bulgaria in 1885. Meanwhile, Greek and Bulgarian partisans were carrying on a running battle with Ottoman forces in Macedonia. In addition, the repression of revolutionary activities in Armenia during 1894-96 cost about 300,000 lives and aroused European public opinion against the Ottoman regime. Outside support for a rebellion on Crete also caused the Porte to declare war on Greece in 1897. Although the Ottoman army defeated the Greeks decisively in Thrace, the European powers forced a compromise peace that kept Crete under Ottoman suzerainty while installing the son of the Greek king as its governor.

More isolated from Europe than it had been for half a century, the Ottoman regime could count on support only from Germany, whose friendship offered Abdül Hamid II a congenial alternative to British and French intervention. In 1902 Germany was granted a ninety-nine-year concession to build and operate a Berlin-to-Baghdad rail connection. Germany continued to invest in the Ottoman economy, and German officers held training and command posts in the Ottoman army.

Opposition to the sultan's regime continued to assert itself among Westernized intellectuals and liberal members of the ruling class. Some continued to advocate "Ottomanism," whereas others argued for pan-Turanism, the union of Turkic-speaking peoples inside and outside the Ottoman Empire. The Turkish nationalist ideologist of the period was the writer Ziya Gökalp, who defined Turkish nationalism within the context of the Ottoman Empire. Gökalp went much farther than his contemporaries, however, by calling for the adoption of the vernacular in place of Ottoman Turkish. Gökalp's advocacy of a national Turkish state in which folk culture and Western values would play equally important revitalizing roles foreshadowed events a quarter-century in the future. [i](#)

The Young Turks

The repressive policies of Abdül Hamid II fostered disaffection, especially among those educated in Europe or in Westernized schools. Young officers and students who conspired against the sultan's regime coalesced into small groups, largely outside Istanbul. One young officer, Mustafa Kemal (later known as Atatürk), organized a secret society among fellow officers in Damascus and, later, in Thessaloniki (Salonika) in present-day Greece. Atatürk's group merged with other nationalist reform organizations in 1907 to form the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). Also known as the Young Turks, this group sought to restore the 1876 constitution and unify the diverse elements of the empire into a homogeneous nation through greater government centralization under a parliamentary regime.

In July 1908, army units in Macedonia revolted and demanded a return to constitutional government. Appearing to yield, Abdül Hamid II approved parliamentary elections in November in which the CUP won all but one of the Turkish seats under a system that allowed proportional representation of all millets . The Young Turk government was weakened by splits between nationalist and liberal reformers, however, and was threatened by traditionalist Muslims and by demands from non-Turkish communities for greater autonomy. Abdül Hamid II was forced to abdicate and was succeeded by his brother, Mehmet V, in 1909. Foreign powers took advantage of the political instability in Istanbul to seize portions of the empire. Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina immediately after the 1908 revolution, and Bulgaria proclaimed its complete independence. Italy declared war in 1911 and seized Libya. Having earlier formed a secret alliance, Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria invaded Ottoman-held Macedonia and Thrace in October 1912. Ottoman forces were defeated, and the empire lost all of its European holdings except part of eastern Thrace.

The disasters befalling the empire led to internal political change. The liberal government in power since July 1912 was overthrown in January 1913 in a coup engineered by Enver Pasha, and the most authoritarian elements of the Young Turk movement gained full control. A second Balkan war broke out in June 1913, when the Balkan allies began fighting among themselves over the division of the spoils from the first war. Taking advantage of the situation, Ottoman forces turned on Bulgaria, regaining Edirne and establishing the western boundary of the empire at the Maritsa River.

After a brief period of constitutional rule, the leadership of the CUP emerged as a military dictatorship with power concentrated in the hands of a triumvirate consisting of Mehmet Talat Pasha, Ahmet Cemal Pasha, and Enver, who, as minister of war, was its acknowledged leader in the war. [i](#)

World War I

As the two European alliance systems drew closer to war in 1914, Enver's pronounced pro-German sympathies, shared by many in the military and bureaucracy, prevailed over the pragmatic neutrality proposed by Talat and Cemal. Germany had been pro-Ottoman during the Balkan wars, but the Porte had no outstanding differences with either Britain or France in the summer of 1914. In guiding his government toward alignment with Germany, Enver was able to play on fear of the traditional Ottoman enemy, Russia, the ally of Britain and France in the war.

On August 2, 1914, Enver concluded a secret treaty of alliance with Germany. General mobilization was ordered the next day, and in the following weeks concessions granted to foreign powers under the capitulations were canceled. It remained for Germany, however, to provide the *casus belli*. Two German military vessels--the battleship *Göben* and the heavy cruiser *Breslau*--that had been caught in a neutral Ottoman port when war broke out in Europe were turned over to the Ottoman navy. In October they put to sea with German officers and crews and shelled Odessa and other Russian ports while flying the Ottoman flag. Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire on November 5, followed the next day by Britain and France. Within six months, the Ottoman army of about 800,000 men was engaged in a four-front war that became part of the greater conflict of World War I.

Enver launched an ill-prepared offensive in the winter of 1914-15 against the Russians in the Caucasus, vainly hoping that an impressive demonstration of Ottoman strength there would incite an insurrection among the tsar's Turkish-speaking

subjects. Instead, a Russian counteroffensive inflicted staggering losses on Ottoman forces, driving them back to Lake Van. During the campaign in eastern Anatolia, assistance was given to the Russians by Armenians, who saw them as liberators rather than invaders. Armenian units were also part of the Russian army. Enver claimed that an Armenian conspiracy existed and that a generalized revolt by the Armenians was imminent. During the winter months of 1915, as the shattered Ottoman army retreated toward Lake Van, a massive deportation of many Armenians was undertaken in the war zone to other Ottoman Provinces such as Lebanon, Syria, etc. It shortly degenerated into a mutual massacre among the local peoples. The most conservative estimates put the number of dead at 350,000, but other sources cite other figures. The situation of those Armenians who survived the march out of Anatolia was scarcely improved under the military government in Syria. Others managed to escape behind Russian lines. The episode occasioned a revulsion in Western Europe that had its effect in the harsh terms meted out by the Allies in the postwar settlement.

In the spring of 1915, the Allies undertook naval and land operations in the Dardanelles that were intended to knock the Ottoman Empire out of the war with one blow and to open the straits for the passage of supplies to Russia. Amphibious landings were carried out at Gallipoli, but British forces, vigorously opposed by forces commanded by Atatürk, were unable to expand their beachheads. The last units of the expeditionary force were evacuated by February 1916.

In Mesopotamia the Ottoman army defeated a British expeditionary force that had marched on Baghdad from a base established at Basra in 1915. The British mounted a new offensive in 1917, taking Baghdad and driving Ottoman forces out of Mesopotamia. In eastern Anatolia, Russian armies won a series of battles that carried their control west to Erzincan by

July 1916, although Atatürk, who was then given command of the eastern front, led a counteroffensive that checked the Russian advance. Russia left the war after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. The new Russian government concluded the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the Central Powers in March 1918, under which the Ottoman Empire regained its eastern provinces.

Sharif Husayn ibn Ali, the sultan's regent in Mecca and the Hijaz region of western Arabia, launched the Arab Revolt in 1916. The British provided advisers, of whom T.E. Lawrence was to become the best known, as well as supplies. In October 1917, British forces in Egypt opened an offensive into Palestine; they took Jerusalem by December. After hard fighting, British and Arab forces entered Damascus in October 1918. Late in the campaign, Atatürk succeeded to command of Turkish forces in Syria and withdrew many units intact into Anatolia.

Ottoman resistance was exhausted. Early in October, the war government resigned, and the Young Turk triumvirate--Enver, Talat, and Cemal--fled to exile in Germany. Mehmet VI (r. 1918-22), who had succeeded to the rule upon his brother's death in July, sued for peace through a government headed by liberal ministers that signed an armistice at Mudros on October 30, 1918, that had been dictated by the Allies. Allied warships steamed through the Dardanelles and anchored off Istanbul on November 12, the day after the end of the war in Europe. In four years of war, the Ottoman Empire had mobilized about 2.8 million men, of whom about 325,000 were killed in battle. In addition, many civilians, including both Turks and Armenians, are believed to have died of war-related causes. Talat and Cemal, who were held responsible for the deportation of Armenians and the mistreatment of refugees, were assassinated by Armenian nationalists in 1921. The following

year, Enver was killed while fighting the Bolsheviks in Central Asia. [i](#)

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Atatürk, The Turkish Nation and Contemporary Turkey 1922

Atatürk returned to Istanbul at the end of the war, his military reputation untarnished by the defeat of the empire that he had served. Revered by his troops as well as the Turkish masses, Atatürk soon emerged as the standard-bearer of the Turkish nationalist movement.

Born in Thessaloniki in 1881, Atatürk was the son of a minor government official in a city where Turks outnumbered Greeks. His ardent Turkish nationalism dated from his early days as a cadet in the military school at Monastir (in the present-day Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) during a time of constant conflict between Ottoman troops and Macedonian guerrillas, who attacked the Turkish population in the region. Following graduation from the military academy in Istanbul, Atatürk held various staff positions and served in garrisons at Damascus and Thessaloniki, where he became involved in nationalist activities. He took part in the coup that forced Abdül Hamid II's abdication in 1909. Atatürk organized irregular forces in Libya during the war with Italy in 1911 and subsequently held field commands in the two Balkan wars (1912-13). Assigned to a post in the Ministry of War after the armistice, Atatürk quickly recognized the extent of Allied intentions toward the Ottoman Empire. [i](#)

Plans for Partitioning Turkey

Allied troops--British, French, and Italian, as well as a contingent of Greeks--occupied Istanbul and were permitted under the conditions of the armistice to intervene in areas where they considered their interests to be imperiled. During the war, the Allies had negotiated a series of agreements that outlined not only the definitive dismantling of the Ottoman Empire but also the partitioning among them of what Turkish nationalists had come to regard as the Turkish homeland. According to these agreements, Russia was at last to be rewarded with possession of Istanbul and the straits, as well as eastern Anatolia as far south as Bitlis below Lake Van. France and Italy were conceded portions of Anatolia, and Britain had promised Izmir to Greece--although it had also been promised to Italy--to encourage Greek entry into the war in 1917.

The Bolshevik government had renounced tsarist claims when it made its separate peace at Brest-Litovsk, but Britain, France, Italy, and Greece all pressed their respective claims at the Paris peace talks in 1919. All agreed with the provisions of President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points calling for an independent Armenia and an autonomous Kurdistan. How the Allies would implement the clause providing that the Turkish-speaking nation "should be assured of a secure sovereignty" was not clear.

The terms of a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire were presented by the Allies in April 1920 at San Remo, Italy, and were embodied in the Treaty of Sèvres, which was concluded the following August. The treaty was shaped by the wartime agreements made by the Allies. In addition, France received a

mandate over Lebanon and Syria (including what is now Hatay Province in Turkey), and Britain's mandate covered Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine. Eastern Thrace up to a line from the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara as well as Izmir and its hinterland were to be occupied by Greece, with the final disposition of the territory to be decided in a plebiscite. The Treaty of Sèvres was never enforced as such, as events in Turkey soon rendered it irrelevant. [i](#)

Nationalist Movement

The sultan was kept in the custody of the Allies to ensure the cooperation of an Ottoman administration, which had effective jurisdiction only in Istanbul and part of northern Anatolia, while they disposed of the rest of his empire. At the same time, a Turkish nationalist movement was organized under Atatürk's leadership to resist the dismemberment of Turkish-speaking areas. Atatürk had been sent to eastern Anatolia as inspector general, ostensibly to supervise the demobilization of Ottoman forces and the disposition of supplies, but more particularly to remove him from the capital after he had expressed opposition to the Allied occupation there. Upon his arrival at Samsun in May 1919, Atatürk proceeded to rally support for the nationalist cause and to recruit a nationalist army. Guerrilla warfare against the government gradually grew to full-fledged campaigns against the Greek army that threatened to involve the other Allied occupation forces.

In July 1919, a nationalist congress met at Erzurum with Atatürk presiding to endorse a protocol calling for an independent Turkish state. In September the congress reconvened at Sivas. Although the delegates voiced their loyalty to the sultan-caliph, they also pledged to maintain the integrity of the Turkish nation. The congress adopted the

National Pact, which defined objectives of the nationalist movement that were not open to compromise. Among its provisions were the renunciation of claims to the Arab provinces, the principle of the absolute integrity of all remaining Ottoman territory inhabited by a Turkish Muslim majority, a guarantee of minority rights, the retention of Istanbul and the straits, and rejection of any restriction on the political, judicial, and financial rights of the nation.

Negotiations continued between the nationalist congress and the Ottoman government, but to no avail. Atatürk resigned from the army when relieved of his duties. The naming of a chief minister in Istanbul considered sympathetic to the nationalist cause brought a brief improvement in relations, however, and the Ottoman parliament, which met in January 1920, approved the National Pact. In reaction to these developments, Allied occupation forces seized public buildings and reinforced their positions in the capital, arrested and deported numerous nationalist leaders, and had parliament dismissed.

Allied actions brought a quick response from the nationalists. In April they convened the Grand National Assembly in Ankara, in defiance of the Ottoman regime, and elected Atatürk its president. The Law of Fundamental Organization (also known as the Organic Law) was adopted in January 1921. With this legislation, the nationalists proclaimed that sovereignty belonged to the nation and was exercised on its behalf by the Grand National Assembly. [i](#)

War against Imperialist West and Wiping England-France-Italy and their puppets out of Anatolia

During the summer and fall of 1919, with authorization from the Supreme Allied War Council, the Greeks and English occupied Edirne, Bursa, and Izmir. A landing was effected at the latter port under the protection of an Allied flotilla that included United States warships. The Greeks soon moved as far as Usak, 175 kilometers inland from Izmir. Military action between Turks and Greeks in Anatolia in 1920 was inconclusive, but the nationalist cause was strengthened the next year by a series of important victories. In January and again in April, Ismet Pasha defeated the Greek army at Inönü, blocking its advance into the interior of Anatolia. In July, in the face of a third offensive, the Turkish forces fell back in good order to the Sakarya River, eighty kilometers from Ankara, where Atatürk took personal command and decisively defeated the Greeks in a twenty-day battle.

An improvement in Turkey's diplomatic situation accompanied its military success. Impressed by the viability of the nationalist forces, both France and Italy withdrew from Anatolia by October 1921. Treaties were signed that year with Soviet Russia, the first European power to recognize the nationalists, establishing the boundary between the two countries. As early as 1919, the Turkish nationalists had cooperated with the Bolshevik government in attacking the newly proclaimed Armenian republic. Armenian resistance was broken by the summer of 1921, and the Kars region was occupied by the Turks. In 1922 the nationalists recognized the Soviet absorption of what remained of the Armenian state.

The final drive against the Greeks began in August 1922. In September the Turks moved into Izmir, where thousands were killed during the ensuing fighting and in the disorder that followed the city's capture. Greek soldiers and refugees, who had crowded into Izmir, were rescued by Allied ships.

The nationalist army then concentrated on driving remaining Greek forces out of eastern Thrace, but the new campaign

threatened to put the Turks in direct confrontation with Allied contingents defending access to the straits and holding Istanbul, where they were protecting the Ottoman government. A crisis was averted when Atatürk accepted a British-proposed truce that brought an end to the fighting and also signaled that the Allies were unwilling to intervene on behalf of the Greeks. In compliance with the Armistice of Mudanya, concluded in October, Greek troops withdrew beyond the Maritsa River, allowing the Turkish nationalists to occupy territory up to that boundary. The agreement entailed acceptance of a continued Allied presence in the straits and in Istanbul until a comprehensive settlement could be reached.

At the end of October 1922, the Allies invited the nationalist and Ottoman governments to a conference at Lausanne, Switzerland, but Atatürk was determined that the nationalist government should be Turkey's sole representative. In November 1922, the Grand National Assembly separated the offices of sultan and caliph and abolished the former. The assembly further stated that the Ottoman regime had ceased to be the government of Turkey when the Allies seized the capital in 1920, in effect abolishing the Ottoman Empire. Mehmet VI went into exile on Malta, and his cousin, Abdülmecid, was named caliph.

Turkey was the only power defeated in World War I to negotiate with the Allies as an equal and to influence the provisions of the resultant treaty. İsmet Pasha was the chief Turkish negotiator at the Lausanne Conference, which opened in November 1922. The National Pact of 1919 was the basis of the Turkish negotiating position, and its provisions were incorporated in the Treaty of Lausanne, concluded in July 1923. With this treaty, the Allies recognized the present-day territory of Turkey and denied Turkey's claim to the Mosul area in the east (in present-day Iraq) and Hatay, which included the Mediterranean port of Alexandretta (İskenderun). The

boundary with the newly created state of Iraq was settled by a League of Nations initiative in 1926, and Iskenderun was ceded in 1939 by France during its rule as mandatory power for Syria.

Detailed provisions of the treaty regulated use of the straits. General supervisory powers were given to a straits commission under the League of Nations, and the straits area was to be demilitarized after completion of the Allied withdrawal. Turkey was to hold the presidency of the commission, which included the Soviet Union among its members. The capitulations and foreign administration of the Ottoman public debt, which infringed on the sovereignty of Turkey, were abolished. Turkey, however, assumed 40 percent of the Ottoman debt, the remainder being apportioned among other former Ottoman territories. Turkey was also required to maintain low tariffs on imports from signatory powers until 1929. The Treaty of Lausanne reaffirmed the equality of Muslim and non-Muslim Turkish nationals. Turkey and Greece arranged a mandatory exchange of their respective ethnic Greek and Turkish minorities, with the exception of some Greeks in Istanbul and Turks in western Thrace and the Dodecanese Islands.

On October 29, 1923, the Grand National Assembly proclaimed the Republic of Turkey. Atatürk was named its president and Ankara its capital, and the modern state of Turkey was born. [i](#)

Atatürk's Reforms

On assuming office, Atatürk initiated a series of radical reforms of the country's political, social, and economic life that were aimed at rapidly transforming Turkey into a modern state (see table A). A secular legal code, modeled along European lines, was introduced that completely altered laws affecting women, marriage, and family relations.

Atatürk also urged his fellow citizens to look and act like Europeans. Turks were encouraged to wear European-style clothing. Surnames were adopted: Mustafa Kemal, for example, became Kemal Atatürk, and İsmet Paşa took İnönü as his surname to commemorate his victories there. Likewise, Atatürk insisted on cutting links with the past that he considered anachronistic. Titles of honor were abolished. The wearing of the fez, which had been introduced a century earlier as a modernizing reform to replace the turban, was outlawed because it had become for the nationalists a symbol of the reactionary Ottoman regime.

The ideological foundation of Atatürk's reform program became known as Kemalism. Its main points were enumerated in the "Six Arrows" of Kemalism: republicanism, nationalism, populism, reformism, etatism (statism), and secularism. These were regarded as "fundamental and unchanging principles" guiding the republic, and were written into its constitution. The principle of republicanism was contained in the constitutional declaration that "sovereignty is vested in the nation" and not in a single ruler. Displaying considerable ingenuity, Atatürk set about reinventing the Turkish language and recasting Turkish history in a nationalist mold. The president himself went out into the park in Ankara on Sunday, the newly established day of rest, to teach the Latin alphabet adapted to Turkish as part of the language reform. Populism encompassed not only the notion that all Turkish citizens were equal but that all of them were Turks. What remained of the millet system that had provided communal autonomy to other ethnic groups was abolished. Reformism legitimized the radical means by which changes in Turkish political and social life were implemented. Etatism emphasized the central role reserved to the state in directing the nation's economic activities. This concept was cited particularly to justify state planning of Turkey's mixed economy and large-scale investment in state-owned enterprises. An important aim of Atatürk's economic policies

was to prevent foreign interests from exercising undue influence on the Turkish economy.

Of all the Kemalist reforms, the exclusion of Islam from an official role in the life of the nation shocked Atatürk's contemporaries most profoundly. The abolition of the caliphate ended any connection between the state and religion. The Islamic religious orders were suppressed, religious schools were closed, public education was secularized, and the seriat was revoked. These changes required readjustment of the entire social framework of the Turkish people. Despite subsequent protests, Atatürk conceded nothing to the traditionalists.

In 1924 the Grand National Assembly adopted a new constitution to replace the 1876 document that had continued to serve as the legal framework of the republican government. The 1924 constitution vested sovereign power in the Grand National Assembly as representative of the people, to whom it also guaranteed basic civil rights. Under the new document, the assembly would be a unicameral body elected to a four-year term by universal suffrage. Its legislative authority would include responsibility for approving the budget, ratifying treaties, and declaring war. The president of the republic would be elected to a four-year term by the assembly, and he in turn would appoint the prime minister, who was expected to enjoy the confidence of the assembly (see table 3, Appendix A).

Throughout his presidency, repeatedly extended by the assembly, Atatürk governed Turkey essentially by personal rule in a one-party state. He founded the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi--CHP) in 1923 to represent the nationalist movement in elections and to serve as a vanguard party in support of the Kemalist reform program. Atatürk's Six Arrows were an integral part of the CHP's political platform. By controlling the CHP, Atatürk also controlled the assembly and assured support there for the government he had appointed.

Atatürk regarded a stage of personal authoritarian rule as necessary to secure his reforms before he entrusted the government of the country to the democratic process. [i](#)

Chronology of Major Kemalist Reforms

Year	Reform
1922	Sultanate abolished (November 1).
1923	Treaty of Lausanne secured (July 24). Republic of Turkey with capital at Ankara proclaimed (October 29).
1924	Caliphate abolished (March 3). Traditional religious schools closed, seriat abolished. Constitution adopted (April 20).
1925	Dervish brotherhoods abolished. Fez outlawed by the Hat Law (November 25). Veiling of women discouraged; Western clothing for men and women encouraged. Western (Gregorian) calendar adopted.
1926	New civil, commercial, and penal codes based on European models adopted. New civil code ended Islamic polygamy and divorce by renunciation and introduced civil marriage. Millet system ended.
1927	First systematic census.
1928	New Turkish alphabet (modified Latin form) adopted. State declared secular (April 10); constitutional provision establishing Islam as official religion deleted.
1933	Islamic call to worship and public readings of the Kuran

	(Quran) required to be in Turkish rather than Arabic.
1934	Women given the vote and the right to hold office. Law of Surnames adopted--Mustafa Kemal given the name Kemal Atatürk (Father Turk) by the Grand National Assembly; Ismet Pasha took surname of İnönü.
1935	Sunday adopted as legal weekly holiday. State role in managing economy written into the constitution.

i

Foreign Policy

Atatürk's foreign policy, which had as its main object the preservation of the independence and integrity of the new republic, was careful, conservative, and successful. The president enunciated the principle of "peace at home and peace abroad." This guideline, whose observance was necessary to the task of internal nation building, became the cornerstone of Turkey's foreign relations.

By the end of 1925, friendship treaties had been negotiated with fifteen states. These included a twenty-year treaty of friendship and neutrality signed that year with the Soviet Union that remained in effect until unilaterally abrogated by the Soviet Union in 1945. Turkey subsequently joined Greece, Romania, and Yugoslavia in the Balkan Pact to counter the increasingly aggressive foreign policy of fascist Italy and the effect of a potential Bulgarian alignment with Nazi Germany. Turkey also entered into a nonaggression treaty with Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran in 1937.

Atatürk attained his greatest diplomatic success in 1936, when Turkey persuaded the signatory powers of the Treaty of Lausanne to allow Turkish control and remilitarization of the straits as part of the Montreux Convention. Under its terms, merchant vessels were to continue to have freedom of navigation of the straits, but Turkey took over the functions of the international commission for registry, sanitary inspection, and the levying of tolls. Turkey was permitted to refortify the straits area and, if at war or under imminent threat of war, to close them to warships. [i](#)



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Timeline Ancient Anatolia (Turkey)



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There is abundant archaeological evidence of a thriving neolithic culture in Anatolia at least as early as the seventh millennium B.C. What may have been the world's first urban settlement (dated ca. 6500 B.C.) has been uncovered at Çatalhöyük in the Konya Ovasi (Konya Basin). Introduced early in the third millennium B.C., metallurgy made possible a flourishing "copper age" (ca. 2500-2000 B.C.) during which cultural patterns throughout the region were remarkably uniform. The use of bronze weapons and implements was widespread by 2000 B.C. Colonies of Assyrian merchants, who settled in Anatolia during the copper age, provided metal for the military empires of Mesopotamia, and their accounts and business correspondence are the earliest written records found in Anatolia. From about 1500 B.C., southern Anatolia, which had plentiful sources of ore and numerous furnace sites, developed as a center of iron production. Two of the area's most celebrated archaeological excavations are the sites at Troy and Hattusas (Bogazköy)

The cape projecting into the Aegean between the Dardanelles and the Gulf of Edremit was known in antiquity as Troas. There, a thirty-meter-high mound called Hisarlik was identified as the site of ancient Troy in diggings begun by German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann in the 1870s. The first five levels of the nine discovered at Hisarlik contained remains of cities from the third millennium B.C. that controlled access to the shortest crossing of the Dardanelles and that probably derived their prosperity from tolls. Artifacts give evidence of 1,000 years of cultural continuity in the cities built on these levels. A sharp break with the past occurred on the sixth level, settled about 1900 B.C. by newcomers believed to have been related to the early Greeks. Built after an earthquake devastated the previous city about 1300 B.C., the seventh level was clearly the victim of sacking and burning about 1150 B.C., and it is recognized as having been the Troy of Homer's Iliad. Hisarlik subsequently was the site of a Greek city, Ilion, and a Roman one, Ilium.

Paleolithic Peoples.....+500000-8000
 Mesolithic Peoples.....8000-5500
 Neolithic Peoples.....5500-4000
 Chalcolithic Cultures.....4000-3300
 Bronze and Iron age cultures thereafter...

7500 BC First Stone age settlements at Çatalhöyük
 1900-1300 BC Hittite Empire with Hattusas as capital,
 contemporary with ancient Egypt and Babylon
 1250 BC The Trojan war and the fall of Troy
 1200-700 BC Migration of Greeks to Aegean coastal regions.
 Establishment of the Phrygian, Ionian, Lycian, Lydian, Carian
 and Pamphylian Kingdoms. The East of Turkey is the home of
 the Urartians
 700 BC Homer is born in Izmir (Smyrna). Aegean Hellenism
 begins
 546 BC Cyrus the Great leads the Persians into Anatolia
 334 BC Alexander the Great drives out the Persians
 130 BC The Romans incorporate Anatolia as the province of
 Asia, controlled from Ephesus (Efes)
 40 BC Antioch sees the marriage of Antony and Cleopatra
 47-57 AD St. Paul spreads Christianity and a community at
 Antioch is established
 313 Roman Empire adopts Christianity
 330 Constantine lays out the boundaries of his new capital,
 Constantinople
 527-65 Glory of Byzantium under Justinian
 638-718 Muslim Arabs besiege Constantinople
 1054 Greek and Roman Churches split over theology
 1071-1243 Rise and rule of the Selcuk Turks in Anatolia, Konya
 is their capital
 1096-1204 The Crusades, marking the beginning of the end for
 Byzantium, a fascinating period in Byzantine history
 1288 Ottoman Empire appears in Bursa
 1453 The fall of Constantinople - the birth of Istanbul
 1520-66 Suleyman the Magnificent sits on the Ottoman throne
 controlling a huge and powerful empire
 1682-1725 Peter the Great initiates Russo-Turkish rivalry
 1854 Crimean war

1909 Abdul Hamid, the last of an unbroken line of Ottoman sultans is deposed
1914 Turkey allies with Germany in the first world war
1915 Gallipoli
1919 Ataturk leads resistance to the allied plan to carve up Turkey
1923 Foundation of the modern Republic of Turkey by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. Many things happen all at once
1938 Ataturk dies in Istanbul's Dolmabahce palace
1939-45 Turkey manages to remain neutral during the second world war
1946 Charter membership of the UN
1952 Turkey joins NATO

