

The ancient history of modern turkey history essay



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Turkey is a new country in an old land. The history of modern day Turkey can be traced back with a certainty to the sixth century A. D. when Turkish tribes wandered the steppes of central Asia. (Metz 1995, 3) There are many things that I can tell you about Turkey seeing as how I have lived here for some time now. I am going to cover several things about how Turkey came to be. First thing is first, I am going to talk about the meaning of the name Turkey. Next I will discuss where the first Turks came from? Following that, I will cover some brief history of Turkey. Then I will cover the early culture related to the history of Turkey. Lastly, I will discuss how Turkey came to be a country. Now that we have discussed what I will be speaking about today let us begin with the meaning of the name Turkey..

The name Turkey (Turkiye) can be broken down into two distinct parts. Turk and the abstract suffix -iye. The first part, Turk, means “ strong” or “ mighty” in Old Turkic () also, Turk is usually given to an inhabitant of Turkey or member of the Turkish people. The next part, -iye is an abstract suffix meaning “ owner”, “ land” or “ related to”. The first historical reference to the Turks appears in Chinese records dating around 200 B. C. These records refer to tribes call the Hsiung-nu who lived in an area bounded by the Altai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. (Metz 1995, 11)

There has been an on-going debate amongst scholars and archeologists as to where the first Turkish settlers came from. The Chinese believe that the Turks came from the Altay Mountains where Russia, China, Mongolia, and Kazakhstan come together. On the other hand, some anthropologists believe that the first Turks came from the region between Kirghiz Steppe and God

Mountain. A region located between Kazakhstan and an unknown mountain region. The art historians believe that the Turks came from northwest Asia or southwest of the Baykal Sea. Lastly, the linguists think the Turkish came from either the east or the west of the Altay Mountain region, (where Russia, China, Mongolia, and Kazakhstan come together) or possibly the Kingan Chains (inner Mongolia). There are many beliefs as to where the Turkish came from but all the theories have something in common and that is they are all very close to each other. Maybe one day they will be able to pinpoint where the first Turkish settlers came from.

Of course the land mass known as Turkey has been around for a very long time but that doesn't tell you much about it. Turkey is Anatolia: a well-defined geographical unit of manageable size; a lay state, in which Turkish nationality and the Turkish language are universally accepted. (Lloyd 1989, 12) The Anatolian peninsula, comprising most of modern Turkey, is one of the oldest continuously inhabited regions in the world. Such settlements included Mersin, Çatalhöyük, and Çayönü are considered to be among the earliest human settlements in the world (Thissen 2007). Recent excavations in Izmir (Smyrna) and Miletos have clearly indicated that the Arolin and Ionian cities on the west coast of Anatolia were founded around 1000 B. C. (Akurgal 1973, 16)

Next I will be talking about the early culture related to the history of Turkey. Turkey has a very diverse culture that has many different backgrounds. Turkey is a blend of Oguz Turkic, Anatolian, Ottoman and also some Western culture (Kaya, 2003). Turkey has such wonders as the great city of Troy, the Celsus Library in Ephesus, and the Selimiye Mosque, which all date back

hundreds of years. Within those cultures comes a mix of others, such as Ottoman which is a continuation of Greco-Roman and Islamic cultures. The mixtures of cultures began as a result of the encounter of Turks and their culture with those of the peoples who were in their path during their migration from Central Asia to the west. Architecture elements were also a unique mix of traditions that have influenced the region over centuries. Such traditions were Byzantine, Ottoman, and certain western styles. As you can see much like everywhere else in the world, Turkey has seen many different styles and cultures. This is what makes Turkish culture so rich.

Finally I am going to talk about how Turkey came to be. This will encompass past and present Turkey also. People started migrating to Turkey in the eleventh century. This was accelerated by Seljuk victory over the Byzantine Empire in the battle of Manzikert ending the Byzantine Empire for good. The modern Turkish state-beginning with the creation of the Republic of Turkey in the years immediately after World War I (Metz 1995, 3) when a cadre of military officers organized a successful resistance. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk led the cadre. Ataturk would later become the first president of Turkey (Shaw 1977). Since those days, Turkey has become the second largest standing army in NATO. The Turkish military consists of Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Gendarmerie. All and all, the total combined strength of over one million uniformed personnel. The backbone of Turkish states has always been the military (Pope 2004, 174) that is why, every fit Turkish male must serve anywhere from three weeks to 15 months in the military, depending on amount of schooling the individual has had.

I have covered such topics as the meaning of the name Turkey. Where did the first Turks come from? The early culture related to the history of Turkey and finally, I discussed how Turkey came to be a country (past and present). As you can see, Turkey has been enriched by several different cultures establishing the ancient history of modern day Turkey and has made it what it is today.

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