

Linguistic reform was essential to Atatürk's vision of the new Turkey, and the reconstituted Turkish language has been both a central symbol and a powerful mechanism of the establishment of a new national identity. Few peoples have undertaken to alter their languages so extensively, but the new identity that Atatürk foresaw could not have developed so quickly without drastic action. Although reform measures at times approached extremism, observers agree that modern Turkish has permitted increased literacy and a popularization of education, improved communication between social strata, and a general improvement in national self-image. In addition, it has forced and facilitated a radical reorientation toward the West and away from the Ottoman past.

Another of the reforms vigorously pushed by Atatürk was the institutional secularization of the country, which included suppressing the caliphate, symbolizing the sultan's temporal powers; the unorthodox but highly influential dervish, or mystical, orders; and locally based religious education (see *Secularist Reforms*, this ch.). The ideologically secularist and modernist urban elite attempted to uproot the Islamic institutions that had bound religion and state inseparably together.

Developments since 1950 have made clear, however, that fervent desire for secularization was limited largely to that elite. As soon as it became possible to do so, the rural masses expressed at the polls their desire for official restoration of some aspects of traditional religious life. Various authors have termed this trend an "Islamic revival," but in fact the traditional aspects of Islam had never died among the masses. Government policy has attempted to conciliate this more conservative religious opinion but has sought to do so within the framework of Atatürk's institutional secularism.

In 1979, as throughout the preceding centuries, the single most significant distinction in Turkish society remained that separating the educated from the uneducated. Under Ottoman rule education had determined social position and had provided the major vehicle for social mobility. The gap—or, more accurately, the chasm—between the elite and the masses survived the reforms of Atatürk. Observers have noted that the primary social effect of the reform period was the consolidation of power by one sector of the elite, the modernists, at the expense of another sector, the traditional religious authorities.

Since the early nineteenth century Western-oriented secularist education has enjoyed increasing prestige; by the turn of the twentieth century a substantial number of the governing stratum, particularly the military officers and higher members of the bureaucracy, had undergone this sort of indoctrination in their youth. Their values, knowledge, and points of view separated them sharply from the illiterate, religiously observant, and socially traditional masses. This radical alienation from the culture and traditions of the common people has been for

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more than a century a proudly displayed badge of social position. The difference between the educated and the uneducated, the urban and the rural, the modernist and the traditionalist is at bottom a difference of culture. Atatürk, speaking for the modernists, contrasted "civilization," the radically foreign infidel culture of Europe, with the backwardness, ignorance, and obscurantism of the common people. Mediation between the two worlds of Turkish society has been and remains difficult and politically problematic.

Despite the continued dominance of the educated civil and military elite in the nation as a whole, economic growth and diversification have to some extent altered its composition. Into the early republican period, civil and military officials occupied the unchallenged pinnacle of the social structure. Since that time, however, competing elements, especially businessmen, industrialists, professionals, and employees of private organizations, have threatened and in some cases destroyed the supremacy of the officials.

As a result, in the late 1970s social structure in many parts of the country was fluid. In most areas, however, and for the vast majority of the population, traditional forms and values, such as the centrality of family life, had survived, although in altered form. The balance between tradition and modernization was often uneasy, and the results of reformist trends were far from clear or complete.

### Geography

In its official statistical publications, the government of Turkey states that the datum area of the country is 779,452 square kilometers, that the real area counting lakes and islands is 814,578 square kilometers, and that the real area not counting the lakes is 805,689 square kilometers. Various international agencies use a figure of 780,200 square kilometers, and data from United States government sources range from 766,640 to 769,600 square kilometers. For purposes of population density data and a consideration of land use and cropping patterns, this book will use the figure of 779,452 square kilometers. About 3 percent of this area, with over 8 percent of the population, is in Europe; this region, known as Thrace (Trakya), is separated from the Asian portion of Turkey by the Bosphorus Strait (Istanbul Boğazi or Karadeniz Boğazi), the Sea of Marmara (Marmara Denizi), and the Dardanelles Strait (Çanakkale Boğazi).

The Asian part of the country is known by a variety of names—Asia Minor, Asiatic Turkey, the Anatolian Plateau, and Anatolia (Anadolu). The term *Anatolia* is more frequently used, however, in specific reference to the large, semiarid heartland plateau. The plateau is rimmed by hills and mountains that in many places form a barrier limiting access to the fertile, densely settled coastal regions. In 1979 Istanbul remained the primary industrial, commer-

...ai, and intellectual center, but the Anatolian city of Ankara, which Atatürk and his associates picked as the capital of the new republic, and the whole Anatolian region continued to be viewed as quintessentially Turkish (see fig. 1).

**External Boundaries**

Turkey is bounded by six countries and six bodies of water. The Greek boundary was confirmed by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, which resolved persistent boundary and territorial claims involving the areas near this border and provided for a population exchange. Most members of the sizable Greek-speaking community of western Turkey were returned to Greece, and the majority of the Turkic-speaking residents of Greek Thrace were repatriated to Turkey. No active disputes on this boundary have since occurred.

The Bulgarian boundary, also confirmed by the 1923 treaty, was not in dispute in mid-1979, nor was the boundary with the Soviet Union, which was defined in the 1921 treaties of Moscow and Kars. The Iranian boundary was determined in 1937 and has not since been disputed by either party. The Iraqi boundary was established by the 1926 Treaty of Angora (Ankara), which was signed by Turkey, Britain, and Iraq.

The boundary with Syria was defined by the Treaty of Lausanne, which allocated the Sanjak of Alexandretta (present-day Hatay Province) to Syria. A Franco-Turkish agreement in June 1939 provided for the transfer of Hatay Province to Turkey. Syria's lingering resentment over the loss of the towns of Antakya and İskenderun (formerly Antioch and Alexandretta) continued to be a minor irritant in Syrian-Turkish relations during the late 1970s.

**Topography and Drainage**

Except for a relatively small segment along the Syrian border that is a continuation of the Arabian Platform, Turkey is part of the great Alpine-Himalayan mountain belt. The intensive folding and uplifting of this mountain belt during the Tertiary Period was accompanied by strong volcanic activity and intrusions of igneous rock material, followed by extensive faulting in the Quaternary Period. This faulting is still in progress, and Turkey is one of the more active earthquake regions of the world.

The quakes cause massive damage to buildings and, especially if they occur at night during the winter months, numerous deaths and injuries. For example, a violent earthquake in Erzincan the night of December 28-29, 1939, devastated most of the city and caused an estimated 160,000 deaths. Earthquakes of moderate intensity frequently continue with sporadic shocks over periods of several days or even weeks. The most earthquake-prone region centers on an arc that stretches from the general vicinity of İzmit to the area north of Lake Van on the border with the Soviet Union (see fig. 8).

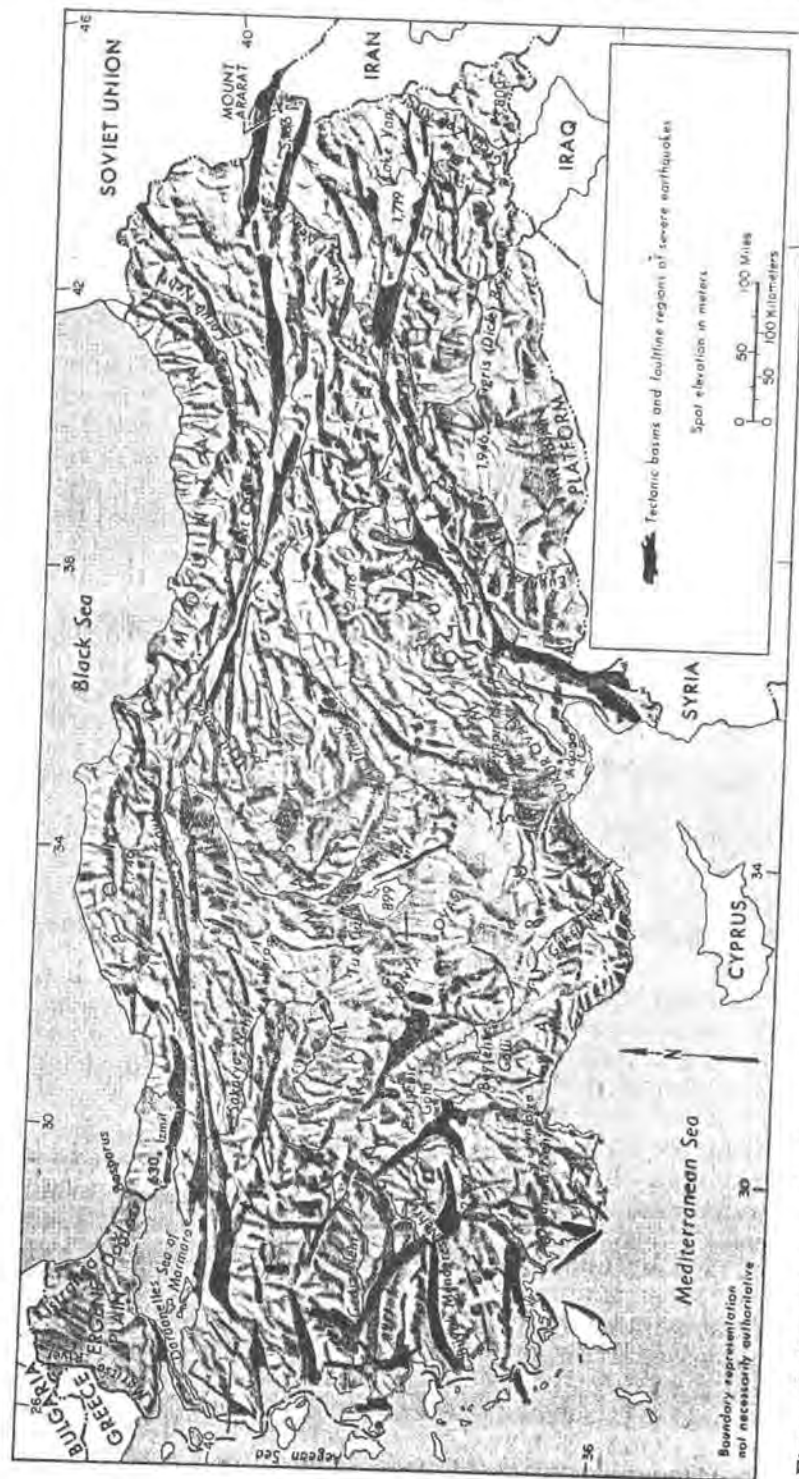


Figure 8. Topography, Drainage, and Major Earthquake Zones

The terrain is structurally complex. A central massif composed of uplifted blocks and downfolded troughs, covered by recent deposits and giving the appearance of a plateau with rough terrain, is wedged between two folded mountain ranges that converge in the east—the Pontic Mountains along the Black Sea and the Taurus Mountains bounding the Mediterranean Sea and the Arabian Platform. True lowland is confined to the Ergene Plain in Thrace, extending along rivers that discharge into the Aegean Sea or the Sea of Marmara, and to a few narrow coastal strips along the Black Sea and Mediterranean coasts.

Nearly 85 percent of the land lies above 450 meters, and the median altitude of the country is 1,128 meters. Even more important is the fact that in Asian Turkey flat or gently sloping land is rare and largely confined to the deltas of the Kilil Irmak, the coastal plains of Antalya and Adana, and the valley floors of the Gediz and the Menderes rivers, as well as to some interior high plains in Anatolia, mainly around Tuz Gölü (Salt Lake) and the basin of Konya (Konya Ovasi). Moderately sloping land surface is limited almost entirely to Thrace and to the hill-land of the Arabian Platform along the border with Syria.

Over 80 percent of the land surface is rough, broken, and mountainous and is therefore of limited agricultural value (see Agriculture, ch. 3). These features are more accentuated in the eastern part of the country where the Taurus and Pontic ranges converge into a lofty mountain region with a median altitude of over 1,500 meters, reaching its highest altitude along the borders with the Soviet Union and Iran. Turkey's highest mountain peak, Mount Ararat (Ağrı Dağı)—about 5,166 meters—is situated near the tri-point where the boundaries of the three countries meet.

#### Natural Regions

##### *The Aegean Coastlands*

The western portion of the region consists mainly of rolling plateau country that is well suited for agriculture, receiving about fifty-two centimeters of rainfall annually. The region contains the cities of Istanbul and Edirne and is densely populated. The Bosphorus is about twenty-five kilometers long and averages 1.5 kilometers in width but narrows in places to less than 500 meters. Both banks, Asiatic and European, rise steeply from the water and form a succession of cliffs, coves, and nearly landlocked bays. Most of the shores are densely wooded and are marked by numerous small towns and villages. The Dardanelles Strait is approximately forty kilometers long and increases in width toward the south. Unlike along the Bosphorus, there are few settlements of any kind along the shores of the Dardanelles.

The Aegean region in Asia has fertile soils and a typically Mediterranean climate with mild, wet winters and hot, dry summers. The lowlands contain about half of the country's agricultural

wealth in the broad, cultivated valleys, the most important of which are the İzmit Valley, the Bursa Plains, and the Plains of Troy. The area is densely populated, particularly around Bursa and İzmir.

##### *The Black Sea Region*

The region has a steep and rocky coast, and rivers cascade through gorges of the coastal ranges. A few larger rivers that have cut back through the Pontic Mountains have tributaries that flow in broad elevated basins. Access inland from the coast is limited to a few narrow valleys, and the coast therefore has always been isolated from the interior.

The narrow coastal ribbon running between Zonguldak and Rize, widening here and there into a fertile delta, is an area of concentrated cultivation. All available areas, including mountain slopes wherever they are not too steep, are put to use. The mild, damp climate favors commercial farming, and the western part of this region is the center of Turkey's heavy industry.

##### *The Mediterranean Coastlands*

The plains of the Mediterranean coast are rich in agricultural resources. The fertile, humid soils and the warm climate make these areas ideal for growing citrus fruits and grapes, cereals and, in irrigated areas, rice and cotton. Summers are hot, and droughts are not uncommon.

The plains around Adana are largely reclaimed floodlands. In the western part of the Mediterranean coastal region, rivers have not cut valleys to the sea; movement inland therefore is restricted. The backland is mainly karst and rises sharply from the coast to elevations of 2,800 meters. There are few major cities along this coast, but the triangular plain of Antalya is extensive enough to support the rapidly growing city and port of the same name, which is an important trading center.

##### *The Central Plateau*

The plateaulike, arid highlands of Anatolia are considered the heartland of the country. Akin to the steppes of the Soviet Union, the region varies in altitude from 600 to 1,200 meters west to east. Wooded areas are confined to the northwest and northeast, and cultivation is restricted to the neighboring rivers where the valleys are sufficiently wide. Irrigation is practiced wherever water is available; the deeply entrenched river courses make it difficult to raise water to the surrounding agricultural land, however. For the most part, the region is bare and monotonous and is used for grazing.

Rainfall is limited and in Ankara amounts to less than twenty-five centimeters annually. Wheat and barley are the most important crops, but the yields are irregular, and crops fail entirely in years of drought. Stockraising also is important, but overgrazing has caused soil erosion in the plateau, and during the frequent dust storms of summer a fine yellow powder

blows across the plains. In bad years there are severe losses of stock. Locusts occasionally ravage the eastern area in April and May. An area of extreme heat and virtually no rainfall in summer, the Central Plateau is cold in winter, with heavy, lasting snows, and villages may be isolated by severe snowstorms.

### *The Eastern Highlands*

Eastern Turkey is rugged country with higher elevations, a more severe climate, and greater precipitation than the central plateau. In the extreme east at Kars, winter temperatures have been known to fall as low as minus 39.6°C.

From the highlands in the north, sometimes called Turkey's Siberia, to the mountains of Kurdistan (land of the Kurds) in the south that descend toward the Mesopotamian plain in Iraq, vast stretches of this eastern region consist only of wild or barren wasteland. Many of the peaks are extinct volcanoes that are 3,000 to 5,000 meters in height. Fertile basins, such as the Muş Valley west of Lake Van and various river corridors, lie at the foot of the lofty ranges.

### **Climate**

Turkey is a focal point of contrasting climates. The pressure systems of all the adjacent regions affect the climate of the country; yet the land forms are high enough to minimize these outside influences. The climate, therefore, is temperate continental, with some Mediterranean influences. The western coastal areas do not experience frost, but in the east, snow may remain on the ground for as many as four months of the year.

In the interior plateau, there is a wide range of temperature. Winters are cold, and frost may occur more than 100 days during the year. Summers are warm, with high daytime temperatures and generally cool nights. The mean for July, the hottest month, lies between 20°C and 21°C. Between twenty-five and forty-three centimeters of rainfall are received annually on the plateau, the precise amount depending on altitude. May is generally the wettest month, and July and August are the driest.

Along the coastal regions winters are mild and summers moderately hot. Along the Black Sea, August is the hottest month with a mean of 21°C. Along the Aegean, August temperatures often exceed 35°C. Winters are generally the wettest months on this coast. Rainfall averages from fifty to seventy-five centimeters per annum along the Aegean and Mediterranean to over 250 centimeters on the Black Sea, the only region of Turkey with a moisture surplus throughout the year.

The climate of eastern Turkey is most inhospitable. Summers are hot and extremely dry; winters are bitterly cold. Spring and autumn are both subject to sudden hot and cold spells.