“Center of Asia” - Turkic Peoples

Last June, the General Secretary of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkish speaking states (TurkPA), Ramil Hasanov, invited the Russian Federation and its constituent entities to take part in the work of the organization. “If Federation Council of Russia’s Federal Assembly will express positive attitude to participation of the Federation’s Turkish speaking constituent entities in work of TurkPA as a guest or observer, the issue will be solved. Russia itself can also participate in the Assembly as a guest or observer as this is provided in our organization’s regulation,” Hasanov said.

The Russian autonomous republics of Altai, Bashkortostan, Chuvashia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay–Cherkess, Khakassia, Sakha (Yakutia), Tatarstan and Tuva are fully or partly Turkish speaking entities, while Turkic minorities can be found throughout the entire territory of the federation. A special place in this variegated mosaic is occupied by the Tuvans, which make up 82% of the 300 thousand population of the Tyva Republic, or Tuva. Lying in Southern Siberia, this majority Buddhist territory borders with Russia’s Altai Republic, Khakassia Republic,
Krasnoyarsk Krai, Irkutsk Oblast and Buryatia Republic, and with Mongolia to the south.

THE "CENTER OF ASIA" MONUMENT IN KYZYL

The capital of Tuva, Kyzyl, claims to be the geographical “Center of Asia”, as asserted by the label of a homonymous monument in the city. Whether this claim is true or false, the Tyva Republic is the cornerstone of Russian power in the yellow continent. Part of the historically Mongol region of Tannu Uriankhai, Tuva was under Manchu rule until 1911, when tsarist Russia, taking advantage of the chaos of the 1991 Revolution in China, formed a separatist movement among the Tuvans. In this way, in 1912 Tuva became nominally independent as the Uryankhai Republic, before being brought under Russian protectorate as Uryankhay Kray under Tsar Nicholas II on April 17, 1914.

During the Russian Civil War, the territory was under control of the White Guard armies of Aleksandr Kolchak from July 1918 to July 1919, when it was occupied by China. In the summer of 1921, following the advance of the Red Army, local bolsheviks established the Tuvin People’s Republic. Popularly called Tannu-Tuva, the republic was de jure independent until 1944, when it was annexed by the Soviet Union following a formal request of the Small People’s Khural, Tuva’s parliament. Since then, the republic has been a Russian outpost in the heart of Altaic Asia, though the independent mood of native Tuvans has remained strong throughout the decades.

As capital of the Tuvin Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR), Kyzyl was one of the signatories to the March 31, 1992 treaty that created the Russian Federation. A new constitution for the republic was drawn up on October 22, 1993, creating a 32-member parliament, the Supreme Khural, and a Grand Khural responsible for foreign policy and any possible changes to the charter, which also allowed for a referendum if Tuva ever sought independence. Although the Tuvin Constitution was passed in a referendum on December 12, 1993, the text and the spirit of the Constitution of the Russian Federation make any reference to Tuva’s present or future sovereignty in the charter of the republic essentially meaningless.

Nevertheless, the shifting of the geopolitical center of gravity toward the Asia-Pacific region makes centrifugal tendencies within the Siberian republics of the Russian Federation always more difficult to control from Moscow. Tuva is one of Russia’s poorest republics, but its developing mining and metal working industry makes the region a natural basin for Chinese economic expansion in mainland Asia. For this reason, the battle for the modernization of the Russian economy waged by the Kremlin should give high priority to the development of those territories, like Tuva, where only the iron fist of the Kremlin has impeded the Turkic peoples of Northern Eurasia from gaining independence from what is, not for nothing, the world’s largest country.

Turkic peoples

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
The countries and autonomous regions where a Turkic language has official status.

**Total population**

Approximately 150-200 million[1][2] speak a Turkic language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions with significant populations</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turkey</strong></td>
<td>c. 58,000,000 (70-76% of total country pop.)[3][4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uzbekistan</strong></td>
<td>26,000,000 (92% of total country pop. have Turkic origin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Iran</strong></td>
<td>c. 13,000,000 (17% of total country pop. speak a Turkic language)[5]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kazakhstan</strong></td>
<td>12,000,000 (75% of total country pop.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>China</strong></td>
<td>11,647,000 (0.8% of the total country pop.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Russia</strong></td>
<td>12,009,969 (8.41% of total country pop.)[6]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Azerbaijan</strong></td>
<td>9,047,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turkmenistan</strong></td>
<td>4,500,000[7] (90% of the total country pop.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kyrgyzstan</strong></td>
<td>4,500,000 (90% of the total country pop.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>European Union</strong> except Bulgaria and Greece</td>
<td>5,210,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afghanistan</strong></td>
<td>3,500,000[8] (%15 of Afghanistan population have Turkic origin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tajikistan</strong></td>
<td>1,200,000 (20% of the total country pop.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Iraq</strong></td>
<td>1,500,000 (5% of the total country pop.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>United States</strong></td>
<td>923,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bulgaria</strong></td>
<td>801,200 c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRNC</strong></td>
<td>298,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australia</strong></td>
<td>293,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ukraine</strong></td>
<td>275,300[9]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Turkic peoples are a collection of ethnic groups that live in northern, eastern, central and western Asia, northwestern China and parts of eastern Europe. They speak languages belonging to the Turkic language family. They share, to varying degrees, certain cultural traits and historical backgrounds. The term Turkic represents a broad ethno-linguistic group of people including existing societies such as the Turkish, Azerbaijani, Chuvashes, Kazakhs, Tatars, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Uyghurs, Uzbeks, Bashkirs, Qashqais, Qa'qaus, Yakuts, Turkic Karaites, Krymschaks, Karakalpak, Karachays, Balkars, Nogais and as well as past civilizations such as the Göktürks, Kumans, Kipchaks, Avars, Bulgars, Turgishes, Khazars, Seljuks, Turks, Ottoman Turks, Mamluks, Timurids and possibly Huns and the Xiongnu. [10][11][12]

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1 Name etymology
2 History
   • 2.1 Origins and early expansion
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Name etymology
The first known mention of the term Turk (Old Turkic: ᠩᠤᠷᠦᠱ ᠳᠤᠷᠦ Khan)[13][14] or ᠩᠤᠷᠦ ᠳᠤᠷᠦ Kök Türk,[13][14] or ᠩᠤᠷᠦ ᠳᠤᠷᠦ Türk,[15] Chinese: 突厥, Pinyin: Tūjué, Wade-Giles: Tu-chüeh, Middle Chinese (Guangyun): [dʰuət-kɨwet]) applied to a Turkic group was in reference to the Göktürks in the 6th century. A letter by Ishbara Qaghan to Emperor Wen of Sui in 585 described him as "the Great Turk Khan."[16] The Orhun inscriptions (735 CE) use the terms Turk and Turuk.

Previous use of similar terms are of unknown significance, although some strongly feel that they are evidence of the historical continuity of the term and the people as a linguistic unit since early times. This includes Chinese records Spring and Autumn Annals referring to a neighbouring people as Beidi.[17] There are references to certain groups in antiquity whose names could be the original form of "Türk/Türük" such as Togarma, Turukha, Turukku and so on. But the information gap is so substantial that we cannot firmly connect these ancient people to the modern Turks.[18][19][20]

According to Turkologists Peter Golden and András Róna-Tas, the term Turk is ultimately rooted in the East Iranian Saka language:

"[Turk] is of East Iranian, most probably Saka, origin, and is the name of a ruling tribe whose leading clan Ashina conquered the Turks, reorganized them, but itself became rapidly Turkified".[21] However, it is generally accepted that the term "Türk" is ultimately derived from the Old-Turkic migration-term[22] "Türük" or "Törük",[23] which means "created", "born",[24] or "strong".[25]

The Chinese Book of Zhou (7th century) presents an etymology of the name Turk as derived from "helmet", explaining that taken this name refers to the shape of the Altai Mountains[citation needed] According to Persian tradition, as reported by 11th-century ethnographer Mahmud of Kashgar and various other traditional Islamic scholars and historians, the name "Turk" stems from Tur, one of the sons of Japheth (see Turan). During the Middle Ages, the various Turkic peoples of the Eurasian steppe were also subsumed under the classical name of the Scythians.[26] Between 400 CE and the 16th century the Byzantine sources use the name Σκύθαι in reference to twelve different Turkic peoples.[26]

In the modern Turkish language as used in the Republic of Turkey, a distinction is made between "Turks" and the "Turkic peoples" in loosely speaking: the term Türk corresponds specifically to the "Turkish-speaking" people (in this context, "Turkish-speaking" is considered the same as "Turkic-speaking"), while the term Türkî refers generally to the people of modern "Turkic Republics" (Türkiye Cumhuriyetleri or Türk Cumhuriyetleri). However, the proper usage of the term is based on the linguistic classification in order to avoid any political sense. In short, the term Türki can be used for Türk or vice versa.[27]

History

Origins and early expansion
The top of Belukha in the Altay Mountains in Mongolia is shown here. The mountain range is thought to be the birthplace of the Turkic people.

It is generally agreed that the first Turkic people lived in a region extending from Central Asia to Siberia with the majority of them living in China historically. Historically they were palpable after the 6th Century BC. The earliest separate Turkic peoples appeared on the peripheries of the late Xiongnu confederation (contemporaneous with the Chinese Han Dynasty). Turkic people may be related to the Xiongnu, Dingling and Tiele people. According to the Book of Wei, the Tiele people were the remaining of the Chidi (赤狄), the red Di people competing with the Jin in the Spring and Autumn Period. Turkic tribes, such as Khazars and Pechenegs, probably lived as nomads for many years before establishing the Göktürk Empire or Mongolia in the 6th century. These were herdsmen and nobles who were searching for new pastures and wealth. The first mention of Turks was in a Chinese text that mentioned trade of Turk tribes with the Sogdians along the Silk Road. The first recorded use of "Turk" as a political name is a 6th-century reference to the word pronounced in Modern Chinese as Tujue. The Ashina clan migrated from Li-jien (modern Zhelai Zhai) to the Juan Juan seeking inclusion in their confederacy and protection from the prevalent dynasty. The tribe were famed metalsmiths and was granted land near a mountain guarry which looked like a helmet, from which they were said to have gotten their name 突厥 (tūjué). A century later, their power had increased such that they conquered the Juan Juan and established the Gök Empire.

Turkic peoples originally used their own alphabets, like Orkhon and Yenisey runiform, and later the Uyghur alphabet. The oldest inscription was found near the Issyk river in Kyrgyzstan. Traditional national and cultural symbols of the Turkic peoples include wolves in Turkic mythology and tradition; as well as the color blue, iron, and fire. Turquoise blue, from the French word meaning "Turkish", is the color of the stone turquoise still used as jewelry and a protection against evil eye.

It has often been suggested that the Xiongnu, mentioned in Han Dynasty records, were Proto-Turkic speakers. Although little is known for certain about the Xiongnu language(s), it seems likely that at least some Xiongnu tribes spoke a Turkic language. Some scholars see a possible connection with the Iranian-speaking Sakas, while others believe they were probably a confederation of various ethnic and linguistic groups. On the other hand, genetics research from 2003 confirms the studies indicating that the Turkic people originated from the same area and so are related with the Xiongnu. So the scientific genetic results show clearly that the Turks originated nearby the Centre-west part of modern China.
Göktürk petroglyphs from Mongolia.

Xiongnu writing, older than Turkic is agreed to have the earliest known Turkic alphabet, the Orkhon script. This has been argued recently using the only extant possibly Xiongnu writings, the rock art of the Yinshan and Helanshan. It is dated from the 9th millennium BC to 19th century, and consists mainly of engraved signs (petroglyphs) and few painted images. Excavations done during 1924–1925, in Noin-Ula kurgans located in Selenga River in the northern Mongolian hills north of Ulan Bator, produced objects with over 20 carved characters, which were either identical or very similar to that of to the runic letters of the Turkic Orkhon script discovered in the Orkhon Valley.

The Hun hordes of Attila, who invaded and conquered much of Europe in the 5th century, might have been Turkic and descendants of the Xiongnu. Some scholars argue that the Huns were one of the earlier Turkic tribes, while others argue that they were of Mongolic origin. Linguistics studies by Otto Maenchen-Helfen's support a Turkic origin. In all probability, they were closely related as the borders were not settled unlike modern times and migrations were common to distant places.

In the 6th century, 400 years after the collapse of northern Xiongnu power in Inner Asia, leadership of the Turkic peoples was taken over by the Göktürks. Formerly in the Xiongnu nomadic confederation, the Göktürks inherited their traditions and administrative experience. From 552 to 745, Göktürk leadership united the nomadic Turkic tribes into the Göktürk Empire. This was the first known political entity to be called "Turk". The name derives from gok, "blue" or "celestial". Unlike its Xiongnu predecessor, the Göktürk Khanate had its temporary khans from the Ashina clan that were subordinate to a sovereign authority controlled by a council of tribal chiefs. The Khanate retained elements of its original shamanistic religion, Tengriism, although it received missionaries of Buddhist monks and practiced a syncretic religion. The Göktürks were the first Turkic people to write Old Turkic in a runic script, the Orkhon script. The Khanate was also the first state known as "Turk". It eventually collapsed due to a series of dynastic conflicts, but the name "Turk" was later taken by many states and peoples. Turkic peoples and related groups migrated west from Turkestan and what is now Mongolia towards Eastern Europe, Iranian plateau and Anatolia and modern Turkey in many waves. This is only the case if one disregards the genetically proven fact that the existing population in today's Anatolia are indigenous to the area, and were Turkified by the ethnic Turk invaders. The date of the initial expansion remains unknown. After many battles, they established their own state and later created the Ottoman Empire. The main migration occurred in medieval times, when they spread across most of Asia and into Europe and the Middle East. They also participated in the Crusades.
Later Turkic peoples include the Avars, Karluks (mainly 8th century), Uyghurs, Kyrgyz, Oghuz (or Ğuz) Turks, and Turkmens. As these peoples were founding states in the area between Mongolia and Transoxiana, they came into contact with Muslims, and most gradually adopted Islam. Small groups of Turkic people practice other religions, including Christians, Jews (Khazars), Buddhists, and Zoroastrians.

Middle Ages

Turkic soldiers in the army of the Abbasid caliphs emerged as the de facto rulers of most of the Muslim Middle East (apart from Syria and Egypt), particularly after the 10th century. The Oghuz and other tribes captured and dominated various countries under the leadership of the Seljuk dynasty and eventually captured the territories of the Abbasid dynasty and the Byzantine Empire. Meanwhile, the Kyrgyz and Uyghurs were struggling with one another and with the Chinese Empire. The Kyrgyz people ultimately settled in the region now referred to as Kyrgyzstan. The Tatar peoples conquered the Volga Bulgars in what is today Tatarstan, following the westward sweep of the Mongols under Genghis Khan in the 13th century. Other Bulgars, who had initially invaded Europe in 5th-6th centuries, as part of the Hunnic tribal confederation, finally settled in Southeastern Europe in the 7th-8th centuries, and mixed with the Slavic population, adopting what eventually became the Slavic Bulgarian language. Everywhere, Turkic groups mixed with the local populations to varying degrees. In 1090–91, the Turkic Pechenegs reached the walls of Constantinople, where Emperor Alexius I with the aid of the Kipchaks annihilated their army.

Islamic empires

Main articles: Ghaznavid Empire, Timurids, Ilkhanate, Delhi Sultanate, Safavid Empire, Ottoman Empire, Mughal Empire, and Afsharid Empire
As the Seljuk Empire declined following the Mongol invasion, the Ottoman Empire emerged as the new important Turkic state, that came to dominate not only the Middle East, but even southeastern Europe, parts of southwestern Russia, and northern Africa.\[32\]

The Delhi Sultanate is a term used to cover short-lived, Delhi based kingdoms of Turkic origin in medieval India. These Turkic dynasties were the Mamluk dynasty (1206–90); the Khilji dynasty (1290–1320); and the Tughlaq dynasty (1320–1414).

The Mughal Empire was a Turkic empire that, at its greatest territorial extent, ruled most of the South Asia, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and parts of Uzbekistan from the early 16th to the early-18th century. The Mughal dynasty was founded by a Chagatai Turkic prince named Babur (reigned 1526–30), who was descended from the Turkic conqueror Timur (Tamerlane) on his father's side and from Chagatai, second son of the Mongol ruler Genghis Khan, on his mother's side.\[55\][56] A further distinction was the attempt of the Mughals to integrate Hindus and Muslims into a united Indian state.\[55\][57][58][59]

A Mamluk nobleman from Aleppo.

The Safavid dynasty of Persia, were of Azeri (Turkish) and Kurdish (Iranic) origin.\[60\][61][62] The members of the family were native Turkish-speaking.\[63\][64] and some of the Shahs composed poems in their native Turkish language. Concurrently, the Shahs themselves also supported Persian literature, poetry and art projects including the grand Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp.\[65\][66] The Safavid dynasty ruled on the Greater Iran for more than two centuries.\[67\][68][69][70] and established the Twelver school of Shi'a Islam\[71\] as the official religion of their empire, marking one of the most important turning points in Muslim history.
The Afsharid dynasty was named after the Turkic Afshar tribe to which they belonged. The Afshars had migrated from Turkestan to Azerbaijan in the 13th century. The dynasty was founded in 1736 by the military commander Nader Shah who deposed the last member of the Safavid dynasty and proclaimed himself King of Iran. Nader belonged to the Qereqlu branch of the Afshars.[72] During Nader's reign, Iran reached its greatest extent since the Sassanid Empire.

Modern history

The Ottoman Empire gradually grew weaker in the face of maladministration, repeated wars with Russia and Austro-Hungary, and the emergence of nationalist movements in the Balkans, and it finally gave way after World War I to the present-day Republic of Turkey.[32] Ethnic nationalism also developed in Ottoman Turkey during the 19th century, taking the form of Pan-Turkism or Turanism. The Turkic peoples of Central Asia were not organized in nation states during most of the 20th century, after the collapse of the Russian Empire living either in the Soviet Union or (after a short-lived First East Turkestan Republic) in the Chinese Republic. Chinese Turkestan remains part of the People's Republic of China, and Tatarstan, Tuva and Yakutia in the Russian Federation, but the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (with ethnic Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Uzbek majorities, respectively) gained independence in 1991 after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Geographical distribution

This section needs additional citations for verification. (February 2010)
Azeris and Turkmen in Iran

Many of the Turkic peoples have their homelands in Central Asia, where the Turkic peoples settled from China. According to historian John Foster, "The Turks emerge from among the Huns in the middle of [the] fifth century. They were living in Liang territory when it began to be overrun by the greater principality of Wei. Preferring to remain under the rule of their own kind, they moved westward into what is now the province of Kansu. This was the territory of kindred Huns, who were called the Rouran. The Turks were a small tribe of only five hundred families, and they became serfs to the Rouran, who used them as iron-workers. It is thought that the original meaning of "Turk" is "helmet", and that they may have taken this name because of the shape of one of the hills near which they worked. As their numbers and power grew, their chief made bold to ask for the hand of a Rouran princess in marriage. The demand was refused, and war followed. In 546, the iron-workers defeated their overlords.[73] Since then Turkic languages have spread, through migrations and conquests, to other locations including present-day Turkey. While the term "Turk" may refer to a member of any Turkic people, the term Turkish usually refers specifically to the people and language of the modern country of Turkey. The Turkic languages constitute a language family of some 30 languages, spoken across a vast area from Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, to Siberia and Western China, and to and the Middle East.

Some 170 million people have a Turkic language as their native language; an additional 20 million people speak a Turkic language as a second language. The Turkic language with the greatest number of speakers is Turkish proper, or Anatolian Turkish, the speakers of which account for about 40% of all Turkic speakers. More than one third of these are ethnic Turks of Turkey, dwelling predominantly in Turkey proper and formerly Ottoman-dominated areas of Eastern Europe and West Asia; as well as in Western Europe, Australia and the Americas as a result of immigration. The remainder of the Turkic people are concentrated in Central Asia, Russia, the Caucasus, China, northern Iraq.

At present, there are six independent Turkic countries: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan; There are also several Turkic national subdivisions[78] in the Russian Federation including Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, Chuvashia, Khakassia, Tuva, Yakutia, the Altai Republic, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachayevo-Cherkessiya. Each of these subdivisions has its own flag, parliament, laws, and official state language (in addition to Russian).

Azerbaijani girl in Khachmaz Rayon.

The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in western China and the autonomous region of Gagauzia, located within eastern Moldova and bordering Ukraine to the north, are two major autonomous Turkic regions.
The Autonomous Republic of Crimea within Ukraine is a home of Crimean Tatars. In addition, there are several Iraq, Georgia, Bulgaria, the Republic of Macedonia, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and western Mongolia.
A young Uyghur girl from Turpan, Xinjiang, China.

The Turks in Turkey are over 60 million[77] to 70 million worldwide, while the second largest Turkic people are the Azerbaijani, numbering 22 to 38 million worldwide; most of them live in Azerbaijan and Iran. Turks in India are very small in number. There are barely 150 Turkish people from Turkey in India. These are recent immigrants. Descendants of Turkish rulers also exist in Northern India. Mughals who are part Turkic people also live in India in significant numbers. They are descendants of the Mughal rulers of India. Karlugh Turks are also found in small amounts in Srinagar region of Kashmir. Small amount of Uyghurs are also present in India. Turks also exist in Pakistan in similar proportions. One of the tribe in Hazara region of Pakistan is Karlugh Turks which is direct descendent of Turks of Central Asia. Turkish influence in Pakistan can be seen through the national language, Urdu, which comes from a Turkish word meaning "horde" or "army".

Western Yugur at Gansu in China, Salar at Qinghai in China, Dolgan at Krasnoyarsk Krai in Russia, Nogai at Dagestan in Russia are the Turk minorities at the respective regions. Beauty of Yugur Culture, Beauty of the Dolgan and Northern Tungus Culture, Beauty of Yakut Sakha Culture, Beauty of Khakass Culture at youtube show the facial feature of the Turks native to Asian Russia and China

International organizations

Further information: Pan-Turkism

Map of TÜRKSOY members.

This section requires expansion. (December 2009)

There are several international organizations created with the purpose of furthering cooperation between countries with Turkic-speaking populations, such as the Joint Administration of Turkic Arts and Culture (TÜRKSOY) and the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking Countries (TÜRKPA). The newly established Turkic Council, founded on November 3, 2009 by the Nakhchivan Agreement Mongolian confederation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey, aims to integrate these organizations into a tighter geopolitical framework.

Demographics

See also: List of Turkic groups
The distribution of people of Turkic cultural background ranges from Siberia, across Central Asia, to Eastern Europe. As of 2011 the largest groups of Turkic people live throughout Central Asia—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan, in addition to Turkey and Iran. Additionally, Turkic people are found within Crimea, East Turkistan region of western China, northern Iraq, Israel, Russia, Afghanistan, and the Balkans: Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania, and former Yugoslavia. A small number of Turkic people also live in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. Small numbers inhabit eastern Poland and the south-eastern part of Finland. There are also considerable populations of Turkic people (originating mostly from Turkey) in Germany, United States, and Australia, largely because of migrations during the 20th century.

Sometimes ethnographers group Turkic people into six branches: the Oghuz Turks, Kipchak, Karluk, Siberian, Chuvash, and Sakha/Yakut branches. The Oghuz have been termed Western Turks, while the remaining five, in such a classificatory scheme, are called Eastern Turks.

All the Turkic peoples native to Central Asia are of mixed Caucasoid and Mongoloid origin. The genetic distances between the different populations of Uzbeks scattered across Uzbekistan is no greater than the distance between many of them and the Karakalpaks. This suggests that Karakalpaks and Uzbeks have very similar origins. The Karakalpaks have a somewhat greater bias towards the eastern markers than the Uzbeks.

The Turkic people display a great variety of ethnic types. They possess physical features ranging from Caucasoid to Northern Mongoloid. Mongoloid and Caucasoid facial structure is common among many Turkic groups, such as Chuvash people, Tatars, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Hazaras, and Bashkirs. Historically, the racial classification of the Turkic peoples was sometimes given as “Turanid”.

The following incomplete list of Turkic people shows the respective groups’ core areas of settlement and their estimated sizes (in millions):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Modern language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkish people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meskhetian Turks</td>
<td>Turkey, Germany, Bulgaria, Georgia, Syria</td>
<td>70 M</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian Turks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbijanis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraqi Turkmens</td>
<td>Azerbaijan Republic, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Russia, Georgia</td>
<td>30 M</td>
<td>Azerbijani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Modern language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uzbeks</strong></td>
<td>Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan</td>
<td>28.3 M</td>
<td>Uzbek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kazahs</strong></td>
<td>Kazakhstan, Russia, China, Uzbekistan</td>
<td>13.8 M</td>
<td>Kazakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uyghurs</strong></td>
<td>China (Xinjiang), Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey</td>
<td>9 M</td>
<td>Uyghur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turkmens</strong></td>
<td>Turkmenistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>8 M</td>
<td>Turkmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tatars</strong></td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, China, Tajikistan</td>
<td>7 M</td>
<td>Tatar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kyrgyzs</strong></td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, China, Tajikistan</td>
<td>4.5 M</td>
<td>Kyrgyz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bashkirs</strong></td>
<td>Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan</td>
<td>2 M</td>
<td>Bashkir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crimean Tatars</strong></td>
<td>Ukraine (Crimea), Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Romania</td>
<td>0.5 to 2 M</td>
<td>Crimean Tatar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qashqai</strong></td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1.7 M</td>
<td>Qashqai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chuvashes</strong></td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1.7 M</td>
<td>Chuvash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Karakalpaks</strong></td>
<td>Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan</td>
<td>0.6 M</td>
<td>Karakalpak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yakuts</strong></td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>0.5 M</td>
<td>Sakha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kumyks</strong></td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>0.4 M</td>
<td>Kumyk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Karachays and Balkars</strong></td>
<td>Russia, Turkey</td>
<td>0.4 M</td>
<td>Karachay-Balkar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuvans</strong></td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>0.3 M</td>
<td>Tuvan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gagauzs</strong></td>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>0.2 M</td>
<td>Gagauz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turkic Karaites and Krymchaks</strong></td>
<td>Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Turkey</td>
<td>0.2 M</td>
<td>Karaim and Krymchak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Language**

Main article: [Turkic languages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkic_languages)

Further information: [Turkic alphabets (disambiguation)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkic_alphabets)

The [Orkhon script](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orkhon_script)
A page from "Codex Kumanicus". The Codex was designed in order to help Catholic missionaries communicate with the Kumans.

The Turkic alphabets are sets of related alphabets with letters (formerly known as runes), used for writing mostly Turkic languages. Inscriptions in Turkic alphabets were found from Mongolia and Eastern Turkestan in the east to Balkans in the west. Most of the preserved inscriptions were dated to between 8th and 10th centuries DE. The earliest positively dated and read Turkic inscriptions date from ca. 150, and the alphabets were generally replaced by the Uyghur alphabet in the Central Asia, Arabic script in the Middle and Western Asia, Greek-derived Cyrillic in Eastern Europe and in the Balkans, and Latin alphabet in Central Europe. The latest recorded use of Turkic alphabet was recorded in Central Europe's Hungary in 1699 CE.

The Turkic runiform scripts, unlike other typologically close scripts of the world, do not have a uniform palaeography as, for example, have the Gothic runes, noted for the exceptional uniformity of its language and paleography. The Turkic alphabets are divided into four groups, the best known of them is the Orkhon version of the Enisei group. The Orkhon script is the alphabet used by the Göktürks from the 8th century to record the Old Turkic language. It was later used by the Uyghur Empire: a Yenisei variant is known from 9th-century Kyrgyz inscriptions, and it has likely cousins in the Talas Valley of Turkestan and the Old Hungarian script of the 10th century.

The Turkic language family is traditionally considered to be part of the proposed Altaic language family. The Altaic language family includes 66 languages spoken by about 348 million people, mostly in and around Central Asia and northeast Asia. The various Turkic languages are usually considered in geographical groupings: the Oghuz (or Southwestern) languages, the Kypchak (or Northwestern) languages, the Eastern languages (like Uyghur), the Northern languages (like Altay and Yakut), and one existing Oghur language: Chuvash (the other Oghur languages, like Hunnic and Bulgaric, are now extinct). The high mobility and intermixing of Turkic peoples in history makes an exact classification extremely difficult. The Turkish language belongs to the Oghuz subfamily of Turkic. It is for the most part mutually intelligible with the other Oghuz languages, which include Azeri, Gagauz, Turkmen and Urum, and to a varying extent with the other Turkic languages.

Religion
Early Turkic mythology and shamanism

Drawing of a shaman's drum, after a drawing made on a 1909–1913 expedition led by Anokhin Andrei Viktorovich, published in 1924 in Materialy po shamanstvy u altaitsev.

A shaman doctor of Kyzyl.

Main articles: Mythology of the Turkic and Mongolian peoples and Shamanism in Central Asia

Pre-Islamic Turkic mythology was dominated by shamanism. The chief deity was Tengri, a sky god, worshipped by the upper classes of early Turkic society until Manichaeism was introduced as the official religion of the Uyghur Empire in 763. The Wolf symbolizes honour and is also considered the mother of most Turkic peoples. Asena (Ashina Tuwu) is the wolf mother of Tumen Il-Qağan, the first Khan of the Göktürks. The Horse is also one of the main figures of Turkic mythology.

Religious conversions

Mosque in Kazakhstan.

Tengri Bögü Khan made the now extinct Manichaeism the state religion of Uyghur Khaganate in 763 and it was also popular in Karluks. It was gradually replaced by the Mahayana Buddhism. It existed in the Buddhist
Uyghur Gaochang up to the 12th century.[89] Tibetan Buddhism, or Vajrayana was the main religion after Manichaeism.[90][91][92] They worshipped Tänrı Tänrisi Burxan,[93] Quanšï Im Pusar,[94] and Maitri Burxan.[95] Turkic Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent and west Xinjiang attributed with a rapid and almost total disappearance of it and other religions in North India and Central Asia. The Sari Uygurs "Yellow Yughurs" of Western China, as well as the Tuvans of Russia are the only remaining Buddhist Turkic peoples. The Krymchaks of Eastern Europe (Especially Crimea) are Jewish, and there are Turks of Jewish backgrounds who live in major cities such as Istanbul, Ankara and Baku. The Khazars widely practiced Judaism before their conversion to Islam.[citation needed]

Even though many Turkic peoples became Muslims under the influence of Sufis, often of Shi’ah persuasion, most Turkic people today are Sunni Muslims, although a significant number in Turkey are Alevi. Alevi Turks, who were once primarily dwelling in eastern Anatolia, are today concentrated in major urban centers in western Turkey with the increased urbanism. The major Christian-Turkic peoples are the Chuvash of Chuvashia and the Gagauz (Gökoğuz) of Moldova. The traditional religion of the Chuvash of Russia, while containing many ancient Turkic concepts, also shares some elements with Zoroastrianism, Khazar Judaism, and Islam. The Chuvash converted to Eastern Orthodox Christianity for the most part in the second half of the 19th century. As a result, festivals and rites were made to coincide with Orthodox feasts, and Christian rites replaced their traditional counterparts. A minority of the Chuvash still profess their traditional faith.[96] Church of the East was popular among Turks such as the Naimans.[97] It even revived in Gaochang and expanded in Xinjiang in the Yuan dynasty period.[98][99][100] It disappeared after its collapse.[101][102]

Post-Soviet shamanistic revival

Main article: Tengrism

A movement of "Tengrism" has developed among intellectual circles of Central Asia since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. "Tengrism" is advocated as the national religion of the Turkic peoples, and combined with the political ideologies of ethnic nationalism or Pan-Turkism. In post-Soviet Siberia, some Yakuts (Sakha) and others have completely rejected Eastern Orthodox Christianity in favor of a revived shamanism.[103]

Gallery

Modern times

- Azerbaijani girls in traditional dress.
Young and old Gagauz people.

Turkmen girl in national dress.

Qashqai women spinning.

Uzbek children in Samarkand.

Karachay patriarchs in the 19th century.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visits Tatarstan. (Hillary Clinton, right, Tatar President Mintimer Shaimiyev, left, and Tatar woman in traditional dress, middle.)

Bashkir boys in national dress.
- A Chuvash woman in traditional dress.

- A female Chuvash dancer in traditional dress.

- Tatar woman in 18th century.

- An Azeri Female from Baku.

- Karachay patriarchs in the 19th century.

- Altay man in national suit on horse.
Medieval times

- **Bulgarians** kill the governor of Thessaloniki Duke Gregory Taronites.

- Khan **Omurtag** of **Bulgaria**, from the Chronicle of **John Skylitzes**.

- **Khazar** warrior with prisoner.

Notes and references

4. ^ [1], *Milliyet*, 22 March 2007. (Turkish)
6. ^ http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%AD%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%BE-%D1%86%D0%B7%D1%8B%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B9_%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%9%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%8F_%D0%A0%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%81%D0%B8%BD%0%BD
quote: "The ethnonym "Turk" has similar connections. The Chinese form, "T'u-chüeh" < 'T'uat-kiwat reflects "Turkut", the plural form, as we have noted. This plural in –t could be Altaic. It is common in Mongol, rare in Old Turkic, and usually found in titles taken from the Jou-jan (e.g., tegin, tegit) —who, it is believed, but not universally, were speakers of some Proto-Mongolian language (they contained Hsiun-pi [Proto-Mongolian] and Hsiung-nu elements; Jänhnunen [1996,190], however, recently asserted a possible Turkic affiliation). It might also be Soghdian or some other Iranian tongue. In the earliest inscription from the Türk empire, the Bugut Inscription, which is written in Soghdian, not Turkic, we find trwkt ' 'sy-ns': Turkit / Turukit Ashinas (Mori-yasu and Ochir 1999,123). The Sui-shu tells us that the name "Tûrk" in their own tongue means "helmet" and that it comes from the fact that the Altay région, where we find the Tûrks at the time in which they form their empire, looks like a helmet. "The people call it a 'helmet,' t'u-chiïeh; therefore, they call themselves by this name" (Liu 1958,1: 40). This is a folk etymology, and there is no attested Turkic form of "Türk" meaning "helmet." As Rôna-Tas has pointed out, however, there is a Khotance-Saka word, tturaka, meaning "lid" (1999,278–281). It is not a serious semantic stretch to "helmet." Subsequently, "Türk" would find a suitable Turkic etymology, being conflated with the word türk, which means one in the prime of youth, powerful, mighty" (Rona-Tas 1991,10-13). It seems hard to avoid the conclusion that the Tûrks, per se, had strong connections with — if not ultimate origins in — Irano-Tocharian east Turkistan. They, or at least the Ashina, were migrants to southern Siberia-northern Mongolia, where we seem to find the major concentration of Turkic-speaking peoples. There are a considarable number of Tocharian and Iranian loan words in Old Turkic — although a good number of these may have been acquired, especially in the case of Soghdian terms, during the Türk impérial period, when the Soghdians were a subject people, an important mercantile-commercial element in the Türk state, and culture-bearers across Eurasia. It also should be noted here that the early Türk rulers bore names of non-Turkic origin. The founders of the state are Bumïn (d. 552) and his brother Ishtemi (552-575), the Yabghu Qaghan, who governed the western part of the realm. Among their successors are 'Muqan/Mughan/Mahân/Muhân (553–572), Tas(t)par (572 -581), and Nivar/Nâbâr/Nawâr (581-587). None of these names is Turkic (Golden 1992,121–122; Rybatzki 2000.206-221)."

○ András Rôna-Tas, Hungarians and Europe in the early Middle Ages: an introduction to early Hungarian history, Central European University Press, 1999,
PP 281: "We can now reconstruct the history of the ethnic name Turk as follows. The word is of East Iranian, most probably Saka, origin, and is the name of a ruling tribe whose leading clan Ashina conquered the Turks, reorganized them, but itself became rapidly Turkified."


23. Murat Ocak, The Turks: Early ages, Yeni Türkiye, 2002


32. MA Li-qing On the new evidence on Xiongnu's writings. (Wanfang Data: Digital Periodicals, 2004)

33. Silk-Road: Xiongnu

34. Yeni Türkiye

35. The Rise of the Turkic People

36. Early Turkish History

37. "An outline of Turkish History until 1923."


41. Nancy Touchette Ancient DNA Tells Tales from the Grave "Skeletons from the most recent graves also contained DNA sequences similar to those in people from present-day Turkey. This supports other studies indicating that Turkic tribes originated at least in part in Mongolia at the end of the Xiongnu period."

42. MA Li-qing On the new evidence on Xiongnu's writings. (Wanfang Data: Digital Periodicals, 2004)

43. Paola Demattè Writing the Landscape: the Petroglyphs of Inner Mongolia and Ningxia Province (China), (Paper presented at the First International Conference of Eurasian Archaeology, University of Chicago, 3–4 May 2002.)


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49. Otto Maenchen-Helfen, Language of Huns

50. Josh Burk, "The Middle East and Its Origins" p.45

When the Moguls Ruled India...

Babur: Encyclopædia Britannica Article


"Peoples of Iran" Encyclopædia Iranica. RN Frye.


"qizilbash normally spoke Azari brand of Turkish at court, as did the Safavid shahs themselves; lack of familiarity with the Persian language may have contributed to the decline from the pure classical standards of former times"

John L. Esposito, *The Oxford History of Islam*, Oxford University Press US, 1999. pp 364: "To support their legitimacy, the Safavid dynasty of Iran (1501-1732) devoted a cultural policy to establish their regime as the reconstruction of the historic Iranian monarchy. To the end, they commissioned elaborate copies of the Shahnameh, the Iranian national epic, such as one made for Tahmasp in the 1520s."

Ira Marvin Lapidus, *A history of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, 2nd edition. pg 445: To bolster the prestige of the state, the Safavid dynasty sponsored an Iran-Islamic style of culture concentrating on court poetry, painting, and monumental architecture that symbolized not only the Islamic credentials of the state but also the glory of the ancient Persian traditions."


*Cambridge History of Iran* Volume 7, pp.2-4


*Turkic Language family tree* entries provide the information on the Turkic-speaking populations and regions.


*Across Central Asia, a New Bond Grows – Iron Curtain's Fall Has Spawned a Convergence for Descendants of Turkic Nomad Hordes*


*Finnish Tatars*

*The Karakalpak Gene Pool* (Spencer Wells, 2001); and discussion and conclusions at [www.karakalpak.com/genetics.html](http://example.com)

*Turkic people, Encyclopædia Britannica, Online Edition, 2008*

Vasiliev D.D. Graphical fund of Turkic runiform writing monuments in Asian areal, M., 1983, p. 44
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• Vasiliev D.D. Corpus of Turkic runiform monuments in the basin of Enisei. M., 1983, (In Russian)

See also

• Chigils Turks
• Shato
• Pan-Turanism
• Pan-Turkism
• Turkic languages
• Turkic migrations
• Turkic states and empires
• Turko-Iranian
• Turko-Persian tradition
• Turko-Mongol
• Turkology
• List of ethnic groups
• European ethnic groups
Peoples of the Caucasus

External links

Wikimedia Commons has media related to: Turkic peoples

- Turkic peoples of Lithuania: Lithuanian Tatars and Karaims - True Lithuania website
- Turkic Orkhon Inscriptions of Mongolia
- Turkic Republics, Regions, and Peoples: Resources – University of Michigan
- Turkic Cultures and Children's Festival, Turkic Fest
- Encyclopædia Britannica 1911 Edition
- turkicworld
- Ethnographic maps
- International Turcology and Turkish History Research Symposium
- Istanbul Kültür University
- Examples of traditional Turkish and Ottoman Clothing
- Türkçekent Orientaal's links for Turkish Language Learning
- Türkçestan Orientaal's links to Turkic languages
- Ural-Altaic-Sumerian Etymological Dictionary
- Crimean Tatar Internet Resources
- Nationwide game of Turks
- Crimean Tatar Web Site
- Kemal's Crimean Tatar Web Site with Crimean Tatar Language Resources

New DNA Results

- "Probable ancestors of Hungarian ethnic groups: an admixture analysis" C. R. GUGLIELMINO1, A. DE SILVESTRI2 and J. BERES
- MtDNA and Y chromosome polymorphisms in Hungary: inferences from the Palaeolithic, Neolithic and Uralic influences on the modern Hungarian gene pool
- World History Study Guide: "Dastan Turkic" at BookRsgs.com
- The Altaic Epic
- Downloadable article: "Evidence that a West-East admixed population lived in the Tarim Basin as early as the early Bronze Age" Li et al. BMC Biology 2010, 8:15. [3]

Languages

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- Azerbaijani
- Bashkir
- Bulgar
- Chagatai

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• Chuvash
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• Karachay-Balkar
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• Khorasani Turkic
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• Kumyk
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- Turanism

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- History (Timeline [500-1300] and migration)
- Nomadic empire
- Tian Shan and Altai Mountains
- Ötüken

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Sovereign states
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- Kyrgyzstan
- Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
• Turkey
• Turkmenistan
• Uzbekistan

• Altai Republic
• Bashkortostan
• Chuvash Republic
• Gagauzia
• Kabardino-Balkaria
• Karachay-Cherkessia
• Karakalpakstan
• Khakassia
• Nakhchivan
• Sakha Republic
• Tatarstan
• Tuva
• Xinjiang

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**Studies**

• Old Turkic script
• Proto-Turkic language
• Turkology

**Religions**

• Turkic mythology
• Shamanism
• Islam
• Alevism
• Tengrist movement

**Organizations**

• Joint Administration of Turkic Arts and Culture
• Turkic Council

¹ Is a state with limited international recognition