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Turkish Empires Rise in Anatolia

MAIN IDEA

CULTURAL INTERACTION
Turkish people converted to Islam and founded new empires that would renew Muslim civilization.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

In the 20th century, the collapse of the Turkish empire left ethnic and religious hostilities that still affect the world.

TERMS & NAMES

- Seljuks
- vizier
- Malik Shah

SETTING THE STAGE To the east of Constantinople and south of Russia, the mighty Muslim empire of the Abbasids had ruled since the eighth century. (See Chapter 10.) By the mid-tenth century, however, their control of the region would end as a powerful group known as the Turks emerged.

TAKING NOTES

Clarifying Use a chart to show important events and features of the various occupations of Baghdad.

| Occupiers | Events |
|-----------|--------|
| Abbasids | |
| Persians | |
| Seljuks | |
| Mongols | |

The Rise of the Turks

As powerful as the Abbasids were, they constantly struggled to maintain control of their empire. Spain broke away in 756, six years after the Abbasids came to power. After setting up their capital in Baghdad, the Abbasids lost their grip on other parts of the empire as well: Morocco in 788 and Tunisia in 800. In 809, they lost some regions of Persia. Then, in 868, the Abbasids lost control of Egypt.



Finally, in 945, Persian armies moved into Baghdad and put an end to the power of the caliph, an Islamic religious or political leader. Even though the caliph continued as the religious leader of Islam, he gave up all political power to the new Persian ruler. It wasn't long, however, before the Persians themselves fell to a powerful group in the region.

The Conquering Seljuks As early as 1300 B.C., Chinese records mention a people called the Tu-Kiu living west of their borders. The Tu-Kiu may well have been the Turks. For centuries, these nomads rode their horses over the vast plains. They herded goats and sheep, lived in tents, and used two-humped camels to carry their goods. The Islamic world first met them as raiders and traders along their northeastern frontiers.

The Abbasids took note of the Turks for their military skills. They began buying Turkish children to raise as slaves, train as soldiers, and employ as bodyguards. The Abbasids came to prize the slaves for their skill and loyalty. On the subject, one author wrote, "One obedient slave is better than 300 sons; for the latter desire their father's death, the former [desires] long life for his master." Over time, Turkish military slaves, or mamelukes, became a powerful force in the Abbasid Empire.

In the tenth century, a growing number of Turks began converting to Islam and slowly migrating into the weakened Abbasid Empire. One of the first of these

migrating Turkish groups was known as the **Seljuks** (SEHL•JOOKS), after the family that led them. The Seljuks gradually grew in number and strength. In 1055, they attacked and captured Baghdad from the Persians.

Nearly 20 years later, the Seljuk sultans marched on the Byzantine Empire. At the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, Turkish forces crushed the Byzantine defenders. Within ten years, the Seljuks occupied most of Anatolia, the eastern flank of Byzantium. This brought the Turks closer to the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, than the Arabs or Persians had ever come. This near conquest of the New Rome also inspired the name of the Seljuk sultanate of Rum (from “Rome”). Rum survived in Anatolia after the rest of the Seljuk Empire had crumbled. **A**

MAIN IDEA

Contrasting

A What advantages would a nomadic people like the Turks have in fighting settled people like the Persians or Byzantines?

The Turks Secure Persian Support Back in Baghdad and its surrounding region, Seljuk rulers wisely courted the support of their newly conquered Persian subjects. In fact, the founder of the Seljuk Dynasty, Toghril Beg, chose the Persian city of Isfahan (IH•S•fuh•HAHN) as the capital of his kingdom. This favorable treatment made the Persians loyal supporters of the Seljuks, and the Turks often appointed them as government officials. The brilliant Nizam al-Mulk, for example, was a Persian who served as the **vizier**, or prime minister, of the most famous of Seljuk sultans, **Malik Shah**.

The Turks also showed a great admiration of Persian learning. The nomadic Seljuks had arrived in Southwest Asia basically illiterate. They were unfamiliar with the traditions of Islam, which they had just adopted. As a result, they looked to their Persian subjects for both cultural and religious guidance. The Turks adopted Persian as the language of culture and adopted features of the Persian way of life that they so admired. Seljuk rulers were called *shahs*, from the Persian word for a king. They also promoted Persian writers like the mystical Islamic poet Jalaludin Rumi, whose poetry is widely read today. Rumi often wrote of his desire to achieve a personal experience of God.

PRIMARY SOURCE

Burning with longing-fire,
wanting to sleep with my head on your doorsill,
my living is composed only of this trying
to be in your presence.

JALALUDIN RUMI, quoted in *Unseen Rain*

Seljuk shahs like the great Malik Shah took pride in supporting Persian artists and architects. Malik beautified the city of Isfahan, for example, by building many splendid mosques. The Turks’ political and cultural preference for the Persians caused the almost complete disappearance of the Arabic language from Persia. Arabic was kept alive mainly by religious scholars studying the Qur’an.

As a result of their policies, the Seljuks won strong support from the Persians, who were proud of their long heritage and eager to pass it on. Like other conquering peoples throughout history, the Seljuk Turks found that they had much to learn from those whom they had defeated.

History Makers



Malik Shah 1055–1092

Malik Shah is thought to be the greatest of the Seljuk sultans. Among his achievements, he built the great mosque Masjed-i-Jame (shown above) in Isfahan. Malik also patronized intellectuals and artists like Omar Khayyam (OH•mahr ky•YAHM), who is most famous today for the *Rubaiyat* (ROO•bee•AHT). The *Rubaiyat* is a collection of poems describing the poet’s love of life’s pleasures. Omar also created a more accurate calendar for Malik.

Malik Shah was also capable of great cruelty. When his brother Takash revolted against him, Malik punished Takash by blinding him. Malik Shah died suddenly at the age of 37, possibly poisoned by his wife.

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH LINKS For more on Malik Shah, go to classzone.com



▲ This drawing from an early 13th-century manuscript illustrates the Turkish siege of a city.

Seljuks Confront Crusaders and Mongols

Malik Shah ruled as the last of the strong Seljuk leaders. After his unexpected death in 1092, no capable shah appeared to replace him. So, the Seljuk Empire quickly disintegrated into a loose collection of minor kingdoms. Just at that point, the West launched a counterattack against the Turks and other Muslims for control of the Holy Land of the Middle East. This series of military campaigns was known as the Crusades.

The Seljuks and the Crusaders Pope Urban II launched the First Crusade in 1095. He called on Christians to drive the Turks out of Anatolia and recover Jerusalem from Muslim rule. Armies from Western Europe soon poured through Constantinople and proceeded on to Palestine. In 1099, the Crusaders captured Jerusalem and massacred its Jewish and Muslim inhabitants. They established a Latin Christian kingdom that lasted about a century. **B**

Eventually, a fragment of the former Seljuk Empire gathered enough strength to fight back. Under their famous Kurdish captain Saladin, the Muslims recovered Jerusalem in 1187. Eventually, Saladin and his Western opponent King Richard I of England signed a truce. Their agreement gave Jerusalem to the Muslims but granted Western pilgrims access to Christian holy places.

Subsequent popes called for further Crusades. But each new military expedition proved weaker than the last. By the 13th century, the Western powers seemed to pose little problem for the Turks. It was around this time, however, that a new threat emerged from the east—the mighty and brutal Mongols.

Seljuks Face the Mongols As you have read previously, the Mongols were a group of nomadic clans along the Asian steppes. In the early 1200s, they grew into a unified force under the ruler Genghis Khan and swiftly conquered China.

The Mongol armies eventually turned to the west and leveled any cities that dared to resist them. They slaughtered whole populations. In 1258, Genghis's grandson Hulagu led his troops to the outskirts of Baghdad, which by this time was surrounded by a defensive wall. The account of what followed by Persian historian

MAIN IDEA

Summarizing

B Why did the Crusades take place?

Wassaf speaks to the Mongols' fierce and overwhelming fighting methods:

PRIMARY SOURCE

The arrows and bolts, the lances and spears, the stones from the slings and catapults of both sides shot swiftly up to heaven, like the messengers of the prayers of the just, then fell as swiftly, like the judgements of fate. . . . In this way, Baghdad was besieged and terrorized for fifty days. But since the city still held out the order was given for baked bricks lying outside the walls to be collected, and with them high towers were built in every direction, overlooking the streets and alleys of Baghdad. On top of these they set up the catapults. Now the city was filled with the thunder and lightning of striking stones and flaring naphtha pots. A dew of arrows rained from a cloud of bows and the population was trampled underfoot. . . . The cry went up, 'Today we have no strength against Goliath and his army!'

WASSAF, quoted in *The Mongol Empire*

When Hulagu finally took Baghdad, he burned down the caliph's palace and had tens of thousands of people killed. Mongol belief forbade the spilling of sacred blood. So Hulagu executed the last Abbasid caliph by having him wrapped in a carpet and trampled to death by horses.

With untold brutality, Genghis Khan and his successors shaped the biggest land empire in history. (See Chapter 12 for more about the Mongol Empire.) The warrior Mongols, however, knew little about administering their territory. As a result, their vast empire crumbled in just a few generations. And out of the rubble of the Mongol Empire rose another group of Turks—the Ottomans. They would build an empire that lasted into the 20th century. You will learn more about the Ottoman Empire in Chapter 18.

Connect to Today



Turkey

Today, Turkey is a nation located between Europe and Asia just north of the Mediterranean Sea. About 80 percent of its residents are descendants of the Seljuks and other Turkish groups.

Turkey became a republic in 1923. Many of today's Turks, like their ancestors, practice Islam, as evidenced by the nation's flag (shown above). It depicts the crescent and the five-pointed star, the symbols of the Islamic faith.

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

INTERNET ACTIVITY Write about a cultural practice in Turkey. Go to classzone.com for your research.

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

TERMS & NAMES 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Seljuks
- vizier
- Malik Shah

USING YOUR NOTES

2. Which occupier proved to be the worst for Baghdad?

| Occupiers | Events |
|-----------|--------|
| Abbasids | |
| Persians | |
| Seljuks | |
| Mongols | |

MAIN IDEAS

3. Why did the Seljuks need to seek religious guidance from the Persian peoples they had conquered?
4. How did the death of Malik Shah affect the Seljuk Empire?
5. What agreement did Saladin and England's King Richard I reach about Jerusalem?

CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING

6. **ANALYZING ISSUES** In what ways would it be accurate to say that the Persians actually won over the Turks?
7. **FORMING AND SUPPORTING OPINIONS** Do you think it is wise for rulers to place members of conquered peoples in positions of government? Why or why not?
8. **MAKING INFERENCES** Based on the observations by the Persian historian Wassaf, why do you think the Mongols were such successful conquerors?
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** **CULTURAL INTERACTION** Write several paragraphs comparing the ways in which the different groups in this section interacted.

CONNECT TO TODAY CREATING A SUMMARY

Identify a modern-day Arab poet. Then analyze one of his or her works and write a brief **summary** that expresses its main idea.