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THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN TURKEY

BERNARD LEWIS

SECOND EDITION

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To
Jill and Ercüment
in friendship and gratitude
The first edition of this book went to press in 1960. Since that date a good deal of new material has come to light. Important documents and memoirs have been published or examined, and numerous studies and monographs on modern Turkish history and thought have appeared, both in Turkey and in other countries. Minor changes were made in successive impressions of this book; the publication of a new edition provides an opportunity to make more extensive revisions. These are, inevitably, still somewhat limited, for both structural and practical reasons. Within these limits, I have tried to profit from the larger perspectives and deeper insights afforded by subsequent developments, both historic and historiographic; I have corrected some errors of fact and judgement, made good some omissions, and modified or amplified the presentation of a number of problems and events. The select bibliography has also been recast and brought up to date.

B. L.

London,
May 1967
PREFACE

The theme of this book is the emergence of a new Turkey from the decay of the old. After an introductory examination of the sources and nature of Turkish civilization, the book falls into two parts. In the first the main events and processes are set forth in chronological sequence, not as a simple narrative history of Turkey, but rather as an attempt to trace and define the principal phases of change. The term of the study has been set in 1950, when the party of Atatürk was ousted from power in a free election which it had itself organized, and the country entered on a new phase in its history. In the second part of the book four aspects of change are examined in greater detail—the transformation of the corporate sense of identity and loyalty among the Turks, the transformation of the theory and practice of government, of religion and the cultural life which it dominated, and of the economic and social order. In a final chapter an attempt is made to draw some general conclusions on the nature of the Turkish Revolution and the measure of its accomplishment.

A separate note contains my thanks and acknowledgements to those who, in one way or another, have helped in the preparation of this book. Here I would like to express my gratitude to two scholars, neither of whom has been directly concerned with this book, yet both of whom have contributed largely to whatever merits it may possess. The first is my friend and colleague, Professor P. Wittek, whose conversation, over a period of many years, has enriched my understanding of Turkish history and civilization more deeply than any formal expression of thanks for help and guidance could indicate. The second is the late and deeply lamented Dr. A. Adnan Adivar, to whose influence and teaching I owe my first acquaintance with Turkey and the Turks, my first knowledge of their language and literature, and an abiding concern that has shaped my life ever since.

London,
January 1960

B. L.
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In preparing the revised edition, I have benefited from the comments of reviewers in a number of journals. To them I should like to express my appreciation. I am also deeply grateful, for privately communicated comments and suggestions, to the following: Dr. F. Ahmad; Professors Y. H. Bayur, R. H. Davison, U. Heyd, F. Iz, and E. Kuran; Dr. H. A. Reed; Professor D. A Rustow; Dr. M. E. Yapp.
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>BSOAS</td>
<td>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Or. contemp.</td>
<td>Cahiers de l'Orient contemporain</td>
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<tr>
<td>EP, EI²</td>
<td>Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1st and 2nd editions</td>
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<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>Islam Ansiklopedisi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Int. Aff.</td>
<td>International Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ist. Univ. İktisat Fak. Mec.</td>
<td>Istanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. As.</td>
<td>Journal Asiatique</td>
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<tr>
<td>JRAS</td>
<td>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</td>
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<td>Jäschke, Kalender</td>
<td>G. Jäschke and E. Pritsch, 'Die Türkei seit dem Weltkriege; Geschichtskalender 1919-28'. Welt des Islam, x (1927-9), &amp;c. (see Bibliography)</td>
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<td>MEA</td>
<td>Middle Eastern Affairs</td>
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<td>MEJ</td>
<td>Middle East Journal</td>
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<td>MER</td>
<td>Middle East Record</td>
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<tr>
<td>MES</td>
<td>Middle Eastern Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSOS</td>
<td>Mitteilungen des Seminars für orientalische Sprachen</td>
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<td>OM</td>
<td>Oriente Moderno</td>
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<td>R.C. As. J.</td>
<td>Royal Central Asian Society Journal</td>
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<td>R. Ét. islam.</td>
<td>Revue d'Études islamiques</td>
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<td>RMM</td>
<td>Revue du monde musulman</td>
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<tr>
<td>R. hist.</td>
<td>Revue historique</td>
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<tr>
<td>RIIA, Survey</td>
<td>Royal Institute of International Affairs, Survey of International Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tar. Derg.</td>
<td>Tarih Dergisi</td>
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<td>Tar. Ves.</td>
<td>Tarih Vesikaları</td>
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<td>TM</td>
<td>Türküyat Mecmuası</td>
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<td>TOEM</td>
<td>Tarih-i Osmanı Encümeni Mecmuası</td>
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<td>Türk Huk. ve İkt. Tar. Mec.</td>
<td>Türk Hukuk ve İktisat Tarihi Mecmuası</td>
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<td>Vak. Derg.</td>
<td>Vakıflar Dergisi</td>
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<td>WI</td>
<td>Welt des Islam</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZDMG</td>
<td>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</td>
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NOTES ON TRANSCRIPTION

Many different systems have been used for the transcription of Turkish in Latin letters. That used in the following pages is based on the official modern Turkish orthography. Some notes on pronunciation may be useful to readers unacquainted with Turkish. The descriptions given below are approximate and non-technical.

c — j as in John
č — ch as in church
b, d — as in English, except that at the end of a syllable they are usually pronounced and sometimes written p, t (e.g. Recep, Râğip, Ahmet, Mehmet for Receb, Rağib, Ahmed, Mehmed). In transcribing Ottoman texts, I have retained the b and d as being nearer to the original.
č — after e, i—roughly as y in saying; after o, ö, u, ü—roughly as w in sowing; after a, å—hardly sounded, but has the effect of lengthening the preceding vowel
ı — something between i as in will and u as in radium
ö — French eu as in seul, or German ö as in öffnen
ş — sh as in shut
ü — French u as in lumière, or German ü as in schützen
CHAPTER I

Introduction: The Sources of Turkish Civilization

Quis unquam tam sapiens aut doctus audebit describere prudenciam, militiam et fortitudinem Turcorum? Qui putabant terrere gentem Francorum minis suarum sagittarum, sicut terruerunt Arabes, Saracenos et Hermenios, Surosos et Grecos.

Gesta Francorum, c. 1100.

It is one of the strange things of Constantinople that for one copper coin one can be rowed from Rumelia to Frangistan or from Frangistan to Rumelia.

Tursun Beg, 'Turih-i Ebu'li-Fetih', c. 1500.

'The Turks are a people who speak Turkish and live in Turkey.' At first glance, this does not seem to be a proposition of any striking originality, nor of any very revolutionary content. Yet the introduction and propagation of this idea in Turkey, and its eventual acceptance by the Turkish people as expressing the nature of their corporate identity and statehood, has been one of the major revolutions of modern times, involving a radical and violent break with the social, cultural, and political traditions of the past.

The name Turkey has been given to Turkish-speaking Anatolia almost since its first conquest by the Turks in the eleventh century—given, that is, by Europeans. But the Turks themselves did not adopt it as the official name of their country until 1923. When they did so, they used a form—Türkiye—that clearly revealed its European origin. The people had once called themselves Turks, and the language they spoke was still called Turkish, but in the Imperial society of the Ottomans the ethnic term Turk was little used, and then chiefly in a rather derogatory sense, to designate the Turcoman nomads or, later, the ignorant and uncouth Turkish-speaking peasants of the Anatolian villages. To

1 The first occurrence of the name Turkey for the Anatolian lands conquered by the Turks is in a chronicle of the Crusade of Barbarossa, of 1190. By the thirteenth century the term is already in common use among western authors. See Claude Cahen, 'Le Problème ethnique en Anatolie', J. Hist. 11 (1954), 510.
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apply it to an Ottoman gentleman of Constantinople would have been an insult.²

Even the term Ottoman was understood not in a national but in a dynastic sense, like Umayyad, Abbasid, and Seljuk, and the Ottoman state was felt to be the heir and successor, in the direct line, of the great Islamic Empires of the past. The concepts of an Ottoman nation and an Ottoman fatherland, as foci of national and patriotic loyalty, were nineteenth-century innovations under European influence. They were of brief duration.

Until the nineteenth century the Turks thought of themselves primarily as Muslims; their loyalty belonged, on different levels, to Islam and to the Ottoman house and state. The language a man spoke, the territory he inhabited, the race from which he claimed descent, might be of personal, sentimental, or social significance. They had no political relevance. So completely had the Turks identified themselves with Islam that the very concept of a Turkish nationality was submerged—and this despite the survival of the Turkish language and the existence of what was in fact though not in theory a Turkish state. Among the common people, the rustics and the nomads, a sense of Turkishness survived, and found expression in a rich but neglected folk literature. The governing and educated groups, however, had not even retained to the same degree as the Arabs and Persians an awareness of their identity as a separate ethnic and cultural group within Islam.

The Turkish national idea, in the modern sense, first appears in the mid-nineteenth century. Many factors contributed to its development—European exiles in Turkey, and Turkish exiles in Europe; European Turcological research, and the new knowledge which it brought of the ancient history and civilization of the Turkish peoples; the Russian Turks and Tatars, who encountered Russian pan-Slavism and reacted against it with a growing national consciousness of their own, nourished—by an odd paradox—by Russian Turcological discoveries; the influence of the subject peoples of the Ottoman Empire, who as Christians were more open to national ideas coming from the West, and who

² A text studied by Cahen shows that already in the thirteenth century a bourgeoisie of Konya uses the designation “Turk” exclusively for the “barbarous” and “unbearable” Turkoman frontier population (Cahen, in G. E. von Grunebaum, Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization (1955), p. 330).
At first these ideas were limited to a small circle of intellectuals, but gradually they spread far and wide, and their victory was finally symbolized by the official adoption, for the first time, of the names of Turkey and Turk for the country and people of the Republic. The growth of the sentiment of Turkish identity was connected with the movement away from Islamic practice and tradition, and towards Europe. This began with purely practical short-term measures of reform, intended to accomplish a limited purpose; it developed into a large-scale, deliberate attempt to take a whole nation across the frontier from one civilization to another.

After the nationalist and modernist movements had established themselves, an interesting new development appeared—the assertion of identity with earlier, pre-existing local civilizations. This movement has its parallels in some other Islamic countries, and is of course a consequence of the importation of the European idea of the secular and territorial fatherland and of a mystical and permanent relationship between the land and the people who inhabit it. In Turkey it gave rise to the so-called Anatolianist movement and, later, to the theories, fathered by Atatürk, of the Turkish origin of such ancient peoples as the Sumerians, the Trojans, and, above all, the Hittites.

This movement was partly political, with the purpose of encouraging the Turks to identify themselves with the country they inhabit—and thus at the same time of discouraging dangerous pan-Turanian adventures. But despite its politically inspired excesses and absurdities, Atatürk’s Anatolian theory contained, or rather brought to light, important elements of truth.

We may then distinguish three main streams of influence that have gone to make modern Turkey: the Islamic, the Turkish, and a third, composite one that for want of a better name we may call local.

1. Local

The Muslim Turks who came to Turkey were marked by a complex and diverse pattern of tradition and culture. One strain is the Anatolian, the importance of which was stressed in the Turkish

It is interesting that while the Turks claimed to be kinsmen and descendants of the ancient Anatolians, they made no such claim concerning the Byzantines, who had the threefold disadvantage, for this purpose, of being Greek, Christian, and above all, extant.
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official thesis. The Hittites have left the most striking remains and have been the subject of the most publicized theorizing, and the other ancient peoples of Anatolia have no doubt also left their mark. The Anatolian is, however, not the only strain. The Ottoman Empire from its first century was a Balkan as well as an Anatolian power, and Rumelia was for long the main centre. Only in our own day has it lost its central position, together with that of Constantinople-Istanbul, the Imperial city with its millennial traditions of state and civilization, the ancient link between the European and Asian territories of the Empire.

Any visitor to Turkey, especially one entering from the south or the east, must at once be struck by the vigorous survival of these local traditions within Turkish Islam. Many things will bring them to his attention—the Anatolian village house and mosque, so different in style and structure from those of Syria and Iraq; the Balkan, almost European tonalities of Turkish music of the kind called popular, as against the 'classical' music in the Perso-Arabic manner; the Byzantine-looking cupolas on the mosques and the Greek and south-east European decorative motives in both formal design and peasant handicrafts.

The survival of Anatolian elements in modern Turkey is now beyond dispute. There is no need to assert that the Turks are Hittites or that the Hittites were Turks—but it is clear that there was a large measure of continuity. This becomes clearer with the parallel progress of archaeological and anthropological work in Anatolia today. It is true that there was large-scale Turkish colonization in Antolia, but the indigenous population was neither exterminated nor entirely expelled. The Greek upper class and the Greek cultural layer were replaced—and in time the inhabitants were reassimilated, this time to Islamic and Turkish patterns. They carried over much of their own culture, especially in what pertains to agriculture and village life—the alternation of the seasons, sowing and reaping, birth, marriage, and death. With these things the newly imported Islamic culture, here as elsewhere essentially urban, had less concern.

The Rumelian influence, after the conquest, came from the top rather than from the bottom. Unlike Anatolia, most of Rumelia was never assimilated either to Islam or to the Turkish language. The peasant masses remained Christian, alien in language and culture as well as religion, outside the cultural horizon of the
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Turks. But the Balkan peoples had an enormous influence on the Ottoman ruling class. One of the most important channels was the devşirme, the levy of boys, by means of which countless Balkan Christians entered the political and military élites of the Empire. Nor was that all. Even the local Christian landed ruling class was not wholly destroyed, as was once thought, but survived to some extent on its lands, and was incorporated in the Ottoman system. In the fifteenth century there were still Christian Timariots—military fief-holders—in Albania. Then and later, Rumelian Christian troops served with the Ottoman forces, both as feudal cavalry and as common soldiers, while converted Rumelians were to be found holding fiefs and commands all over the Asiatic provinces of the Empire. The great role of the Albanians and Bosniaks in the Ottoman Empire is well known. Together with other Rumelians, they continued to play an important part in the reforms and revolutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Byzantine heritage of Turkey was at one time much exaggerated. Some historians attributed almost everything in Ottoman state and society to one or other source in Byzantium, and spoke of massive borrowings of Byzantine institutions and practices after the capture of Constantinople in 1453. It is now generally agreed that much of this is erroneous, and that in fact the Byzantine elements in Ottoman civilization are very much smaller than had previously been supposed. Moreover, these elements date from before the conquest of Constantinople, in most cases indeed from before the establishment of the Ottoman state. Some borrowings can be traced back to the time of the Anatolian Seljuks—others even to the Abbasid Caliphate, from which they came to Turkey as part of classical Islamic civilization itself. It was natural for the Seljuks to borrow during their long cohabitation with Byzantium, at a time when that state had not yet dwindled into the pale shadow that the Ottomans encountered.

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4 On this term, and the practice that it denotes, reference may be made to the article 'Devshirme' in EI² (by V. L. Menage). The compulsory levy of boys, originating in early Ottoman times, died out in the seventeenth century.


6 Köprülüşade Mehmet Fuat (=M. F. Köprülü), 'Bizans Müesseselerinin Osmanlı Müesseselerine Te'siri hakkında bazı Mülâhazalar', Türk Huk. ve İkt. Tar. Mec., i
Yet, if the Byzantine elements have been exaggerated and misdated, they are nevertheless there. Though perhaps fewer, they are at the same time older and more deeply rooted—older perhaps than the Byzantine Empire. The survival of Byzantine motives in architecture has already been mentioned. But something as central and as typical in a society as its religious architecture cannot be an isolated phenomenon. The Byzantine elements in the Turkish mosque—so universal and so persistent—must express some deeper social and cultural affinity, all the more so in a society like Islam, where all is under the sign of religion. To suggest but one possible line of thought: perhaps we may associate the domed basilica type of mosque with the appearance—for the first time in Islam, and under Turkish rule—of an ecclesiastical hierarchy, with muftis presiding over territorial jurisdictions, under the supreme authority of the Şeyh-i-İl-Islâm, the Chief Mufti of the capital, whom we may describe, perhaps a little fancifully, as the Archbishop-primate of the Ottoman Empire. And here we may recall that hierarch and cupola are both oriental invaders even in Byzantium.

One other aspect of local influence may perhaps be considered here. Rumelia and Constantinople are part of Europe, and the Ottomans have from an early stage in their history been in contact with Europe—longer and more closely than any other Islamic state, not excluding North Africa. The Empire included important European territories, in which it absorbed European peoples and institutions. It also maintained contact with the West through trade, diplomacy, war, and—not least—immigration.

Mehmed the Conqueror had a knowledge of Greek and a library of Greek books. His entourage included the Italian humanist Ciriaco Pizzocolli of Ancona; his biographer was the Greek Critoboulos, his portraitist the Venetian Bellini.7 Though unusual, this was not an isolated phenomenon. Not a little knowledge of the West was brought by the many renegades and refugees who sought a career in the Ottoman service, as well as by European diplomats and merchants. In the fifteenth century the Ottoman Sultans were quick to adopt the European device of artillery—often with European gunners and gun-founders. By the sixteenth...
Introduction: The Sources of Turkish Civilization

and seventeenth centuries Ottoman soldiers and sailors were trying, with varying success, to adopt European techniques of warfare, while Ottoman scholars were making their first tentative inquiries into European geography, history, and medical science. Before the nineteenth century Ottoman borrowings from Europe were mainly of a material order, and were restricted in both scope and effect. But today it is almost a truism that there can be no limited and insulated borrowing by one civilization of the practices of another, but that each element introduced from outside brings a train of consequences. We should perhaps reconsider the significance and effects of such early Ottoman importations from Europe as cartography, navigation, shipbuilding, and artillery, followed in the eighteenth century by printing, military engineering, and an Italianate style in Turkish architecture, exemplified in the Nuruosmaniye mosque in Istanbul.

2. Turkish

A visitor to Turkey will encounter at once the first and unmistakable sign of Turkishness—the Turkish language, which, despite long subjection to alien influences, survives triumphantly. Scholars have noted the remarkable capacity of Turkish to resist, displace, and even supplant other languages with which it has come in contact. With the Turkish language, as a sign of Turkish tradition, the visitor may perhaps associate the habit of authority and decision, and therefore of self-reliance, which the Turks have retained from their historic role in the Islamic world.

Language was indeed the main—or at any rate the most readily identifiable—contribution of the Turks to the diversified culture of the Ottoman Empire. As once the Arabic language and the Islamic faith, so now the Turkish language and the Sunni Islamic faith were necessary qualifications of membership of the dominant social class. In Ottoman Turkish was created a rich and subtle means of expression, a worthy instrument of an Imperial civilization. The Ottomans had no racial arrogance or exclusiveness, no insistence on 'pure' Turkish descent—nothing equivalent to the segregation on a lower level of the Mawdil—the non-Arab

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* A. Adnan, La Science chez les Turcs ottomans (1939). A more extensive treatment of the subject by the same author in Turkish will be found in A. Adnan-Adıvar, Osmanlı Türklerinde İlim (1943). See further below, ch. iii.

* See below, p. 440.
converts to Islam—by the Arab masters of the early Caliphate. Islam and the Turkish language were the entry requirements which opened the door both to real power and to social status, to Albanian, Greek, and Slav as well as to Kurd and Arab.

For a time the Turks showed little national consciousness—far less, for example, than the Arabs or Persians. The pre-Islamic Turks were after all no savages, but peoples of a certain level of civilization, with their own states, religions, and literatures. Yet, save for a few fragments, all was forgotten and obliterated in Islam, until its partial recovery by European scholarship in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There is no Turkish equivalent to Arab memories of the heathen heroes of old Arabia, to Persian pride in the bygone glories of the ancient Emperors of Iran, even to the vague Egyptian legends woven around the broken but massive monuments of the Pharaohs. Save for a few fragments of folk poetry and of genealogical legend, all the pre-Islamic Turkish past was forgotten, and even a newly Islamized Turkish dynasty like the Karahanids in the tenth century forgot their Turkish antecedents and called themselves by a name from Persian legend—the House of Afräsiyäb. Even the very name Turk, and the entity it connotes, are in a sense Islamic. Though the word Turk occurs in pre-Islamic inscriptions, it refers only to one among the related steppe peoples. Its generalized use to cover the whole group, and perhaps even the very notion of such a group, dates from Islam and became identified with Islam; and the historic Turkish nation and culture, even in a certain sense the language, in the forms in which they have existed in the last millennium, were all born in Islam. To this day the term Turk is never applied to non-Muslims, though they be of Turkic origin and language like the heathen Chuvash and Christian Gagauz, or citizens of a Turkish state, like the Christians and Jews of Istanbul.

But the real Turkish element in Ottoman society and culture, if unselconscious and unarticulated, is nevertheless profoundly important. It was revived in the late fourteenth century, when the

11 In Iranian legend, re-echoed in Persian heroic poetry, Afräsiyäb was king of Turan, a term which was later arbitrarily applied to the Turks.
Ottomans, expanding from western into eastern Anatolia, encountered large groups of Turkish nomads, with their tribal organization and traditions intact—not yet scattered, disintegrated, and affected by local influences as in the western part of the peninsula.

During the first half of the fifteenth century there are a number of signs of the rise of a kind of Turkish national consciousness. It was at this time that the Ottoman Sultan assumed the old Turkish title of Khan; the cattle-brand of the Oğuz Turkish tribe of Kayı, from whom the Ottomans claimed descent, appeared as an emblem on Ottoman coins, and Ottoman historians and poets elaborated the Oğuz legend, which linked the Ottoman ruling house with a quasi-mythical Turkish antiquity and became the official account of the origins of the dynasty. At the court of Murad II (1421–51) and his successors, Turkish poetry flourished and the study of Turkish antiquities was greatly in vogue. Even the Central Asian Turkish language and literature were for a while cultivated, and towards the end of the fifteenth century a literary school tried to write in pure and simple Turkish, without excessive use of the Persian and Arabic words and expressions that were already a part of the Turkish literary language. This movement was limited and in many respects transitory, but it had an important effect in reaffirming the position of the Turkish language and thus of all that accompanies and is contained in language in the life of a people. It is significant too as the first major appearance, in the Ottoman state, of the nomadic Turkish element, which was now an important part of the Turkish population.

It is primarily as an ethnic reservoir that the Turkish nomadic tribes are important in the Ottoman Empire. They were not a ruling element as such, but were rather treated with alternating mistrust and contempt by the state and the ruling groups. They were, however, the reserve on which the ruling class drew. The movement of the tribesmen into Ottoman society took place in several ways. One was the process of sedentarization, by which the nomads were settled on an increasing scale in different parts of

14 Köprüüzade Mehmed Fuad (=M. F. Köprüü), Millet Edebiyatın ilk Mabeyzileri (1st., 1928).
16 Wittek, in Mé. G. Smetts.