

Türkiye in the History Textbooks of Contemporary Azerbaijan

written by Shalala Mammadova Şəlalə Məmmədova

In one of his speeches in May 2025, President of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, described the Battle of Chaldiran as a joint victory of Turks, Kurds, and Arabs over a common enemy. In his earlier addresses, he had emphasized that Shah Ismail once attempted to destabilize the Ottoman state both internally and externally, but the Turks had succeeded in defending their homeland. President Erdoğan's reference to the Safavids as adversaries—despite Türkiye being regarded as a “brotherly state”—was met with mixed reactions in Azerbaijani society. The fact that Erdoğan's remarks sparked differing opinions within both Azerbaijan and Türkiye is clearly a result of the same historical events being interpreted from different perspectives in each country. At the same time, this divergence reflects the way Azerbaijani history is represented in textbooks in Türkiye, and conversely, how the history of Türkiye is portrayed in textbooks in Azerbaijan.

This article examines the image of Türkiye in contemporary Azerbaijani history textbooks intended for general secondary education, including the *History of Azerbaijan*, *General History*, and the textbook titled *Common Turkic History*. The analysis provides a comparative perspective on how Türkiye is represented across different educational materials. In this article, I do not aim to assess whether historical facts related to Turkic peoples, the Ottoman Empire, or the Republic of Türkiye are falsified or distorted, nor do I intend to determine whether these representations are accurate or biased.

First and foremost, it should be noted that, as in Azerbaijan,

the teaching of history in Türkiye is given particular emphasis. This is because history has played a fundamental role in the formation of the modern, national, and secular Republic of Türkiye.[\[1\]](#) With the foundation of the republic, a new historiographical approach emerged toward both the Ottoman Empire and the pre-Islamic history of the Turks, where history began to be narrated from the standpoint of contemporary political and cultural values. As in Azerbaijani textbooks, the teaching of history in Türkiye is not limited to the history of the state alone. Textbooks in Türkiye present the country's history within the broader analysis of Asia's general historical context, focusing on the history of ancient Turkic states and Turkic-Muslim polities.[\[2\]](#) As in the case of Azerbaijani textbooks, the primary aim of history textbooks in Türkiye is to extend the historical depth of the Turks, enhance their significance within the context of world history, and construct a past that evokes national pride. These textbooks seek to affirm that the Turks are a dignified people, to demonstrate that Anatolia was shaped and built by Turks, to highlight the indispensable contributions of Turks to Islamic civilization, and to explain the importance of the Republic of Türkiye in the historical development of Turkish society. Another central objective of Türkiye's history textbooks is to underscore the enduring and mutually beneficial historical ties between Türkiye and other Turkic states, both near and distant.

This aim has been partially realized through the creation of a Common Turkic History. The idea of a shared Turkic history first gained traction at the end of the 20th century, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. After more than three decades of discussions among the leaders of the newly independent Turkic republics, the initiative was partially implemented in 2019. In that year, a textbook intended for use in secondary schools in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Türkiye, and Azerbaijan was published. The textbook was developed by the International Turkic Academy and was approved by the Ministry

of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan for inclusion in the 2021–2022 academic curriculum as an elective subject.

The textbook is designed specifically for 8th-grade students and focuses on events in the Turkic world from ancient times to the 15th century.

Türkiye in Azerbaijani History Textbooks

In Azerbaijani history textbooks, the study of ancient Turkic history begins in the 7th grade. The section titled “Oghuz-Seljuk Migrations and Azerbaijan” states that Azerbaijan has been “the homeland of Turkic tribes” since ancient times.[\[3\]](#) For this reason, the arrival of the Seljuks in Azerbaijan is not presented as an invasion or conquest but rather as Seljuk migrations, and the section emphasizes that this movement “led to a significant ethno-political change in Azerbaijan in the mid-11th century.” It is stated that the Seljuks fulfilled two important missions in the history of Azerbaijan: 1) Through the Seljuk migration, the Turkic element became the dominant ethnic and political force in the South Caucasus and the broader Near East; 2) The Seljuks “liberated the Muslim Turkic population of the Caucasus from the domination of Byzantine, Georgian, and Armenian feudal lords.” As an example, it is stated that “in 1048, the Seljuks, passing through Arran, together with the Shaddadids, defeated the Byzantine-Georgian-Armenian military forces.” It is noted that during the reign of Sultan Alp Arslan, a new phase of the conquest of Azerbaijan began.[\[4\]](#)

The arrival of the Seljuk Turks in Azerbaijan is described as the third major migration wave of Turkic tribes to the region, and the textbook states that “the Oghuz Turks quickly assimilated with the Turks already living in Azerbaijan.” The Seljuk conquests are generally evaluated positively for Azerbaijan, and even their increase in taxation is not portrayed as a negative outcome.[\[5\]](#) Among the powerful states

that emerged after the fragmentation of the Seljuk Empire, the Atabegs of Azerbaijan (Eldiguzids) are highlighted as the most significant. Shamseddin Eldeniz (Shams al-Din Eldiguz) is depicted as a wise and farsighted leader, with his greatest achievement being the unification of all Azerbaijani territories under his rule.[\[6\]](#) Another noted accomplishment is his successful defense of Azerbaijani lands from Georgian incursions.

The portrayal of the Seljuks in Azerbaijani textbooks not as conquerors but as defenders is shaped by two key factors: First, the textbooks emphasize that the Seljuks were not foreign elements but brothers to the Turks already living in Azerbaijan; and second, the Seljuks are identified as the ancestors of the future Ottoman Empire.

The second instance in which Turkic identity is foregrounded concerns the Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu (Bayandur) states. These confederations, described as ancient Oghuz tribes, are said to have migrated to Eastern Anatolia from Azerbaijan.[\[7\]](#) The Qara Qoyunlu consolidation of power in Azerbaijan is portrayed positively and not labeled as occupation, and Jahan Shah Baharlu's efforts to establish cordial relations with the Ottoman Empire are praised.[\[8\]](#) The emphasis on diplomatic relations stems from the fact that various Turkic states in Azerbaijani territory were often in conflict with the Ottomans.

Under the rule of Hasan Padishah, head of the Bayandur (Aq Qoyunlu) dynasty, relations with the Ottomans deteriorated—framed in the textbooks as a reaction to the Ottoman occupation of Trabzon. The mission of resolving this tension is taken on by Hasan Padishah's mother. However, despite their shared origins, the political ambitions of the two rulers could not be restrained. In the Battle of Beyşehir, the Bayandur forces were defeated by the Ottomans.[\[9\]](#) After several clashes, it becomes evident that neither side achieved its objectives and that the Bayandur (Aq Qoyunlu) state

ultimately weakened as a result of these conflicts.

“The Safavid–Ottoman Wars” illustrate that relations between the two Turkic states were far from fraternal or friendly.[\[10\]](#) The textbook notes that the Safavids, who emerged in the early 16th century and solidified their influence in Azerbaijan, the South Caucasus, and Eastern Anatolia, were seen as a significant threat to the Ottoman Empire. As a result, bloody wars between the Ottomans and the Safavids over Azerbaijan and the broader Caucasus region continued for more than a century. The textbook emphasizes that these conflicts had predominantly negative consequences for Azerbaijan.[\[11\]](#) However, in its description of the Battle of Chaldiran—one of the most violent confrontations between the two sides—the textbook avoids harsh language or emotionally charged expressions. At the same time, when recounting Sultan Suleyman’s military campaigns in Azerbaijan, it notes that the “scorched earth” tactics used to prevent Ottoman advances caused severe economic devastation.[\[12\]](#)

In the 8th-grade Azerbaijani history textbook, there are several sections that present the Ottomans as occupiers. These sections primarily focus on the wars between the Safavids and the Ottomans. The chapters titled “The Occupation of Azerbaijani Territories by the Ottomans” and “The Military Successes of Shah Abbas I” state that the Peace of Amasya, signed between the two states, did not last long and that the Ottomans violated its terms by taking advantage of the weakening Safavid state.[\[13\]](#) One of the primary goals of Shah Abbas’s foreign policy is described as the liberation of occupied Azerbaijani lands from Ottoman control.

In the section titled “Azerbaijani Territories under the Rule of Russia and the Ottoman Empire,” Ottoman administration is portrayed in more favorable terms compared to Russian rule.[\[14\]](#) The textbook notes that the Ottomans implemented a more humanistic tax policy, exempting economically disadvantaged segments of the population from taxation.

However, the textbook also acknowledges that Janissaries plundered the population and highlights a major uprising against Ottoman rule in Karabakh in 1727.[\[15\]](#) In the section “The Liberation of Azerbaijani Territories,” the textbook states that the Safavids entered negotiations to form a united front with Russia against the Ottomans, and following the military campaigns of 1735, the Ottomans were expelled from “all Safavid territories they had occupied.”[\[16\]](#)

With the fall of the Safavid Empire and the occupation of the South Caucasus by Russia, the place, role, and mission of the Ottoman Empire in the region underwent a transformation. In the section titled “Azerbaijan in 1918–1920: The First Republic” of the 9th grade history textbook dedicated to the modern period, several important issues are addressed, highlighting the positive role of the Ottoman Empire.[\[17\]](#) The textbook emphasizes that the Baku Soviet pursued a policy of genocide against Azerbaijanis, and attributes this to the hatred of Turks by the Armenian-Dashnak leaders within the Bolshevik government in Baku. During the peace negotiations in Batumi in May 1918 between representatives of the South Caucasus and the Ottoman Empire, the main source of tension arose from the Azerbaijani delegation’s inclination towards the Ottoman state. After the declaration of an independent Azerbaijani state, the Ottoman Empire was the first country with which diplomatic relations were established. On 4 June 1918, a treaty of peace and friendship was signed with the Ottoman Empire, making it the first state to recognize the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic (ADR). According to the Treaty of Batumi, the Ottoman government undertook the responsibility of providing military support to the Azerbaijani government when necessary to ensure law, order, and national security. The textbook emphasizes the decisive role of the Caucasian Islamic Army in the liberation of Baku.[\[18\]](#)

The flag adopted by the ADR in June 1918 “resembled the flag of the Ottoman Empire, with a slight difference.”[\[19\]](#) The textbook states that the task of military organization in

Azerbaijan was entrusted to Nuru Pasha, commander of the Caucasian Islamic Army. After the Ottoman army withdrew from Azerbaijan, Armenian armed groups became more active, leading to massacres of the Turkish population in many regions. Thus, in the early 20th century, the Ottoman Empire is presented both as a protector of Azerbaijani Turks and a builder of critical state infrastructure.[\[20\]](#) The Ottoman state held a significant place in the foreign policy of the ADR. The textbook notes: "Relations with the Ottoman Empire were based on historical traditions and fraternal bonds. The ADR government's pro-Ottoman policy was not without reason. The Ottoman state played a major role in ensuring Azerbaijan's territorial integrity."[\[21\]](#)

The history textbooks for grades 10 and 11 offer a more detailed account of history from ancient times to the modern period. In these textbooks as well, Turks and the Ottoman Empire are generally portrayed positively. The Oghuz-Turkmen tribes that founded the Qara Qoyunlu state began settling in Azerbaijan from the 7th century. Among the founders, Qara Yusif and his son Cahan Shah established friendly relations with the Ottomans.[\[22\]](#) Those who established the Aq Qoyunlu state had settled in Azerbaijan since the early Middle Ages and later expanded into Eastern Anatolia. With the strengthening of the Aq Qoyunlu state and the expansionist policy pursued by the Ottomans, relations between the two Turkic states deteriorated. Ottoman Sultan Yıldırım Bayezid viewed the founder of the Aq Qoyunlu principality, Qara Osman, as a rival. During the rule of Hasan Bey Bayandur, the expansionist policy of Mehmed II brought the two states into confrontation; although Hasan Bey was victorious at Goyluhisar, he decided to end the war.[\[23\]](#) In the battles of 1473, Hasan Bayandur "completely destroyed" nearly 12,000 Ottoman troops through a "military ruse," and "Ottoman-Aq Qoyunlu relations remained tense" until the end of Uzun Hasan's life.[\[24\]](#)

The textbook states that Shah Ismail maintained normal

relations with Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II, but the expansionist policy of Sultan Selim I disrupted the cordial relationship between the two states. At the Sultan's behest, the ulema declared a jihad against the Qizilbash, initiating two centuries of warfare between the two Turkic states. In the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514, despite Shah Ismail's personal bravery, "the Ottoman army won due to superior numbers and the use of firearms."[\[25\]](#)

The textbook portrays the condition of Azerbaijani territories under Ottoman occupation as dire. Heavy taxation and lawlessness led to uprisings in various regions, and many people unwilling to live under Ottoman rule emigrated. The textbook also highlights the military successes of another Turkic commander, Nadir Shah, who in 1735 succeeded in expelling Ottoman troops from Azerbaijan through military campaigns.[\[26\]](#)

In the chapter titled "The First Republic of the Muslim East – The Azerbaijani Democratic Republic" in the 11th-grade history textbook, Azerbaijani-Ottoman relations are revisited.[\[27\]](#) It notes that Azerbaijani-Ottoman forces (the Caucasian Islamic Army) defeated Soviet troops near Goychay and that the successes of this army allowed the ADR to establish control over much of the country. The textbook asserts that the Ottoman Empire made invaluable contributions to the formation of the ADR, the prevention of the physical extermination of the country's Muslim population, and the protection of Azerbaijani territory from Armenian aggression. It describes "Ottoman assistance to the Azerbaijani people, who had chosen a republican form of government over a constitutional monarchy, as one of the rare events in world history."[\[28\]](#) Interestingly, in the 11th chapter, while explaining the foreign policy of the modern Republic of Azerbaijan, the textbooks do not place much emphasis on relations with the Republic of Türkiye, instead prioritizing relations with Western countries, especially the United States.[\[29\]](#) Nevertheless, in the section titled "The Patriotic War," it is

noted that weapons acquired from Türkiye were used during the 44-day war. [\[30\]](#)

Thus, the portrayal of Turkey in Azerbaijani history textbooks varies depending on historical context and circumstances. The textbooks highlight the ancient settlement of Turkic states, especially the Seljuks and Oghuz Turks, in Azerbaijan, emphasizing that the Turks who later settled in Eastern Anatolia had originally migrated from Azerbaijan. This narrative underscores the shared ethnic roots and fraternal ties between the two peoples. The textbooks also stress not only Turkic but also Islamic solidarity, noting that the Seljuks protected local Turks from Byzantine, Armenian, and Georgian invasions. These friendly relations and the image of Seljuk Turks as protectors continue up to the emergence of powerful states in the region. The textbooks note that none of the Azerbaijani states pursued aggressive policies against the Ottomans; rather, conflicts and wars occurred as a result of the Ottomans' expansionist ambitions. When describing these wars, terms such as "two brothers" and "two Turkic states" are used, and it is emphasized that the Turkic world as a whole suffered loss. The textbooks also recount episodes where, due to political ambitions, Azerbaijani Turks attempted alliances with Christian states against the Ottomans, and some Azerbaijanis (Turks) resisted Ottoman rule and even staged uprisings. In the late medieval period, the Ottoman Empire is generally depicted as an occupying, oppressive, and destructive force.

However, during the revolutionary and imperial collapse period of the 20th century, the Ottoman Empire regains the image of blood brother, protector, and builder. This image is further reinforced in the context of the Armenian-Muslim massacres and Bolshevik policies prior to the establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. The Ottoman Empire is portrayed as providing essential assistance to Azerbaijan in both state and military building. This support, however, also led to tensions between Azerbaijani political leaders and

leaders of neighboring peoples in the South Caucasus. Notably, the textbooks do not consider it necessary to discuss tensions between the Ottomans and Azerbaijanis in this context.

Türkiye in World History Textbooks

The history of ancient Turks is presented similarly in both Azerbaijani and Turkish textbooks. In the World History textbook intended for 6th grade, in the section titled "Ancient Turks," it is stated that the first settlements of the ancient Turks were in a region called Greater Turkestan, and that these lands stretched westward to Anatolia.[\[31\]](#) The Scythian states and the Great Hun Empire are mentioned as the most powerful states established by the ancient Turks.[\[32\]](#) It is noted that the Huns founded the first Turkic state in Central Asia.

In the 7th-grade textbook, which begins with the Great Migration of Peoples, information is provided about the European Huns and the Hephthalite (White Hun) state. It is stated that after the collapse of the "Great Hun Empire," some Turks migrated to Western Turkestan and established the White Hun state there.[\[33\]](#) The borders of this "state stretched from western Mongolia to the Caspian Sea." In the section dedicated to Turkic-origin states in Central Asia, it is noted that the Oghuz were a tribal union consisting of 24 clans, primarily settled "between the Seyhun River and the Caspian Sea in Central Asia."[\[34\]](#) The Seljuk state is presented as the most powerful Turkish state of the classical feudal period. This section titled "Great Seljuk Empire" states that the Seljuks migrated to Anatolia because they were suffering from political pressure, land scarcity, and a lack of pastures, and that after overthrowing the Ghaznavid state, they established the Great Seljuk Empire.[\[35\]](#) The struggle of the Seljuk leader against Christians is depicted, and the authors write that Alp Arslan "defeated the Armenians, Georgians, and Abkhazians who had contact with Byzantium." Alp Arslan's "main goal was to turn Anatolia into Turkish land."[\[36\]](#) This goal was realized

“after the Battle of Manzikert,” and “Anatolia became Turkish land forever.”[\[37\]](#)

In the section titled “Ottoman Empire,” the authors state that the Anatolian Seljuk Sultanate emerged as a result of the fragmentation of the Great Seljuk Empire.[\[38\]](#) After the Mongol invasions, serious changes occurred in the region, and some Turkish tribes living in Central Asia and Azerbaijan, under pressure from the Mongols, took refuge in the Anatolian Seljuk Sultanate. For this reason, Turks from Azerbaijan also participated in the conquests carried out during the reign of Orhan Gazi. The textbook states that during the siege and conquest of Bursa, which later became the capital of the Ottoman Empire, Geyikli Baba from the city of Khoy in Azerbaijan came with his followers to support the Ottoman army.[\[39\]](#)

During the reign of Sultan Selim, the attitude toward other Turkic states changed. The textbook does not explain the reason for this shift but emphasizes that Selim’s primary targets for attack were the Turkic-Muslim states in the East – the Azerbaijani Safavid state and the Egyptian Mamluk Sultanate. Thus, the unity and solidarity that had existed since ancient times began to be disrupted. Failing to consolidate power in Azerbaijan, Selim I brought Egypt under the control of the Ottoman state. The textbook provides no further information about the Ottoman-Safavid wars. In the section on the culture of Eastern peoples, extensive information is presented about science and culture in the Ottoman state.[\[40\]](#)

The World History textbook for 8th grade presents the history of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th–18th centuries. The Ottoman Empire is described as “a powerful state with vast territories by the end of the 16th century. Victorious in the wars with the Safavids, the Ottomans had taken control of vast territories extending to the Caspian Sea.”[\[41\]](#) However, at the beginning of the 17th century, the Ottoman Empire “entered a

period of stagnation, followed by decline.” The textbook then analyzes the socio-economic, political, and international reasons for the weakening of the Ottoman state. Western/Christian powers attempted to include the Safavid state in alliances against the Ottomans, but the Safavid ruler Shah Suleiman responded to these efforts by saying: “In difficult times, we will not stab our brothers in blood and faith in the back.”[\[42\]](#)

The textbook notes that with the “loss of significant territory in Europe,” the Ottoman Empire “entered a period of decline following the period of stagnation.” After suffering heavy defeats on the battlefield and losing many territories, the Ottomans realized they were falling behind in military organization, scientific progress, and technological development, and they began to turn toward European courts. This section of the textbook does not mention the Ottoman wars with Nadir or their failed battles. It states only that after the peace treaty between Mahmud I and Nadir Afshar, the Ottomans redirected their strength toward the Habsburgs.[\[43\]](#) The cause of the 1789–1791 Russo-Ottoman War is attributed to Russia’s occupation of Crimea and its brutal repression of the local population, thereby portraying the Ottomans as the defenders of Turkic peoples.[\[44\]](#) The war’s conclusion and the Treaty of Jassy are characterized as “the beginning of the disintegration period of the Ottoman state.” On page 41 of the textbook, an English cartoon is presented depicting Napoleon being defeated by the Ottoman army, but the textbook does not clarify which event it refers to. In the section on culture, the scientific achievements of the Ottoman state are discussed, noting that the first printing press was established in 1727 and that the first book was published in the empire at that time.

In the 9th-grade textbook covering modern history, the authors note that “by the early 19th century, the Ottoman Empire, which possessed territories across three continents, had clearly fallen behind European countries politically and

economically.”[\[45\]](#) Reforms implemented with the aim of strengthening the state’s military power failed, and “as a result of the Balkan Wars, the Ottoman Empire’s rule in Europe came to an end.”[\[46\]](#) On the Caucasus front of World War I, the Russian and Ottoman armies were in combat. In the section titled “The Ottoman Empire in the War,” the authors argue that “the Ottoman Empire’s military position on the Caucasus front was dire. At the beginning of 1915, the heavy defeat at the Battle of Sarikhamish created a favorable environment for Russian forces to launch offensive operations in Eastern Anatolia.” The textbook highlights the role of Armenian volunteer military units in the Russian victory, stating that Armenian detachments “committed genocide against the Turkic-Muslim population of the region” and caused “horrific destruction.” “They provided comprehensive support to the Russian army and betrayed the Ottoman state.” However, it is also stated that “in the 1915–1916 Battle of Gallipoli, the Ottoman army, displaying great heroism, achieved victory.” The textbook emphasizes the role of Azerbaijani volunteers in this victory who came to support.[\[47\]](#)

In the paragraph dedicated to events in Türkiye between World War I and World War II, the leadership of Mustafa Kemal in the liberation movement and the consequences of his later activities are discussed. The textbook authors note that in December 1920, the Turks “defeated the Dashnak-Armenian state” and forced it to sign the Treaty of Gumru.[\[48\]](#) Thus, “the Armenian government renounced its territorial claims to Anatolia.” In 1921, the Greek army was defeated in the Battle of Sakarya. “With the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, the independence and territorial integrity of Türkiye were recognized.” The textbook emphasizes that “Türkiye was the only defeated country in World War I that did not accept the treaty imposed by the victors.”[\[49\]](#) In the section titled “Mustafa Kemal’s Reforms,” cultural reforms are addressed, and it is noted that the adoption of the Latin alphabet in Türkiye led Soviet Azerbaijan to undertake the same step.[\[50\]](#)

In examining Türkiye's place and role in the new international relations system that emerged after World War II, the Soviet Union's territorial claims against Türkiye are brought to the forefront. This situation "forced Türkiye to draw closer to the United States. The U.S. provided Türkiye with military and economic assistance."[\[51\]](#) The textbook states that Türkiye defended its compatriots in Cyprus, and that in 1974, when Greece attempted to annex the island, Türkiye stood against all Western states and deployed troops to the island. "Despite political pressure and the imposition of an economic embargo, Türkiye demonstrated resolve and did not back down." Türkiye's firm stance resulted in the division of the island into two parts and the establishment of a Turkish state in the north of Cyprus.[\[52\]](#) The textbook also notes that Türkiye has long suffered from Armenian and Kurdish terrorism. It describes the achievements of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which came to power during the economic crisis of the 2000s under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, stating that the new leader brought political stability and economic development to the country.[\[53\]](#)

Thus, while analyzing historical processes from antiquity and the medieval period, the World History textbooks attempt to demonstrate the deep bond between Azerbaijani Turks and Anatolian Turks, presenting them as sharing common roots and united against a common enemy. The long and bloody wars during the classical feudal period are attributed to the expansionist policies of the Ottoman sultans. In the modern era, the weakening Ottoman Empire—falling behind Western countries in scientific and technological development—is portrayed as a defender and protector of Turkic kin. Türkiye's alignment with Soviet Russia after World War I and with the United States after World War II is explained in terms of national interest. Internal contradictions within Türkiye are linked to the terrorist policies of national minorities (Armenians and Kurds).

Türkiye in the Common Turkic History Textbook

The Common Turkic History textbook, prepared by the International Turkic Academy, consists of seven sections. The first section is dedicated to the place of Turkic peoples in world history, while the final section focuses on the spiritual and cultural heritage of Turkic peoples. The remaining five sections are devoted directly to historical processes. Since the objective of this article is to analyze the image of Türkiye in the textbooks, I will specifically focus on the interpretation of the histories of states that are territorially connected with Türkiye – the Great Seljuk Empire, the Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu confederations, and the Ottoman Empire.

The authors of the textbook link the indispensable role of the Seljuks in Turkic history to the victory at the Battle of Malazgirt: “This victory granted the Turks a new homeland in Anatolia.” [\[54\]](#) This state undertook two historical missions – playing a key role in both the spread of Islam and the defense of Islam against the Crusaders. Unlike the Azerbaijani textbooks, the Common Turkic History textbook does not attempt to antiquate the Turkish history of Anatolia. It emphasizes that the first Turkic tribes appeared in the region in the 4th century, consisting mainly of the Huns and the Sabars (referred to as Sabir in Azerbaijani textbooks). Nevertheless, the textbook does not shy away from Turkifying geographical names (İznik, Konya, İstanbul, etc.). It also presents the Seljuk conquests in a positive light, claiming that economic and cultural life flourished in the conquered territories. [\[55\]](#)

The Ottoman state, founded in the early 14th century, is described as the longest-lasting state in the Turkic world. It was established by a representative of the Kayı branch of the Oghuz Turks. The ancestors of this dynasty are said to have migrated from Central Asia to Azerbaijan and then to Anatolia in the 13th century. Explaining Ottoman expansionist policies through religious motives, the authors claim that “the Ottomans’ goal was not to fight against the Turkic-Muslim principalities in Anatolia but to spread Islam.” [\[56\]](#) The

assaults on the Byzantine Empire and other Christian states are portrayed as efforts to Islamize those territories. Another bold claim in the textbook concerns the consequences of the conquest of Istanbul for Europe. The authors argue that the conquest of Istanbul transformed all of European history, as it demonstrated – through the use of powerful cannons – that even the thickest fortress walls could be destroyed and consequently this ended feudal fragmentation in Europe and triggered the formation of centralized states.[\[57\]](#) The textbook also stresses that the Ottoman Empire pursued an ethnically and religiously tolerant policy in the conquered lands. In the discussion of material and spiritual issues, the authors note that the Ottoman state had been “influenced by Arab and Persian Muslim cultures, which had existed long before it.”[\[58\]](#)

Unlike Azerbaijani textbooks, the Common Turkic History textbook does not mention that the first state structure of the Qara Qoyunlu was established within the present-day territory of Türkiye. It merely states that Qara Yusif worked with honest, competent, and capable officials to revive the national economy.[\[59\]](#) The only reference to a connection between the Qara Qoyunlu and the territory of present-day Türkiye is the construction of the Grand Mosque (Ulu Cami) in Van. The textbook states that the founder of the Aq Qoyunlu state was from an Oghuz tribe and that their capital was located in Diyarbakir. It notes that during the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror, the Ottoman-Aq Qoyunlu wars over Trabzon significantly undermined the Aq Qoyunlus’ political and military prestige. Among all states mentioned, the Common Turkic History textbook devotes the most attention to the Ottoman Empire.

Conclusion

The states that existed within the territory of Azerbaijan fought their longest wars with the Ottoman Empire. Religious factors were used to justify these wars. The Ottoman sultans

declared jihad against the Shias, thereby launching attacks on a fellow Muslim state under the pretext of purifying the faith. Nevertheless, except for a brief historical period, Türkiye is generally portrayed with a positive image in history textbooks. By referencing the common origin and shared geographic roots of Azerbaijani and Anatolian Turks, the textbooks equate their socio-political ambitions. They claim that during critical historical periods, Turks helped one another and did not act as rivals. This concept appears logical up to the point when strong political authority began to form in the territory of Azerbaijan; however, it contradicts the prolonged wars between the Aq Qoyunlu, Safavid states and the Ottomans. In order to soften these contradictions, Azerbaijani textbooks attempt to explain what they call fratricidal wars between two Turkic states as the result of Christian world intrigue. The textbooks also aim to improve the image of the Ottomans as occupiers of territories taken through conquest by describing their implementation of a just tax policy and stating that the most vulnerable segments of the population (the elderly, widows, children, etc.) were exempted from heavy tax burdens. The Common Turkic History textbook, on the other hand, draws attention to the policy of ethnic and religious tolerance in the conquered territories but does not explain why this tolerance did not extend to Shia Muslims. The sections of the textbooks dedicated to culture have also been used to polish the image of Anatolian Turks and the Ottoman state, attributing many achievements to the Turks and downplaying the causes of scientific and technological backwardness.

Notes and References

[1] Ismail H. Demircioglu "History Teacher Education and History Education in Turkey" *In History Teacher Education: Global Interrelations (History Education international)* Elisabeth Erdmann, Wolfgang Hasberg (Eds.). Wochenschau

Verlag: 2014, 130

[2] History, 9th Grade Textbook, Devlet Kitaplari 2024, https://tymm.meb.gov.tr/upload/kitap/tarih_9.pdf

[3] History of Azerbaijan, 7th Grade. Baku: Tahsil Publishing and Printing, 2023, p. 54.

[4] Ibid, 55.

[5] Ibid. 57

[6] Ibid. 60

[7] Ibid.83.

[8] Ibid.97.

[9] Ibid.100.

[10] Ibid.117-122.

[11] Ibid.117.

[12] Ibid.120.

[13] History of Azerbaijan, 8th Grade. Baku: Tahsil Publishing and Printing, 2023, pp. 10, 20.

[14] Ibid. 58.

[15] Ibid. 60-1.

[16] Ibid. 62, 64, 65.

[17] History of Azerbaijan, 9th Grade. Baku: Sharq-Qarb, 2024, pp. 82–100.

[18] Ibid. 89.

[19] Ibid.92.

[20] Ibid.98.

[\[21\]](#) Ibid.99.

[\[22\]](#) Ibid. 105, 108.

[\[23\]](#) Ibid. 109, 110.

[\[24\]](#) Ibid. 111.

[\[25\]](#) Ibid. 127-29.

[\[26\]](#) Ibid. 159.

[\[27\]](#) History of Azerbaijan, 11th Grade. Baku: Sharq-Qarb, 2023, pp. 87–88.

[\[28\]](#) Ibid. 96.

[\[29\]](#) Ibid. 187.

[\[30\]](#) Ibid. 206.

[\[31\]](#) General History, 6th Grade. Baku: Azpoliqraf LTD, 2021, p. 68.

[\[32\]](#) Ibid. 73, 77.

[\[33\]](#) General History, 7th Grade. Baku: Sharq-Qarb, 2022, p. 10.

[\[34\]](#) Ibid. 40.

[\[35\]](#) Ibid. 62, 64.

[\[36\]](#) Ibid.65.

[\[37\]](#) Ibid.66.

[\[38\]](#) Ibid.80.

[\[39\]](#) Ibid.81.

[\[40\]](#) Ibid.124.

[\[41\]](#) General History, 8th Grade. Baku: Sharq-Qarb, 2023, p.

28.

[\[42\]](#) Ibid.32.

[\[43\]](#) Ibid.35.

[\[44\]](#) Ibid.38.

[\[45\]](#) General History, 9th Grade. Baku: Sharq-Qarb, 2024, p. 30.

[\[46\]](#) Ibid.32.

[\[47\]](#) Ibid.44.

[\[48\]](#) Ibid.72-3.

[\[49\]](#) Ibid.73.

[\[50\]](#) Ibid.80.

[\[51\]](#) Ibid.118.

[\[52\]](#) Ibid.119.

[\[53\]](#) Ibid. 120.

[\[54\]](#) Common Turkish History: From the Earliest Times to the 15th Century, 8th Grade. Azpoliqraf LTD, 2023, p. 75.

[\[55\]](#) Ibid.77.

[\[56\]](#) Ibid.107

[\[57\]](#) Ibid.108.

[\[58\]](#) Ibid. 113.

[\[59\]](#) Ibid. 124.