

The Turkins are a foreign people with unclear origins; a people known for their equestrian prowess, courage, and adaptability. Though fiercely loyal to their liege, they are largely autonomous - and intend to stay that way.

Origins

The Turkins are a people forged in the fires of war. Several centuries ago, the Akritians were locked in a brutal struggle with the Turkins. The fighting was long. Raiding and pillaging famished thousands, and the clamour of battle claimed thousands more. After endless years of war, with astonishing losses, the Akritian capital was finally and brutally sacked, shortly after the devastating Battle of Nicopolis, which saw most of the Akritian army decimated and many of their foremost noblemen killed or captured.



The Akritian army suffers a reversal at the battle of Nicopolis. Neither side was able to gain the advantage for decades. War was constant; there were no treaties between the two peoples.

It seemed like the Turkins had finally secured their place in the sun; finally defeated their rival and finally forged a legacy of their own.

But it was not to be.

Just as trade started to recover, a crushing plague stormed onto the scene and ravaged both peoples. Most of both nations perished - both peoples were hit equally badly - and the infant hegemony of the Turkins collapsed with the speed of a winged chariot. By the time the plague had ended, a full

half of all of Turkins died, and they once more became people of the horse, abandoning the settlements they had grown to love, once united; now shattered into a thousand pieces.

For years, the Turkins lay in obscurity. They fought amongst each other with petty rivalries, until one legendary man came to bring greatness to them once again. That man was and remains the champion of the Turkins, his descendants still ruling over them today. He was the Bey of Beys - and his name was Orhan Sungur.

Orhan was a brutal man. Believed to be favoured by Tigrir, he conquered the most remote of tribes and brought them under his cruel but even-handed and popular rule. Orhan is remembered as a brave warrior, a brilliant strategist and a hard but just ruler. Establishing many Turkin cultural practices, he was universally loved by his family and his closer circle.

But he could not defeat the Turkin's inhospitable land. He decided to move West, toward the shining beacon of civilisation and wonder that is Oren. Those famous words, from father to son, recorded by the eloquent chronicler Suleiman some decades later, have become legend among the Turkins.



Orhan Sungur depicted by an Orenian artist.

‘Mehmed, heroic son, leave this land. This land has made us hard. It has made us strong. But it cannot support us. We must move elsewhere.

Far to the West, there is an Empire. I heard that they posses gold in such magnitude that even their serfs bathe in it. That all their wheat is golden; that all their heraldry is noble.

Go there! There is a man, whom they call Augustus. He is the Marshal of the land, whose reputation of bravery makes him nearly an equal to us. It is said as thus - that he fears spears and arrows nor more than would an anvil. He serves in the name of Tigrir, like we do.

But above all, remember this. **We are men of the sword. We live by it. We die by it. And never forget it.**' -Orhan Sungur, according to Suleiman the Chronicler.



Orhan Sungur (centre), along with his son Mehmed and his companion Alp Osman, prepare to migrate.

Now, under the leadership of Orhan's son, the Turkin embarks onto a new - and likely bloody - chapter of their history.



Language and Literacy

Like the people that speak it, the origins of the Turkic language are almost entirely untraceable. It arose during the Turkins' nomadic period, where they spoke a primitive language. However, this has quickly changed, and, with some adopting Flexio script (with some letters and literary concepts of their own), the language is much more complex today and suitable for the most eloquent of philosophers. Many choose instead to write in the Qalsheen script.

Literacy tends to be restricted to the Bey and his noble companions, and even then, the more martial of them do not even bother. The merchants who control the lifeblood of the Turkins and their exotic goods also tend to be more well versed in literacy. However, for the common serf or peasant, the script of the Turks is merely a puzzle. It is extremely rare for your regular farmer or craftsmen to read or write; it is rare too for the most dedicated of warriors. Education is mostly at the Madrasas, or by private tutors (many of whom are foreign) by which a Bey or another senior man may educate his sons.

'What good is a son who cannot read?' -Bey Orhan Sungur to his son, according to the chronicle of Suleiman



Turkins are becoming increasingly suited to a settled lifestyle.

Some Phrases:-

Selamlar-Greetings

Evet-Yes

Hayır-no

Yaparım-I'll do it

Memnun oldum!-I'm pleased!

Tanıştığımıza memnun oldum!-Pleased to meet you!

ALLAH ALLAH!-A common warcry in battle

Haydi-Let us

Çok mutluyum ulan!-I'm very happy!

Güle güle-Bye

Elveda-Farewell, Godspeed.

SALDIR!-ATTACK!

GERİ ÇEKİLİN!-Retreat!

Some Nouns:-

Atlı okçu-Horse Archer

Süvari-Cavalry

Okçu-Archer

Piyade-Infantry

Mızraklı Piyade-Spearman

Yeniçeri-Jannissary

Tımarlı Sipahii-Levy

Tımar-Land

Köy-Village

Bey-Lord, Sire

Bacım- 'Sister' though used as a word to show respect to women who are not related

Beylerbeyi-Lord of the Lords (kings or dukes)

Sultan-İmparator

Fighting Style

When the Bey calls his people to war, men of all classes and creeds band together to form a diverse, yet potent mixture of troops.

The Janissaries are the pride of the infantry and an elite heavy infantry unit. Clad in heavy mail and wielding shields and scimitars, these are standing, professional troops, and the match for any foot knight. However, these are the minority.



The Janissaries accompany their Bey everywhere.

Most of the infantry are Tımarlı Sipahii, light infantry armed with maces, axes or spears or skirmishers using javelins and slings, but mostly bows. They are mostly brave and devoted men; not prone to turning their back. However, their light armour makes them vulnerable.



The call of the Bey is sounded, and all men take up arms as Tımarlı Sipahii.

Not quick to forget their past as equestrian masterminds of old, cavalry are by far the most renowned part of the army. Most of them are horse archers, mounting very light and swift horses and making use of the composite bow. This is a tradition practiced for generations, and has been perfected by the Turks.



The Turks are master equestrians.

‘Orhan and his young son approached a man of Tigris, who said to him “By the benevolence of our one creator, it is said he who can cut this knot - which we call the knot of Beys will have for his dynasty everlasting glory!” The knot was very tight and strong, unintelligible by most men. But Orhan simply swung his sword into the knot and broke it, and all rejoiced for he had done the impossible! We ask of Tigris, most exalted and true to bring this prophecy to reality every day, and he brings us closer to it. O, how great is thy kindness, how limitless in thy mercy!’ - The chronicle of Suleiman

However, breeding the famous Amaurian Destrier with their own horses to create the Büyük At (Great Horse) and combining the properties of both, the Turkins also have heavy cavalry. Like the cataphracts of old, both horse and rider are extremely heavily armoured and a fearful sight on the battlefield. Only the Turks’ richest men are equipped in this fashion.



A Turkin horseman in full equipment, with bow, shield and scimitar; clad in full mail.

Values

The Turkins value, above all, bravery. They are a very martial society, and martial strength is central to a Turkin male's standing, especially the Bey's. Some Turkin rulers, including Orhan (considered someone to emulate), have resorted to very ruthless methods to prove their strength. For example, when a rebellious tribe would not pledge allegiance to him, and cost his men lives in a military engagement, he:-

'...Sought revenge in every instance. Invading upon their camp, he torched their tents with their infants still inside. He massacred so many on that night that blood poured here and there in thick lakes; he enslaved many as well. He stacked the dead's heads so high that a horseman could not see above them, and therefore reduced their tribe to dust. The aforementioned slaves' wails were so great in volume that they could be heard for an unbelievable distance. Such is the fate of all who oppose us!' -Suleiman the Chronicler



A Turkin warrior fights the enemies of Lorraine.

Among women, a different kind of bravery is valued. Not raw courage, but loyalty and devotion to their husbands and fathers in the most dire of situations.

They are also a religious and superstitious people. Many Canonists dot their ranks, but the primary religion, and that followed by the dynasty of the Bey is that of Tigrism. Believing in but one God, Tigr, They still differ quite wildly from the Canonists. For example, they believe that various spirits, whilst not divine, play a large role in forming the world as it is. These spirits are ultimately under Tigr's lordship, but they have a degree of autonomy, favouring or denouncing men whom they dislike, in the same way Tigr does, but on a smaller scale.

They believe all people are weak, and have failures, working to improve them ideally. The Tigrists neither despise nor love other religions or ways of life, but tolerate them.

Honesty is another key value. In traditional Turkin customs, the penalty for giving false testimony is equal to that of committing the crime itself. Rulers who go back on their word, especially those who revoke oaths, are despised and hated by their own people.

Chastity is not valued among Turkin noblemen and warriors, who can have multiple wives, concubines or lovers should it appease them. Women and peasants are expected to be chaste, sticking to their single relationship.

Customs

Succession-Traditionally, Turkin succession has been agnatic gavelkind. This means that property is divided evenly among the male children. The eldest is almost always the liege lord of the other children, but sometimes this does not occur.

Law-The Turkins have no formally written law, but traditionally they have had several unalienable legal principles which have never been forsaken:-

- Those who give false testimony are given the same punishment as if they had committed the crime themselves.

- Punishments are usually very harsh. One of them, *kazık* (literally stakes), involves the victim being brutally beaten, tied to a stake, and covered in honey, milk and other such things, so that they attract insects. It is done in hellishly high temperatures. Death can be from dehydration and starvation, but sometimes the life is spared - the judges secure in the knowledge the victim has learnt their lesson.

Council-The Bey relies greatly on this council, which includes his most senior men. The council may argue a point, and if they overwhelmingly agree on a point they can even override the Bey, but such cases are very rare. Instead, the Bey almost always has the final decision, though it is considered honourable to consider the council's words carefully.



The council assemble.

Cuisine

The Turks have tried to bring their exotic food to Oren. Among the wealthy, a feast often begins with Meze. These are small dishes, meant to accompany alcohol, and include hummus, meats, olives and vegetables. Then, an expensive meat is eaten, often birds such as pigeon (usually roasted.) These are often accompanied with Kavun Dolmasi, or stuffed lemon.



Inherited from the Qalsheen, döner kebab and adana kebab (kebab with spices) are popular dishes, though eaten horizontal and not vertically. The poor mostly eat simple vegetable dishes, which include a wide variety of vegetables. Crop variety is key to the Turkins therefore, the vegetables are often diverse:- spinach, leeks, cauliflowers, artichokes, cabbage and celery. These are often combined with flatbreads.



The Turkins have taken kindly to the wine of Lorraine, which, combined with their own drinks, have made feasts very vibrant.

Commemorations and Feasts

Marriage-A marriage ceremony, of great importance in Turkin society, according to Tengriist creed, begins with the marriage itself. This takes place near a 'Holy Tree', both of the two wearing a ring which has been tied by a crimson rope. The man draws his sword, and says: "May these rings mark our partnership and marriage, which will not be cut, like this rope." The woman replies: "May these rings mark our love; mark our sincerity which resides deep in our hearts." After the man has kissed the woman on the forehead, they are married.

After this, there is great cause for celebration amongst the local community. Weddings are seen as an important 'rite of passage' into adulthood among the Turkins and thus the resources of the family are used to full extent to create a grand celebration.

Most marriages are monogamous, but polygamy is permitted. A man may take many wives or even concubines, and is most popular among the higher classes, and least popular amongst the poor.

Ergenekon Destanı-Centuries ago, in the dark age of the Turkins, much of the people found itself enslaved, chained in harsh labour and humiliated. A once proud warrior people, they had been reduced to near nothingness.. But this state of affairs was merely temporary. Two married couples, determined to escape this fate, abandoned their masters and fled to a valley. From these four, it is said the Turkins were reborn as a free people.

Without a knowledge of the terrain or the guidance of roads,, a smith (rumoured to be the great grandfather of today's Alp Osman, a senior advisor of the Bey), found a great abundance of ores and other resources, mostly iron. Blessed by Tigr, they worked with a saintly diligence to smelt the iron; led by a grey wolf, they not only managed to escape the seemingly endless valley, but would rebuild their people's reputation as a free people.

New Year-At the turn of the year, it is believed, according to Tengriist creed, that an ancient spirit of renowned wisdom known as 'Ayaz Ata' blows his breath such that winter grips the world. After this, he goes to the mortal world to help people in dire need, appearing in the form of a man only to men of extreme generosity and prudence. In the end, Turkins at this time strive to show these qualities, so that Ayaz Ata may appear to them, or to do it in his honour.

