THE VALUES □□CONTRIBUTED TO TÜRKIYE BY TURKISH ARMENIANS

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By Melinda Andonyan, Istanbul, 26 November 2025

One of the key aspects shaping Türkiye's cultural fabric is the Armenian community, which has lived there for centuries. Throughout history, Turkish Armenians have made significant, lasting contributions across many fields, from culture and art to crafts and commerce, from architecture to science, becoming an integral part of the country's social and cultural mosaic.

Cultural Richness and Language

Armenian is one of the ancient languages that has left its mark on Anatolian history. The preservation of this language by Armenians in Türkiye adds a powerful touch to the country's cultural diversity. Armenian schools, printing houses, and newspapers in Istanbul have preserved and fostered both Armenian culture and multilingualism for centuries.

Art and Literature

Turkish Armenians have been pioneers of artistic production in many fields, from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic. Many prominent figures have emerged in the performing and visual arts, particularly theater, music, sculpture, and painting. The Balyan family's architectural works, which shape Istanbul's skyline—such as Dolmabahçe Palace, Beylerbeyi Palace, and Ortaköy Mosque—are among the most concrete examples of this contribution. Musicians like Onno Tunç and Aram Tigran, and theater artists like Vahram Papazyan and Nubar Terziyan, hold a special place in Türkiye's cultural memory.

Trade, Crafts, and Handicrafts

Armenian artisans were renowned for their mastery in a wide range of fields, from jewelry and stonemasonry to carpentry and printing. The profession of jewelry, in particular, is still known in Türkiye for the craftsmanship and aesthetic flair of Armenian masters. This culture of craftsmanship has both contributed to the economy and enriched the country's handicraft tradition.



The Armenian Patriarchate - Istanbul

Architecture and Urban Culture

The traces of Armenian architects and masters can be seen in many Anatolian cities. Churches, inns, bridges, stone houses... These works are part of the cultural heritage of not just a community but the entire country. The historical fabric of cities like Istanbul, Kayseri, Van, Diyarbakır, and Sivas becomes even more meaningful with these traces.

Education, Press, and Intellectual Life

Armenian newspapers, publishing houses, and schools are important institutions that ensure the continuity of multicultural life. Newspapers like Agos have made significant contributions not only to the Armenian community but also to freedom of expression in Türkiye. Armenian schools continue

to exist as an educational tradition that fosters bilingualism and intercultural dialogue.

Social Life and Neighborhood Culture

Turkish Armenians have contributed to strengthening neighborly relations in the neighborhoods where they reside—such as Kumkapı, Samatya, Balat, Feriköy, Kurtuluş, and Kadıköy—and have made them a natural part of intercultural life. Easter buns, New Year's Eve dinners, religious holidays, and traditions are deeply ingrained in Türkiye's shared cultural memory.

The Armenian Community in Today's Türkiye

Today, Armenians in Türkiye continue to play an active role in areas such as media, education, the arts, gastronomy, and civil society. We can cite the influence of Armenian cuisine on restaurant culture, productions in the contemporary art scene, academic contributions, and civil society activities as examples.

Conclusion

The contributions of Turkish Armenians are not limited to specific areas; these contributions are values that deepen Türkiye's cultural richness, aesthetic fabric, historical memory, and social diversity. The shared story of these lands, like many other cultures, gains meaning through the influence of Armenian culture.

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Melinda Andonyan was born in Istanbul-Türkiye in 1982. She is a Turkish-Armenian whose ancestors have lived in these lands for centuries. She graduated with honors from the Department of Teaching. She studied linguistics in Germany, on a scholarship from the German government. She has been actively involved in educational activities in various countries and worked as a teacher at private schools and universities in Türkiye. In addition to her teaching career, she has been an active translator and interpreter in four languages (English, German, Armenian, and Greek) since 2014. She first translated a Turkish book into English, called “Chaldee Letters and The Chaldeans,” (written by Mgr. Francois Yakan) in 2014. This translation has been acclaimed worldwide and has found its place in libraries in many countries. Currently, she is translating books for many publishing companies and also writing articles and texts for various magazines and online platforms.

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