

# Rumelian Turk in Greece



Photo: Garry Knight



Map: Bethany World Prayer Center

*"Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."*

People Name	Rumelian Turk
Country	Greece
Status	Unengaged Unreached
Population	154,000
Language	Turkish
Religion	Islam - Sunni
Written Scripture	Yes
Oral Scripture	Yes
Jesus Film	Yes
Gospel Recordings	Yes
Christ Followers	No
Churches	No
Workers Needed	3
Workers Reported	0

## BACKGROUND

The Rumelian Turk are a remnant of the Ottoman Turks who migrated from their homeland in central Asia in the 13th century. The Rumelian Turk conquered Anatolia and established the Ottoman Empire, which encompassed the Balkan Mountains, Arabia, and North Africa. The Rumelian Turk name is derived from the word rumelia, which means "land of the Romans" referring to the Balkan Mountains.

## WHAT ARE THEIR LIVES LIKE?

Although the Ottoman Turks ruled for 500 years, the Turks were always an ethnic minority. They did not intermarry in large numbers with the rest of the population because of religious, linguistic, and social differences. Where they did intermarry, Turkish men usually married non-Turkish women, often of another Muslim ethnic group. Today, polygyny (having more than one wife) is prohibited by state law.

Architecture throughout the Balkans still bears evidence of long Turkish-Ottoman influence: Ottoman-style domed mosques with pencil-thin minarets are modeled after those in Istanbul. Other typical details are wooden houses with latticework windows, separate quarters for men and women, and marketplaces where specialty stores are grouped together.

Lamb is the favorite meat of Turks. The most common way of preparing it is pilaf, where small bits of meat are cooked with rice and oil. Musaka (roasted meat and eggplant) and kapama (mutton with spinach and green onions) are other popular dishes. Turks are very fond of sweets and eat large quantities, especially the kind known as Turkish delights (gummy confections usually cut in cubes and dusted with sugar). The Rumelian Turk are not supposed to drink alcohol because their Islamic belief forbids it. Instead, they drink much coffee and sour milk, or yogurt, which is said to keep people healthy.

## WHAT ARE THEIR BELIEFS?

The Rumelian Turk of Greece are virtually all Hanafite Muslims. Islam is a religion of works-based on the five central teachings or "pillars": (1) A Muslim must affirm that there is no god but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet. (2) Five times a day he must pray while facing Mecca. (3) He must give an obligatory percentage (very similar to tithes) on an annual basis. (4) He must fast during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim year. (5) He must try to make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca in his lifetime.

Even after the establishment of Communist rule in the Balkans in the years that followed World War II, authorities tolerated

Muslim religious observance and institutions. This toleration extended to Islamic schools, which were allowed to continue to operate, but only as a replacement for the compulsory state educational system.

## WHAT ARE THEIR NEEDS?

The Bible and the Jesus film have already been translated into the language of the Turks, and some Christian broadcasts are also available. However, only a small number of Greek Rumelian Turk are known to have become Christians. Prayer is the key to reaching them with the Good News of salvation.

## PRAYER ITEMS

- \* Ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into Greece to work among the Rumelian Turk.
- \* Pray for the effectiveness of the Jesus film among the Rumelian Turk.
- \* Ask God to anoint the Gospel as it goes forth via radio in their area.
- \* Ask God to raise up prayer teams who will begin breaking up the spiritual soil of Greece through intercession.
- \* Ask the Lord to bring forth a triumphant Rumelian Turk church for the glory of His name!
- \* Ask the Lord to save key leaders among the Rumelian Turk who will boldly declare the Gospel.