

Ankara geographic locations

Ankara is the capital city of Turkey. Located in the central part of Anatolia, the city has a population of 5.1 million in its urban center and 5.8 million in Ankara Province. Ankara is Turkey's second-largest city after Istanbul by population, first by urban area (4,130 km²), and third by metro area (25,632 km²).

The region's history can be traced back to the Bronze Age Hattic civilization, which was succeeded in the 2nd millennium BC by the Hittites, in the 10th century BC by the Phrygians, and later by the Lydians, Persians, Greeks, Galatians, Romans, Byzantines, and Turks (the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, the Ottoman Empire and finally republican Türkiye).

Phrygian rule was succeeded first by Lydian and later by Persian rule, though the strongly Phrygian character of the peasantry remained, as evidenced by the gravestones of the much later Roman period. Persian sovereignty lasted until the Persians' defeat at the hands of Alexander the Great who conquered the city in 333 BC. Alexander came from Gordion to Ankara and stayed in the city for a short period. After his death at Babylon in 323 BC and the subsequent division of his empire among his generals, Ankara, and its environs fell into the share of Antigonos.

The town was reincorporated into the Roman Empire under Emperor Aurelian in 272. The tetrarchy, a system of multiple (up to four) emperors introduced by Diocletian (284-305), seems to have engaged in a substantial program of rebuilding and of road construction from Ancyra westwards to Germe and Dorylaeum (now Eskişehir).

In its heyday, Roman Ancyra was a large market and trading center but it also functioned as a major administrative capital, where a high official ruled from the city's Praetorium, a large administrative palace or office. During the 3rd century, life in Ancyra, as in other Anatolian towns, seems to have become somewhat militarized in response to the invasions and instability of the town.

The city is well known during the 4th century as a center of Christian activity (see also below), due to frequent imperial visits, and through the letters of the pagan scholar Libanius; Bishop Marcellus of Ancyra and Basil of Ancyra were active in the theological controversies of their day, and the city was the site of no fewer than three church synods in 314, 358 and 375, the latter two in favor of Arianism;

Early Christian martyrs of Ancyra, about whom little is known, included Proklos and Hilarios who were natives of the otherwise unknown nearby village of Kallippi, and suffered repression under the emperor Trajan (98-117). In the 280s we hear of Philumenos, a Christian corn merchant from southern Anatolia, being captured and martyred in Ankara, and Eustathius.

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In the late 4th century, Ancyra became something of an imperial holiday resort. After Constantinople became the East Roman capital, emperors in the 4th and 5th centuries would retire from the humid summer weather on the Bosphorus to the drier mountain atmosphere of Ancyra. Theodosius II (408-450) kept his court in Ancyra in the summers. Laws issued in Ancyra testify to the time they spent there.

Both the Ancient Byzantine Metropolitan archbishopric and the "modern" Armenian eparchy are now listed by the Catholic Church as titular sees, with separate apostolic successions.

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Web: <https://sumthingtasty.co.za/contact-us/>

Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com

WhatsApp: 8613816583346

