

Geographical Factors in Teaching Historical Events

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Abstract: It is known that history instruction has a very significant place in curricula. Special emphasis is laid on a lot of subjects from the instruction of family (the smallest institution of society) history to the teaching and learning of nations and world history. Knowing origins of the family, understanding its traditions, teaching its pecuniary resources are considered important with regard to social status. Knowing which processes nations have undergone until they reached their current state and constitution is notable in terms of showing societies what to aim at, ensuring unity of the society, bringing in the spirit of unison come rain or shine. History instruction is also important with respect to learning which processes the world has undergone so far in terms of technology and knowledge, determining future-oriented aims and evaluating the mankind's point of view about future. In order to understand the aim of this study, it is significant to give meaning to basic concepts used in history instruction such as similarity and difference, cause and effect, change and permanence. History is "the science which narrates events that originate from activities influencing societies, nations and institutions with an indication of time and place and studies the relationship between these events, their connections to previous and following events, their interactions and civilisations established by each nation and their internal issues"[1]. Among the concepts mentioned in this definition the one which is directly related to geography is the place. The concept of place which is mentioned in the definition of history includes all the geographical conditions which affect the events that are the subject matter of history. The ancient developed civilizations had been established on the productive land near the water sources. Also, the migration roads usually follow the sea, river and harbours. In the history, the most important cause of wars is probably "productive land" which have also a lot of natural substances. The associations and examples drawn on to explain the subject are taken from primary and secondary school textbooks and used in this research. Social sciences such as history and geography are regarded either as parrot fashion lessons or as study areas to be learned by memorisation by some educators and students. In fact, it is impossible to replicate historical events in a laboratory. Therefore, historical events include abstract incidents. Consequently, it seems like they can only be taught and learned by memorisation. However, each historical event has been experienced in a place and it is geography that teaches us about those places. In consequence, if historical events which are based on a fundamental knowledge of geography could be explained by using maps which illustrate places transferred onto paper and by putting them in the right places on a timeline, events would lose their position as stories and fairy tales and become concrete. The aim of this paper is to focus on the effects of the geographical conditions which consist of the places where historical events has happened on the development and results of events and the effects of associating "place"s with maps on the realisation of historical events and teaching geographical components which consist of the places in history instruction accurately.

Key words: History textbooks · history · history instruction · history education · place · geography · geography instruction

INTRODUCTION

The geography which analyses the relation between mankind and the place, the effect of the place on humankind and the effect of human kind on the change of

the place, today explains the distribution of physical and human events and the causes of the distribution. Some events that affect our daily life are analysed in geography. In the daily life, people have taken the geographical conditions into consideration. It is possible to see

countless examples showing that the factors that are analysed in the physical, human and economical events that are analysed in the geographical have effect on the events of not only for the daily life and life of today but also for the events passed in the former times and the for the historical events. Although the political power was important for the outbreak of the wars in the 20th century, which caused the Europe to change completely, it is also known that the reasons behind these political fights were controlling the sources, sharing the markets and the world domination. The world domination and sharing markets are related to the geography. The world domination and the theories made in the late XIX century and earlier XX century are also the subject of the political geography. Before the World War I and World War II, some statesmen of Europe were affected by their political geographers and believed that they should widen the lands of their centuries so as to become a powerful country in the world; as a consequence, Europe was destroyed completely. As there were geographical reasons for the World War, the reason why Germany returned from the gates of Moscow are the “climate” which is a climatic factor.

Today, it is known that there is a relationship between the events in the history and the distribution of nations, domination areas and distribution of the beneficial places. There is the effect of factors which are the subjects of the geography behind the emigrations, wars, invades, victories and defeats in the history. However, when historical events are mentioned, the geographical conditions are bypassed and political results are highlighted. However, for the historical events to be explained with the place they passed on and to be understood it not as a legend, the geographical conditions need to be explained and understood. To give a general sense, the examples have been given from the universal history and the correlation between geographical factors and beginning, development and results of the historical events in the history of Mesopotamia, Central Asian Turkish History, Channels of Commerce, history of Anatolia, Istanbul and Straits between East and West, Eastern front in the World War I and the Russia and Germany in the World War II.

Universal history: When the places in which the first civilizations came into being are examined, it seen that “they are the regions which are easy for the human being to live in.” The plains beside the Nile River in Egypt, Tigris (Dicle) and Euphrates (Firat) in Mesopotamia, Yellow River in China, Indus and Ganges Rivers in India

provided the required conditions for the living of human being and gave life to the civilization in the mentioned regions [2]. The geographical factor played an important role in the development of the China civilization. The China civilization came into being in the plain made by the Yellow River. This plain is muddy and its climate is harsh. However, the required humidity and temperatures required for the growing of plants were provided by the summer monsoon. However, people did not inhabit in the plain densely because of the climate’s getting arid. People densely inhabited in the plains in the south parts, because these plains in the south were arable. The China civilization was established as a consequence of the immigrations from east to west and from north to south. A community that have different ethnicities, having social life and depending on agriculture came into being [3].

Especially there is a correlation between the productivity of the Mesopotamia and Nile basins and having being invaded many times in history. Some conditions provide the development of civilization while some others hinder the development of civilization. If the land is productive in terms of food and natural resources, if rivers provide the transportation, if the coasts are combined with the natural ports and if the land is on the way of commerce like Phoenician, Atina, Carthage and Florance or Venice, it is preferred by people and its life standards increase [4]. However, it is stressed that the life conditions are hindered in some places by the geographical conditions. The high temperatures and countless parasites hinder the establishment of civilization. Laziness, drowsiness and illness, prematurely and getting rotten before the right time prevent people from making effort for establishing civilizations. In such places, people think no more than hiving enough food and continuity of their life. Water which gives life some times turns into a catastrophe. Heavy rains and torrent destroyed the civilizations like Babylon and Nineveh civilizations [5].

In the place where they civilizations lived in has become the reason for many historical events. “Water Resources” themselves became the reason of many conflicts between civilizations because the water is the fundamental requirement of life. Every community has to life around water resources and this condition resulted in conflicts between civilizations. Moreover climatic conditions, surface features and underground resources and many other regional conditions should be taken into consideration making assessment about the historical events [6].

After the Geographical Discoveries, the areas to live in widened. The continent of America was occupied for inhabitation by the brave European mariners. At the time of the first emigrations from Europe to America, the transportation was performed through sailing vessels. The journey which took about 3 months was dependent to the direction of the wind. The knowledge of the brave European mariner who discovered America about the climate was good exchange, slave trade and emigrations transportation [7].

History of mesopotamia: Mesopotamia means the land between two rivers. As a geographical regions Mesopotamia is the land ranging from the South- East of Turkey to the Persian Gulf between Tigris and Euphrates [8].

Mesopotamia which is one of the three biggest centres of the old East, means “the land between rivers” in Greek. These lands which take place between Tigris and Euphrates Rivers was called as “Naharina” by Egyptians, which has the same meaning mentioned above.

The lands of Mesopotamia were always invaded because they are very productive. Therefore, the change in the community was also reflected to the name of places. Therefore, the name of places was changes together with its community in the historical process. As it can be seen on the map, Mesopotamia is a gateway of Asia to Mediterranean Sea. Mesopotamia is the land constituted of 120.000 km² between the Mediterranean Sea at the west of continent of Asia and the Persian Gulf. This area has the shape of a crescent with its border with Iran in the East and its border with Anatolian Plateaus in the north part. Taurus Mountains extended through South direction until Red Sea with taken various names as Mountain Lebanon, Hermon and Mountain Sina. Mountain Zagros which parts of the extension of Anti Taurus and located at the east of Tigris River is the natural dividing Iran Plateau and Tigris Valley. That’s why Mesopotamia surrounded by mountains with three dimensions and it is huge plains which opened to the Syria and Arabian deserts and looks like infinite plains from south direction [9].

Mesopotamia lands are invaded geography because of its productive lands and its convenient climate for human being. Humans located at these lands because of winter season lasting short period, but summer season lasting long period according to old life conditions. Many civilizations established at this region and provided that rich accumulation of culture. This mountain which surrounds to regions has big importance for natural defence feature.

People prefer to live hot and watery places which far away from nature’s heavy conditions. Because of same reasons, Stone Age culture lived at this region at the 6. and 5.th millennium B.C., Europe lived ice age at same period, but Europe was reached to Stone Age at First Millennium BC. Some residential areas were established at the Mesopotamia’s water along for housing. For example, Eridu Ur which are the sites of the Sumerian civilization, Ubeyd Cities the old name of which is not known by us were situated beside the river [10].

The geographical condition of Mesopotamia had influence on the political life of the states established in this area. As a matter of fact, it became the first aim of the people emigrated from deserts of the Central Asia and water-land areas, because Mesopotamia was between Asia and Mediterranean Sea. From time to time, Arabia also send the desert children who were subjected to the same catastrophe of aridity to these lands. Therefore, Mesopotamia was sometimes occupied by Asian nations, Semitic and some times by Aryans. This condition prevented the states in the Mesopotamia to have a long time and stabile authority.

Central Asia Turkish history: It is known that there is a relationship between geographical conditions and events that happened certain eras of the Turkish history which has a thousands years of past. Migration of Turks from Central Asia is important for both Turkish history and World history. When they were being forced to migrate from Central Asia they turned to west, south-west and south. Migration of Turkish Tribes from Central Asia is a result of changes at geographical conditions. As a result of geographical conditions, Turkish tribes coming out of Central Asia passed through north of Black sea and caused the migration of nations in Europe and by spreading in Anatolia resulted in downfall of Byzantine Empire.

Bedirhan [11] gives following information about lives of Turks in Central Asia and relationship of this life with geographical conditions: Birth and development of the idea of “organization” in Turks goes back to ages before Christ. Environmental and Climate conditions in Central Asia used to allow animal husbandry rather than agriculture. Turks used to breed animal in great herds. They have to look for grazing land and water continuously and, migrate from one climate to another in order to feed their herds and increase productivity. Especially activities like administration of great herds, finding and protection of pastures prepared them to cooperation, solidarity and more importantly to dominate

and commend thus, provided a great convenience to build a state organization. Especially “horse” gave them a feeling of dominance and supremacy. On the other hand, ruling over countries and many nations made be possible only by smoothly organizations that dependent on the center. It is understood that economic activities based on the information given above brings along organizational skills as well.

Changes at geographical conditions which required migration of Turks from Central Asia which is very important historically are explained as follows: “In central Asia, which is ancestral homeland of Turks, there were inland seas and strongly flowing rivers that fed them. These rived used to originate from glaciers on t high mountains of the area. As the time went by glaciers shrunk. The rivers they fed got weaker and the seas and lakes fed by those rivers turned into deserts and marshlands. Copious pastures dried. Drought and intensive colds that happened as a result of those climate changes left livelihood of the population inadequate [12]. The same event has been handled by Ak°it and Oktay completely depending on climate conditions.

During the Ice Age, while people in the other parts of the world are still in Paleolithic age, people of Central Asia who lived in a very convenient climate conditions in the west part of Central Asia populated and reached to Metal age. But upon rising of temperatures and end of Ice Ages, Central Asia gradually began to dry. Intense winds and sand dunes brought by those winds made the living conditions difficult. Because they had domesticated the horse and knew how to make carts with wheels, they managed to go distant lands [13]. At the end of this textbook, evidences that show why Central Asia dried are explained as an answer to a chapter evaluation question: Geological researches found that there were two inland sea in Central Asia, one in the west and one in the East, departed by Altai and Tengri Mountains. The fact that today big or little lakes, marshlands and sand deserts replace these inland seas proves that Central Asia dried. This view is strengthened by the Ancient Chinese sources which call Great Gobi Desert as Dry Sea. On the other hand ceramic art works found in Northern China, Northern India, at Musyantepe and Sus in Iran bears great resemblances to art works found in Anav. This explains that people who left Central Asia because of drought created same art works where they went [14].

Trade roads and routes: Starting of exchange of goods constitutes one of the important phases of the world history. Exchange of goods indicates surplus

products change hands. While surplus goods change hands sometimes in short distances, it used to be transferred to long distances as well. Growth at production, accordingly creation of surplus can be seen as an indicator of human dominance on the environment [15]. Trade routes which were used for –although they were infrequent -distribution of inventions that were made in the course of time to make life easier and transportation of good that are light in weight but worthy in price were a product of geographical conditions. Trade routes known as *Silk Road*, *Spice Road*, *King’s Road* which goes to Europe starting from Chine and passing through ports in northern, western and southern Anatolia were created in the direction of shapes on the earth’s surface and helped to transportation of goods, money, culture and technology between the East and the West for thousands years. Although trading volume was low, long distance trade was an indicator of wealth. Some information about these trade roads as follows:

“Silk Road was not opened by humans. This road was composed of wide walleyes and oases prepared by nature and climate and allowing accommodation of caravans. In the course of time cities were build in those oases such as Turfan, Kashgar, Hotan and, Yerkent [16]. In another textbook: “Transportation of spice and silk of the East to the West created traded routs reaching from Chine to Europe. In Middle Ages, trade caravans used to depart from Shian City of current Chine and came to Kashgar City of Uzbekistan, follow the of the two routes: first one passes through plains of Afghanistanand leads to Caspian Sea and the second passies over Karakurum Mountains and leads to Anatolia via Iran. Gods were transported to Europe from Anatolia via sea routes or land routes over Thrace [17].

Anatolian history: It is known that because of its suitable climate conditions and fertile lands people had lived since the oldest ages of the historyin Anatolia and left many artifacts [18]. It has been determined that during this thousands-years long time period, a number of states had been built, lived for some time and collapsed.

In Anatolia animal husbandry and agriculture were basis of the economy. On the land that were sown in the name of kings, along with cereals like wheat, barley and rye, vegetable and fruit were grown as well. Animal husbandry was seen as supplementary to agriculture and, cattle, sheep, horse and donkey were raised. Some qualities have been stressen on while teaching states built on Anatolia. For example: The Urartu was advanced in mining. Textile industry was developed as well. Among

Phrygians carper and rug weaving was common. Lydians invented the money and brought a new dimension to trade. Having been passed from barter system to money system trade between Anatolia and, Northern Syria and Mesopotamia expanded largely. The famous “King’s Road” which starts from western Anatolia and reaches to Mesopotamia fastened the trade between the East and the West [18]. Apart from that, the emphasis on the geographical conditions of the states built on Anatolia can be seen at following examples:

Lydians: They lived in Western anatolio on the fertile land between rivers of Menderes and Gediz. First Lydian king Gyges saw development of agriculture and trade essential for development of Lydia. That is why he had the famous King’ Road opened which starts from Milet, passes through Sardis and reaches to Persian Empire in Mesopotamia [19]. From perspective of a second person: In my country, on whose fertile land between rivers of menders and Gediz in Aegean we live, every kind of vegetable and fruit grows. Nothing is absent in bazaars of capital city Sardis. Except one thing. My little son had seen a sweet fruit which resembles to olive in the bazaar. Afterwards I learned that its name was date [20]. Another quotation about the King’ Road is as follows: “Goods that came from the Continent of Asia to the bazaars to be sold reaches to Aegean Sea after a long and difficult journey on the King’s Road. The goods are transported to important ports of Europe via Mediterranean Sea [21].

Urartus: Urartus had been founded in the Eastern Anatolia around 860 B.C. Their capital city was on the shores of the Lake Van. Since they lived on craggy and rocky areas, they had built their cities like a castle against invasion and plunder. They were very skilled at stone works and building stone castle [22]. From perspective of a second person: Being mountainous and rocky of my country required I and my colleagues built reservoirs, dams and irrigation channels. Otherwise how viniculture which likes irrigated lands could bring this much gains to my country [23].

Phrygians: One of the Balkan originated tribes that came to Anatolia over the straits around B. C. 1200. They established a state lying between Kutahya in the west and, Kizilirmak in the east, Ankara in the north and Denizli in the south.

Ionians: In the Antiquity Western Anatolian shores lying between Smyrna Bay and Gulluk Bay used to be called

Ionian. On this land where trade roads of the Little Asia come to end Ionians created a vast civilization in a short time [24].

While development of agriculture and trade among Lydians was related with fertile land and trade routes, development of stone works and irrigation systems among Urartus was associated with protection of cities against plunders and viniculture’s being an important source of living. As it will be understood from these examples, understanding of economic activities, craftsmanship and cultural activities depends on understanding of geographical activities. Another example about this subject is a solar eclipse during a war between Lydians and Meds. During a war between Lydians who lived around rivers of Gediz and Kucuk Menders in Western Anatolia on 28 May 585 B.C a solar eclipse happened and the sides perceived this a omen and stopped fighting [25].

It has been understood that Ancient dwelling places and ports in the Delta of rivers Bakircay, Gediz, Kucuk menders and Buyuk Menderes which flow into Aegean Sea were once in the cost of the sea, but in the course of the time the sea and ports were filled with material brought by the rivers thus, dwelling places left in inland and the ports lost their functions. About this subject Atalay gives following examples in his study named *Turkiye Coğrafyası*: Elia Port which was in the eastern part of Bakircay Delta and experienced its golden age between 150 and 300 B.C. filled and turned to marshland. Ephesus which was founded where Kucuk Menderes reaches to Aegean Sea began to lost its connection to the sea around 286 B.C and from 750 B. C. to today the delta grew more than 8 kilometers. It has been understood that Heraklia ancient city which is in Buyuk Menderes delta of Southern Aegean was a costal settlement once [26].

Geographical factors have multifaceted effects from birth of a civilization, to its get strength and to political struggles. Features of geography can make the life easier or more difficult. Cultural accumulation of a civilization and interactions develops according to the relation of geography with environment. Sometimes geographical conditions prepare grounds for conquests, on the hand it some times protects from attacks. Entering of Turks to Anatolia in 1071 and Trabzon Greek Empire which survived until 1461 are examples of this subject.

In order to explain why Malazgirt Pitched Battle happened in Malazgirt plain but in another plain one needs to know surface shapes in whole region. Another example about this subject is; the reason for survival of Trabzon Greek Empire when Ottoman State enlarged its

borders to include all Balkans after conquest of Istanbul was Northern Anatolian Mountains [27, 28].

Istanbul and Bosphorus at the door of east and west:

It is known that Istanbul is among the most important places concerning the struggle from the continent of Asia to Europe and from Europe to the continent of Asia. "The conquest of Istanbul" becomes very significant, in regards of security of the Ottoman State's "geographical integrity" through the Turks' establishment of their presence in Anatolia and their arrival to the Balkans. When this process is examined as a whole, it is witnessed that the role of geographical factors is very important in the basis of the struggle to ensure the conquest of Istanbul. Istanbul was located over important land and sea roads and it was elevating the charm of the city for the states wishing to possess Istanbul. What was important about Istanbul, for the Ottoman state was Istanbul's location on a place combining the Ottoman State territories in Asia and in Europe.

The Ottoman State was starting to obtain a great power through its conquests performed on Anatolia and Rumalia and was transformed from a "Seigniory" to a "State". Istanbul has a strategical importance concerning the unison of these territories. With the conquest of Istanbul, The Ottoman State has been transformed to a great state, possessing not only Anatolian territories or Rumalian territories, but ruling over both. At this point, Istanbul, with economical and strategical reasons, in other words with its geographical value, has paved the way for the integration of the Ottoman State and has added even more power to an already powerful force.

Istanbul and Bosphorus, have directly and indirectly been a "struggle area" throughout history, especially during the Ottoman Area and afterwards during the World War I and World War II, in regards of the "geopolitical status". Especially when the struggles experienced between the Ottoman Empire and Russia is considered, Bosphorus has a very important place in Russia's policy to reach hot seas. Bosphorus was critically important during the historical epoch not only for Russia to get stronger, but also for Russia's security. An important indication in regards of the strategical status of the Bosphorus is, the allied powers' intention to bring support to the Russian Tsar to prevent the Bolshevik revolution occurred at Russia during the World War I, via crossing through the Bosphorus.

The eastern front during the world war I: A Big Russian Front have been introduced in the East, promptly after the

Ottoman State's participation to the World War I. The Russians have made Kars, Ardahan and Batumi, located in the Eastern Anatolia and captured them via the Peace of Berlin, a preparation base for the future wars. Russians also were intending to capture other provinces located in the Eastern Anatolia and if possible, reaching the Persian Gulf before their allies, The English. On the other hand, Enver Pasha was projecting to dissolve the Russian forces first, with a sudden raid and then save Kars, Ardahan and Batumi. Then the Ottoman troops were supposed to enter into the Southern Caucasia and revolt the Muslim residents against the Russians and the Armenians. After capturing these territories, the way for "Turan" would open. In the autumn of 1914, Russians started to make a military buildup in the Sarıkamış neighborhood and took forward action. In the meantime, they have been encountered with the Ottoman counter-attack lead by Enver Pasha. Enver Pasha initially have met with success, but the "winter" conditions were not taken into consideration for this attack, prepared urgently. Cold, lack of roads, illness and alimentation difficulties caused the Turkish Soldiers harms that the Russian Army was not able to give and approximately 100 Thousand soldiers have fallen at the Allahuekber Mountains by freezing to death [29].

Steps taken, without taking into consideration the geographical factor have resulted in approximately 100 Thousand martyrs. A very good knowledge of the related regions geographical features and climate is critically important, especially in the planning of military operations. No matter how great the military force or the arm force is, no matter how immaculately planned the operation is, up to its smallest details; the intended results can only be reached if the "geography" where such activities would happen, ensures the appropriate condition. In other words, if one intends to get satisfactory results from military operations, the geographical conditions must be taken into consideration.

After the collapse of the Tsarist Russia through the Bolshevik Revolution, the Brest-Litovsk Treaty has been entered into by and between the Ottoman State and the Soviet Russia, in the year 1918. Russia have given Kars, Ardahan and Batumi back to the Ottoman Empire according to the aforementioned treaty. The hole left by Russia after the World War I was filled by Armenia and Georgia. Under the Moscow Treaty, entered into the Soviet Russia during the Turkish War of Independence, the decision to "give back Batumi to Georgia" was accepted. It has been Russia's advantage that Batumi, a region rich in oil resources belonged to Georgia, not

Turkey. This is a situation, indicating that the resources existing in a region are always rendering it preferable.

Russia and Germany during world war II: The object of Germany, during the World War II, started by Germany's occupation of Poland at September 1, 1939, was to march until Moscow. The German attack, starting from 3 branches with destinations being Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev has easily flourished. The besieging of Leningrad started in the beginning of September. The German Forces captured Kiev in September the 19, Odessa in October the 16, Rostov and all of Crimea in November the 21. The attack performed in November to ensure the fall of Moscow in November, without taking into consideration the conditions of the climate turned out unsatisfactory. Hitler's plan to conquer Russia in 6 to 8 weeks have fallen to the ground [30]. The hard resistance of the Germans continued until the beginning of August. The allied powers march only gained speed after the breaking of the aforementioned resistance. The allied powers started to cross the Rhein River in 25-26 September 1944. Now the troops entered the German territories [31].

The simple geographical features of Europe, the absence of high mountains and undulating and pitched lands to block the access have paved the way for the German forces to march through the east in a great speed and to reach Moscow's doors. But steps taken, without taking into consideration the conditions of the climate, in some ways, steps taken against the nature, have not brought further expansion, they have brought a heavy defeat. The Germans, aiming to support the German Power located at Russia as reinforcements were stranded with their soldiers, tanks, cannons and arms and have never reached Russia. The frost, developed as a result of the conditions of the climate is the reason behind this failure. The power of nature have practically established a defensive wall for Russia. Russia, losing ground before the Germans and waiting the support of their allies, has gathered its strength with the help of the conditions of nature. Conditions of climate have played a big part in the determination of the World War II's outcome in Europe.

CONCLUSION

It is known that the distribution of population in the World and the distribution of factors related or unrelated to human, like development ratio, cities, villages, railroads, land roads, airports are related to the geographical conditions. The current distributions of the

mentioned factor are not only related to the conditions of today. For the accurate understanding of any event approached scientifically, it is important to take into consideration any factor influencing the event subject to the examination. It is also important to know any condition influencing the subject, for the accurate understanding and teaching of an event experienced in the past. Samples referred to explain the subject of this study, "geographical factors on the teaching of the history events" make up only a few of perhaps hundreds of thousand history events. It is important to know the climate, soil and water conditions, ensuring the Chinese Plain to host a civilization, in the past and today. To understand the charm of Mesopotamia, where hot war is experienced nowadays, it is necessary to study the abundance arising from water the life source of agricultural societies and soil, also the underground resources, the geographical conditions exposing the variety of their social structures.

To better understand and teach the subject of Turks, who were themselves forced to migrate due to the change in the geographical conditions, causing the Tribal Immigration, establishing a state covering a section of the Eastern Europe, Western Asia and Northern Africa, by dominating Anatolia and the functioning of this state organization, the geographical reasons behind the organization formed in the Central Asia must be taken into consideration.

It is known that the migration and commerce roads are important when the History of the World is considered. Mesopotamia, The Nile Basin, Indus and Ganges Deltas and the Chinese Plain are among the original settling areas and it is proved by documents that the civilizations immigrating from these regions have followed the roads designated by the geographical features, while performing the immigration. Likewise, the textbooks are teaching that the routes of the *silk* and *spice* roads, longing from China and India until the European coastline via Anatolia, were also designated by the geographical features. The geographical feature knowledge is significant to enable the better teaching of the goods exchange and migrations throughout the history of the World.

A great number of states have been established in Anatolia during a timeline of thousands of years. Those states, surviving for a while, have been destroyed by being exposed to external attacks, of following disasters like earthquakes or epidemics. The changes in population in Anatolia, establishment of many states, goods produced and the activities of craft are closely related to

the geographical features and climate and soil conditions of Anatolia.

Bosphorus and the Çanakkale Trait, uniting the continents of Asia and Europe, have always played a significant part, in the passages between Asia and Europe. From the military expeditions executed by the Roman Empire towards Anatolia, to the Crusades and to the march of the Ottoman State in Europe, many of the passages towards military operations have been materialized via Istanbul and the traits. The geographical features are directing the roads crossing over Anatolia to Istanbul and the traits. Likewise the roads heading towards the East from Europe, are also directed by the Carpathian and Rhodope Mountains onto Istanbul.

Climate, one of the factors designating the settling place of human beings is not related solely to settlement. One of the fields where the conditions of the climate matter is the military activities. Military operations executed without taking into consideration the conditions of the climate, may cause thousands of soldiers freezing to death due to the cold, or the failure of the operation due to the freezing of the tank engines, caused by the low temperatures; the retreat of the siege during the I. Siege of Vienna is another example of what the neglect of the conditions of the climate may lead. Vienna was besieged between September 27 and October 16 of the year 1529 by the army lead by Sultan Suleiman I (The Magnificent), but due to the strength of the city walls, the inconvenience of the roads, the early deterioration of the season climate and therefore the failure to carry the heavy siege cannons near the castle have caused the retreat of the siege. One of the better examples in this regard, is the freezing of the German tank engines of the marching in the Eastern European plains, due to the temperatures fallen to -30° C.

Geography has a significant power in the presence of historical events and in human societies reaching a developed civilization. Especially the attributes of the climate and the region, can provide an easier road for the civilization, but can also constitute an obstacle for the development. When tangible and intangible opportunities have become barren in a region, people have started to migrate to the areas where the soil is more fertilized and even started to struggle for these new and attractive settling areas. Regions having rich natural resources, where the life conditions are really suitable to human residence, have always been areas enabling the development of the civilizations. This fact can be indicated as one of the primary causes of the disputes between the states and the wars experienced. The geographical conditions have always been one of the

main factors in the structuring of the history. With this point of view; geographical conditions must be taken into consideration when approaching wars experienced in the past, struggles, immigration and many other subjects. Bringing the students an all-around point of view, while teaching history, may support the student accomplishment. So the history lessons will no more be comprised of the memorizing of the texts and will become more meaningful.

Geographical conditions, influencing the occurrence of the historical events and constituting the “location”, one of the examination subjects of history must be taken into consideration instead of narrating dry information. A decent geography teaching must be performed for the history teaching to reach its target: any historical event must be associated to location and maps, especially indicating the geographical features must be used when teaching history. Also, the location conditions influencing the related historical event must be emphasized.

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