

Centenary (Turkey)

By [Nazan Maksudyan](#)

Summary

This article provides an overview of commemorations of the centenary of the First World War in Turkey. I first focus on the official commemorations of the battles of Sarıkamış, Gallipoli, and Kut, which were organized around isolated “victories” and “martyrdom” – consciously avoiding a complete historiography of the war. Moreover, in line with the current government’s Islamist tendencies, official centenary events aimed to overwrite secularist historiography by reducing the visibility of Mustafa Kemal and by highlighting the role of Muslim faith and solidarity under “Turkish leadership.” Official commemorations also aimed to suppress and silence the centenary of the Armenian Genocide. In the second part of the article, I discuss a few academic and artistic centenary events, that were organized by civil initiatives in 2014 and 2015 and sought to remedy the silence on the genocide, along with providing anti-militarist commemoration of the centenary.

Table of contents

- [1 Official Commemorations of the Battles of Gallipoli, Kut, and Sarıkamış](#)
- [2 Muslim Martyrdom and Neo-Ottoman Themes in Official Commemorations](#)
- [3 Official Commemorations and Genocide Denialism](#)
- [4 Unofficial Centenary Events](#)
- [5 Conclusion](#)

[Notes](#)

[Selected Bibliography](#)

[Citation](#)

Official Commemorations of the Battles of Gallipoli, Kut, and Sarıkamış

The centennial of the First World War triggered a large wave of commemorative events worldwide and inspired new trends in international academic debates. However, while the [historiography](#) had begun to engage in systematic translocal and comparative perspectives, commemorations still mostly took place within nation-state frameworks. The commemorative events in Turkey focused either on Ottoman victories during the war or on martyrdom.¹

Despite being on the losing side in the war, Turkish nationalist [historiography](#) and [memory](#) regards the [Battle of Gallipoli](#) (1915)² as a victory and one that was a pivotal precursor to the

War of Independence and the creation of the modern state of Turkey in 1923.³ The exaltation of the “Turkish victory” in Gallipoli was used not only to obscure the Ottoman’s eventual defeat in the war, but also to stress the “anti-imperialist character” of the prospective nation-state.⁴ Even though the battle has always been part of the Kemalist canon of memory, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) [government](#), led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, commemorated the Gallipoli campaign as part of a “struggle of Muslim martyrs against Christian invaders.”⁵

The centenary commemorations started on 14 March 2015 with the visit of President Erdoğan to the seaport town of Çanakkale. Following a public opening ceremony in the Governorship, the president went to the Gallipoli Peninsula with a helicopter to place a wreath on the Martyrs’ [Memorial](#) and to pray upon the graves of martyrs.⁶ On “18 March Martyrs’ Day” 2015, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu led a series of commemorative events “to mark the sacrifice made by Ottoman soldiers” and highlight the debt of the country to the “quarter of a million” Ottoman soldiers “who sacrificed themselves.”⁷ In the opening ceremony, held in 18 March Stadium, a gold [medal](#) bearing the words “Çanakkale Impassable” was buckled onto the Turkish flag. Then, the flag was raised, representing the “253,000 martyrs”.⁸ The next stop of the “100th anniversary celebrations” took place at the Martyrs’ Memorial on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The chief of the general staff and other force commanders attended the ceremony, while naval ships, [submarines](#), and air force helicopters took part in the ceremony.⁹ The minister for culture and [tourism](#), Ömer Çelik, noted that an extensive ceremony would “make the world hear our [Turkey’s] voice.”¹⁰

Within the scope of the 100th anniversary of the “Çanakkale Victory,” the prime minister’s office ordered all the public institutions (ministries, [universities](#), schools, [hospitals](#)) to offer a lunch menu on 18 March 2015 with the dishes supposedly eaten by the soldiers at the front a hundred years ago. The menu included a rich wheat soup with grape compote and bread. The printed menus noted that these were eaten “to commemorate our sacred martyrs with mercy and gratitude.”¹¹ The menu was not very popular among students in schools and universities. Moreover, the veracity of the menu has been challenged by a few historians. However, the practice did not remain limited to the centenary and continued to be followed.

In his speech at the 18 March ceremony, Prime Minister Davutoğlu reminded the audience of the upcoming international Gallipoli commemoration. He said that the “nations fighting both on the side of Turkey and against it” would meet in April 2015. Referring, without a doubt, to

the efforts for the recognition of the [Armenian Genocide](#), he noted that some people were “trying to create a culture of hatred through 1915,” while he would prefer “to leave aside the feelings of hatred, grudge and vengeance.”¹² The Gallipoli commemorations, on 24-25 April, were among the biggest centenary events of 2015, since the campaign played a crucial role in shaping national identities, not only for Turkey, but also for [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#).¹³

The ceremony took place on 24 April 2015 at the Martyrs’ Memorial. President Erdoğan and numerous guest leaders entered the ceremony area through a corridor formed by soldiers wearing the “historical uniforms” of “Turkish soldiers” at Gallipoli. First, President Erdoğan laid a wreath on the memorial, followed by Charles, Prince of Wales, who was dressed in his military uniform. The ceremony continued with a minute of silence, the raising of the Turkish flag, and the singing of the Turkish national anthem.¹⁴ The ceremony was attended by sixteen heads of state, as well as other state representatives, such as presidents of parliament, vice-presidents, prime ministers, ministers, and ambassadors. The countries represented included the [United Kingdom](#), [Albania](#), [Azerbaijan](#), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Djibouti, South Sudan, [Ireland](#), [Montenegro](#), Qatar, Macedonia, Mali, Niger, Pakistan, Senegal, [Somalia](#), Turkmenistan, [Afghanistan](#), Sudan, Australia, New Zealand, Moldova, [Romania](#), and Syria.¹⁵

In 2016, the AKP government discovered and commemorated another victory of World War I. During a talk on 28 April 2016, President Erdoğan noted that there had been attempts to erase the victory of [Kut al-Amara](#) from the “nation’s memory” and from the pages of history. He announced that on its centenary the following day (29 April), the victory would be “officially commemorated” under the auspices of himself, the prime minister, and the chief of the general staff with a pompous ceremony “to commemorate the glory and to honor the martyrs and heroes.”¹⁶ On 29 April 2016, the official news agency of Turkey (*Anadolu Ajansı*) published a series of news items (including an infographic) wherein it presented the siege of [British-occupied](#) Kut (al-Amara)¹⁷ in Mesopotamia in the winter of 1916 as a “forgotten” victory and the “second most important Ottoman victory after the battle of Çanakkale [Gallipoli].”¹⁸ Government and pro-ruling party publications circulated a conspiracy theory to explain this “conscious neglect” of the siege, especially by comparing it with the great importance attributed to the Battle of Gallipoli. In order to make up for a hundred years of oblivion, the centenary was to be commemorated in an extravagant manner.¹⁹ The ministry of culture and tourism was charged with the organization of numerous events for the centenary of Kut, including the publication of expensive books with images, [maps](#), and comics, organizing exhibitions and symposiums, preparing [websites](#) and staging theater plays.

The commemoration ceremony for the centenary, organized “under the auspices of the Presidency” at Lütü Kirdar International Convention and Exhibition Center, mainly featured a “theater play.” Along with President Erdoğan, the guests included high-ranking politicians, members of the military, and bureaucrats. Several community leaders from southern Iraq and the present-day governor of the city of Kut, Malik Halef, also attended the ceremony.²⁰ Curiously named “Kut’ül Amare Dramatic Staging with Documents” (*Kut’ül Amare Belgeli Dramatik Gösterimi*), the performance featured thirty-eight janissary [musicians](#) (*mehteran*) and seventy-two actors on stage. After the performance, President Erdoğan, the governor of Kut, and the minister of culture and tourism took the stage. President Erdoğan was presented the flag of the 6th Army which “won the victory” at Kut. The governor of Kut then made a short speech and subsequently presented the president with the “soil of Kut, watered with martyr’s blood.”²¹ Erdoğan made a long speech at the ceremony referring to the main tenets of the government’s commemorative centenary politics. The program ended when Iraqi community leaders, whose “grandfathers were martyred in Kut,” presented a flag with a crescent and star symbolizing the Turkish flag to Erdoğan.

Prime Minister Davutoğlu also spoke and promised that they would “keep the spirit of Kut’ül Amare until the doomsday” and that Kut al-Amara would not be “forgotten again until the doomsday.”²² It is apparent that the Kut “fever” has passed beyond its centennial in 2016. The office of the presidency, the government with its various ministries, and the ruling party’s municipalities organized numerous meetings and panels, and published several special issues and books about the campaign in 2017 and 2018. In 2017, the “victory” was added to the Turkish history curriculum (8th grade) under the chapter “National Revival: Steps to Independence” and the anniversary of the victory was inserted into national [education](#) calendars.²³ A TV series named *Mehmetçik, Kut’ül-Amare*, which became quite popular, was also produced by the state channel in the aftermath of the centenary.²⁴

The official commemoration of the [Battle of Sarıkamış](#) was another novelty of the AKP government, initiated for the first time in 2013.²⁵ Through a project of the ministry of [youth](#) and [sports](#), “Youth on the Trail of Martyrs” (*Gençlik Şühedanın İzinde*), tens of thousands of young people were brought to Sarıkamış, Çanakkale, Malazgirt, and Dumlupınar to commemorate the martyrs (of different battles) in 2013.²⁶ On the ninety-ninth anniversary of the Battle of Sarıkamış (January 2014), the ministry organized a memorial march for the fallen soldiers for the second time, entitled “Turkey is Walking with its Martyrs.”²⁷ During the centennial anniversary of Sarıkamış, in difficult weather conditions (ten degrees below zero), thirty thousand people reportedly met in Kızılçubuk village, Kars to commemorate the fallen

of the Sarıkamış.²⁸ The commemoration entailed an eight-and-a-half kilometer long walk in the Allahuekber mountains, which took two hours. During their march, the crowds used the slogans suggested by the ministry: “Asım’s generation²⁹ at the March of the Century” (*Asımın Nesli Asrın Yürüyüşünde*), “Sky Allahuekber, Earth Allahuekber” (*Gök Allahuekber, Yer Allahuekber*).³⁰ The procession then reached the newly built 15,000 square meter ceremonial area and a ceremony was held in front of the Sarıkamış Martyrs’ Memorial. Important political figures, such as the parliament speaker, minister of the interior, and minister of youth and sports, were present at the commemoration, which was purportedly followed by 100,000 people. The ministry of youth and sports declared that they wanted “all the members of the society” to appreciate the “spirit of Sarıkamış.” The commemorative march, the minister announced, was a “meaningful journey” to connect Turks with their national history and their ancestors. This commemoration, too, is now part of the national commemorative calendar.³¹

Muslim Martyrdom and Neo-Ottoman Themes in Official Commemorations

Commemoration of the First World War in Turkey was subject to the current political dynamics, which at times overshadowed the actual experiences and aftermath of the war. Remembrance of devastating defeats or Ottoman failures have not been part of Kemalist memory politics.³² Sarıkamış presents an important exception. Since 2002, AKP rule has provided a strong Islamic setting to the commemoration of the war, and Sarıkamış, framed in terms of [sacrifice](#) and martyrdom, became particularly useful for an Islamist re-imagining of late Ottoman history. In this sacralized recasting of history, martyrdom had a more important emotive value than victory itself.³³ A shift toward [religious](#) meaning is visible, as well, in the recasting of the victory at Gallipoli. In the 2000s, the historical meaning of Gallipoli has been somehow shifted from a “Turkish nationalist victory” towards “an Ottoman victory based on religious faith.”³⁴ As part of the centenary events, the office of religious affairs (*Diyanet*) organized commemoration of the martyrs in mosques in eighty-one cities and 957 districts. During the morning prayer at Bursa Ulu Camii, 253,000 *hatim* prayers – full recitations of the Quran – were made for the “253,000 martyrs.”³⁵ During the 24 April 2015 Gallipoli ceremonies, the president of religious affairs, Mehmet Görmez, was the first speaker. He even took the floor before Prince Charles and President Erdoğan. After reciting the Quran, he said a long prayer for the martyrs of Çanakkale.³⁶ Likewise, the commemoration of the Siege of Kut was filled with Islamic references. The government recommended that “1,001” *hatim* prayers be said for the martyrs of Kut in the religious vocational schools across the country. The students were also expected to lead Islamic memorial services (*mevlid*) in

mosques.³⁷

The commemoration of the First World War may also be seen as part of the AKP's larger "Neo-Ottomanist" aspirations.³⁸ As we have seen, the new narratives stress Turkey's religious ties with the Muslim world. Both Gallipoli and Kut are presented as heroic Muslim victories against a great Christian power. Moreover, the "leading role" of the Turks or the "historical legacy" of leadership in the Middle East is constantly highlighted. This neo-Ottomanist perspective seeks to privilege Turkish leadership and paternalistic position over "other Muslims" under their rule. Erdoğan noted in his speech at the centenary of "the forgotten victory of Kut" that the name Turk "did not refer to a certain people (*kavim*), but referred to all Muslims."³⁹ The commemoration of Kut, therefore, purposefully highlighted Muslim solidarity and unity under the Ottomans, by focusing on the support of local Muslim Arabs, together with the sympathetic position of Indian Muslims in the British army.⁴⁰ The new official interpretation of Kut marginalized the rise of Arab [nationalism](#) – which Kemalists interpreted as treachery and betrayal of the motherland in the past⁴¹ – as a plot by Christian Western powers against the unity of Muslims.⁴² Erdoğan claimed that remembrance of Kut al-Amara corrected "an important defect [*arıza*] of the official [Kemalist] history discourse," which relied on the lie that "Arabs stabbed us in the back." Whereas, during the siege, "the people of Kut acted like a part of the Ottoman army, giving martyrs for the cause."⁴³

Official Commemorations and Genocide Denialism

The primary concern of the denialist state apparatus of Turkey during the centenary of World War I was to silence and obscure the [centenary](#) of the Armenian Genocide.⁴⁴ As early as 2010, the minister of foreign affairs, Davutoğlu, noted that 1915 might mean "genocide" to Armenians, but for the Turks, "it meant Gallipoli."⁴⁵ As was to be expected, denialist calculations determined Turkey's 2015 international commemoration of the Battle of Gallipoli, which has always been observed on 18 March.⁴⁶ In 2015, the Turkish government used the Gallipoli centennial to distract domestic and global attention away from the genocide centennial by changing its date. Pushing the international observance forward to 24-25 April, the goal was to thwart the commemorative events organized worldwide for the centenary of Genocide Remembrance Day on 24 April 2015, the day in 1915 when Armenian notables were rounded up in Istanbul for deportation.⁴⁷ The decision was an attempt to overwrite Armenian suffering with an emphasis on the suffering of Ottoman *cum* Turkish soldiers at Gallipoli.⁴⁸ This was a deliberate attempt to undermine the genocide centenary

and a denialist strategy.⁴⁹

While side-lining genocide commemorations in 2015 with events at Gallipoli, the government propagated another “victory” in 2016 – that of the siege of Kut – to be commemorated on 23 April 2016. Here the aim was to overshadow not only the national holiday celebrating the anniversary of the opening of the Grand National Assembly in 1920 but also the Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day.

Around the same time, the ministry of foreign affairs organized an exhibition entitled “In Lieu of a Pomegranate. Time to Remember, Not to Forget in Turkish-Armenian Relations” (7-29 April 2016) at the *Tophane-i Amire* exhibition hall of Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University. In direct opposition to its title, the event was aimed at forgetting and denying the genocide through methods of silencing, trivialization, and euphemism.⁵⁰ In her interview with the weekly Armenian newspaper AGOS, the curator Güzin Erkan describes the exhibit’s intention as “the contribution of Armenian people” to this society,” to focus on “co-existence” and “positive stories,” and not “get stuck on 1915.”⁵¹

The exhibition, which welcomed its visitors with Davutoğlu’s “just memory”⁵² and Erdoğan’s “condolence message” from 2014⁵³, reflected the overall centenary version of denialism by equalizing the perpetrators and the victims as “victims of the same tragedy.”⁵⁴ Taner Akçam notes that the concept of “just memory” strengthened the politics of Turkish martyrdom in World War I. In this constellation, Gallipoli and Sarıkamış are shamelessly presented as Turkish “equivalents” to the genocide, whereby “Muslim losses” are put into competition with the victims of the Armenian Genocide.⁵⁵ In sum, centenary denialism mainly relied on “the tragedies that befell the Turkish and Muslim peoples who lost their lives in World War I,” as the ministry of foreign affairs stated in its response to Pope Francis.⁵⁶

Unofficial Centenary Events

In April 2014, the Tarih Vakfı (History Foundation) and the Orient-Institute Istanbul, which is affiliated with the Max Weber Foundation, organized an international conference entitled “Not All Quiet on the Ottoman Fronts. Neglected Perspectives on a Global War, 1914-1918.” The four-day conference brought together a large number of historians. It focused largely on non-elite and home front dimensions of the war, together with providing a transnational historiographical perspective. The persecution and annihilation of the Armenians was openly discussed. The History Foundation also organized a talk series from October 2014 to May 2015 in Istanbul, entitled “From 1915 to 2015. Deportation, Massacres, Genocide.” A total of

fourteen talks, hosting prominent Ottoman historians such as Fatma Müge Göçek, Fikret Adanır, and Nazan Maksudyan, focused on different dimensions of the Armenian Genocide.

The 4th International Çanakkale Biennial (27 September – 2 November 2014), “Only the Dead Have Seen the End of War,” also had a World War I focus.⁵⁷ In their conceptual framework, the curatorial team, Beral Madra, Seyhan Boztepe, and Deniz Erbaş, stressed their intention to focus on the “tragedy” of the First World War and to reevaluate the impact of war on the city. Quite a number of the works presented at the biennial held an anti-militarist attitude (e.g. those of Douglas Gordon, Klaus vom Bruch, Songül Boyraz, Akram Zaatari, Ayşe Erkmen, and Sıtkı Kösemen). Furthermore, the works of Tunca Subaşı, Grigor Khachatryan, and Nigol Bezjian made explicit or implicit references to the Armenian Genocide. Making use of buildings and venues of historical importance for the city, such as the Korfmann Library,⁵⁸ Armenian Church,⁵⁹ and Jewish storehouses (renovated as MAHAL), the biennial reminded its visitors of the lost [multi-ethnic character](#) of the city prior to World War I.

A more important international [art event](#) was the 14th Istanbul Biennial, curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, with the title “Saltwater.” There were a number of works that referred to the Armenian Genocide and the developments that followed it.⁶⁰ Michael Rakowitz’s work linked the disappearance of Armenian craftspeople, through the figure of the plaster caster Garabet Cezayirliyan, to the expulsion of an estimated 80,000 stray dogs from Istanbul to the island of Sivriada in 1910, to the genocide of Armenians in 1915. Francis Alÿs had an installation in which the sounds of the birds that once lived in the Ani district of Kars were imitated, to commemorate the Armenians who were forced to leave the region. Aslı Çavuşoğlu also developed a project for the biennial, in which she extracted a particular red dye from an insect – an ancient Armenian technique that is no longer used.

As alternatives to the state efforts, there were also a number of smaller commemorative events. For example, from December 2014 to April 2015, Koç University’s Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations (RCAC) in Istanbul housed an exhibition, curated by Bahattin Öztuncay, which displayed artefacts and memorabilia of the First World War from the Ömer M. Koç Collection. “Propaganda and War. The Allied Front during the First World War” explored the evolution of the [Ottoman Empire’s](#) relations with its German, Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian allies, through posters, ceramics, postcards, flags, awards and documents.⁶¹ An academic conference was also organized by the RCAC, on 10 January 2015, to accompany the exhibition.⁶² Another exhibition was opened at the İşbank [Museum](#) in Istanbul for the centenary of the Gallipoli Campaign. “Gallipoli. From the Depths to the Trenches” declared

that it aimed “to give visitors a real feel of the campaign, and what it was like to be there for those who fought.”⁶³ Focusing on both naval and land battles of Gallipoli, the exhibition brought together replicas, recreations and [big screen documentaries](#), together with documents from the [archives](#) of the Turkish general staff, King’s College London and the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Most visible, perhaps, was the commemoration of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide Memorial Day on 24 April 2015 in Istanbul. Although many centennial commemorations were planned around the world, this civil society initiative stressed the importance of Istanbul as “the site of the arrests of Armenian leaders and intellectuals on April 24, 1915 that marked the start of the genocide.”⁶⁴ “Project 2015,” a non-profit organisation comprised of academics, activists, and [writers](#) of Armenian and Turkish descent living in the [United States](#), organized the program for the events, in collaboration with civil society and human rights organizations in Turkey.⁶⁵ “A major gathering in Istanbul” was intended to challenge the denialism that “defined successive Turkish governments,” which have both refused to acknowledge the events of 1915 as genocide and to make any reparations or amends to the survivors and their descendants. Another aim was to stimulate a broader discussion about the need to recognize the Armenian Genocide.⁶⁶

The commemorations started with a gathering of about hundred people in front of the Islamic Arts Museum in Istanbul. The building was symbolic as it served as the Ottoman police headquarters in 1915 and it was there that the Armenian intellectuals were incarcerated before being deported on 24 April 1915. Police stopped several dozen human rights defenders and lawmakers from reading a statement outside the museum. The protesters then strolled through the district of Sultanahmet, on a silent “Walk to Remember.” They read their statement at a rights association’s office while riot police stood guard outside. The demonstrators were generally silent, there were no slogans or chants during the march, which was accompanied by riot police and led to Eminönü. The group then took the boat to the Haydarpaşa train station, from which Istanbul Armenians were deported and sent to their deaths. There was a public commemoration in front of the station. After 6 pm, Armenians from around the world assembled at the entrance of İstiklal Street, in front of the French consulate. The event began with the hanging of strips of cloth on a wooden “Wishing Tree,” an artwork by Hale Tenger, which was declared to be a symbol of togetherness and remembrance. The commemoration then started with a speech from Heghnar Watenpaugh, a member of “Project 2015.” Entitled “Invitation for a New Beginning,” this was a call to connect the generation of her grandparents with the generation of her children. Nurcan Kaya’s talk after that demanded “recognition and apology.” Then, a chanting group of demonstrators, organized by Nor Zartonk, arrived carrying photos of the intellectuals who

lost their lives in 1915, together with more recent victims of genocide denialism, such as [Sevag Balık \(-2011\)](#) and [Maritsa Küçük \(-2012\)](#). The commemoration of the Armenian Genocide in Istanbul, which first began in 2010 in Taksim Square and grew in size every year, actually reached its zenith with the centennial anniversary.⁶⁷

Conclusion

After the Gezi resistance in May-June 2013, the political climate was progressive and hopeful in Turkey, despite the fact that the resistance had been violently suppressed. The centennial events organized with civil initiatives in 2014 and early 2015 inherited this bravery and hope for political action. It was still a possibility to challenge nationalist taboos and imagine a new societal settlement in the country. In mid-2015, however, the government once again resorted to brutal violence in Turkey's predominantly Kurdish south-east after a three-year peace process with the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK). In Kurdish-populated towns, there were severe human rights abuses, violence against civilians, and round-the-clock curfews that deprived the population of necessary provisions.⁶⁸ The state's renewed war also led to a crackdown on freedom of speech, the [press](#), and academics critical of the war. Almost total suppression of the freedom of expression from 2016 onwards led to a halt in civil society initiatives interested in the critical apprehension of the centennial of World War I in Turkey. Official centenary events, on the contrary, were all organized around "victories" and "Muslim martyrdom" – consciously avoiding a complete historiography of the war.

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Notes

1. The term "martyrdom" should also be considered in the context of Islam and the declaration of jihad against the Allies in November 1914. For a discussion on the importance of martyrdom in Turkish political culture, see Bozarslan, Hamit: *Türkiye'de Siyasi Şiddetin Fikri Kaynakları* [The Ideological Sources of Political Violence in Turkey], in: Laçiner, Ömer (ed.): *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce. Dönemler ve Zihniyetler* [Political Thought in Modern Turkey. Eras and Mentalities], volume 9, Istanbul 2009, pp 370-385. ↑
2. The Gallipoli Campaign, also known as the Dardanelles Campaign or the Battle of Gallipoli, was a naval attack at the straits followed by a landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula. See Gallipoli, Campaign and Battle of (forthcoming), in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie

Universität Berlin,

https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/gallipoli_campaign_and_battle_of. ↑

3. See Aksakal, Mustafa: Introduction, in: International Journal of Middle East Studies 46/4 (2014), pp. 653-656; Yanıkdağ, Yücel: Ottoman Empire/Middle East, in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2014-12-19. DOI: 10.15463/ie1418.10522; Gürcan, Metin / Johnson, Robert (eds.): The Gallipoli Campaign. The Turkish Perspective, London et al. 2016. ↑
4. In a TV documentary series about the First World War seen “through Arab eyes,” scripted and moderated by Tunisian writer Malik Triki and produced by Al-Jazeera English (2014), it was suggested that the victory was indeed won by “Arabs,” as the majority of Ottoman contingents deployed at Gallipoli had been recruited in Greater Syria. See Bromber, Katrin / Lange, Katharina / Liebau, Heike / Wetzel, Anorthe (eds.): The Long End of the First World War, Frankfurt a. M. 2018, p. 148. ↑
5. See Lüküslü, Demet: Creating a Pious Generation. Youth and Education Policies of the AKP in Turkey, in: Southeast European and Black Sea Studies 16/4 (2016), pp. 637-649. ↑
6. Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, Çanakkale Şehitler Abidesi’ni Ziyaret Etti [President Erdoğan has Visited Çanakkale Martyrs’ Memorial], issued by the Office of Turkish President, online:
<https://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/410/29707/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-canakkale-sehitler-abidesini-ziyaret-etti> (retrieved: 16 May 2019). ↑
7. Turkey Starts Programme of Events to Mark Centenary of Gallipoli Campaign, issued by Centenary News, online:
<http://www.centenarynews.com/article/turkey-starts-programme-of-events-to-mark-centenary-of-gallipoli-campaign> (retrieved: 4 April 2019). ↑
8. Büyük Zafer 100. yılında törenlerle kutlandı [Great Victory has Been Celebrated in its Centenary], issued by Habertürk, online:
<https://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1055358-canakkale-zaferinin-100-yildonumu-cesitli-etkinliklerle-anildi> (retrieved: 16 May 2019). These much-inflated numbers do not correspond to the actual death toll of the battle, although they are widely accepted by the public as a result of official repetitions. ↑
9. The minelayer “Nusret” was among the ships that paraded. The ship was launched a week beforehand and it laid two mines to symbolize its historical role in the war. Nusret Mayın Gemisi 100 yıl sonra yeniden denize çıktı [The Nusret Mine Ship was Launched Again after 100 Years], issued by Günlük Gündem, online:
<http://web.archive.org/web/20160602213020/http://www.gunlukgundem.com/turkiye/nu>

sret-mayin-gemisi-100-yil-sonra-yeniden-denize-cikti-h1356.html (retrieved: 16 May 2019). ↑

10. "...geniş çaplı bir etkinlikle sesimizi dünyaya duyuracağız." Kültür ve Turizm Bakanı Ömer Çelik, 18 Mart Şehitleri Anma Günü ve Çanakkale Deniz Zaferi'nin yıl dönümü dolayısıyla bir mesaj yayımladı [Culture and Tourism Minister Omer Celik Issued a Message for March 18 Martyrs Commemoration Day and the Anniversary of the Dardanelles Sea Victory], issued by T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, online: <http://basin.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR-132055/kultur-ve-turizm-bakani-omer-celik-18-mart-sehitleri-an-.html> (retrieved: 16 May 2019) [translated by author]. ↑
11. Başbakanlık'ta "Çanakkale Menüsü" ["Çanakkale Menu" at the Prime Ministry], issued by Yeni Şafak, online: <https://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/basbakanlikta-canakkale-menusu-2104817> (retrieved: 16 May 2019). ↑
12. Davutoğlu. Milletimiz mertçe savaşır [Davutoglu. Our Nation Fights Bravely], issued by Yeni Şafak, online: <https://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/davutoglu-milletimiz-mertce-savasir-2104830> (retrieved: 16 May 2019). ↑
13. Anticipating record centenary demand, Australia and New Zealand held ballots for members of the public wanting to travel to Gallipoli for the Anzac Day commemorations. Due to restricted space at the Anzac commemorative site, the participants would be limited to 10,500. See, Gallipoli Centenary April 25. Events Preview, One Month to Go, issued by Centenary News, online: <http://www.centenarynews.com/article?id=3286> (retrieved: 4 April 2019). ↑
14. Çanakkale'de görkemli anma töreni [Majestic Commemorative Ceremony in Gallipoli], issued by TRT Haber, online: <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/canakkalede-gorkemli-anma-toreni-180633.html> (retrieved: 16 May 2019). ↑
15. French President François Hollande and Russian President Vladimir Putin, although they were invited to Gallipoli, attended the Armenian Genocide commemoration in Yerevan instead. World Leaders Join Gallipoli Commemoration in Turkey, issued by Al Jazeera, online: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/04/world-leaders-remember-gallipoli-centenary-150424060036088.html> (retrieved: 12 August 2019). ↑
16. Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan. Tedavülden kaldırılıp tarihin tozlu raflarına havale edildiler [President Erdoğan. Removed from Circulation and Transferred to the Dusty Shelves of History], issued by Anadolu Ajansı (AA), online: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-tedavulden-kaldirilip-tarihin-tozlu-raflarina-havale-edildiler/563210?preview=1> (retrieved: 19 May 2016). ↑

17. The Siege of Kut al-Amara between 3 December 1915 and 29 April 1916 was an important episode of the war between the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain. For more information see Çetinsaya, Gökhan: Kut al-Amara, in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2017-12-18. DOI: 10.15463/ie1418.11204. ↑
18. See Kut'ül Amare, bağımsızlık ve hürriyet aşkının destanı [An Epic for the Love of Independence and Freedom], issued by AA, online: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/kutul-amare-bagimsizlik-ve-hurriyet-askinin-destani/563536> (retrieved: 4 April 2019); Kut'ül Amare zaferi Rusları da etkiledi [Kut Victory Also Influenced the Russians], issued by AA, online: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/kutul-amare-zaferi-ruslari-da-etkiledi/563654> (retrieved: 4 April 2019); Kut'ül Amare Zaferi'ni İngilizler bize unutturdu [The English Made Us Forget the Victory of Kut], issued by AA, online: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/kutul-amare-zaferini-ingilizler-bize-unutturdu/563531> (retrieved: 4 April 2019); 100. Yılında Unutulan Zafer. Kut'ül Amare [Forgotten Victory on the 100th Anniversary. Kut'ul Amare], issued by AA, online: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/info/infografik/1019> (retrieved: 4 April 2019). ↑
19. See Onaran, Burak: New Histories for a New Turkey. The First Battle of Kut (1916) and the Reshaping of the Ottoman Past, in: Akyıldız, Kaya / Furman, Ivo / Hecker, Pierre (eds.): The Politics of Culture in "New Turkey", Edinburgh 2021: Edinburgh University Press. The ministry of culture and tourism also published a short clip for the centenary. Anadolu Ajansı: "Kut'ül Amare" hafızalardan silinmeyecek ["Kut'ül Amare" Will Not be Erased from Memory], issued by YouTube, online: <https://youtu.be/X91jj8NMlo> (retrieved: 16 May 2019). ↑
20. Demir, Adem: Kut'ül Amare Zaferi'nin 100.yılı için görkemli anma programı [Majestic Commemorative Program for the 100th Anniversary of the Victory of Kut'ül Amare], issued by AA, online: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/kut-ul-amare-zaferinin-100yili-icin-gorkemli-anma-programi/563907> (retrieved: 16 May 2019). ↑
21. Ibid. ↑
22. Tarihi 1919'dan başlatanlar Milletimizin hasmıdır [Those Who Start History from 1919 are the Enemies of Our Nation], issued by Yeni Şafak, online: <https://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/tarihi-1919dan-baslatanlar-milletimizin-hasmidir-2459219> (retrieved 16 May 2019). ↑
23. Kitaplardan İsmet İnönü çıktı Kut'ül Amare girdi [İsmet İnönü Out From (School) Books, Kut'ül Amare In], issued by Sözcü, online: <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2017/egitim/kitaplardan-ismet-inonu-cikti-kut-ul-amare-girdi-1>

626476/ (retrieved: 4 April 2019). ↑

24. The president and his government have embraced Mehmetçik, Kut'ül-Amâre publically and enthusiastically. The first episode of the series was screened in the conference hall of the presidential complex. See Onaran, New Histories 2019. ↑
25. The battle in winter 1914-1915 close to the current Armenian border constituted a devastating defeat of Ottoman forces by the Russian military with the aid of Armenian volunteer units. See Sarikamis, Battle of (forthcoming), in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/sarikamis_battle_of. For years, there had been unofficial commemorations by various groups. In some ways, they might be the ones that forced AKP's hand into official commemoration. See Sarıkamış Dayanışma Grubu [Sarıkamış Solidarity Group], issued by Facebook, online: <https://www.facebook.com/SarikamisDayanismaGrubu/> (retrieved: 12 August 2019). ↑
26. The first two are World War I fronts, whereas Malazgirt refers to "the entry of the Turks to Anatolia" in 1071 and Dumlupınar refers to the final victory of the Turkish nationalist forces in 1922. See Gençlik Şühedanın İzinde. Dumlupınar'dan Zafertepe'ye [Youth on the Trail of Martyrs. From Dumlupınar to Zafertepe], issued by T24, online: <https://t24.com.tr/haber/genclik-suhedanin-izinde,237430> (retrieved: 4 April 2019). ↑
27. See Binlerce Genç, Sarıkamış'ta Ecdadın İzinde Yürüdü [Thousands of Youth Walked on the Trail of Martyrs in Sarıkamış], issued by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, online: <http://www.gsb.gov.tr/HaberDetaylari/3/3798/binlerce-genc-sarikamista-ecdadin-izinde-yurudu.aspx> (retrieved: 4 April 2019). Other trekking routes were also organized across the country's eighty-one provinces and Cyprus. See "Martyrs' Memorial March". Turks Commemorate Battle of Sarikamish, issued by Centenary News, online: <http://www.centenarynews.com/article?id=1336> (retrieved: 12 August 2019). ↑
28. The number of fallen soldiers has been disputed constantly. Earlier works refer to 22,000 martyrs. The number became 60,000 in 2015. See Sarıkamış Harekatinin 100. yılında anma yürüyüşü [Memorial March on the 100th Anniversary of the Sarıkamış Operation], issued by CNN Türk, online: <https://www.cnnturk.com/video/dunya/sarikamis-harekatinin-100-yilinda-anma-yuruyusu> (retrieved: 4 April 2019). In 2016, the number increased to 90,000. See Sarıkamış Şehitleri 101. Yılında Anıldı [Sarıkamış Martyrs Were Commemorated on the 101st Anniversary], issued by Hürriyet, online: <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/sarikamis-sehitleri-101-yilinda-anildi-37223066> (retrieved: 4 April 2019). ↑
29. The phrase, "Asım's generation" comes from a poem by Mehmet Akif Ersoy, praising martyrdom in the service of Islam. ↑

30. Asım'ın Nesli Asrın Yürüyüşünde [Generation of Asım in the March of the Century], issued by İHA, online: <https://www.iha.com.tr/haber-asimin-nesli-asrin-yuruyusunde-426210/> (retrieved: 16 May 2019). ↑
31. On the 104th anniversary, in 2019, thousands of people, including several ministers and soldiers, walked in heavy snow. See Şehitler böyle anıldı [Martyrs Remembered], issued by CNN Türk, online: <https://www.cnnturk.com/video/turkiye/sehitler-boyle-anildi> (retrieved: 4 April 2019). ↑
32. See Arcan, H. Esra: Homeland Memory. Construction of Memory Politics and the Media in Turkey Related to World War I, in: Doğan, Emrah / Geçgin, Ercan (eds.): Current Debates in Public Relations, Cultural and Media Studies, volume 9, London 2018, pp. 481-504; Lüküslü, Pious Generation 2016. ↑
33. Ibid. ↑
34. See Baykut 2016. ↑
35. Bursa Ulu Camii'nde Çanakkale Şehitleri İçin 253 Bin Hatim Duası Yapıldı [253,000 Hatim Prayers for Çanakkale Martyrs in Bursa Grat Mosque], issued by Haberler, online: <https://www.haberler.com/bursa-ulu-camii-nde-canakkale-sehitleri-icin-253-7087953-ha-beri/> (retrieved: 16 May 2019). ↑
36. Çanakkale'de görkemli anma töreni [Majestic Commemorative Ceremony in Gallipoli], issued by TRT Haber, 24 April 2015, online: <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/canakkalede-gorkemli-anma-toreni-180633.html> (retrieved: 16 May 2019). ↑
37. See, Görkemle kutlansın [May it be Celebrated With Splendor], issued by Hürriyet, online: <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/gorkemle-kutlansin-40089900> (retrieved: 4 April 2019). ↑
38. For further information on neo-Ottomanism, see Ergin, Murat / Karakaya, Yağmur: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania. Navigating State-Led and Popular Cultural Representations of the Past, in: New Perspectives on Turkey 56 (2017), pp. 33-59; White, Jenny: Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks, Princeton 2014. ↑
39. Tarihi 1919'dan başlatanlar Milletimizin hasmıdır [Those Who Start History from 1919 are the Enemies of Our Nation], issued by Yeni Şafak, online: <https://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/tarihi-1919dan-baslatanlar-milletimizin-hasmidir-2459219> (retrieved: 16 May 2019). ↑
40. A TV series, named Mehmetçik, Kut'ül-Amare, was also produced by the state channel in the aftermath of the centenary. It is a propagandistic work that feeds into the nationalist populism with a strong attachment to militarism, Islamic identity, and neo-Ottomanism. See Onaran, New Histories 2019. ↑
41. Çiçek, M. Talha: Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Ders Kitapları Çerçevesinde Türk Ulus Kimliği

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42. Tarihi 1919’dan başlatanlar Milletimizin hasmıdır [Those Who Start History from 1919 are the Enemies of Our Nation], issued by Yeni Şafak, online: <https://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/tarihi-1919dan-baslatanlar-milletimizin-hasmidir-2459219> (retrieved: 16 May 2019). ↑
43. Ibid. ↑
44. 2015 was the year of international demands in genocide recognition. Armenia issued a centenary declaration on 29 January 2015, repeating demands for Turkey to recognise the killing of Armenians during the First World War as a genocide. Pope Francis also sparked a diplomatic row with Turkey on 12 April 2015 by describing the mass killings of Armenians during the First World War as “the first genocide of the 20th century”. Following the pope’s statement, the European Parliament MEPs backed a resolution on 15 April 2015 urging Turkey to use the centenary to “come to terms with its past, recognise the genocide and so pave the way for a genuine reconciliation between the Turkish and Armenian peoples.” ↑
45. A Conversation with Ahmet Davutoglu, issued by Council on Foreign Relations, online: <https://www.cfr.org/event/conversation-ahmet-davutoglu-0> (retrieved: 27 March 2019); Yetkin, Murat: Davutoğlu. Ermeni diasporasıyla temas istiyoruz [Davutoglu. We Want Contact With the Armenian Diaspora], issued by Radikal, online: <http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/murat-yetkin/davutoglu-ermen-diaporasiyla-temas-istiyoruz-987815/> (retrieved: 27 March 2019). ↑
46. The government even passed a new law for the “Çanakkale Martyrs’ Day” commemorations, specifically indicating the date 18 March: 18 Mart Şehitler Günü ve 19 Eylül Gaziler Gününde Yapılacak Törenler Hakkında Yönetmelik [Regulation on Ceremonies to be Held on 18 March Martyrs Day and 19 September Veterans Day], issued by Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi, online: <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/Metin.Aspx?MevzuatKod=7.5.5792&sourceXmlSearch=&MevzuatIliski=0> (retrieved: 27 March 2019). ↑
47. Adjemian, Boris / Nichanian, Mikaël: Du centenaire de 14-18 à celui de 1915, in: *Études arméniennes contemporaines* 2 (2013), pp. 65-88, issued by OpenEdition, online: <https://journals.openedition.org/eac/254> (retrieved: 27 March 2019); Fisk, Robert: The Gallipoli Centenary is a Shameful Attempt to Hide the Armenian Holocaust, issued by The Independent, online: <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/the-gallipoli-centenary-is-a-shameful-attempt-to-hide-the-armenian-holocaust-9988227.html> (retrieved: 27 March 2019). ↑
48. See Leupold, David: Authentische Gewaltgeschichten oder verzerrte Spiegelbilder? Die

- türkische und armenische Geschichtsdeutung von 1915 im Lichte des Nationalmythos, in: Christophe, Barbara / Kohl, Christoph / Liebau, Heike (eds.): Geschichte als Ressource. Politische Dimensionen historischer Authentizität, Berlin 2017, p. 215. ↑
49. See Aybak, Tunç: Geopolitics of Denial. Turkish State's "Armenian Problem", in: Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies 18/2 (2016), p. 136. ↑
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<http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/15089/tarih-vertigosu-hafiza-hipnozu-nar-niyetiyle-hatirlamak> (retrieved: 27 March 2019). ↑
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52. Davutoğlu first used the concept in 2010, see A Conversation with Ahmet Davutoğlu, issued by Council on Foreign Relations, online:
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<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/23/turkey-erdogan-condolences-armenian-massacre> (retrieved: 27 March 2019). ↑
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56. Press Release Regarding the Statements Delivered During the Liturgy in Vatican on April 12, 2015, issued by Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, online:
http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-110_-12-april-2015_-press-release-regarding-the-statements-delivered-during-the-liturgy-in-vatican-on-april-12_-2015.en.mfa (retrieved: 16 April 2019). ↑
57. 4th Çanakkale Biennial, issued by Çanakkale Biennial Initiative, online:

<https://www.canakkalebienali.com/4-canakkale-bienali/?l=en> (retrieved: 12 August 2019). ↑

58. The library bears the name of Manfred Korfmann, the long-term manager of the archaeological site of Troy. ↑
59. Surp Kevork Church was occupied by the municipal authorities in 1915 and has been under occupation ever since. Despite the protests of the Christian community, the church was used as a building of the arts department of the 18 March University, later as the Museum of Ethnography, and later as a cultural center. ↑
60. For detailed information on the biennial and the works included, see the guidebook prepared by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV), 14th Istanbul Biennial. Saltwater. Guidebook, issued by İKSV, online: http://cdn.iksv.org/media/content/files/14B_Guidebook.pdf (retrieved: 16 May 2019). ↑
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62. Ideology, Propaganda, and War. The Ottomans in the Great War, 10 January 2015, issued by Koç University, online: http://leylek.ku.edu.tr/file/54a1718b559e1/SEMPOZYUM_PROGRAM.pdf (retrieved: 4 April 2019). ↑
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64. Why a Commemoration in Istanbul?, issued by Project 2015, online: <http://www.armenianproject2015.org/commemoration-in-istanbul/> (retrieved: 16 April 2019). ↑
65. This was the Platform for the Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide (Ermeni Soykırımını Anma Platformu), led by DurDe! (Say Stop to Racism and Nationalism), the Human Rights Association (IHD), Nor Zartonk, and the European Grassroots Antiracist Movement (EGAM). ↑
66. Annual 24 April commemorations actually first began in 2010 in Taksim Square and grew in size every year, reaching their zenith with the centenary. See Marsoobian, Armen: 7th Annual Armenian Genocide Commemoration Held in Istanbul, issued by The Armenian Weekly, online: <https://armenianweekly.com/2016/04/25/istanbul-commemoration-04-24-2016/> (retrieved: 16 April 2019). ↑
67. Talin Suciyan notes a number of weaknesses in the commemorative events, such as failing to identify the perpetrators and falling short of calling the genocide by its name.

Suciyan, Talin: Toplumsal Anma Pratikleri Şekillenirken (2) [As Social Commemoration Practices Take Shape (2)], issued by Azad Alik, online: <https://azadalik.com/2015/06/21/toplumsal-anma-pratikleri-sekillenirken-bolum-ii-istanbul-24-nisan-2015/> (retrieved: 16 May 2019). ↑

68. The peace petition of the Academics for Peace (January 2016), entitled “We will not be a party to this crime,” was very important in raising the issues. We will not be a party to this crime! (in English, French, German, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Greek), issued by Academics for Peace, online: <https://barisicinakademisyenler.net/node/63> (retrieved: 16 April 2019). ↑

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