

MONUMENT TO THE NATION: THE CHANGING FACE OF WAR MEMORIALS
IN GALLIPOLI

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*Dedicated to my mother, Elizabeth
and my grandparents, Crispin and Margaret
for without whom this would not have been possible.*

ABSTRACT
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Keywords: Çanakkale, monuments, nationalism, discourses, commemoration

The battlefields and monuments of Gallipoli are considered to be among the most important cultural heritage sites in Turkey and in official historiography understood to represent many of the values on which the nation and state is supposedly based. The role of the nine-and-a-half month battle has considerable importance in official (and unofficial) discourse as the origin of Turkish nationhood. This is - according to the official narrative - when Mustafa Kemal stepped into his role as “fearless leader”, “transporting Turkey into the modern age”.

A historical moment attributed with such importance has been marked with monuments and memorials commemorating the battles and their victory against “imperialist invaders” seeking to prevent the emergence of an independent Turkish state. Nationalist discourses often refer to these battlefields in precisely this way, stating that they were crucial to the nation’s formation. Despite the importance the official discourse assigns to the Gallipoli Campaign, the display of the monuments is constantly in flux. The explanation may lie in the changing discourses of the state (or other actors), and the way that the memorials are used by different discourses over the course of time. This study does not seek to determine exactly what the memorials represent, or whether these representations are faithful to the events that occurred. Rather, this study investigates the divergent meanings, preferences and preoccupations in the process of monumentalizing and commemorating Gallipoli at different historical conjunctures through Turkish history textbooks, historical accounts of the event, and comparative examples within other contexts.

ÖZET
MİLLETE BİR ANIT: ÇANAKKALE'DEKİ SAVAŞ ANITLARININ DEĞİŞEN
YÜZÜ

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Anahtar sözcükler: Çanakkale, anıtlar, milliyetçilik, söylemler, anma

Resmi tarih yazımında ulus-devletini oluşturduğu söylenen değerlerin birçoğunu temsil ettiği görülen Çanakkale'nin savaş alanları ve anıtları, Türkiye'de en önemli kültürel miras alanları arasında kabul edilir. Dokuz buçuk aylık savaşın rolü Türk Milliyeti'nin kökeni olarak resmi (ve resmi olmayan) söylemde büyük bir öneme sahiptir. Bu savaş- resmi anlatıya göre- Mustafa Kemal'in "korkusuz lider" olarak rolüne adım attığı ve Türkiye'yi modern bir çağa taşıdığı zamandır.

Böylesine önem atfedilen tarihi bir ana dikkat çekmek üzere, bağımsız bir Türk Devleti'nin ortaya çıkmasını engellemeye çalışan "emperyalist işgalcilere" karşı savaşları ve zaferleri hatırlatan anıtlar ve abideler yapılmıştır. Milliyetçi söylemler, bu savaş alanlarına millet oluşturmada çok önemli olduğunu ifade ederek-tam bu yolla sık sık gönderme yapar. Resmi söylemin Çanakkale Savaşı'na verdiği öneme karşın anıtların sergilenmesi sürekli bir değişim halindedir. Bu sürekli değişim, devletin (ya da diğer aktörlerin) de değişen söylemleriyle ve anıtların zaman içerisinde farklı söylemler tarafından kullanılma şekliyle açıklanabilir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, tam olarak anıtların neyi temsil ettiğini ya da bu temsillerin gerçekleşen olaylara sadık olup olmadığını belirtmekten ziyade, Türk tarih kitapları, olayın tarihi açıklamaları ve diğer bağlamlarda karşılaştırmalı örnekler yoluyla farklı tarihi konjunktürlerde Çanakkale'yi anıtsallaştırılma ve anma sürecindeki çeşitli anlamları, tercihleri ve meşguliyetleri incelemektir

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1. HISTORICAL NARRATIVES AND FRAMEWORK

1.1 Introduction

The narratives and the symbolism surrounding the battles at Gallipoli in 1915 played a critical role in the formation of the Turkish nationalist ideology. References to the site are everywhere in Turkey: whether just visiting the local bakery or restaurant, one is bound to come across a poster, plaque, photo or other tchotchke referring to the battles and the victory of “the Turks”¹, “Çanakkale Geçilmez”². The perceived birth of the nation occurred during these pivotal moments, as the ideological nationalist rhetoric claims the Ottoman Empire was in a state of decay, and the imperialist powers were just waiting for the opportunity to overtake the remnants of a great empire. As British forces entered the Dardanelles and set foot on Ottoman soil, it was seen as the last step in the process of destroying the empire and the end of a civilization.

These notions of victory and nationhood are seen in the material world as not only souvenir items, but also in the large monuments that cover the Gallipoli Peninsula. An example of the Turkish nationalist perspective that enumerates the above mentioned characteristics are evident in the story as told by the Turkish writer, Ömer Seyfettin. Comprehending this nationalist outlook of the period immediately following the Battle of Gallipoli is vital to understanding the importance of Gallipoli then, and its continued importance today. In *After Gallipoli*³, Seyfettin uses the character of the desperate and ‘mad’ reclusive bachelor to symbolize the state of decay of the Ottoman Empire, and its

¹ There is a cultural obscuration where the Ottoman Army is often referred to as the “Turkish Army”, thus playing into the manipulation of the nationalist discourse.

² Literally this phrase means ‘Çanakkale cannot be passed’, but it also has connotations meaning that the enemies cannot pass!

³ The English translation of *Çanakkale’den Sonra* used here is that of Professor Halil Berktaş. The Turkish version of the excerpts used will be found in the footnotes.

rebirth as the hopeful Turkish nation subsequent to the Turkish victory at Gallipoli. Through the symbolism in this short story, one can understand Seyfettin's belief that the Ottoman Empire had failed potential, becoming a wasteland, just as the man in the story lived his life, as a hermit with a garden overgrown with hemlock, a poisonous plant. The outlook was gloomy and hopeless until the news of the Turkish success at Gallipoli.

Using this story as an introductory lens into the outlook of the Young Turks, a group of military officers who assumed the leadership role in the last few years of the empire, is also tremendously useful. The protagonist is well-educated and regards the sciences highly, just as the Young Turks did. He believed that what defined a human was the usage of a shared language and religion, the presence of a community, and thus becoming the member of a nation. Nationality for the man was a significant part of the human identity. Yet, in the Ottoman Empire, after the Balkan Wars and understood imminent decline, the Young Turks faced similar fears of lacking nationality, language and religion as defining features of their 'nation'.

Whereas he would have liked to be a human being with his nationality, with his religion, with the exaltation of its temples, with a sense of community existing from time immemorial, with his ideal stretching into eternity – a moral and spiritual human being.⁴

Not only was there this perception of a distinct national identity, but there was also a perpetual fear of invasion of the Russians, British and French, and the immediate elimination of the 'Turks' presence in history. This fear, resulting in such a strong element of anti-imperialism within the Turkish nation is present in the recluse's firm beliefs that the Turks were to become 'enslaved' by the invading Great Powers.⁵ Remember that the British and French had already put their forces on the ground in Gallipoli, for the Young Turks in reality, and for our protagonist in the story, it was merely a matter of time. The conspiracy theories of how these powers were meddling in "the clumsiness of a nation that was unable to govern itself"⁶, with "all trade, wealth, money and affluence...in the hands of foreigners" only contributed to the strengthening of anti-imperialist and anti-foreigner sentiments. The same ideology as the Young Turks who were ready to burn Istanbul if the Great Powers were able to pass through the Dardanelles, and easily continue into the capital city of Istanbul, is represented in

⁴ Seyfettin, "After Gallipoli." Translated by Halil Berkay, page 2.

⁵ Seyfettin, page 2.

⁶ Seyfettin, page 3.

the story as the man is prepared to self-destruct if Anatolia is invaded by foreign powers.

Meanwhile, there was another crucial factor emphasized in Seyfettin's *After Gallipoli* that was also present in the growing nationalist sentiment of the time. That is, the Young Turks had a complex where they believed that the rest of the world looked down upon them, thus causing them to look down upon themselves, "while others tried to reduce the Turks, who had inscribed such glorious pages in history, to the civilizational level and retarded mental outlook of primitive, semi-savage tribes and peoples..."⁷ It seemed to become a mission of the Turks to prove that this was not the case.

Yet the negative tone of the story and the grim outlook soon changed with the perseverance and the success of the Turkish troops in Gallipoli. For Seyfettin, and the Young Turks, these pivotal moments were when the "enemy army was eroded and pushed back into the sea. Great ships sank. The British, thought to be invincible, were forced to let their flags drop to the ground" and the Russians were forced to retreat from their aspirations of conquering Istanbul. For Seyfettin, and the national memory, these were the times when the nation became just that, a nation. Seyfettin's character underwent a metamorphosis, from a depressed recluse to a jubilant father and member of a community. The rejuvenation of the man after seeing the efforts of his fellow citizens alters the main characters perspective. The man's transformation represents that of the nation, becoming reborn into a respectable 'dawn of hope'.

The short story, written in 1917, is indicative of the way the Gallipoli was to be integrated into the official historiography and national memory. From this introduction, one can further explore the leading historical narratives of Gallipoli and begin to understand why the state would commemorate such an occasion. Acquiring this context is important for determining how to situate the event and its representations into the nationalist discourse and its changing role over time. The nationalist discourses, an example of which has been seen above, gives us a starting point from which to view how the monuments that memorialize the battles of Gallipoli have been used for the nation-building purposes of the state.

⁷ Seyfettin, 3.

1.2 Sources and Shortcomings

For many, the story of the First World War and the Gallipoli Campaign is one of battle plans, maneuvers, and tactical victories or losses. However, for this study, the specifics of battle are not the focus. Instead, the aim is to bring the monuments dedicated to the Gallipoli campaign into context as a part of the larger process of Turkish nation-building. As can be seen in the Turkish narrative of history, the Gallipoli Campaign has assumed a supreme role, superseding the events of the First World War and even the Turkish War of Liberation. It has become a legend or myth emphasizing certain morals and characteristics critical to the creation and maintenance of the state. The huge losses suffered combined with the grand victory make this event of prime interest for the Turkish nationalist story.

Yet, the Turkish story takes various forms according to different biases and perspectives. Somehow, some parts of the story get swept under the rug of hidden history and some parts are emphasized. For example, the Ottoman Empire was actually on the losing side of the First World War. Out of the five fronts where the Ottoman Empire engaged in battle, the Ottoman troops were only successful in one of them, the Gallipoli front. Here one can see that the one glorious victory encompassing a rally for survival is more unifying than a valiant effort in a lost war.

The Ottoman Empire⁸ entered the First World War after forming an alliance with Germany. Participation because of German manipulation or encouragement, depending on the perspective, does not make for a very heroic, one-against-the-world-success-through-struggle story. Some authors write about the Ottoman Empire's interest in joining Germany, too. However, the story of courage and sacrifice for the notion of one's homeland does elicit stronger emotion and provides better material for constructing a historical narrative grasped by the public and society at-large. This is

⁸ Many of the texts describing the events of the First World War refer to the Ottoman Empire as Turkey, however at this time, Turkey did not yet exist. The use of the terms Turkey and Ottoman Empire interchangeably only further proves the point that the Battle of Gallipoli has been adapted as a Turkish battle playing a crucial role in the construction of the Turkish nationalist narrative, and emphasizing the effectiveness of its use in the Turkish nationalist discourse.

where part of the disconnect between the First World War and the Battle of Gallipoli occurs, and the myth-making begins.

The importance assigned to Çanakkale⁹ by the Turkish side is apparent when visiting the actual battlefields and commemorative monuments. These monuments have been built over the past century to both remember the event and to ensure the attribution of attention and importance to particular qualities of the battle. I argue that the monuments themselves not only serve the purpose of remembering those lost, but also carry heavier and more loaded meanings that have transformed over time helping in the construction of a particular historical narrative. In order to contextualize the Gallipoli campaign for the purposes of this study, the available and differing historical narratives will be explored, in an effort to situate the battle into the ideology of Turkish nationalism.

As recognized among many of the scholars studying the Ottoman Empire's role in the First World War, there is a lack of material. Not only this, but as there is a hierarchy in the international world system, respectively, there is a similar correlation between the research and the interest that certain perspectives receive.¹⁰ Therefore, as the Ottoman Empire was on the losing side of the war, the Allies benefitted from the greater interest in the war accounts and the prevalence of historical accounts. Then, of course, there is significant interest in the other 'western' powers that took part in the war, but whom were on the losing side, and finally, we come to the understudied role of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War. Noting the lack of attention, one must also differentiate between the accounts available.

The historical narrative of Gallipoli as an event has many variations according to the narrator and the narrator's biases. Therefore, settling on one accurate account of each detail becomes nearly impossible. Luckily, for this study, the accuracy of the historical accounts is not of the utmost meaning. Instead, what matters for this study is the perception of the event and how the Battles at Gallipoli have been used over time in Turkish nationalist discourse. This chapter aims to bring the Gallipoli campaign into context as a part of the larger process. Part of this section will be dedicated to the main sources available in English that are available for consumption on Gallipoli. Although,

⁹ Çanakkale is the Turkish version of the English 'Gallipoli'.

¹⁰ Erol Koroğlu. *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity: Literature in Turkey during World War I*, London/New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007, page xiv.

this survey of sources is not all-inclusive and focuses on the most referenced and respected of the available works. It does not include those that are committed to showing that “Gallipoli deserves to be, and is, also remembered for the heroism and resourcefulness of both the British army and the men of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.”¹¹ While the literature describing the great heroism and triumph of the soldiers has an important place, the focus here is on the historical narratives that describe the overall events.

This thesis has relied heavily on English-language sources for its account of the events at Gallipoli. However, these sources were used conscientiously with the sources’ biases in mind. Many of the accounts available in English are representative of the British or Australian/New Zealand perspective of the event. The plentiful resources of biased material (reflecting the side of the Entente powers), add to the view that the British were seen as the main aggressors and the Turks were forced to respond to the attacks with minimal preparation and resources. The Turks are presented as being unready for war, making up for their lack of skill and training with their fanaticism in protecting their land.

Despite the disproportionate usage of English language materials versus Turkish sources, some sources in Turkish have been utilized.¹² In order to define the official ‘national’ account of the Turkish state, contemporary history textbooks published by the National Ministry of Education were examined. These textbooks present the official narrative that is being taught in the present. However, here too, there is an opportunity for more detailed study tracing the transformation of the official narrative of the Battle of Gallipoli through the years utilizing only textbooks. My inclination is that this type of study would also provide an interesting view of how narratives about Çanakkale have been utilized at different points of history for different purposes.

¹¹ Card catalog description for *Gallipoli 1915: Frontal Assault on Turkey*, by Philip J. Haythornthwaite.

¹² An obvious shortcoming of this study is that many of the sources used were English language materials. Very few Turkish language materials were used as my language skills in Turkish are still developing and there were time constraints for the completion of the project. However, had more Turkish accounts of the event been used, the study would have been more colorful and balanced. This deficiency will allow for more research on this topic in the future.

1.3 Historical Accounts

Several of the accounts of Gallipoli that have come to be the foundations of the historical literature are Alan Moorehead's 1956 text in novel form *Gallipoli* (1956), Nigel Steel and Peter Hart's *Defeat at Gallipoli* (1994), Michael Hickey's *Gallipoli* (1995), Lyn Macdonald's *1915: The Death of Innocence* (1993), Robert Rhodes James's *Gallipoli* (1965/1999), *The World War Collection: Gallipoli and the early battles* and Les Carlyon's *Gallipoli* (2001). Also included in the analysis of these texts *Gallipoli: The Turkish Story* (2003) by Kevin Fewster et al. because of its interesting title and even more strange perspective mixing the discourse of the Turkish with those of the Australian. Many of the historical accounts describe the same set of events, but Moorehead is a bit different in his significant details and notes regarding the outlook of the Ottoman-Turkish/German side.¹³ Yet, Robert Rhodes James criticizes the historicity of Moorehead's book, as references are scant.¹⁴

For the Turkish narratives, Edward Erickson's *Ordered to Die* (2001) and Turkish high school history textbooks represent the Turkish military and Turkish state perspectives. As is noted in the initial pages of Erickson's text, General Huseyin Kivrikoğlu states the need for the text since it describes the military's perspective that has been ignored in as showing the military's view of the Gallipoli campaign.¹⁵ The Turkish history textbooks published by the National Education Ministry show the official ideology and Gallipoli story that schoolchildren are indoctrinated with several times within their mandatory school careers.

¹³ Alan Moorehead's *Gallipoli* seems to show a deeper awareness about the innerworkings of the Turkish mentality during the Gallipoli campaign. However, one of the great deficiencies in his work is the lack citations and resource information, which is supposedly the norm for history texts published in the 1950s.

¹⁴ Robert Rhodes James, *Gallipoli*, London: Pimlico, 1999. [London: Batsford, 1965], pg. vii.

¹⁵ Huseyin Kivrikoğlu. Foreword in Erickson, Edward. *Ordered to Die: a history of the Ottoman Army in the First World War*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001.

The Ottoman Empire went from a neutral state in the First World War to becoming fully involved after the incidents surrounding the British withholding the dreadnoughts for which the Ottoman Empire had ordered and paid. The battleships were withheld at the last minute because of doubts of loyalty and security of the relations between Britain and the Ottoman Empire. After this move, the relations that were supposedly creating a barrier between British influence and the Russian Empire were ruined.¹⁶ The Germans filled the void felt by the Ottoman public handing over the Goeben and Breslau, two modern dreadnoughts, which won favor for the German mission in Istanbul as the political climate continued to become more and more tense with the impending war.¹⁷

Initially, the Young Turks, who were actively in control of the empire after 1908, were walking a tightrope, balancing between the Entente powers that had their representation in Istanbul, and the Germans, or Central Powers.¹⁸ There are multiple perspectives of how exactly Turkey entered the war, some of which state that Enver Paşa single-handedly threw the Empire into war.¹⁹ Another perspective is that it was the Germans who were campaigning for the support of the Ottomans, which was easily attained after the British kept the dreadnoughts.²⁰ The last straw, according to some authors, was after the German mission took control of the Ottoman fleet, initiating the attack on two Russian cities and sinking two Russian ships.²¹ The Ottoman Empire declared war on the Entente on 31 October 1914, and the British reciprocated on 5 November 1914.

¹⁶ James, 32; the Ottoman Empire was being used as a barrier between the two.

¹⁷ Alan Moorehead. *Gallipoli*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1956; James, 4-5; Erickson argues that despite what many historical accounts say the two German ships were not handed over to the Turkish military, but remained under the control of the Germans until 1918, *Ordered to Die*, pg. 31/4.

¹⁸ Moorehead seems to capture some version of the sentiments of the Young Turks as the Ottoman Empire was declining and before the Republic was established.

¹⁹ Moorehead.

²⁰ Nigel Steel and Peter Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli*, London: Macmillan, 1994, 3-4; Hickey.

²¹ Steel and Hart, 6.

The charge to invade the Dardanelles was led by Winston Churchill, who supposedly ‘bamboozled’²² members of the Admiralty Committee into approving the disastrous plan. Admiral of the Navy, First Sea Lord Admiral Fisher, was constantly standing against Churchill’s plans, as he noted the invasion as a mistake from the beginning. Generally, the idea of attacking the Dardanelles was seen as extremely difficult.²³ Despite the presence of negative views, the battles at Gallipoli were initially fought with naval power. It was believed that the British Navy would be able to penetrate the Dardanelles quickly and easily without landing any troops on the ground, as their naval power had previously been unstoppable. However, the British Navy was unable to force their way through to the Marmara Sea, thus providing impetus the joint Naval/Army venture.

The first charge to press the Dardanelles on the February 19th only utilized naval power, since the British Council was hesitant as they were already engaged on other fronts.²⁴ Initially, the British forces even sent old, outdated battleships believing that these sources would be enough to take the Dardanelles.²⁵ Ultimately, these attempts culminated with the Ottoman naval victory on 18 March 1915, after the Ottoman forces laid another line of 20 mines just 10 days before, in the same area where British battleships had been seen. “The reality of 18 March was that it had been a failure for the Allied fleet. Of the sixteen capital ships engaged, three had been sunk, and three more put out of action for a prolonged period. Yet almost nothing had been achieved.”²⁶

Subsequent to the British naval defeat, the Allies decided that it was necessary to begin a land operation. After the March 18th victory, the Ottomans were not only rejuvenated from the win, but they were also given adequate time to improve their defenses as the Allied forces did not land until 24-25 April 1915.²⁷ The landings were

²² Moorehead.

²³ Steel and Hart, 4-5.

²⁴ Steel and Hart, 9 & 13.

²⁵ Steel and Hart, 9. Not necessarily mentioned in the text, but the British were most certainly playing on the expectation that the Turkish defenses would easily be penetrated.

²⁶ Steel and Hart, 27.

²⁷ The attacks had been planned to occur earlier, but were postponed for various reasons like weather and lack of essential preparedness. Moorehead, 108-110.

set to occur at Gaba Tepe (ANZACs), Cape Helles, Beşika Bay (Asian side, near Kum Kale), Kum Kale (French troops), and Bay of Saros toward Bulair. The two main fronts were the Gaba Tepe and Cape Helles landings, which Limon von Sanders, the main commander of the Ottoman forces at Gallipoli, could not believe.²⁸

The landings themselves were not successful for the British as they had been swept about a mile off course landing in the wrong place, not Gaba Tepe, but Sarı Bair.²⁹ In many of the texts Mustafa Kemal is mentioned as playing an integral role in several of the battles. In some of the historical accounts, he is presented as a ‘fanatical’ commander leading his troops with fury.³⁰ This was to the misfortune of the British and Allied troops as the British failed to consider the poor position of the Allies in their attempt to attack and the idea that the “...the Turks were defending their homeland against the infidel invader and this fact gave them an edge in their determination.”³¹ Mustafa Kemal led the troops to victory a couple times and prevented the invading forces from gaining ground in several of the key battles in Gallipoli.³²

It was also Mustafa Kemal Bey who defended the Gaba Tepe front. He was asked to send an extra battalion toward Chunuk Bair to oppose the incoming attack. In response, Mustafa Kemal responded by sending his whole division, which had been prepared to participate in a field day.³³ It was from Battleship Hill that Mustafa Kemal ordered his infamous bluff to not retreat, fix their bayonets and fight.³⁴ It was this unit,

²⁸ Moorehead, 117.

²⁹ Moorehead, 121. The difficult aspect of these landings was that the terrain of Sarı Bair was much more challenging with steep rock cliffs.

³⁰ Steel and Hart; Moorehead; James. In these historical accounts, it is interesting to note that it is only the Turkish troops that are referred to as ‘fanatical’, while the Allied/Entente forces are just enthusiastic. (Again, here one can note that the Ottoman forces are ‘Turkish’ even before the formation of Turkey.)

³¹ Quote of Ataturk as quoted by Steel and Hart, 72. “Everybody hurled himself on the enemy to kill and die. This was no ordinary attack. Everybody in this attack was eager to succeed or go forward with the determination to day.”

³² Moorehead. These epic successes are those at Chunuk Bair (Çonkbayırı) and Gaba Tepe.

³³ Steel and Hart, 66-7. “Instinctively Mustafa Kemal realized that, if successful, an advance up the high ground toward Koja Chemen Tepe would be decisive....”

³⁴ Steel and Hart, 69; The inspirational words of Mustafa Kemal were “Size ben taarruz emretmiyorum, ölmeyi emrediyorum. Biz ölünceye kadar geçecek zaman içinde yerimize başka kuvvetler ve başka komutanlar gelebilir.” *İlk Öğretim Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılar Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük* 8. Ankara:

the 57th Regiment that lost all of its soldiers fighting subsequent to Mustafa Kemal's orders.³⁵ "A hitherto obscure Turkish lieutenant-colonel had just won one of the decisive battles of modern history, although he did not know it at the time."³⁶

There was intermittent fighting between the landings on April 25 and June, when the British focus switched from the Gaba Tepe (ANZAC front) to the Helles front in order to capture Krithia village. Then in early August the British had planned another landing at Suvla Bay in what would be an attempt to take Sari Bair, with a planned ANZAC attack at Lone Pine, as well. At the Battle of Chunuk Bair in August, it was the counter-attack led by Mustafa Kemal that cleared the incoming enemy from the slopes.³⁷ The landings at Sulva Bay initially were rather successful for the Allied Troops as they were undefended.³⁸ The skirmishes continue in difficult conditions with great losses of life until the British evacuations on the 8th and 9th of January.

James criticizes the role of Mustafa Kemal in the Gallipoli leading and the national mythology that surrounds it.³⁹ James argues that his role at Gallipoli is

MEB/Devlet Kitaplari,2008, 22. (I'm not ordering you to attack, I'm ordering you to die. In the time it takes for us to die, other commanders and reinforcements will come in our place.)

³⁵ James, xiii. Contrary to the typical discourse surrounding Mustafa Kemal's performance at Gallipoli and more specifically at Chunuk Bair, "Kemal's blunders were terrible—not every divisional commander futilely loses an entire regiment in less than an hour—but his intervention on April 25 and the final achievement on August 10th on Chunuk Bair were totally decisive."

³⁶ Michael Hickey. *Gallipoli*, London: J. Murray, 1995, page 119. This quote refers to the battle at Ari Burnu on 24-25 April when the Anzacs were first landing. It is also critical to point out that Mustafa Kemal Bey was only ranked as lieutenant-colonel, and not a higher ranking military official.

³⁷ Moorehead, 271-2. Even though the majority of Mustafa Kemal's troops were lost at Sulva, the trenches that had been taken by the Allies was won back, which seems to be the important part of the story.

³⁸ Moorehead, 242-244.

³⁹ James is also critical of the Australian national mythology that is derived from the events of Gallipoli. "What has been quite vexing in recent years has been the growth of quite unnecessary Turkish and Australian mythologies about Gallipoli. The Turks have decided to omit the facts that their principal commanders were German and that Kemal was a divisional commander: Kemal has been elevated as the commander-in-chief of the Turkish army, and if Von Sanders is mentioned at all, it is done so abusively. The legends of Kemal's military achievements are tediously maintained in Turkey, and any attempt to challenge them are greeted with shocked silence and disbelief. He was good, but not as good as all that." Introduction, xiii.

exaggerated. Although other sources note that it is possible that the success of Mustafa Kemal's career began in the battles at Gaba Tepe and Sarı Bair, preventing the Allies from dominating the Narrows.⁴⁰ Of course, it is certainly part of the myth-building process that Mustafa Kemal's actions have been emphasized in the more recent accounts of the battle.

Some sources also note the difficult conditions experienced on both sides of the line. In fact this is seen as a unification point between the Allied and Turkish forces.⁴¹ Immediately after the ceasefire agreed upon on May 19 to bury the dead that had piled up on the battleground, the camaraderie grew between the two opposing sides. Additionally, several of the sources available in English give detailed descriptions of the British movements and responses, along with the British allies.⁴² For the most part, the movements and strategy on the Turkish side are missing. In these British-centric sources, there is a failure to mention that the failed attempt on the Gallipoli front had anything to do with their opponents; instead the loss was completely dependent on the 'lost opportunities' and 'cruel misfortune' at critical moments, procrastination on behalf of the French and British, lack of necessary commitment of troops and supplies, and the view that the Ottoman Empire would prove to be an easy target.⁴³ Meanwhile, another authoritative source on Gallipoli states, "These operations failed, partly because the Turks were too strong, partly because some of our troops and their leaders were unequal to the task assigned them, partly through shortage of war, and partly because the plan was defective."⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Moorehead, 123.

⁴¹ Steel and Hart, 363. "The Turk he is an honest man, and fights us fair and true,/But we annoy him all we can,/As we are paid to do."

⁴² Examples of texts of this sort are *The World War I collection: Gallipoli and early battles* and *The National Museum Book of the Turkish Front 1914-1918*.

⁴³ Steel and Hart, 419.

⁴⁴ *The World War I collection: Gallipoli and the Early Battles*, 254.

1.4 The Turkish Story

One account named to be the ‘The Turkish Story’ of Fewster et al. actually has a bit of an Australian twist.⁴⁵ An account that actually gives more of a Turkish version of the events is Edward Erickson’s *Ordered to Die*⁴⁶. According to this narrative, which is approved by the Chief of the Turkish General Staff, the text supposedly offers a view into the Ottoman Army’s movements and motivations during the First World War. Here, the Turkish troops are interpreted to be strong and noble force in difficult times and battles.⁴⁷

The official Turkish perspective as described by the National Education Ministry begins with the imperialist interests of the Great Powers. The first sentence sets the stage, “The Battles of Çanakkale have a distinctive place in the First World War as an

⁴⁵ Fewster, Kevin, Vecihi Basarin and Hatice Hurmuz Basarin. *Gallipoli: the Turkish Story*, Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2003., interspersed with the events as they are important to the Turkish side, there are also references to the importance of Gallipoli for the ANZAC troops as this was the first time that they were recognized as an independent country. This book is extremely misleading in its content, as it is merely nationalistic statements reminiscent to Turkish nationalism, with some extra information on the Australians.

⁴⁶ The book’s aim is to tackle the myths that have been created due to the lack of sources on the Ottoman military in Western languages. “All of this has given a myriad of myths about the conduct of the First World War by the Turkish Army. One of the most prevalent myths is that the Turks held numerical advantage over the allies during many of the important campaigns and another is that the Germans commanded many of the major operations. Another myth is that the Turks kept very poor records. Still another is that Turkish units often “came apart” under pressure, disintegrating and crumbling because of mass desertion. Finally there is the idea that the Turks wanted to regain their shattered and crumbling empire. None of these are true. In fact, in most cases, quite the opposite is true, showcasing the inaccurate picture that most westerners have of these people at war. Indeed, the Turkish Army in the First World War was a formidable fighting machine much feared by its enemies.” (xvii)

⁴⁷ Edward Erickson. *Ordered to Die: a history of the Ottoman Army in the First World War*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001, first paragraph. “The Ottoman Army was a great fighting army that confounded its enemies during four years of war. It was an army that died with its boots on and endured great hardship and adversity This was the army that after the dust settled on the prostrate armies of Russia, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania was still on its feet and fighting a stubborn and determined fight.” (xv)

epic tale of heroism that changed the fate Turkish history.”⁴⁸ The ultimate goal of the invasion was to take over Istanbul to weaken the empire and help the Russians. Because of the valiant naval victory of 18 March, the Allies were shown that they would not be able to pass the Dardanelle Straits so easily.⁴⁹ Accordingly the unsuccessful efforts of the Allies had repercussions throughout the world.⁵⁰ After the failed naval efforts, with the leadership of Sir Ian Hamilton, troops were landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula on the 25th of April (1915) at Ariburnu, Conkbayırı and Anafartalar. The Allied forces faced a defense and young commander that they did not expect, and they could not pass.⁵¹ Because of the unsuccessful attempts at Anafartalar, Conkbayırı and Kireçtepe, the Allied powers had to withdraw from the peninsula.⁵²

From these two Turkish historiographical sources, one can see that this perspective tends to focus on the victories of the Turks and minimize the other aspects of the war. As we will see later, these main sites of victories have become some of the main tourist and memorial sites, especially when considering the sites that seek to emphasize Mustafa Kemal’s courage and leadership.

1.5 The Crux...

Throughout this thesis, I argue that the monuments of Gallipoli have most certainly been used by the state and other political actors to reflect their goals, desires, and discourses. Gallipoli has always been important in the historiography of the Turkish nation. However, over time the importance has been altered according to the political and social contours of history. This thesis aims to prove that through the

⁴⁸ *İlk Öğretim Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılap Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük*, 22.

“Canakkale Muharebeleri, Birinci Dünya Savası içinde ayrı özellikleri olan, Türk tarihinin kaderini değiştiren bir kahramanlık destanıdır.”

⁴⁹ *İlk Öğretim Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılap Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük*, 22.

⁵⁰ *İlk Öğretim....24; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılap Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük* (Lise 3), 12.

⁵¹ This is the emphasis of historical narrative in both the 8th grade and 11th grade textbooks. Because of the determination, perseverance and courage of Mustafa Kemal the victory at Anafartalar was won, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılap Tarihi..*(Lise 3), 14.

⁵² *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İnkılap...Lise 3*, 14.

changes that can be traced at the memorial sites themselves, one can understand the powerful voices within the nation. For example, at the Çanakkale Martyr's Memorial (Çanakkale Abide Şhitlik) site, there have been many renovations since the construction of the large Abide, like the addition of reliefs, installation of flag poles, movement of symbolic cemeteries and addition of rose gardens, just to name a few. The voices of the state and the state's institutions can be found in these renovations and new construction projects.

Other examples include elements of militarism and military influence that can be seen in some of the monuments that take the form of the monoliths. Meanwhile, the way the monuments have been built over space and time points to the need for unification following particularly challenging decades of rule. The myth of Çanakkale is manipulated by those groups that need to gain support and who need to attain the legitimacy as Turkish nationalists. By using Çanakkale, a particular set of values and ideologies are assumed. The prevalence of claiming legitimacy through this avenue is evident in the continued dedication to building monuments and constant redevelopment of the sites that have already been constructed.⁵³

1.6 Methodology and Chapter Overview

Chapters one and two define the topic and explore the importance of Gallipoli in the Turkish national imaginary. They are based upon literature reviews of classic texts on nationalism, as well as those that focus on Turkish nationalism and Turkish historical development. With the help of the historical narratives, Chapter 2 focuses on situating the events of Gallipoli into Turkish nationalism. It aims to show that the discourses describing the battles of Gallipoli encompassed many of the ideologies and the 'values' that were exemplified in the process of defining Turkish nationalism. While some of the ideologies of discourse on Gallipoli do not present the definitive characteristics of Turkish nationalism, they most definitely contribute to what the nationalism has become. That is, while some of the aspects of this blend of nationalism were not necessarily attributed to the Gallipoli campaign initially, some of them were applied retrospectively. Thus, today Gallipoli is often utilized as an example in nationalist

⁵³ Refer to the Uzun Gelişme Planı described in the Law 4533 enacted in 2000.

narratives when citing integral values such as self-sacrifice and bravery for the nation and ideas like anti-imperialism, especially for political ends. The background presented here will provide the historical and theoretical foundation and support for the arguments that follow in the later parts of the thesis.

The third chapter, which describes selected monuments and memorial sites, provides the background information and basis for the study, which culminates in the following chapter on the discourse of commemoration and the transformations of the site of Gallipoli. The background study on the monuments and memorial sites comes from an analysis of several Gallipoli Battlefield and tourism guidebooks as well as several compilations of informative texts on the memorial sites and from the monuments themselves. Besides the textual resources utilized for this section, information was collected from a guided tour led by a tour guide certified by the Gallipoli Peninsula Historical National Park. Through a detailed description of the monuments and the form that they take in the present, the place within the national ideology begins to come clearer, and this is the segue to the next chapter which will discuss the actual usage of the monuments in discourse and the various evolutionary processes that the monuments themselves have undergone.

Dealing with monuments and memorials require a consideration of memory and commemoration studies that will provide the framework for shaping the arguments surrounding the selected Turkish monuments. Examples of studies based on monuments in other places will provide a comparative element to the study. Ultimately through the combination of historical perspective situated in the basis and ideologies of Turkish nationalism, this project explores how Gallipoli is remembered, the type of memory created and spread via the medium of monuments and commemorations. What does the representation of the monument tell us is important for the society by the commissioners of the monument? Is there an obvious message that the visitor is supposed to understand?

The last chapter that engages the monuments and the actual forms the discourses take relies mainly on textual analysis, as well as some basic information from Ahmet Bey, the tour guide.⁵⁴ It will explore how Gallipoli is narrated and used by different public actors. In addition, the aesthetic design of the monument and the memorial site will be problematized to understand the greater underlying meanings.

⁵⁴ Names have been changed to preserve anonymity.

2. GALLIPOLI IN TURKISH NATIONALISM

2.1 Introduction

Many of the historical details leading to the Ottoman Empire's entrance into the First World War are debatable. However, the myth of the entrance into the war and the subsequent victory on the Çanakkale front are far from debatable, as they have entered the Turkish nationalist discourse as unquestionable. I make the case that the Battles of Çanakkale have been solidified in the national imaginary, and their stories have become almost fact, surpassing the threshold of needing proof in the eyes of most Turkish citizens. Who can question the courage, valor and bravery of the young men who left their families to save their homeland? Who can argue against the sacrifice of the men who lost their lives in the hills and trenches in an effort to prevent the advancing enemies? These young soldiers, and their honorable leaders, were protecting their nation from an outside threat. The bonds formed in the trenches and in the name of protecting the homeland were effective in invigorating the nationalization process that supposedly began with the Battles at Çanakkale.

Even though Etienne Balibar discusses nation-formation more generally without considering the specific case of Turkey, his formulations can be adapted to our study. He argues, "The formation of the nation thus appears as the fulfillment of a 'project' stretching over centuries".⁵⁵ The project includes critical points where the nation realizes itself, and helps to situate the concept of the nation in the minds of the public, whether or not the projection of the nation and its history is accurate. That is, the project is actually a construction that is composed of the nationalization process and the

⁵⁵ Etienne Balibar. *The Nation Form: History and Ideology*. pg. 86. That is, the image that is given of a particular nation is that it has been in existence for as long as anyone can remember, even though this perspective is often constructed to be seen this way.

perceived destiny, or the culmination of the process that the nation portrays as its history.⁵⁶ The Battles of Çanakkale, for Turkey, play an integral role as one of the ‘single founding revolutionary events’⁵⁷ that is loaded with meaning in the retrospectively constructed historical narrative. Since national formation does not require a linear formation of history, it merely requires mass socialization or the subordination of individual’s existence to the status as citizens through state intervention⁵⁸ (such as mandatory education or military service). These state intervention projects train the public to understand a particular view of history, which can be injected into the nationalist story later.⁵⁹

The Turkish state uses this means of constructing a historical narrative after the fact, and that narrative has become untouchable. The Battle of Çanakkale is seen overall in its mythical form as the beginning of the Turkish nation-state emerging from the rubble of the Ottoman Empire. It is also crucial to homogenizing different groups and populations into one nation.

No nation possesses an ethnic base naturally, but as social formations are nationalized, the populations included within them, divided up among them or dominated by them are ethnicized – that is, represented in the part or in the future *as if* they formed a natural community, possessing of itself an identity of origins, culture and interests which transcends individuals and social conditions.⁶⁰

With this, and the discussion to follow, I argue that the Battles of Çanakkale are removed from their actual place in history as a part of the First World War and transplanted into the liberation efforts of the Turkish state. The liberations efforts of the state then take the event of Çanakkale as a whole, implanted with the idea of nationalism, and continue to base identity on ethnicity of referring back to the efforts of the Turks rather than on a wider view of citizenship.

⁵⁶ Balibar, 86-7.

⁵⁷ Balibar 87.

⁵⁸ Balibar, 94. “The individuals destined to perceive themselves as the members of a single nation are either gathered together externally from diverse geographical origins, as in the nations formed by immigration or else are brought mutually to recognize one another within a historical frontier which contained them all.” An example of this type of event would be the collective participation in a war.

⁵⁹ The concept of the nationalization process as creating a particular view of history after the fact is from Balibar’s piece, *The Nation Form: History and Ideology*. The basis of this particular part of the argument is found on page 92.

⁶⁰ Balibar, 96.

Despite the mixing of events and their place on this historical timeline, the ideological background that emerged with the Turkish nation subsequent to the War of Liberation did have some connections with the ideological currents leading into the Ottoman Empire's entrance into the First World War. According to Şükrü Hanioglu, the official ideologies of modern Turkey were set in the years prior to World War I, as the early Young Turks exerted their influence between 1889 and 1908.⁶¹ However, in these years, the Committee of Union and Progress was still unable to exert their entire plan into the state apparatus.⁶² It was in the years leading right up to the entrance of World War I and the following that allowed those leaders to inject their form of developing nationalism into the state. The Young Turks and more specifically, the Committee for Union and Progress fashioned the main principles of Turkish nationalism.⁶³ The nationalism that was formed was not conceived in a vacuum, as the worldview of the Young Turks was separating from that of the past "and this ushered in a new era in the intellectual history of the Empire and the dawn of drastic developments."⁶⁴

2.2 The basic ideologies...

The Battle of Gallipoli served as one of the first steps in creating the new homeland. As the Ottoman troops were engaging in battle against the invading imperialists, the bonds between the people themselves and with the state were being solidified. Unified under the common banners of the homeland, people from very different places and backgrounds were able to join together to expel the imposing external threat. When the battle was won, the nation gained some notion of identity, and the battle gained even more importance in the eyes of the public, the soldiers and

⁶¹ M. Sukru Hanioglu. *The Young Turks in Opposition*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, page 3.

⁶² Handan Nezir-Akmese. *The Birth of Modern Turkey: the Ottoman Military and the March to World War I*, London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005, page 157.

⁶³ David Kushner. *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism, 1876-1908*. London, Totowa, N.J. Cass, 1977, 6.

⁶⁴ Hanioglu, *Young Turks in Opposition*, page 10.

the political leaders. The events at Gallipoli became part of the past that could constantly be referred to illustrate the strength and dedication of the nation's people.

Anti-imperialism. Several of the critical ideologies that the Young Turks internalized were the notions of anti-imperialism, racism, elitist, militarism and social Darwinism. As Mustafa Aksakal argues the desire for revenge, retribution and recovery were embedded in the Ottoman identity around 1914, after the Balkan Wars and the forced migration of Muslims to Anatolia.⁶⁵ Although the Young Turks relied upon Europe and the Europeans as a means toward modernization and science education, they also revolted against other influences that the Europeans sought to exert over the Empire.⁶⁶ As has been previously explained, the Battle of Çanakkale was one that was fought against the “infidel invaders”, or an external threat in an effort to protect the homeland. If an adequate defense was not upheld, the Anatolian homeland would fall into the hands of an imperialist power, threatening the Empire's sovereignty and identity. Here, we realize the importance of the term, “Çanakkale Geçilmez”, meaning that Çanakkale is not to be overtaken or passed. Anti-imperialism may have been one of the most important elements of unification in the Battle of Çanakkale. The battle was on the home territory of the Turks and losing was not an option, as losing would mean imminent loss of what was left of the dwindling homeland, namely Anatolia. Or, at least this is the story that is told now. For many of the members of the Committee of Union and Progress, the ‘homeland’ was already gone, since they came from the Balkans or Syria. The Balkans and Syria were already lost. Yet, the discourses insinuate that there was still a need to wake Anatolia, despite the high expectations of the Young Turks. Anatolia was previously viewed as useless and unwanted except for its tax revenues and human labor.⁶⁷

Racism. The Young Turks had a twisted conception of who was to participate in the Gallipoli campaign, and who actually belonged to what was to become the Turkish nation. As Şükrü Hanioglu argues in his article *Turkism and the Young Turks*, ethnic

⁶⁵ Mustafa Aksakal. *Ottoman Army Effectiveness in World War I: a Comparative Study*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 15.

⁶⁶ M. Şükrü Hanioglu. “Turkism and the Young Turks (1889-1908).” *Turkey Beyond Nationalism: Toward Post-Nationalist Identities*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006, page 12.

⁶⁷ Kushner, 50. Anatolia was originally only seen as a “major source of revenue and of manpower for military service” but “the ignorant peasants and nomads of Anatolia could not command any respect or esteem.”

separatism plagued the Ottoman Empire despite the enforced concept of equality amongst all religions.⁶⁸ The growth of influence of the Muslim majority and the early steps toward what was perceived to be Turkification emerged in the ideology of Ottomanism before becoming Turkism. Initially, the unification efforts amongst different groups of Muslims was merely for anti-imperialist purposes, to prevent the European powers from dividing the empire.⁶⁹ The original Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress sought to take pre-emptive action in stopping the Europeans by prohibiting Christian membership.⁷⁰ I argue that these early beginnings seem to be the start of what would become a harsh racism, that extended beyond just the non-Muslims, but also came to exclude all non-ethnic Turks.⁷¹ “Although over time political Turkism gave way to a more racial doctrine, the majoritarian principle, as well as historical claims continued to serve as justifications for granting a guiding role for the Turks.”⁷²

The racist element within the Battle of Çanakkale is often overlooked by those studying the official history. As previously argued, the CUP organization became primarily composed of ethnic Turks, which was accompanied by a strong distrust of all other minority groups except the true Turks. While the Battle of Çanakkale was raging on in 1915 in the Dardanelles, the Young Turk ordered Armenian massacres were being executed in the Eastern part of the empire. Also, there were most certainly Arab regiments present in the Ottoman Army, however these regiments were not trusted because of their ethnicity and not permitted to fight alongside the honorable and trustworthy Turkish troops. Other minorities were present of course, as the Ottoman Empire prided itself on the multiculturalism, yet this gradually changed in the transition from empire to republic.

Elitism. There was a stark recognized difference between the Anatolian peasants and the shop owners and city-dwellers. Through contact with Europe, the Ottoman state, and its elites were exposed to concepts new to the Empire and its basic

⁶⁸ Hanioglu, *Turkism and the Young Turks (1889-1908)*. Page 5.

⁶⁹ Hanioglu, *Turkism and the Young Turks (1889-1908)*, page 8.

⁷⁰ Hanioglu, *Turkism and the Young Turks (1889-1908)*, page 8.

⁷¹ Hanioglu, *Turkism and the Young Turks (1889-1908)*, page 8. As Hanioglu states in his article, “The major vehicle for the introduction of Turkish nationalist ideas was the penetration of the organization by a growing body of members of Turkish extraction, who believed in the primacy of the Turks within the Empire.”

⁷² Hanioglu, *Turkism and the Young Turks (1889-1908)*, page 11.

foundational structure. The concepts such as nation, freedom, homeland and equality were introduced through contact with the European countries by way of educational exchanges and diplomatic ties.⁷³ Creating a nation requires the ability to identify with a particular territory with boundaries.⁷⁴ Therefore, as the Ottoman elites began to be introduced to the concept of nation as a territorial unit, they wanted to base the state on a new identity independent of the typical traditional Islamic one.⁷⁵ Prior to Gallipoli and the War of Liberation, the boundaries of the Ottoman territories were in a constant state of flux. However, with the shrinking Empire, there was a need to begin to identify with what was left of the homeland, Anatolia.⁷⁶ Building an understanding for the public that Anatolia was the Turkish homeland was essential to creating what was to become the Turkish nation.

Because of this extreme sense of elitism and the dissatisfaction with the perceptions of the ‘Turk’ at the time, the Young Turks and especially the CUP needed to redefine the identity of ‘Turk’. There is a common perception that the negative European perception had penetrated the Turk’s view of themselves. The European perception was one of an uncivilized and bloodthirsty creature. When analyzed more critically, one will see that it was the Ottomans who viewed the rural Turks as backward because they were merely peasants and nomads. However, with the transforming notion of nation and where that nation was to take root, the Turk needed to be redefined

⁷³ Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism*, 3.

⁷⁴ As with many arguments for the definition of nation-state, territorial boundaries are necessary. For this argument though, the information here was found in Cinar, Alev., 99. Kuser also argues that the Turkish nation was built based on a territorial unit in *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism*.

⁷⁵ Kushner, 7.

⁷⁶ As Kushner argues in *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism*, “Nor could the concept of ‘homeland’, *vatan*, lead the Ottomans to a special attitude concerning Anatolia. Until the nineteenth century, this concept, derived from the Arabic *watan*, had been used only in a very narrow sense, indicating place of birth or residence, and commanding some sentimental loyalty. It certainly did not include areas far from home, even though they might have been populated by people of the same faith or language. The only territorial entity of the Empire itself, seen as part, indeed a major part, of the ‘Abode of Islam’, as against the infidels’ ‘Abode of War’. Even the limited sense of *vatan* could not have raised Anatolia to a position of any significance in the eyes of the Ottoman statesmen and official, since many of them came from other parts of the Empire. Raised, as they were, in the palace since early childhood, they could not, in fact, have even remembered their original homeland.” pg. 50/1.

from the images that had been cast upon them by both the Ottomans and the Europeans. Therefore, the glimpse of hope that Moorehead believes the Ottoman Empire saw in the Battle of Gallipoli was either misplaced as a retroactively placed misconception or the definitional change that the Ottomans were forced to make within their previously established elitist values.⁷⁷ However, the Battle of Gallipoli did provide the necessary opportunity to make a break with the ideologies of the past, and adapt new aspects within the ‘Turkish outlook’. Thus, the nationalist writers of the intelligentsia were attempting to set a new pace and perception. “It was, then, a civilized Turk, conscious of his national culture that nationalist writers were seeking to create.”⁷⁸

Militarism. Militarism is the motivation that unites the soldiers and the commanders to participate in such a long and gruesome battle. As defined by Anuradha Chenoy, “militarization is the process that emphasizes the use of coercive structures and practices.”⁷⁹ Meanwhile, “militarism is the ideology that valorizes and glorifies such a reliance and practice.”⁸⁰ Based on this definition, Ayşe Gül Altınay argues that the Turkish state is a ‘military nation’ as it is the state’s culture that manifests the characteristics of the military.⁸¹ Successful militarization “achieves a discourse of ‘normalcy’ in public discussions surrounding the power of the military in civilian life, politics, economic, and people’s self-understandings.”⁸² There had to be a higher purpose for war, besides the desires of the state apparatus or the soldiers would not have stayed in the trenches to fight. By ingraining a sense of urgency and an ideology that supported militaristic behavior, the soldiers had the motivation that they needed to remain in the trenches and risk their lives, as the cause was bigger than themselves. From these statements, Turkey’s militarized status becomes apparent, as the military was and remains active in many aspects of the state, including politics. The military establishment has been able affect each individual’s understanding of themselves and

⁷⁷ Moorehead, 82.

⁷⁸ Kushner, 89

⁷⁹ Anuradha M. Chenoy. “Militarization, Conflict, and Women in South Asia.” In *The Women and War Reader*, New York: New York University Press, 1998, p101.

⁸⁰ Chenoy, 101; Ayşe Gül Altınay. *Myth of the Military Nation: Militarism, Gender and Education in Turkey*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, page 2.

⁸¹ Altınay, 2. Altınay argues that Turkey in the present day is a ‘military nation’, but it’s roots to becoming a military nation were formed long before the creation of the Turkish Republic.

⁸² Altınay, 2.

their world through mandatory conscription laws that require all young men to serve a certain amount of time in the military.⁸³

Military power was seen as essential for survival in the war that was inevitable and it was a means of deterring invasion.⁸⁴ Thus, as with Darwinism understood in the scientific context of ‘only the strong survive in the natural world’, a similar meaning is understood in the world of politics and nation states. War, as perceived by social Darwinists is the key to independence and security.⁸⁵ Therefore, the ideologies of militarism and social Darwinism are melded together. Enver Paşa, the War Minister at the time of the Ottoman Empire’s entrance into the First World War, was of this mindset.

Military prowess can be seen as the redeemer of the state, and as a means of sparking patriotism and pride often through participation in war. Hugh Poulton argues this as he states that war contributes to the construction of nationalism when it unites a group against a common enemy or common threat.

The importance of war to nationalism as an anvil for hammering out a national identity is also mirrored in the frequent use of military parades and military anniversaries in national celebrations in many countries. Armies and universal conscription (revealingly termed national service) are also used as means of instilling unitary nationalistic values into a heterogenous population, as well as aiding a general socialization process...War is a powerful delineator between different groups, and the combination of modern nationalism with war often leads to the terrible spectacle of whole populations being stigmatized with collective guilt and subjected to inhuman measures, purely for being perceived as belonging to the wrong group.⁸⁶

After the losses of the Balkan Wars, a certain way of rejuvenating patriotism, faith in victory and idealism was by rallying around the institutions of the military.⁸⁷

⁸³ The mandatory military service also affects the members of the other gender as mothers, lovers, and sisters are forced to support and encourage their young men while completing their service requirement. Even though there is a distinction of gender as women are prevented from participating, their supportive role still persists.

⁸⁴ Nezir-Akmese, 22.

⁸⁵ Aksakal, 17.

⁸⁶ Hugh Poulton. *Top Hat, Grey Wolf, and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic*. London: c. Hurst & Co. Ltd, 1997, 9.

⁸⁷ Nezir-Akmese, 164.

Thus a strong linkage between the questions of war, liberation, and modernity characterized political writing on the eve of the First World War. Discussions focusing on the creation of a “new society” and a “new life” which were to be molded by a new language and a new literature converged with the ideas of waging war and gaining independence from the imperialist powers.⁸⁸

Militarization emerged alongside of modernization and the quest for westernization despite the West. In the Battle of Gallipoli, it can be argued that because this was a break with the past, and in effect an effort at creating a new identity through militarization and participation in war, perhaps the Turkish War of Liberation did not begin on 19 May 1919, but instead began in 1915.⁸⁹ As the Turkish state was forming, the separation between the two becomes blurred and as Çanakkale is understood today, it was the beginning of the Turkish nation-state. Through the modernization of the military, modernization of the rest of society was possible as the standard was set.

2.3 The elements applied...

Turkish nationalism emerged at a time when the Ottoman Empire was faced with the decisions of whether to enter the war. First, the Empire was in danger of being partitioned by the Allied Powers,⁹⁰ who had been ready to split the territories amongst themselves for a long time. Therefore, if partitioned, the Empire would fall under the control of the foreign powers,⁹¹ and the state would lose its sovereignty.⁹² After the

⁸⁸ Aksakal, 29.

⁸⁹ Aksakal, 15.

⁹⁰ Mustafa Aksakal. *Ottoman Army Effectiveness in World War I: a Comparative Study*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, page 2; James, 42. The imperialist intentions of the British were clear. “Constantinople was tense and expectant, acutely conscious of the proximity of the wolves gathering for the death agonies of the Ottoman Empire. In the subterranean world of secret operations, news reached London that certain members of the Turkish administration would welcome a clandestine discussion with British representatives on the subject of a peace treaty. At the first gentle push, the Ottoman Empire rocked on it’s heels.”

⁹¹ Aksakal, page 2.

⁹² “Turk milleti, kendi topraklari uzerinde yenilmeyecegini ve tutsakligi kabul etmeyecegini butun dunyaya kanitladi.” *Ilk Ogretim Turkiye Cumhuriyeti Inkilar Tarihi ve Ataturkculuk* 8. Ankara: MEB/Devlet Kitaplari,2008, 24.

Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913, the losses of territory and the bloodshed were felt quite deeply. Sixteen percent of the Empire's population and eighty percent of the Empire's European territories were lost.⁹³ For the leadership at the time, entering the war seemed like a means of saving the Empire from these two impending dangers.⁹⁴ In order to find this path to security, an ally needed to be attained among one of the Great Powers. Choosing to side with the Germans was difficult,⁹⁵ yet siding with the French or British would have proven to be more dangerous as they had already set their plans for splitting the Ottoman state into pieces.

The Ottoman Empire and some of the leading Young Turks believed that sovereignty and security lay in a true show of military force.⁹⁶ Therefore, according to this simplified version of events, the only clear choice was to enter into the war on the side of the Germans as they could provide modern military training and financial assistance. This entrance on the side of the Germans also contributed to the dependence on and importation of western military technology, and thus modernity.

Even so, the empire's military, political and intellectual leaders were not engaged solely in a campaign of self-defense; they firmly believed that the militarization of society and its institutions, which were based on European models, were the only road to modernity.⁹⁷

Generally speaking, the military officers of the CUP graduating in the 1880s and 1900s saw militarism as the key to saving the Empire.⁹⁸ Since many of the leaders of the state were these military graduates, these ideologies were crucial to the realities of the time. They possessed obsessions with military values and anti-imperialism, and this shaped the ideologies that were subsequently spread to the public.

The militarism adopted by the CUP believed that developed military power "prevents dismemberment and colonial status."⁹⁹ Hand in hand with this militarization is the previously mentioned modernizing ideology. By 1913, the Committee of Union

⁹³ Aksakal, 22.

⁹⁴ Aksakal, 2.

⁹⁵ Hickey argues that Kaiser Wilhelm II had imperialist interests and was trying to redeem the German Empire after the bad performance in the 'Scramble for Africa' (pg. 22-3). Here, the imperialist desires seem to have been quite clear.

⁹⁶ Aksakal, 2.

⁹⁷ Aksakal.

⁹⁸ Nezir-Akmese, 179.

⁹⁹ Aksakal, 3.

and Progress had gained nearly authoritarian control over the state apparatus, making the CUP the basis of the state and placing their ideologies in the mainstream.¹⁰⁰ While the Ottoman Empire had been making great efforts to modernize in the footsteps of the European powers, according to many scholars it constantly remained behind.¹⁰¹

The time leading up to and during the Battle of Çanakkale is an era of tensions. The ethnic and religious divisions that created pressure from the inside were flaring up after the Balkan Wars. The Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913 led to the destruction of the Ottoman Empire and contributed to an outlook seeking retribution for the losses and hardships suffered. “The Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 were a disaster on a scale that neither the Ottoman general staff nor the people had imagined possible. Not only did the Ottoman Empire lose virtually all its European possession to the enemy, but invading armies penetrated to the outskirts of the capital and threatened the very existence of the Empire.”¹⁰²

The lessons learned from the Balkan Wars and the rise in minority nationalisms prior to the Balkan Wars spread through the Empire, causing an outburst in the formation of the Turkish nationalism as well as the fuel to drive the formation of the other minority ethnic and religious nationalisms.¹⁰³ It was perceived that these growing nationalisms had become restless and began to pose a threat to the integrity of the Empire.¹⁰⁴ It was understood by the Young Turk leadership that “Turks” were the unifying element in the Empire, and thus fueled their racist notion of ethnic

¹⁰⁰ Aksakal, 9.

¹⁰¹ Actually, this point is one that reflects the Eurocentrism of many sources, reflecting a paradigm that the Ottoman Empire needed to catch-up with the West by following the path of the Western superiority.

¹⁰² Ahmad, Feroz. *From Empire to Republic: Essays on the Late Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Universitesi, 2008, 234.

¹⁰³ Nezir-Akmese, 144., Alan Moorehead also argues that the 18 March 1915 naval victory fueled the search for political and racial opponents contributing to the Armenian Genocide, which Moorehead argues aided the Young Turks in their quest to feel security in very uncertain and turbulent times. This information can be found on page 84 and 86. Moorehead even takes this a step further, arguing the difference between the fight for the struggle to survive against the Allies versus the distinctly different personal hatred that the Young Turks directed toward the Russians and the Armenians. ‘The Turks were fighting for Turkey’ they did not fight the Allies as they did their personal opponents—recklessly and viciously.’ page 87.

¹⁰⁴ Kushner. *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism, 1876-19*, 4/5.

superiority.¹⁰⁵ By now, however, it must have already become clear that the Turks were also the only *loyal* element in it and constituted the chief bulwark and support of the State.”¹⁰⁶ As the ethnic Turks were seen as the only loyal component of the state, those of other ethnicities were eliminated or forced from the territory.¹⁰⁷ The obvious next step in this equation was to build a commonly defined nation, behind which loyalties can be directed.

2.4 Atatürk

Thus, in order to build a commonly defined nation, a single leader needed to be found behind whom the public could organize themselves. This is another important part of Turkish nationalism born in Gallipoli, the myth of one of the great leaders of Turkey. Mustafa Kemal, who eventually became the first President of Turkey, assuming the name Atatürk¹⁰⁸, initially earned his reputation as a divisional commander in the Battle of Çanakkale. By valiantly leading his troops in the 19th division of the Fifth Army, he was able to accurately predict the attack of the Allies and hold the position until the enemy retreated. It was Mustafa Kemal’s actions and leadership in Çanakkale that paved that way for his recognition and success later in his career. Mustafa Kemal’s actions in Çanakkale not only set the pace for his future career, but also his place as the legendary leader of the Turks into modernity.

¹⁰⁵ Nezir-Akmese, 35. “The CUP’s Turkish nationalist tendencies emerged more slowly. In theory, the CUP was committed to ‘Ottomanism’, that is to say, to the equality of all Ottoman subjects, regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation. In practice, however, it remained firmly attached to the preservation of the Ottoman Empire as a unitary state, and the bulk of its support was drawn from among Turks and Muslims.”

¹⁰⁶ Kushner, 5; Erickson argues this point also as it was mostly the efforts of the ethnic Turks during that Battle of Gallipoli that suffered and eventually won.

¹⁰⁷ Moorehead states that following the 18 March victory, the Turks felt the psychological effect of victory, that united them as committed, thus inspiring them to eliminate the traitors within. “There was no longer any question of surrender or defeat. it was the defiance of the wounded wolf. He had wreaked his vengeance on the weak and now he stood at bay against the world.” Moorehead, 87. The concept of the united front against the world is emblematic of a primary Turkish perspective at the time.

¹⁰⁸ Atatürk means ‘Father of the Turks.’

Mustafa Kemal was the most imaginative, most successful officer to fight on either side at Gallipoli. At several moments in the campaign his personal intervention was almost certainly the difference between success and failure for the Ottomans. Gallipoli launched his career. He subsequently became the first president of the newly formed Republic of Turkey and the nation's acknowledged founding father.¹⁰⁹

According to his renowned biographer, Andrew Mango, Atatürk played a critical role in Gallipoli, but did so alongside other notable generals.¹¹⁰ Additionally, despite his courage and achievements, in the immediate aftermath of the battles, Atatürk was not well-known.¹¹¹ He had to work to be noticed and only over time was able to gain the recognition he received, especially in the Atatürk myth-making project culminating in the mid-1920s. Even though Mustafa Kemal's name was unknown to most right after the war, it is only his name that is heard now when discussing the Çanakkale battles. In fact, at the Conkbayırı site, there are signs marking the places where Atatürk's watch broke, or the place that Atatürk used as a look-out post. These places are marked and emphasized now, but the locations of where Limon von Sanders or Esat Paşa led the troops, nothing is marked.

This leads one to question the nationalist version of history. This significant change is how Atatürk's role, being the 'founding father' of the nation has been portrayed, and to some extent created retrospectively, and how his memory has been pressed into the minds of the public through education, militarization and memorialization. The ultimate result of the myth-making can be seen in Esra Özyürek's article, which discusses the more recent phenomenon in the 1990s of the commodification of Atatürk imagery.¹¹² While significant, his role at Gallipoli was not so spectacular that it necessarily deserved more attention and legend-making than any of the other heroic soldiers.

Why then is Atatürk the key player remembered when referring to Gallipoli? And why does this battle seem to be the beginning of the story of Turkish nationalism? First, one must understand, as can be seen from this discussion that Turkish is

¹⁰⁹ Fewster, Kevin, Vecihi Basarin and Hatice Hurmuz Basarin. *Gallipoli: the Turkish Story*, Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2003. page 2.

¹¹⁰ Andrew Mango. *Ataturk*, London: John Murray, 1999, page 156.

¹¹¹ Mango, 156.

¹¹² Esra Özyürek. "Miniaturizing Atatürk: Privatization of state imagery and ideology in Turkey." *American Ethnologist* 31 no. 3 (2004): 374-391.

constructivist. Nations and nationalisms are not natural parts of the human condition; rather they are constructions of human experience.¹¹³ Turkish nationalism was created against a common set of enemies, the imperialist powers and the competing minority nationalisms, as the Ottoman Empire was in the process of disintegrating. It unites groups of a common ‘ethnic’ group against others in order to construct a new homeland. Referring back to Balibar’s arguments on the place of the nation-formation experience, the facing of common enemies in collective action is critical to the unification process.

2.5 The Nationalist Construction

By having a victory to rally behind as a motivator for the future generations, the battle also became critical to the education of the younger generations to ensure the presence of a nationalist population and the writing of history. The language of the state then becomes a product of the writers, journalists, and politicians who shape the way that the stories are told and carried into the present from past and future.¹¹⁴ When the event of Gallipoli becomes more important in the nationalist story, so does the role of the nationalist leader. That is why the same history textbooks that emphasize the bravery, valor and courage of the Turkish soldiers in Gallipoli, also emphasize the leadership and achievement of Atatürk.¹¹⁵

The heroism and sacrifice of the Turkish soldiers is an element of every schoolchild’s education in both eighth and eleventh grades. Therefore the students are not only reading and studying the material once, but they are repeatedly consuming the stories. It is in this way that the Battle of Çanakkale stays alive into the present, and urges a particular understanding history and the military. Constantly bombarding the students with this view of history and the event also places the military in a positive light. It is through the characteristics associated with the honorable and brave soldiers,

¹¹³ Breiully, John. “Gellner and Nationalism”; xxii-xxx from his “Introduction” to Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*. Cornell University Press, 1983; Blackwell, 2005.

¹¹⁴ Balibar, 97. Balibar discusses the role of language in uniting the state, and the ways that the language is translated to impact the public.

¹¹⁵ An interesting path of research to explore would be how the myth-making of the Battles of Çanakkale affected the myth-making of Atatürk or vice versa.

(most of whom became martyrs,) that the military remains a loved and respected institution to this day.

Although there was continuity between the characters that were instrumental in the new Turkish state and the Ottoman Empire, there was a break in the economics. The economy of the decrepit Empire and the state that emerged subsequently was in a dire situation, as what was coming into the state as income was going straight out to the foreign powers through the Ottoman Public Debt Administration.¹¹⁶ The state of the economy also plays a critical role in the motivations for war, and the motivations to engage the foreign powers. According to Erik J. Zürcher, World War I provided the Young Turks the opportunity to focus their attentions on national cohesion rather than repaying debts.¹¹⁷ World War I served as an opportunity for the Young Turks to take back the majority of the controls of the government from the European powers that had been in control. Not only did this feed into the distrust of the Non-Muslim non-Turks, but also into the fury for creating a new nation-state based on a homogenized identity.¹¹⁸ It was the Turks who were trustworthy and who could provide the unifying building blocks for the Empire.

These elements of Turkish nationalism leading to and during the Battle of Gallipoli are related to the upcoming discussion on monuments that are large and loaded with messages of militarism and patriotism. When the ‘Turkish nation’ was facing difficult times, looking back on the symbolism and ideologies redirects the focus on power and strength of the nation. They refer back to a difficult point in history; the Battle of Çanakkale was being fought for existence. The monuments represent the localized victory (despite the overall defeat) showing that the nation will always be willing and able to protect itself and stand its ground in the face of danger.

The Turkish historiography is selective in what is emphasized and what is forgotten. However, in the case of the Battle of Çanakkale, it seems as though the

¹¹⁶ Aksakal, 59.

¹¹⁷ Erik J. Zürcher. *Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2010, p. 70-1; Moorehead, 82.

¹¹⁸ The foreigners were involved in all aspects of Turkey, which caused great discomfort and anger for the ‘Turk’. This initiated the motivation to cut the ties with the Ottoman Empire, which would allow the ties with the foreign powers to be severed. Until the 18 March victory, the Turk was supposedly seen as ‘not only incompetent to manage his own affairs, he was not yet civilized.’ Moorehead, 82.

memory must be kept alive at all costs, for if the memories of the past battles and struggles die, failure of the nation is bound to ensue.¹¹⁹ Failure will ensue because the foundation in which the Turkish nation is based is encompassed in the Battle of Çanakkale and its leadership. If these lessons of the past are forgotten, then it is perceived that there will no longer be a basis for the nation to stand. If the three military interventions in the history of Turkey were aimed to restore the early values of the nation, then they would be aiming to reinstitute the ideals that were supposedly solidified during and immediately after the Battle of Çanakkale. Perhaps this can be related to why so many war memorials dedicated to Atatürk were built after the 1980 military coup. The establishment of a particular version of history seems to be common for all nation-states in their formative years continuing over time.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Aksakal, 27.

¹²⁰ Zurcher, *The Young Turk Revolution*.

3. MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS

3.1 Introduction

Critical to our examination of the monuments and thus, the use of the Battle of Çanakkale in nationalist discourse requires a detailed look at the actual monuments and cemeteries themselves. In her article on museums in Germany, Irit Rogoff is concerned about “museumification, a manipulation through strategies of display of historical periods and historical processes.”¹²¹ To me, it seems as though we can apply some of the same criteria in our analysis. Thus, by examining the memorial sites/monuments and the cemeteries of the ‘martyrs’, one will gain a better view of how the Turkish nation legitimizes and actualizes the nationalist sentiment it claims through the visible formations that the monuments take. Upon arrival at several of the sites, my first impression of the memorials was that the monuments and cemeteries possess an imposing essence, but lack any form of elegance. They are incredibly large and numerically abundant (*figure 3.1*). While some elements of this description may not be entirely objective, it seems to be a fair observation of style and overall presence of the monuments and cemeteries at a first glance. Meanwhile, the outline of the basic information and details of the monuments can relay a sizeable amount of information about the intended audience and the messaging goals of the state. By attempting to examine where the funds for the projects came from, who supported the construction, as well as location and design, many inferences can be made.

¹²¹ Irit Rogoff. “From Ruins to Debris. The feminization of Fascism in Germany-History Museums.” In *Museum culture. Histories, discourses, spectacles*. Edited by Irit Rogoff and Daniel J. Sherman, pp. 223-249. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, 233.

Figures 3.1: The plentiful and large monuments.



Çanakkale Şehitler Abidesi, photo by author.



Front entrance to Akbaş (symbolic) cemetery, photo by author.

3.2 Analytical framework for evaluating the monuments

When analyzing the construction of the monuments of Gallipoli, several prominent themes emerge. By organizing the monuments according to when they were constructed or renovated, comparison of the construction dates in relation to the political events in Turkey, motivations become clearer and connections can be made as

to what purpose the monuments serve. As Winter aptly puts it, “[t]hey have a life history, and like other monuments have both shed meanings and taken on new significance in subsequent years.”¹²² In our study, several monuments have been chosen for specific reasons. Partially, the monuments selected for more detailed analysis were constructed in very different periods; therefore a variety of time periods in Republican history can be represented. They are concentrated on the European side of the Straits, as most of the attention on Gallipoli is focused in this region. The other reason for selecting the monuments is based on the popularity and attention they receive, as well as the intrigue that I personally felt when visiting the sites.

After listing all of the monuments that are recorded in a collection of Gallipoli battlefield and cemetery guidebooks¹²³, there were a total of 71 monuments or memorials dedicated to the memory of the Turkish war efforts, which also included cemeteries, both real and symbolic. (This number does not include the emplacements or sites of cannons that were left behind in the hills.) The sheer number of monuments on or around the area of the Çanakkale battlefields is rather mindboggling, especially considering that they were built at such different times, and very few of them were built in the first ten years after the battle. Through a systematic categorization of monuments and their approximate construction dates, other commonalities in form also emerged. For example, many of the earliest monuments to the fallen of Çanakkale take the form of the short (more modest) obelisks (*figure 3.2*). Also, the construction of symbolic cemeteries seems to become more widespread starting in the 1940s. The popularity of symbolic cemeteries is especially interesting since in many of the real cemeteries the identities of the Turkish soldiers buried there are unknown, as many were buried in mass graves.

¹²² Jay Winter. *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, page 79.

¹²³ Mithat Atabay, Muhammet Erat and Haluk Çobanoğlu. *Çanakkale Şehitlikleri*, Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2009; Gürsel Göncü and Şahin Aldoğan. *Çanakkale Muharebe Alanları Gezi Rehberi/Gallipoli Battlefield Guide*. Istanbul: MB Yayınevi, 2006.; Ekrem Boz. *Adım Adım Çanakkale Savaş Alanları*. Edremit: Gizem Ofset, 1996.

Figure 3.2: Mehmet Çavuş Anıtı, originally constructed in 1917, with later restorations. Note the more modest design.



Photo by author.

The multiplication of the memorials and monuments certainly brings the following question to the forefront: Why so many? Jay Winter states that memorials help those that search for meaning of the devastating war.

The search for the ‘meaning’ of the Great War began as soon as the war itself. For some people that search goes on to this day. Visible evidence of that quest may be found in towns and villages throughout Europe. There are war memorials in virtually all of them: sculptures, plaques, or other objects that recall the 1914-1918 war and the sacrifices that it entailed.¹²⁴

This is certainly not an overstatement when considering the case of Turkey. In larger cities and towns, a monument to those fallen in the Battle of Çanakkale can be found.¹²⁵ That is, the production of monuments paying tribute to those fallen in the nine-month battle at Çanakkale has not been limited to construction on the battlefields and their hinterlands. Instead, one should consider that there have been monuments built throughout the country and cemeteries have even been constructed in other countries for the Turkish martyrs.¹²⁶ Not only should one consider this point, but one should also consider the continued interest in the monuments on the Gallipoli Peninsula, which

¹²⁴ Winter, 78.

¹²⁵ This is also similar to the arguments of Aylin Tekiner (2010) in her study on Atatürk monuments, and their construction in the center of every town and province.

¹²⁶ Zekeriya Türkmen, Ahmet Çalışkan and Fatma Ilhan. *Çanakkale Savaşı Anıtları ve Şehitlikleri*, Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı Yayınları: Ankara, 2007.

continuously undergo renovations or are newly built. The presence of many monuments could actually give some indication to which a particular group/society/state gives the most importance. For example, that symbols indicate the celebration of a social phenomenon such as origin, and are often concentrated in the center of this place.¹²⁷ Yet, there must be something more provocative about the monuments that allows for their continued construction and the renovation of other sites.

3.3 The specifics

To begin with let's look at one of the most well-known memorials, which is the Çanakkale Martyr's Memorial (Çanakkale Şehitler Abidesi ve Şehitliği) located on the coast of Morto Bay, at the entrance to the Dardanelles. This parcel of land is where the Allies sent a small contingent of troops as a distraction to S Beach, and the area was taken relatively easily.¹²⁸ Nigel Steel notes in his tour book, "Given the success of the [British] landing here, it is ironic that on this site now stand the main Turkish Memorial and Cemetery that commemorate the place where their homeland was successfully defended in 1915."¹²⁹ The Çanakkale Şehitler Abidesi (the large memorial) was completed and opened to the public in 1960, but the project design was submitted much earlier in 1944 to the Ministry of National Defense.¹³⁰ Interestingly, the project was not started until 1954, 10 years after the project design by Doğan Erginbaş and İsmail Utkular was selected. The intimidating and towering structure was finished on 21 August 1960 when the newspaper *Milliyet* began a public fundraising campaign to finish the project as the state ran out of funding.¹³¹ The actual Abide's design is a 41.7 meter tall structure with four legs, which act as supports with a platform over these four

¹²⁷ Barry Schwartz. "The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory." In *Social Forces* 61, no. 2 (December 1982), pp. 378.

¹²⁸ Nigel Steel. *The Battlefields of Gallipoli: Then and Now*, London: L. Cooper, 1990, page 21.

¹²⁹ Nigel Steel. *The Battlefields of Gallipoli Then and Now*, page 22.

¹³⁰ Atabay, *Çanakkale Şehitlikleri*, page 18

¹³¹ Gürsel Göncü and Şahin Aldoğan. *Çanakkale Muharebe Alanları Gezi Rehberi/Gallipoli Battlefield Guide*. Istanbul: MB Yayınevi, 2006., page 20.

pillars.¹³² Supposedly, according to the website of the ‘Gelibolu Yarımadası Tarihi Milli Parkı, the Çanakkale Martyr’s Memorial was built to be more than 41 meters for all of the soldiers that fell on the Çanakkale front.¹³³ On each of the four pillars, there are reliefs of important events that occurred throughout the nine-month war, four depict scenes of the naval battles, while four of them depict scenes from the land battles. When standing in the center of the monument looking up between the four pillars, one sees the expansive mosaic in the red and white crescent and star design that is also the symbol of the Turkish flag. When viewing the large monument from a distance and placing the corner as the center, the monument supposedly looks like an “M”, which stands for “Mehmetçik” (*figure 3.3*).¹³⁴ There are rumors that the structure completed in 1960 was merely half of the originally intended design, which would have included a similarly sized Mehmetçik¹³⁵ soldier standing on the top, yet when the monument was being constructed, there were insufficient funds.¹³⁶

The Abide was constructed to eternalize the victory at Çanakkale. “The story of the monument starts with the project contest launched by the Ministry of National Defense in 1944 for the purpose of perpetuating the memory of martyrs that died on the Çanakkale Front, and the Çanakkale Victory.”¹³⁷ According to Ahmet, our tour guide, during a guided tour of the Gallipoli Peninsula, the memorial site and monument were built on French territory during the war, and had no specific significance when

¹³² Göncü and Aldoğan, page 20.

¹³³ “Çanakkale Muharebeleri’nde Şehit düşen tüm Türk askerleri için inşa edilen Abide 41m yüksekliğindedir.” from *Gelibolu Yarımadası Tarihi Milli Parkı*. <http://www.gelibolutarihimilliparki.gov.tr/GYTMP/AnaSayfa/sehitlikler/SembolikSehitlikler/SehitlerAbidesi.aspx?sflang=tr>

¹³⁴ This was information provided by the tour guide, Ahmet when visiting the site.

¹³⁵ ‘Mehmetçik’ is the term used for the unknown or regular Turkish soldier. It is a term that can be understood to have religious meaning as well as a strong meaning in the nationalist and secular.

¹³⁶ This point could neither be confirmed nor denied. Upon asking several history professors who study the Çanakkale Wars and the memorial sites, as well as several tour guides, a definite answer could not be obtained. Despite the uncertainty of the story, the existence of the story is enough to show that some would welcome an even larger monument that paid even greater tribute to the Mehmetçik.

¹³⁷ Atabay, *Çanakkale Şehitlikleri*, 20. “Anıtın öyküsü, 1944 yılında Milli Savunma Bakanlığının Çanakkale Cephesi’nde verilen şehitlerin hatırasını ve Çanakkale Zaferi’ni ebedileştirmek amacıyla açtığı proje yarışmasıyla başlar.”

considering the outcomes or critical points of battle.¹³⁸ Questioning why the monument and memorials were built here may leave one confused, especially considering that Morto Bay was not an area of Turkish victory, but was in fact, part of the Allied territory. Although, upon gazing over the Gallipoli Peninsula from different angles and locations, a more practical reason for building such a large memorial on that particular piece of land becomes more clear. It can be seen from many angles and from far distances. The visibility of the location from across the area and from the site over the peninsula must have had some impact on the decision on placement. While to some, it may appear to be massive and dull, “its undeniable strength as it towers impressively over the Dardanelles, particularly when floodlit at night, soon overcomes its monotonous grey symmetry.”¹³⁹ This imagery of strength and massiveness can be interpreted as a sign of greatness, and thus emphasizing that despite the minor loss of that piece of land during the war, the Turks were ultimately triumphant. The Monument built here could also be a retrospective attempt to exert a powerful image, even if it is a distortion of the actual historical events.

The area of the Çanakkale Şehitler Abidesi is has also become the site of a very large symbolic cemetery and includes other smaller monuments that combined create a nation-lover’s dream. The most recent and very obvious update to the site of the Çanakkale Şehitler Abidesi is the symbolic cemetery that was installed in 2007 utilizing the land that was previously a parking lot.¹⁴⁰

During the latest renovations in 2007, a large symbolic graveyard (*şehitlik*) was put up north of the monument, on an area which was being used as a parking lot, and which included some of the pine forest. The names of the approximately 60,000 fallen soldiers of Gallipoli whose names and ranks could be ascertained are written here. The names of the fallen are divided by cities of origin, which are in turn organized alphabetically. Thirty-six names are written on each transparent fiberglass gravestone. Cypresses have been planted between the gravestones. A *serpuş* figure representing the headgear of the Ottoman soldiers has been used in the rose garden in the graveyard. Thanks to these efforts, visitors are now, for the first time, able to see the names of the 60,000 known casualties of the Battle of Gallipoli.”¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Information from the tour guide, April 2011.

¹³⁹ Steel, Nigel. *Battleground Europe: Gallipoli*, 22.

¹⁴⁰ Atabay, et al. *Çanakkale Şehitlikleri*, page 27.

¹⁴¹ Atabay, et al. *Canakkale Şehitlikleri*, page 27. “2007’deki son düzenlemelerde abidenin kuzey tarafına bir dönem otopark olarak kullanılan kısımla birlikte çamların bir kısmını da içine alacak şekilde büyük bir temsili şehitlik kurulmuştur.

Figure 3.3: Çanakkale Abidesi-Some say that it is supposed to look like an “M” when viewed from this angle, which stands for “Mehmetçik”



Photo by author.

Burada Çanakkale'nin tüm şehitlerinden ismi ve rütbesi tespit edilebilen yaklaşık 60.000'inin isimleri yazılıdır. Şehitlerin isimleri geldikleri şehirlere göre ayrılmış, şehirler de alfabetik olarak sıralanmıştır. Fiberglas şeffaf mezar taşlarından her birine 36 şehidin ismi yazılıdır. Mezar taşlarının aralarına serviler dikilmiştir. Şehitlikteki gül bahçesinde Osmanlı askerinin başlığını temsil eden serpuş figürü kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmayla ilk defa ziyaretçiler Çanakkale Savaşları'nda şehit olanlardan tespit edilebilen yaklaşık 60.000 şehidin ismini görebilmektedir.”

The parking lot turned symbolic cemetery is rather expansive and spreads over great distances (*figure 3.4*). The sheer number of gravestones, each representing 36 men lost on the side of the Turks, makes the visitor feel small and insignificant among the maze of gravestones that are filled with names, thus impressing the importance of Çanakkale and the losses suffered. However, imagine one's surprise when upon one visit to the site, there is just a parking lot and two years later, there is a vast cemetery. Such an alteration to the site is extremely noticeable and must alter the image of the site and alter how one remembers Gallipoli through their own touring experience, thus impacting the collective memory of the visitors.

Figure 3.4: Symbolic Cemetery at the Çanakkale Abidesi Site.



Photo by author

Another interesting point to be mentioned is how the cemetery is organized. The gravestones are organized in sets of three, separated into sections according to the homeland, or province of the soldiers. This is similar to the symbolic cemetery (which was much smaller) that previously occupied the space of the current rose garden, in the foreground of the monument. As the site has changed since the publishing of Steel's tour book, descriptions of certain areas are no longer accurate. Although, this helps to emphasize the evolutionary track of the memorials while providing clues toward understanding some motivations of the Turkish state. While one symbolic cemetery

was removed and replaced with a rose garden, the arrangement of the previous smaller cemetery holds some similarities with the new.¹⁴²

In the small cemetery more soldiers' names are set in stone and beneath each one is shown the year of their birth and the name of their hometown. Moving slowly amongst them, visitors are quickly reminded that the Ottoman Empire of 1915 was much larger and more cosmopolitan than the Anatolian territory that today forms modern Turkey. The dead came from far afield, from Mesopotamia, the Hejaz and the Caucasus, yet they fought together as one people to protect the thing that was central to them all: their homeland.¹⁴³

In some cases such as the symbolic cemetery at the site of the Çanakkale Abidesi, the cemetery is split into sections by the origin of those that are represented (*figure 3.5*). By organizing the site in this way, the state is able to connect those from a vast range of locations into one 'nation', a unified country, thus serving the purpose of a nationalist cause. Common to many of the symbolic cemeteries, the native cities or *memleket* are mentioned on the gravestones. The names of cities are also sometimes included in the memorials, on walls listing those lost. Perhaps relating the soldiers to their hometown, thus a part of the homeland distracts from the use of other characteristics that were more controversial at the time, such as ethnicity.¹⁴⁴

The memorial site also includes a large flag and wide relief facing the open ceremonial space that features Mustafa Kemal in Anafartalar as well as other heroes from the war.¹⁴⁵ At the site of the Çanakkale Şehitler Abidesi, the other monuments are the Injured Soldier Monument, the previously mentioned 45 meter long relief, and the

¹⁴² Some of the changes at the Çanakkale Abide site can even be seen in the photos presented in the informational text, *Çanakkale Şehitlikleri*, as a photo showing the site on one page includes the first symbolic cemetery that was later demolished in the foreground the of abide and on the next facing page and on the next facing page, a more contemporary photo that shows that this symbolic cemetery have been replaced with a rose garden. (Pages 18 and 19)

¹⁴³ Steel, Nigel. *Battleground Europe*, 24.

¹⁴⁴ Arzu Öztürkmen discusses how through the nationbuilding process geographical location became more important than ethnic identification in her article on folkdancing, "I Dance Folklore" in *Fragments of Culture: The Everyday of Modern Turkey*, edited by Deniz Kandiyoti and Ayse Saktanber. London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002.

¹⁴⁵ Atabay, et al. *Çanakkale Şehitlikleri*, 22. "Abidenin karşısındaki tören alanına bakan kısımda, başta Anafartalar kahramanı Mustafa Kemal Atatürk olmak üzere diğer savaş kahramanlarının da olduğu büyük bir rölyef dikkat çekmektedir. Tören alanında ayrıca bir benzeri Anıtkabir'e olan büyük bir bayrak direğinde Türk bayrağı dalgalanmaktadır."

symbolic cemetery that was opened in 2007.¹⁴⁶ There is also a small memorial dedicated to the unknown soldiers who perished. Just beyond the relief is sprawling symbolic cemetery commemorating the martyrs of the Battle of Çanakkale, which features more than 60,000 names of soldiers lost.¹⁴⁷

Figure 3.5: Plan of Symbolic Cemetery at the Çanakkale Şehitler Abidesi site organized by city of origin.



Photo by author.

As one case see, by looking at the accounts of several tour guidebooks from different times and authors, the site of the Çanakkale Martyr's Memorial is in a constant state of renovation, thus constantly changing form. This persistent state of flux could easily be equated with the constant efforts of the state in the nation-building and consolidation process. According to *Çanakkale Şehitlikleri*, a book detailing most of the monuments and cemeteries that commemorate the Battle of Gallipoli in Çanakkale, “Yet today, the surrounding area continues to be reorganized.”¹⁴⁸ Steel states that the changes to the memorial site “appears to be an attempt by the Turkish authorities to

¹⁴⁶ *Geliboli Yarımadası Tarihi Milli Parkı*, (website) <http://www.gelibolutarihimilliparki.gov.tr/GYTMP/AnaSayfa/sehitlikler/SembolikSehitlikler/SehitlerAbidesi.aspx?sflang=tr>

¹⁴⁷ Atabay, et al. *Çanakkale Şehitlikleri*, page 26.

¹⁴⁸ Atabay, et al. *Çanakkale Şehitlikleri*, page 18; “Günümüzde ise çevresindeki düzenlemeler hala devam etmektedir.”

personalize an otherwise rather austere national monument.”¹⁴⁹ However, I would argue that Steel’s point of view is too simplistic in this case. The presentation of history in memorial sites and monuments creates a particular way of seeing.¹⁵⁰ Alpers defines the museum effect as “the tendency to isolate something from its world, to offer it up for attentive looking and thus to transform it into art like our own”.¹⁵¹ Here, I argue that even though the monuments certainly are not museums, the analytical framework for analyzing a museum exhibit applies to monuments and memorials. The organization of the exhibit, and in our case, the memorial, affects how the object/event is seen and the feelings that are evoked. If the site is constantly altered, it’s as if the site is a traveling museum installation that must be changed to perpetuate a continued interest. That is, perhaps the renovation of monuments is not to personalize a dull site, but in fact a means of ensuring that the site remains a central point of interest and reference, especially when considering the importance of Çanakkale in the national imaginary.

The website of the *Gelibolu Yarımadası Tarihi Milli Parkı*¹⁵² gives rather detailed information on the historical event as a whole, the names and sending cities of the ‘martyrs’ and the many monuments and cemeteries dedicated to the ‘martyrs’. The categories are quite numerous and are broken down into the groups of monuments and memorials, actual cemeteries and the symbolic ones. The website also details information on the cemeteries and monuments of the foreigners, but they are condensed into one category. The point that seems striking is that the ‘şehitlikler’ of the Turkish/Ottoman side are separated according to whether they are actual or symbolic. (The visitor to the website can refer to the menu on the right hand side of the screen). Within each of the categories there are lists with small blurbs provided to describe each site, whether it includes the construction information or basic information about what each site specifically represents. That the *Gelibolu Yarımadası Tarihi Milli Parkı* makes the distinction between the real and symbolic cemeteries is important, although, according to the information that the tour guide provided and a comparison of the

¹⁴⁹ Steel, Nigel. *Battleground Europe: Gallipoli*, 23.

¹⁵⁰ Svetlana Alpers. “The Museum as a Way of Seeing.” In *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, edited by Ivan Karp & S. Lavine, pp. 25- 32. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991.

¹⁵¹ Alpers, The Museum as a Way of Seeing. pg. 27.

¹⁵² Gelibolu Yarımadası Tarihi Milli Parkı (website)
<http://www.gelibolutarihimilliparki.gov.tr>

locations of the actual battles (or hospitals), there seems to be a discrepancy when considering some of the sites of the ‘actual’ cemeteries (*gerçek şehitlik*). That is to say, on the sites of the actual cemeteries, there are also symbolic cemeteries that have been erected more recently adjacent to those that are real. In some cases, the sites designated as actual cemeteries show photos and describe the cemeteries that are actually symbolic.

The placement of the dead and commemoration play an important role in today’s interpretation of the event of Gallipoli and Turkey’s lesson and position afterward. “The Turkish dead were accorded scant ceremony and were generally cremated en masse in gullies, where their remains may still be seen bleaching in the sun.”¹⁵³ The complete change in presentation and style of the Turkish monuments contrasted with the actual events and treatment of the martyrs leaves one questioning. Although for the daily visitor this conundrum does not present itself, as there has been a significant change in perceptions within the recent decades.

Figure 3.6: Photo of Soğanlıdere Şehitliği from the website of the Gelibolu Yarımadası Tarihi Milli Parkı.

(What is fascinating about this photo is that it is the photo that is shown as when clicking the link to see the actual cemetery at the Soğanlıdere Şehitliği, the photo is actually of the symbolic cemetery.)



Photo: <http://www.gelibolutarihimilliparki.gov.tr/>

Particularly interesting within this discussion regarding the symbolic cemeteries is how the Turkish symbolic cemeteries are presented. In several cases, the symbolic cemeteries are represented as the real ones (*figure 3.6*). Even the Gelibolu Yarımadası

¹⁵³ Hickey, 339; Moorehead, 343. “The Turks find this preoccupation with the dead somewhat strange, since their own soldiers who died at Gallipoli were buried in anonymous communal graves, and until recently almost their only memorial was a legend picked out in large white letters on the hillside above Chanak.”

Tarihi Milli Parkı (Gallipoli Peninsula Historical National Park) website misrepresents the actual and symbolic in some cases.¹⁵⁴ The names presented on the gravestones are also presumed to be correct. Often the information on the gravestones includes the name of the soldier (or whom they were the son of), the city or town from which they came, the age at which they died, and sometimes the unit in which they served (*figure 3.7*).

*Figure 3.7: Example from the Yayha Çavuş Şehitliği (symbolic)
The names are probably 'representative' and the home cities are marked.*



Photo by author.

However, according to our trusty tour guide, Ahmet, the information given on the gravestone is often not historically correct, as usually the only accurate information relates to the unit of service. Otherwise, the information is claimed to be representative. Ahmet, the tour guide, also informed us that some of the actual graveyards are just empty fields now. They are not marked, and if one wanders around in these very plush green fields, it would not be out of the question to find bones or other evidence of war. Whether this information from Ahmet is completely true or not is not the most important part of the argument. What actually matters is the fact that it is not considered out of the ordinary for the state to falsify the information that is written on the gravestones. What is important is that the information is mainly intended to be

¹⁵⁴ On the Gelibolu Yarımadası Milli Parkı website, Soğanlıdere Şehitliği is listed as a 'gerçek' ('real') cemetery, but the photo shown on the website for the Soğanlıdere Şehitliği is actually the representative cemetery and monument that was erected much later. There is no discrimination between the actual cemetery and the commemorative one at the site.

representative and serve the higher purpose of creating feelings of unification in a population. This goal becomes easier when it can be ensured that the soldiers are representative of all corners of the country and that they lost their lives, often at young ages, fighting for an important cause they believed in...what was to become the Turkish nation.

Let's refer back to the symbolic cemetery that was erected in 2007 at the site of the Çanakkale Martyr's Memorial as an example. Each headstone lists the names of 36 men, 18 on each side. Giving each soldier a place on the headstones gives the impression that the cemetery is personalized, and makes it seem as though each soldier lost was a devastating loss. However, the result that occurred at this symbolic cemetery does not appear very personal. The architectural design appears to be poorly planned. Each headstone is two-sided so as to provide more space for more names. While this may not seem problematic at first, it most certainly is if you consider that the headstones are made of transparent fiberglass, with the names etched into the surface. Therefore when there are names etched into both sides, it skews and makes the type illegible, as if one is trying to read the newspaper by holding it up to the light with words and letters going in both directions (frontward and backward) simultaneously (*figure 3.8*). Moreover, the time chosen to build the cemetery is intriguing as almost a hundred years have passed since the Battle at Çanakkale, and the sprawling symbolic cemetery was just recently constructed.

Figure 3.8: Headstone from the symbolic cemetery at the Çanakkale Martyr's Memorial (Note the illegibility of the names.)



Photo by author.

As previously mentioned, there are several symbolic cemeteries that sit side-by-side with real cemeteries.¹⁵⁵ These memorial sites create a dilemma as they confuse the visitor and paint a particularly manipulative picture, with the ‘representative’ names and ages on the memorial walls. Jay Winter gives an interesting example in his text about a similar scenario in France.

Both Rand and the architect Ventre understood that the sites of memory needed preservation to stop the voyeur or the tourist from degrading them. But what form was appropriate to the necessary act of preservation?...Their answer was original. They concluded that the most fitting memorial was the site itself, unembellished, unchanged.¹⁵⁶

The kicker here is that the actual site of the Bayonets in the trenches that was being memorialized was 30 feet away from where the memorial site was established! Yet, it was portrayed to the visitors that the site was real and that the site was yards away was not shared with the visitors.

Furthermore, there seems to be a difference in care that the two types of sites receive. While the symbolic cemetery, chock full of nationalist references and imagery like crescent/stars, bright red paint and sometimes even guns,¹⁵⁷ seems to receive significant attention and care, those that are the actual resting places of the deceased soldiers, seem to receive little attention. Maybe this is due to the form that remains of the actual cemeteries take as mere scattered rubble in a grassy field. Perhaps this selective ‘preservation’ in the sites is due to the public interest that can be cultivated by emphasizing certain areas and ignoring others. This situation is similar to one that Pelin Başaran describes in Kars. Ani, an Armenian cultural heritage site within the Kars city boundaries is closed and left in disrepair because allowing the site to be open and renovated would force the remembrance of a historical past that tells a less than desirable story.¹⁵⁸ By distracting the visitor with a symbolic cemetery, the impression

¹⁵⁵ Examples of such cases are the Soğanlıdere Şehitlik and the Şahindere Şehitlik.

¹⁵⁶ Winter, 102.

¹⁵⁷ The crescent and star design is used in many of the monuments, several of which were previously mentioned (Soğanlıdere Şehitlik, Şahindere Şehitlik, and the Çanakkale Martyr’s Memorial). Included with these designs are highlights with the red paint like at Akbaş Şehitlik. The guns as decoration can be found on the fences of the Havuzlar Monument.

¹⁵⁸ Pelin Başaran. “Looking at Kars Through The Monument Of Humanity.” Istanbul: Bilgi University. Forthcoming., pg. 148

and image created is also controlled. This is another critical point that needs to be explored more thoroughly in the upcoming chapter that discusses the discourses on commemoration and the use of particular monuments.

Two examples of these real cemeteries accompanied by symbolic ones are the Şahindere Şehitliği and the Soğanlıdere Şehitliği. As both are considered to be actual cemeteries, their construction date would be during the battle. However, several of the guidebooks list their construction dates as 1945.¹⁵⁹

The Soğanlıdere site is one of the places where some of the batteries of low-caliber cannons taken from naval ships since 1915 were positioned. During the land battles at Gallipoli, the storage depots and distribution centers of the Northern Front Command were also found at this site. Additionally, the mobile hospital of the 152nd division is at the Aramaz site in the same region. The medical companies serving in the 2nd, 7th, and 122nd divisions also were active in this region. The ruins which can be seen on the right when entering the Soğanlıdere valley from Kilitbahir were used actively during the war as the “Melek Hanım Farm” infirmary.¹⁶⁰

This memorial site, initially used in as a cemetery in 1915, also the site of a hospital, with a representative memorial built in 1945, was renovated and opened to the public in 2005. In order for the renovations to be carried out, a municipality of Istanbul also contributed to the complete renovation of the memorial. Obviously, it seems strange that a municipality of a completely different city located several hours away by car would contribute to the building of such a memorial, unless the meaning of the site was that important as a symbol for the people that live so far away.

The Soğanlıdere graveyard was opened to visitors in 2005 after a renovation sponsored by the municipality of Zeytinburnu, Istanbul. The symbolic gravestones bearing the names of the 600 known soldiers who

Başaran argues that opening the Ani site would require remembering and discussing why Armenians are no longer a part of the city, compared to their presence in the past.

¹⁵⁹ Göncü and Aldoğan; Atabay, et al.

¹⁶⁰ *Çanakkale Şehitlikleri*, page 12. “Soğanlıdere mevki 1915 başından itibaren donanma gemilerinden sökülen küçük çaplı toplardan kurulan set bataryalarının bir kısmının konuşlandırıldığı yerlerden biridir. Çanakkale kara muharebeleri sırasında Güney Cephesi komutanlıklarının erzak ambarları ve dağıtım merkezleri de bu bölgede yer alıyordu. Bu bölgede ayrıca Aramaz mevkiinde 152. Tümen Seyyar Hastanesi vardı. 2., 7. ve 122. Tümenlere ait Sıhhiye bölükleri bu bölgede görev yapmıştır. Soğanlıdere vadisine Kilitbahir’den gelirken girildiğinde sağ tarafta görülen harabe binaarın olduğu yerde savaş esnasında “Melek Hanım Çiftliği Reviri” faaliyet göstermiştir.”

fell here have been arranged in the new graveyard to form the crescent and star when viewed from above. The real graves, meanwhile, have been marked by stones of various sizes on the slopes of the valley to the rear and front of the graveyard.¹⁶¹

Another similar case is the Şahindere site, which shares similar circumstances as the previously mentioned Soğanlıdere Şehitliği. Not only do they share the similar arrangement between real and symbolic cemeteries, but they also share similar designs for the symbolic cemeteries. If viewed from above, they both form a large star and crescent pattern.¹⁶² Both of the symbolic cemeteries seem to be constructed from similar materials and share the same color combinations. Additionally, both feature the same information about those lost soldiers that they are commemorating.

The Şahindere site was also initially constructed in 1945 and renovated and reopened by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to the public on March 18, 2005.¹⁶³ This date is important to the Çanakkale victory, as the 18th of March is the anniversary of the naval victory of the Ottoman forces, thanks to the mines laid several days prior to the Allied attack. The symbolic cemetery was constructed with “symbolic headstones in the shape of Turkish military headwear of World War I.”¹⁶⁴ The picture shown in the *Battles of Gallipoli* tour book shows the symbolic gravestones that are organized in the crescent and star shape with the names of the ‘martyrs’ inscribed on the lower walls and helmets with the names of the cities that supposedly sent their men to fight there. However, there is a complete lack of information and focus on the remains of the ‘real’ cemetery, which was supposedly stumbled upon by a farmer who was just working the land. The actual gravestones have no markings, and without being informed the visitor has no way of knowing that the groups of rocks on the ground are actual graves (*figure 3.9*).

¹⁶¹ Atabay, et al. *Çanakkale Şehitlikleri*, page 13. “Soğanlıdere Şehitliği, 2005 yılında İstanbul Zeytinburnu Belediyesi’nin katkılarıyla yeniden düzenlenerek ziyarete açılmıştır. Yukarıdan bakıldığında ay yıldız şeklinde yerleştirilen simgesel mezarlarla yapılan yeni şehitlikte, burada yattığı tespit edilen 600 şehidin ismi yer almaktadır. Gerçek şehit mezarları ise şehitliğin alt vey an taraftadaki vadi yamacında farklı büyüklükteki taşlarla belirlenmiştir.”

¹⁶² Göncü and Aldoğan, pages 14-15.

¹⁶³ Göncü and Aldoğan, 14&15.

¹⁶⁴ Göncü and Aldoğan, page 161.

Figure 3.9: Actual headstone at the Şahindere site.



Photo by author.

Why is it necessary to include a large and commanding memorial/monument at the site? Do the old gravestones not speak for themselves, as they have survived the test of time and weather? Why does it appear that the newly erected monument with symbolic gravestones receives better care and more attention than the actual gravestones in the location of the actual burials?

3.4 Monoliths

Another theme that is prominent when examining the quantity of monuments and memorials constructed in a given time is the popularity of the monolith structure utilized in the 1980s. There are at least eight sets of monoliths that were built on the European-side of the Straits in the 1980s, following the 12 September 1980 military coup. These monoliths commemorate important turning points in battles at different times.¹⁶⁵ While many commemorative statues and structures are to be expected for an event of such magnitude in the history of an emerging nation, what is not so predictable is the popularity of the similarly designed monoliths that were constructed nearly 65 years after the event.

Generally speaking, the monoliths usually either include a quotation of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, or they detail the events of a particular attack or defense, like a little

¹⁶⁵ Some of the examples are the Kanlısirt Kitabesi, Kemalyeri Kitabesi, the Kucuk Arıburni 27. Alay Kitabesi, the ANZAC Koyu Kitabesi, Damakcılık Bayırı Kitabesi, the Buyuk Kemikli Kitabesi, Yusufcuiktepe Kitabesi, Kabatepe Arıburnu Sahil Yaziti, and Kirectepe Yaziti ve Sehitligi and the most widely known of these and also the largest is the Conkbayırı Mehmetçik Kitabeleri.

historical snippet on a gigantic marble or concrete billboard.¹⁶⁶ In fact, the Conkbayırı Mehmetçik Parkı features 5 of these monolith structures built in a semi-circular pattern to resemble the five-fingers of a hand reaching up to God.¹⁶⁷ The first of the five monoliths was completed in 1981 commissioned by General Kenan Evren, and the other four were completed and open to the public in 1984 (*figure 3.10*).¹⁶⁸ Supposedly, this was the area where Atatürk forced his men to fix their bayonets and fight at Conkbayırı in April of 1915, which is where Atatürk is claimed to have won the war.¹⁶⁹ So, what was going on in the 1980s to trigger such a dedication on behalf of the government in monument construction on the Gallipoli Peninsula?

Figure 3.10: 3 of the 5 monoliths at the Conkbayırı Mehmetçik Parkı Anıtı Yazıtları



Photo by author.

As with the Conkbayırı Mehmetçik Parkı Anıtı Yazıtları, many of the other large monoliths were also completed during the 1980s. If many of the monuments built at a certain time were of similar form and content, there must be an underlying reason. The character of the monolith, as well as the use of Atatürk quotations utilized must have

¹⁶⁶ Göncü and Aldoğan, 65.

¹⁶⁷ Göncü and Aldoğan, 65.

¹⁶⁸ Atabay, et al. *Çanakkale Şehitlikleri*, 66-7.

¹⁶⁹ Göncü and Aldoğan, 65.

been perceived to be carriers of immense meaning. The quotation on the first of the five monoliths is what Atatürk said to the Turkish troops on the way to Conkbayırı as the Battles of Çanakkale were beginning: “I’m not ordering you to attack, but to die. Within the time until we die, other forces might take our place, other commanders might dominate.”¹⁷⁰ With the energy and motivation of this, the soldiers supposedly pushed the advancing enemy troops backwards, or so the story goes. (Yet, there were still incredible losses.) The other monuments describe events that showcase the heroism of the troops in general, and especially Atatürk.

Also, in 1993, the Conkbayırı Atatürk Anıtı was opened¹⁷¹; and this monument shares the same general location as the monolithic structures on Çonkbayırı. It is a short walk through a wooded area and over the renovated trenches to the New Zealand monument standing adjacent to the Atatürk statue (*figure 3.11*). The placement of the Atatürk statue is interesting as it comes almost face to face with the towering obelisk-like structure built in 1925 to commemorate the 850 soldiers from New Zealand that were lost at Chunuk Bair in a few days of fighting in August of 1915.¹⁷² While the Atatürk statue is not in a battle position-like pose, he wearing a military uniform and is facing the monument looking firmly ahead. Again, did the events of the 1990s trigger some sort of impulse to construct a giant Atatürk statue in this particular spot? The site seems to have already been very laden with Atatürk references, although the increased need to pull the Atatürkist image back into the limelight seems to have been necessary.

¹⁷⁰ “Ben size taarruzu emretmiyorum, ölmeyi emrediyorum, biz ölünceye kadar geçecek zaman zarfında yerimize başka kuvvetler gelir, başka komutanlar hakim olabilir.”

¹⁷¹ Atabay, et al. *Canakkale Şehitlikleri*, pg 70.

¹⁷² ÇŞATT website. < <http://www.canakkalesavaslari.gen.tr/thefarmx.html> >.

Figure 3.11: Conkbayırı Atatürk Monument (1993)



Photo by author.

Why are particular styles and forms chosen as good representative monuments for the Gallipoli campaign? As initially discussed, monuments and memorials sprouted up all over the Gallipoli Peninsula beginning in the 1960s and continue to spread at a faster pace through the 1980s and 1990s. There are a very few monuments built immediately after the war and even fewer still standing in the present.¹⁷³ A point to probe: why was there a sudden interest in building memorials and monuments dedicated to Çanakkale? After the war, there were only four monuments built to remember the soldiers and the importance of the war. As anyone can see from the sheer number of monuments and memorials today, there is certainly no shortage; the construction and plans to continue building persist. The monuments that are constructed are not necessarily true to the historical events, as we have seen with the symbolic cemeteries. Does authenticity matter? What were the political motivations for monument building? The upcoming chapter will help to place these monuments in their proper political and social context. It will also help to problematize the key question to our study, why are these monuments and thus the Battle of Çanakkale so salient in the nationalist imaginary.

¹⁷³ One of the two remaining monuments is the Mehmet Çavuş Anıtı, which was built in 1919. It is not still standing in its original form, but has been rebuilt. Descriptions of this monument can be found in the *Gallipoli Battlefield Guide* by Göncü and Aldoğan or on the Gelibolu Yarımadası Milli Parkı website.

4.DISCOURSES OF COMMEMORATION & THE TRANSFORMING IMAGE

*As it is known, the Battle of Canakkale not only rescued unity, but also prevented the elimination of the Turks. By establishing first the Seljuks, followed by the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey, our ancestors succeeded in the continuation of Turkish sovereignty on Anatolian soil for more than one thousand years.*¹⁷⁴

4.1 Introduction

Through the medium of national monuments and memorials, this chapter aims to trace the transformation of the nationalist discourse surrounding the Battle of Çanakkale as an event that claims a spotlight in the historiography of the state. This event supposedly defined the Turkish values of strength, courage, willingness to sacrifice and homeland.¹⁷⁵ As previously discussed, standing against the imperialist powers and providing an opportunity to break with the Ottoman Empire, participation in the First

¹⁷⁴ Bodur, in the Introduction of *Kugu'nun Son Otusu: Canakkale Destani/The Last Cry of the Swan: The Legend of Canakkale*. Istanbul: Bogazici Yayinlari, 1999., p. 5

¹⁷⁵ A question that has not been asked is, where were the women? I would argue that the notions of battles and war are expressed as masculine virtues. Thus, when analyzing the monuments that commemorate the battles at Gallipoli, the dominating discourse of masculinities overshadow any possibility of an analysis of the female experience. The main values that have been associated with the Turkish victory at Gallipoli such as courage, valor, bravery and self-sacrifice are very specific to describing the strength of the Turkish nation, asserting a very masculine character to the nationalist discourse. Integral to this definition of the state is honor, a term that seems to be rather connected with the military establishment. Often the actions of the military are considered to honorable and brave without much thought or criticism. By placing the military in a prominent position within the state and society, the male population automatically becomes honorable (because of mandatory military service).

World War seemed to be a chance to establish a new state.¹⁷⁶ Although the Battle at Çanakkale is technically a part of the First World War, meaning that the battle was an Ottoman battle; it has been claimed by the Turkish nationalists. This phenomenon alone is a product of discourse in the framing of the event within its surrounding history. As the Battle of Gallipoli has been extracted from just a part of the Ottoman Empire's involvement in First World War, I argue that it has become the product of an event-centered approach. By taking an event-centered approach to history, the event can be taken out of context and focus on the smaller internal parts, without looking at the larger picture.¹⁷⁷ One can put the puzzle pieces together and situate the war monuments and cemeteries discussed in the previous chapters into the proper historical and societal context over time. Nevertheless, this task becomes rather difficult considering that the state uses the somewhat ambiguous images of monuments or remnants from the Battle of Çanakkale and establishes a narrative to supplement.¹⁷⁸ Besides political and societal context, it is vital to understand the ideological currents that controlled and continue to control the meaning that the monuments still represent through time.

Purpose of war memorials. Initially, war monuments and commemorations are said to play a critical role in the healing process after a traumatic event. For example as Jay Winter argues in his text *Sites of Memory, Site of Mourning*, "War memorials are collective symbols. They speak to and for communities of men and women."¹⁷⁹ Following the First World War in the 1920s, there was a significant pilgrimage movement, where the relatives of the dead (resulting from the war) would go to visit the cemeteries where their loved ones rested.¹⁸⁰ While Jay Winter mainly refers to the case of the Allied Powers of Western Europe, many of his observations apply to the Turkish case. Although the Turkish pilgrimage experience has been rather delayed in

¹⁷⁶ Ersin Kalaycioglu. *Turkish Dynamics: Bridge Across Troubled Lands*, New York: Palgrave, 2005, page 34.

¹⁷⁷ Geoffrey M. White. "National subjects: September 11 and Pearl Harbor." *American Ethnologist* 31 no. 3 (2004): page 305.

¹⁷⁸ White, 296. White discusses the use of discourses surrounding the usage of Pearl Harbor and September 11 in the United States. For the sake of this project, I have adapted White's arguments from these two events in American history to the Turkish experience and the usage of Çanakkale.

¹⁷⁹ Winter, 51.

¹⁸⁰ Winter, 52-3.

comparison to the British and French cases, when the pilgrimages were right after the war. Within the past 30 or so years, it seems as though there has been a renewed interest in the battlefields and war memorials of the Gallipoli Peninsula. Monuments and cemeteries have popped up, sparking a revival in memory of the Battle of Çanakkale, leading to the transformation from memorials to pilgrimage sites. Meanwhile, this revival has inspired a greater interest in tourism on behalf of Turkish citizens as well as attracting Australians and New Zealanders, who yearn to set foot on the territory where their grandfathers fought and many died.¹⁸¹ (Here it is interesting to note the mutual interest in the same sites of the former enemies.)

The increase in interest and state attention to the monuments, war memorials and cemeteries in Gallipoli are a product of the constructed discourses of the state itself. In fact, the constructed discourse here is related to a similar construction in South Korea. As Jager explains, the Yongsan War Memorial acts like a museum of military history that emphasizes particular events and completely ignores others.¹⁸² The monument serves as a reminder of state power and ‘efforts to legitimize that power through making and/or re-making of history.’¹⁸³ Although the Yongsan War Memorial is organized in a more strict and controlled way, both the Yongsan War Memorial and the Çanakkale Martyr’s Memorial (*Çanakkale Abidesi ve Şehitliği*) are organized to create a controlled experience and a version of history that reverts to the glories of the past, making a model for the ideal future.¹⁸⁴

The monuments are made to reflect the state the state’s perception of it’s people. Duara argues that discourses can construct their subjects but the subjects can

¹⁸¹ It is believed that the Australian and New Zealander tourists would have participated in pilgrimages to the Gallipoli Peninsula has the area been in better condition.

¹⁸² Jager, Sheila Miyoshi. “Manhood, The State and The Yongsan War Memorial, South Korea.” *Museum Anthropology* 21(3): 33-39.

In this article Jager relates the monument with the goals of the state and how it reflects a particular national history. The motivational resemblances are close. “The museum obscures the national shame associated with the colonial period. By inventing a newer, stronger, and militarily more powerful image, the Memorial aims to claim for the present a stronger, more “manly” military past—one that had been, in reality, virtually nonexistent. (pg. 36)

¹⁸³ Jager, 33.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

also construct the history that constructs identities.¹⁸⁵ Some of the constructions are direct products of societal reverberations that already exist in the community. That is to say, (adapting these arguments to our example of nation) the discourses that are constructed by the state often define the nation. The nation then has meaning in two areas, discursive, relating to rhetoric, narratives and ideology and symbolic, relating to cultural practices and rituals.¹⁸⁶ The framework established by Duara applies to our discussion of discourse construction and the definition of nation. Within the compact unit of a monument, the state is shaping cultural practice and rituals through the many commemorative ceremonies on key dates of the war, as well as perfecting the discourse that is spread through the speeches given at these events and the media coverage they receive.

4.2 But what do the monuments mean?

Yes, monuments and memorials are constructed as compensatory for losses or crimes.¹⁸⁷ (But they are also constructed to commemorate important events.) However, does the size of the monument reflect the loss or the meaning of the event in the historiography? If this were the case, the sheer number and size of the monuments dedicated to Çanakkale would indicate that the sacrifice was great. (Is this really why the monuments are so huge?) Yet, the focus on Gallipoli did not occur right away. Actually, attention more concentrated on Gallipoli especially during the 1980s with a few other additions in the meantime. There was an absolutely tremendous loss of human life at the time, but the representation of figures of losses was not utilized until decades after the battle ended. That is, the representation of loss has been manipulated.

¹⁸⁵ Prasenjit Duara. "Historicizing National Identity, or Who Images What and When." In *Becoming National: A Reader*, edited by Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny. Pp. 151-179. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, 165.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ Vincent Crapanzano. "Remembrance." In his *Imaginative horizons: an essay in literary-philosophical anthropology*, pp. 148-177. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004, 168.

As Huyssen argues, the line between the mythic past and the real past often become blurred instigating a cultural obsession.¹⁸⁸

While some may be suspicious of the positive monuments exuding images of victory, success and heroism,¹⁸⁹ it seems as though the Turkish monuments focus on the triumph. The construction of the monuments allowed for the state's constant media and news attention.¹⁹⁰ The desire to attract media attention may even serve as a greater motivation for monument building than the longer-lasting meaning of the actual monuments themselves. However, Aylin Tekiner points out that the sheer number of monuments, many of which became mass-produced did not necessarily keep the attention on the monuments, but instead leads to statuephobia.

Despite the danger of overproducing and spreading monuments, Alev Çınar argues that “the state constructs itself by opening up new spaces, closing others, inscribing them with marks and symbols of state power, and organizing urban space in accordance with official national ideology.”¹⁹¹ While the aesthetics of the monument may not be of the highest aesthetic quality, this is not the goal of the state. The state merely wants to impose the national ideology onto the people, and ensure that it remains without competition through adjustments, changes, and updates: whatever it takes to keep the attention focused on the state's goals.

Referring back to the Çanakkale Martyr's Memorial, the visitor is confronted with a gigantic structure with reliefs of critical moments in battle on the pillars. Although loss in battle is obvious, the reaction to the battle is more related to the triumph over the infidel imperialists.

The form of a memorial usually mediates between memories of brutal, tragic events involving, in the twentieth century, death on a massive scale with ideals that these were not in vain. The idea that deaths were not

¹⁸⁸ Andreas Huyssen. “Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia.” In *Public Culture*, 12 (1): page 26.

¹⁸⁹ Crapanzano argues that the negative monuments representing loss, war and holocaust are more salient with the public. However, in the Turkish case, it seems as though the positive monuments have gained a higher popularity., 168.

¹⁹⁰ U. Aylin Tekiner. *Atatürk Heykelleri: Kult, Estetik, Siyaset*. Istanbul: İletişim Yayinlari, 2010.

The media and news would focus not on the monuments themselves, but on the opening ceremonies and those government officials that were in attendance.

¹⁹¹ Alev Çınar, *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey: Bodies, Places and Time*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005, 101.

wasted but were constitutive of collective memory is implied by the often strongly egalitarian and democratic ideologies presented in the material form of the memorial.¹⁹²

In a similar line of argument like Rowlands, Crapanzano also writes that, “Not only do monuments and memorials inspire memory, but they influence the way memories are recalled or recounted.”¹⁹³ Whether the visitors to the monument agree or disagree with the message that the monument presents, it is inevitably entered into the discourse through the experience of the individual. The monument creates a basis, or common experience that will be similar to all visitors of the site. By attaching personal experiences to the monuments, they are legitimized.¹⁹⁴ This according to Crapanzano is a site of commemorative interaction -- where individuals must come to terms with their relationship to the collectivity.¹⁹⁵

The connection with the collectivity and the ways that the memorials are remembered by visitors cannot be qualified, as every individual’s personal experiences are different, and measuring emotional reactions are not the point of this work. However, for the sake of the argument, it can be stated that particular associations can be made from influencing particular experiences. For example, organized trips fall into this category of those activities creating a collective experience. Since many of these trips are organized by schools or political organizations, the material presented is controlled and can be altered according to the belief of the tourguide.

These trips also contribute to another interesting phenomenon that seems to separate the Çanakkale campaign from the greater set of events known as the First World War.¹⁹⁶ When asked about Çanakkale, Turkish citizens can often cite some of the significant characters and happenings. However, placing Çanakkale in the proper chronology provides a challenge. Separating Çanakkale into its own category away from the other events of the period seems to make it more eternal and rejuvenates it, by making it timeless and more applicable in the present. Thus, war memorials can also

¹⁹² Michael Rowlands. “Remembering to Forget. Sublimation as Sacrifice in War Memorials.” In *The Art of Forgetting*. Edited by Adrian Forty and Susanne Kuechler, pp. 129-146. New York: Berg, 1999, 133.

¹⁹³ Crapanzano, 171.

¹⁹⁴ Crapanzano, 172.

¹⁹⁵ Crapanzano, 172.

¹⁹⁶ Crapanzano, 175.

remain more pertinent to the present, as monuments and cemeteries are still being renovated and built, unlike the experience of many other countries that participated in the First World War. In many of the Allied countries who experienced the war, the meaning of the monuments that were built in the immediate aftermath of the war diminished.¹⁹⁷

For Turkey, the emphasis on monuments only began to appear 40 years after the event, long after the wounds began to close. And these same monuments, have also gained new meanings over time, without fading. There must be something different within the Turkish monumento-sphere. That is, the purpose of the Turkish monuments/memorials may have originally been to aid in the mourning process, but now go beyond that, as the mourning process should be complete. I would even argue that the monuments at Gallipoli were not actually used as a means of healing; they skipped this step, jumping directly to unification building efforts.

Here Rowlands helps to shed light on the inquiry of how memorials change roles, as he states that “memorials become monuments as a result of the successful completion of the mourning process.”¹⁹⁸

War memorials should ideally allow the fusion of the living with the dead as an act of remembrance whilst eventually providing a way out of melancholia through an act of transcendence. Triumphalism, the reason why most memorials are monuments, achieves this through the assertion of collective omnipotence and by banishing from memory those acts of humiliation when the nation failed to protect its own young.¹⁹⁹

Essentially, the point that seems to surface when questioning whether or not the nation protected its own young is that the young men were called upon to protect their nation for the good of the future generations.

However, Winter concedes that it is difficult to answer the question of the exact meaning of monuments. “Different cultural norms and religious traditions yield different meanings.”²⁰⁰ For example, in France the memorials typically recall the loss

¹⁹⁷ Winter, 98.

¹⁹⁸ Rowlands, 131.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ Winter, 78.

and sacrifice, while the memorial traditions of the British and in Germany/Austria recall more than the central facts of the war.²⁰¹

“While ambiguities of iconography and ritual are undeniably present in war memorials, and while they embody and proclaim a host of commemorative messages about war, they do not obliterate the simple truth that people die in war, and in the Great War their number was legion. That message may be direct; it may be indirect or muted; it may be drowned in sentimentality or lies, but between the lines of noble rhetoric, through the mass of figurative or sculptural detail, the harsh history of life and death in wartime is frozen in public monuments throughout Europe and beyond.”²⁰²

Although despite this immutability of death that is present in the monuments in Gallipoli, the deaths that are remembered are selected carefully emphasizing one view of history. For example, the monuments scattered across the Gallipoli Peninsula are commemorating the Turkish soldiers that were lost in the effort to save the homeland. However, on the opposite side of the country, there was a different battle on a different front where there were also many casualties. Yet these casualties resulted from the Armenian massacres executed by the Young Turks in an effort to protect the homeland from the perceived internal threat, even though these residents were also long time residents of the same lands! The emphasis on Çanakkale places the events of the other front under a veil, as they are not to be seen. The valiant victory was won in Çanakkale, so this is where the attention should be focused.

After such a publicized traumatic event with incredible losses, as that of the Battle of Gallipoli, one would think that it is the people that need a means of healing. Since Gallipoli and the battles of the First World War were so public and affected nearly everyone, as almost everyone in the engaged countries had a brother, son, husband, relative or friend in the war, one could easily perceive that public shows of memory would be beneficial to the surviving loved ones. According to Jay Winter, there are a few central themes for commemoration, “The need to reaffirm the nobility of the warrior by an appeal to ‘ancient’ tradition, the tendency to highlight soldiers’ sacrifice and civilian debt, and the consequent unending duty of dedication to some noble communal task: all are expressed here in a romanticized form which described a

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² Winter, 78.

war which changed rapidly after 1914.”²⁰³ Perhaps the reason that Çanakkale monuments seem to resonate so well to this day is that Turkish families and citizens can still attach a meaning to them, especially if participating dead relatives can be equated with the memorials.

As previously mentioned, the monuments also are supposed to represent the values of the “Turkish” men that sacrificed their lives. Throughout the conversation of what the monuments mean, one should recognize that the values attributed to the Turkish nation, that came from the battle are those that were seen in the men. Honor, nobility, triumph, bravery: these are the qualities of the Turkish Mehmetçik, the nameless warrior willing to lose his life for the nation. The qualities described are not only attributed to the men as individuals, but are acquired through the institution of the military.

Besides the meaning the associations with the military and triumphalism, which are engrained into the citizens of the Turkish nation at young age, there are other meanings that can be extracted. One of the most important of which is the use of monuments as a means of community unification. Again, using the Çanakkale Martyr’s Memorial as an example, the symbolic cemetery found at the entrance serves the purpose of community unification and bereavement. Having the gravestones organized by region of origin and including the names of soldiers lost personalizes the experience of the visitor. The unification motives of the state are furthered by showing that there were soldiers lost from all over the homeland, and that whether from far corners, everyone has a common tie to the war, as the men from all over the Ottoman Empire fought in the trenches together and died together. The actual structure of the Çanakkale Martyr’s Memorial provokes pride as well. The large structure towering above gives the impression of the gigantic victory that was won. The size of the structure pulls attention away from the losses that were suffered on other Ottoman Fronts in the First World War. All of those who identify as members of the Turkish nation can rally around this monument and leave feeling proud of the accomplishments of their grandfathers, great-grandfathers, great-uncles, or other relatives.

Subsequent to the initial healing of those relatives, lovers and friends of those lost in the Great War, the memorial’s role changes. The memorials have also occupied an important part of the public memory, as Çanakkale remains one of those salient

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 85

political and historical topics. “Public memory is produced from a political discussion that involves not so much specific economic or moral problems but rather fundamental issues about the entire existence of a society: its organization, structure of power, and the very meaning of its past and present.”²⁰⁴ And Bodnar continues with his description of public memory and its role in society.

Public memory is a body of beliefs and ideas about the past that help a public or society understand both its past, present, and by implication, its future. It is fashioned ideally in a public sphere in which various parts of the social structure exchange views. The major focus of this communicative and cognitive process is not the past, however, but serious matters in the present such as the nature of power and the question of loyalty to both official and vernacular cultures.²⁰⁵

While the monuments and commemoration ceremonies provide for a public means of mourning as Jay Winter argues, it is also “a political act; it could not be neutral, and war memorials carried political messages from the earliest days of the war.”²⁰⁶ As both Winter and Bodnar state, the monuments carry heavier meanings that reflect the goals and the motivations of the state, attaching certain meanings to events and controlling the meanings that are produced. Bodnar’s arguments for public memory, its construction and perpetuation correspond quite well with the political events and political usage of the monuments.

4.3 The Timeline:

In the immediate aftermath of the Gallipoli, which ended in January 1916, there were only four monuments built to remember the fallen.²⁰⁷ This is understandable considering that the Turkish/Ottoman Army continued fighting despite the ending of the First World War in what is now termed the Turkish War of Liberation. Culturally,

²⁰⁴ Bodnar, John E. *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992, pg. 14

²⁰⁵ Bodnar, pg. 15.

²⁰⁶ Winter, Jay. 82.

²⁰⁷ Göncü and Aldoğan, 51. There were four Turkish monuments built in the immediate aftermath of the Çanakkale campaign and only remnants two remain, Mehmet Çavuş Anıtı and the Kireçtepe Jandarma Anıtı.

monument-building was limited as Islam prohibited idolatry, and monuments were seen as a form of idol.²⁰⁸ Economically, the country was ravaged and in a state of decay after several continual years of fighting. Politically, the Ottoman government was in a state of collapse, especially after the Treaty of Mudros, which not only ended World War I, but also was a step toward the Western Allies staking their claims on Ottoman territory. As emphasized previously, anti-imperialism and fighting to expel the infidels was a strong motivation during the Battle of Çanakkale. This sentiment must have remained in the minds of the emerging leadership that culminated in the Turkish War of Liberation fought between 1919 and 1922, leading to the proclamation of the new Turkish Republic on 29 October 1923. With early beginnings in the Çanakkale campaign and continued success through the War of Liberation, Mustafa Kemal's role was solidified as a leader.²⁰⁹ This solidification was most definitely an important development leading to the monument building and construction of a new state identity.

According to Aylin Tekiner, there are several eras of monument building witnessed throughout the history of Turkey, which can be identified as eras when there was an emphasis on showing the strength of the state.²¹⁰ Throughout the 1920s, and the single party period, there was an influx of statue building, mainly focused on Atatürk.²¹¹ However, the focus of the newly established republic during the 1920s and the 1930s was found in creating a national character, securing the borders, consolidating power, formulating a national identity and establishing a definitive rupture from the Ottoman past.²¹² Monuments were a way of doing just that. After the establishment of the republic, there was an increase in the number of Atatürk monuments built, which can be associated with state-building and the creation of a new memory.²¹³ In fact, when

²⁰⁸ Initially, the lack of monuments can be attributed to the cultural ban on idol-worship according to Islam. However, Tekiner argues that the way was paved for monument building when Atatürk gave a speech in Bursa that claims monument building is not idol-worship. Tekiner, 67.

²⁰⁹ Mustafa Kemal's lasting role on the establishment of the Turkish Republic was also solidified through a myth-making process like that of the Battle at Çanakkale.

²¹⁰ According to Tekiner, monuments effectively show the strength of the state, and are tools used for this purpose.

²¹¹ Tekiner, Atatürk Heykelleri.

²¹² Lecture notes from Ersin Kalaycioglu's Turkish Politics class, 5 March 2010.

²¹³ Tekiner, 65. As Tekiner states in her book, Atatürk introduced the concept of monument-building as acceptable at a speech in Bursa on 23 January 1923.

referring to the event of Çanakkale, it seems as though the newly formed government was attempting to distance itself from the event as it was a victory sustained under Ottoman leadership. In the 1930s and 1940s, the effects of the Great Depression were felt, and then World War II hit. Meanwhile, there were great challenges to the new republic that prevented much development before the 1950s, with the difficult economic conditions, the much needed regeneration of the destruction in the war torn territory was impossible with the devastated markets.²¹⁴

According to Ahmet, our tour guide of the Çanakkale battlefields and cemeteries, the state was not in a position to begin building any sort of monument until the 1950s.²¹⁵ This is the reason that construction on the Çanakkale Martyr's Memorial was postponed from 1944 when the design was accepted until 1954, and remained closed due to slow construction efforts to the public until 1960.²¹⁶ However, it is interesting to compare the Çanakkale Martyr's Memorial with Anitkabir (Atatürk's Mausoleum), completed in 1953 in Ankara, which led to the measure of nationalism in level of allegiance to Atatürk, and the symbols of the nation.²¹⁷ Obviously, Anitkabir became the central joint monument/memorial around which Turkish nationalism was to be centered, but the Abide memorial in Çanakkale would help to further another one of goals of national identity formation: creating a sense of unified territory.²¹⁸ Some like Klaus Kreiser believe that the mausoleum overshadowed the importance of war memorials, although the memorials played an important role elsewhere.²¹⁹ Additionally in the 1950s, there was renewed interest in the monuments that had already been constructed. Between the late 1940s and 1950s, renovations were carried out on the memorials/cemeteries.

Then, on 27 May 1960, there was a military coup perceived in the present as coming from the left-wing. This military coup signaled the beginning of a new era in

²¹⁴ Lecture notes from Ersin Kalaycioglu's Turkish Politics class.

²¹⁵ Tour guide interview.

²¹⁶ Tour guide interview.

²¹⁷ Çınar, 100.

²¹⁸ Çınar, 101.

²¹⁹ Klaus Kreiser. "War Memorials and Cemeteries in Turkey." *The First World War as Remembered in the Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean*, edited by Olaf Farschid, Manfred Kropp and Stephan Dahne, 183-201. Beirut: Orient-Institute, 2006. 192.

monument building, which represented an effort to establish legitimacy of the new government and signify the strength of the state.²²⁰ Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, the monument building phenomenon continued and increased exponentially.²²¹ While this hypothesis has not been proven, perhaps the monument building trend correlated with the perceived chaos and disorganization the state saw during the decade. Monuments therefore could be utilized in a deliberate attempt to increase the unity and nationalist feeling among the population. Despite the disorder of the period, the *Gelibolu Yarımadası Tarihi Milli Parkı* was created and established in 1973, marking the renewed interest in the ‘spirit of Gallipoli’ during the 1970s.²²²

The May 27 era was brought to an end on 12 September 1980, when there was yet another military coup, with its organizers aiming to establish national security and order through Turkification policies; this military intervention was perceived to be generally accepted by the public. Here, one can see another element of the myth of history, where hindsight allows the nationalist story to claim that the coup was for the purpose of ending chaos and turmoil widespread in the 1970s and that the public generally accepted it. The official national historiography has been able to translate their tale into monuments, legitimizing particular claims that are assumed within the dominant discourses. The inspiration for building the monoliths in the 1980s is similar to the Yongsan Memorial in South Korea. The memorial aimed to “bring together State power and of the people” while “serv[ing] as the source of legitimization of the modern triumphant nation of the “people’s army”.”²²³ According to Tekiner’s analysis of Atatürk monuments, it can be argued that the coup of 1960 was the initial threshold in

²²⁰ Tekiner, 154. While Tekiner’s research focuses on the phenomenon of Atatürk statues, many of her descriptions regarding times and eras fit with the correlations found when examining the monuments at Gallipoli. In the Turkish historiography, Atatürk is said to have had his early beginnings in Gallipoli, thus also playing an important role in the Atatürk cult and exemplifying the critical role that Atatürk plays in the nationalist discourse.

²²¹ Tekiner, 171. Tekiner compares the number of Atatürk monuments built between 1946 and 1960 with the number of Atatürk monuments built between 1960 and 1970. The number of monuments went from 12 to 59.

²²² This information can be found on the Nature Protection and National Parks General Directorate (*Doğa Koruma ve Milli Parkı*) website at: http://www.milliparklar.gov.tr/DKMP/AnaSayfa/dogaKorumaHaber/10-02-13/Milli_Parklar.aspx?sflang=tr .

²²³ Jager, 37.

the monument and memorial making, followed by another threshold in 1980.²²⁴ In fact, monument construction and memorial-making exploded in the 1980s and has only continued to intensify.

These thresholds experienced in Turkey correspond to a larger and more global transition in memory discourses. According to Andreas Huyssen, a new type of memory discourse emerged in the West in the 1960s “in the wake of decolonization and the new social movements and their search for alternative revisionist histories.”²²⁵ He continues by stating that “memory discourses accelerated in Europe and the United States in the early 1980s” following the attention that had been focused on the Holocaust.²²⁶

After the difficult economic and political periods leading into the 1970s and 1980s, the war monuments at Gallipoli also began to include commemoration of places and movements of Atatürk as a unification attempt. Within this idea, statues of Atatürk were constructed and memorials began to include places that Atatürk had been or quotations that contributed to nationalist goals. The use of Atatürk as a political icon and to further political goals was popular throughout the country, but was not as widely used in Gallipoli until after the 1980 coup.

Crass methods used in producing an ideology out of Atatürk’s sayings and doings failed to erect an “official ideology,” but the overdose of propaganda efforts, which created an industry of propagandists, one the one hand, and a reaction of callousness to such propaganda by the men and women in the street, on the other. There also seems to be some evidence that such efforts were popularly perceived as an attempt by corrupt governments to sanctify their otherwise unacceptable style of rule, and suppress opposition directed at their policies in the post-1980 politics of Turkey.²²⁷

Hand in hand with the actual monument building activities, many of the monuments and sites of the Gallipoli Peninsula were included under the protection of the Ministry of Culture on the 14th of November in 1980. While this follows nearly a month after the military coup, it indicates that the sites and the message of the sites are important to the official state ideology and that they have been incorporated into the

²²⁴ Tekiner, 171.

²²⁵ Huyssen, 22.

²²⁶ Huyssen, 22.

²²⁷ Kalaycioglu, Ersin. *Turkish Dynamics: Bridge across Troubled Lands*. page 194.

ideology of the nation. Basically, it gives the site the official legitimacy and a stamp of approval from the state. Most of the monuments and cemeteries were integrated under the Ministry of Culture in 1980, but another critical date was the 17th of June in 1991, when a number of monuments were officially protected under the Ministry of Culture. The incorporation of these cultural areas legitimizes the cultural production and establishes the state's position as factö as the monuments are a standing and long-lasting representation of the state ideology.

As Tekiner points out, the 100th anniversary of Atatürk's birth was celebrated in 1981, marking an important milestone for the state and an a moment of influx in monument creation. The celebratory year was marked with a 'craziness' in Atatürk monument building. Actually, there was a craziness that swept the year with celebrations and the strengthening of the Atatürk cult.²²⁸ The craze was fueled by UNESCO's recognition that Atatürk made his mark on era as a leader, not just in terms of Turkey as country, but for the world as a whole.²²⁹ The 1980s followed on this similar path of rapid monument building with the expansion of the monument market until the 1990s, which correlates with the nationalist outbursts of the Turkish state in both the 1980s and 1990s.²³⁰

The 1990s were also turbulent years for Turkey. The state's security discourses were changing not least in tandem with the transformations in the globalized world.²³¹ Despite the changes of the security discourses that dominate the national discourse, the state still employed a notion of self-defense in making decisions. That is, self-defense remained an issue when analyzing both internal and external threats. The Middle East was in crisis and became a war zone after Iraq invaded Kuwait triggering the Gulf War which ended in 1991. The PKK, or the Kurdish Workers Party, a recognized terrorist organization operating mainly in the southeastern parts of Turkey instigated continual

²²⁸ Tekiner, 195/9.

²²⁹ Tekiner, 194. The agreement by UNESCO was signed by 152 countries recognizing that Ataturk was the "çaga damgasını vuran önder."

²³⁰ Hans-Lukas Kieser. "Introduction." In *Turkey Beyond Nationalism*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser. Pp. vii-xvii. New York: I. B. Tauris,2006, xii.

²³¹ Pinar Bilgin. "Turkey's changing security discourses: The challenge of globalization." *European Journal of Political Research* 44(2005): 175-201, Pg. 178.

violent clashes with the Turkish state.²³² Additionally, as Kleiser states, “Nationalist cohesion collapsed after 1999, with the economic crisis of 2001 playing an important role and thus opening the way for the reconfiguration of the political landscape in 2002.”²³³ Yet, the difficulties experienced only fueled the monument-building fury. Tekiner emphasizes that monument making became almost like an assemblyline activity, lacking aesthetics and style.²³⁴ This cookie-cutter influx of mass produced Atatürk monuments continued, as did the interest in constructing and changing the sites of the Gallipoli Peninsula into the present decade. According to the tour guide and the construction projects in progress in Gallipoli, it is almost certain that this trend will persist, although only time will tell what path the meaning of monuments will assume in the future. Yet, the following question must still be asked: How are the changes in the monuments reflected and understood by the public?

4.4 Pervasiveness into the present

Recollection is “an active, constructive process, not a simple matter of retrieving information.”²³⁵ Therefore, creating a unified narrative and ensuring that the ideal narrative be propagated throughout society is a complicated task. It is framed as identifying the Battle of Gallipoli as the first time the Turkish were fighting for themselves, setting the stage for the beginning of a national resistance struggle. It effectively provides the basis to build a nation, and the groundwork for individuals to establish emotional bonds of social belonging.²³⁶ These bonds are also critical in that

²³² However, it was not only the Kurdish rebels that were instigating attacks, the Turkish military has also targetted Kurdish civilians. For more details see: Bilgin Ayata and Deniz Yukseker. “A belated awakening: National and international responses to the internal displacement of Kurds in Turkey.” In *New Perspectives on Turkey*. No. 32 (Fall 2005): pp. 5-42.

²³³ Kieser, xvi.

²³⁴ Tekiner, 199.

²³⁵ Schwartz, 374.

²³⁶ Duncan S Bell. “Mythscapes: Memory, Mythology and National Identity.” In *British Journal of Sociology* 54, no. 1 (March 2003): pp. 64. He writes on Mythscapes and Memory, describing the formations that contribute to national identities.

they are recognized by others, creating boundaries between inside/outside, self/other, us/them “that define the topography of nationalist sentiment and topography.”²³⁷

The monuments of Canakkale have been instrumental in the the production of a certain set of discourses. Yet as Bodnar reiterates, it’s more than just mere manipulation that is needed to ensure the prevalence of a symbol.

To the extent that public memory originates in discourse or the presentation of divergent viewpoints, it is not simply manipulated. Discourse can simultaneously be a servant of and a hedge against hegemonic interests. To put it another way, manipulation and invention do not go far enough in explaining how certain symbols assume dominance in public memory.²³⁸

The symbol needs to have a history and be integrated into the historical narrative. The symbol also needs to have a connection to the individuals for which there should possess a pervasive meaning. Of course, the meanings of the monuments can change over time and evolve through generations. However, the meaning attached to the monument and the meaning within the public memory can be used by other groups besides the state hegemony.²³⁹

Media and broadcasting are integral to the shaping of public memory in the current age. Many commemorative events and news features are blasted into the homes of millions of viewers, reaching audiences that without television and radio broadcasting would be outside the influence of the state and the outside world. While September 11, 2001 was most definitely a ‘media spectacle’ as Geoffrey White describes it, the media element was critical to the mourning and remembrance/memorialization process.²⁴⁰ While the presence of extensive media outlets in 1915 was non-existent, the use of the monuments that have been constructed since do play a role in the media. That is, the Çanakkale Martyr’s Memorial has become a rather popular symbol in the nationalist circle. It is utilized in photos and

²³⁷ Bell, 64.

²³⁸ Bodnar, 19.

²³⁹ Alternative discourses also utilize the salient monuments and symbols. For example, some argue that those groups that have been termed ‘minorities’ by the state may also use their participation in Gallipoli as a claim to citizenship. This is an area much deserving of scholarly attention, as there has been very little published on this issue.

²⁴⁰ White, Geoffrey M. “National subjects: September 11 and Pearl Harbor.” *American Ethnologist* 31 no. 3 (2004): 293-310.

commercials as a representation of Turkish values and morals, and the sacrifices made to get to this point in the present. Even when travelling between cities by bus within Turkey, the personal televisions in the bus seats often feature a section that includes information about different cities. If one chooses to watch the informational video on ‘Çanakkale’, the story of the monuments and memorials receives the most attention. Aside from this small example, the monuments in Canakkale receive a significant amount of coverage throughout the year. The newspapers and history-oriented magazines always feature the Battle of Çanakkale (and often include its modern representations) around the 18th of March, or the anniversary of the naval battle. This date provides an opening for the myth of Çanakkale to be refreshed in the minds of the public at least one time each year.

4.5 Forms of Commemoration:

None of the days associated with Gallipoli are Turkish national holidays, but several of the dates that are considered important are still well-known by the public and celebrated accordingly. For example, on 18 March, the anniversary of the great Turkish naval victory during the Gallipoli campaign, there are rows and rows of banners commemorating the victory as far as the eye can see in many cities. In Istanbul, there are even commemorative ceremonies and all of the public squares and large intersections are covered with banners and posters from political parties and organizations across the political spectrum. With just this minor example, how can the regular inhabitant of the city forget the events of Çanakkale?

Additionally, commemoration is more than just the remembering of an event. Commemoration goes beyond the retrieval of basic information, it’s a means of safeguarding an ideal, making an ordinary event extraordinary, so as to encourage the representation of a set of fundamental values.²⁴¹ Another form of commemoration of an event is in the naming of institutions.²⁴² The main university in the Çanakkale area is

²⁴¹ Schwartz, 376.

²⁴² The politics of naming neighborhoods and streets was also a part of the nation-building process in the early Republic.

Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi, which was opened in 1992.²⁴³ As the university would like to incorporate the history and of the Battle of Çanakkale into the academic experience of the students at the university, there is an organization that plays an important role in achieving this goal. The Çanakkale Savaşları Araştırma Tanıtma Topluluğu (ÇŞATT) is one of the largest and most active clubs at Onsekiz Mart University (18th of March University) according to their current advisor, Niyazi Sezen. The club is split into several branches such as the Research Group, those in charge of upkeep for the website, a photograph group, etc. The student organization publishes magazines with articles written by the student members about issues related to the history of the Battles of Çanakkale, sponsors conferences and trips that encourage learning about Çanakkale and the continuing importance for Turkey. In addition, their website offers an extensive amount of information on the memorials and monuments of the Gallipoli Peninsula, as well as about the history of the war. So, what does the existence and success of this club tell us? The membership and participation in this university organization emphasizes how much the events of the Battle of Çanakkale resonate within the student body. However, it is not so surprising on the other hand considering the location of the university and the name of the institution.

For the Turkish Navy and the Turkish military establishment, 18 March is celebrated as a bayram or holiday. Every year on March 18, there are military commemoration ceremonies, especially for the success of the naval forces. The Turkish Navy even distributes a poster each year (*figure 4.1*). Not only for the victory, but it is also considered to be a remembrance of the martyrs. Each year, the Turkish Navy (*Türk Deniz Kuvvetleri*) salutes with a flag-raising ceremony. Additionally, there is often a ‘*geçit töreni*’, where naval vessels parade through the Dardanelles as a means of celebrating the victory, the memory and the *myth* (*figure 4.2*). Remembering the 18th of March this year, 2011, the head of the Turkish Navy, Admiral Uğur Yiğit, stated, “The Victory at Sea on 18 March was not only one of the most important events in Turkish military history but also in world history.”²⁴⁴ The message continues, “Every

²⁴³ The Canakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi website gives the history and basic founding information. < www.comu.edu.tr >.

²⁴⁴ Uğur Yiğit. “Denkom Oramiral Uğur Yiğit’in, 18 Mart Canakkale Deniz Zaferi’nin Yildonumu ve Şehitleri Anma Günü Nedeniyle Yayınlanmış Oldukları Mesaj.” *Türk Deniz Kuvvetleri*. 18 Mart 2011. <http://www.dzkk.tsk.tr/turkce/mesajlar/110318_canakkale_sehitleri.php>. “18

nation (*millet*) has certain important events that shape the course of its fate. For the Turkish nation (*ulus*) Çanakkale, the place where the spirit of struggle in our War of Liberation and the seeds of victory began to grow, is not simply about one battle or one place. For Turks, Çanakkale means resistance—it means a cry to rise up!”²⁴⁵

Also of interest here is a story from a friend who completed his mandatory military service in the Turkish Navy. Mehmet²⁴⁶ was assigned to work on a very active naval ship that was constantly on-the-go for the duration of his military service. During his tenure, with several trips at sea, he was able to see the internal naval celebrations of the Battle of Çanakkale. The 18 March victory is still praised and marked in a small commemoration ceremony on the ship, even though at the time, the ship was very far from Çanakkale. According to Mehmet, there was a special flag-raising ceremony, which included the raising of alphabetical naval flags in addition to the daily flag-raising routine, and moment of silence in honor of the victory and those lost during the battle. The 18 March festivities also included the screening of an informational film about the events of that day in 1915. Then, several weeks later, the naval ship to which Mehmet was assigned, passed through the Dardanelle Straits. He excitedly explained that they saw the “Dur Yolcu”²⁴⁷ sign and the Çanakkale Martyr’s Memorial from the Straits. The ship passed through during midday so the other soldiers were able to come to the deck to see the monument as well. According to his report, there were poems read by the soldiers commemorating the Battle of Gallipoli. This small example exemplifies that Çanakkale is still a potent symbol for the armed forces, which is one of the most important institutions of the state apparatus in Turkey.

Mart Deniz Zaferi, sadece Türk harp tarihinin değil, dünya tarihinin de en önemli sahnelerinde biridir.”

²⁴⁵ Yigit, http://www.dzkk.tsk.tr/turkce/mesajlar/110318_canakkale_sehitleri.php. “Her milletin kaderini belirleyen önemli olaylar vardır. Kurtuluş savaşımızın mücadele ruhunu ve zafer tohumlarının yeşerdiği Çanakkale, Türk ulusu için sadece bir savaş ya da bir bölgeyi ifade etmez. Türkler için Çanakkale, bir diriliş demek, bir haykiriş demektir.”

²⁴⁶ Name anonymized to preserve privacy.

²⁴⁷ The “Dur Yolcu” sign was created in 1960 by a soldier completing his military service at the time. The etching on the ground is a quatrain from Necmettin Halil Onan’s poem. Information from Goncu and Aldogan, 147.

Figure 4.1: Posters from the Turkish Navy's website for the 18 March celebrations.
March 2010.



**18 MART'TA DONANMA
ÇANAKKALE BOĞAZINDA ŞEHİTLERİ SELAMLİYOR**

14:30 - 15:45

GÜÇLÜ ORDU GÜÇLÜ TÜRKİYE

TÜRK SİLAHLI KUVVETLERİ

Photos from the website of Turk Deniz Kuvvetleri.



**ŞEHİDİM,
SAYENDE YAŞANACAK VATANIMIZ,
GURURLANACAK TARİHİMİZ VAR.**

**18 MART ŞEHİTLER GÜNÜ
GÜÇLÜ ORDU GÜÇLÜ TÜRKİYE**

Photos from the website of Turk Deniz Kuvvetleri. <http://www.dzkk.tsk.tr/turkce/ANMAKUTLAMA.php>
(March 2011)

Besides these ceremonies dominated by the armed forces, the civilian government also convenes ceremonies for the remembrance and honor of the Battle of Çanakkale. The Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan attended the 96th Anniversary Commemoration ceremony in Canakkale on 18 March 2011. Many other dignitaries of the government (ministers of government ministries, local government officials (like the governor), as well as a few Australian government representatives were in attendance.²⁴⁸ Like the 95th Anniversary ceremony, there was a parade of naval vessels and military helicopters with acrobats performing in the air.²⁴⁹ The celebration of the military victory and the remembrance ceremonies are incredibly militaristic (emphasizing strength), with the grand show of naval power, helicopters and air acrobatics.

The 93rd Anniversary Ceremony commemorating the ANZAC landings on the Gallipoli Peninsula also featured Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Prime Minister/AKP) and his wife. Erdoğan stated that the Battle of Çanakkale is a heroic epic that was an important step toward the War of Liberation and the establishment of the Republic.²⁵⁰ Here, the Battles of Çanakkale are used as a starting point that results in the Republic. Erdoğan refers to the ‘spirit of Gallipoli’ which is an unshakeable love of the Turkish homeland and is the strength and richness of the Turks.²⁵¹ Çanakkale is claimed to be a symbol of the unity and the brotherhood of the Turks.

Three years later at the 96th Anniversary (2011) of the 18th of March naval victory, the AKP Provincial Chairman of the Yenimahalle, a part of Ankara, released a statement celebrating the nation and its humble beginnings with the Battle of Gallipoli. It was a message of unification and pride in the sacrifice of the soldiers lost. It was as a unification of all that fought in the battle, emphasizing the distant lands from which the

²⁴⁸ Information gathered from the *Gelibolu Yarımadası Tarihi Milli Parkı* website at:http://www.gelibolutarihimilliparki.gov.tr/GYTMP/AnaSayfa/resimliHaber/11-0321/%C3%87ANAKKALE_ZAFER%C4%B0%E2%80%99N%C4%B0N_96_YIL_D%C3%96N%C3%9CM%C3%9C_KUTLANDI.aspx?sflang=tr.

²⁴⁹ See above mentioned website/press release.

²⁵⁰ “Çanakkale Birlik ve Beraberliğin Sembolüdür.” Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi. 18 March 2008. <<http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/canakkale-birlik-ve-beraberligin-semboludur/788>>.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Mehmetçik originated and their different races.²⁵² This point is critical when considering the alternative discourses to the typical nationalist one that excludes the presence and contributions of anyone but “the Turks”.²⁵³ As the AKP has been the political party in power, they have the advantage in making appearances and claiming attention for their nationalist purposes. This creates a blur in the line between what is considered the word of the state versus the party in power, as the representative for both is the same person from the same political party. Thus, the nationalist discourse of the party permeates that of the state.

The other main opposition party, the CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/Republican People’s Party) also recognized the importance of the Battles of Çanakkale, however commemorated the event by visiting Koca Seyit’s grave in Balıkesir for the 96th Anniversary of the 18 March naval victory. The difference in discourse is remarkable, as Kiliçdaroğlu focuses more on the actions and meanings understood from the heroic actions of Mustafa Kemal. Compared to the AKP’s messages in the recent years, the CHP’s messages are rallying behind the leadership of Mustafa Kemal and the new path that Çanakkale initiated for the Turkish Republic, and are dedicated less to messages of unification.

Another yearly commemoration is held between the 24th and 25th of April. Interestingly enough, this is the commemoration of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli. This date is generally understood as a day of remembrance for the Australian and New Zealand forces, however has become integrated into the Turkish commemoration calendar. In 2010, 24 April was also celebrated with a salute and a parade of naval vessels through the Straits for the 95th anniversary of the battle.²⁵⁴ The poster published on the Turkish Navy’s website is also rather indicative of the importance of the symbols that the monuments have become (again, refer to *figure 4.2*). On this 95th commemoration event advertisement poster, the central feature is the Çanakkale Martyr’s Memorial. In the foreground are naval ships maneuvering through the calm

²⁵² Hamdi Balaban. “Canakkale Zaferi 96 Yil Kutlama Mesaji.” *AK Partisi: Yenimahalle*. 18 Mart 2011. <<http://www.akpartiyenimahalle.com/?p=653>>.

²⁵³ Alternative discourses of the ‘ethno-religious’ others is missing from the Turkish historiography. There has been little mention and little academic work on the alternative discourses that may exist.

²⁵⁴ See poster of the Turkish Navy announcing the event. Turk Deniz Kuvvetleri. 23 April 2010. <http://www.dzkk.tsk.tr/turkce/images/anmakutlama/23_nisan_resmi_gecit.jpg>.

blue seas, and the flag marked jets and a military helicopter flying over the monument. In bold letters at the bottom of the poster are the words: ‘Strong Military, Strong Turkey’.²⁵⁵

Figure 4.2: Poster from the Turkish Navy’s website advertising Geçit Töreni



Photo from Turk Deniz Kuvvetleri website

The same dates (24th and 25th of April) mark the pilgrimage of many Australian and New Zealand visitors exploring the lands where their forefathers fought as members of the the independent states of Australia and New Zealand. The commemoration usually includes representatives from all sides of the war, but emphasizes the peace that is to be shared. The site is no longer viewed at one of carnage, but one of peace. One rather nationalist Turkish text, published by Boğaziçi Yayınları states “Representatives of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Germany, France, India, Great Britian and South Africa in front of the memorial [Çanakkale Martyr’s Memorial] after the service. This time the leaders came armed with wreaths and respect, not cannons and rifles.”²⁵⁶

During our trip to the Gallipoli Peninsula to tour the memorials and monuments, the preparations for the ANZAC day commemoration ceremonies were taking place. The platforms and stadium-like seating was erected in the areas where ceremonies were to be held. The normally deserted areas were prepared for the mass of people that was about to surge onto the cliffs. There were tour buses full of Australian and New

²⁵⁵ ‘Guçlu Ordu, Guçlu Türkiye.’

²⁵⁶ *Kugu'nun Son Otusu*, 237.

Zealander tourists visiting the sites, who would probably be taking part in the commemoration ceremonies that followed a few days later. The most interesting part of this, is that the Turkish and the ANZAC both participate in the commemoration together. While there are still exclusively Turkish commemorative events, the battlefields of Gallipoli went from being an area of harsh fighting to an area marking shared difficult experiences and similar losses with similar causes. That is to say, the ANZAC troops were a part of the British Imperial forces, but it was the first time that they had been seen as the military force of an independent nation. For Turkey, the Ottoman Empire was about to crumble and this was the first battle not of Ottomans, but during the transformation into Turks.

4.6 Battlefield Tourism

As briefly mentioned before, battlefield tourism is an integral part of spreading a particular message regarding the monuments and memorials. What role would monuments and memorials play if no one goes to see them?

Through the myth which came to surround it, the war experience was sanctified. Yet at the same time, the war was confronted and absorbed in a radically different way, by being trivialized through its association with objects of daily life, popular theater, or battlefield tourism. Here the war experience could be distorted and manipulated at will.²⁵⁷

Just as Mosse argues in the above quote, the Çanakkale War experience is manipulated for divergent ends [or by different interest groups]. The distortions can be found in the presence of the constant references to Çanakkale, and to the use of the event in the present by various groups, such as the State, political parties, and others to elicit particular feelings or make reference to possessing certain qualities. So, how are the monuments and memorials manipulated? Part of the process begins with schoolchildren who are bussed to the sites and given guided tours at a young age. While the tours of the Gallipoli Peninsula are not mandatory activities in which all schools must participate, the tours are strongly encouraged.²⁵⁸ Of course, on these trips, the travel

²⁵⁷ Mosse, George L. *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, page 7.

²⁵⁸ Halil Berktaş, Personal communication.

itinerary is set, and the children are told the nationalist narrative, so as to inspire the pride of nation in the young students.²⁵⁹ In this way, the students are able to associate the event in their history books with a place, with an actual experience and a large set of visuals. The education of the young schoolchildren in this way also contributes to the spread of the myth that is emphasized. The education of all students in Turkey is regulated by the National Ministry of Education, and thus the version of history taught is standardized. Critical to the equation is the sheer number of schoolchildren that are brought to Çanakkale from the four corners of the country.²⁶⁰ Visiting Çanakkale and the war memorial and monuments associated with it is almost like a rite of passage for the citizens of Turkey, as it serves as a similar pilgrimage for the younger relatives of the ANZAC forces who make their annual pilgrimages to Canakkale in remembrance of their ancestors who landed on the beaches on the 25th of April. Yet, one is forced to ask, for the schoolchild, are these sites really a place of mourning, a place of endurance and victory, or something else completely?

War monuments, commemorating the fallen, symbolized the strength and manliness of the nation's youth and provided an example for other generations to follow. The cult served as a reminder of the glory and challenge of war even in peacetime.²⁶¹

Here again, the memory that is created of the site during this touristic visits becomes one of strength and manliness. Not only do the school sponsored battlefield visits encourage a particular view of history, but they also single out a particular part of the population. Gender becomes a critical aspect of the tourism experience. The Battle of Gallipoli is a man's story, one from which women are absent. The only mention of women is their work in the fields and villages or as nurses, supporting the war effort in these domestic tasks as loyal auxiliaries. Although, it may not seem so outright, the expected gender roles of the Turkish citizenry are definitely passed on to the youth subliminally.

²⁵⁹ This instilled pride of the students can be conceptualized as nationalism as a civic religion, according to Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 155.

²⁶⁰ While asking a war buff and professor at Onsekiz Mart University, he quoted that there were around 80,000 students that are brought to the site on bus tours each year. While the number may not be the most accurate, there is the impression of large groups of students that are bussed to the sites each year.

²⁶¹ Mosse, 35.

Mosse argues that the battlefield tourism contributes to the trivialization of the event. The visitors to these battlefields and the trenches do not reenact the events, but they stay in comfortable hotels and buy souvenirs²⁶², which are available in the parking lots or at the entrance of every memorial or monument (*figure 4.3*). This trivialization reflects the similar sentiments that Aylin Tekiner cites as when she discusses the negative impact of the monument production craze that she predicts will end in ‘statuephobia’. The production and consumption of commemorative kitsch brings the memorials and the memories associated with them into the private sphere.²⁶³ What previously stood as a public site for consumption, enters the private home solidifying the place of the event and the given political attachments within the personal sphere.²⁶⁴

The battlefield itself became familiar as a tourist attraction: there was surely a sadness, but the horror must have been numbed by the amenities of the visit and the cemeteries themselves, projecting rest, resurrection, and camaraderie, would have made such numbing easier. But then the landscape of the battlefields had also been tidied up: peaceful nature had reclaimed some of the land, farming had resumed, and villages had been rebuilt. The trenches were cleaned or reconstructed with stairways and ropes for tourists to hold onto—as they can still be visited today. The scars of war were hidden...²⁶⁵

These manipulations to the site, the cleaning and making it tourist-friendly distorts the meaning of war that the tourists take with them after their visits. While the events may have happened at a particular place, the surroundings are in a completely different form, a form that causes the visitor to place the war/battle in a different frame than one would have viewed if the visitor had seen the same location less than 100 years before. It is important to note that the beautiful flowers, and the lovely green fields were missing during the war. They were quite the contrary....smelly, dirty, and the area full of flies.

²⁶² Mosse, 155.

²⁶³ Esra Özyürek, *Miniaturizing Atatürk*. Özyürek argues that with the increased commodification of the Atatürk, and as regular citizens are able to buy Atatürk representations and bring them into their homes, thus breaking the previous division between the public and the private.

²⁶⁴ This is similar to the arguments that Esra Ozyurek make in the Introduction of her book *Nostalgia for the Modern*.

²⁶⁵ Mosse, 155.

Figure 4.3: Souvenir stands at the sites/in the parking lots.



Photo by author.

Even though the sites have become calm creating an image that starkly contrasts the setting during the actual wartime, there is a benefit in battlefield tourism for the state. The memorials give the public ‘emotion-laden landscapes inhabited by a nation’s dead’ establishing an actual place where individuals can connect their life with ‘the larger, imagined sweep of national or world events’.²⁶⁶ It provides the visitor with an experience where the place becomes more real from standing at the physical location, and connects the personal with the historical narrative.²⁶⁷ For our study of the Turkish state, this is essential in ensuring that the desired myth of Çanakkale is carried into the next generation.

Municipalities also sponsor free or subsidized trips of Gallipoli for their residents. The following is a quote of Mustafa Unlu of Yeşildağ Belediyesi, who recently sponsored a trip to Çanakkale for the citizens of the municipality: “About forty-five citizens participate in the tour. Our goal is to show our fellow citizens where their ancestors fell defending their homeland and to have them visit their graves and pray for them. These tours are really meaningful and fill our visitors with a variety of emotions, so we plan on continuing them in the years ahead.” on the Haber 3 website.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ White, 299.

²⁶⁷ White, 299.

²⁶⁸ “Yesildag Belediyesinden Canakkale Gezisi.” *Haber 3*, 11 June 2011. <<http://www.haber3.com/yesildag-belediyesinden-canakkale-gezisi-888544h.htm>>. "Geziye yaklaşık 45 vatandaşımız katılıyor. Amacımız, vatandaşlarımızın, atalarının vatanını korumak için şehit düştüğü toprakları görmesi, mezarlıklarını ziyaret ederek onlara dua etmesidir. Oldukça anlam ifade eden ve farklı duygular yaşatan bu tür gezileri önümüzdeki yıllarda da devam ettirmeyi planlıyoruz"

Municipalities across the country participate in this type of battlefield tourism in an attempt to attain a piece of the official Turkish nationalist ideology.

Another municipality in Istanbul, Zeytinburnu Belediyesi has sponsored many trips, claiming to have taken more than 120,000 people to Çanakkale to see the battlefields and memorials (and this was claimed in 2008, so the number must be much higher by now).²⁶⁹ Zeytinburnu Belediyesi has been prolific in their production of materials on Çanakkale, as they produced a documentary *Son Kale, Çanakkale* and a book *Çanakkale İzlenimleri*. The book is composed of photos taken of the monuments and some of them even include the tourists with the monuments. There is very little information in the text about the monuments and their history; it's merely a picture book of random monuments with some of the visitors. Along with the monuments, there are quotations from those that attended the tours discussing their feelings and appreciation for the experience.²⁷⁰ Clearly, the historical analysis is not important here, rather it is just the reactions that the images receive that is important. Additionally, the comments that are listed often do not match with the photo that is sharing the page. Some of the comments possess a tone of admiration, like that of a religious idol. "Everybody gets quite emotional walking on the same ground that Atatürk did."²⁷¹ Or another is example: "I realized once again how much sacrifice is required to have your own homeland."²⁷² The reaction of these people to the trips is precisely that notion of nationalism as state religion that was discussed earlier. The nationalist feelings evoked or at least the impression of nationalist sentiment that is shared within the text to be propogated throughout the population remembers the events as a testament to what the state imagines for the nation, a unified nation with loyal citizens, ready to take up arms against the invaders should there ever be another need. "I must say that I would have

²⁶⁹ "Zeytinburnu Belediyesi 20 bin Kişiyi Çanakkale'ye Götürecek," *Haber 34*. 17 March 2008. <<http://www.haber34.com/zeytinburnu-belediyesi-20-bin-kisiyi-canakkaleye-goturecek-3321-haberi.html>>.

²⁷⁰ The lack of substantial information in the text shows the point that the actual history is not what is important.

²⁷¹ Aydın, Murat, ed. *Canakkale İzlenimleri*. Istanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi, 2004. (Quote of Filiz Tibilli), page 15. "Atatürk'un ayak basmış olduğu yerlere bizlerinde ayak basması gerçekten duygulanılacak bir şeydir."

²⁷² *Canakkale İzlenimleri*, (Quote of Mustafa Kurt) page 23. "Bir kez daha vatan sahibi olmanın ne kadar büyük fedakarlıklar getirdiğini anladım."

really liked to be at that battle too. I would have really liked to die for the sake of my homeland, just like those people, those young people.”²⁷³

The trips to the Battlefields of Gallipoli are not just tours for schoolchildren and municipalities, but often times are sponsored by political parties. Generally, it's a specific branch of the party like the women's or youth branches of the party that sponsor trips. As our tour guide of the Gallipoli Peninsula mentioned, it has been in the past 10 years or so that has marked the rejuvenated interest in the monument trips. This is certainly of interest considering that the political parties are now aiming to take a piece of the Çanakkale story.

The Turkish case of sites of commemoration that have assumed greater roles than just the remembrance of the martyrs, is just another example of a state instrumentalizing an event or symbol for the establishment of a particular national imaginary. For example, in Egypt, the state also employed similar tactics.

Sites of commemoration not only defined the accomplishments and goals of Egyptian nationalism for the citizenry; they were also an indispensable instrument in the reality of their imagined national community. Monuments, rituals, and narratives of commemoration gave body and substance to this community, populating it with memorable events and individual exemplars. The episodes from the past that sites of commemoration exalted anchored the nation in specific, tangible and observable referents that could be internalized by contemporary Egyptians.²⁷⁴

Ultimately, the discourses of Canakkale are not just used by the state, but also by political parties and other organizations with political interests. Obviously, the state does take an active role in the controlling the version of the Gallipoli story that permeates society, through the control of the sites by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, as well as through the mandatory history education that is outlined by the National Ministry of Education. However, political parties have also come to use Canakkale and sponsored trips to the site to reclaim the event as their own. After the AKP (Adalet Kalkina Partisi/Justice and Development Party) began sponsoring these

²⁷³ *Çanakkale İzlenimleri*, (Quote of Yavuz Selim Demirbas) page 132.

“Gerçekten şunu söylemek istiyorumki ben de o savaşta olmayı çok isterdim. O insanlar gibi o genç insanlar gibi vatanım uğuruna olmayı çok isterdim.”

²⁷⁴ Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski. *Commemorating the Nation: Collective Memory, Public Commemoration, and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Egypt*, Chicago: Middle East Documentation Center, 2004, 306.

events, the other political parties followed as the use of the site and the trips became salient in the public.

Although there are different uses and discourses employed around the Battle of Çanakkale, there are also some similarities. The undisputable usage of Çanakkale includes the notions of bravery and self-sacrifice. There is also a commonality in the use of Mustafa Kemal's heroic feats, although the degree to which his accomplishments are cited varies. Additionally, the competing nationalisms are settled on the belief that the Çanakkale was the door toward the creation of the Republic. The monuments, memorials and cemeteries merely reflect the importance that is attributed to the event by various institutions of the state.

5. CONCLUSION

The monuments at Çanakkale, like many monuments tell a story; it is a story that is both reminiscent of the past and idealized for the future. These stories that the monuments tell are not necessarily historically accurate, but expound upon a specific event adding and taking where necessary to perpetuate the desired message. Through the new lens of a monument, the view of Gallipoli as a historical event is obscured, and one must ask what happens in this conversion from historical event to aesthetical representation, this case, a monument. “The placement of monuments and icons of the nation becomes one of the essential means through which the national ideology finds material presence and authority in public life.”²⁷⁵

Turkish nationalism, created through persistent work and evolution has undergone a transformation at times becoming the religion of the state or sometimes even political parties. For different political parties and different actors, the same event carries a slightly different meaning, but each attributing some importance. What then, is it that brings different groups with different backgrounds to congregate around the same sacred ground? Perhaps the historical narrative that has been popularized initially by the state has become so ingrained on the society that it is guaranteed to trigger emotion. As has been previously argued, the message of Çanakkale is one that changes according to who is using it and over time. As the religion of the state, the nationalism needs to unite the community while imposing a set of ideologies that become engrained on society.

As this thesis has tried to argue, the constantly changing memorial sites are evidence of the changing message of Çanakkale. Initially, monuments built after the First World War were built as a means of public mourning for those who lost sons, husbands, brothers and relatives in the war. However, more than 95 years have passed and monument construction efforts continue and even flourish. Obviously, the

²⁷⁵ Cinar, Alev. *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey*. 100.

monuments no longer serve the purpose of relieving the grief, but serve a more lofty purpose of uniting and educating the nation.²⁷⁶ The Battle of Çanakkale has become a myth, and as a part of that myth has established itself into the national imaginary as the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Therefore, the gigantic looming Abide and the sprawling cemetery become the relics to visit that are representatives of the humble beginnings.

Museums provide the showcase for art exhibitions and collections – and often national and/or civilizational narratives. They organize and display art in a certain way that either creates a story or tells the story from an angle. Parts of the story are emphasized, and parts of the story are forgotten adapting the elicited reactions to a particular end. The museum is the lens through which the object is seen. A similar framework applies to the monuments and memorial sites that are constructed and developed by the state or special interests. The monuments and memorial sites must be viewed critically understanding that the obelisks, statues, monoliths and symbolic cemeteries were not constructed arbitrarily. Each was built with a motive and has a role in the overall discourse.

Part of this role is to keep the memories alive beyond the life span of the survivors. The marble or stone structures erected can outlive any human, solidifying a particular view with an object that constantly exudes similar meaning. Even though Adrian Forty questions whether material objects can take the place of a memory, the Turkish nation state has made a valiant attempt to disprove this hypothesis.²⁷⁷ It is this fear of forgetting that motivates the Turkish state to construct monuments and memorials, so that the memory of the Battle of Gallipoli stays alive in the minds of the younger generations and the generations to come. By analyzing the Çanakkale Martyr's Memorial, one quickly realizes that the site is constantly changing, almost like a

²⁷⁶ Klaus Kreiser. "War Memorials and Cemeteries in Turkey." *The First World War as Remembered in the Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean*, edited by Olaf Farschid, Manfred Kropp and Stephan Dahne, 183-201. Beirut: Orient-Institute, 2006, page 193. Kreiser explicitly states that the monuments are a form of national education, as the monuments work as a means of enforcing a particular set of ideologies.

²⁷⁷ Forty, Adrian. "Introduction." In *The Art of Forgetting*. Edited by Adrian Forty and Susanne Kuechler, pp. 1-18. New York: Berg, 1999., page 4. Adrian Forty furthers the idea that material objects cannot necessarily take the place of a mental form of memory, questioning whether an event dies in memory when the survivors of the given event dies.

museum exhibit designed to attract attention. Is this effort to keep the site changing, like museum exhibits, part of an effort to keep the ‘desired’ memory of the Battle of Gallipoli alive? Are these changes the preventative measures of the state against ‘forgetting’? Forty argues that the battle against forgetting is not only expensive (with expenditure in the upkeep and opening of museums, memorials, information technology and archives), but also challenging.²⁷⁸ Since the battlefields of Gallipoli are considered to be among the most important cultural heritage sites in Turkey and are said to represent many of the values on which the nation is supposedly based, the narratives behind the battles become necessary in determining which values are esteemed, and which particular events within the larger whole are emphasized.

The tensions of Gallipoli as a representation. Despite the efforts of the state to spread a particular view of history and emphasize the events of Gallipoli, significant tensions still present themselves in their notable absence. As discussed earlier, the tension between the handling of the internal and external threats. The non-Turk, non-Muslim minorities were seen as a threat to the composition of the empire, just as the Allied invaders were. However, only the one front of battle is emphasized, while the other is overlooked. This point leads to the recognition of silences of alternative histories. Through the transition from Ottoman to Turkish and the assimilation to Turkishness, pre-emptive efforts were made to prevent alternative discourses. This corresponds with the emphasis on certain groups who participated in the war efforts, and the forced silences of others like minorities and women. Women are noticeably underrepresented in the monuments and memorials, and their participation is rarely recognized.

Another significant tension to be mentioned is the representation of the areas memorialized. Once places of carnage between fierce enemies, the battlefields have now become areas of memorialization and peace among equals. Near the large monuments to the Turkish efforts, there is typically some type of smaller monument noting the equality or peaceful notions toward those who were previously considered enemies.

Monuments and the war experience. Mosse’s succinct description of the war experience and its transformation nicely sums up the Turkish war experience in

²⁷⁸ Forty, 7.

general, but also fits within the context of how monuments are used within this manipulation of the war experience.

The reality of the war experience came to be transformed into what one might call the Myth of the War Experience, which looked back upon the war as a meaningful and even sacred event...The Myth of the War Experience was designed to mask war and to legitimize the war experience; it was meant to displace the reality of war. The memory of the war was refashioned into a sacred experience which provided the nation with a new depth of religious feeling, putting at its disposal ever-present saints and martyrs, places of worship, and a heritage to emulate.²⁷⁹

It is this myth that the Turkish state aims to perpetuate to the future generations of young Turkish citizens. The monuments on the Gallipoli Peninsula have loaded meanings that transform and evolve with time and the constantly changing political climate. The monuments, memorials and symbolic cemeteries should be evaluated in their historical context to fully grasp the true meanings that affect the formation of Turkish nationalist ideologies.

²⁷⁹ Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 7.

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