

PETER HART. *Gallipoli*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. 544. \$34.95 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2013.98

Popular memory often romanticizes the Gallipoli campaign of 1915 as a tragic near miss by the Allies, who were attempting to knock the Ottoman Empire out of the First World War. Thanks to heroic action by the Australian and New Zealand Corps (ANZACS), the British supposedly came close to capturing the Gallipoli Peninsula, key to the Straits and Constantinople, despite superior numbers of Turkish troops and machine guns. Sadly, the odds against them were too great, and they could not take advantage of this alternative route to victory at a time when the Western Front was locked in stalemate.

Peter Hart is having none of this. In *Gallipoli*, the oral historian of Britain's Imperial War Museum (who is also a tour guide at the Gallipoli battlefield itself) pulls no punches in his argument that "Gallipoli was damned before it began" and ended in catastrophe (460). His book provides a readable and vivid overview of the campaign from planning to evacuation, focusing on the personal accounts of those involved.

Throughout this volume, Hart stresses that the campaign was not a good idea poorly executed; it was doomed from the start. First, an attack on the Ottoman Empire made no strategic sense. Britain's War Council—and especially First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill, who promoted the "Eastern" strategy of a Dardanelles expedition—should have understood that the Allies could only win the war by stopping Germany on the Western Front. Defeating Turkey would have made no difference to that war of attrition. Second, the War Council's casual assumption that the Turks would be incapable of resistance meant that Britain gave only limited resources to the campaign. This was convenient, because Britain had few resources available in 1915 anyway. As a result, outdated ships made for an ineffective opening naval attack against Turkish fortifications, and the ground troops who arrived later lacked sufficient artillery, munitions, and supplies, not to mention medical services. Third, compounding these original difficulties, the campaign suffered from the leadership of General Sir Ian Hamilton, whom Hart excoriates for incompetence and fantastical optimism. Hamilton's operational planning was inept, and his offensives, particularly the late summer attacks of 1915, sent men to die for useless objectives. Hart praises the courage and fighting spirit of the allied troops but stresses that they did not have the strategy, logistical support, or leadership they deserved.

Much of this argument is not especially new for historians; most recently, Robin Prior's *Gallipoli: The End of the Myth* (2009) made a similar case. However, Hart does offer welcome additions to the story of the campaign. He brings new attention to the usually overlooked French forces at Gallipoli, quoting liberally from their eyewitness accounts. He emphasizes their valuable contributions to operations, especially with artillery support, even though they held a difficult position on the Asiatic side of the Straits. Hart also takes care to point out that, for all their problems, the Allies did not just beat themselves—the Turks beat them. He includes information from and about Turkish officers and men, noting that their training, fighting skills, and solid leadership—not simply greater numbers and machine guns—led them to victory at Gallipoli.

Hart's expertise in oral histories gives the book its particular strength: its incorporation of oral histories and written memoirs from soldiers and sailors of all ranks. In their own words, usually given in long block quotations, they describe the many experiences of war. Taken within the narrative of plans and battles and evacuation, these personal accounts make readers feel the men's confusion, fear, determination, or exhaustion. We see their ingenuity and gallows humor, along with both their high hopes and their disillusionment. Evocative photos from the Imperial War Museum archives further illuminate the human beings at the heart of the battles.

Hart wraps up his argument by debunking common myths about Gallipoli. For example, while acknowledging the importance of the ANZAC Corps, he notes that they were secondary to the campaign. More British and French troops participated (not to mention Indian troops), and they, not the ANZACs, carried on the main effort at Helles. The real legacy of the ANZAC effort was the sense of comradeship and military competence that provided a foundation for Australian and New Zealand national identity in years to come. Likewise, Hart cautions against making too much of the admittedly impressive Turkish win, often seen as central in the national myth, running from Mustafa Kemal on the peninsula through the founding of independent Turkey. The fact was that the Turks *did* lose the war, and the Ottoman Empire collapsed completely. Finally and most important, Hart counters what he calls the British myth, which celebrates the military achievement of the landings at Gallipoli, focusing on heroic soldiers fighting against huge odds, but ignores the fact that the Allies lost. The genuinely heroic soldiers were failed by British leadership in London, which sent them on a useless mission, and British leadership on the ground, where Hamilton and others made unrealistic operational plans and missed tactical opportunities.

*Gallipoli* does not include a bibliography, which would have been helpful, given the extensive literature on the campaign and Hart's use of new archival material. The volume seems to cite mostly primary sources, either found in archives or quoted in secondary sources, which befits its focus on personal accounts but leaves the reader wondering about its engagement with the work of other scholars. Additional examination of sources, in particular from or about other members of the War Council (besides Churchill and Kitchener) might give more depth to the picture of their decision making in regard to the Dardanelles plan. If they are collectively to blame for sending thousands of men on a "doomed expedition" (458), as Hart writes, they would benefit from more comprehensive attention.

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RICHARD HUZZEY. *Freedom Burning: Anti-slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012. Pp. 312. \$29.95 (cloth).  
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In *Freedom Burning*, Richard Huzzey launches a provocative and beautifully written statement of the importance of antislavery as the motive force of British imperial policy and expansion. His study spans not only an extraordinarily ambitious range of imperial sites, from the West Indies to West Africa and East Africa, but also an extended time period, running the length of the nineteenth century. The book thus connects colony with metropole and the emancipation period with the race for Africa. Huzzey is extremely subtle in drawing out the complexities under the umbrella of antislavery, although if antislavery could support, as he shows it did, diametrically opposed policy positions on sugar duties, on the forcible suppression of the slave trade, on colonial expansion in Africa, and even on tolerance of local slavery, then there may be a basis for questioning how useful it is as a historical category. It was hegemonic (it certainly precluded the public and perhaps even personal espousal of a proslavery position by slave owners as early as the 1820s), and that recognition is important, but to what extent does it explain the paths taken and not taken by the imperial British state? The status of "antislavery nation" (19) was not a necessary, let alone sufficient, condition for other European powers in the scramble for Africa, who were pretty skeptical of claims for British exceptionalism, as the book reports without really responding to their more jaundiced readings of Britain's international conduct.

The book fits (unannounced) into a long-running controversy that has pitted Eric Williams and his followers against David Brion Davies, Seymour Drescher, David Eltis, and others.