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ANZAC Battlefield

A Gallipoli Landscape of War and Memory

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ANZAC Battlefield is the product of a five year (2010-2014) tri-national (Australia, Turkey, NZ) interdisciplinary field survey of the Anzac Area at Gallipoli. The survey grew out of concern about roading development at Anzac Cove to cater for growing numbers of visitors, and a joint Australian-Turkish survey programme was developed to document and understand the archaeology of the area. New Zealand joined the project, with the sole representative being Ian McGibbon from the Ministry of Culture and Heritage. Ian provided an overview of this survey in his paper in the June 2016 issue of AINZ.

In these centenary years of the First World War there is vast and growing literature covering many aspects of the conflict, most of it from a British perspective, but there is a notable presence of a New Zealand voice. Some of this literature describes, some explains and some questions (for example, Eldredd-Grigg 2010; McGibbon 2014). Archaeology has had its say, and stories regularly find their way into the popular media: the latest being the discovery and identification in Belgium of the body of Aucklander Captain Henry Walker who was killed in the Second Battle of Ypres in 1915 (*NZ Herald* 30 August 2016).

So how does *ANZAC Battlefield* fare in this somewhat crowded market? It is not a coffee-table book of rediscovered WWI photos or a simple archaeological survey of a conflict landscape. It is a detailed account of one small area of the Gallipoli landscape (the survey area being strictly delineated by the Anzac Area as defined in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne), and provides not just an account of the conflict and its archaeology, but looks back to the more ancient history and archaeology of the area and forward to the memorialisation of this landscape from immediately after the Allied withdrawal on 20 December 1916 until the present day. It also considers the battlefield from both the Allied and Ottoman perspectives, and uses the detailed series of maps of the area made by the Ottoman Brigadier Mehmet Sevki Pasha immediately after the Allied withdrawal as a basis for interpreting the archaeological features visible today.

In any study that claims to be archaeological, place and artefacts must take a central role. There are some excellent photographs and maps of trenches then

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and now, and the detailed text describes how the landscape developed incrementally during the campaign as each side jostled for position. GPS plots of archaeological features visible today are overlain on the Sevki Pasha maps as a way of interpreting the role of those features in the landscape. The artefact section considers the fragmentary material that is still scattered across the battlefield, and references the influential *A History of the World in 100 Objects* (MacGregor 2010 & BBC Radio) that has inspired numerous studies of object histories, where the artefact lies at the centre of a wider narrative about human history and experience. In the case of Gallipoli, barbed wire, ordnance, food and water defined much of the daily lives of the soldiers on both sides of the lines, and these are amply discussed and illustrated.

For me probably the most interesting part was the account of the aftermath and the memorialisation of the place. Whether or not one ascribes to the idea that New Zealand's modern identity was born at Gallipoli, it is undeniable that it was an important event and has continued to hold a fascination down through the generations. As Chapter 9 discusses, the fate of the war cemeteries was a concern before the Allies even withdrew, and has continued to drive New Zealand and Australian involvement in the area. And this is where we started: this concern continues and led to the current book.

I did find the maps a little difficult to assimilate: there is little to tie all of the archaeological survey detail together, and this detail is mostly presented overlain on the Sevki Pasha maps. It would have been nice to have stitched it all together in clear single map of the modern archaeological landscape. But my main criticism is almost churlish: the lack of NZ involvement in the project. Ian McGibbon is a respected war historian, but the apparent lack of interest of the NZ government in sending a larger contingent is to be regretted. Otherwise this is a valuable addition to the literature that has assimilated a vast amount of primary historical and archaeological data to create a fine-grained account of one of New Zealand's key overseas battlefields.

Peter Petchey

References

- Eldredd-Grigg, S. (2010) *The Great Wrong War. New Zealand Society in WWI*. Random House.
- McGibbon, I. (2014) *Gallipoli: A Guide to New Zealand Battlefields and Memorials*. Penguin Books, Auckland.
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