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Archaeology at Gallipoli in 1915

The focus of this paper is not battlefield archaeology, but archaeology in battle, and what meanings can be drawn from some chance meetings with antiquity in the course of the Gallipoli campaign. Our task will be to examine some of the direct encounters with the physical remains of Greek and Roman antiquity during the course of the fighting in Turkey in 1915. As we will see, some of these finds are epigraphical in nature, a field in which Michael Osborne is a world leader, but in which I can claim no expertise at all. Nonetheless, I do hope that what follows is of interest both to him personally, and also enhances the broader study of inscriptions and archaeology for which Michael has done so much.

The main argument to be put is that the various archaeological activities at Cape Helles by the French and the British in 1915 offer us a profound sense of the repeated calamities of human existence within the different layers uncovered. It is war that defined the Dardanelles in antiquity – the siege of Troy, Xerxes and the Persians at the Hellespont, Athenians and Spartans in the Peloponnesian war, and Alexander the Great’s ambitious assault into Asia. It was from these conflicts that the western discourse on war emerged – Homer’s Iliad, Herodotus and Thucydides, the Alexander historians. In 1915 the allied attack on the Gallipoli peninsula not only re-enacted some desperate ancient claims for control of the Dardanelles; but it actually uncovered some material evidence for the sites themselves. With death all around them Allied soldiers uncovered the burial remains of ancient peoples some of whom had struggles of their own for survival in the region.

The extensive practice of digging trenches in a place like Gallipoli meant that there was always going to be a prospect of striking ancient material. Some soldiers, like Captain George Augustus Auden, a Cambridge man with antiquarian interests, must have been on the lookout for the occasional ancient object lying around amidst the clutter and the chaos of the fighting. He was a doctor with plenty of suffering to attend to, but as a man in middle age with a long-standing interest in
antiquity, a little bit of archaeology on the side will have come as a pleasant 
thought (Mendelson 2004: 921). Auden knew about Troy across the waterway, and 
about Schliemann’s excavations there in the 1860s and 1870s. And he knew that 
the Greeks had inhabited the Gallipoli peninsula from a very early period in their 
history. Others, without the same kind of academic background, would have known 
nothing about the ancient context of the Dardanelles prior to the campaign. It was 
the engineering units that tended to come into direct contact with the material 
remains of antiquity at Gallipoli, and their ranks rarely included classicists or 
archaeologists. Nevertheless, the written record suggests that there was a wide-
spread interest in the ancient material uncovered, one that extended beyond a 
privileged elite. One doesn’t need to know about antiquity to appreciate a direct 
physical encounter with it.

Such a person was the sapper Sergeant Lawrence at ANZAC. His very early 
life was spent in New Zealand, but he moved to Melbourne as a boy. Lawrence had 
an engineering background, and the diary that he kept suggests that he quickly 
learnt to appreciate ancient manufacturing techniques, some of which he saw still 
being used in Egypt, Greece and Turkey (Lawrence 1981). When he got to 
Gallipoli itself he came upon some ancient pottery, and he responded in his diary 
as follows: (June 22, 1915) ‘there is nothing exciting to report as to my shift on the 
tunnels. As we drive through we come across all sorts of earth etc. In places we run 
through great deposits of pottery buried as low as twenty feet. This is very fine stuff 
and is in an excellent state of preservation. Rather red and of a very fine texture, it 
seems to be all of the one class of work. We came across a huge sort of basin made 
of this the other night. It must have been about six feet in diameter and shaped 
thus [sketch omitted]…It was about five inches deep and would be about one and 
a half inches thick. Mostly it takes the form of slabs and seems to be a kind of 
covering for the dead. I intend to get a little piece if I can’ (Lawrence 1981: 33).

Unfortunately, we don’t know whether Lawrence got his souvenir or not, but 
you would imagine that he could have taken a nice piece without too much trouble. 
As far as his location at the time is concerned, we can identify with reasonable 
precision where the material was encountered. From the entries of his diary of five 
days beforehand (June 17), and two days after (June 24), it is likely that he was 
working on B3 tunnel, one of the three original saps at the Pimple. This is located 
between Brown’s Dip and Lone Pine on the 400 Plateau (Bean 1942: 260). The 
proximity of Lawrence’s find to Lone Pine is worthy of note because other (un-
published) evidence suggests that the modern Lone Pine cenotaph, built in honour 
of Anzac victims of the fighting, was the site of a Roman camp (Crouch, 1924). The 

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fact that a modern monument at Gallipoli was built on top of an ancient site has its parallel elsewhere on the peninsula. The very same thing occurred down at Cape Helles where the Abide monument to the Turkish victims of the war now sits right on top of the ancient city of Elaious (see below). Inevitably, some of the heights on the peninsula that attracted the attention of ancient engineers were sites of importance in the campaign of 1915 too.

Sergeant Lawrence’s words seem to suggest that it was not really such a special thing to come upon ancient material. There is the faint suggestion in the entry that they encountered this kind of stuff on a regular basis. Notice his turn of phrase to describe his encounter: ‘there is nothing exciting to report as to my shift on the tunnels… in places we run through great deposits… this is very fine stuff’ (Lawrence 1981: 33). The diary entry reveals a kind of ‘all in a day’s work’ aspect to it. And yet at the same time Lawrence is genuinely interested in what he has struck and he wants to keep a little bit for himself as a memento of his time there. In an ideal world he might have been just the person to explore the finds further. But his existence was far from ideal, and there were more important things to do. So the ancient material was thrown out with everything else that they dug up.

At Suvla Bay there was another important encounter with antiquity that found its way into publication shortly after the event (Hutton, 166-8). The key figure in this find was Captain Auden of the Royal Army Medical Corps. In 1915 Auden was a man of about 43 years with three children, the youngest of whom, was Wystan Hugh, or W.H. as he is usually known (Mendelson 2004: 921). This younger Auden, of course, was destined to acquire considerable renown as a writer, but he was only eight when his father came upon two Greek inscriptions at Gallipoli. These were found right on the edge of the salt lake, at Lala Baba, which lies inland of the bay. As we have seen, Auden was not the sort of man who would let a war get in the way of a genuine personal encounter with ancient artefacts. After coming upon the inscriptions he wrote that ‘they have a good deal of personal interest to me, for the wells, by which they were placed, came in for a good deal of daily shelling, and it was only safe to linger over them in the early morning or after sunset’ (Hutton, 166). And so in these circumstances he copied down the inscriptions and handed over transcripts in 1916 to Captain D.G. Hogarth (1862-1927), the distinguished classicist and archaeologist, who worked in the Arab Bureau in Cairo during the war.

Both of the inscriptions are written in Greek, and date from the Roman period about the end of the first century A.D. They deal with the subject of potential penalties to be paid for tumbůruchia or grave-robbing. Auden reported
that the first inscription, which was ‘a good deal weathered’ was ‘on a sarcophagus used as a trough near the Salt Lake’ (Hutton 1914-16: 166). The other was ‘on a marble slab unearthed near the well at the foot of Lala Baba on the edge of the Salt Lake’ (i.e. in the area of land between the lake itself and the south side of the bay, Kucuk Kemikli). Auden pointed out that the second inscription ‘is very sharply cut without sign of weathering’ (Hutton 1914-16: 166).

This second inscription helped to identify the name of the ancient city where it was found. Two different cities were referred to on this inscription, one called Koila, the other Alopekonnesos. We know from other evidence that Koila was on the eastern side of the peninsula (very near to ancient Madytos, modern Eceabat). This is quite a long way from where the inscription was found at Suvla. It is clear that Alopekonnesos is the name of the settlement on the western side where Auden had his chance encounter. The British also found coins there during their occupation, and this supports the identification of the site (Hutton 168). Since the war, other coins have also been found and reported (Yarkin 1978 1; Isaac 1986: 189-90). Other finds from the site include an archaic stele in high relief of a young athlete dating to ca. 470 B.C. (now in Canakkale Museum), and a Roman sarcophagus. Alopekonnesos was always known about from the literature, and in fact the name of the city is mentioned in the Athenian tribute lists of the 5th century B.C. (Isaac 1986: 190). But prior to Captain Auden’s chance discovery in 1915 it was little more than a name, much like other ancient settlements on the peninsula.

Whilst these scattered finds on the western side of Gallipoli have their own importance in the discovery of antiquity in 1915, our primary concern in this paper is with Cape Helles in the south. This was where the most extensive archaeological work took place, and where the various layers of human activity best come into relief. As cultural historians, we should distinguish between the east of the Gallipoli peninsula and the west. On the busy Dardanelles side of Gallipoli you get a much broader sense of the passing of time and the different monuments of human cultures. From Helles you can see Homer’s Troy – with a decent pair of binoculars and a guide to point it out. In later times, in the fifth century B.C., the Persians and the Greeks struggled over this area, as did the Athenians and Spartans later in the same century. Similarly, Alexander the Great was drawn here late in the next century as he was about to embark on his Asian adventure against the Persians. The major war narratives from antiquity are centred on the Dardanelles, not on the western side of Gallipoli which rarely receives a mention. This means in practice that modern war narratives – the struggle at ANZAC, and the battle for Suvla - dominate the western side of the Gallipoli peninsula.
Helles

In May 1915, just weeks after the commencement of the Gallipoli campaign on the ground, some soldiers from the French expeditionary force at Helles were digging trenches and came upon some ancient remains in the form of tombs with stone slabs (Pottier 1915:135-240). Their encounter took place at the plateau of Eski-Hissarlik just above Morto Bay and S Beach. This is just a few kilometres from the tip of the Gallipoli peninsula, and right at the modern Turkish memorial of the conflict. The next month they hit upon other sarcophagi, and so they decided to embark on a detailed exploration and excavation of the site. The key officers who authorised the excavation were Colonel Nijer of the African forces, who set aside the ground for the work; and General Henri Gouraud, commander of French forces at Gallipoli (Pottier 1915: 152).

Gouraud had replaced General D'Amade in May of 1915 after some heavy French losses early in the campaign (van Heyningen 2001: 8-9). The new general was a comparatively young man in his late forties (born 1867). He was called 'petit père' by his men, who seem to have held him in high regard. He was a determined and able general who ultimately got results. To the disappointment of Sir Ian Hamilton, Gouraud had to be replaced in late June after he received serious wounds. As a result of these he had to have his right arm amputated. But he ultimately recovered from his wounds and re-entered the war with some distinction. Gouraud was just the kind of man who could authorise an archaeological excavation in a war without any quibbles from those around him. He clearly had a significant personal interest in antiquity, and at the end of the war also set up a Service of Antiquities in Syria.

The rationale for embarking on a full archaeological excavation during military operations is clearly set out in the final report: it was perceived as a matter of national importance. It would signal to the civilized world that French cultural values could prevail, even in the midst of death and suffering. These are the words of the report that went to the French Academy at the end of the excavation: 'The general headquarters of the expeditionary force, true to an already age-old tradition, thought it important for the good name of French science to play a part, despite the limits imposed by the circumstances, in the study of the ancient remains that our soldiers' picks had uncovered during military endeavours. General headquarters (my italics) therefore ordered excavations, whose desired scope was unfortunately restricted by the necessities of war' (Pottier 1915: 135). Note that this was never going to be a sly bit of archaeological work on the side by an amateur, or
by some kind of antiquarian crank. This was to be an official excavation, undertaken with the imprimatur of the highest ranking officers.

The French command gathered together people with the relevant expertise, and provided them with the resources to do the necessary work. The resulting fieldwork is probably unique in modern warfare. The decision to excavate meant that, quite remarkably, a whole archaeological excavation took place in the midst of the campaign (Chase 1916: 201-2). The work took place between July 8 and December 12 when French troops were withdrawn from the peninsula. The key personnel were Sergeant Dhorne, a Catholic priest who had been a Professor in the College of St Joseph in Beirut; and J. Chamonard, who was a trainee interpreter. Chamonard had previously been a member of the French School in Athens and was quickly considered the right man for a difficult job. After the excavation a report was duly submitted to the Academy in Paris and published in early 1916 (with a date of 1915).

It is important to remember the great privation and terrible losses in the south of the peninsula during and after the three battles of Krithia. The French casualties, like everybody else’s at Gallipoli, were very high during the campaign, especially at the beginning (van Heyningen 2001: 1-11). At their peak there were about 42,000 French soldiers serving in Gallipoli, including the African contingents; and the total dead under French command was as many as 15,000. On one day alone, June 21st, the French lost 2,500 men – a bloody day indeed when you bear in mind that the Turks lost 6,000 men in the same battle (Haricot Redoubt). To say the least, you would think that archaeology would be the last thing on anyone’s mind; but the record speaks otherwise. In his report on the excavation Pottier gives us a sense of the difficulties of the task: ‘The work began on July 8. It was deliberately undertaken with a very limited workforce. There would have been misgivings about taking too many men away from their military duty. It was also pointless to increase the risk of accidents on terrain where at certain hours Turkish ineptness lavished stray bullets, and sometimes even mislaid shells: to these unexpected collaborators, but nonetheless ill-timed and dangerous visitors, we owe the opening of a tomb and the uncovering of some earthenware jars. And a group of workers would certainly have attracted the attention of a suspicious enemy. In addition, excavations of this kind, because of their painstaking nature, do not require a large workforce. A team of four men – reduced to just two during the first part of the campaign, due to illness and injury – was assigned to this work’ (Pottier 1915: 153).

When we bear in mind the conditions in which they worked, the excavation
yielded significant material. The report lists 38 sarcophagi and 18 funerary jars and amphoras. The objects found included vases from the 6th Century B.C. to the Hellenistic period. There was also jewellery in bronze, glass paste, and shell. Athenian material becomes common about the 550s B.C. (Boardman, 265). Much of the material found in 1915, and in subsequent excavations after the war (1920-23), now resides in the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul and at the Louvre in Paris.

To get an idea of what the French came upon in 1915 it is worthwhile briefly to offer a summary of two of the 56 tombs discovered – one sarcophagus and one funerary jar. The objects found in these tombs are characterised by their Athenian provenance, and the fact that they date to the classical period of the fifth century B.C. Sarcophagus number seven is as follows (Pottier 1915: 191-2):

Sarcophagus VII (abbreviated report)

Discovered, 27 July (1915). Tomb of a child.
   Orientation north-south
   Few bones evident

Objects

1. Small Attic flask (lekythos). 5th century B.C.
2. Small bronze bracelet.
3. Bronze bracelet in serpentine shape.
4. Small Attic lekythos
5. Terra-cotta bust of funerary Demeter. 1st half of the 5th century B.C.
6. Terra-cotta statuette of a male person. 1st half of the 5th century B.C.
7. Statuette of a seated female deity (Demeter?). 1st half of the 5th century B.C.
8. Small bowl without its base. 5th century B.C.
9. Small silver ring

Likewise one of the 18 funerary jars is described in abbreviated form below (Pottier 1915: 222-3):

Funerary Jar IX (abbreviated report)

Amphora. Discovered, 21 August (1915)
   Orientation north-east south-west, the opening at the south-west
Objects

1. A large black-figured bowl with Dionysiac scenes on it of music and dance. End of the 6th Century B.C.
2. Glazed Athenian black cup (skyphos)
3. Large Athenian black-figured flask (lekythos). Second half of the 5th century B.C.
4. A cup with legs attached
5. Small flask (lekythos)

Elaious

What the French had come upon in May and June of 1915 were remains of the Greek city of Elaious. This was a city of some importance in Greek antiquity, not least because of its important strategic position at the tip of the peninsula. The city also went under the name 'Eleonte', and this is the name that most French scholars tend to use in their work on the site. Like most of the Greek cities on the peninsula, the origins of Elaious are quite uncertain. Some time in the 7th century B.C., the site seems to have attracted the attention of Aeolian Greek settlers from other cities to the south or west, although it has also been argued that the Athenians themselves were the original settlers (Isaac 1986: 159-97). Whoever founded it, they were undoubtedly attracted by its geographical location at the very entrance to the Dardanelles. Money was to be made, and control was to be exerted, by ownership of key sites along the coastline of the waterway. The destinies of many cities in the region, including Troy, were fundamentally bound up in their location at the Dardanelles.

What we now call Morto Bay must have been perceived as an excellent harbour by the first settlers of Elaious. And the area had other attractions too. It offered high ground with a defensive capacity against attack (Eski Hissarlik). There is fine arable land available nearby which would have made it very attractive to peoples who lacked this sort of topography at home. The name 'Elaious' in the Greek suggests that the growing of olive trees was a characteristic activity of the area in antiquity (elaiê = olive tree, elaion = olive oil). You can still see plenty of olive groves if you go to Helles today. The tip of the Gallipoli peninsula has a very attractive topography, and so it is no surprise that Elaious turns out to be one of the most important cities in the whole region in Greek antiquity.

But I want to concentrate my attention on two individuals who were asso-
ciated with ancient Elaious, and whose presence there really helps to inform the Helles battles in 1915. Elaious had a very important connection to the story of the Trojan war. In antiquity the city was most renowned as the location of the shrine of Protesilaus, who seems to have been worshipped there as a god. From the Iliad, our earliest European literature, we learn that Protesilaus was the leader of a Greek contingent from Thessaly who went to Troy (2.695ff). He acquires his renown in antiquity as the first Greek hero to be killed in the Trojan war. He was hit and killed by a spear thrown by the Trojan warrior Hector as he leapt ashore from his ship. There was also a slightly elaborated version in a lost epic poem called the Cypria. A later summary of this epic tells us that the goddess Thetis, the mother of Achilles, had warned her son not to disembark straightaway at Troy because it was fated that the first warrior to do so would be killed (West 2003: 77). Protesilaus, however, without such divine assistance, knew nothing about this prophecy, and so on the beach at Troy he fell victim to his own bravado, and to the workings of fate.

The nature of Protesilaus’ death as the brave leader of the first charge from the ships at Troy, makes him an ideal figure for Greek hero-cult. And this was duly established at some early stage at ancient Elaious on the other side of the waterway from Troy, very near to where the French made their discoveries in 1915. The shrine became very famous in antiquity, not least because the historian Herodotus dealt with it in great detail. Herodotus tells us that during the Persian control of Gallipoli at the beginning of the fifth century B.C. the Persian governor Artayctes profaned the site by collecting women there and committing various acts of theft and sacrilege (Herodotus, 7.35; 9.114-21). The various deeds of the governor, as described by Herodotus, are about as bad as it gets in a Greek religious context. They are a kind of parallel to, and a natural extension of, the hubris of Xerxes in crossing the Dardanelles to attack the Greek world in the first place.

The story of the revenge against the Persians by the Athenians in 479 B.C. ends the whole History of Herodotus (9.114-21). Artayctes and some of his people made their escape from the Athenian siege of Sestos (just to the north of Elaious), but they were captured near Aegospotami. The people of Elaious wanted their revenge on the governor, and so did the Athenian commander Xanthippus (the father of Pericles). Xanthippus had no hesitation in having Artayctes nailed to a plank above the town of Madytos (mod. Ecabat). To add to the governor’s agony he was forced to watch his son being stoned to death before his eyes. Herodotus seems to take some grim satisfaction in ending his whole history with this gruesome narrative.

But the most famous visitor to the shrine of Protesilaus arrived about 150

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years after the Persians, in the person of Alexander the Great in 334 B.C. Alexander had pilgrimage on his mind, on both sides of the Dardanelles. On the European side he ventured to the shrine of Protesilaus at Elaious, and then he went to Troy on the Asian side to honour Achilles. Arrian tells us that ‘at Elaious [Alexander] offered sacrifice upon the tomb of Protesilaus, who was supposed to have been the first man of Agamemnon’s army to set foot upon the soil of Asia when the Greeks sailed against Troy. His purpose in performing the ceremony was to ensure better luck for himself than Protesilaus had’ (Arrian, 1.11, trans De Sélincourt). Alexander wants to be the new Achilles (Stewart 1993: 78-86), not the new Protesilaus, and so he embarks on a kind of personal pilgrimage prior to the campaign in Asia. He himself, therefore, crosses to the Asian side from Elaious, whereas his army cross the Dardanelles at the Narrows between Sestos and Abydos, where Xerxes had gone in the other direction all those years beforehand.

The site of the shrine of Protesilaus has not been identified by archaeologists with any precision. But it is probably located between V and S Beaches, the former of which saw some terrible casualties on April 25 1915. Indeed Protesilaus’ death is a kind of early Greek leitmotif of the horror of the Gallipoli landings. In the Helles landings thousands died much like Protesilaus did – on the boats, or in the water, or on the beaches themselves (Liddle 1976: 119ff.). There are, of course, some graphic accounts of these landings. Midshipman Drewry of the Royal Naval Reserve, later a VC winner, described his landing at V beach in the following way: ‘At last we had the signal at 6.am and in we dashed. At 6.10 the ship struck, very easily – she brought up and I shot ahead and grounded on her port bow. Then the fun began, picket boats towed lifeboats full of soldiers inshore and slipped them as the water shoaled and they rowed the rest of the way. The soldiers jumped out as the boats beached and they died almost all of them, wiped out with the boats’ crews’. Likewise Midshipman Berridge on the ship Albion wrote that ‘the slaughter was awful and you could see them falling on the beach and in the water. They got into dead ground under a bank however and there remained for the whole day’.

In all, thousands died in the Helles landings in a similar human catastrophe to the landings at Anzac. The ancient Greek setting at the tip of the Gallipoli peninsula allows us now to see the Helles landings in a broader temporal and cultural context. On April 25, 1915 the men in the water and on the beaches at Helles met their fates in the vicinity of the ancient shrine of Protesilaus. The very idea of Protesilaus’ cult-site silently witnessing the Helles landings has a rather profound and immediate poignancy to it. It must be one of the great topographical coincidences of the First World War, and very rarely noticed too. It is almost as if
his shrine stands nearby as a single heroic memorial of their fates. No setting could quite evoke the collective tragedy of the Helles landings like the adjacent shrine of Protesilaus (cf. Chase 1916: 202).

Attalus

The French were not the only ones who managed to uncover the material remains of ancient Elaious, even if they were the only ones to embark on a full excavation. Another soldier who came upon an ancient find at Helles was Serjt.-Major R.S. Jones of the 136 Company, Royal Engineers (Norwood, 1-2). In December 1915 Jones came upon a short Greek inscription in excellent condition. He managed to transcribe it and sent it home to his relatives in Cardiff in a letter dated 16 December 1915. Jones’ letter was ultimately passed on to the classicist Gilbert Norwood in Cardiff who published it in the Classical Quarterly of January 1917.

After acquiring the letter, Norwood wrote to Jones at the Gallipoli front to get more information about its discovery. But Jones was already dead after being hit by a shell on 27 December – tragically soon before the evacuation of the last British forces. Two days beforehand he had been recommended for the Distinguished Conduct Medal. In his brief article Norwood wrote that “it is a splendid thought that we owe this new historical information to the interest and care of a soldier in the midst of perilous and toilsome duties. His commanding officer wrote that he was ‘my right-hand man ever since the company was formed at Buxton’” (Norwood 1917: 1).

What Jones came upon was a dedication by the city (of Elaious) ‘to king Attalus, son of king Attalus, called ‘Philadelphus’, the saviour and benefactor of the city’ (Norwood 1917: 1-2). Norwood dates the inscription to between 148 and 138 B.C. when Attalus II, was king of Pergamum. The inscription recognises the achievement of Attalus in fighting against the invading Thracians on behalf of the Greek people of Elaious. Norwood suggests that Attalus was unable to protect the whole peninsula from the Thracian advances, but he was able to achieve a kind of ‘last stand’ victory at Elaious. For these services the people there were enormously grateful, and they set up a public monument in his honour.

So the key point in all of this is that one war context – that is, the fighting at Cape Helles in 1915 – managed to uncover details of another war that took place in the same spot over 2000 years beforehand. The layers of war are presented to us here with an immediacy rarely encountered in modern conflict. Just as Elaious was probably the only ancient city within the allied line of control at Helles in 1915, so it may have been the only settlement not taken by the Thracians in their incursion
into the peninsula in the mid-second century B.C. There is the sense therefore that at Helles the allied forces were in a similar position to the people of ancient Elaious, albeit without the same happy ending. In December 1915, when Jones found his inscription, the allies could have done with an Attalus - or an Alexander - to lead them to victory. But such a leader was not to be had, and they were gone from the peninsula in defeat within a matter of weeks.

To conclude, I make four main point points. First, the result of the Anglo-French discoveries at Helles meant that Elaious – a city referred to in the ancient literature – was identified. These discoveries of ancient artefacts had their parallel at Anzac and at Suvla, although the work done in these two places during the campaign was much more limited in scope. The archaeological and literary evidence suggests that Elaious was a major city in the region, not least because of its important strategic position at the tip of the peninsula. Ancient military men, like the Athenian Miltiades at the end of the 6th century, were drawn to Gallipoli, for the same sorts of reasons as Winston Churchill in 1915. Control of the tip of the peninsula was a preliminary to controlling the whole waterway.

Second, the Gallipoli Peninsula has never been an area of significant activity in Turkish archaeology for various reasons, including the military sensitivity of the region in the 20th century. There is a rather significant irony that no formal archaeology took place in Turkey in 1915 specifically because of the war, apart from the very location where the fighting was actually taking place. Nothing much that is good came out of the Dardanelles campaign, and so we may be thankful for learning a bit more about the region in antiquity from the allied military debacle. Third, the various encounters with antiquity in 1915 also tell us quite a bit about the character of the different national participants on the allied side – French, British and Australian. The French attitude to archaeology in the Gallipoli campaign is very revealing, and it had some parallels with other theatres of operation in the Great War – such as in Macedonia (Picard 1918-19: 1-9). The event seemed to galvanise French pride at their conduct in the war (Luce 1940: 522). The excavation was later perceived as one of the great contributions of French scholars to the war effort.

And finally, many first world war war historians consider the ancient context of Gallipoli a kind of interesting irrelevance. Indeed some Gallipoli historians with whom I have dealt seem to think that it is an annoying distraction from the conflict itself. How can the ancient context offer us new insights into 1915 (or vice versa)? The interdisciplinary approach adopted by this paper has tried to explore the different layers of martial activity at the Dardanelles through time. There is a certain poignancy that 125,000 men died at Gallipoli above earlier layers of ancient
people who had similar struggles for survival. In the case of Helles and ancient Elaious there is quite a profound sense of the repeated calamities of human existence within the different layers uncovered. Helles is a kind of snapshot of war through time - ancient and modern - and the incidental archaeology that took place in 1915 offers us a greatly enhanced sense of the meaning of the campaign in a much wider temporal context.

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