

GALLIPOLI BEFORE GALLIPOLI

The Thracian Chersonese and the Hellespont (the Dardanelles)
in the Classical, Byzantine and Early Ottoman Periods

Project Director: Professor Samuel N.C. Lieu FRAS, FRHistS, FSA, FAHA

Project Officer: Tristan Doust

Website Address: <http://www.acrc.mq.edu.au/gallipoli/index.html>

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) landings between Gaba Tepe (lit. 'rough hills') and Arı Burnu (lit. 'Bee-Point') on the Gallipoli Peninsula on 25th April 1915 is a defining landmark in the history of two Anglophone nation-states in the South Pacific. The deployment troops from these two new nations in an ill-fated attempt to help the Allies (or the Entente forces) seize the forts heavily defended Dardanelles by land brought thousands of young men of mainly European descent to a part of the world which was and still is soaked in history – both Ancient and Medieval. The name 'Gallipoli' - originally from the Greek Kallipolis (Καλλιπόλις) meaning 'a fine city' - has come to symbolize a host of Australasian virtues and traits. However, the campaign's link to the Classical past is far more than a matter of etymology. The fact that some of the fighting took place almost within sight of the fabled plains of Troy on the Asian shores of the Dardanelles and that most modern day Australasian 'pilgrims' would include a visit to the legendary city of the Homeric epics as part of their 'Hajj' certainly help to bring the histories of the two relatively young nations closer, no matter how vicariously, to the older and more familiar Classical roots of the 'West'.

The events of the seven-month campaign in 1915 from landing to withdrawal had become such a part of the Australasian self-image that the history of the region before the ANZAC landings inevitably pales into relative insignificance. The Dardanelles (the ancient Hellespont) were and still is one of the most important waterways in the world also provided the main crossing place between Europe and Asia until the establishment of Constantinople on the Bosphorus as the new capital of the Roman Empire. The main purpose of this project therefore is to provide historical resources for research into the less well known but equally fascinating history of the region from the era of Greek Colonization to its becoming an important part of the Ottoman Empire. The project is housed at the Centre for Ancient Cultures at Macquarie University although a great deal of the essential research is conducted overseas because of the limited library resources in Australia. The first stage of the project is to provide make a available an **electronic archive** (*Archivum Callipolitanum*) online consisting of the following major sections:

1. An electronic [historical atlas](#) of the region consisting of half a dozen maps drawn with the help of satellite-imaging. The first of these (see Map 1), drawn by Dr Duncan Keenan-Jones, the project's principal Technical Officer, covers the Classical Greek Period (i.e. from the era of Colonization to the rise of Philip of Macedon). Subsequent maps will cover the Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine periods, the era of Crusader and Catalan domination and the Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman periods. The information provided by the maps will be regularly emended and updated as the research progresses. [See Dr Keenan-Jones' statement on the electronic compilation of the maps which accompanies the atlas.]
2. A [gazetteer](#) to the atlas. The entries will be arranged alphabetically for ease of reference and will cover every place-name given in the maps of the atlas. It will also cite original sources stored in the electronic database of texts (see next item) to help locate the sites. The gazetteer will also provide etymologies (and mythologies) of place-names with classical associations such as the Dardanelles, the Hellespont, Gallipoli, Cape Helles, Krithia, Bulair etc. which should be of particular help to teachers of Ancient History and those brave enough to challenge the knowledge of their tour-guides on these matters of sanctity!
3. A data-base of [Classical and Medieval sources](#) on the history of the main settlements on the Thracian Chersonese and on some of the key cities on the Asian shores of the Dardanelles. The Director of the Project, Professor Sam Lieu, began collecting this source material over a decade ago and the data-entry of much of this material has been completed (especially sources on the history of the port-city of Gallipoli on the Dardanelles which gave her iconic name first to the whole peninsula and later the 1915 campaign) and select texts will be available in their original languages and in English translation in the form of PDF files. The advent of Unicode means texts in non-Latin scripts such as Greek in particular could now be presented in the original and in a format easily accessible to all internet users. Sources in Ottoman Turkish are not included in this project as they will undoubtedly be covered in similar projects in the run-up to the centenary celebration of the ANZAC Landings.
4. A selection of [travellers' accounts](#) to the region from the Late Middle Ages to the Modern period such as those of Ghilbert de Lannoy, Cristoforo Buondelmonti, Ruy González de Clavijo, Cyriac of Ancona, Dr John Covel, Jacques Spon, Pierre Belon du Mans, Richard Chandler and Charles Greenstreet Addison – to mention but a few. Much of this material has already been data-entered and will be made available in due course.
5. An archive of modern writings on what can best be termed the '[Classical Echoes](#)' which resonated throughout the 1915 campaign and afterwards in its commemoration. Although the ANZACs fought mainly in a part of the peninsula which was largely devoid of Classical remains – except for those who were transferred to Cape Helles to take part in the doomed attempts to capture Krithia – the campaign as a whole was spoken of in Homeric terms, especially at its initial stages when hopes were high. Many of the Allied officers and German advisers to the Ottoman Army who took part in the campaign knew their Homer in the original Greek. Though the most famous of these classically trained 'Neo-Argonauts', the poet Rupert

Brooke, fell victim to blood-poisoning before the start of the campaign, others who made it ashore like Arthur Tisdall VC and Patrick Shaw-Stewart were outstanding classical scholars from Cambridge and Oxford respectively. The latter wrote a much cited classicizing poem on the campaign ('Stand in the Trench Achilles') as well as letters to his friend the venerable Ronald Knox which are full of classical metaphors and illusions. Armed with the superlative 1914 Baedeker Guide to Constantinople and the neighbouring districts, German officers who served in the campaign like Hans Kannengiesser (Pasha) were equally well, if not better, informed than their British counter-parts on the mythological associations and historical geography of this fabled region. The joint attempt (Allied and German) to see the campaign as a new Homeric epic is not merely an intellectual exercise among the social elite but an important part of the history of the European Classical Tradition and of European attitudes towards 'Asiatics'. For this reason a selection of their writings (copyright permitting), especially citations from their letters and diaries, will also be data-entered to facilitate research into a potentially fascinating aspect of what could only be termed a 'New Trojan War.'

6. An [Album of Images](#) – this is one of the more problematic aspects of the project because of limitations of copyright. Nevertheless, every effort will be made to provide scanned photographic images (especially those taken before 1915) of sites as well as of ancient coins, inscriptions, drawings, old maps, sea-charts (including old editions of the important *Black Sea Pilot*), manuscript illustrations etc. which are relevant to the project.
7. [Bibliography](#). An online bibliography will be provided covering primary sources (ancient and medieval) and secondary works (especially works in English, French and German). A small number of works in Modern Turkish will also be listed, especially those containing bibliographical information on related publications in Turkish. The information will be arranged by type (primary sources and secondary literature), by subject matter (geography, archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics, commemoration etc.) and by the main historical periods (Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Early Ottoman). Like the atlas, the bibliography will be regularly updated and augmented.
8. **Numismatic data** – Dr Ken Sheedy, the Director of the Australian Centre of Ancient Numismatic Studies (ACANS), will provide a synoptic study of the coinage of the region. This part of the project, which is still under discussion, will probably be delivered on the ACANS' own website.

As Australia and New Zealand head for the centenary celebration of the most famous chapter in her history in a little more than four years' time, interest in all aspects of the Gallipoli campaign is very likely to grow. Teachers of history, both Ancient and Modern, are likely to require information and resources on the background history and the historical geography of Australasia's most famous 'turf' on the European shores of Turkey. It is hoped that the 'Gallipoli Before Gallipoli' website will help those interested in broadening their knowledge of the Gallipoli Peninsula and of the Dardanelles

region as a whole to explore online what the major historical studies of the 1915 campaign tend to pass over.

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Professor Samuel N.C. Lieu
samuel.lieu@mq.edu.au