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978-1-107-11174-5 - Anzac Battlefield: A Gallipoli Landscape of War and Memory

Edited by Antonio Sagona, Mithat Atabay, C.J. Mackie, Ian McGibbon and Richard Reid

Excerpt

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Introduction

ANTONIO SAGONA AND C.J. MACKIE

This book deals with the transformation of the Anzac landscape at Gallipoli. We seek to explain how a rugged piece of land, remote and overlooking the Aegean Sea, was quickly and dramatically turned into a scene of intense conflict on 25 April 1915. Within eight months Allied and Ottoman forces changed this land, which is actually quite small in size, into a battleground, scarring it with a complex labyrinth of military earthworks. Then, a few years after the conflict ceased, silence descended upon it once more. Gallipoli entered its third stage of development, as a cemetery – the last resting place for thousands of soldiers who lie buried within its soil.

In terms of preservation, no other First World War battlefield can match Anzac. Whether trenches or tunnels, dugouts or terraces, much of the Anzac battlefield still survives beneath a canopy of vegetation. Battered by cold northerly winds in winter, which often bring with them copious quantities of rain, this coastal fringe and its hinterland have suffered much erosion over the last hundred years, as any comparison with photographs will show. Even so, this fragile site endures. Despite the fact that more than one million people visit the battleground each year as tourists and pilgrims, there is as yet little ‘development’ in the modern sense of that word. Reference to other coastal locations in the west of Turkey, such as Bodrum, reminds us just how well preserved the battlefields actually are. You can stand at Lone Pine today looking south towards Cape Helles and scarcely see a building or structure of any kind.

Violence and aggression extend back to the very roots of humanity. Long before any written records, prehistoric warfare conducted by stateless societies has been attested many times over by archaeologists working in every corner of our planet.¹ Five thousand years ago, when writing was invented, conflict became a continuous feature of literature and religion. Yet, in all instances of conflict before the First World War, the scope was localised, even if the motives and the trauma it caused victims still resonate

1 Guillane & Zammit, *The Origins of War*.

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in today's hostilities. The First World War was something quite different. It ushered in war that was both global in scale and industrial in its operations. Never before had armies been equipped with such powerful weaponry, collectively capable of inflicting so much damage. Needless to say, the capacity for even greater destruction has been accentuated in the period since.

Many books and countless papers have been written on Gallipoli. In the pages that follow, we will not attempt to emulate these in terms of breadth and content. Rather, at the core of this book is the materiality of the battlefield: its features and artefacts, and their social context, which have been systematically and precisely recorded and analysed for the first time, using methods and techniques developed in archaeology. At the outset, we should state that the five years of fieldwork carried out at Anzac (2010–14 inclusive) did *not* involve excavations. On the contrary, the evidence we collected was lying on the surface of the ground, observable to trained eyes, and our work required no disturbance of the earth. Even a cursory glance at the contents page of this book will reveal its multiple authorship. Benefits emerge from this teamwork, since our evidence of the battlefield is more than one sort, and needs more than one level of expertise to interpret it. This integration of approaches is desirable – indeed essential – if one is to produce a rounded account.

Few people interested in the 1915 campaign are, these days, aware of the deep history of the Gallipoli Peninsula. That was largely true of the soldiers who served there too, although many of them became more aware of it as time went on. The authors of this book felt that it was important to set the Gallipoli campaign in a broader historical and cultural context, so chapter 1 focuses briefly on some of the principal literary and mythical narratives from Greco-Roman antiquity located in the immediate region. We also explore the limited archaeological work done on the peninsula in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and try to gain some sense of what life was like for the civilian population of Gallipoli in 1914 before the coming of the Allies. After a brief overview of the 1915 campaign and some of the responses to it (in chapter 2), the book then moves to the early attempts to record the battlefield and the operations that it witnessed (chapter 3).

Maps are an essential part of any military campaign, and they have been much discussed with respect to the Gallipoli campaign. Inevitably the mapping of the battlefield played an absolutely crucial part in the work done by the research team. Chapter 4 of this book therefore explores the numerous attempts to map the peninsula from the mid-nineteenth century to the years immediately after the campaign. Archaeology, of course, has developed its own methods and techniques, and in chapter 5 we present those that we used in our survey. At the heart of our approach is the precise and systematic recording of the position (context) of every feature, whether earthworks or artefacts. This has enabled us to understand the geographical relationship of items across the battlefield and to draw inferences from their distribution. Using historical sources, chapters 6 and 7 tackle the task of explaining how the battlefield was formed, on both sides of no man's land – the thin strip of land that divided enemies. Trenches, tunnels, dugouts and other earthworks form only part of the picture. What the soldiers left behind after eight months of conflict, the artefacts, are discussed in chapter 8. The focus here is not just the materials themselves but also their spatial distribution across the battlefield. These tangible data, in particular, indicate behaviour and activities not necessarily mentioned in documents. Chapters 9 and 10 examine the history of the

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battlefield after the 1915 campaign through to the construction of memorials. The authors do not, however, enter into the complex and contested area of commemorative narratives, but rather explain how the cemetery has unfolded.

The broad range of academic interests of the JHAS team is therefore very clear to the reader from the start: archaeologists, specialists in GIS technology, and military and cultural historians; likewise, the fact that the team came from three different countries with very different perspectives and priorities. We were conscious all the while that each country had its story to tell and that each story needed to be reflected, as far as possible, in the focus of the fieldwork. Even though the team spent five seasons on the peninsula – equivalent to about five months of fieldwork – we were also conscious that we could spend a great deal more time there and still only touch the surface, so to speak. Nonetheless, we learned to know the battlefield and the peninsula very well, and to respect it in the fullest way possible. We also saw close up just what a struggle it was to live and fight and survive – let alone triumph – in a landscape like Anzac.

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1

Boundary and divide

The antiquity of the Dardanelles

C.J. MACKIE, MITHAT ATABAY, REYHAN KÖRPE AND ANTONIO SAGONA

'All history has passed through the Hellespont, from the expedition of the Argonauts and the Trojan war down to the recent Great War.'

XIMINEZ, *ASIA MINOR IN RUINS*, p. 91.

So the Spanish traveller and author Saturnino Ximenez observed in 1925 – writing amid turbulent times in the region. The Hellespont, as he calls it, is the ancient Greek name for the passage of water that is now usually known in English as the ‘Dardanelles’ and in Turkish as ‘Çanakkale Boğazı’. There can be few more important passages of water (plate 1.1). It both connects and divides. It connects the Mediterranean and Black Seas – ultimately linking Eurasia and the Caucasus in the north and east with Spain and North Africa in the west. And it separates Europe from Asia, and has therefore featured throughout time as a kind of natural border of ethnic difference. The Greek writers of antiquity saw the Persian crossing of the Hellespont into Europe in 480 BCE as a kind of breaking of natural law, and some of their narratives about it were constructed to make this point. These days, the passage from Asia to Europe, or vice versa, is rather more seamless. Çanakkale and Eceabat are a kind of ‘twin towns’ on either side of the strait – places that become quite well known to visitors to the Gallipoli battlefields. Modern Turkey embraces its identity both within Europe and within Asia, and this dual profile has tended to dominate its recent history.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DARDANELLES IN ANTIQUITY

For many people today the Gallipoli Peninsula is inextricably associated with one event: the attempt by the European Allies in 1915 to push through the heavily mined straits of the Dardanelles to support Russia. Of the campaigns fought in that battle, which took the lives of more than 125 000 Turkish and Allied soldiers, three are

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deeply embedded in the psyche of the contemporary nation states of Turkey, Australia and New Zealand: 18 March, when the Ottoman fortresses and batteries successfully fought off the second attempt by the British Royal Navy and the French Navy to break through the Straits; 25 April, the dawn landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC), which launched the land offensive; and 10 August, when the Ottoman forces drove the Allied soldiers back down the slopes of Chunuk Bair, thus effectively thwarting their August offensive.

Yet the Gallipoli Peninsula, encompassing an area of 33 000ha (330km²), has a much deeper history, stretching back to remote prehistory. Washed by the waters of the Aegean to the west, and defined by the Dardanelles to the east, this thin slice of land (5km wide at its narrowest point) has acted as a bridgehead, a barrier and a meeting place for millennia.¹ This predicament of ‘bridge and barrier’, together with the human impulse to control the Straits – a 70km natural channel that connects the Aegean Sea and the Sea of Marmara, and thence Istanbul – have defined its dramatic and turbulent history, even in antiquity. Yet, despite this, there is little consciousness of the peninsula’s rich cultural history among many Australians. A mature understanding of Gallipoli in 1915 requires some awareness of the significance of the peninsula in a broader cultural and historical context. There are many detailed histories of the Dardanelles region through time, and this introduction will not try to emulate them.² But we can at least focus briefly on some of the moments in time that have caught the imagination of poets and historians and myth-makers.

The first literary references to Gallipoli come to us from ancient Greek texts. And indeed, as we will see below, these are actually quite extensive and informative, especially in the fifth century BCE.³ The Gallipoli Peninsula was known to the Greeks of antiquity by the name ‘Thracian Chersonese’ (which means ‘Thracian peninsula’). The name ‘Gallipoli’, as used in modern English parlance, comes from the ancient name for one particular settlement (Kallipolis = ‘Beautiful City’; mod. Turkish ‘Gelibolu’). The name of this city came to be used (in English) for the whole peninsula, although ‘Dardanelles’ was also commonly used in 1915. The word ‘Dardanelles’, in turn, is cognate with Dardanus, a figure in ancient Greek myth, who was meant to have founded the site of Dardania on Mount Ida.⁴ Some of the names for ancient settlements on the peninsula are quite informative: ‘Krithote’ comes from *kri*, the Greek word for ‘barley’ (cf. modern ‘Krithia’); and ‘Elaious’ (= ancient Helles) comes from the Greek word for ‘olives’ (*elaiê* = olive tree, *elaion* = olive oil). The Greek writer Xenophon (c. 430–354 BCE) described the peninsula as ‘beautiful’ (*kalê*) and ‘prosperous’ (*eudaimôn*).⁵

1 In 1973 the area was turned into the Gallipoli Peninsula National Historical Park and included in the UN List of Protected Areas in 1997; see <<http://whc.unesco.org>> (retrieved 23 April 2014).

2 On the ancient side the reader might start with Isaac, *The Greek Settlements in Thrace until the Macedonian Conquest*, and Tzvetkova, *History of the Thracian Chersonese from the Trojan War until the time of the Roman Conquest*. Other works include Leaf, *Strabo on the Troad*; Bieg, ‘Troas und Gallipoli’; Yavuz, ‘The Thracian Chersonese in the Archaic and Classical Ages’; Hansen & Nielsen, *An Inventory of Archaic and Greek Poleis*; Külzer, *Ostthrakien (Europe)*. For the general reader, the works of John Freely, *The Western Shores of Turkey* and *Children of Achilles*, provide an invaluable and fascinating introduction to the west of Turkey.

3 For a broad overview of the literary evidence, see Isaac, *The Greek Settlements in Thrace until the Macedonian Conquest*, pp. 159 ff.

4 Hom. *Il.* 20.215–16.

5 Xen. *An.* 5, 6, 25.

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The Gallipoli Peninsula was defined by war in antiquity, as it has been in more recent periods, driven usually by the desires of ambitious men to control the waterway and its adjacent land. One might see the 1915 campaign as the end of a historical continuum of military conflict in the region – something of which Charles Bean, the Australian official historian of the war, was very conscious (see below). Even a cursory examination of the cultural history of the place in antiquity can identify some of the major struggles that took place in the region, especially the Trojan War, the Persian wars and the Peloponnesian war. The characteristic attractions of the peninsula in antiquity were the fertile soil for growing crops, and its strategic location beside the Dardanelles. Indeed, cities on both the European and the Asian sides of the Dardanelles have always had an investment in what the waterway and the adjacent land could have to offer.

The Trojan, Persian and Peloponnesian wars

It is worth looking briefly at some of the prominent literary narratives from Greek antiquity set in the region. The peninsula began to be settled by Aiolian Greeks, probably from the early seventh century BCE, and Ionian Greek peoples followed.⁶ The Aiolian Greeks came as colonists, especially from the nearby island of Lesbos, and they established the settlements of Sestos and Madytos – two of the more significant cities on the peninsula. The Ionians came from Miletus and Greek cities on the mainland of modern western Turkey to the south of Gallipoli. It is very important to recognise that Greek-speaking peoples had a significant presence on the Gallipoli Peninsula from these early times right through until the twentieth century, before the ‘exchange of the minorities’ in 1922–23 (see below for the ethnic character of the peninsula in 1914).⁷ Indeed, the reader should think of the Gallipoli Peninsula in the early twentieth century, or just before the Allies launched their attack, as having a very significant multicultural identity under Ottoman hegemony. In 1914, as the records show, its population was made up of Greeks, Turks, Jews, Armenians and Bulgarians. The lives of these people, and the character of the place, were changed forever by the Allied assault on the straits and on the peninsula.

The earliest occupation of Gallipoli by Greek-speaking peoples actually coincides with the rough date for Homer’s *Iliad* – c. 700 BCE, or a little later. Homer’s poem, around 16 000 lines long, focuses on the 10-year struggle for the city of Troy, which is besieged by a huge force of Greek warriors (‘Ilios’ is the Greek word for ‘Troy’; hence the poem is an epic about the city). The *Iliad* reaches back to the late Bronze Age (or ‘Late Mycenaean’) world, and might originate in a real conflict that took place there at that time, perhaps in the 12th century BCE. Troy is situated on the Asian side of the Dardanelles, and looks across at the tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula (plate 1.2). But it is important to stress that the two sites are not as close to one another as they might appear on a map. The remains of Troy can scarcely be seen from Cape Helles with a pair of binoculars on a clear day, and they cannot be seen from Anzac or Suvla at all (plate 1.3). Because of Homer’s great poem, however, Troy has dominated the cultural landscape

6 On the early colonisation of the peninsula, see Isaac, *The Greek Settlements in Thrace until the Macedonian Conquest*, pp. 160–1; Tzvetkova, *History of the Thracian Chersonese from the Trojan War until the Time of the Roman Conquest*, pp. 286–7.

7 Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact upon Greece*, pp. 31–2.

of the Dardanelles region from early ancient times. Some soldiers of the 1915 Gallipoli campaign were already conscious of its presence, and others became conscious. For these soldiers Troy had a kind of sphinx-like role, watching over another disastrous military conflict in the region.⁸

So the poet known as Homer produced a magnificent poem about war in the Dardanelles at a time when the Greeks from the south were becoming much more active in the region. And indeed it is noteworthy that the peninsula – or rather one city on it, Sestos – receives a mention in the *Iliad* itself (Book 2.836). The reference to this particular city means essentially that the Gallipoli Peninsula appears in the earliest extant work of European literature.

The reference to Sestos is significant here because of its location, and the fact that it became a major city in later historical times. Sestos and Abydos were situated at the ‘narrows’ of the Dardanelles, and were therefore quite prominent throughout history. We know that the site of historical Abydos was just north of Çanakkale (modern Cape Nagara, currently a military base), and that Sestos was opposite it. Strabo in the Roman period actually tells us that, because of its position in relation to the currents, Sestos, not Abydos, controlled the waterway.⁹

In the period after the *Iliad*, when we start to gain a clearer sense of the history of the region, Greek colonists, especially Athenians, established a significant presence throughout the peninsula. Naturally Sestos and Abydos were also very important because of their locations at the ‘narrows’ of the Dardanelles. Sestos was just one city among about a dozen that we know about on the Gallipoli Peninsula itself from the ancient literary sources. Some of these cities were places of importance – including Kardia, Alopekonnos, Elaious, Madytos and Sestos itself. Kardia and Alopekonnos were located on the north-west coast: Kardia up on the Gulf of Saros, and Alopekonnos at Suvla Bay. As far as the 1915 context is concerned, the reader might want to be conscious that there were actually two ancient cities at Suvla Bay (called Alopekonnos and Limnai) and one at Helles (called Elaious). There is no real evidence, however, literary or archaeological, for an ancient city at Anzac, although there was some kind of fortification or settlement in the late Hellenistic or Roman period at Lone Pine.¹⁰

BOX 1.1: ROMAN LONE PINE

The fighting at Helles and Suvla took place in the vicinity of ancient cities we now know about from the literary and archaeological evidence of antiquity. On the basis of the ancient texts, there seems to have been no ancient city within the boundaries of the Anzac battlefield. The literary record of 1915 itself, however, and shortly afterwards in 1924, states that there were encounters with antiquity at Lone Pine. These statements have added significance in light of Lone Pine’s importance in Australian culture.

8 Vandiver, *Stand in the Trench Achilles*; Mackie, ‘Hell and Helle at the Dardanelles’, pp. 187–99.

9 Strab. 13.1.22.

10 An anonymous reviewer speculated on whether the known city of Araplos was situated at Gaba Tepe. See also Mackie, ‘Archaeology at Gallipoli’, pp. 213–25.

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One important diarist in this context was the sapper Sergeant Cyril Lawrence from Melbourne. He had some direct encounters with buried pottery near Lone Pine: '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.' Lawrence seems to be referring to B3 tunnel, one of the original saps at the Pimple, near Lone Pine.

Almost a decade later, in 1924, a veteran of Gallipoli, Colonel R.A. Crouch, visited the peninsula and was met by Colonel C.E. Hughes, the Australian representative on the Imperial War Graves Commission. On the basis of his discussions with Hughes, who showed him around the battlefield, Crouch later wrote: 'It will interest the Lone Pine defenders to know that when the Commission was digging for the site of the obelisk, they discovered a Roman Camp, old Roman remains, and coins, and some old skeletons.'¹¹

In 2012, the JHAS team was able to confirm archaeologically the factual basis for both of these literary records insofar as some traces of ancient occupation were documented (plate 1.4). These included ceramic sherds consistent with Late Hellenistic or Roman-period pottery. The artefacts did not provide any consistent evidence for what kind of occupation characterised the area (plate 1.5). Most ancient settlements on the peninsula are located close to the sea, either on the eastern side (the Hellespont) or the western side (up towards Suvla and Saros Bay). But this is not the case with Lone Pine. The excellent view from the site, across the whole peninsula, supports the view that in antiquity it was a camp, a fort or a watching-post of some kind.

Alopekonesos (Suvla) looks out westwards towards the islands of Imbros (Gökçeada) and Samothrace, rather than eastwards towards the waterway, like some of the other larger ancient cities on the peninsula (plate 1.6). Most of the ancient Greek literature dealing with the Gallipoli Peninsula is focused on the major cities on the eastern side of the peninsula, especially Elaious (Helles), Madytos (Eceabat) and Sestos. The Greek historian Herodotos (fifth century BCE) in particular had a central interest in the Gallipoli Peninsula's eastern-facing cities, not least because they represented the very end of Europe – the boundary, as it were, between Europe and Asia. In this sense the Hellespont to Herodotos was much more than just a waterway, and Herodotos perceives the Persian king Xerxes' crossing of it in 480 BCE as a kind of fundamental challenge to the order of the world. Some classical scholars see the defeat of the great Persian military assault of 480–79 as the most monumental moment in the cultural history of the West, in that Greek culture itself was placed in peril as at no other time. It is worthy of note, in this context, that the whole of Herodotos' *History*, which tells the story of the Persian invasion, ends on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

It is important to recognise that the Persians were key players in the identity and military profile of the Dardanelles region from the sixth to the fourth centuries BCE. In 514 BCE, the Persian army under Darius I passed through Gallipoli, and the peninsula fell under Persian control.¹² In 480 BCE, his son Xerxes had greater conquests on his

11 Crouch, *Gallipoli Revisited*.

12 Hdt. 6.33. On Achaemenid Anatolia, see Dusinberre, *Empire, Authority, and Autonomy in Achaemenid Anatolia*.

mind. Herodotos relates that Xerxes visited Troy before going to the Hellespont, where he paused before making his crossing to the peninsula. The story of his visit to Troy is remarkable because the evidence for other such pilgrimages describes prominent *European* visitors to the site of Troy, such as Alexander the Great (see below) and various distinguished Romans.¹³ In Xerxes' case we have evidence for somebody coming from the other direction, as it were, from the east, beyond Mesopotamia, more than 2600 km away. And Xerxes presumably sympathised with what happened to the indigenous Trojans.

Xerxes crossed his forces to Gallipoli by means of a pontoon bridge, yoking boats together to provide access into Europe. Herodotos tells us that the bridges touched Europe between Sestos and Madytos (identified with modern Eceabat) (plate 1.7).¹⁴ This means, as far as the modern traveller is concerned, that Xerxes' bridges might have been just to the north of Eceabat and Kilye Bay on the road to Gelibolu, although the exact location is disputed. Changes in the landscape in the intervening period can also make certain identification difficult.

Despite some early successes, the Persian invasion of Greece was a failure, most famously in the naval battle at Salamis in 480 BCE, and in the land battle at Plataea in central Greece the following year. After his defeat at Salamis, Xerxes hastily returned to Sestos on his way back to Persia (although Herodotos also gives us an alternative version of his flight home).¹⁵ By the time he reached the narrows, the bridge was gone, shattered by storms, so he had to use a boat to cross the waterway. It was a further sign of his ultimate humiliation and failure. Fifth century BCE Greek writers, such as Aischylos (in his play *Persians* of 472 BCE) and Herodotos, mythologised the story of Xerxes to try to convey some fundamental religious and moral truths. A great and powerful king with a huge army had been defeated by small, democratic Athens and other Greek states. In their eyes, Xerxes' supreme arrogance (or 'hubris'), demonstrated most emphatically at the Dardanelles, had led inexorably to the utter defeat of him and his army.

The importance of Gallipoli to Herodotos is indicated by the fact that the end of his whole *History* is set there. Indeed, modern visitors to Gallipoli are sometimes surprised that the vicinity of modern Eceabat (ancient Madytos) is the setting for some grim events that conclude Herodotos' great work. The cruelty of what happens, and the way it is told, evince the religious and moral agenda of Herodotos: that the invasion of European Greece at the peninsula would have brutal consequences. Herodotos' account is as follows: Artayctes, the Persian governor of Sestos, committed various acts of sacrilege at a cult site at Elaiou at the tip of the peninsula (Helles). These included collecting women in a temple there and performing various unnamed acts of impiety.¹⁶ Artayctes' activities, in Herodotos' mind, characterised Persian hegemony in the region. But by 479 BCE the Athenians were back in control of the peninsula and besieging the Persians at Sestos (plate 1.8). The people of Elaiou wanted revenge on the governor, as did Xanthippos, the Athenian commander (and father of Pericles, who would become a great Athenian general and statesman in his own right).

13 Hdt. 7.43.

14 Hdt. 7.33.

15 Hdt. 8.117–118.

16 Hdt. 7.33.

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Artayctes and other Persians made their escape from Sestos, but they were captured near Aigospotami, further up the peninsula near modern Gelibolu.¹⁷ The Athenians brought the governor back south to Madytos, had him nailed to some boards, then hanged him within sight of where Xerxes had crossed with his fleet into Europe in the previous year. To add to the governor's agony he was forced to watch his son being stoned to death before his eyes. Herodotos seems to take some grim satisfaction in ending his *History* with these gruesome events on the peninsula, adjacent to where the crossing had occurred. In this way, the unassuming modern town of Eceabat, or its immediate vicinity, is the setting for the final and brutal scene in the Persian campaign of Xerxes against the Greeks (plate 1.9).

Later in the same century the Gallipoli Peninsula was also a key strategic location in a very different kind of war. Fortunately, this war too was a subject for a renowned ancient Greek writer whose work has come down to us: Thucydides, the Athenian general and historian, who wrote a *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Remarkably, this history also ends with an interest in the Hellespont, although in Thucydides' case the work is unfinished and it cuts out abruptly in very uncertain circumstances.¹⁸ The Peloponnesian war was fought between the two leading Greek states of the time, Athens and Sparta, and their allies, between 431 and 404 BCE. The cities of the peninsula were caught up in the war, just as the rest of Greece was, especially in its last phase (411–404 BCE). Two major sea battles were fought just off the shores of the peninsula: the battle of Cynossema (modern Kilitbahir, just to the south of Eceabat) in 411 BCE, and the battle of Aigospotami (near modern Gelibolu) in 405 BCE.¹⁹ Cynossema represented a narrow victory for the Athenians, but Aigospotami, the last major battle of the Peloponnesian war, was a total victory for the Spartans under Lysander. Spartan victory in the war was assured after Aigospotami. Unfortunately, Thucydides' narrative cuts out abruptly after the battle of Cynossema, so we are unable to compare his treatment of these two major sea battles between Athens and Sparta.

Students of the naval operations in the Dardanelles in 1915 might therefore reflect on these two great maritime struggles, which took place within the straits themselves during the Peloponnesian war. The battle of Cynossema in 411 BCE in particular was fought not very far from where the Allied ships were defeated on 18 March 1915. Thucydides tells us that the Athenians used Sestos and Elaious (Helles) as their base, whereas the Spartans operated from Abydos on the Asian side. He also tells us that the 76 Athenian ships sailed close to the peninsula heading towards Sestos and the narrows, and that the Spartans and their allies, with their 86 ships, came out to meet them.²⁰ The Athenians set up their line parallel with the shore, and the Spartans spread out their line to meet them. The reader might ponder the visual aspect of this naval battle: 162 ships locked in a fierce struggle in the straits would have provided the spectators on the heights of the peninsula with a rather graphic spectacle. Even more so the battle of Aigospotami six years later, which had double the number of vessels – about 350 ships in total.

The landscape of the peninsula played a crucial role in the way the struggle eventuated, in so far as the Cynossema promontory split the conflict into two (plate 1.10).

17 Hdt. 9.120–122.

18 Thuc. 8.109.

19 Körpe & Yavuz, 'The location of Aigospotamoi', pp. 226–7.

20 Thuc. 8.104.