

Chapter 11

COMING TO TERMS WITH
THE IMPERIAL LEGACY AND
THE VIOLENCE OF WAR

**Turkish Historiography of World War I between
Autarchy and a Plurality of Voices, 1914–2019**

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In Turkey, interest in the Great War was quite limited for a long time.¹ An important reason has been the clear break with the Ottoman past intended by the Kemalist Republic, including especially the tragic developments during the years 1912–22, a decade that the first republican generations experienced as well. Nonetheless, the wars of this period (the Balkan Wars, World War I, and the War of Independence) became aspects of national history as catalysts for the foundation of the republic. A retrospective reading of these events opened a space for narratives concerning the territories of the new republic, thereby omitting the Balkan and Arab provinces. Contrariwise, the Battle of Gallipoli—which was, together with the Battle of Kut-Al-Amara in Ottoman Iraq from December 1915 to April 1916, one of the two main victories of the Ottomans during the Great War period—gained importance by being inscribed into the hagiographical narrative of the national hero, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Turkish historiography,² and specifically the writing of the history of the Ottoman front, has often been neglected by compendia on World

War I.³ A lack of knowledge concerning Turkish language cannot solely account for this shortcoming since several major works have been made available in English. It is rather the perception of the Ottoman fronts as being only of secondary importance for the armies of the Triple Entente and of Germany that can be considered as the reason for the scarcity of interest. The shortage of French historiography on the Eastern fronts (the Dardanelles and the Balkans) sets a good example.

Turkish historians working on the Ottoman front and World War I in general tended to read very few publications penned by their foreign colleagues. Furthermore, Turkish translations of books on the war have become available only since the 1990s and only to a limited extent. In order to be able to explain this lack of interest, one might refer to two major characteristics of Turkish war historiography throughout much of the twentieth century, this chapter dwelling upon them as well: its national character and its focus on classical military and diplomatic history.

The end of the 1970s marks a first turn in the national historiographical tradition. This break was caused by the reaction of the Turkish state when confronted with the murders committed by the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) and the sudden emergence of the Armenian genocide as an issue of Turkish foreign affairs. The state chose to respond by means of public commemorations and the production of historiography, among others.

It was only several years later, in September 1980, that the *coup d'état* brought the second turn, a change that the two preceding military coups (namely those of May 1960 and March 1971) had not been able to foster: the army, encouraged by the goal of social engineering, intended to redesign civil society by imposing the values of what was no longer called Kemalism but Atatürkism.⁴

The third turn can be dated roughly back to the end of the 1990s and the 2000s. The increase in publication of Turkish sources and works on World War I during this period of about fifteen years is remarkable. This newfound interest might be due to the processes of political and economic liberalization, resulting in the ability for alternative—and even controversial—narratives to emerge and to be discussed without Kemalism to be perceived as under threat. Secondly, this increase in research and publications can also be considered as an effect of the Islamist “Justice and Development Party” (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi—AKP)—in power since 2002—prevailing in the conflict with Kemalist civil elites and the military. This development dispossessed the military institutions of their near monopoly on the production of historical discourse, thus opening up new fields of research. The recent and unexpected alignment of former political enemies, the military and the AKP, however, resulted

in a new nationalist synthesis of historical imagination and a renewed instrumentalization of the Battle of Gallipoli.⁵

The 2010s do not really stand for a historiographical turn but were a time when repeated commemorations of the Great War and some its great battles on the Ottoman front (Gallipoli, the defeat of Sarıkamış and, more recently, Kut-Al-Amara) boosted academic meetings and publications in quantitative terms.

While the writing of the history of the Great War was near exclusively in the hands of the military and affiliated historians until the first turn, two different camps have emerged since then, one nationalist and one critical. Both are writing “their” history of the war from their own perspective. Even though the main actors of these camps have been changing over the years, one can observe a relative stability and continuity in both the contents of and the intentions behind the two narratives.

Beginning with the question of whether there is a Turkish memory of World War I, we will then discuss the roles of the military and of Kemalism in framing the historiography of the Great War. After debating the presumably specific geographical and chronological characteristics of the Ottoman fronts, we will map the changes in sources and actors involved in the writing of the Turkish history of the 1914–18 years. We will then come to one of the most crucial issues, state violence against civilians, including the Armenian genocide. And, finally, we will analyze current trends and developments in Turkish historiography and answer the question whether there is a new Turkish historiography breaking with the culture of denial.

Is There a Turkish Memory of World War I?

One can rightly speak of a “Turkish” memory of World War I since the Armenian and Greek remembrances are either overshadowed by or reduced to a genocide scheme and the Greek-Turkish exchange of populations in 1923 and 1924. However, speaking of a Turkish memory, one must keep in mind that the common recollection of World War I by Turkish civilians is largely overdetermined by the official narrative. It is only here and there that traces of old song texts composed at the time and transmitted from one generation to another can be found. Particularly the mobilization (*seferberlik*) in 1914, the defeat of Sarıkamış in mid-January 1915, and the victory of Gallipoli in January 1915 are objects of—mainly elegiac—local folkloric and national songs (*türkü*). Concerning the Battle of Gallipoli, the *türkü* of Çanakkale, whose origins are still uncertain, is probably the most famous one. Completely different from the usual chau-

vinist tirades, it tells stories of the pain of separation of young drafted men from their loved ones, of the youth lost and of the cruelty of the war, the abominable scenes of mass murder, and finally the inconsolable grief afflicting the ones left behind. The memory of particularly hard or victorious campaigns lasted for generations in family memory, creating a deep, personal attachment to the memory of the battles. The veterans of the Battle of Gallipoli thus appear to have written its history, evoking a feeling of pride transmitted to their descendants. The memory of the war is hence also that of the soldiers shoved around from one front line to another, one landscape to another, enduring a tragic odyssey. The return of the surviving soldiers in 1918 and 1919 extended over a period of several months. Mostly carried out on foot, their return home turned the roads of Anatolia into a sea of people, resembling what the Russians experienced after 1917.

National commemorations began during the interwar period, that is, during the founding years of the republic (1923–38), but they unsurprisingly mainly concentrated on the Battle of Gallipoli, linking it with the great battles of the Independence War (1919–22) and thereby overshadowing and even eliding the Balkan Wars and the other battles of World War I. After the transition from a one- to a multiparty system at the middle of the 1940s, new monuments commemorating the defeat of Sarikamış were erected, often on local military initiative. These clearly served the maintenance of regimental memories. Accordingly, and this is true up until the 1980s, the ceremonies that took place at these memory sites had a predominantly military character, even if representatives of state and municipal authorities were present as well.

There are several reasons for the belated emergence of commemoration by civilians in the form of “memory tourism.” First, the relatively late appearance of the concept of national and cultural heritage may serve as an explanation. Second, the geography of the Ottoman fronts is to be blamed. Far beyond the territories of the Republic of Turkey—Thrace and Anatolia—one can find Ottoman military cemeteries in the area stretching across Galicia, Macedonia, Romania, the Caucasus, Persia, Egypt, and the Arabian provinces of the empire such as Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Yemen, and even as far away as India (Karnataka and Rajasthan), Myanmar, and Siberia, where Turkish POWs were sent. Nonetheless, these cemeteries maintained by the army are hardly ever visited by civilians, serving their purpose only on the occasion of official visits. Commemorative tourism only began when the southern part of the peninsula of Gallipoli was made into a park for national history in 1973. The boom of national tourism during the 1990s marked the beginning of a new upswing of commemoration in the park. From 1993 to 1998, the number of visitors to the

two museums based on the peninsula increased from 90,000 to 145,000 per year. A renewed increase in numbers can be detected during the period from 2003 to 2005/2006, bringing the numbers to 300,000. Hence, it has been estimated that a total of seven million visitors—speaking of 10 percent of the population—has visited the peninsula from 2007 to 2013, a number to which one may add an additional three million visitors for the period prior to 2007.⁶ Besides, between 60,000 and 80,000 foreigners—mainly New Zealanders and Australians attending Anzac Day (25 April)—are visiting the park each year since 1990, when their national commemorations were extended to the peninsula.

The Foundational Historiographical Narrative Established by the Military and Kemalism

A Military History of World War I Written by and for the Military

Turkish historiography followed the approaches of diplomatic and military history, showing little interest in neighboring subdisciplines such as the social history of war. Here, the term “military history” must be understood as a history of military operations written by and for the military. In the beginning of the republic, during the 1920s and 1930s, officers—very often recently retired—set out to write and sometimes translate books mainly for the purpose of serving as manuals for cadets at the military schools and the war college. Since such published monographs and conference presentations were often authored by officers of the General Staff who had actively participated in the events, it is difficult to categorize them as either primary or secondary sources.

Since the 1920s, most of the research on military history was published by the Military Academy, for example the *Askeri Mecmua* (Military journal). This periodical, first issued in 1882, published sixty-two articles (of which ten were translations) on the Great War during the period from March 1919 until March 1948. From 1952 onward these articles were printed in the series *Harp Tarihi Vesikaları* (Documents of the history of the war), which became *Harp Tarihi Belgeleri* (idem) in 1973 and finally *Askeri Tarih Belgeleri* (Documents of military history) from 1978 to 2004.

In 1916, the Ministry of War (Harbiye Nezareti) opened a new branch working on the history of war (Tarih-i Harp Şubesi), mainly concentrating on the collection and classification of documents on the wars of the empire (the Great War included). In order to store and categorize them properly, the Military Archives (Harb Hazine-i Evraki) were established; they show a clear preference for documents produced at the front, such as war diaries (in Ottoman: *harp cerideleri*), when it comes to choosing

sources for writing the history of the recent wars (the Italo-Turkish War, Balkan Wars, and the Great War). This newly created section was directly attached to the General Staff and has been providing members for the constitution of a Commission on Military History (Tarih-i Askeri Encümeni). Two other projects envisaged but never realized were the compilation of a history of the world war (*Harb-i Umumi Tarihi*) in fifty volumes and publications on the history of all Ottoman fronts. After several name changes, the branch was renamed again in 1978 and is since known as the Directorate for Military History and Strategic Studies (Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı—ATASE).

Nevertheless, it took some sixty years before the Turkish General Staff finally published a history of the Great War at the Ottoman fronts in four volumes. The given title *Birinci Cihan Harbi'nde Türk Harbi* (The Turkish war during the First World War)⁷ is misleading, since it places the Ottoman front only to a certain and very limited extent in the larger context of the Great War. From 1967 on, publications on World War I approach the topic either with a focus on regions or, less often, with a focus on the type of warfare (aerial, naval, etc.). Only from 1983 on is the “Armenian question” addressed regularly in generalized publications not directly in line with the Great War.⁸ The Battle of Gallipoli, object of two publications in the 1950s, gained editorial attention again in the 1990s on the occasion of its seventy-fifth anniversary.⁹ In the 2000s and 2010s, interest in this battle has undergone another remarkable upswing in terms of publications.¹⁰

This “Turkish” military history is also represented in the work of Edward J. Erickson, a retired American naval officer who had served in Turkey during a NATO mission in the 1990s. His first book, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War*, was published in 2001.¹¹ Though he explains his motivation for writing this monograph to have been the lack of English books on the Turks in the Great War, he confesses in his acknowledgments that he was also strongly encouraged by his Turkish colleagues. The book’s preface was written by the Turkish head of staff at the time, General Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu, who had been Erickson’s superior during the mission and a close friend ever since. According to Erickson, Kıvrıkoğlu’s position granted him privileged access to military sources (at ATASE). Erickson’s book focuses on the martial qualities of the Ottoman army and implicitly adopts a denialist stance on the question of the Armenian genocide. In 2003, Vahakn Dadrian, a historian, legal expert, and director of research on the genocide at the Zoryan Institute (in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and in Toronto, Canada), published a devastating critique of Erickson’s work, accusing him of being a spokesperson for the Turkish General Staff. Mehmet Beşikçi, a Turkish

historian who wrote his dissertation on the mobilization during the war, repeated Dadrian's criticism without denouncing Erickson's stance on the genocide.¹² Erickson's book was translated into Turkish and published as early as 2003.¹³ His second work, *Ottoman Army Effectiveness in World War I* was published in 2007 and translated into Turkish in 2009.¹⁴ It was followed by his third monograph *Gallipoli: The Ottoman Campaign*, published in English in August 2010 and in Turkish in 2012.¹⁵

Most of Turkish archival sources on World War I are located at ATASE and in the Ottoman archives of the Prime Ministry (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri—BOA). The diplomatic archives—mostly written in French—had been inaccessible for a long time,¹⁶ but they were recently joined to the latter archive. The archives of the Ministry of the Interior (Dahiliye Nezareti)—also part of the BOA collections—are of particular importance for the study of the Great War. They allow an analysis of the activities of (Mehmed) Talaat Pasha during the time in which he was the head of the Ministry of Interior, between July 1913 and October 1918.

Besides archival sources, memoirs, testimonies, and other first-person documents are important resources for military historians. In trying to explain their relatively small number in the Ottoman case, one usually references a high level of illiteracy—a presumption hard to verify since it had not been an aspect of the general census.

Fevzi Çakmak, head of the General Staff from July 1921 to April 1950, played a crucial role in promoting the publication of war memoirs and set an example himself. Writing on the Balkan Wars and the Great War and not on the War of Independence provided the opportunity to avoid topics that could have caused irritation. This course of action was used by a very limited but nevertheless influential group of generals such as Kâzım Karabekir, Rauf Orbay, and Ali Fuat Cebesoy, who supported Mustafa Kemal during the War of Independence but politically confronted him once peace was reestablished. Clearly, the military memoirs were intended for the Turkish army, its officers, and particularly the General Staff. As the military historian Mesut Uyar mentioned in 2005,¹⁷ many of these memoirs are still lying untouched in the archives of ATASE.

The Diplomatic and Political History of the Entry into the War and of Warfare with a Focus on the Issue of Unionist Responsibility

Apart from the military history of the Great War, there is also a diplomatic and political approach to history. Yusuf Hikmet Bayur,¹⁸ an eminent historian central in the construction of the “official civil history” of the war, was probably the first civilian to elaborate on the entry into the war and on warfare. He dedicated four of ten volumes¹⁹ of his political

history of the “Turkish Revolution” to these issues, a *summa* published in the years of 1939 to 1963²⁰ and covering the period from 1878 to 1923. Bayur depicts the entry into the war as an adventurous and thoughtless decision taken by the “triumvirate” of the pashas Talaat, Enver, and Djemal. He accused Enver Pasha of having pursued the political pipe dreams of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism and of having “sold” the empire to Germany. Concerning the sources of his work, Bayur mostly relies on the rich documentation published by European governments after 1919, and on Ottoman periodicals, the Ottoman diplomatic archives—which had not yet been catalogued—as well as local political memoirs difficult to access. Bayur’s harsh critique of the Unionists—whom he depicts as incompetent—and his view of the global conflict as the result of Western imperialism rapidly created a new paradigm in Turkey. In spite of the critical view of the Unionists’ role in the war, the continuity between Unionists and Kemalists both in terms of personnel and ideas²¹ motivated Kemalist Turkey to protect the memory of Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) protagonists regarding important issues such as the genocide, a strong republican reflex that was undermined only partly by the rise to power of the Islamist AKP in the early 2000s.

The history of the Great War was also the object of research of two Turkologists—Feroz Ahmad and Stanford J. Shaw—who made their careers mostly in the United States but later on taught in Turkey.²² The political history of World War I owes a lot to Ahmad,²³ who—focusing on the Unionist government—privileged a chronological approach to the period from 1908 to 1918. As stressed by Mehmet Beşikçi, Feroz Ahmad’s contribution is not limited to a classical political history of the Great War but also encompasses economic and social dimensions. Stanford Shaw, who passed away in December 2006, wrote a history of the Ottoman Empire during the war period (two volumes of almost twenty-six hundred pages!), published by the public Society of Turkish History (Türk Tarih Kurumu). His work wavers between descriptive erudition—useful but lacking true problematization—and a thematic approach (dealing with war mobilization, the Special Organization, population movement, and Pan-Islamism). Even though his work—considering its volume and density—appears authoritative, it falls victim to his alignment with the Turkish state as far as the Armenian genocide and the violence against civilians during the war in general are concerned.²⁴

The National and Nationalist History Centered on Mustafa Kemal

Turkish historiography, with rare but notable exceptions, was and remains national. It seldom uses Western primary and secondary sources, neither

sources in other languages of the Ottoman Empire than Turkish. Furthermore, Turkish historiography narrates an imperial history as if it was a national one, rarely and poorly considering non-Muslims and minorities of the late empire (for instance, in topics like conscription, desertion, and forced labor, see *infra*). Moreover, these narratives tend to “Turkify” Ottoman patriotic sentiments present among the Muslims and sometimes the non-Muslims of the Empire. The focus on military operations in Anatolia (the Battle of Gallipoli, the war theater of Eastern Anatolia) at the expense of other Ottoman territories in the Arab provinces constitutes another characteristic. Finally, the narrative created by Turkish historiography is an often nationalist and Manichean history frequently used as a tool for ideological mobilization. The Battle of Gallipoli serves as the best example: it is—as seen earlier—part of a teleological history of modernization read back to the first years of the Tanzimat Reforms in the nineteenth century and possibly even to the reign of Selim III at the end of the eighteenth. This teleological approach emerged during the Young Turk period, but it especially flourished in the Early Kemalist Republic, when the War of Independence and the Unionist period were included in the narrative. In this regard, the battle of Gallipoli does not belong to the Great War but is a kind of prelude to the War of Independence, also referred to as the “Liberation War” (*Kurtuluş Savaşı*) or the “National Struggle” (*Milli Mücadele*).

The historiography of the Battle of Gallipoli focuses on the commanding officers of the regiments for two reasons. First of all, there is the aim to play down the importance of the role German officers had in the victory. The second concern focuses on Mustafa Kemal. He himself being the commander of the Fifty-Seventh Regiment, the importance of the other parties involved in the victory (his peers, his Ottoman superiors, and especially Esad Pasha)²⁵ had to be diminished in order to make him emerge as the main agent of victory. Kemal—as lieutenant colonel (*kaymakam*)—managed to stop the ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) on their advance from Ariburnu, from where they advanced to Conkbayır in May 1915. Kemal is also perceived as the colonel (*miralay*), promoted by Liman von Sanders on 1 June 1915, who fought back the British troops in the first Battle of Anafartalar (on 9–10 August), in Kireçtepe (on 17 August), and in the second Battle of Anafartalar (on 21 August 1915).

Mustafa Kemal’s role has repeatedly been subject to reevaluation. Already during the war, in an extensive interview conducted in Mustafa Kemal’s domicile in Istanbul from 24 to 28 March 1918 and published in the periodical *Yeni Mecmua*, the journalist Rüşen Eşref [Ünaydın] presented him as the “hero of Anafartalar.” This reputation did help Mustafa Kemal

consolidate his authority over his peers, his equals, and even over his superiors (in age and rank) during the War of Independence. Additionally, it can partially explain both his popularity among the Muslim population and the charisma he would show before, during, and even after the War of Independence. Beside Rüşen Eşref's article, which has been republished many times during the following decades, the General Staff also kept the cult of Mustafa Kemal alive by publishing a book penned by his comrade of war, Cemil [Conk], in 1959.²⁶ Apart from these publications, the Society of Turkish History (Türk Tarih Kurumu—TTK) decided in 1962 to reissue Mustafa Kemal's notes on the Battle of Anafartalar that had already been printed in 1955 by Sel, a private publishing house.²⁷ Truly remarkable is the fact that new editions appeared in large numbers after the coup of 1980. This might be due to the military willing to reinforce the cult around the charismatic leader who founded the Republic. Historiography today still seems to partly follow this trend, as a recently (2003) published book by ambassador Sermet Atıncalı, *Atatürk ve Çanakkale'nin Komutanları* (Atatürk and the commanding officers of the battle of Gallipoli),²⁸ indicates.

A Chronological and Geographical Framework Proper to the Ottoman Fronts?

An Ottoman “Ten-Year War”

After the Great War, Turkish historians first talked of a “world war” or a “universal war” (*cihan harbi* or *harbi umumi*), and then of the “First World War” (*Birinci Dünya Savaşı*). In the Ottoman case, one could rather call it a “ten-year war” since the time from the first Balkan War to the end of the War of Independence (1912–22) is a decade marked by only short periods of fragile peace.²⁹ It must be emphasized that, for the Ottomans, the Great War was initially only the third round of the Balkan Wars. And it was only the War of Independence (1919–22) and the treaties that followed³⁰—and not the armistice of Mudros in 1918—that put an end to the war period. This very belated end of the war is shared *mutatis mutandis* by another Eastern front: the Russian one. At the time, the impression of having lived through a decennial conflict was surely adopted by the elites of the respective countries, but probably also by the people.³¹ Consequently, the Ottoman front shares a major characteristic with the other Eastern fronts in Europe (the Balkans and Russia): the desertion rate was not about 1 or 2 percent as it was for the Western fronts, but ten times higher, from 10 to 20 percent.³² The weariness of the conscripts became palpable in Eastern Anatolia as early as 1915 and appears to have

been stronger in rural environments, where enrollment started in 1912. In fact, the extension of the period under observation helps comprehend the effect on the war generation: the young commanders leading the War of Independence from 1919–22 were born in the 1880s just like Mustafa Kemal and shared the same multiple war experiences, including 1914–18.

Recent official historiography does not ignore this prolonged perspective, as evidenced by works such as that of İsmet Görgülü titled *On Yıllık Harbin Kadrosu: 1912–1922* (The Military Staff of the Ten Year War: 1912–1922)³³ or again the three volumes published by ATASE in 2009 covering the biographies of Ottoman commanders fighting in World War I.³⁴ But unfortunately these biographies are too concise and exiguous to provide a real prosopography.

One or Several Ottoman Fronts?

The war waged by the Ottoman Empire against the Entente was conducted on a vast territory stretching from the Balkans—and even from Galicia where Enver Pasha sent his best regiments in order to please his allies—to as far as Iraq and Yemen. These distances were a crucial parameter for an empire whose transport infrastructure and facilities were notoriously deficient. Considering the geographical dilation, another variable enters the war: the dispersion of battlefields over a very heterogeneous territory in terms of landscapes and peoples (more or less loyal populations and more or less well organized). The war experience in these various areas had in common only the movement of Ottoman soldiers, who were sent from one place to another, which motivated mostly Turkish officers and sometimes even Germans to write about their experiences, systematically juxtaposing landscapes ranging from the snowy mountains of Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus to the deserts of the Middle East. These memoirs became testimonies of the destabilizing and murderous effects such changes in landscape and setting had on the soldiers and also of how these men succeeded in adapting and inventing micro-solutions.³⁵ This necessity and ability to adapt to the difficulties of the war and the environment could be seen as a recurring theme, a leitmotif, going beyond the extensive litanies on the bravery and heroism of soldiers and beyond works on mortality (actually on the “Armenian question”), epidemics, and health services.³⁶

The Ottoman fronts as covered by historiography can be grouped *grosso modo* as follows: Eastern and Southeastern Europe (especially Galicia, but also some parts of the Balkans, namely Macedonia and Romania); the peninsula of Gallipoli and a small part the Aegean shores (in the year 1915); the “Caucasian” front (this front includes Eastern Anatolia and

the Northern and Southern Caucasus),³⁷ to which a closely linked Persian subfront might be added; and finally the front of the Arab provinces, which could be divided into four subfronts: (1) Tripoli; (2) the front of the Suez Canal, Egypt, and Syria-Palestine, (3) the Gulf front; and (4) “Mesopotamia” (now Iraq). These fronts—due to their varying importance—do not all enjoy the same attention. For several reasons, three of them deserve a more careful examination: Gallipoli, Syria-Palestine, and the Caucasian front.

An Analysis of the Syrian-Palestinian Front through the Overlapping Prisms of Ideologies (Pan-Islamism, Nationalism, and Ottomanism)

From 1916 onward, the Ottomans had to face the “Arab Revolt” in Syria-Palestine,³⁸ an ideal starting point when it comes to measuring the importance of religious motifs within ideological and military mobilization. The bearings of *jihad* proclaimed by the Ottomans in 1914 on the one hand and of Pan-Islamism molded by the CUP on the other hand set good examples for objects of research.³⁹

For a long time, this front had been neglected by Turkish historiography.⁴⁰ This neglect can be understood as an expression of negative views of the Arab world as a consequence of their “betrayal” during the Arab Revolt. A reappraisal happened only in the 1990s when the Centre for Research on Islam (ISAM—İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi), linked to the Presidency for Religious Affairs (Diyanet), promoted an interest in the Arab and Muslim worlds. Also, the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), part of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and founded in Istanbul in 1980, became more important at this time. These centers did not publish on the Great War directly but encouraged research in this direction, underlining the importance of the role played by a common religious identity, creating a kind of network of fraternity and corporate feeling. This reorientation toward the Arab world has been continued and even emphasized by the Islamist AKP coming into power in 2002. It is promoting a new diplomatic program based on the idea of reevaluating the Ottoman period in the light of the colonial mandates, the troubled Arab independences, and the quest for Ottoman heritage. This approach disdains—in accordance with the approach by IRCICA—the historiographical debate on Ottoman colonialism, which finds its most fervent defenders among Arab historians and its best regional example in the Yemenite case. While the military contribution of the Arab provinces to the imperial war effort had been underrated, it is nowadays reevaluated, and even runs risk of going so far as to reverse perspectives, overshadowing the role of Arab and Turkish

nationalisms, the latter of which is still visible in some Turkish generals' memoirs. The rise of nationalisms during the Great War is a factor that explains the widening gap between the military administration and local elites in Syria, even if some Turkish historians still have difficulties in recognizing this process.

The “Caucasian” Front: A Field for Observing Enver Pasha’s Ideology in Action

The “Caucasian” front was taken into account by Turkish military historiography from very early on, but it has not been an object of major interest in any other field apart from military history until the 1990s. The field of activity of Enver Pasha in 1914, this front is the setting for a traumatizing defeat in Sarikamış (in February 1915), highlighted even more by the victory at Gallipoli. In 1918, Enver reappears indirectly by establishing the “Army of Islam,” which was led by his uncle Halil and his brother, cadet Nuri. Thus, Enver launched the last Caucasian campaign. This army—already extensively studied—can be considered as Enver’s swan song in the region,⁴¹ part of his vision and his complex political activism that should be qualified as “Enverism” rather than as “Pan-Turkism” or “Pan-Islamism.”⁴² To date, this vision has been less researched than the military operations it provoked. A noteworthy exception represents the work of Michael Reynolds: not denying the existence of Pan-Turkish or Pan-Islamic motives in Enver’s politics, Reynolds defends the idea of a Unionist policy seeking stability and preservation of the Ottoman state and facing supposed threats.

By jointly reading recent Turkish research⁴³ and that of Wolfdieter Bihl, one can get a larger picture of the articulation of German and Ottoman⁴⁴ Caucasian policies,⁴⁵ as well as the policies directed toward the minorities of imperial Russia. Adding the work and publications of Stéphane Yerasimos and Mete Tunçay helps us gain a clearer, multilayered understanding of the links between the Caucasian front and the events of the Russian Revolution, an important question for the 1918–22 period as well.⁴⁶

Another characteristic of the Caucasian front is its centrality when it comes to understanding the Armenian genocide, since the majority of Ottoman Armenians in 1914 lived in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Anatolia. The historiography of the Armenian genocide has been partly marked by decontextualization in the sense that the genocide was often represented as an isolated event not located in the context of the war on the Caucasian front, which embeds the genocide into a larger temporal frame.

Recent publications pointed out the effects of the massive desertions subsequent to the defeat of Sarıkamış in February 1915.⁴⁷ Even though these desertions concerned Muslims and Armenians in an equal manner, the Ottoman government, gripped by a fit of paranoia, punished primarily the latter group. This moment also invites us to think about the interaction between the Third Ottoman Army stationed in the Northeastern Anatolia and the loosely organized groups and brigades of the Special Organization (Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa), to the latter of whom the initiative and responsibility on the war field, and especially in the Armenian genocide, has often been attributed, although the army and to some extent the CUP were in charge. Finally, the study of the Ottoman front reveals the overshadowing nature of Armenian genocide: what started as an Ottoman-Russian conflict became, especially due to the process of disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the resulting fear of a complete collapse, a conflict in which—after the Russian Revolution, the collapse of the Russian Empire and the subsequent withdrawal of the Russian army—Armenian militias and Ottoman forces were opposing one another. The sheer fear of total extermination on the Armenian side and the threat of revenge on the Ottoman side changed the face and nature of the conflict profoundly. This front is an object of research par excellence when it comes to studying the phenomenon of militias and irregular paramilitary groups.

New Actors, New Sources and New Fields: A Change in the Writing of History?

The End of the Military Monopoly

The exclusive—or rather excessive—role of military historians within the historiography of the Ottoman imperial wars has been pointed out by Mehmet Beşikçi and Gültekin Yıldız, the latter being a historian not of the 1914–18 years but of conscription and the maintenance of order in the Ottoman nineteenth century. Whereas the first, Mehmet Beşikçi, offers a simple explanation for the overwhelming role of military historians by underlining the traditional disinterest of Turkish universities in topics such as wars and the army and the absence of research programs in the relevant departments,⁴⁸ the second, Gültekin Yıldız, sees the military as the agent of its (own) involvement in the Turkish World War I historiography.⁴⁹ Yıldız promotes the concept of a “demilitarization” of military history, paralleling the political agenda of the Islamist AKP, which is attempting or attempted to expulse the military from the public sphere

in order to “civilize” it. Yıldız points out that militarism is presently denounced more openly and easily, especially by intellectuals and universities affiliated to the liberal left.

Hence, according to Yıldız, the main historiographical divide is not the one separating military history from other approaches to the history of World War I but rather that between historiography of historians with connections to the military and history written by those without such connections. By drawing a clear line between civil and military historians, Yıldız emphasizes the role of military historians and military institutions such as ATASE, but he tends to underestimate the porosity between these two groups—Turkish military and civil historians—a porosity that implicitly nourishes militarism. Some scholars choose to work and publish on topics such as the Battle of Gallipoli, Atatürk, or the War of Independence in order to rise faster within their profession.

The complex role played by the 1980 coup in restructuring historiographical production should not be forgotten: a great number of scholars from various disciplines (primarily economy and political sciences, but also history) were excluded from higher education. Besides, the systematic “cleansing” of universities and the introduction of a control mechanism in the form of the High Council of Universities (Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu—YÖK) made the academic field more obedient and facilitated the careers of mediocre figures. Most professors and graduates excluded from academia entered the private sector (media, enterprise, etc.), and a few of them moved abroad. Careers in the private sector allowed some of them to acquire alternative resources they were subsequently able to invest when the regime of the military junta progressively liberalized, thereby creating new spaces in scientific publishing (for example the publishers Belge and İletişim), the field of associations (e.g. the Tarih Vakfı, the Foundation for History), and the academic milieu, most notably through the foundation of private universities from the mid-1990s on. Economic liberalization introduced a market logic that allowed both alternative history and official history to find an audience.

The role of Turkish media in militarization is often underrated, although the contribution of journalists to the writing of the history of the Great War is quite important. One should also not forget the major role of local contributors to historiography who are a blend between investigative journalist and amateur historian, termed “researching writers” (*araştırmacı yazar*), a genuinely Turkish category. There is not one single socio-professional group involved in writing on war: authors are rooted in different milieus and come from different social and cultural backgrounds. Their largely nationalist stance guarantees them a certain degree of unassailability when writing about the Great War; and they share a chau-

vinist, heroic vision of history that creates an emotional bond. Equally important as the authors and publishers are the purchasers: municipalities, large as well as midsized public or private enterprises, banks, and insurance companies, all competing to publish “their” history of Gallipoli. Publications on the “Armenian question” on the other hand rather draw on the support of the state or other “official” actors (such as the *Türk Tarih Kurumu*). Furthermore, universities and foreign research institutes, particularly those in the United States of America, deserve a closer look. As early as 1991, in his polemical essay *The Turkish State and History: Clio Meets the Grey Wolf*, Speros Vryonis denounced the Turkish governmental policy aimed at directing, controlling, and instrumentalizing foreign research on the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. To be balanced, one also needs to point out the very positive role Turkish doctoral students in American as well as European universities played in elaborating a truthful historiography of the Great War. These academics assumed crucial roles in establishing new approaches to the study of the war.⁵⁰

Another set of actors played a role in the multiplication of publications of historical sources: publishing houses, whether large, such as the *İş Bankası* or *Timaş*, or more modest ones, that publish series of memoirs or other documents of the war. The most common constellation of persons involved in the publication of such books is composed of a descendant of a person who produced or owned a manuscript, an amateur historian, often assisted either by an older person or a student (who does not assist officially or even in the name of his/her university) with a reading knowledge of Ottoman Turkish, the latter of whose task is to transcribe the manuscript into Latin characters and “simplify” it (in Turkish: *sadeleştirme*) by replacing Ottoman vocabulary considered obsolete with modern Turkish equivalents. Consequently, neither scholars officially affiliated with a university nor military historians are usually involved in the process of editing and adapting the document. Publishing houses tend to prefer the texts to be accessible rather than authentic. The editorial work, the critical adaptation, and the number of footnotes are often limited.

Easier Access to Archives and an Expansion of Sources?

Access to the Ottoman archives (BOA) has become progressively easier since the 1990s. One of the first persons to use these archives for research (in the 1990s) was Fuat Dündar, who was then preparing his master’s thesis on the Unionists’ demographic engineering of Muslim populations in the years from 1913 to 1918. He consulted documents of the Ministry of Interior that had probably never been shared before. In order to explain this unprecedented accessibility, he underlines the role played by the

changing profile of the directorate, but also of the personnel, insisting on the importance their initiative played for his access.⁵¹ According to Dündar, they were no longer nationalist in the sense of protecting Unionist ideas but rather were influenced by the new Islamist trend, which allowed them to hand over these documents without batting an eye. But this can only partially serve as an explanation since the new accessibility did not only concern documents from the Young Turk period (1908–18) but included the history of the Ottoman Empire as a whole. This policy was part of a new level of transparency the Republic offered to improve its position in the debate about the Armenian genocide. Additionally, this shift in attitude can be considered as part of a newly emerging state discourse suggesting that “one should leave the Armenian question to the historians.”⁵²

Access to the military archives had been severely restricted for a long time and had only been granted to either army historians or historians “accredited” by the General Staff if convinced of their ideological docility. This was the case at ATASE, where documents about the Great War were assembled under an eponymous subdivision: the *Birinci Dünya Harbi (BDH) Koleksiyonu*,⁵³ which theoretically should have made access technically easier and quicker than for the Ottoman Archives (BOA). The ATASE archives houses two kinds of sources. The first kind documents correspondences between military authorities of the same rank and vertical correspondence across ranks, giving information about their interaction. The second consists of daily reports that grant insight into the development of battles, the military and security-related situation of an area at any given time, etc.

Authors writing about the Armenian genocide denounce the inaccessibility, the “cleansing” of civil and military archives, and the destruction of documents, claiming that these archives hold fundamental evidence for the activities of the Special Organization that gained notoriety as a main actor in the genocide.

The situation has changed gradually since the 1990s. Today, the website of the Turkish Armed Forces states that the archives are open to four categories of researchers: “1. Turkish citizens; 2. Foreign scholars; 3. Researchers from official institutions [a category of its own!] 4. Authors and researchers coming from ATASE.”⁵⁴ The division into distinct categories suggests, however, that differences between researchers are still made according to nationality and affiliation. Besides, the reproduction of documents was forbidden until recently: researchers had to tediously copy them by hand. Mehmet Beşikçi summed up the state of this issue in the introduction to his thesis in 2012: the ATASE “liberally” authorizes the general release of documents for a proposed research topic. However, the decision on whether a specific document falls within the limits of said

topic remains with ATASE. The catalogue represents another burden in listing files and not documents, since the researcher cannot know the number of documents contained in one file.⁵⁵

Toward a Social and Economic History of the War?

In 1930, the book *Turkey in the World War* was published in the United States by the Turkish journalist Ahmet Emin Yalman, who was in voluntary exile at the time for having engaged in the party opposing Mustafa Kemal until 1925.⁵⁶ The geographical distance allowed Yalman not only to develop a more independent perspective but also to expand his approach well beyond that of a military or diplomatic account. His book evokes the politics of the Unionist government (not only focusing on the so-called triumvirate of Enver/Djemeal/Talaat⁵⁷) but goes far beyond into the past and develops the background to topics usually neglected, namely the war economy and desertions. This is the first Turkish work devoted to the social and economic history of the Great War.

It is only in the 1980s that an economic historian of Boğaziçi University, Zafer Toprak, revisited the subject in his work on the “national economy” of the Unionist period from 1908 to 1918. A second edition appeared in 2003 titled *İttihat-Terakki ve Cihan Harbi: Savaş Ekonomisi ve Türkiye’de Devletçilik, 1914–1918* (Union and Progress and the World War: The War Economy and Statism in Turkey, 1914–1918). This edition was more elaborate in problematizing the topic but narrower in focusing on a shorter period (the Great War).⁵⁸ Toprak analyzes the Unionist war economy, the effects of the abolition of capitulations, the goal of creating a Muslim merchant class, and the disappropriation of the non-Muslim bourgeoisie that went hand in hand with it. Moreover, he underlines the crucial role played by the decision to make use of the right to print money, a decision that impacted Ottoman financial credibility. According to Toprak, this choice sealed the empire’s decline even more than its military defeats. He also added an analysis of the social effects of the terrible inflation on the empire, which resulted in the emergence of a newly rich class profiting from war and mass pauperization.⁵⁹ These social effects as outlined by Toprak are the topic of a recent dissertation by Yiğit Akın on the home front, inspired by the German *Alltagsgeschichte*.⁶⁰ Just as Toprak who was a trained economist but then turned to the Great War and its economic dimensions, Erol Köroğlu—trained at Boğaziçi University—did not study history but turned his attention from the field of comparative literature to the Great War, writing a dissertation on the instrumentalization of literature for propagandistic ends, which was defended and published in 2003.⁶¹

Some fields of research and a few topics such as local history, prisoners of war, and the Special Organization remain largely untouched by the historiographical renewal outlined above. Local actors (public universities, chambers of industry and commerce, municipalities, etc.) incentivize the production of works characterized by a strong local patriotism, comforting official history and avoiding topics such as violence against local non-Muslim populations (Armenians, Greeks, but also Syrians and Chaldeans). This concerns particularly the regions in the east and southeast of Turkey (for the Armenians, the Syrians, and the Chaldeans) and the Aegean coast (for the Greeks). The history of the prisoners of war is a rich subject that has been dealt with in several works, which are unfortunately rather limited and deceiving.⁶²

The Bone of Contention: The Armenian Genocide and State Violence against Civilians

The Caucasian front is essential for understanding the Armenian genocide, since the great majority of Ottoman Armenians were situated in the eastern provinces of Anatolia in 1914.

When it comes to the Special Organization (*Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*) and its wide range of activities—among them espionage, counterintelligence, psychological warfare, guerrilla war, deportation, and mass murder—one must admit that the difficulty in drawing a greater, more detailed picture still prevails until today. Examining its crucial role in the Armenian genocide is an important but not the only challenge. Unfortunately, even though the ATASE archives contain numerous documents concerning the *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*, only few of them are published. The popular fascination for the arcane nature and the mysteries surrounding the Special Organization has also gripped Turkish researchers. But little is known about this polymorphic organization, whether regarding its origins, its contours, its hierarchy, or even its interactions with other institutions such as the Unionist Party (CUP), the government, and the army.⁶³

The genealogy of the centrality of this form of violence has not yet been traced. In order to do so, one probably needs to go back to the debates of the Peace Conference of 1919 and even beyond, if one considers that the figures and motives of this discourse had already been elaborated—with political, ethical, and legal registers—in Europe during the nineteenth century.⁶⁴ The centrality of the Armenian genocide, a topic prohibited to research and denied by Turkish historiography, can therefore also serve as an explanation for the lack of discussions on the war in general. Nowadays, this position is not unanimous among Turkish historians anymore

and the discourse is expanding. It may even be argued that today a part of the new generation of historians—by explicitly or implicitly opting for the concept of “demographic” or “ethnic engineering” (*nüfus mühendisliği* or *etnik mühendisliği* in Turkish) as frame of analysis—poses the question of the centrality of extreme violence against civil populations not exclusively for the Armenian genocide or for the World War I period, but extends their interest toward matters of the last decades of the Ottoman Empire and the founding years of the republic (1923–38).⁶⁵

Militarism and Mobilization of Resources: New Conceptual Instruments for Breaking the Impasse?

Turkish militarism has been an object of interest of several books examining both its manifestations and its possible German roots. In this respect, the role of paramilitary youth associations has been analyzed by Zafer Toprak in 1979, followed by Mehmet Beşikçi and more recently Mehmet Ö. Alkan’s work, which focuses on schooling and civic education in the years from 1908 to 1918. The role Germany played within the empire is largely military, with the point of contention being the role of German officers in the Battle of Gallipoli and the German “mission” within the empire. The most important memoirs of German military actors are available in Turkish. Furthermore, there are well-elaborated works on the Prussian/German military influence and its bearings from the Tanzimat period to the 1940s,⁶⁶ thus going far beyond the classical studies of Wallach and Trumpener.⁶⁷ These analyses also include a reevaluation of the German influence on Ottoman officers who are nowadays no longer considered as unconditional partisans of the Second Reich but rather as militarists socialized in the Prussian/German tradition.

Since 1980, a number of historians have been emphasizing that the conception of a “nation in arms” developed by Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz, the leader of the German military mission in Turkey from 1882 to 1895, assumed a central role for the Young Turks and Mustafa Kemal. Hande Nezir and Fuat Dündar revisited this Goltzian idea in their dissertations.⁶⁸ Dündar explains that von der Goltz’s first contribution was to define a defendable military space and territory corresponding in this case to Anatolia and partially also to Syria. Besides this territorial strategy, he is also known for his book on the nation in arms, *Das Volk in Waffen*, subject to numerous translations and editions. Its Ottoman translation—a bestseller in the empire—is supposed to have inspired the founders of Young Turk militarism and their writings. Finally, another point of contention in Turkey is the effect of importing a German social Darwinist

model, a question that concerns also the German role in the extermination of the Armenians. This issue caused lively debates among historians transcending the rift between deniers and their opponents.

The conscription of all Ottoman citizens regardless of religion adopted after the revolution of the Young Turks (1908) represented one of the most important and most debated measures.⁶⁹ It is the logical but “revolutionary” continuation of a constitutional process started in 1856. Even today, there is uncertainty to which extent this reform was applied during the war as it provoked reluctance among non-Muslims as well as Muslims. Doubt is also entertained when it comes to the question of how non-Muslim soldiers (becoming an officer was very rare for non-Muslims and mostly confined to technical domains) interacted with Muslim soldiers, especially within the Muslim military hierarchy. Hence, the challenge for historiography is to abandon its reductive and anachronistic Turkish Muslim-centered perspective and write a truly “Ottoman” history of the army. The topic of non-Muslims in the army touches upon another dimension that shows the definite failure of the 1908 project: from 1915 onward, non-Muslim soldiers were massively and obligatorily transferred to the battalions of forced labor (*amele taburları*) created in 1914. These battalions formed an unarmed and therefore vulnerable labor force. They are a well-studied topic that has raised lively debates among historians that still deserves further and in-depth researches.⁷⁰

Mehmet Beşikçi devoted one part of his thesis to the question of conscription, the “mobilization of manpower,” but also—and more importantly—to the “total war.” He calls the initial mobilization of autumn of 1914 an “organized spontaneity.” His work examines the relations between state and society from the point of view of interaction and thus perceives it as a relationship of permanent negotiation. Furthermore, he emphasizes the evolution of state practices, which seemed to become, according to him, more and more centralized, authoritarian, and nationalist. Yet he arrives at a complex picture oscillating between the great dependence of society on the state and an increase in the repertoire of reactions available to social actors, ranging from voluntary support to mostly passive rather than active resistance. In order to contain these developments and to maintain authority over the situation, the state intervened with new mechanisms of control on a local level.

Current Tendencies

The new research fields and topics of the historiography of the Ottoman fronts that emerged over the past years are becoming more and more vis-

ible in the numerous academic meetings and publications since 2014. One can be certain that these publications will initiate a new wave of reflection and discussion, bearing fruits in the near future. Some of the conferences organized for the centennial of World War I are platforms for meetings and discussions that have begun to initiate a process of connecting the historiography of the Ottoman fronts with others and bring together Turkish and non-Turkish scholars from abroad with researchers based in Turkey.⁷¹ Another attempt at connecting Western and Turkish discourses about the war is the Thyssen Lecture Series (2014–16), which presents eminent European scholars of World War I to Turkish academic audiences.⁷² These events provide occasions for collaborative endeavors and possibly even the emergence of new research topics. However, inasmuch as there may be new opportunities, commemorative conferences in Turkey have historically mostly been occasions for the repetition of entrenched discourses without much critical reflection.

Another form of commemoration has itself become an object of study: the emergent commemoration culture of the Battle of Gallipoli. While it is very visible in Turkish media, its study is rendered difficult by its superficial and nationalist mediatization. An aspect of this field of study includes also the new museums and museology devoted to the Great War. Furthermore, progress has been made regarding the study of the memory of the war in local and regional history. Unfortunately, since memory is mostly a matter of oral transmission, this development set in too late to preserve the voices of the last living witnesses. As for the sociocultural history of the Great War, it is without any doubt a newcomer. Here, we firstly need to mention advancements in visual history that not only reads historical visual material as propaganda material but also sheds light on its creators: painters, moviemakers, and photographers.

Finally, a space has been opened up for the study of actors such as women and children beyond their traditional places in nationalist discourse. Concerning children, particularly the works on orphanages are multiplying—often in the context of the Armenian genocide.⁷³ As for women, they are no longer solely seen as passive subjects—for example as victims (of masculine violence) or in their role as brave mothers and attentive nurses—but also as protagonists in their own right, having agency in their interaction with authorities, for example when promoting petitions.⁷⁴ Moreover, manliness, triumphant or injured, became an interest of research.⁷⁵ Finally, yet importantly, the topic of sexuality—except for prostitution⁷⁶—remains mostly unexplored.

Concluding this all-too-short overview, two essential domains remain that deserve brief examination: the first, socioeconomic history, is being addressed anew after a long intermission, while the second, the Armenian

deportation camps in Ottoman Syria, is being engaged for the first time. Socioeconomic history emerged in the 1970s and nowadays concentrates on two major sets of questions, both addressing the economy of war in a critical way: firstly, the issue of food supply and nutrition, a crucial subject in times marked by shortages and famines; and secondly, the disposal of economic goods and properties belonging to minorities⁷⁷ and the human exploitation implicit in the term “wartime efforts.” Finally, one might paint the development of narratives of the war with an individual perspective: in a country like Turkey, where national heroes as well as collective confessional and ethnic identities have been construed as of utmost importance for history, narrating individual stories is essential for a renewal of historiography. Some works are now giving insights into the conditions of those who survived the war, permanently renegotiating identities and loyalties.

Moving on to the contemporary historiography of the Armenian genocide, one can distinguish two major topics of interest: the deportation camps in Ottoman Syria on the one hand and the conversion of Armenians to Islam during the wartime period on the other, although these topics themselves do not align with the stance of the researcher regarding the matter of recognition or denial of the genocide.

The issue of the size of the population of the Syrian camps has major implications in terms of demography, while the living conditions concern their nature as instruments of the Armenian genocide. The higher the number of people deported to Syria, the more one can adjust downward the number of victims of the genocide (as an event happening outside of the camps)—an argument used by the deniers. Yet, contrariwise, works on mortality statistics render some of these camps part of the genocide. Some Turkish historians consider that there is another question to be addressed when speaking about deportation: the treatment of Ottoman soldiers in enemy war camps and the violation of the law of war.⁷⁸ This matter allows them to shift the issue from the treatment of civilians to that of soldiers, resulting in the claim that it was not the Ottomans who committed war crimes but the Allied forces. Moreover, the present debate around camps and orphanages also concerns the policies of Djemal Pasha, the “leader” of Ottoman Syria, usually much less targeted than Enver or Talat Pashas for his role and or attitude during the genocide process.⁷⁹ They are the object of historiographical works that are not limited to his presumed role in and responsibility for the genocide.

Coming to the second major field of interest in present historiography, conversions of Armenians to Islam,⁸⁰ one inevitably touches upon the issue of memory. This is the case particularly for the descendants of Islamized Armenians who discovered the identity of their ancestors

only recently. Fethiye Çetin, since 2005 the lawyer of the late Armenian journalist Hrant Dink and—after his assassination in January 2007—the lawyer of his family, published a book about the story of her Armenian grandmother in December 2004 that served as a catalyst for further works.⁸¹ Since then, several testimonies in the form of monographs and articles have been printed, journalists have embarked on investigations, and documentarists accompanied Islamized Armenians rediscovering their ancestral roots. The Armenian community in and outside of Turkey reacted to these developments with both interest and perplexity. First of all, this kind of memory diverges from the memory of the genocide even if it is a direct consequence of it. Also, Islamized Armenians rediscovering their roots do not necessarily intend to change their religion but often opt to embrace a multiple identity. And finally, the publications are the grievances of Armenians claiming to have been forgotten and ignored for decades. This *travail de mémoire* has been followed by historical research in three distinct directions: first, the rediscovery of Armenian roots; second, conversions on local and regional levels in 1915; and third, a comparison with earlier waves of conversion in the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century. A conference organized by Boğaziçi University and the Hrant Dink Foundation in November 2013 revealed once again the importance of this matter.⁸² In Turkey, these debates became possible due to a major change in how the genocide is dealt with, opening up avenues formerly closed by the shared consensus of denial. The last part of this chapter will report on this change.

A Break with the Culture of Denial in Turkey

The coup on 12 September 1980 put Turkish universities more closely under state control and thus turned them into ideologically rather docile institutions. Hundreds of leftist academics were dismissed or forced to resign. As a consequence, social science research developed outside of the university, sometimes in cooperation with universities abroad, but mostly with Turkish civil society associations, niche media, and publishers. The publishing houses Belge and İletişim as well as the Foundation of History (Tarih Vakfı), a research foundation, an NGO, and a publishing house at the same time, played a crucial role in these developments. Ultimately, these dynamics fostered the emergence of a critical history eager to face the black pages (and particularly the genocide) of Turkey's past. Even more than political liberalization, the foundation of dozens of new universities allowed these actors to reenter educational and research environments from the 1990s onward. The development of a critical

history was further reinforced by the increase of Ottoman and Turkish history scholars who studied or worked in universities and research centers abroad.

Beginning in the 1980s, a slight change in official stance became visible when the state that had previously strongly denied the genocide announced that from now on the “Armenian question” should be left to historians and not to politicians. This tactical change came in parallel to the emergence of research centers on the “Armenian question” in Turkish universities and the funding of foreign scholars supporting the Turkish thesis. The certainty that the Ottoman archives were framed by the view of the imperial bureaucracy in 1915—and had probably been “cleaned” several times—allowed the state to open the archives to two foreign historians recognizing the genocide and working in the archives until 1995.⁸³ The official stance has not changed since then and has been reflected even by the protocols signed between Turkey and Armenia on 10 October 2009.⁸⁴

The dynamics of the 1990s gave rise to the occasion of translating into Turkish multiple books on the genocide, such as the ones by Taner Akçam. He had been a far-left activist and thus became a political refugee in Germany in the years 1977–78. Initially trained in the social sciences, he focused on torture and political violence in the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey before specializing on the Armenian genocide. In the beginning, he privileged a judicial approach working mainly on the trials opened in the years 1918 to 1920⁸⁵ against the head of the Committee of Union and Progress and the bureaucracy for their implication in the extermination of Armenians, but he later extended his field of research.⁸⁶ Continuing his academic career in the United States earned him the recognition of the Armenian diaspora and its researchers. He was the first Turkish scholar to be supported by the Armenian diaspora, which provided him with international prominence.

Akçam’s work, conceived in the United States, was published on the brink of a conference devoted to the fate of the Armenians held in Istanbul at the end of September 2005. His presence at this conference, which was intended only for a Turkish audience, represented the first encounter between Akçam’s novel work and a slowly transforming Turkish academia.

The conference titled “The Armenians during the Last Imperial Period: Scientific Responsibility and Questions Concerning Democracy”⁸⁷ was co-organized by three of the most prestigious Turkish universities. This conference endeavored to embed 1915 within the context of war. Indeed, this exercise in remembering history had a cathartic dimension, since a great number of Turkish intellectuals and scholars participating in the conference were not convinced by the existence of the genocide

at the time. Hrant Dink, a Turkish Armenian, also a committed leftist journalist and activist for human rights, participated in this conference, defending the idea that the Armenian drama had to be approached in a “compassionate” way by integrating the trauma of the victims and the local as well as familial dimensions.⁸⁸

Dink’s assassination on 19 January 2007 provoked a chorus of outrage and mass demonstrations in Istanbul, where people were chanting “We are all Armenian.” What had been intended as an act of silencing the voices demanding recognition of the genocide, the assassination provoked the exact opposite response: a long-term mobilization of numerous different actors even more determined than before.⁸⁹ One of the results was a petition collecting apologies to the Armenians signed by more than thirty thousand people in mid-December 2008.⁹⁰ This wide success was partly based on the support of many Kurdish activists in Turkey, testifying that the Kurdish movement had lived through an *aggiornamento* regarding the genocide and accepted the idea of a shared responsibility of the Kurds. From 2010 on, intellectuals and activists commemorate the genocide each 24 April, assembling and organizing sit-ins in Istanbul and a few other Turkish cities.⁹¹

No matter to what extent the AKP-led government and the Turkish state disapproved of the transformation since 2005, they did not prevent it. Hence, the culture of denial that used to be a national consensus is nowadays contested. Time will tell if this contestation will succeed in paving a way to widened recognition. Undeniably, these movements have already forced the government to change its stance, as evidenced by the “condolences” for the events of 1915 presented by the Turkish prime minister on 23 April 2014.

Since 2015, the aforementioned new trends have been strongly impacted by the worsening of the political climate in Turkey. A Kurdish-Turkish peace process was ongoing in the country since the end of 2012. But negotiations were suddenly stopped after the June 2015 general elections, whose results provided substantial gains for the Kurdish party HDP and, for the ruling Islamist party AKP, were bad enough to make it lose its majority at the Great National Assembly. The armed conflict restarted with heavy civil casualties in the southeast. In January 2016, a petition initiated in Turkish academia was signed by hundreds of people. Titled “We Will Not Be Part to This Crime,” this document protested the way the Turkish army was striking towns in the southeast, and it urged the restart of broken negotiations. Prosecutions were launched against hundreds of these academics.

The political climate deteriorated once more after the failed coup attempt of 15 July 2016, and even if there were absolutely no connections

between the actors of the failed coup and the “Academics for Peace,” the Turkish courts opened trials against circa five hundred academics on the ground of terrorist propaganda. None of these scholars was actually working on World War I. But the very rude way the state and the government used the pretext of these trials to systematically take a firm control on universities and research institutions, whatever their statute was, brought academic autonomy near to zero and froze many of the depicted inner dynamics that had paved the way to a renewed historiography of World War I in Turkey. The very nationalistic turn of the Turkish government after 2015 may have also frightened many scholars of challenging the official discourse and narratives on national history, especially regarding sensitive matters such as the one of Armenian genocide.

To this heavy atmosphere, one has to add the consequences of the financial and economic crisis that started in 2018 in order to understand how the means shrunk for those who want to promote a less chauvinistic understanding of World War I. As to now, this kind of effort is mainly supported by Turkish scholars and or by research centers based abroad, a feature that was present before but whose importance was probably underestimated.

Conclusion

The commemorations ended in 2018, and public attention is now oriented toward the aftermath of World War I—that means the War of Independence (1919–22) and the Lausanne Treaty (1923), which both compose the real core of the national epos. This chapter has shed light on the widespread idea that the late empire was involved in a disastrous Ten-Year War (1912–22) that encompassed the Great War. Nowadays, this chronological frame is also applied by Western historians specialized on other fronts of World War I who share the idea that the war didn’t really end in 1918, but between 1923 and 1924. And some of these historians are now including the Ottoman fronts within this widened chronology.

Robert Gerwarth, the author of the *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917–1923* is one of them.⁹² Interestingly, his book, published in 2016, was also printed in Turkish in December 2018 by a publishing house with a great exposure. Gerwarth, in an earlier book, together with John Horne, explored the paramilitary dynamics that made this belated ending of the war possible, and therefore questioned the blurred boundaries between civilians and the military.⁹³ This chapter has stressed how accurate this perspective was for the Ottoman fronts. Horne and Gerwarth’s book included a contribution titled “Paramilitary Vio-

lence in the Collapsing Ottoman Empire,” penned by Ugur Ümit Ungör, a Dutch scholar born in Turkey but trained in the Netherlands and whose first works were devoted to the Armenian genocide.

What has changed from 2012 onward? Turkish historiography and historians are much more accessible, at least for those whose works are partly written in English, translations from Turkish being very rare beside autotranslations. Gerwarth’s monography showed a repeated use, even if limited, of the historiography on the Ottoman fronts and on the aftermath of the Great War in the Middle East, a historiography based, among others, on sources in Ottoman and sometimes in other languages spoken in the empire, and on a bibliography in modern Turkish. Many of the references used by Gerwarth belong to Turkish scholars based abroad. As for most of the Turkish historians based in Turkey, books like *The Vanquished* challenge the prevailing national understanding of World War I that is reluctant to put the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey in a broader perspective that would, for example, help them understand how common Turkish revisionism was after 1918, in comparison with others in Europe.

The Ottoman fronts of the Great War are not as unique as they appear to be. For example, in the British and French cases, the battles of the Somme and of Verdun tend to overshadow other developments of the war as well. Another reality shared to different degrees by multiple protagonists of the war is the plurality of the fronts. Finally, violence against civilians, although more clearly pronounced on the Ottoman fronts, is by no means absent in Europe.

The originality of Turkish historiography, hence, arises rather from the pivotal role of two elements: the Armenian genocide as the climactic expression of this violence and the entanglement of civil and military spheres, with the latter characterizing both the history and the historiography of the war in Turkey. Both elements, genocide and entanglement, influenced the conditions of the production of historiography and its contents. The “Armenian question” reinforced the autarkic and nationalist character of the Turkish war narrative. Furthermore, by emphasizing the role played by both Armenian militias and the Special Organization, it has also introduced a civilian element into a history hitherto exclusively military: both actors are caught in an inextricable knot of civil and military identities. The 1980 coup certainly introduced a new dimension of militarization that shortly afterward—paradoxically—turned into a demilitarization promoted by those it excluded. The investment in other, new fields of research beyond diplomatic and military history is one manifestation of this trend that was already foreshadowed in the 1970s. Moreover, a process of searching for points of articulation—and friction—between state and society going beyond the usual examination

of the state-society relation had its beginnings at this time. Even though this set of questions has been alluded to, it only progresses slowly, still being hindered by the new process of fragmentation that splits the former official narrative of war up into a plurality of new histories. The question, of course, is to what extent this new plurality of voices can influence the national(istic) consensus on the war beyond purely academic discourse. The fragility of the emergent alternative narratives and their links with political agendas and developments in Turkey make their future unclear.

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Notes

1. I'm deeply indebted to my colleague Till Luge, who helped me in editing this chapter in English. Thanks as well to Timour Muhidine (INALCO) and Nikos Sigalas (CETOBaC) for their careful reading and check.
2. By Turkish historiography, one means here not only the Turkish historians, wherever they are based, but also the non-Turkish historians working on the history of the World War I and using bibliography and sources in Ottoman and modern Turkish.
3. The academic conferences and other venues organized between 2014 and 2018, during the commemorative period of the Great War, didn't pave the way to many studies on Turkish historiography. Yet, in 2019, the Turkologist Fabio Grassi (Sapienza University-Rome) delivered a short but inspiring paper. See Fabio Grassi, "Turkish Historiography on the WWI," in *The Great War. A European commitment of Research and Reflection*, edited by Andrea Ciampani and Romano Ugolini (Roma: Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento Italiano – Rubbettino, 2019), 151–67. See also Ömer Turan, "Turkish Historiography of the First World War," *Middle East Critique* 23, no. 2 (May 2014): 241–57. Both historians agree on the fact that this historiography is overshadowed by the one on the Turkish War of Independence (1919–22) and the interest for the World War I period often reduced to the Battle of Gallipoli. Furthermore, Ömer Turan underscores the existence of many memoirs. However, these memoirs are often republished (for the memoirs, see *infra* in my text). Mesut Uyar, a Turkish military historian, claims rightly that several unpublished memoirs of Ottoman officers are kept in the military archives.

4. Both terms were used after the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1938). In comparison with the former term “Kemalism,” Atatürkism refers much more to the sole thought pattern and views of Atatürk than to the Early Republican Era (1923–38), a period of key structural reforms conducted under the leadership and initiative of Mustafa Kemal, as president of Turkey. From the May 1960 coup on, and in a systematic manner after the September 1980 coup, Atatürkism has been conceived by the state military and civilian bureaucracy as a tool for legitimizing policies that sometimes had very little in common with the policies followed by the founder of the Turkish republic.
5. Alexandre Toumarkine, “La Turquie d’aujourd’hui et la Grande Guerre,” *Matériaux d’histoire du temps présent* 113–14 (2014): 32–41.
6. Serdar Değirmenciöğlü, “Şehit Turizmi: Kitlelerin Çanakkale Seferberliği” [Martyr tourism: The mass mobilization in Gallipoli], in *Öl Dediler Öldüm. Türkiye’de Şehitlik Mitleri*, edited by Serdar Değirmenciöğlü (Istanbul: İletişim, 2014), 373.
7. General Fahri Belen, ed., *Birinci Cihan Harbi’nde Türk Harbi*, 4 vols. (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1963–67). A fifth volume was posthumously published in 1979, four years after Belen’s death.
8. Four books appeared in the 1980s, two in the 1990s, and sixteen between 2000 and 2008. These books deal with the activities of Armenian groups and focus on the abuses and massacres committed by Armenians.
9. Five works in total, among them two booklets.
10. Ten titles in the 2000s. For a very descriptive presentation of these publications until 2002, see Edward J. Erickson, “The Turkish Official Military Histories of the First World War: A Bibliographic Essay,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 3 (2003), 190–98.
11. Edward J. Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000).
12. The criticism was published in *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 1, no. 2 (2003): 297.
13. Edward J. Erickson, *Size Ölmeyi Emrediyorum: Birinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Osmanlı Ordusu* (Istanbul: Kitap, 2003).
14. Edward J. Erickson, *Dünya Savaşı’nda Osmanlı Ordusu (Çanakkale, Kutü’l-Amare ve Filistin Cephesi* [The Ottoman army in the world war: Gallipoli, Kut-Al-Amara, and the Palestinian front] (Istanbul: İş Bankası, 2009).
15. Edward J. Erickson, *Gelibolu, Osmanlı Harekatı* (Istanbul: İş Bankası, 2012).
16. Since access to the Ottoman diplomatic archives is possible, the Isis publishing house based in Istanbul but publishing mainly in French and English on Turkey and the Ottoman Empire has started to systematically issue documents of the Archives of the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs through a series of eight volumes on “The origins of World War One.”
17. Mesut Uyar, personal interview with author, Çanakkale, October 2005.
18. On Bayur, see Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 11–12.
19. Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, *Türk İnkılap Tarihi* [History of the Turkish revolution] (Ankara: Türk Tarihi Kurumu, 1939–63).
20. These volumes were published between 1940 and 1943.
21. This continuity has been evidenced by Erik-Jan Zürcher in *The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement* (Leiden: Brill, 1984).
22. Stanford Shaw taught at Bilkent University, Ankara, while Feroz Ahmad is teaching at Yeditepe University, Istanbul.

23. See Feroz Ahmad, "War and Society under the Young Turks 1908–1918," *Review* (Spring 1988): 265–86. Translated into Turkish as "Jön Türkler Döneminde Savaş ve Toplum," *Tarih ve Toplum* 64 (1989): 239–48. The article was reprinted under the same title in *The Modern Middle East: A Reader*, ed. Albert Hourani, Philip Khoury, and Mary Christina Wilson (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1993), 125–43. See also Feroz Ahmad, "Ideology and War Aims of the Unionist Government, 1914–1918," *Annales de la Faculté de droit d'Istanbul* 33, no. 50 (2001): 1–13; Feroz Ahmad, "Ottoman Armed Neutrality and Intervention: August–November 1914," in *Studies on Ottoman Diplomatic History*, edited by Sinan Kulneralp (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1990), 441–61.
24. Stanford J. Shaw, *The Ottoman Empire in World War I*, 2 vols. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2006, 2008). A third volume, edited by Shaw's widow, Ayşe Ezel Kural Shaw, is in preparation.
25. Esad Pasha was Mustafa Kemal's teacher at the Military Academy (Harbiye).
26. Cemil Conk, *Çanakkale Conkbayırı Savaşları, Atatürk'ün Yaptığı Görülmemiş Yiğitçe Sıngü Hücumü* [The unique and brave bayonet attack led by Atatürk at the Battle of Chunuk Bair in the Gallipoli Campaign] (Ankara: Erkânıharbiye Umumiye Basımevi, 1959). Cemil Conk (1873–1963) took part in the battle of Anafartalar as lieutenant colonel. Besides, he was one of the commanding officers of the Turkish army during the War of Independence.
27. Mustafa Kemal, *Anafartalar Muharebatı'na Ait Tarihçe* [History of the Battle of Anafartalar] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1962).
28. Sermet Atacanlı, *Atatürk ve Çanakkale'nin Komutanları* (Istanbul: MB, 2006).
29. Fabio Grassi, "Turkish Historiography," pointed also this long framework.
30. The Conference and Treaty of Lausanne (1922–23) and the Frontier Treaty signed in 1926.
31. The posthumous memoirs of Halil Paşa who successfully besieged Kut-Al-Amara are titled *Bitmeyen Savaş* (An unending war).
32. On desertion, which had for a long time been an issue rather unnoticed in historiography, see Erik-Jan Zürcher, "Between Death and Desertion: The Experience of the Ottoman Soldier in World War I," *Turcica* 28 (1996): 235–58; and Mehmet Beşikçi, *The Ottoman Mobilisation of Manpower in the First World War: Between Voluntarism and Resistance* (Leiden: Brill, 2012). The book has been published in Turkish by İş Bankası in 2015.
33. İsmet Görgülü, *On Yıllık Harbin Kadrosu: 1912–1922* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1993).
34. *Birinci Dünya Savaşı Üst Kademedeki Komutanların Biyografileri* [The biographies of the highest-ranking officers of the First World War], 3 vols. (Ankara: ATASE, 2009).
35. Erik-Jan Zürcher, "Little Mehmet in the Desert: The War Experience of the Ottoman Soldier," in *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced*, ed. Peter Liddle and Hugh Cecil (London: Lee Cooper, 1996), 230–41.
36. On Turkish psychiatry during the Great War, see the works of Yücel Yanıkdağ, especially *Healing the Nation: Prisoners of War, Medicine and Nationalism in Turkey, 1914–1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013). For issues related to health, see the works of Hikmet Özdemir and Oya Dağlar: *Oya Dağlar, War, Epidemics and Medicine in the Late Ottoman Empire (1912–1918)* (Haarlem: Sota, 2008); Hikmet Özdemir, *The Ottoman Army, 1914–1918: Diseases and Death on the Battlefield* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008).
37. Ozan Arslan earned his PhD in 2011 from the University Paul Valéry—Montpellier III writing about this front. He is the author of a work on the Ottoman military

- operations in the Caucasus: *Osmanlı'nın Son Zaferleri: 1918 Kafkas Harekatı* [The last Ottoman victories: Operations in the Caucasus in 1918] (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2010). For a broader chronological perspective, see also Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empire; 1908–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
38. Syria was also the place where Djemal Pasha ruled from 1915 to 1917. Despite the publication of a biography penned by Nevzat Artuç (*Cemal Paşa: Askeri ve siyasi hayatı* [Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2008]), Djemal Pasha's local activities and his power in the new Unionist leadership were little covered until recently. See Talha Çiçek, *War and State Formation in Syria: Cemal Pasha's Governorate during World War I, 1914–1917* (London: Routledge, 2014); and Talha Çiçek, ed., *Syria in World War I: Politics, Economy and Society* (London: Routledge, 2015).
 39. For the jihad, see Erik Jan Zürcher, ed., *Studies on the Ottoman Jihad on the Centenary of Snouck Hurgronje's "Holy War Made in Germany"* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2016), and Donald M. McKale, *War by Revolution: Germany and Great Britain in the Middle East in the Era of World War I* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1998); for the Ottoman Pan-Islamism, see Namık Sinan Turan, "Gerçek ve İllüzyon Arasında: Birinci Dünya Savaşı'na Giden Süreçte Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Panislamizm" [Between reality and illusion: The Ottoman Empire and Pan-Islamism during the process leading to World War I], in: *Nuray Yıldırım Armağan Kitabı* (Istanbul: BETİM, 2016), 515–45.
 40. As a first exception: Hasan Kayalı's classical work: *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Second Constitutional Period of the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). Recently, Eugen Rogan published a comprehensive and original study: *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East, 1914–1920* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).
 41. Beşikçi, *Ottoman Mobilisation of Manpower*, 14–15.
 42. Michael A. Reynolds, "Buffers, Not Brethren: Young Turk Military Policy in the First World War and the Myth of Panturanism," *Past and Present* 203 (2009): 137–79; Reynolds, *Shattering Empires*.
 43. See Mustafa Çolak, *Alman İmparatorluğu'nun Doğu Siyaseti Çerçevesinde Kafkasya Politikası (1914–1918)*. [The Caucasus policy of the German Empire in the framework of Eastern politics, 1914–1918] (Ankara: Türk Tarihi Kurumu, 2006); see also Selami Kılıç, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkilerinin Doğuşu* [The birth of Turkish-Soviet relations] (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 1998).
 44. Wolfdieter Bihl, *Die Kaukasuspolitik der Mittelmächte*, vol. 1: *Ihre Basis in der Orient-Politik und ihre Aktionen 1914–1917* (Wien: Böhlau, 1975); vol. 2: *Die Zeit der versuchten kaukasischen Staatlichkeit (1917–1918)* (Wien: Böhlau, 1992).
 45. And even more so of the politics directed toward the minorities of Imperial Russia.
 46. See Stefanos Yerasimos, *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri: Ekim Devriminden 'Milli Mücadele'ye* [Turkish-Soviet relations: From the October Revolution to the "national struggle"] (Istanbul: Gözlem, 1979); Stefanos Yerasimos, "Sur les origines du mouvement de l'Armée verte en Anatolie," *Etudes Balkaniques* (1977): 98–108; and Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye'de Sol Akımlar (1908–1925)* [Leftist currents in Turkey, 1908–1925] (Ankara: Bilgi, 1967).
 47. See, for instance, Ali Rıza Eti, *Bir Onbaşımın Doğu Cephesi Günlüğü 1914–1915* [The diary of a corporal on the Eastern Front, 1914–1915] (Ankara: İş Bankası, 2009).
 48. Beşikçi, *Ottoman Mobilisation of Manpower*, 23–24.
 49. Gültekin Yıldız, "Bir De-militarizasyon Projesi: Geç Osmanlı 'Askeri Tarih' Araştırmaları Sivilleştirilmek" [A de-militarization project: Civilizing research on the mili-

- tary history of the late Ottoman period], *Toplumsal Tarih* 198 (June 2010): 44–53; see also Gültekin Yıldız and Cevat Şayin, *Osmanlı Askeri Tarihini Araştırmak: Yeni Kaynaklar, Yeni Yaklaşımlar* [Researching Ottoman military history: New sources, new approaches] (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2010).
50. For example, and among others: Yiğit Akın, Fuat Dündar, Elif Mahir Metinsoy, and Yücel Yanıkdağ.
 51. Fuat Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Müslümanları İskan Politikası (1913–1918)* [The settlement policy of muslims of the Committee of Union and Progress, 1913–1918] (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001). Dündar, interview with author, February 2007.
 52. The president of the Republic of Turkey (1993–2000), Süleyman Demirel, was the first one to use this dictum at the beginning of his term.
 53. The other sections are “The Wars before the Balkan Wars,” “The Balkan Wars,” “The Health Issues,” “Veterinarian Military History,” and “The Archives.”
 54. Website of the Turkish army forces, retrieved 11 August 2019 from <https://www.tsk.tr/Sayfalar/viewName=TarihtenKesitler>.
 55. Mehmet Beşikçi estimates not having been able to consult more than about a third of the documents he needed.
 56. Ahmed Emin Yalman, *Turkey in the World War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1930).
 57. For a reappraisal of Talaat's role during the Great War, and more specifically his responsibility in the Armenian Genocide, see the recent biography of the Unionist leader by Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Talaat Pasha: Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018). In his *War and State Formation in Syria: Cemal Pasha's Governorate during World War I, 1914–1917* (New York: Routledge, 2014), Talha Çiçek takes issues with the idea of a monolithic triumvirate, without, however abandoning the concept. Yet one may underline for the wartime the emergence and or empowerment of important political figures of the Comity Union and Progress, such as Kara Kemal in charge of supplying food to the Ottoman capital, or Bahaddin Şakir, whose role in the genocide is crucial. Further, the degree of autonomy of the main generals and the commandants of the Ottoman army on the field is still an important and omitted dimension that needs to be evaluated.
 58. Zafer Toprak, *İttihat-Terakki ve Cihan Harbi: Savaş Ekonomisi ve Türkiye'de Devletçilik, 1914–1918* (Istanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2003).
 59. See Şevket Pamuk: “The Ottoman Economy in World War I,” in *The Economics of World War I*, ed. Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 112–35.
 60. Yiğit Akın, “The Ottoman Home Front during World War I: Everyday Politics, Society, and Culture” (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2011). The dissertation turned into a book: Yiğit Akın, *When the War Came Home: The Ottomans' Great War and the Devastation of an Empire* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018).
 61. Erol Köroğlu, *Türk Edebiyatı ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı (1914–1918): Propagandadan Millî Kimlik İnşasına* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2004). The book was published in English in 2007 by I. B. Tauris under the title *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity: Literature in Turkey during World War I*.
 62. Cemalettin Taşkıran, *Ana Ben Ölmedim* [Mum, I am not dead!] (Istanbul: İş Bankası, 2008); Doğan Şahin, *Türklere Esir Olmak- Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Savaş Yıllarında Yabancı Esirler* [To be prisoner of the Turks: Foreign POWs in the war period from the Ottoman Empire to the republic] (Istanbul: Ozan Yayıncılık, 2015); Ahmet Tetik et Mehmet Şükrü Güzel, *Osmanlılara Karşı İşlenen Savaş Suçları (1911–1921)* [War

- crimes committed against Ottomans (1911–1991)] (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2013). More interesting is Yücel Yanıkdağ's, "Ottoman Prisoners of War in Russia, 1914–22," *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 1 (January 1999): 69–85. For an overview by the same author, see "Prisoners of War (Ottoman Empire/Middle East)," in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, ed. Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, and Bill Nasson, <http://dx.doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10269>.
63. Beside published sources like memoirs penned by members of the organization, one has mainly to look at the works of two Turkish historians: Ahmet Tetik and Safi Polat. For the latter, see first and foremost his unpublished dissertation: "The Ottoman Special Organization—Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa: An Inquiry into Its Operational and Administrative Characteristics" (PhD diss., Department of History, Bilkent University, 2012). Among published works in English, one may look at Safi Polat, "History in the Trench: The Ottoman Special Organization—Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa Literature," *Middle Eastern Studies* 48 (January 2012): 89–106. Ahmet Tetik has been the head of the ATASE archives. See Ahmet Tetik, *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa (Umur-ı Şarkıyye Dairesi) Tarihi* [The history of the Special Organization (the Office for Eastern Affairs)], vol. 1: 1914–1916, and vol. 2: 1917 (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2014, 2018). Regarding the involvement of the Special Organization on the Caucasian Front, see Nikos Sigalas, "La Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa sur le front du Caucase: De la politique du front vers la politique de l'arrière-front; prélude au Génocide," in *Marges et pouvoir dans l'espace (post)ottoman. XIXe-XXe siècles*, Hamit Bozarslan (Paris: Karthala, 2018).
64. Nikos Sigalas, "Intention et contingence: L'historiographie de la violence sur les minorités dans son rapport avec le droit," in *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 12 (2011): 1–34, <http://ejts.revues.org/index4552.html> (online since 19 June 2012).
65. Nikos Sigalas and I edited three contributions to the *European Journal of Turkish Studies* (EJTS) that concern this phenomenon. For a general idea: Nikos Sigalas and Alexandre Toumarkine, "Demographic Engineering, Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing: Dominant Paradigms for Studying Minority Populations in Turkey and the Balkans," in *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 7 (2008): <http://ejts.revues.org/index2933.html> (online since November 16, 2009).
66. İlber Ortaylı, *İkinci Abdülhamit Döneminde Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Alman Nüfuzu* [The German influence in the Ottoman Empire during Abdülhamid's reign] (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, 1981); Mustafa Gencer, *Jöntürk Modernizmi ve Alman Ruhu* [Young Turk modernism and the German state of mind] (Istanbul: İletişim, 2003); Cemil Koçak, *Türk-Alman İlişkileri (1923–1939): İki Dünyâ Savaşı Arasındaki Dönemde Siyâsal, Kültürel, Askerî ve Ekonomik İlişkiler* [Turkish-German relations (1923–1939): Political, cultural, military, and economic relations during the interwar period] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991).
67. Ulrich Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire: 1914–1918* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967); Jehuda Wallach, *Anatomie einer Militärhilfe: Die preußisch-deutschen Militärmissionen in der Türkei 1835–1919* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1976).
68. Handan Nezir-Akmese, *The Birth of Modern Turkey: The Ottoman Military and the March to WWI* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005); Fuat Dündar, *Crime of Numbers: The Role of Statistics in the Armenian Question* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2010).
69. On the conscription of non-Muslim soldiers, see Ufuk Gülsoy, *Osmanlı Gayrimüslimlerin Askerlik Serüveni* [The experience of military service by Ottoman non-Muslims]

- (Istanbul: Simurg, 2000), 127–71, and Erik-Jan Zürcher, “The Ottoman Conscription System in Theory and Practice. 1844–1918,” in *Arming the State: Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia*, ed. Erik-Jan Zürcher (London: I. B. Tauris, 1988), 437–49.
70. See Erik-Jan Zürcher, “Birinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Amele Taburları” [The battalions of forced labor in World War I], in *Savaş, Devrim ve Uluslaşma* (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2005), 201–14. Regarding the systematic assassination of Armenians enlisted in these battalions, see Raymond H. Kevorkian, “Recueil de témoignages sur l’extermination des Amele tabouri ou bataillons de soldats ouvriers arméniens pendant la Première Guerre mondiale,” *Revue d’Histoire Arménienne Contemporaine* 1 (1995): 298–303. Concerning the fate of the Jews in these battalions, see Leyla Neyzi, ed., *Amele Taburu: The Military Journal of a Jewish Soldier in Turkey during the War of Independence* (Istanbul: Isis, 2007).
 71. The most successful conference thus far in this regard was “Not All Quiet on the Ottoman Fronts: Neglected Perspectives on a Global War (1914–1918),” organized by the Orient-Institut Istanbul, the Foundation for History (Tarih Vakfı), and five prominent Istanbul-based universities, held at İstanbul Bilgi University, 8–12 April 2014.
 72. These lecture series were supported by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation and co-organized by the Orient-Institut Istanbul and Turkish host universities in Istanbul and provincial towns.
 73. See Naksan Maksudyan, *Ottoman Children and Youth during World War I* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2019).
 74. See Elif Mahir Metinsoy, *Ottoman Women during World War I: Everyday Experiences, Politics, and Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Nicole van Os, “Women’s Mobilization for War (Ottoman Empire/Middle East),” in *1914-1918-online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, DOI: 10.15463/ie1418.11287.
 75. See the abovementioned studies by Yücel Yanıkdağ.
 76. See Çiğdem Oğuz, “Prostitution (Ottoman Empire),” in *1914-1918-online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, ed. Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, DOI: 10.15463/ie1418.11038.
 77. See Uğur Ümit Üngör and Mehmet Polatel, *Confiscation and Destruction: The Young Turk Seizure of Armenian Property* (New York: Continuum Books, 2011); Hilmar Kaiser, “Armenian Property, Ottoman Law and Nationality Policies during the Armenian Genocide, 1915–1916,” in *The World War I as Remembered in the Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Olaf Farschid et al., (Beirut: Orient-Institute Beirut, 2006); Bedross Der Matossian, “The Taboo within the Taboo: The Fate of ‘Armenian Capital’ at the End of the Ottoman Empire,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* (6 October 2011): retrieved 18 June 2015 from <http://ejts.revues.org/4411>; in Turkish, see Nevzat Onaran, *Osmanlı’da Ermeni ve Rum Mallarının Türkleştirilmesi (1914–1919)* [The Turkification of Armenian and Greek goods (1914–1919)] (Istanbul: Evrensel Basım Yayın, 2013); Taner Akçam and Ümit Kurt, *Kanunların Ruhü: Emval-i Metruke Kanunlarında Soykırımın İzini Sürmek* [The spirit of the laws: To follow the trace of the genocide through the abandoned properties Laws] (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012).
 78. See Emre Öktem and Alexandre Toumarkine, “Will the Trojan War Take Place? Violations of the Rules of War and the Battle of the Dardanelles (1915),” *International Review of the Red Cross* 97 (2015): 1047–64.

79. See Hilmar Kaiser, “Regional Resistance to Central Government Policies: Ahmed Djemal Pasha, the Governors of Aleppo, and Armenian Deportees in the Spring and Summer of 1915,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 12, no. 3 (2010): 173–218; and Ümit Kurt, “A Rescuer, an Enigma and a Génocidaire: Cemal Pasha,” in *The End of the Ottomans: The Genocide of 1915 and the Politics of Turkish Nationalism*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser, Margaret Lavinia Anderson, Seyhan Bayraktar, and Thomas Schmutz (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2019), 221–45. This book contains several chapters devoted to CUP and Teşkilat-I Mahsusa prominent figures (see contributions by Candan Badem, Mehmet Polatel, Hilmar Kaiser, Umit Kürt, and Ozan Ozavci).
80. For the historiography, see Taner Akçam, *Ermenilerin Zorla Müslümanlaştırılması* [The forced Islamization of the Armenians] (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014).
81. Fethiye Çetin, *Anneannem* [My grandmother] (Istanbul: Metis, 2004). The book has been translated to English and published under the title *My Grandmother: A Memoir* (London: Verso, 2008).
82. The conference proceedings were published by the Hrant Dink Foundation under the title *Müslümanlıştırılmış Ermeniler* (Istanbul, Hrant Dink Vakfı, 2015).
83. These are Hilmar Kaiser, a German scholar who specialized in the study of the Armenian genocide, and Ara Sarafian, the director of the Gomidas Institut, based in London.
84. One of the aims of the protocol was to “implement a dialogue on the historical dimension with the aim to restore mutual confidence between the two nations, including an impartial and scientific examination of the historical records and archives to define existing problems and formulate recommendations.” The ratification process of the protocols ended in 2010.
85. His dissertation defended at Hannover University in 1995 addressed this very topic.
86. Taner Akçam’s main books in English are *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006); *The Young Turks’ Crime against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha’s Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
87. The conference was held at Bilgi University (Istanbul) and supported by two other prestigious universities based in Istanbul: Boğaziçi and Sabancı.
88. Based on my own observation as a follower of the debates of the conference.
89. One of the measures that ensured the sustainability of the mobilization was the creation of the Hrant Dink Foundation (Hrant Dink Vakfı) in 2011.
90. The short text of the petition actually did not contain the word “genocide”: “My conscience does not accept the insensitivity showed to and the denial of the Great Catastrophe that the Ottoman Armenians were subjected to in 1915. I reject this injustice and for my share, I empathize with the feelings and pain of my Armenian brothers and sisters. I apologize to them.”
91. Those held in Istanbul are commemorating the arrest and murder of 2,345 Armenian notables, among them many intellectuals and artists.
92. Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917–1923* (London: Penguin Books, 2016).
93. Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, eds., *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

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