

**Kieser, Hans-Lukas, Nunn, Pearl and Schmutz, Thomas (eds.).** 2023. *Remembering the Great War in the Middle East: From Turkey and Armenia to Australia and New Zealand.* London/New York: Bloomsbury. 320 pages. ISBN: 9780755639953.

**Kieser, Hans-Lukas.** 2023. *When Democracy Died: The Middle East's Enduring Peace of Lausanne.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. xii + 328 pages. ISBN: 9781009029957.

Reviewed by **Nikos Christofis**  
University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece  
n.christofis@gmail.com

Much has been written about the Treaty of Lausanne that put an end to a decade-long war since its signing. A century later, interest in the treaty remains alive, sparking debates and new research that open new avenues for understanding one of the most important events of the twentieth century. The two studies presented here – an edited volume and a monograph – contribute to this literary tradition, providing new insights and approaches to the issues surrounding not only the treaty itself but also the preceding period, particularly the Great War and its contemporary remembrance and relevance.

The latter is the main focus of the book edited by Hans-Lukas Kieser, Pearl Nunn, and Thomas Schmutz. *Remembering the Great War in the Middle East* is the third output of international conferences and workshops held from 2013 to 2017 at the universities of Basel and Zurich, as well as other meetings. While the first volume traced developments from the Balkan Wars through the first year of the Great War, and the second explored the regional theaters of genocide and the biographies of Turks and Armenians during the darkest hours of the Great War and its aftermath, this volume adopts a transnational perspective on how World War I is remembered. As the subtitle of the book indicates, it examines remembrance in different settings from Turkey and Armenia to Australia and New Zealand. The editors rightly argue in the introduction that ‘the Great War continues posing great challenges to history writing’ (p. 6).

Indeed, at the core of the present volume is the public remembrance of the night of 24–25 April 1915, when the landing at Anzac Cove (known to the Turks as the Ariburnu Battle) began the land phase of the Gallipoli campaign of the First World War, with the assault troops consisting mostly of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC). Using the events of 24–25 April 1915, the chapters in *Remembering the Great War in the Middle East* address both the enduring trauma of the Australians and New Zealanders, with their grave losses and final defeat, and that of the Armenians, who suffered the first genocidal policy in the modern era the same year.

The book consists of four parts, an introduction, and an afterword. The first part, titled ‘History Writing and the Politics of Commemoration,’ consists of four chapters and discusses the historiography of the Ottoman Great War in general and the politics

of commemoration regarding 24–25 April 1915 in particular. Topics include mass violence, dissent, the Anzac Day, the Armenian Genocide, and the Gallipoli Campaign. Alexandre Toumarkine opens this part with a contribution on the split and variegated historiography of the Ottoman Great War. The remaining chapters focus on the contested but entangled histories of 24–25 April 1915. With chapters on Australia, New Zealand, and Turkey, Rowan Light, Harutyun Marutyan, and Erol Koroglu, respectively, demonstrate how the histories of 24–25 April 1915, the Armenian Genocide, and the Anzac invasion of the Gallipoli peninsula are interconnected and explore and investigate the different meanings and changing liturgical practices in both imperial and post-imperial settings.

Part II, titled ‘National Narratives in the Former Ottoman World,’ focuses on historical works that shape memory. Mesut Uyar, a military historian, exemplifies how the war gave rise to new forms of Turkish history, notably a Turkish military historiography that served ‘as part of the war propaganda effort and as a way to disseminate lessons learned and train future generations of officers’ (p. 115). Yuval Ben-Bassat and Dotan Halevy, in their contribution, focus on Greater Syria, highlighting Cemal Pasha, a castigated figure in the national historiographies of Greater Syria. The region of Greater Syria presents an interesting case as it has been redeployed by different Arab and Zionist groups, creating narratives of Greater Syria as part of the Ottoman Empire.

The third part focuses on the Australian case and how memories of Anzac and Gallipoli have been shaped there. Kate Ariotti, Daniel Marc Segesser, and Burcu Cevik-Compiegne explore different aspects of remembrance. Ariotti focuses on image-making and stereotypes, illustrating how Australians imagined the Turks before, during, and after the war. Segesser’s case study on Canberra demonstrates it as a site of contested narratives and ownership of the Gallipoli peninsula through ‘the efforts of governments and organizations to construct a shared memory to underline the strong and friendly bonds that at least officially the nations have tried to establish and develop after the end of the war’ (p. 178). Finally, Cevik-Compiegne adopts an ethnographic approach to analyze diasporic memories of Sikhs and Turks, providing new insights into the diasporic remembrances of the war and larger issues about the post-imperial and multicultural politics of memory.

The final part, ‘Contested Memories: New Zealand, Turkey, and Armenians,’ deals with contested memories in New Zealand. Bruce Scates focuses on pilgrimage and memorialization around the site of Chunuk Bair on Gallipoli, showing how language, the genealogies of imagery, and practices have shaped the formation of national myths since the 1980s. Maria Armoudian, James Robin, and V.K.G. Woodman explore the remembering and forgetting of the Armenian Genocide, a contested issue between Turkey and Armenia and other countries. They argue that the New Zealand government, through active diplomatic aid to Turkey, the continued memorialization of Mustafa Kemal, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, and the incorporation of Turkey into Anzac memorial services, contributed to the amnesia of the Genocide. They demonstrate how the New Zealand government ‘chose sides’ regarding the Armenian Genocide. Talin Suciyan’s final chapter addresses the heated topic of the Arme-

nian Genocide and how it should be remembered in the contexts of institutionalized denial, both inside and outside Turkey. She highlights two main issues that need to be addressed in order to tackle with the issue: the exclusion of survivors' accounts from the historiography of Turkey and the last phase of the Ottoman Empire, and the silence of historians around primary sources and secondary literature aimed at reproducing denial (p. 263).

Hans-Lukas Kieser's monograph, on the other hand, *When Democracy Died: The Middle East's Enduring Peace of Lausanne* continues, albeit from a different angle, where *Remembering the Great War in the Middle East* leaves off by focusing on the eight dramatic months of the Lausanne Conference, which concluded more than ten years of war and genocide in the late Ottoman Empire and its aftermath. The Lausanne Conference (November 1922–July 1923; with an interval period between 4 February–24 April 1923) and the subsequent Treaty have been described as a 'formative mega-event in which ageing Western European national-imperialists diplomatically compromised with 'anti-imperialist' ultranationalists of a hitherto Bolshevik-backed elite in Ankara.<sup>1</sup> The Treaty of Lausanne is considered by several scholars as perhaps the most important agreement of the twentieth century, settling a decade-long warfare, but also facilitating the persecution of minority groups, including Armenians, Kurds, and Arabs, thus creating a homogeneous Turkish state in Asia Minor. Moreover, the Treaty has been crucial in shaping the modern Middle East, the repercussions of which are still seen today, and facilitated dictatorships in Turkey and Europe during the interwar period.

The book consists of four parts, each comprising several small chapters. The author carefully builds his narrative, methodically introducing the main topics, terminology, and historical approach applied in the book. It brings the League of Nations into the picture of the early interwar years when the League was a prominent actor and a shining reference. This allows the author to clarify one of the core issues of the book, namely what 'peace' meant, and would have meant, for an Ottoman world heavily affected by the Great War (p. 16). While Kieser acknowledges that there is some truth to Lausanne's 'bright side,' he argues that the Lausanne Conference 'hammered the last nail in the coffin of the League's project of global peace through law and democratic self-determination [and thus] real peace was lost from sight' (p. 3) and 'represented the triumph of a new state born in mass violence' (p. 7).

The second part delves into the late-Ottoman prehistory of the Lausanne Conference, which put an end to a formative decade of wars, single-party rule, demographic engineering, diplomatic ruptures, and imperial collapse. Kieser's analysis in this part starts with an exploration of the political and historical thought of Rıza Nur, the vice-chief of Ankara's delegation in Lausanne. In addition, the author emphasizes the influential role of diaspora organizations in the years before the Conference, their

1 Kieser, Hans-Lukas. 2023. 'Framing Pasts and Futures at the Lausanne Conference'. In Conlin, Jonathan and Ozavci, Ozan (eds.). *They All Made Peace – What is Peace? The 1923 Lausanne Treaty and the New Imperial Order*. London: Gingko, p. 328.

articulation of new futures, and their close relations with nationalist leaders in Anatolia and Europe.

Part III presents the book's central section. Through an analytical account with a vast array of sources, the author re-evaluates the inner workings of the Lausanne Conference. The reader receives a vivid and in-depth analysis of the debates, discussions, and diplomatic background among the participant countries, each promoting its interests and expectations. Kieser argues that the Lausanne Conference clearly failed to come to terms with the previous decade, establishing a balance of interests among the imperial powers at a price that mortgaged the future and sidelined millions left out.

Finally, as the Treaty cut short all alternative futures imagined by various actors during the previous decade of wars – in particular, any Armenian future in Anatolia, as well as future self-determination aspirations of the Kurds, Rûm, Assyrians, and Arabs – Part IV serves as a 'call' to reconsider the global and regional ramifications of Lausanne, as well as its shifting significance in Turkey's politics. Kieser's point is particularly significant, especially considering the authoritarian tendencies in several countries, not only Turkey, during the 1930s, which rendered democracy an increasingly distant utopia. Indeed, in the final analysis, history and law in Lausanne affirmed a new type of radical nationalism in interwar diplomacy. Notably, high diplomacy in Lausanne embraced both Benito Mussolini, Italy's new Fascist Prime Minister, and Ankara's ultranationalists, both of whom were preoccupied with domestic consolidation. In other words, Sovereignty won at Lausanne was about the will to unrestricted rule that late Ottoman national-imperial cadres successfully asserted vis-à-vis ageing European imperialists, rather than that of Anatolia's people(s) or a 'sovereignty of law,' to be proved by constitutionality and independent justice. Finally, this last part sheds light on how the Conference and Treaty framed the post-Ottoman century in Turkey and Turkey's neighborhood, and explores the defining roots of the Republic of Turkey.

In conclusion, the virtues of both works are numerous. Not only do they utilize a vast array of primary and secondary sources, but the authors in both works situate the local within the global in a well-researched and coherent narrative. While *Remembering the Great War in the Middle East* presents case studies that were either previously unexplored or presented separately, it offers a study that stands out for its originality, coherence, and well-structured manner. Hans-Lukas Kieser, in his detailed monograph, provides a re-evaluation of the 'Lausanne event,' delivering a useful and readable study. The chapters in each part may easily work as a guide to the readers not to miss the grand narrative of the book. Despite implying that historians have missed Lausanne's real significance, Kieser makes a compelling argument regarding the successes and failures of Lausanne and calls on historians, a century later, to reconsider what 'democracy' and 'peace' truly mean. Both studies offer invaluable contributions that appeal to both experts and general readers. They should be read widely.