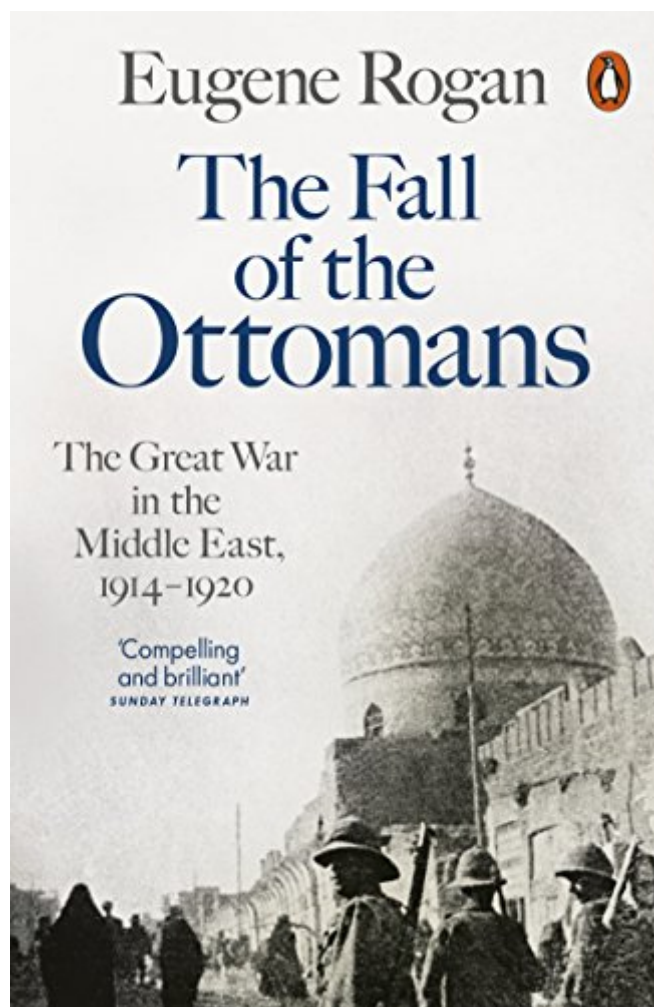


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The Fall Of The Ottomans: The Great War In The Middle East, 1914-1920



Synopsis

The final destruction of the Ottoman Empire - one of the great epics of the First World War, from bestselling historian Eugene Rogan. For some four centuries the Ottoman Empire had been one of the most powerful states in Europe as well as ruler of the Middle East. By 1914 it had been drastically weakened and circled by numerous predators waiting to finish it off. Following the Ottoman decision to join the First World War on the side of the Central Powers the British, French and Russians hatched a plan to finish the Ottomans off: an ambitious and unprecedented invasion of Gallipoli... Eugene Rogan's remarkable new book recreates one of the most important but poorly understood fronts of the First World War. Despite fighting back with great skill and ferocity against the Allied onslaught and humiliating the British both at Gallipoli and in Mesopotamia (Iraq), the Ottomans were ultimately defeated, clearing the way for the making, for better or worse, of a new Middle East which has endured to the present.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a very well written and good book on the topic. However, it is primarily a political study of the fall of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. It is not so much a military study. The author, who teaches at Oxford, has looked at the Ottoman Empire and how it handled World War One. He works in Turkish and Arabic. There are many individual vignettes from individuals at ALL levels of society,

from political policy carried on at the highest levels, to the various campaigns and the fighting that resulted. It is well-illustrated volume but includes only a handful of strategic maps of the Empire's battlefields. The political history is excellent. The author has a firm grasp of the Young Turk movement, the JIHAD aspect of the Turkish war effort and the impact of the Arab on the Turk (and vice-versa). His discussion of the Armenian genocide is balanced and accurate and unlike many studies, does NOT ignore the brutal killing of thousands of Assyrians. An entire chapter is devoted to this and will inhibit sales in Turkey! But it is not so much a military study. The German battlecruiser GOEBEN & British battlecruiser INFLEXIBLE become battleships. The small old French battleship REQUIN becomes a cruiser, HMS AMETHYST becomes French (p137) and Ottoman losses are often based on old Allied accounts. German Admiral Souchon is mentioned once in the book, ignoring his large impact in the Black Sea. Edward Erickson's I ORDER YOU TO DIE is in the bibliography but seemingly not consulted in some of the areas covered in the book. The Turkish Official military studies appear to be completely missing as well. The author does NOT note that after the Allied naval assault at the Dardanelles, in which they suffered major losses, the Turks were virtually out of artillery ammunition.

• Good prose should be transparent, like a window pane, • so said George Orwell. That's what Eugene Rogan does for us in *The Fall of the Ottomans*. He has breathed new life into the morbid corpse of the First World War . Gallipoli, Dardanelles, the Black Sea, Istanbul! Odious Ottomans, angry Arabs, blustering Brits , and joyless Germans all get together in a masterful mishmash of mayhem, misunderstanding and mauling. It's strange. They are all using each other and manipulating, and they end up in the rubbish bin of history. Rogan catalogues well the Tragedy of Errors that became World War One. We see that the Ottomans were just as edgy, arrogant, and manipulative as the Europeans. They got sucked into the vortex of destruction through their own imperial machinations, which in the end brought them crashing down! Add to this mix the Russian revolution which put an extra twist into an already contorted situation. Yes, the old world order imploded and this war marked the beginning of the end for Europe. Those 20th century blues that Noel Coward referred to in a song. Europe and the Ottomans couldn't handle the new century so it consumed them. Britain, the mighty naval behemoth, wanted to knock out the Ottomans with sea power. But French and British warships hit minefields in the Dardanelles straight, leaving one third of the allied fleet sunk or badly damaged in a single day of action. So naval power was not able to bombard and destroy the Ottoman artillery. This forced Britain to commit a large ground force to take the Gallipoli peninsula to silence the Ottoman guns to allow ships to enter the straight and

advance on Istanbul. The ground war prompted the wholesale slaughter.

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