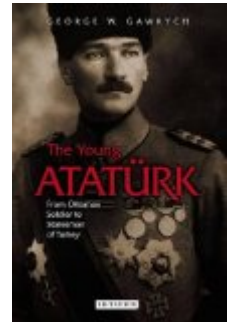


**George W. Gawrych.** *The Young Atatürk: From Ottoman Soldier to Statesman of Turkey*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2013. xiv + 267 pp. \$35.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-78076-322-4.



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**Commissioned by** Margaret Sankey (Air University)

Many biographies and histories have been published about Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, including several recent ones in English and dozens in Turkish. *The Young Atatürk: From Ottoman Soldier to Statesman of Turkey* incorporates a slightly different approach from the rest. George W. Gawrych states that his work offers insights into Atatürk's early career, roughly covering 1880-1923; he delivers on this promise. In doing so, Gawrych effectively uses Atatürk's notebooks and synthesizes many recent works in English and Turkish. Additionally, he makes excellent use of archival material including documents from the Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı (Military History and Strategic Studies Directorate), Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Prime Ministry Ottoman Archive), Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi (Prime Ministry Republican Archive), and Türk Tarih Kurumu Arşivi (Turkish Historical Society Archive). These materials add a great deal to this work and allow it to go in new directions.

Gawrych masterfully weaves Atatürk's written works into his narrative and highlights

themes from his works throughout this volume. This methodology, the strength of Gawrych's book, is what makes it different from other recent publications on Atatürk. In some ways, Gawrych's treatment is a synthesis of an intellectual and military profile. He provides interesting insights into Atatürk as a student of strategy, tactics, and military history. Gawrych effectively uses Atatürk's written works to understand his mentality over time.

In one of the more interesting sections of the book, Gawrych describes Atatürk's early assignments in Libya and in the Balkans. Here Gawrych provides some fascinating aspects from Atatürk's military career. He describes the manner in which Atatürk built an alliance with the Arab tribes of Libya and used these forces along with Ottoman units to carry out an effective guerilla campaign against the Italians in 1911-12. In most English studies of Atatürk, this information is often lacking or is dealt with in a cursory manner. Gawrych further uses this experience to show Atatürk's later dealings with Kurdish tribes in

Eastern Anatolia in the First World War and with Kurdish and Turkoman tribes in the War of Independence/Greco-Turkish War of 1919-22.

The greatest strength of the book is its coverage of the War for Independence/Greco-Turkish War of 1919-22. In this section, Gawrych provides an analysis of the 1st and 2nd Battles of İnönü, the Battles of Afyonkarahisar and Eskişehir, and the Battle of Sakarya. He also presents excellent details of the "Great Offensive" (Büyük Taaruz) following the Battle of Dumlupınar. This section includes useful maps of the many campaigns and battles described within.

Throughout the work, the author gives intriguing insights into what he calls Atatürk's corporate leadership style. This perspective challenges the often-held notion, in both Turkey and elsewhere, of Atatürk as Tek Adam, a single man, acting with singular purpose. Instead, it reveals not only a decisive figure but also a commander who considered the opinions of his subordinates and allowed freedom of action. This depiction shows that Atatürk's ideas about military matters were not fully formed by the War of Independence/Greco-Turkish War of 1919-22, but were constantly being refined and thought out. Thus, Gawrych emphasizes Atatürk as commander as well as intellectual. It is a humanizing and refreshing approach.

The only critique of this work is that it could have contained more information about Atatürk's military activities before 1919. Gawrych heavily emphasizes post-1919 events; I personally would have liked to see more information on the pre-1919 period. That being said, this readable work offers a great deal to military historians as well as scholars of the Middle East, Turkey, and the Ottoman Empire. It provides new insights and a concise synthesis of many previous studies of Atatürk's early military career, and it draws on sources that are used infrequently by Anglophone authors. This work nicely complements recent English books on Atatürk, such as Andrew Man-

go's *Ataturk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (2002), Austin Bay's *Ataturk: Lessons in Leadership From the Greatest General of the Ottoman Empire* (2011), M. Şükrü Hanioğlu's *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (2011), and Edward Erickson's *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk* (2013). As a synthesis of military history and intellectual biography, this work excels.

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