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The Story of *Tell England* (1931) in Turkey: Transcultural Remakes and the Early Sound Era

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Abstract

Tell England (1931), Anthony Asquith and Geoffrey Barkas' film depicting the Battle of Gallipoli, unsurprisingly incited emotional responses from its audiences. In Turkey, at a time when memories of the war were still fresh, importers wanted to screen it. The general feeling was that *Tell England* depicted the war in fairly neutral terms, but that it would benefit from the insertion of a few 'local scenes'. Additional scenes were written by author, Ziya Şakir, who also appeared in the film alongside other Turkish actors. In January 1932, this new version of the movie was screened under the new title, *Çanakkale/Gallipoli*. The founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal, who was also the commander of the Ottoman Empire at the Gallipoli front, was in attendance at one of the film's screenings, along with other senior officers. In order to meet the demand for the indigenous production of the talkies in Turkey at a time when the necessary resources and infrastructure were not readily available, *Tell England* served as a way of offering a film which could meet these demands, without having to produce an entire film. Although the arrival of the talkies has often been described as having posed a challenge to the transnational exhibition of cinema, in this article, we will consider the ways in which local exhibitors of the period employed a number of tactics in relation to *Tell England* and its adaptation for Turkish audiences. In addition to subtitling, dubbing and foreign language remakes, creative strategies like those used in the Turkish production of *Tell England*, demonstrate the ways in which film continued to be productively exchanged internationally, even in cases where ideological reframing was required to suit local and national contexts.

Tell England, a 1931 British drama film directed by Anthony Asquith and Geoffrey Barkas, tells the story of two friends who join the army, taking part in the fighting at Gallipoli in 1915-16, during World War I. The battle focused on a strait in the

Dardenelles which was viewed as a significant point of access from which the Allied forces would be able to advance on Constantinople. After eight months of fighting, and the great loss of lives on both sides, the allied forces were left defeated and withdrew, a result which marked a key victory of the Ottoman Empire and was viewed as a tragic disaster by the Allies. This article will consider the original film, its reception in Britain, and the production and reception of the Turkish transcultural remake which effectively resituated a patriotic war film across lines of battle.

Produced by British Instructional Films, who had already produced several war films, both fictional and documentary, *Tell England* was made at Welwyn Studios, which BIF built in 1928 and then converted to sound using Klangfilm equipment from Germany.[1] The first production made using the studio was Asquith's film, *A Cottage on Dartmoor* (1929), although the film's short sound sequence was reported to have been made in Germany. *Tell England,* initially conceived of as a silent film, was later adapted for sound by adding a dubbed soundtrack featuring minimal dialogue, as well as some diegetic music and environmental sound. Like other early sound films, it presented what Lawrence Napper describes as 'a clash of silent and sound techniques', with dialogue sometimes casually replaced by intertitles left over from the earlier silent version.[2] This patchwork approach to the film may have made it easier to adapt for foreign audiences. While critics of the talkies fearing the loss of cinema as an art form often advocated for the use of minimal dialogue, in reality, the early talkies were never the '100% all talking picture' they were often advertised to be. As Lorraine Porter and Geoff Brown write, the transition to sound was not a seamless process, but was one characterised by fits and starts. As filmmakers scrambled to adopt the new technology, many films were shot silent with soundtracks added after (a type of film referred to as 'goat glanders').[3] Even Asquith's film, *A Cottage on Dartmoor,* noted as one of the last British silent films,

attempted to engage with the new technology in some way by including a short sound sequence (now lost), which rather humorously depicted the reactions of a cinema audience experiencing an early talkie, presumably for the first time.

Asquith's approach, even when he was making silent films, was to resist an overreliance on dialogue. His first film, *Shooting Stars* (1928), for instance, made minimal use of intertitles, particularly when compared to other films of the period. Similarly, Asquith's first sound film *Tell England* was praised for resisting the deployment of sound for merely conveying information. The main channel for telling the film's story is still the image. Dialogue is minimal, with sound's primary use in the film being reserved for artistic and emotional effects. As a result, the task of translating the spoken language of the film proved far less a challenge than it would have been for other films. The fact that it was a war film would have also made it more amenable to cross-cultural translation, in the sense that the spectacular battle sequences praised so highly by audiences and critics in Britain, were largely focused on elaborate visual reconstructions and experimental soundtracks recreating the acoustic environment of the battle, but with an economic use of dialogue. With minimal adjustments made, the film's ideological focus was relatively easily shifted from one side of the battle line to the other.

***Tell England* (1931): the reception of the film and the novel it was based on**

The original film was also adapted from another source. A loose adaptation of the popular novel of the same name by Ernest Raymond, the film's publicity ascribed authorship of the film to Raymond, and makes no mention of the film's directors, a surprising omission, considering that Asquith, by that point, had already established himself as a one of the most significant British directors of the period. With the success of earlier films, such as *Shooting Stars* (1928), *Underground* (1928), and *A Cottage on*

Dartmoor (1929), Asquith was often spoken about (or written about) in relation to the other great British director of the period, Alfred Hitchcock. The faint mentions of the film's stars, Carl Harbord and Tony Bruce, both well-known actors of the day, and the decision to give the book's author top billing, provides further evidence of the great popularity of Raymond's novel during the period.[4] In a review of the film in *The Observer*, the critic cites the novel as 'too well known to need to recall the story.'[5] At the time of the film's release, the book, which was originally published in 1922, had already reached its thirty-third edition. The film only increased its popularity.

However, not all critics were in agreement that the film's ties to the original novel, itself a fictionalised account of Gallipoli, were beneficial. In fact, the two primary criticisms of the film were that firstly, the film's inclusion of the personal, romantic narratives, often sat awkwardly with the significant historical narrative and secondly, that the film represented a very particular kind of England – a public school boy, upper-class England – that didn't seem representative of the men who had fought in Gallipoli. *The Manchester Guardian*, for instance, criticised the film's adaptation of the story, saying it required 'different treatment from what it is given here to justify its advertisement as "a great romance of glorious youth" […] We do not learn enough about them to justify their personal interruption of the war scenes, which in turn are robbed of their historical value by the personal romantic element.'[6] John Grierson's take on the film's weaknesses also focused on the personal storylines of the original novel. He wrote, 'Asquith has had a certain burden to bear in acting knee-wife to Raymond's rather sissified story of English heroism on the shores of Gallipoli'.[7] He goes on to write:

> To be blunt about it, Asquith's rather trifling hero dies specifically for –i) Fay Compton, (ii) a couple of swans, and (iii) afternoon tea on the domestic lawn.

> He dies for an England which may indeed be Asquith's England, but which is hardly an England worth dying for. For on its own evidence, it is a leisure-class England which has lost contact with fundamentals, with the toiling earth and the men who go with it. It is a complacent and effete England, which—if it exists—one would rather die to wipe from the map in a more local war.

Grierson's criticism of the narrative's focus on the upper classes, could also be read, along with some of the other reviews, as also being a reaction against to the homoerotic subtexts of the film and original novel. Even though advertising used to promote the film emphasised Fay Compton as the romantic female lead, the central narrative focuses on the friendship between the two central male characters. Ultimately, the criticisms of class may have more to do with a rejection of non-heteronormative projections of national identity, where the more feminised aspects of the narrative are dismissed in favour of the vigour and glory presented in the battle scenes.

Fellow British director, Roy Lockwood's rather impassioned account of Asquith's direction of the film is a good example of this. He writes,

> All his work is interesting, but he has a weakness for going and doing something so utterly awful in the midst of perfect beauty that, watching it, one wants to scream.
>
> Take "Tell England." Think of the magnificent landing scenes, and then of the flash-back close-ups of Fay Compton. Think of the shell-hole scenes and the attack on the trench mortar, and then think of that too Oxford accent of Tony Bruce and Carl Harbord.

Asquith himself was gay, but was in the closet throughout his life. So, while it's unlikely the responses to the film were personal attacks, they are certainly evidence of a homophobic reaction to the director's arguably subversive approach to a masculine genre. It is also worth noting that Lockwood's criticism here likely focuses on a rather nuanced use of sound in the battle scenes, which interrupts the sounds and images of battle to include a line of interior dialogue from Edgar ('That's what I'd like to tell England'), which serves to problematize a straightforward patriotic presentation of events. It is a sophisticated use of sound, particularly for the period, in the way that it draws together image and sound in a layered and complex way, but also in its bold and more nuanced depiction of war. It is the more ambiguous qualities that lead film critic, William D Routt, writing in 1994, to declare the film as 'a clear example of "art cinema"', citing the fact that although the film's meaning may not be immediately apparent to audiences, 'its ability to generate multiple expositions is taken as testimony to its worth.'[8]

The film's depictions of the actual scenes of battle at Gallipoli received high praise. Asquith, the son of the former prime minister, Herbert Henry Asquith, who was in office during the Gallipoli campaign, was given access by the Admiralty to their fleet, including ships, seven destroyers, and many picket boats. Although other BIF films had co-operation from the War Office and Admiralty, some critics were disapproving of what they perceived as Asquith benefitting from his 'influential standing' and receiving support which other filmmakers interested in filming the subject matter would not be able to attain.[9]

The film's production stretched over eighteen months, lasting longer than the campaign itself. Most of the outdoor scenes were shot in Malta and the film's celebrated

landing scenes were reported to have involved a cast of one thousand men. Many of those involved were from the original Mediterranean garrison and uniforms were loaned by the British and Australian governments, and the Turkish troops were played by locals from Malta.[10]

The elaborate battle scenes, overseen by the film's other director, Geoffrey Barkas, who had served at Gallipoli himself, were received with great praise by audiences. As a result, the film was deemed to be of high national significance.[11] For instance*, Morning Post*, hailed it as 'a great British war film', offering praise for scenes 'showing the tragedy of the 29th Division landing from the River Clyde on V Beach.'[12] John Grierson, despite his criticisms previously mentioned, made fervent claims that 'the percussive cutting of one shot-and-shell sequence is better than anything of the sort from Russia'. For many critics, the strength of the film lay in its editing. Unfortunately, there was little to no acknowledgement of the film's editor, Mary Field, a notable director of children's educational films, who at the time had been working on natural history films at British Instruction Films, the company that also produced *Tell England*. Her work on the film was largely invisible. Grierson, in his review of the film, concludes that Asquith 'is probably responsible for the cutting.'[13]

The reception of the film overseas was mixed. In the US, the film was released under the title, *Battle of Gallipoli*, perhaps in an attempt to broaden the film's appeal beyond its specific national focus. There it was received well by the critics and deemed by some to be a superior film to the popular American war film, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Lewis Milestone, 1930), but was perhaps not such a success at the box office. As one critic noted in relation to the screenings of the film in New York how 'in spite of excellent reviews […] it was not successful, and ran for only a week.'[14] In Australia, the film's very English perspective of Gallipoli was criticised for its lack of

acknowledgement of the Australian sacrifice and that no sense of 'comradeship, even gratitude' for the Australian effort is 'even suggested.'[15] In Jerusalem, reactions to the 'great British film' were also negative. The film was banned by authorities after only two screenings when British troops and politicians in the audience began to cheer and boo at alternate scenes, 'until the hall became a bedlam. [and] Eventually, the film had to be stopped.[16] The audience's reaction in this instance provides a good example of the possibilities for audiences to read against the grain of the film's intended ideological perspective.

The film industry in Turkey during the transition to sound cinema

The "Turkish" version of *Tell England*, in which some parts of the original movie were removed, and some new scenes shot in Istanbul were added, was released on 20 January 20 1932, in the Artistic and Opera cinemas in Istanbul, under the new title, *Çanakkale* (Dardanelles).[17] The movie was presented as 'an important success in Turkish cinema', especially in the advertisements for the film's first screenings.

The arrival of the cinematograph to this region was met with enormous interest from audiences. However, because the event coincided with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the new republic, the cinema industry relied mostly on importing and screening foreign films. Of course, there were various attempts at indigenous film production, but the only real continuity in filmmaking in the country would not be achieved until the 1930s with the İpekçi Brothers, who had entered the film business through movie theatre management and eventually established a production and dubbing studio.

When *Çanakkale* (Dardanelles), the Turkish version of *Tell England*, was released in January 1932, Turkish audiences had seen only two domestic films since the

establishment of the Republic in 1923. The first of these films, both of which are İpekçi Brother's İpek Film productions, was *Ankara Postası* (Ankara Post) (Muhsin Ertuğrul), which reached audiences in 1929. The movie ends with patriotic scenes featuring the order of the Great Offensive, which was the final military operation of the Turkish War of Independence. The other film, the first Turkish talkie, *İstanbul Sokaklarında* (On the Streets of Istanbul) (Muhsin Ertuğrul, 1931), was shot in Egypt, Greece and Istanbul, and dubbed at Epinay Studios in Paris, since there was no infrastructure in Turkey. The entire production and post-production process of the film, from the shooting process to the departure of the team to Paris for dubbing, was closely followed by the press, and the fact that the audience would hear Turkish words and lyrics for the first time in the cinemas was greeted with enthusiasm and became a source of national pride. Audiences did in fact respond enthusiastically to the first Turkish sound film. *İstanbul Sokaklarında* (On the Streets of Istanbul) opened on December 1, 1931, screening in the İpek and Elhamra Cinemas owned by İpekçi Brothers, and continued until January 20, 1932, the day *Çanakkale* was released at the neighbouring cinemas, Opera and Artistic. In total, *İstanbul Sokaklarında* was exhibited at theatres for 7.5 weeks nonstop, a tremendous achievement in years when film programmes were usually changed twice a week.

İpek Film and Opera Film, the biggest film importers of the period, were also the operators of the most magnificent cinemas of Istanbul. İpek Film, which produced the first Turkish sound film, *İstanbul Sokaklarında*, was operating the Elhamra and Melek Cinemas, and Opera Film, which produced the Turkish version of *Tell England*, operated the Opera and Artistic Cinemas. Melek, Opera and Artistic cinemas were neighbours, with all three cinemas located inside the Cercle d'Orient complex which was one of the most prestigious buildings of the period on İstiklal Avenue. At the end of

1932, the İpekçi Brothers took over the neighbouring Opera Cinema from its operator Mehmet Rauf (Sirman) and his partners, renaming it İpek Cinema and running it for many years. While İpek Film was the representative of Paramount Pictures, Opera Film was the representative of Fox Film in Turkey. The cinemas operated by the two companies were also in competition with each other and closely followed the innovations in European cinema to bring them to the country. This included the arrival of sound cinema. The first two sound film screenings in Turkey took place on September 26 and October 9, 1929 at the Opera Cinema, which, at the time, was run by Mehmet Rauf and his partners. The third sound film was screened a week later, this time at the Elhamra Cinema, run by İpekçi Brothers.[18]

Although the Opera Cinema and the cinemas run by İpekçi Brothers commenced sound film screenings in 1929, they also suffered from the language barrier that was a common problem all over the world during the period. Although there were attempts to overcome the language barrier through subtitling or the use of distribution materials offering translations of song lyrics in the films, the solution eventually settled on would be dubbing. İpekçi Brother's film, *On the Streets of İstanbul,* would be the first to present audiences with a Turkish soundtrack. In response, Opera Film, even though they were not capable of making a whole sound film, in order to compete with this situation, they decided to produce *Çanakkale*, a remake of *Tell England,* which would combine material from the original film with a few newly shot scenes.

The making of *Tell England'*s Turkish version, *Çanakkale*

While Opera Film was localizing *Tell England*, they decided to work with a writer, Ziya Şakir to develop additional scenes to be shot in Turkey. Şakir participated in the Balkan War (1912-1913), World War I (1914-1918) and the Turkish War of Independence

(1919-1923), and had serialised numerous popular historical research pieces and novels in various newspapers after the foundation of the Republic. The first thing that brought him fame was *Meçhul Asker* (The Unknown Soldier), a novel about the Balkan War in Edirne in 1912, featuring himself and his brother as the main protagonists.[19] Considering Şakir's success as a writer especially in war novel genre, it is not surprising that the owners of Opera and Artistic Cinemas were interested in him for a film about the Battle of Gallipoli.

An article published in the national newspaper, *Vakit,* on the day of the film's release, provides further clues about the production process of the film in Turkey. Firstly, it is stated that *Tell England* is not anti-Turkish, but rather that 'the British can show heroism by obeying orders even if it is unnecessary'. The article also observes that while Turkish soldiers are only seen injured and killed in some clashes in the film, that of course, the film cannot be shown in this way. It also reports that one of the film's importers went to Ankara (the capital) to meet with military authorities to present their idea for a project which would combine parts of *Tell England* with their own newly scripted scenes which, with their support, could be filmed using Turkish soldiers.[20] The newspaper goes on to say that production on the new version, *Çanakkale*, had started in Kilyos, an area located on the Black Sea coast of Istanbul. The article also states that the parts of *Çanakkale* shot in Istanbul are silent. Since the country did not have sound recording equipment and dubbing infrastructure at that time, there was no Turkish speech in the film. Sound effects such as a train whistle or the sound of a bugle were added to the parts shot in Turkey.[21][22]

The newspaper *Son Posta* also reported that while the original of the film is approximately 2300 meters long, a 1200-meter 'Turkish front addition' had been shot under the leadership of a Turkish coordinator[23] and an operator. Which meant that the

additional material shot in Istanbul was around half as much as the original. We also learn from the article that the main change made in the film was to replace two main characters with two Turkish characters. One of the characters was played by Ziya Şakir, the additional parts' writer, and the other by Ferdi Tayfur, who would later become one of Turkish cinema's greatest stars.[24] (Figure 2)

Since the film *Çanakkale* is lost, these comments in the press about it provide valuable clues about what the film was like. From the press coverage, we are able to infer that the two main characters, as well as the scenes set in England, were cut and replaced with the story of a friendship between two characters played by Ferdi Tayfur and Ziya Şakir. Scenes shot in Kilyos with the participation of the Turkish army, depicting the Turkish front in Gallipoli were also added. Although without the film, the exact details of these changes are uncertain, we are still able to determine the effect of these changes on the overall meaning of the film by examining the reception of it in Turkey.

By mid-November 1931, the owners of Opera Film began hanging posters of the film *Çanakkale* with the Turkish flag in various places in İstanbul.[25] In some of the film's advertisements, it was presented as 'a tremendous war movie with sound and speech, created with the help of the Turkish and English armies'.[26] Although the statement is not entirely incorrect, it is misleading in the way it implies that the film was produced with the cooperation of the armies and filmmakers of both countries. In an advertisement released two days later, the film is presented as 'an important moment in Turkish filmmaking', but this time the emphasis is on the film's identity as a domestic production. The owners of Opera and Artistic Cinemas, who were also the producer and exhibitor for the Turkish version of *Tell England*, wanted to turn the film's soiree into a

big event and organised tram expeditions that leave every five minutes from Pera's neighbouring districts Fatih and Maçka.[27]

Atatürk's Response and Reception of *Çanakkale*

The Gallipoli Campaign held a special meaning for the founding father of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. At the start of the Battle of Gallipoli, he was just a commander of one division, but following his success in defending the Anafarta section (which includes Suvla Bay and Chunuk Bair) he became the commander of six divisions and, by the end of the war, he was awarded a Legion of Merit. His fame, thanks to his success in the Battle of Gallipoli, would play a crucial role in his leadership for the Independence War (1919-1923), which involved a nationalist resistance against the occupation of Anatolia by Greece, France, Italy and Britain after the First World War. While a secular republic was established in 1923 after this war, the elites described the moment as representing a clear break from the legacy of the Ottoman Empire. The nationalist historiography also described the War of Independence as a definite and clear break from the Ottoman past.[28] Similarly, the Battle of Gallipoli is separated from the Ottoman past and presented as either a rehearsal for the War of Independence or a part of it.[29] In the legendary Battle of Gallipoli narratives, the multinational Ottoman or Anatolian troops were replaced with Turkish soldiers, and the victory was achieved almost solely thanks to the military genius of the nation's founder, Atatürk.[30]

Given this complex historical and ideological context, it's understandable that one of the most significant events of the film's exhibition was the Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's attendance of one of the evening performances of the film at the Opera Cinema. After watching *The Vagabond King* (Ludwig Berger, 1930) at the Elhamra Cinema in Istanbul on December 3, 1930, Mustafa Kemal, along with a couple of

ministers and MPs went to see one of the public screenings of *Çanakkale*, two days after its premiere.[31] The following day, the visit appeared on the first page of the dailies, with emphasis being placed on his attendance at the film's screening being met with a standing ovation from the theatre's audience, and that, after the film was finished, the audience accompanied him and his entourage to the street.[32]

During the film's break, while chatting with the movie theatre owner, Mustafa Kemal stated that cinema is a very important device to enlighten the public, and that more people should make use of it. They then moved on to a discussion about the ticket prices and Opera movie theatre's ticket prices, which were three or four times more than a regular cinema ticket, which led the theatre owner to report on the fact that they were paying 33 percent tax. As a result of the conversation, Mustafa Kemal requested that the finance minister, who was with him at the time, reformulate the tax in relation to the film business. Shortly after this film screening, the tax was decreased to 10 percent.[33] Cemil Filmer, who was operating cinemas in these years, recalled in his memoir, that filmmakers welcomed the news and that it began a lucrative period for filmmakers.[34]

Success and reception of *Çanakkale*

Although we do not have the box office data for this period, as Opera Film anticipated, the audience's interest in the film was very high. Various articles in the press observed how audiences were 'flocking to cinemas for days for the film *Çanakkale*', and that going to the first screening of the day was recommended in order to find a seat.[35] Abidin Daver, offering an account of his own experience of watching the movie in his column in the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper, said that he heard a woman's crying from behind him in the cinema, which was likely to be a mother who lost her son in the Gallipoli Campaign.[36] Another article stated that the scene in which the British soldiers were

exposed to the fire of the Turkish gatling while they were landing was the scene that received the most applause from the audience.[37]

Even without box office data, it is certain that the film was one of the most popular films of the year. Eugene Hinkle, the second secretary of the US Embassy in Ankara, who also had a sociology degree, conducted research on the cinema in Turkey in 1932. The research included in depth interviews and questionnaires with different age groups of students. *Çanakkale*, (Dardanelles) was cited as the favourite film for primary boys and second favourite for secondary boys, and third favourite films for primary and secondary girls.[38] The first three films in all groups were the first Turkish talkie *İstanbul Sokaklarında*, the second Turkish talkie *Kaçakçılar* (both by İpek Film) and *Çanakkale* (by Opera Film).[3940] The apparent interest of the audience in these three films suggests that *Çanakkale* is regarded in the same way as other local film productions.

Çanakkale was mostly welcomed by the press. It was stated that it successfully demonstrated that 'the heroic Turkish soldiers, who had been fighting the enemy with great determination for months, finally succeeded in expelling the enemy'.[41] The cinema editor of the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper states that he went to the film with great reservations, fearing that 'British may have turned the greatest example of Turkish heroism in their favour', yet 'the British filmed these historical heroic legends of the Turks as they were without any distortion, and ours added very modest parts'.[42] The author adds that 'he will not criticize the parts we have added because they do not have an artistic claim'. Other newspapers, such as the *Son Posta* offer more praise for the new local scenes, by emphasizing the seamlessness in which they blended in with material from the original film: 'There is no possibility to find the slightest difference between the two parts, both technically and photographically'. The same article also offers praise for the actors playing the Turkish front and their natural acting abilities,

especially when taking into account that this was their first time in front of a camera. Congratulating the entrepreneurs behind the film, which facilitated the revival of this great victory of the Turks, the article concludes by saying that the Turkish film industry seems to be slowly walking towards maturity and that he is proud of it.[43]

Fikret Adil, who managed the cinema page of the *Vakit* newspaper, offered the only criticism of the film. Shortly after the initial announcements were made about the film and additional scenes were being shot in the city, he wrote an article and asks, ‘Is this film showing the false heroism of British imperialism censored? If so, how was it done and how was it allowed to be shown?’.[44] In his article following the film’s release, he accuses the producers of the movie of, ‘taking an English movie and putting the name of the most honourable mention of our national history on it, retouching it and putting it on the market as a national heroism movie’ and thus using national honour for their own interests.[45] In both the praise and criticism of *Çanakkale*, the film’s patriotic subject is considered in relation to the Turkish film industry and either it is stated that they are proud of this advancement in domestic film production, or the filmmakers are accused of exploiting this national heroic story for their own selfish interests.

Reusages of *Tell England* in Turkey

After being screened at the Artistic and Opera cinemas until January 30, the film was exhibited in the capital, Ankara. Met with great interest, the film stayed on screen in Ankara longer than initially planned. The manager of the Milli and Hilal cinemas in Istanbul Şehzadebaşı, who was due to show the film after Ankara, put an advertisement in the newspaper, announcing that the *Çanakkale* film screening program had been postponed due to circumstances beyond their control.[46]

After these screenings in 1932, there is also evidence of the Turkish version of *Tell England* featuring as part of an itinerant program of sound films in Kars, an Eastern city of Turkey. It seems unlikely there were facilities to exhibit sound films in the city at the time, so the entire screening was presented as a national propaganda program. Accounts in the press state that when the people of Kars heard Atatürk's voice for the first time, they listened with interest to the speech of the Minister of National Education about the Latin alphabet reform, and were flattered by the film *Çanakkale*, and its depiction of the sacrifice and heroism of the Turks.[47]

Çanakkale continued to be used to bolster national pride in later years. In 1934, HA-KA Film agreed to make a film with the Soviet director Esther Shub to portray the phases of the Turkish revolution. For the film, which took four years to complete, new footage was shot in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, and the director, who had already influenced Vertov and Eisenstein with her editing style, used parts of the movie *Tell England* for the new film, which would eventually be titled *Türk Inkılabında Terakki Hamleleri* (Progress in the Turkish Revolution)[48] After that, the film was released again on October 20, 1940, the week before the Republic Day, and just after the Second World War began, the film was released under the new title, *Çanakkale Geçilmez* (Dardanelles Impenetrable). Sadettin Kaynak, a famous composer of the period, composed a score for the film, and a few famous poets' poems about veterans and martyrs from the war were also added.[49] Abidin Daver, who also wrote about the film when it was screened previously in 1932, asks why crowds filled the cinemas despite the fact that the film had been shown before, and comments that: 'The Turkish nation preserves that great, invincible spirit that created the miracle of Çanakkale, with all its fire and all its vitality. What makes this film immortal and eternal, like the Çanakkale miracle, is that the Turk is always ready to create the same miracle again, if necessary.'

Along with Paramount's war newsreels, the film, which was screened during the Republic Day period and this time was named *Dardanelles Impenetrable,* becoming a vehicle to appeal to the growing anxieties of the people during the Second World War, implying that if needed, the nation had the power to reinscribe Turkish heroism in history. Of course, all these re-uses of *Tell England* show that the Turkish film industry had yet to not reach the capacity to re-enact the Gallipoli War, and that it still had to continue to use scenes from the English film.

Conclusion

The story of *Tell England* in Turkey constitutes a very special example of the appropriation of foreign films according to the ideological needs of the country, which is connected with the new problems triggered by the transition to sound for the film industry. However, there are many examples of foreign films being reframed in different ways from the originals in Turkey. One of them is worth mentioning here for its similarly reversed reception. In 1914, French director Louis Feuillade's silent film *L'Agonie de Byzance* (The Agony of Byzantium) (1913) was screened in Istanbul cinemas with the title *Conquest of Istanbul*. Although the film focuses on the fall of the Byzantine Empire rather than the conquest of Istanbul and the Turks were portrayed negatively, the film, which was released after the Ottoman defeat in the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), and reframed in the press as 'a visual feast of one of the golden pages of Turkish history'.[50] Audiences filled the cinemas in response to this appeal and were reported to have broken into floods of applause each time the Turks appeared on the screen.[51] Even though *L'Agonie de Byzance* was not significantly altered by shooting additional scenes, the reception of the film in Istanbul seemed against the intentions of the filmmakers.

As the domestic film industry was gradually being built, foreign films started to be modified by local distributors, exhibitors and even censorship bodies attempted to make them more suitable for the tastes of local audiences.[3][52] The appropriation of foreign, especially Hollywood films, continued in the 1960s and 1970s, when the Turkish film industry, known as 'Yeşilçam', was most productive and making unlicensed remakes or using the soundtracks or some scenes of Hollywood films directly in domestic films.[53] Savaş Arslan calls the translation of foreign films suitable for the cultural context as 'Turkification' and the story of *Tell England* in Turkey can be seen as an example of Turkification in many senses.

Although the arrival of the talkies has often been described as having posed a challenge to the transnational exhibition of cinema, as this film illustrates, local exhibitors of the period employed a number of tactics. In addition to subtitling, dubbing and foreign language remakes, creative strategies like those used in the Turkish version of *Tell England* aka *Çanakkale* demonstrate the ways in which films continued to be productively exchanged internationally, even when – as in the case of *Tell England* – they were ideologically reframed to suit local and national contexts.

Tell England served as a way of offering a film which could meet the demand for indigenous production of the talkies in Turkey without having to produce an entire film while the necessary resources and infrastructure were not readily available. The film was of obvious interest because of the subject matter, but Asquith's approach as a filmmaker, which resisted an overreliance on dialogue, meant that the task of translating the film's dialogue was not an onerous one. The fact that it was a war film, which comprised of spectacular battle sequences and featured minimal dialogue also contributed to its suitability for cross-cultural translation.

Lawrence Napper says that *Tell England* ends with its final scene endorsing the ideals that it has questioned throughout the movie, but still strongly stages the crisis of faith in the war like the novel it is adapted.[54] However, as the exhibition and reception histories of the film *Çanakkale* demonstrate, the Turkish version of the film placed emphasis on the Turkish soldiers selflessly defending their homeland, rather than offering any sustained reflection on the meaninglessness or futility of war. Although the *Tell England* was initially prized for its potential to offer to challenge the first Turkish sound film, it was ultimately the film's subject matter, and it's focus on a battle of great national significance, which led to its eventual status as a much-valued Turkish patriotic film, that would be repurposed and exhibited for many years to come.

Notes

[1] See Rachel Low, *Filmmaking in 1930s Britain.* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), 121. Mark Connelly's recent book, *Celluloid War Memorials,* also offers an account of the WWI films produced by British Instructional Films, which were largely documentary reconstructions, so quite different from *Tell England.* Mark Connelly, *Celluloid War Memorials: The British Instructional Films Company and the Memory of the Great War.* (University of Exeter Press, 2016).

[2] Lawrence Napper, *The Great War in Popular British Cinema of the 1920s*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 199.

[3] Geoff Brown and Laraine Porter, 'Introduction', *Music, Sound and the Moving Image* 12, no. 2 (2018): 87-92.

[4] According to Lawrence Napper, although the book was received by some critics as being overly sentimental, it was a great success and was reprinted 14 times in 1922 and 6 times in 1923, 196.

[5] '"Tell England." The Gallipoli War Film. A Talk with Mr. Anthony Asquith. Sight and Sound.' *The Observer*, February 15, 1931.

[6] '"Tell England" Another British War Film', *Manchester Guardian*, March 3, 1931.

[7] John Grierson, 'Asquith Tackles Gallipoli', *The Clarion,* May 1, 1931, 15.

[8] William D Routt, 'Some early British films considered in light of early Australian production', *MetroL Media and Education Magazine,* issue 99, December 1994, 65-69: 66.

[9] Anthony Asquith, 'Tell England –And Hannen Swaffer',
Responding to attack by Hannen Swaffer in 'Sunday Express' the previous week, *Sunday Express*

[10] '1000 Take part in Gallipoli Picture', September, 1930.

[11] Grierson, p. 143; Low, p. 121.

[12] W.F. 'Tell England': A great British War Film', *Morning Post*, March 3, 1931.

[13] Grierson, 15.

[14] Alexander Bashky, 'English Films and the American Public: Views of an Impartial Critic', *The Era,* June 29, 1932, 3.

[15] Routt, 67.

[16] 'Arabs in Cinema "Scene": Disturbance when British film is shown in Jerusalem', *The Scotsman*, Tuesday March 29, 1932, 7.

[17] In Turkey, the Gallipoli Campaign is referred to as the Çanakkale Savaşı (Battle of Dardanelles). Gallipoli is the name of peninsula where most of the battles took place and Çanakkale (Dardanelles) is the name of the straits that separates European and Asian continents and also connects Mediterranean and Aegean Sea to the Marmara Sea.

[18] Özge Özyılmaz, 'Responses of The Film Industry and Audiences to The Introduction of Sound Cinema in Turkey (1929–1933)', *Music, Sound and the Moving Image* 12, no. 2 (2018): 245-246.

[19] "Ziya Şakir Araştırmacı Gazeteciliğin Öncüsüdür", medeniyetimiz.com, Archived at 17.09.2017, https://web.archive.org/web/20170911205027/http://www.medeniyetimiz.com/index.php/95-guemue-yazlar/guemue-yazlar/2066-ziya-akir-aratrmac-gazeteciliin-oencuesueduer.

[20] 'Çanakkale Tell England (İngiltereye Söyle)', *Vakit*, January 20, 1932, 5.

[21] Ibid.

[22] In the report of Eugene Hinkle who is the second secretary of the US Embassy in Ankara on cinema in Turkey and prepared in 1932, it is indicated that the language of *Çanakkale* is English and Turkish. Eguene Hinkle. 'The Motion Picture in Modern Turkey.' *Us Diplomatic Documents on Turkey II: The Turkish Cinema in the Early Republican Years*, eds Rifat Bali. (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2007), 139.

[23] Although the name is not written in the news, the coordinator is most likely Ziya Şakir.

[24] Fikret Adil, 'Spekülasyon: Çanakkale-Tell England', *Vakit,* 27 January, 1932, 5.

[25] 'Ben ne biçim sansör? İlk hatta ve siperde kahraman olan biziz!', *Vakit*, 17 November, 1931, 5.

[26] *Cumhuriyet*, 19 January, 1932, 4.

[27] *Akşam*, 21 January, 1932, 4.

[28] Yücel Yanıkdağ, "The battle of Gallipoli: The politics of remembering and forgetting in Turkey." *Comillas Journal of International Relations* 2 (2015): 99-115, 101.

[29] Erol Köroğlu, "Tarih, ideoloji ve popüler roman" [Unpublished paper]. Boğaziçi University, Institute of Modern Turkish History, (1999, November 5), cited in Ibid., 104.

[30] Mesut Uyar, "Remembering the Gallipoli campaign: Turkish official military historiography, war memorials and contested ground." *First World War Studies* 7, no. 2 (2016): 165-19, 170.

[31] Mustafa Gökmen, *Eski İstanbul Sinemaları* (İstanbul: İstanbul Kitaplığı, 1991), 46.

[32] 'Gazi Hz. Dün gece Opera sineması teşri ve "Çanakkale" filmini seyrettiler', *Cumhuriyet*, 23 January, 1932, 1.

[33] Cemil Filmer, *Hatıralar: Türk Sinemasında 65 Yıl* (İstanbul: Emek Matbaacılık ve İlancılık, 1984), 149-150.

[34] Ibid., 150.

[35] *Cumhuriyet*, 24 January, 1932, 4.

[36] Abidin Daver, 'Çanakkale!', *Cumhuriyet*, 29 January, 1932, 3.

[37] Fikret Adil, 'Spekülasyon: Çanakkale-Tell England', *Vakit*, 27 January, 1932, 5.

[38] Eguene Hinkle. 'The Motion Picture in Modern Turkey.' *Us Diplomatic Documents on Turkey II: The Turkish Cinema in the Early Republican Years* eds Rifat Bali. (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2007), 139-140.

[39] The first Turkish film *Istanbul Sokaklarında* was the first favourite for those all-age groups except primary boys (Primary boys' favourite film was *Çanakkale*). Ibid., 139-140.

[40] The secondary boys and girls were asked to write down the names of the movies they disliked and the reasons. Just two boys gave the name of the film and the reason for one of them was lacking a subject matter and the other boy disliked the film as his uncle died in the war. Ibid., 136.

[41] *Akşam*, 26 January, 1932, 8.

[42] 'Haftanın filimlerine ait intibalar: Çanakkale', *Cumhuriyet*, 24 January, 1932. 5.

[43] 'Çanakkale Harikası Beyazperdede', *Son Posta,* 22 January, 1932, 7.

[44] 'Bu ne biçim sansür? İlk hatta ve siperde kahraman olan biziz!', *Vakit*, 5 November, 1931, 5.

[45] Fikret Adil, 'Spekülasyon: Çanakkale-Tell England', *Vakit*, 27 January 1932, 5.

[46] 'Beyani itizar', *Cumhuriyet*, 29 February, 1932, 4.

[47] 'Kars'ta sesli seyyar sinema', *Cumhuriyet*, 27 *June*, 1933, 5.

[48] Mustafa Gökmen, *Eski İstanbul Sinemaları* (İstanbul: İstanbul Kitaplığı, 1991), 193.

[49] *Akşam*, 20 October, 1940, 3.

[50] Gökhan Demirkol and Tunç Boran, "Louis Feuillade'in 'L'agonie De Byzance' (1913) Filminin Türk Sinema Salonlarında 'İstanbul'un Fethine' Dönüşümü." Türk Sinema Tarihine Farkli Bakışlar, eds Rifat

Becerikli. (Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık, 2020), 77-119: 114; Saadet Özen, "Sinematografta İstanbul'un Fethi, Sinema Salonunda Tarih Yapımı (I)." *Toplumsal Tarih Dergisi* 318 (2020): 36-43.

[51] Ibid., 115.
[52] Ahmet Gürata, "Hollywood in Vernacular: Translation and Cross-Cultural Reception of American Films in Turkey." *Going to the Movies: Hollywood and the Social Experience of Cinema*, eds Melvyn Stokes, Robert C. Allen, and Richard Maltby. (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2007), 333-347: 335.
[53] Nezih Erdoğan, "Powerless Signs: Hybridity and the Logic of Excess of Turkish Trash." *Mapping the Margins: Identity Politics and the Media*. eds. Karen Ross and Deniz Derman. (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2003); Ian Robert Smith, '"Beam Me up, Ömer": Transnational Media Flow and the Cultural Politics of the Turkish Star Trek Remake', *The Velvet Light Trap* 61(1) (2008): 3-13; Savaş Arslan, *Cinema in Turkey: A New Critical History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[54] Lawrence Napper, *The Great War in Popular British Cinema of the 1920s* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 199.

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