



28th Levantine Heritage Foundation dinner gathering in London, with guest speaker Professor Peter Mackridge: 'The delights of Constantinople in eighteenth-century Greek literature' & Tom Rees 'Camarthen to Cairo via Smyrna and Cyprus: the Rees family 1850 to 1950'.



Peter Mackridge was Professor of Modern Greek at the University of Oxford and is an Emeritus Fellow of St Cross College. He holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Athens and an honorary professorship from the University of the Peloponnese. His books include *The Modern Greek Language* (1985), *Dionysios Solomos* (1989) and *Language and National Identity in Greece, 1766-1976* (2009). He has co-written two grammars of Modern Greek and has published English translations of *Three Days in the Monasteries of Cappadocia* by George Seferis (2010) and *The History of Western Philosophy in 100 Haiku* by Haris Vlavianos (2015) as well as volumes of stories by Vizyenos, Papdiamandis and Yorgos Ioannou. He has recently translated *Pope Joan* by Emmanuel Roidis for a forthcoming graphic version of this novel by the cartoonist Dimitris Chantzopoulos.

Two Greek texts provide us with a window on the natural and man-made delights of Constantinople and the Bosphorus in the eighteenth century. The first of these is the "Vosporomachia", or "The Quarrel of the Bosphorus", in which Europe and Asia, personified in female form, argue as to which of the two shores of the Bosphorus is the more beautiful. This charming long poem was written in Greek about 1753 by Gasparo Ludovico Momartz, a Levantine born in Constantinople who became chief dragoman at the Austrian embassy there. The second is the verse memoir of Patriarch Kallinikos III, who wrote it after being deposed from the throne after only six months in 1757. In order to dispel the melancholy caused by his unjust fate, he set about exploring Constantinople and its environs in search of stimulating spectacles and experiences, which he describes in his poems. Kallinikos' autobiographical poetry contains fascinating eyewitness information about life in and around Constantinople, and especially about the wondrous spectacles it had to offer, even to members of an "enslaved nation" (at least to those who belonged to the elite). Among the marvels he describes are the carnival-like celebrations for the birth of Sultan Selim III in 1761, the seasonal migration of fish through the Bosphorus, and his encounters with groups of Muslim women singing in gardens.



Istanbul's Bosphorus Strait by Jacques François Joseph Carabain

## Camarthen to Cairo via Smyrna and Cyprus: the Rees family 1850 to 1950 – Tom Rees

The talk will look at the political context and the social background of the first family migrant, the flexibility with which successive generations adapted to economic and technical change, the range of activities they were engaged in, commercial, military and intelligence, and their links to other long-established Levantine communities.



Zoë Rees, nee Werry, 1869-1963, and her ten surviving children; photo taken c. 1915, when the family had taken refuge from Turkey in Athens in the early days of WWI.



Tom Rees spent his early childhood in Alexandria, Egypt, where the Rees businesses had their headquarters, with regular holiday visits to his French and English grandparents near Izmir. Secondary schooling was in England, where he learned to shed his Levantine English accent for a pukka version which allowed him to pass for a native! After university he spent twenty years alternating between different government departments, the LSE and government and private sector think-tanks, before retiring to grow vines and make wine, first in Somerset and then in Bordeaux, finally leaving France (with a pang) in 2004. While in France, in the intervals between vine-growing and wine-making, he wrote a family history: *Merchant Adventures in the Levant*, ISBN 0-9545566-1-5, which was published privately.

10 April 2018, 6 pm start, talks start 6.30 pm, dinner 8pm  
at the Friends Room, Hellenic Centre, 16-18 Paddington St., London W1U 5AS  
Talks are free but booking essential: <https://28th-lhf-gathering.eventbrite.co.uk/>

There is no set dinner after the talks in the Hellenic Centre. However, we will arrange a group booking in a local restaurant for those who wish to dine at about 8pm. In booking your place for the talks, please indicate whether you wish to join us for dinner and we will send details of the venue and estimated costs.

Please support these events by becoming a sponsor. We provide these talks for free as part of our mission to preserve and promote the research and public understanding of Levantine heritage. Sponsoring the talks helps cover the LHF's costs in arranging these talks in central London. For sponsorship packages, please contact [chairman@levantineheritage.com](mailto:chairman@levantineheritage.com). All sponsors will be recognised at events and on our website.