

## **How to study one's ancestry in a Levantine context**

### **Family first:**

Genealogy is a study that used to be mostly the preserve of the well off and retired. The internet and the easier availability of information have changed that. But for Levantines there are special circumstances that make research at the same time harder, but also more rewarding.

Levantines by nature are people who are removed from their ancestral lands, and this could be as many different lands as the countries in Western Europe! Furthermore, Diaspora Levantines, to which many of the attendees here belong to, are twice removed, and so there is yet another level of accessibility and potential language problem to overcome. But because of this double break with their past, often the longing to learn about ancestry, how life was like back then, the reasons for that migration, what was the nature of their employment, their pass-times, who they married, and what were the limits of 'acceptable' mixed marriages back then, why then sometimes changed their nationality and how did the families fracture with time, living in different lands, holding different passports. And there are frequent examples of families migrating more than once, often the Aegean islands acting as a refuge for centuries, and the records in some instances are either lost or hard to access.

There is a popular misconception that the way of life for Levantines came to an end in 1922 for Izmir with the Great Fire of Izmir and 1924 for Istanbul, with the end of the Allied occupation. While the economic destruction to all communities was massive, the level of violence experienced by Levantines is often exaggerated, and many stayed on, and continued to prosper. Of course a huge number left never to return and their grandchildren now try to find out about that past. And people tend to forget that Levantines existed in other parts of Turkey and the former Ottoman Empire as well, and descendants continue to live happily.

There are basic rules about studying ancestry that apply to whatever background you come from and for the sake of completeness I will go through these steps as I see them.

The starting point of any investigation is the setting of goals, realistic targets, how much time and money you are prepared to spend. And an acceptance from the start that some questions will always remain unanswered. Your house is usually the best place to start, what old photographs are lying about. Can you identify them all? Any old diaries, bundles of letters, even objects of curiosity can tell tales. Old title deeds, military records and decorations, and family heirlooms, from the distant past, rescued from fires and brought from distant lands.

Next call are relatives, not necessarily the eldest members of the family, but those happy to talk about it, and happy to have some of this noted either in written form or recorded audio that can later be transcribed. So before this interview, it is good to be prepared. Often asking an open question like 'tell me about your past', will be too much to digest and the response will often be 'where do I start?' Opening the past can be emotionally traumatic and scary for some, so gently does it, but sometimes it is a case of snatching information only. Questions should follow questions, so if a relative's name is mentioned, and you don't know who he/she is, ask; if relevant also ask about their relationships, where they lived, what they did. But then return to the main story. I find it useful to draw or use a rough family tree with the interview so all persons are covered and missing links are revealed. And don't over do it. For most people talking about the past can be emotionally draining and there is the fear of giving incorrect information, so it is usually good to return to a second and third session with the former account printed and you can check with the person. Often as you read it out the person will add further layers of information, so the account is enriched each time. If the person is happy about it then sections of the interview can videotaped as well, so there is a movie record of this for future generations. Then the same process can be repeated with any other relatives, again not necessarily people in the 'autumn of their lives', there is much oral history passed in many families, so the person could be our generation, but can provide a different angle on the family history. Some parts of the account will not match, and so these can be cross-checked with family members, failing that records available, which is the next stage:



image 1: Craig Encer interviewing Edward de Jongh in 2006

### **Records in Turkey:**

There were no proper census taking in the Ottoman Empire, so unlike the west, these records don't exist. However the churches and consulates were quite meticulous in recording their 'flock' and where fire hasn't destroyed these, they are usually the best place to start Levantine investigations. For Anglican records of Izmir the registers are kept in the London Metropolitan Library and there is no fee to access these. A portion, are missing, those of pre-1922 Bornova were lost in the chaos of the time. Those in Istanbul are kept in the parsonage of the Crimean Memorial Church and there will be a standard fee (25 YTL whether you wish to do it yourself or the pastor, Ft. Ian Sherwood ) if you wish to access these, or if travel is an issue, Ft. Ian Sherwood to do a search on your behalf. The records of Anglicans for the rest of Turkey are kept in the National Archives Library in Kew, free to access, though the records are not complete.



image 2: register books for the All Saints Anglican church of Izmir, held formerly in the Guildhall library, now moved to the Metropolitan archives.

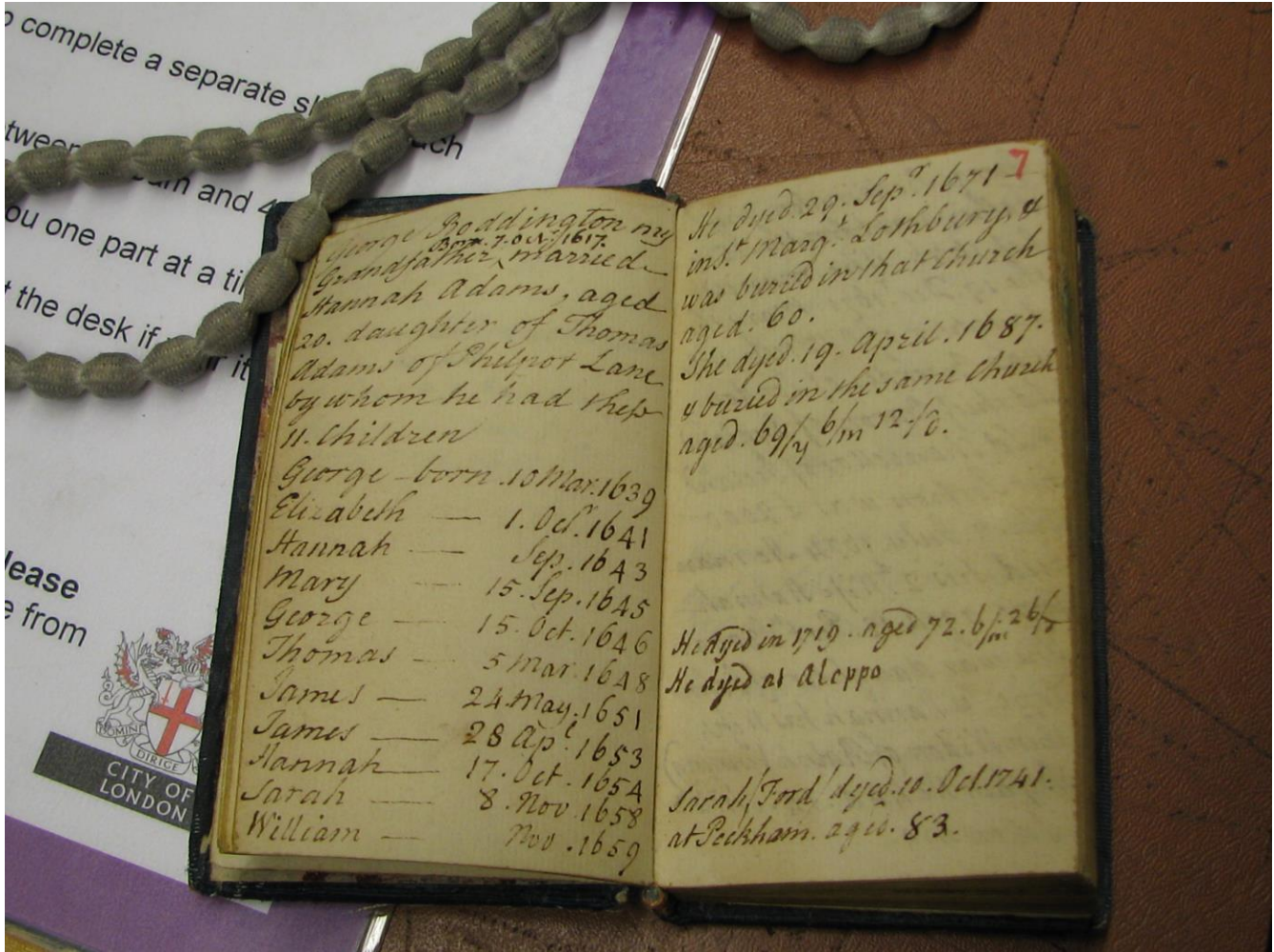


Image 3: Boddington family notebook from 18th century at the London Metropolitan library

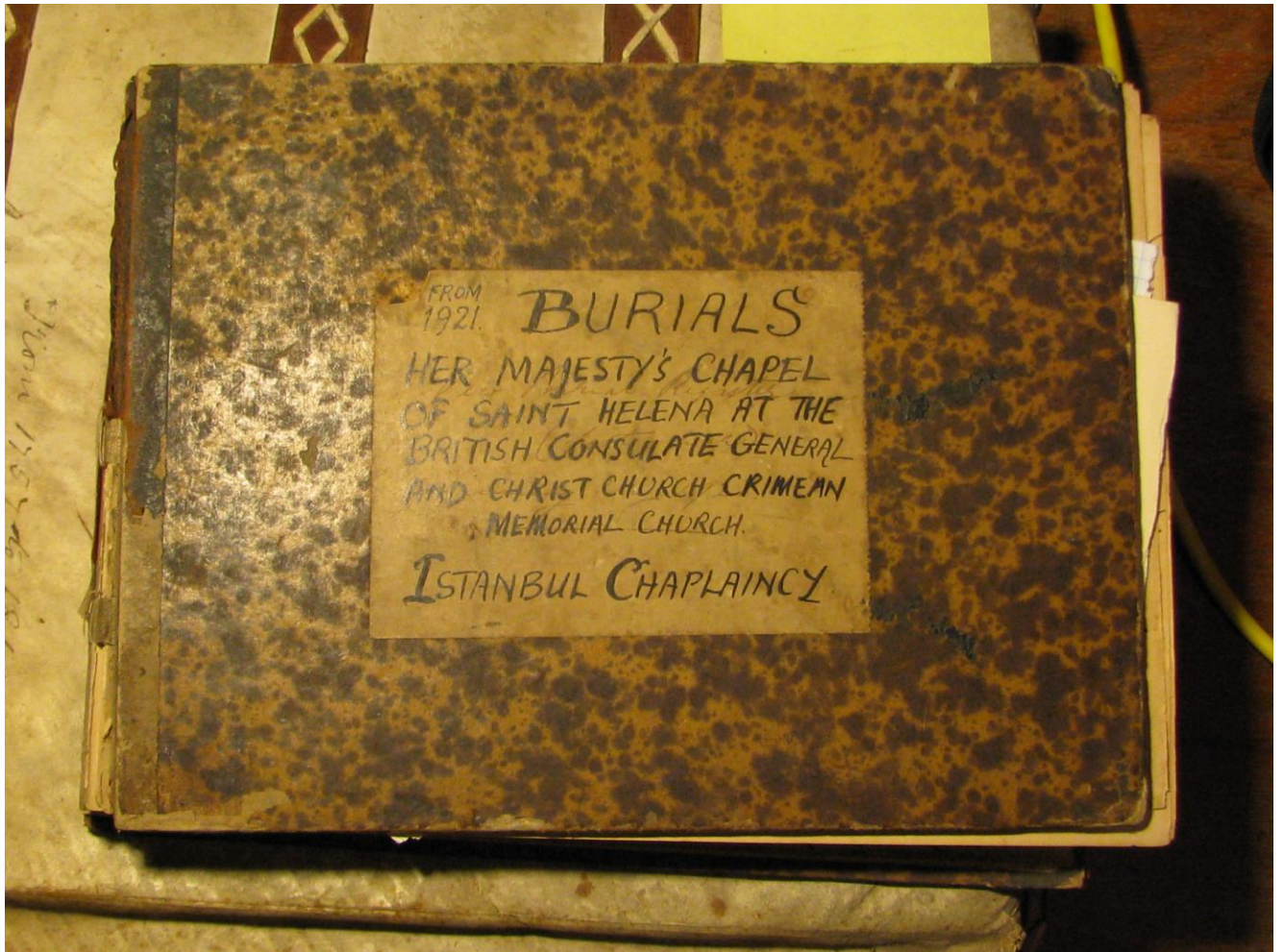


Image 4: One of the burial registers held at the Crimean Memorial Anglican Church in Istanbul

Then there are the cemeteries. There are 3 Protestant (Buca Anglican, Bornova Anglican, Alsancak Dutch), 2 Catholic (Soğukkuyu, Paşaköprü ) and 1 Orthodox cemeteries in Izmir, and in Istanbul, 2 Protestant (Feriköy, Haydarpaşa), 4 Catholic (Feriköy, Yeşilköy, Kadıköy, Büyükdere) and numerous Greek and Armenian, if you have such family connections. The Levantine Heritage web site has complete listings for the Izmir Protestant cemeteries, and partial listing for the Paşaköprü (Karabağlar) cemetery. Of the former cemeteries that were in the Kemer area, Mr Livio Missir created an article and listing for the Roman Catholic one in the 1970s whose data is on the LH website in image form. In 2010 Jean Özmırza led a group project to record and catalogue all the visible burials in the Catholic cemeteries of Izmir, Soğukkuyu (Karşıyaka), Paşaköprü cemeteries. This booklet can be purchased from Mr Özmırza through: [jean49@gmail.com](mailto:jean49@gmail.com).

The Catholic Church registers of Izmir mostly survived the 1922 events, and are still being used. The parish registers include those for Bornova from 1797, Buca from 1831, Cathedrale of St. John in Alsancak from 1875, Göztepe Notre Dame De Lourdes from 1899, Bayraklı St. Anthony from 1903, Karşıyaka St. Helen (stretching back pre its construction) from 1882, Alsancak Holy Rosary from

1904. The registers for St. Polycarp in Alsancak stretch back to 1807 and a recently a register book of this church dating from 1782-1787 was found in Marseilles. The registers for St. Maria church in Alsancak were all destroyed by the 1922 fire but a serious attempt was made to recreate them through testimonials, and these non-originals now date back to the 1820s. The registers of St. Polycarp, the Cathedral and Göztepe are kept in St. Polycarp Church, those of St. Maria in Alsancak and Bornova are kept in St. Maria church. The registers of St. Helen, Ss. Rosario and Bayraklı are retained in their own parishes. The Catholic Fathers are happy to open these registers or seek entries on your behalf, of course a small donation to church upkeep is always good practice on these occasions. Furthermore there are family address listings kept up to date, in case you wish to establish contact with family members. The first port of call for these will be one of the Catholic fathers, such as Padre Stefano Negro of SS. Rosario ([padrestefano@hotmail.com](mailto:padrestefano@hotmail.com)).

The British Consulate has a small batch of archives, including a pre-1922 address card listing, so you can get an impression of who lived where and number of persons in that household. However, street names have often changed, and it maybe a challenge to find the exact property, if it is still standing. However, despite misconceptions, most Levantine properties of Buca and Bornova are protected by law with extremely high standards of authenticity expected for any restoration but often the damage is done by elements over time.

One of the first stops in investigations in Turkey should be the Ottoman Bank Museum and archives centre in Galata, Istanbul in the Bankalar Caddesi on the third floor and very easily accessible (and staff is super friendly and helpful), speak fluent French and English. Just smile and mention the Osmanli Bankasi kitaphane and the concierge will get the elevator for you and give you directions. They also have great exhibitions. Phd student Aylin Besiryan (the old librarian) now doing her phd at the European University in Florence is the person who you should contact on genealogy. She does

not work for the Ottoman Bank anymore, but her knowledge is excellent.



Image 5: The Ottoman Bank Museum and Archives centre at Bankalar cad., Galata, Istanbul

The Ottoman Bank's main asset is the *Annuaire Oriental/Indicateur Ottoman* that was published in 1867, (gap of thirteen? years) 1881 - ca. 1925. But this almanac was not published in the First World

War. I would always suggest starting there if your family was in Trade, Banking, and Insurance.

Craftsman or lower personnel are often not mentioned in this Almanac however (Muslim traders aren't mentioned either very often, it is focused on inhabitants of Pera and Galata, the Christian, European and Jewish communities and higher Ottoman officials). If you want to know who's who in the Ottoman Empire that year: then this publication is also an excellent resource. It takes some time

though to search in the *Annuaire* as they have scanned the pages in separate pdf files and you cannot just flip through the book, or search on key word. However by using the paper register you



will probably find out which pdf you need to print. This almanac will help you find out where your family worked and where they lived. Just like the modern yellow pages you can search on name or trade, and often there are advertisements in the back.

The Bibliotheque National in Paris, France have scanned some editions of the annuaires/indicateurs for their Library so this resource is becoming more accessible and it is free to use and many editions are now online.

One of the main Catholic Churches in Istanbul, Saint Antoine de Padua, will reply to e-mails, and this could be a first step: [anton@sentantuan.com](mailto:anton@sentantuan.com) but a normal letter should be better practice:

R. P. Anton Bulai, ofmconv.  
Istiklal Caddesi, No 171  
34433 Beyoglu - Istanbul

Registers here start from 1831, you can find the registers of Andrinople & Karagatch (Edirne) and the only remaining register of Rodosto (Tekirdag).

In addition contacts for other Latin Churches in Istanbul:

2. Cathedrale Saint-Esprit

R. P. Giuseppe Giorgis: [giorgisg@libero.it](mailto:giorgisg@libero.it)

3. Notre Dame de Assumption

R. P. Yves Plunian  
Moda Cem Sok. No. 5  
34710 Kadikoy - Istanbul.

4. Saint Pierre & Saint Paul (the oldest church)

Galata kulesi sokak 44

Karaköy, Istanbul

Tel 212 249 23 85

Padre Lorezo Piretto ([lopiretto@hotmail.com](mailto:lopiretto@hotmail.com))

the registers start in 1740 up to present,

they also keep the registers of :

- Notre Dame de Lourdes of Bomonti

- Notre Dame du Rosaire of Bakirköy
- Notre Dame de l'Assomption of Yedikule

5. The registers of Sainte Marie Drapéris (Istanbul) entries start from 1662

For information about Constantinople inhabitants during World War I: the 1916 Constantinople Telephone Book is in the Istanbul Library in Sultanahmet, near Aghia Sophia. Back then only the top layers of society and wealthy Levantines had phones, so the listings aren't very long to trawl through. There are more recent versions of the phone book as well, and for Britain, archive phone book search service is available through [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk) to help trace the movements of family households.

For burial records: the register of Catholic cemetery Ferikoy is in their office in Şişli to the left of the entrance, records for WWI are not always present. I would always suggest checking the register first though as you can easily spend a day at the Catholic cemetery looking at graves three rows thick, walking over them in the rain and mud.

The Protestant cemetery records are kept in a different consulate every 2 years; this is a tradition going back to the foundation of the cemetery managed by 7 nations (Britain, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, USA, Holland, Sweden). If you contact the German Consulate in Istanbul, they can probably help you find the present location (= the consul who has it now).

The Izmir city archives centre, Apikam, has an impressive collection of foreign language newspapers of the city, aimed clearly at the Levantine community, often with writers from that background. Announcements of deaths, marriages and other events can often be seen, though the collection is not complete. In addition Apikam holds a library of Turkish books on the history of Izmir, and with some of these the focus is very much the Levantines who held an important place in the commercial world of this port city. The archives also contain a modest collection of paper ephemera pertaining to Levantines, such as old fire insurance documents etc. donated by members of the public. The staff of Apikam are helpful in tracing records pertaining to individual families.



Image 6: The Izmir archives centre and museum, Apikam

**Further: all consular and church archives.**

Consular Archives from before 1940 or even later, are often kept in consular archives back home. Please be aware that many records from before the Great Fire in Pera (1870) were destroyed. The Dutch National Archives in The Hague [www.nationaalarchief.nl](http://www.nationaalarchief.nl), The Swedish National Archives (Mr. Sten Leander: [Sten.Leander@riksarkivet.ra.se](mailto:Sten.Leander@riksarkivet.ra.se)) are very responsive and will probably help you. Italians have a privacy law and often do not respond. The French consular archives are in Nantes. They do not really help you, but tell you how to search and can give you a name of a researcher who will do it for you. CADN Archives [[Archives.CADN@diplomatie.gouv.fr](mailto:Archives.CADN@diplomatie.gouv.fr)].

For St. Maria Draperis in Istanbul: Fr. Ruben Tierrablanca, OFM (orders of friars mino), at [rtierrablanca@ofm.org](mailto:rtierrablanca@ofm.org). He is absolutely fantastic! Their records are digitalized and he is super responsive and sends you an attachment within a week with records from your family

The Dutch Chapel: Mrs. Elaine van Rensburg, the pastor's wife knows a lot about their archive as she wrote a book about the parish. They live in Union Han and can be contacted there.

The Cercle d' Orient might have information if your family was powerful, they keep information about all past members (ambassadors, bankers): Büyük kulüp: info@buyukkulup.org.tr, Mr. Osman Mutlu. But lower diplomatic personnel (consuls) and successful businessmen usually went to the Club de Constantinople.

The Italian Consulate in Izmir keeps the records of its registered citizens going back to 1871. All the Italians living in Izmir from 1871 were registered in the first in a series of four large registers still existing today, and Fabio Tito employed there is often available to look into specific enquiries. In addition these records cover minor state citizen records such as Sardinia and Tuscany, who used to have their own consulates in Izmir. A part of the archives of the Consulate of the Kingdom of Sardinia in Izmir is held in the State Archive of Turin. Similar records are accessible in Istanbul. The registers there start in 1860, but they also keep one Sardinian register, one Tuscan register, one Neapolitan register. For genealogical researches, the Italian consulate in Izmir can be contacted at consolato.izmir@esteri.it or segreteria.izmir@esteri.it.

For Chios, the remaining parish registers are no longer in that island, they can be found in Tinos.

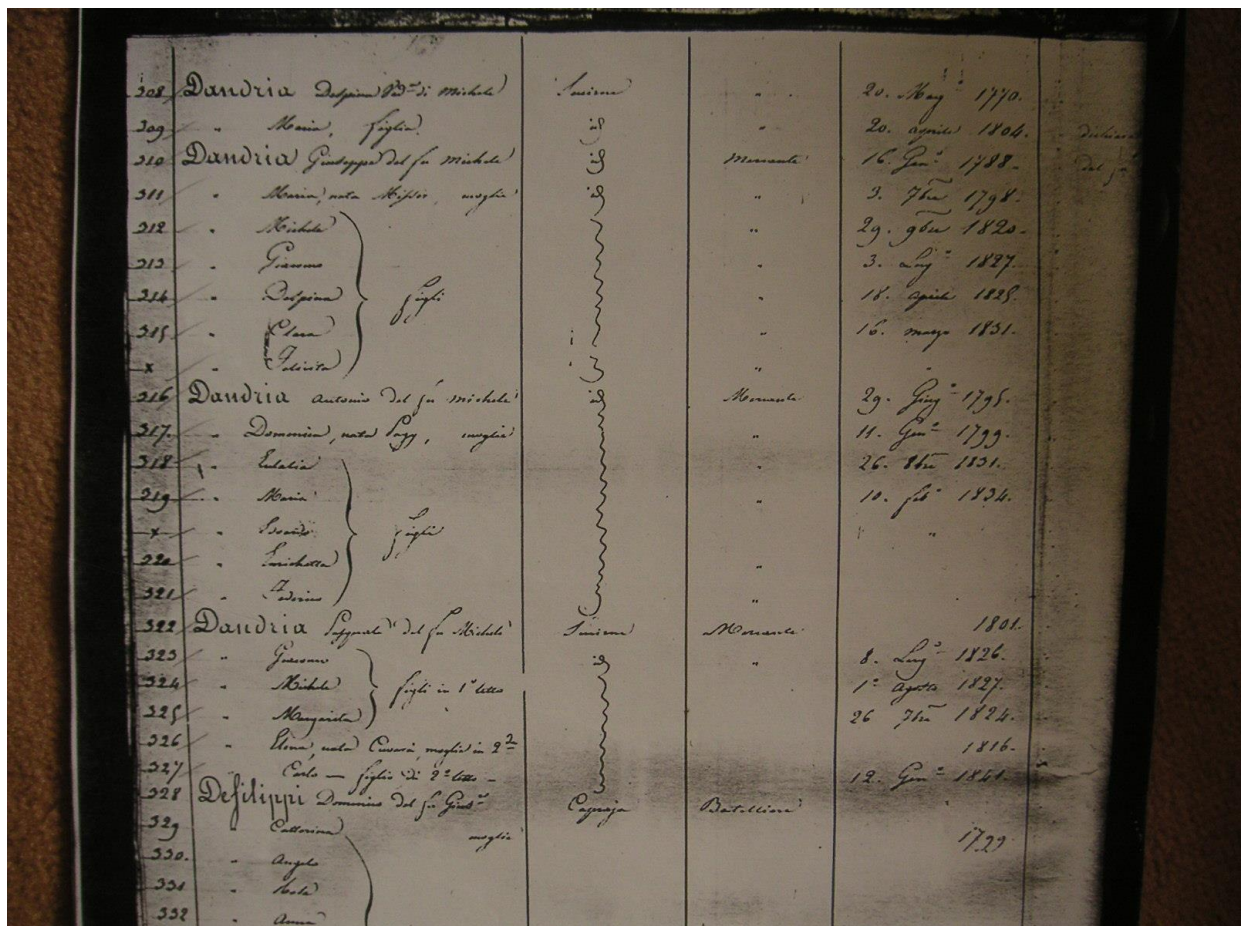


Image 7: Smyrna Consulate of Sardinia entries held in Torino concerning the D'Andria family

| N° | Noms    | Prénoms     | Age | Filiation                | Lieu de Naissance | Origine de Parenté | Religion    | Etat ou Profession               | Sujet ou Protégé  |
|----|---------|-------------|-----|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 1  | Slavens | Maria       | 53  | fille de feu P. Slans    | Smyrne            | Mesine             | Grecque     | Veuve de feu J. Slans            | Sujette mariée à feu J. Slans & de son vivant titulaire de ce brevet  |
| 1  | "       | André W     | 30  | fil de D.                | "                 | Haarlem            | Protestante | Employé de commerce              | sujet   |
| 1  | "       | Sarah       | 28  | fille de feu P. Slans    | "                 | Mesine             | Grecque     | femme d'André                    | sujette   |
| 1  | "       | Anastasio   | 6   | fil de D'André           | "                 | Haarlem            | "           | "                                | "   |
| 1  | "       | William J   | 4   | fil de - de -            | "                 | "                  | "           | "                                | "   |
| 1  | "       | André R     | 7   | - - d'André              | "                 | "                  | Grecque     | "                                | Sujet   |
| 1  | "       | Adele       | 28  | fille de feu Isaac       | "                 | "                  | Protestante | Amoureuse avec son frère         | Sujette   |
| 1  | "       | Maria       | 27  | - - - - -                | "                 | "                  | "           | "                                | "   |
| 1  | "       | Edmond A    | 23  | fil de - de -            | "                 | "                  | "           | Employé de commerce              | sujet   |
| 1  | "       | André       | 61  | fil de Daniel B.         | "                 | "                  | "           | Comptable                        | "   |
| 1  | "       | Catherine   | 59  | fille de Fanellet        | "                 | France             | Catholique  | femme d'André                    | sujette   |
| 1  | "       | Bonaventure | 26  | fil de d'André           | "                 | Haarlem            | "           | Employé de commerce              | sujet   |
| 1  | "       | James       | 59  | fil de Daniel A.         | "                 | "                  | Protestante | Sans Etat                        | "   |
| 1  | "       | Gysbert     | 50  | - - - - -                | "                 | "                  | "           | Employé de Commerce              | "   |
| 1  | Seybald | Daniel      | 49  | fil de feu Bartholomaeus | "                 | de la Suède        | Catholique  | Tailleur                         | Protégé son père et son Oncle feu J. Sanderus et de son Oncle feu J. Sanderus et de son Oncle feu J. Sanderus et de son Oncle feu J. Sanderus                                       |
| 1  | "       | Grazia      | 45  | fille de feu Datolet     | "                 | Sarrazine          | "           | femme de Daniel                  | Protégé   |
| 1  | "       | Helene      | 16  | fille de feu Daniel      | "                 | de la Suède        | "           | "                                | "   |
| 1  | "       | Alphonse    | 14  | - - - - -                | "                 | "                  | "           | Etudiant                         | "   |
| 1  | "       | Hercule     | 13  | - - - - -                | "                 | "                  | "           | "                                | "   |
| 1  | "       | Joseph      | 10  | - - - - -                | "                 | de d'Elbe          | "           | "                                | "   |
| 1  | "       | Maria       | 8   | - - - - -                | "                 | Suède              | "           | "                                | "   |
| 1  | "       | Marianne    | 58  | fille de feu Abel        | Porto Torro       | de d'Elbe          | "           | Blanchisseuse veuve de Corneille | Son mari fil de de Chikan d'est protégé en son vivant par son Oncle feu J. Sanderus et de son Oncle feu J. Sanderus et de son Oncle feu J. Sanderus et de son Oncle feu J. Sanderus |
| 1  | "       | Philippe C  | 32  | fil de feu Cornelius     | Smyrne            | Suède              | "           | Employé                          | Protégé   |
| 1  | "       | Fabius C    | 31  | - - - - -                | "                 | "                  | "           | "                                | "   |
| 1  | "       | Jerome J    | 28  | - - - - -                | "                 | "                  | "           | Tailleur                         | depuis leur enfance   |
| 1  | "       | Isidore     | 25  | - - - - -                | "                 | "                  | "           | Blanchisseuse                    | "   |
| 1  | "       | Joseph      | 19  | - - - - -                | "                 | "                  | "           | Employé d'Imprimerie             | "   |
| 1  | "       | Cornelis    | 33  | fil de feu Jean          | "                 | "                  | "           | "                                | Son père a été employé comme médecin et de son Oncle feu J. Sanderus et de son Oncle feu J. Sanderus et de son Oncle feu J. Sanderus et de son Oncle feu J. Sanderus                |
| 1  | Scuffi  | Jean        | 52  | fil de feu Battisti      | Cephalonia        | Cephalonia         | Grecque     | Négociant                        | Protégé depuis sa naissance son père feu J. Scuffi & C. Napoléon  |
| 1  | "       | Catherine   | 38  | fille de feu Battisti    | "                 | Roïmetie           | "           | Secrétaire femme de J. Scuffi    | Protégé depuis sa naissance   |

Image 8: Dutch registration records for Smyrna, 1859, held at The Hague, Holland

| N° | Noms      | Prénoms | Age  | Filiation | Lieu de Naissance | Origine de Parenté | Religion | Etat ou Profession | Sujet ou Protégé |
|----|-----------|---------|------|-----------|-------------------|--------------------|----------|--------------------|------------------|
| 29 | De Andria | Stefano | 1891 | Lucrezia  | Lucrezia          | Lucrezia           | Lucrezia | Lucrezia           | Lucrezia         |
| 30 | De Andria | Stefano | 1891 | Lucrezia  | Lucrezia          | Lucrezia           | Lucrezia | Lucrezia           | Lucrezia         |
| 31 | De Andria | Stefano | 1891 | Lucrezia  | Lucrezia          | Lucrezia           | Lucrezia | Lucrezia           | Lucrezia         |
| 32 | De Andria | Stefano | 1891 | Lucrezia  | Lucrezia          | Lucrezia           | Lucrezia | Lucrezia           | Lucrezia         |

Image 9: Register of the Italian nationals held at the Italian Consulate, Izmir

| Numero<br>L'ordine | Data<br>1872 | Nome e Cognome                         | Luogo<br>di<br>Nascita      | Età  | Professione | Luogo<br>di<br>nascita<br>del<br>consolato | Qualificazione<br>della<br>nascita  | Sottoscrizione<br>del<br>consolato | Notazioni avvenute                                     |
|--------------------|--------------|--|-----------------------------|------|-------------|--|---|------------------------------------|--|
| ✓ 5273             | Maggio       | De Solignol<br>Aristotela<br>Antonio   | Brussa<br>(n. di Venezia)   | 1861 | Domestico   | Colongo Nuboli<br>Via S. Maria 15          | Passo di Sofia del<br>20. Aprile 1872.  | Asistete A. Solignol               | Completato con Maria<br>Filippa, iscritta al #. 5271 - |
| 5274               | 30           | Xun Ortensio<br>Giuseppa de<br>Alberto | Coscoli<br>(n. di Brindisi) | 1880 | ---         | ---  | Atte di riconoscimento<br>te si figlio naturale<br>N. 27. in data 20.<br>Maggio 1872. P. att.<br>Densate della Chiesa<br>del Padre e Sante Maria<br>N. E. mese Maggio 72<br>P. padre V. N. 560. | ---                                | ---  |
| 5275               | 31           | Dandria<br>Francesco del fu<br>Smarzio | Scio<br>(n. di Genova)      | 1816 | Scrittore   | Venapia                                    | V. di Reg. D. N. 897.<br>a peso di Simione 12<br>Novembre 1875.   | ---                                | ---  |
| 5276               |              | moglie<br>D. Maria Rita<br>Giraud      | Scio                        | 1821 | ---         | ---  | Fede matroni trasm.<br>M. E. mese Giugno 72.  | ---                                | ---  |
| ✓ 5277             |              | figli<br>D. Smarzio                    | Coscoli                     | 1849 | Scrittore   | ---  | Fede matroni trasm.<br>M. E. mese Giugno 72.  | ---                                | ---  |
| ✓ 5278             |              | D. Lucia                               | ---                         | 1854 | ---         | ---  | ---   | ---                                | ---  |
| ✓ 5279             |              | D. Antonio                             | ---                         | 1857 | Comune      | ---  | ---   | ---                                | ---  |
| ✓ 5280             |              | D. Caterina<br>Agusta                  | ---                         | 1860 | ---         | ---  | ---   | ---                                | ---  |

Image 10 - Register of the Italian nationals held at the Italian Consulate, Istanbul

Concessions de II<sup>e</sup> Classe

## Carré Saints Pierre et Paul

| Tombe N° 70     |                           | NOMS DU CONCESSIONNAIRE: <i>Dandria Ignace</i> |          |                  |   |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--|----------|------------------|---|
| Numéros d'ordre | Personnes Inhumées        | Adulte ou Enfant                               | Reçu No. | DATE             | OBSERVATIONS                                |
| 1               | <i>Dandria Emma</i>       | Enf  | 303      | 18 Février 1873  | } Transféré d. V. C. N. 79                  |
| 2               | <i>Dandria Doménica</i>   | "  | -        | 24 Janvier 1874  |   |
| 3               | <i>Dandria Ignace</i>     | "  | 50       | "                |   |
| 4               | <i>Dandria Ursula</i>     | Adult.   | -        | 5 Août 1885      | " " "                                       |
| 5               | <i>Dandria Elisav</i>     | "  | -        | 1 Novem. 1880    | NATO A SCIO 1847                            |
| 6               | <i>Dandria Mari</i>       | "  | 327      | 28 " 1881        | NATA MARCO POLI à SCIO 1814                 |
| 7               | <i>Dandria Cathérin</i>   | "  | 784      | 21 Juillet 1901  | NATA NEL 1846                               |
| 8               | <i>Dandria Stienne</i>    | "  | 981      | 11 Avril 1908    | (STEFANO) nato nel 1834                     |
| 9               | <i>Dandria Girone</i>     | "  | 1099     | 24 Mars 1912     | (JEROME D'ANDREA) nato 1843                 |
| 10              | <i>Dandria Mari</i>       | "  | 1197     | 12 Avril 1915    | NATA 1863                                   |
| 11              | <i>Dandria Mirope</i>     | "  | 651      | 10 Mai 1921      |   |
| 12              | <i>Dandria Michel</i>     | "  | 1317     | 30 Mars 1924     | U 1849                                      |
| 13              | <i>Dandria Michel</i>     | 4 ans  | 1942     | 20 Mars 1926     | U 22 NOV 1921 (MIKI)                        |
| 14              | <i>D'Andria Isidore</i>   | 62 ans   | 1874     | 9 Novembre 1939  | U 6 JUIN 1877                               |
| 15              | <i>D'Andria Marie</i>     | 86 ans   | 3098     | 14 Décembre 1943 | U 1856                                      |
| 16              | <i>Dandria Aspasia</i>    | 70   | 6869     | 21 Décembre 1952 | U 11.11.1873 - T 7.11.1939                  |
| 17              | <i>Dandria Ignace</i>     | 77 ans   | 1058     | 26 Novembre 1964 | U 8.12.1886                                 |
| 18              | <i>Dandria Thérèse</i>    | 68 ans   | 1304     | 28 Mars 1971     | U 24.05.1903 - T 23.3.1971                  |
| 19              | <i>Sivren Babal</i>       | 44 ans   | 3704     | 2 Mars 1974      | U 1898                                      |
| 20              | <i>Dandria Alessandro</i> | 86 ans   | 5741     | 21 Juin 1976     | COMM. DOTT ALESSANDRO D'ANDRIA<br>1890-1976 |
| 21              | <i>Dandria Isidore</i>    | 92   |          | 27102197         | ANDREE? 1906. 1997.                         |
|                 | <i>D'ANDRIA JOHN</i>      |  |          |                  | U 21 DEC 1885 - T 18 MAGGIO 1953            |

Image 11 - sample of the register of the Catholic Cemetery of Ferikoy, Istanbul

Online records:

Google books is a free and a huge resource. Family names (often in French or English version of first or last name) might be mentioned in memoirs of old embassy personnel and insurance or shipping registers or yearbooks.

Our site has a collection of articles and personal testimonies from a wide range of individuals and this give a good flavour of the range of the Levantine experience. Many of these people can be contacted, either they have their e-mail at the bottom of the text, or through site administrator. These people maybe distantly related to you as so many Levantine married each other over the generations and also they might have tips and suggestions on researching your ancestors.

Ancestry.com is a paid ancestral research tool, however they offer a week's free trial. Attached to that service are Ellis Island records, and genealogy forums organized under surnames or regions including one for Turkey.

There is a Levantine Facebook group, where the theme is not purely genealogical however, it is a meeting point for people around the world sharing that heritage, and so a means of contacting over 1000 people. Some could be distant cousins.

There are also web sites dealing with individual family genealogy though the content may not be entirely in a Levantine context, as the story often goes before and after that period of residency. These family sites include those for the Maltass, Aliotti, Joly/Hadkinson, Van Lennep, Fidao, Ashe, Werry families, though the detail in these varies a lot.

The French National Library (Gallica) provides free online archive trade registers to view, the most important being l'Indicateur commercial de Smyrne -  
<http://gallica.bnf.fr/Search?ArianeWireIndex=index&p=1&lang=FR&q=indicateur+commercial+de+smyrne&x=21&y=18> and and the l'Annuaire Oriental Cervati

[http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k57559815.image.langFR.r=annuaire oriental](http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k57559815.image.langFR.r=annuaire%20oriental)

The Mormon church in the US also allows for universal searches, but filtered for example by births in Turkey:

[https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/results?count=20&placeId=167318&query=+place:"Turkey,Istanbul"](https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/results?count=20&placeId=167318&query=+place:)

It is important to check for misspellings of names or alternative spellings of the same name in different Levantine languages.

### **Records in the West:**

For British Records, as I mentioned there is the Guildhall library for births, marriages, baptisms for the parishes of Izmir. The national archives office in Kew has additional resources to go deeper,



including military service records, consular reports, nationalization records, and register of wills, though these are often now held in York.

For the Catholic Church in Istanbul, St. Louis des Français' records are kept in and you can write to them: Capuchine Friars 27 rue Boissonade 75014 Paris, France.

The Chamber of Commerce of Marseilles has detailed records of its merchants that traded with the Levant, however research usually means visiting the place in person.

### **Books:**

There is a small but often very useful number of books written specifically on the subject of Levantine genealogy. The most important being:

Olivers Jens Schmitt, "Les Levantins", published in French and German mostly on the Latin Levantine community of Istanbul.

Livio Missir, "Les Grandes Familles Latins de Smyrne", published in French dealing with the Catholic community of Izmir also a similar volume covering the Latin community over the whole of the Ottoman Empire.

Then there are books written by families for their own families, included in this list are a number of books for the Whittall, Pengelley, Ashe, Caporal, Missir family etc. These are usually hard to get hold of.

Finally there are books published in Turkey, the first (1988) 'Bizim Izmirimiz' by Melih Gursoy, detailing economic history of the city, with many Levantine family background detailed in this story. There have been a growing number of reference books published by both the Izmir municipality and the Izmir Chamber of Commerce, the last being from the latter organization, 'Izmir 1856', based on George Rolleston's report and subsequent book 'Report on Smyrna'. These books may not deal with individual family stories and genealogies, but names and firms are mentioned in many and details of life in the city help to create an understanding of conditions and lifestyles long gone. The language barrier for some descendants can be overcome through networking, often involving relations who still live in Turkey.

### **The Community:**

The Levantine Heritage has encouraged more people to record their own or family story, many of which now feature in the site. Also there are 2 informal groups that get together both in London and Istanbul, to share ideas and support each other in various research areas. Also there are 3 valuable members of this community who have done research over many years, Livio Missir for the Latin communities, Jacques Caporal for the database of Smyrna families of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and Marie Anne Marandet for an online visible database of most Levantine families covering thousands of names with relationships outlined where known.

<http://gw.geneanet.org/marmara2?lang=en&m=AM&v=2>

They have indicated they are willing to help researchers with specific queries.

### **For the future:**

You can make the work of future family researchers by sorting out your own family papers, if need be making duplicates, left in duplicate locations, scanning photographs, and naming faces and locations where possible. And don't neglect yourself, a copy of your CV in the valuable papers, a basic family history written by you or updated by you if it has already been written by an ancestor, and include some anecdotes, as a person will become a persona through stories. The worst thing to do is nothing, with the excuse of 'nobody will be interested in me'. How many times we must curse for our own ancestors who no doubt had the same humble excuse for laziness, causing so much to be lost over generations. And if you keep a diary, make sure it is kept safe! People don't write letters much these days of e-mail, skype and mobile phone. These records will never be kept, so leaving a record of ourselves more than a driving licence and utility bills becomes even more important. And if you wish to do this with technology to reflect the times, that is okay as well. A video record of you talking about your recollections would be a compromise, but don't forget the next generation will want more detail than a half an hour, 'greeting future family' type of presentation...

Craig Encer, November 2010, updated February 2015

[www.levantineheritage.com](http://www.levantineheritage.com)