

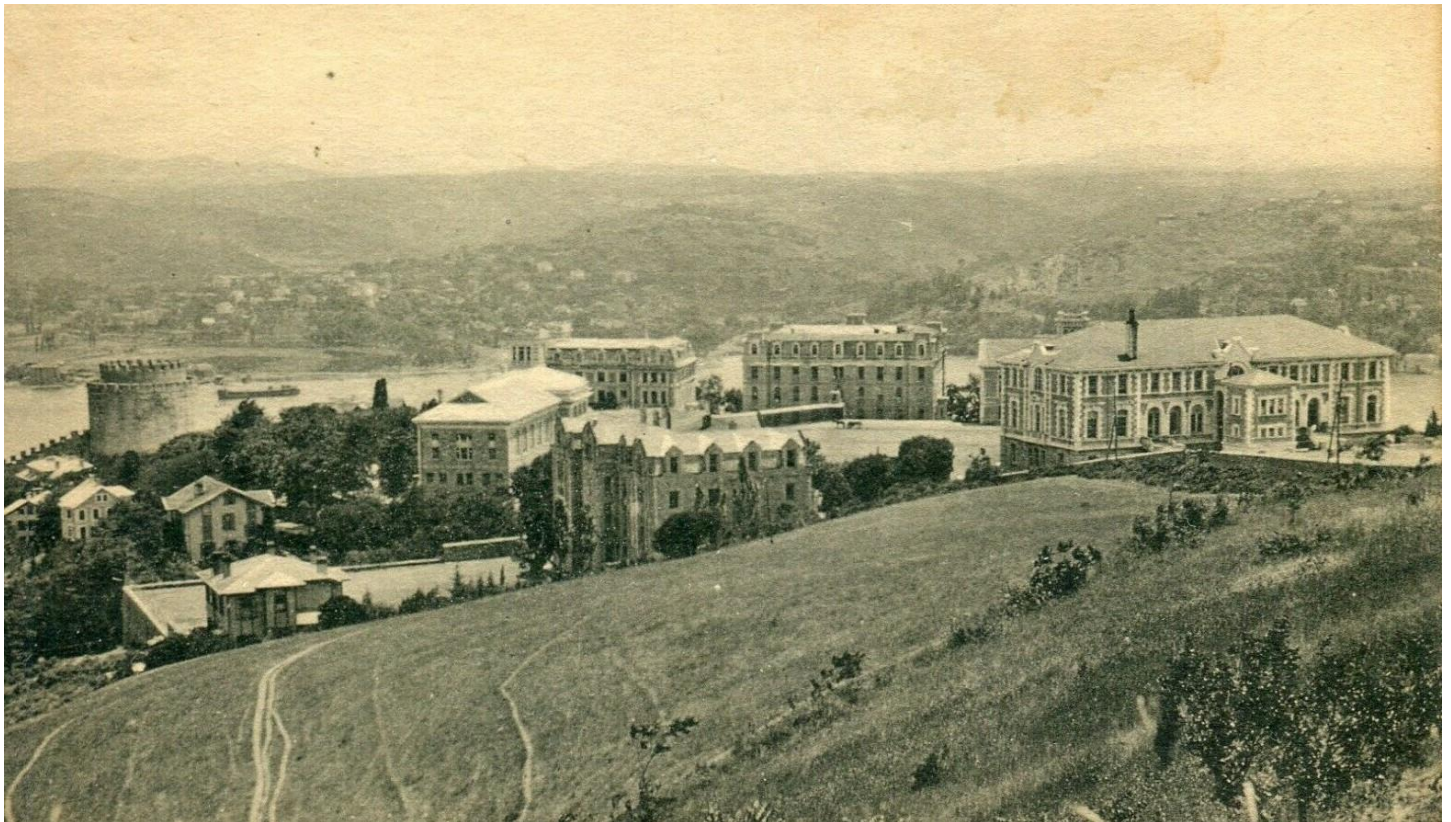


16th Levantine Heritage Foundation Zoom lecture gathering with guest speaker Devrim Ümit
1 November 2021, 6 pm (UK time)

Robert College of Istanbul: the Star of the American Mission Colleges in the Near East

2020 marked the 200th anniversary of the landing of the first American Protestant missionaries from Boston on the Ottoman territories. From their first arrival to the Ottoman Empire, as a matter of fact to the Near East, until the outbreak of the World War I, American Protestant missionaries, largely operating under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (A.B.C.F.M.), occupied the increasing attention of the Ottoman officialdom in domestic and foreign affairs, while the mission work in Ottoman lands established the largest investment of the American Board in the world, even above India and China, on the eve of the war. The bulk of the correspondence of the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs in late Ottoman era was with the United States and this was chiefly concerned about American mission schools. The recent decade has witnessed a remarkable rise in studies on American Protestant missionaries in the late Ottoman Empire. However, given the uneven treatment of American and Ottoman archival materials, the exploration of the latter still being in its infancy, American missionaries continue to be a missing link in the study of the late Ottoman period in spite of the fact that they left their enduring mark in American and Western conceptions of the period. Therefore, this talk will shed some light on Robert College, Istanbul, the first American mission college established in Ottoman lands and the Near East as well as the first American school founded outside the United States, through the examination of various topics from curriculum and extracurricular activities to student body and graduates by the means of the Presidential Ottoman Archives at Istanbul and various American mission, state, and diplomatic archives. Opened independent of the American Board right at the heart of the Ottoman capital in 1863, the College set the pattern for the following American colleges in the region. Further, the case of Robert College of Istanbul stands as a microcosm to the encounter of the Ottoman state and the American Protestant missionaries in late Ottoman era.

Booking essential: <https://devrim-umit-lecture.eventbrite.co.uk>



Devrim Ümit is a transnational historian specializing in American Protestant missionaries in late Ottoman era with an emphasis on American mission educational work in Ottoman Turkey. Most of her publications and talks are on those topics and she has recently been searching the questions of conversion, apostasy, relief work, and American naturalized citizens of Ottoman origin. She received her PhD and MPhil degrees from Columbia University in the City of New York and MA degree from University of Nebraska-Lincoln through various scholarships and fellowships. She is the founding and former Chair of the Department of International Relations at Karabuk University, Turkey and is one of the five recipients of David M. Stowe Fellowship at Yale University in 2019.