



21st Levantine Heritage Foundation Zoom lecture gathering with guest speaker Joshua Shannon-Chastain  
6 September 2022, 6pm (UK time)

## For Queen and Sultan: Anglo-Ottoman Advisors, Soldiers, Mercenaries and Imperial Agents in War and State (1853-1890)

At the start of the long 19th century there were two paths to service for a foreigner in the Ottoman Army. The first was as a renegade, a convert who, for whatever reason, “turned Turk,” fully embracing Ottoman cultural, political, and religious thought and lifestyle. Depending on their merit and connections such a man could rise to the highest levels of the Ottoman state. The second was as a military instructor. The difference between the renegade and the instructor was their Ottoman identity, the former who became Ottoman, and the latter who kept his foreign identity, which in the period meant whether or not they changed their religious identity.

The Crimean War (1853-1856) saw France and Britain send troops the Ottoman Empire to exercise their imperial visions and maintain the balance of power in Europe. This presentation aims to reassess this Western intervention during the Crimean War by looking east and examining the role played by British officers who came to the Ottoman Empire not from England, but from India. This presentation investigates the “Anglo-Turkish Contingent” and “Beatson’s Horse,” two contingents formed and staffed by both Ottoman and Anglo-Indian officers and soldiers. In the Russo-Ottoman War (1877-1878) Britain did not formally come to the Ottoman’s aid, but many British officers served with the Ottoman army in both official and unofficial positions. However, these British officers who came to the Ottoman Empire did not convert. Their status was not based on their religious identity, but on their military acumen and political loyalty. In this era of Anglo-Ottoman military cooperation they were patriots and military advisors in the most modern sense of the words.

This presentation will examine several Anglo-Ottoman military officers including Henry Felix Woods, better known as Woods Pasha, who faithfully served the Ottoman Empire for 45 years. Another Ottoman officer of British origin, Blunt Pasha, who died in 1909 after 30 years of service to the Ottoman Empire; he was honored by a state funeral in Istanbul. Blunt Pasha was buried near Hobert Pasha, an Ottoman Admiral, who likewise was given a state funeral and who had entered the Ottoman navy in defiance of his own Royal navy. The list goes on: Mahir Pasha (George Borthwick), Baker Pasha, Hassan Bey (Eugene O’Reilly), Müşavir Pasha (Adolphus Slade), all men who served both the Ottoman and British Empires. Alongside these Anglo-Ottoman officers, hundreds of British and Anglo-Indian officers fought beside and led Ottoman troops in defense of the Empire. The two most important, Robert John Vivian and William Ferguson Beatson, commanded thousands of Ottoman troops under British, rather than Ottoman authority during the Crimean War.

Booking essential: <https://joshua-shannon-chastain-presentation.eventbrite.co.uk>



from left to right: Adolphus Slade, Robert John Vivian, A British Officer commanding Ottoman Bashi Bazouks, Valentine Baker, James Blunt.



Joshua Shannon-Chastain is a program manager at the University of Maryland, College Park. He did his undergraduate in History at Portland State University and completed his MA in History at Bilgi University in Istanbul. During his research and writing of his thesis he did extensive research in both the British National Archives and the Ottoman State Archives on Anglo-Ottoman military officers. He has presented his research at universities in New Delhi and Berlin. He is currently supporting his wife in her doctoral program in Ottoman-Armenian History.