



26th Levantine Heritage Foundation dinner gathering in London, with guest speakers Dr Jonathan Conlin, senior lecturer in modern history at Southampton University on 'Very Loyal Subjects and Friends of Our Country: The Gulbenkians and Ottoman/Turkish Economic Development, 1880-1935' and author Nicholas Pelham, author and Middle East correspondent of The Economist, on his Alexandrian and Levantine background.

The contribution of the amira or merchant elites of the Ottoman Empire to the empire's development was highly contested in the decades around 1900. Ottoman Armenian amiras dominated imperial finance and international trade, as well as coordinating the introduction of new crops and industrial technologies. Integrating the Empire in a globalized world, however, led to accusations by non-Armenians that the amiras were guilty of condemning that same Empire to a subservient state of clientage, while fellow Ottoman Armenians increasingly viewed the amiras as unpatriotic collaborators. Drawing on a wealth of new archival material from one leading amira clan, this talk attempts to move beyond nationalist narratives, revealing the amiras' multiple identities as the vanguard of a globalizing world.

[Dr Jonathan Conlin](#) teaches modern British history at the University of Southampton, and recently completed a five-year project researching the life and career of the Anglo-Armenian oil magnate, art collector and philanthropist Calouste Gulbenkian (1869-1955). His books include 'Evolution and the Victorians: Science, Culture and Politics in Darwin's Britain', 'Tales of Two Cities: Paris, London and the Making of the Modern City' and a biography of the moral philosopher [Adam Smith](#).



Calouste Gulbenkian born in Istanbul who in 1892 married Nevarte Essayan in London.

Nicolas Pelham is a writer on the Arab world for *The Economist* and the *New York Review of Books*. Since his first job as editor of the Cairo-based *Middle East Times*, he has spent 20 years studying and working across the region. He has also reported as a correspondent for the BBC, the *Financial Times* and *The Economist* based in Rabat, Amman, Jerusalem and Iraq, often dragging his indefatigable family with him. He is the author of [A New Muslim Order](#) (2008) and co-author of [A History of the Middle East](#) (2010). Taking occasional breaks from journalism, he was a senior analyst for the International Crisis Group, and worked for the United Nations and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, reporting on Gaza's tunnel economy and the rise of the Bedouin in the Sinai Peninsula. This talk will focus on his own family connection with Alexandria.



Street scene from old Alexandria

21 September 2017, 6pm start, talk 7 pm, dinner 8pm

Royal Thames Yacht Club, Knightsbridge, London

Talks are free but booking essential: <https://26th-lhf-gathering.eventbrite.co.uk>