



8th Levantine Heritage Foundation Zoom lecture gathering with guest speaker Kaleb Herman Adney
14 May 2021, 6pm (UK time)

Portfolio Habits: Commercial Networks, Oriental Tobacco, and Extraterritoriality in the Age of International Finance

Financial institutions and personal networks played a major role in the accumulation of capital within the Ottoman tobacco trade of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Political and economic privileges associated with extraterritorial status and European finance were among the factors that made such institutions and networks more accessible to the most successful regional merchants. Still, there was no guarantee that extraterritorial status or Levantine heritage would allow an individual merchant to thrive in the growing tobacco industry at the end of the nineteenth century. In this talk, Kaleb Herman Adney will explore some of the limits of extraterritoriality within the context of the Ottoman tobacco trade both prior to and shortly after the 1875 declaration of Ottoman bankruptcy, the Decree of Ramadan. By analyzing some of the other factors which contributed to regional merchant's rise or fall within the tobacco trade, this talk will attempt to contextualize extraterritoriality within the specific regional context of tobacco production and trade in late Ottoman Thrace and Macedonia. The topics covered in this talk are part of a larger project which explores the commercial and political behaviors which contributed to a culture in late Ottoman Thrace and Macedonia that was engineered for volatility, especially in the forms of illegal commerce and political violence.



Kaleb Herman Adney is a PhD student and an Ottoman historian at the University of California, Los Angeles where he is writing his dissertation tentatively titled "*Habits of the Market: Commercial Networks, Regional Finance, and Resistance in the Ottoman Tobacco Trade (c. 1858-1912)*." In it, he argues that interactions between bureaucracy, legislation, and local political administration on the one hand and commercial networks, economic privileges, and credit markets on the other were central to economic development (uneven as it was). Political economy in the age of the market, therefore, shaped both illicit trade through smuggling networks, violence, and nationalist activism as much as it did legal commerce and officially sanctioned social organizations. Before entering the program in modern Middle Eastern history at UCLA, he received an MA in classical Arabic at the same institution but in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Culture. During his MA, he also began learning both modern and Ottoman Turkish. He has spent time extensively in Greece and Turkey conducting research and has traveled throughout the Balkans and the Middle East. This experience and training has given him a lasting interest in the practices and institutions that have historically shaped regional finance, commerce, and labor from Bosnia to the Levant and Egypt southwards and from the Aegean Islands to central Anatolia in the East.

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