



Research - Education - Preservation

Newsletter no: 11 (Autumn-Winter 2018)

Upcoming events

Roundtable: 'Who are these Levantines: Their activities and contributions to the society they lived in' (discussion in Turkish)– Monday 17 December 2018, 6 - 8 pm

LHF-Istanbul & Beyoğlu Municipality joint event -Akademi Beyoğlu, İmam Adnan Sokak, Beyoğlu, Istanbul - [flyer:](#)

29th Levantine Heritage Foundation lecture gathering in London– Tuesday 15 January 2019, 6 pm

Royal Anthropological Institute, London, with guest speakers Robert Irwin 'Western travellers in the Mamluk lands' and Raphael Cormack 'Cairo's multicultural interwar theatre scene' – [flyer:](#) - [booking:](#)

Recent events



Presenters and friends at the 1st LHF-Italy roundtable gathering 'Catholic faith and transnational culture among Levantines of Italian origin in Ottoman and Early Republican Turkey' in Polo del '900 Centre Turin in association with Air- Atelier Ideas & Research / Fondazione Carlo Donat-Cattin, 23 October 2018, with presenters: Rinaldo Marmara, Emanuela Pergolizzi, Cenk Berkant, Francesco Pongiluppi, Gianfranco Morgando (director of Carlo Donat-Cattin foundation), Craig Encer, Alan Maglio, Massimo Togay Özonaran & Theodosias Kyriakidis - [poster:](#) [gallery:](#)



Some of the presenters and delegates at the end of 3rd Levantine Heritage Foundation international conference: 'The Levantines: Identities and Heritage', Athens, Greece, 2-3 November 2018 - [programme](#) - [booklet](#) - [tours flyer](#) - [gallery](#) - [videos](#):

A big thank you to all our speakers, volunteers, sponsors.



Lecture: 'From Mohammed Ali Pasha to King Farouk: the Rise and Fall of Royal Alexandria', Dr Philip Mansel –4 December 2018, 7 pm

Egyptian Cultural Centre and Education Bureau, 4 Chesterfield Gardens, London- [flyer](#): - [video](#):

Requests

Become a member of the LHF

We hope you find our website and events interesting and useful. Access to the website and to many of our talks are free. Our work is mainly achieved thanks to our volunteers and site contributors. However, we do have significant real costs in adding to and maintaining the website, funding small research projects, organising events and preparing publications and other materials. Where we charge for events, we aim to cover only the direct costs of catering in order to make them accessible to as wide an audience as possible, including students and early career researchers.

The Levantine Heritage Foundation is reliant on membership subscriptions, donations and sponsorship. Please consider becoming a member or renewing your membership. Membership is just £20 a year, or £80 for 5 years or you can become a life member for £500. Benefits include priority booking for events and discounts on LHF publications and events where we have to charge a fee.

You can join the LHF or renew your membership on line at <http://www.levantineheritage.com/join-us.html> or email membership@levantineheritage.com. You can also pay by cheque and send it to: The Levantine Heritage Foundation, 71-75 Shelton Street, London WC2H 9JQ.

We would appreciate a volunteer to help us manage our membership lists, renewals, reminders better. If you can spare the time, please get in touch.

Donations and legacies

If you wish to make a donation to the LHF, you can also do this online at <http://www.levantineheritage.com/support-us.html>. Our bank details are there if you wish to make a direct transfer. Or you can send cheques to the LHF at The Levantine Heritage Foundation, 71-75 Shelton Street, London WC2H 9JQ.

If you wish to provide a legacy for the LHF in your will or if you have family archives that are relevant to Levantine research, please contact Quentin Compton-Bishop at chairman@levantineheritage.com to discuss your wishes.

Gift Aid:

If you are a UK tax payer, you can make your donation go further with gift-aid – [word](#) / [pdf](#) documents:

Corporate Sponsorship

Major events, such as the upcoming Athens 2018 conference and other planned events which need detailed preparation, cannot be financed by ticket sales alone. We do have a small number of commercial sponsors and supporters to whom we are very grateful and we seek further partnerships and commercial sponsors. Benefits include your name and logo on our website and in publications such as conference programmes.

We have a number of package levels for sponsorship and if you would like to discuss these opportunities further please contact our Chairman Quentin Compton-Bishop on chairman@levantineheritage.com.

Join the LHF team

We are a small team of volunteers growing an expanding international network of academic and amateur researchers, historians and people with a great diversity of connections and interests in the heritage of the Levant region. Our headquarters is in London, we have active groups in Istanbul and Athens, and many collaborators in other countries and cities including, Izmir, Paris, Amsterdam, Rome, Toronto, New York and Los Angeles. We are looking for volunteers who can commit time to advise us and help organise events and communicate with our wide network. Specific opportunities include:

- Academics or historians to advise the Trustees and help with conference programmes and publications
- Membership Secretary to grow membership and take charge of member support and communications

If you are interested in getting more involved with the LHF, please contact Craig Encer, General Secretary on secretary@levantineheritage.com.

Purchasing copies of past LHF Conference books:

If you wish to purchase copies of conference presentations books: **First Levantine Conference in Istanbul**, 'The Levantines: Commerce and Diplomacy', held in Istanbul November 2014 - [details](#) or

Levantines Past, Present, Future Symposium, Izmir, November 2010 - [details](#):

Please refer to the pricing instructions here ([doc](#) / [pdf](#) version), and send the correct amount (including postage) through our [paypal buttons](#) (or bank transfer - details on support us page) with your address details please:

Current research

My name is Athan [short for Athanasios; or Θανάσης (Thanasis) or preferably Νάσος (Nasos), in Greek]. I am Greek by birth, Australian by naturalisation (as it had been my home of almost 10 years, 7 of which in Sydney and 3 in Melbourne) and British by residence (as I have recently made the UK home). Now, if that is not 'Levantine', then what is it?

The story begins in September 1922, when the Asia Minor Catastrophe (as is known in Greece) had just taken place and my paternal family left the province of Bursa [Broussa, Προύσα (Prousa)] and their small coastal hometown of **Ελιγμοί/Ελεγμοί (Eligmoi/Elegmoi)** - modern day Kursunlu, in between Moudania and the ancient city of Kios (now Gemlik) - and finally settled in Itea, Delphi's port city.

The family in more detail:

Great grandfather - **Νικόλαος (Nicholas) Τράς**, born in 1883, father's name: Παναγιώτης (Panagiotes)

Great grandmother - **Ζωή (Zoe) Τράς née Αλτινή (Altini)**, born in 1887, father's name: Gustav(e)/Gustaf (recently discovered - obviously Levantine, of Germanic background, most likely), mother's name: Μελπομένη (Melpomene)

Children:

Ευστράτιος (Στράτος) Τράς, born in 1910 [Eustratios (Stratos)]

Άννα Τράς, born in 1913 (Anna)

Παναγιώτης Τράς, born in 1916 (Panagiotes)

Όθων Τράς, born in 1920/21 (Othon in Greek/**Otto**) **quite unusual a name as the rest of them were Christian ones (and mostly Orthodox). When asked about his first name, my grandfather said, according to his father's account, that he was named after his godfather's late son who had died at a young age [German/Dutch-levantine (?)].*

Ευσταθία Τράς, born in 1924 in Itea, Greece (Eustathia)

Great great-grandmother - **Ελένη (Helen) Τράς**, born between 1845 and 1850 - I recently found out that she had also made it to Greece and actually passed away in Itea in 1933 (death certificate, no maiden name unfortunately)

Great great-grandfather - **Παναγιώτης (Panagiotes) Τράς** - passed away before 1922; nothing else is known about him

Great great uncle - **Πέτρος (Peter) Τράς**, born in 1888, brother of my great grandfather; went to the USA in 1908; have found documents online (immigration to the US, registration papers, censuses); surname shown and spelled as 'Tras'

Great great aunt - **Ευγενία Αλτινή (Eugenia Altini)**, born in 1896; sister of my great grandmother; went to the USA in 1924; have found documents online [(immigration to the US (mother's name mentioned as 'Melpomene'), censuses and marriage registration showing father's name as 'Gustave']; surname spelled as Altini, or Altine later on in America - **Αλτινή** in Greek, but the Greek letter Η/η would/will a lot of times transliterate into E/e in English

Never thus far had I heard anyone though say anything about a possible Levantine or Frankish past. The family after all had come to Greece along with 1.5 million ethnic Greeks from Asia Minor, due to the Treaty of Lausanne and the population exchange. Looking back at it now though, Asia Minor had just been lost, shortly after WWI, and a period of extreme nationalism, especially in the 'dying years' of the Ottoman Empire, so the family held on to their Greek identity (language and culture) and anything else was lost into oblivion.

The surname in Greece is now Τροπουλος (Τρόπουλος) but I have always known, since a very young age, that

the family's real name was Τράς. Our grandparents and parents made sure that this was and is still passed on to the next generation. Τρόπουλος was added as a hellenised form to Τράς quite early on, however the latter became redundant sometime in the 1950/60s and only the former has prevailed (my great grandfather's death certificate, 1976, reads Νικόλαος Τράς; furthermore, he signs as Νικόλαος Τράς OR Τρόπουλος in his mother's death certificate in 1933). My great uncle, Στράτος, was the instigator and really insisted on getting the name changed.

When I was naturalised in Australia, I decided to reinstate my real surname, so my Australian passport reads 'Athanasios Truss Tropoulos' (Truss - because that is how it would be spelled in English, according to my research. Now, from that research, mainly conducted online, I have located variants of the Τράς surname in the following regions in Europe:

- 1) **Tras** or **Trass** & **Truss** in the UK, but the first two are considered misspellings of the surname Truss, which is recorded in the Oxford Dictionary of Surnames in the UK and Ireland
- 2) **Tras**, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Russia, Poland, Germany.
- 3) **Traas**, quite a common surname in the Netherlands; few in Germany and Norway.
- 4) **Trass**, Germany, Sweden.
- 5) **Trads (d is silent)**, Denmark.

My great grandmother's maiden name, Αλτινη (Altini), if that is how it is indeed spelled, then it is native to Italy; its distribution is throughout Italy, but primarily is located in the Emilia Romagna region, around Bologna and Ravenna (an Italian acquaintance of mine has recently told me that Italian surnames that end in **-i** are northern Italian ones). However, having found out that her father's name was Gustav(e), then that does not really add up; unless he was of a mixed Levantine background, which was not uncommon at all. Considering that Αλτινης(male)/Αλτινη(female) was an Hellenised form of Altin (for instance), looking Gustaf Altin up online, then the name is found all over Sweden, or Gustav Alten found all over Prussia, as in modern day Germany mostly, but also Poland, the Baltics, Denmark, Belgium, Switzerland.

I have also undertaken two ancestry DNA tests, and I have been matched with people mostly in the UK, Central Europe, Scandinavia and the USA; none of them though bear a variant of the Τράς surname. In terms of my genetic makeup, except for being mostly Greek, there is also Italian, a little British and some Central/Eastern European ones.

The past five years, I have been trying to find the missing pieces to my paternal jigsaw puzzle, which will, to a great extent, explain who I am and my innate international outlook on life. But not only that; it's an effort to uncover a past we, as a family, never got the chance to be exposed to, due to events that were beyond our control, but also a tribute to that family who left considerable parts of their lives and beings behind.

Should anybody feel they could contribute to that quest of mine, then I would be more than grateful to hear from you; my email address is A.TrussTropoulos[at]gmail.com



My grandfather and my paternal great-grandparents

Help required to give possible Levantine provenance to a letter seal stamp bought at auction in Turkey by Mr Doğan Ateş Konuralp. The rearing horse figure at the top possibly points to the Toscana region of Italy.



Of interest to **George Baker** descendants and fans: Al Mueller (husband of Gillian Leavitt Mueller, great-great granddaughter of George Baker) has been entering the data from Victor Binns's (Louisa Edwards nee Baker's grandson) extensive Baker genealogy into Geni.com. Descendants of George Baker (and the Binnses, Seagers, Hamlins, Stocks, Pulmans, etc.) are invited to check out the Baker family tree on Geni.com; and to make corrections and add their own family's information along with photographs, letters, and documents. No membership fee is involved. <https://www.geni.com/family-tree/index/600000001985038511>

External Upcoming Events

Lecture - 'The Merchant of Syria and his Ottoman ancestors', Diana Darke

13 December 2018, 6 pm

Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy St, Fitzrovia, London – [info:](#)

Lecture - 'Martoni's Pilgrimage: the Levant before the Pax Ottomana', John Mole

17 January 2019, 6 pm

Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy St, Fitzrovia, London – [info:](#)

Exhibition - The Characters of Yusuf Franko: An Ottoman Bureaucrat's Caricatures

Until 25 January 2019

Çankaya Belediyesi, Zülfü Livaneli Kültür Merkezi, Ankara – [info:](#)

Lecture - PhD and a Cup of Tea: A Sarajevo Jewish Story

6 February 2019, 3 – 4.15 pm

The Wiener Library, 29 Russell Square, London – [info:](#)

Twin lecture: "Transcultural Encounters", Nandini Das 'City of Memory: Portuguese Goa and the First English Voyage to India'; Eva Holmberg 'Beyond the Harem and the Veil: Early English Encounters with the Women of the Ottoman Empire, c. 1600'

11 February 2019, 5.30 pm

Council Room (K2.29), King's College London – [info:](#)

Lecture: "1919: Venizelos' Asia Minor policy revisited" - Roderick Beaton

28 February 2019, 7 pm

Archaeological Society, 22 Panepistimiou Street, Athens, Greece – [info:](#)

Conference - The Egyptian Revolution of 1919: The Birth of the Modern Nation

27 March 2019

Brunei Gallery, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, London – [info:](#)

Lecture: 'Protecting the Mediterranean: Ottoman Responses to Maritime Violence in the Eighteenth Century' – Michael Talbot

25 April 2019

King's College London – [info:](#)

Recent Publications

The Warm South: How the Mediterranean Shaped the British Imagination - Robert Holland, Yale University Press, 2018 – [link:](#)

Le Journal d'Orient Gazetesi ve İstanbullu Azınlıkların ve Levantenlerin Cemiyet Hayatı [*Le Journal d'Orient newspaper and the minorities of Istanbul and the social circle of Levantines*] (1950-1971) - Rifat N. Bali, Libra kitap, 2018 – [link:](#)

Η Προκυμαία της Σμύρνης: Ανιχνεύοντας ένα σύμβολο προόδου και μεγαλείου [The Waterfront of Smyrna: Tracing a symbol of progress and splendour] - George Poulimenos & Achilleas Chatziconstantinou, Kapon Editions, 2018 – [link:](#)

Accidental Orientalists: Modern Italian Travelers in Ottoman Lands - Barbara Spackman, Liverpool University Press, 2017 – [link:](#)

Not yet published:

A Short History of Venice and the Venetian Empire - Maria Fusaro – [link:](#)

Britain and the Collapse of the Ottoman Empire: British Diplomacy and the Birth of the Modern Middle East - Warren Dockter, Christopher Catherwood – [link:](#)

Enlightening Europe on Islam and the Ottomans: Mouradgea d'Ohsson and His Masterpiece - Carter Findley – [link:](#)

Imperial Perceptions of Palestine: British Influence and Power in Late Ottoman Times - Lorenzo Kamel, I.B. Tauris, 2018 – [link:](#)

New External digitisations:

Alexander Vallaury's late works on Izmir, Thessaloniki and Eminönü custom houses and notes on the agenda of Ottoman architecture at the turn of the century - Seda Kula Say, 2014 – [link:](#)

Italian Architects and Modern Egypt - Cristina Pallini, 2006 – [link:](#)

The Ottoman Empire and the American flag: Patriotic travel before the age of package tours, 1830–1870 - Susan Nance, 2009 – [link:](#)

Architecture, identity and liminality: On the use and meaning of Catholic spaces in late Ottoman Istanbul - Paolo Girardelli, 2005 – [link:](#)

Confessional Politics and Religious Identity in the Early Jesuit Missions to the Ottoman Empire - Robert J. Clines, 2014 – [link:](#)

Trades in Constantinople in the First Half of the Fifteenth Century - Miki Iida, 1998 – [link:](#)

Late Ottoman Resort Houses in Istanbul: Büyükdada and Kadıköy - Irmak Köseoğlu, 2013 – [link:](#)

Sayfiye to Banlieue: Suburban landscape around Anatolian Railways from mid-nineteenth century to the World War II - Ebru Salah, 2013 – [link:](#)

Capturing Constantinople: Travel albums (1884-1910) - Sibel Acar, 2015 – [link:](#)

The international news agencies in the Ottoman Empire (1854-1908) - Servet Yanatma, 2015 – [link:](#)

Conversions intra chrétiennes dans l'Empire ottoman au xviii^e siècle - Elisabetta Borromeo, 2009 – [link:](#)

Levantines in Constantinople - Schmitt Oliver, 2005 (summary) – [link:](#)

Cosmopolitan: A Tale of Identity from Ottoman Alexandria - Maya Jasanoff, 2005 – [link:](#)

Best of Enemies: Europeans in the Ottoman Elite - Tobias P. Graf, History Today, 2018 – [link:](#)

Ordinary Jerusalem 1840–1940: Opening New Archives, Revisiting a Global City - Edited by Angelos Dalachanis and Vincent Lemire, Brill 2018 – [link:](#)

Le Pietre Sepolcrali di Arab Giami (Antica Chiesa di S. Paolo a Galata) [The tombstones of Arab Mosque (The

ancient St. Paul's Church in Galata]] - Eugenio Dalleggio d'Alessio, Nella Sede Della R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per la Liguria Palazzo Rosso, Genova, 1942 - [link:](#)

A transient colony in the valley of the Nile: The history of the Maltese colony in Egypt throughout the 19th and 20th century - Nicholas D. Chircop, 2015 - [link:](#)

New Podcasts:

World Book Cafe: Beirut, BBC World Service, 9 June 2018 - [link:](#)

Venetian Physicians in the Ottoman Empire - Valentina Pugliano, Ottoman History Podcast, 2016 - [link:](#)

Dr. Philip Mansel: Friend or foe? The Ottoman Empire and Europe, from Mehmed II to Wilhelm II - Lecture at the Orient-Institut Istanbul, 24 October, 2013 - [link:](#)

Dr. Carole Woodall: 'Constan Town' Jazz: A guide to 1920s Beyoğlu - Lecture at the Orient-Institut Istanbul, 10 November, 2014 - [link:](#)

New Video productions:

Ancient Invisible Cities: Istanbul, Athens, Cairo - Michael Scott, BBC2, 2018 - [link:](#)

Şebnem Şenyener: 'The letters writ by a Turkish spy', its influence on literature and on my work, September 2018 - [link:](#)

A Dangerous Dynasty: House of Assad, BBC2, October 2018 - [link:](#)

Mediterranean with Simon Reeve, BBC2, 2018 - [link:](#)

New news articles:

The Decimation of Alexandria's Architectural Heritage - Egyptian Streets, Aya Nadar, 20 July 2016 - [link:](#)

Nostalgia for the present in Tunis's belle-époque downtown: A photo-report from a forgotten city, where memories of war, colonialism and cosmopolitanism linger beyond history, Iason Athanasiadis, 2017 - [link:](#)

Last Greeks of Alexandria struggle to keep their community alive - Marc Espanol, Al-Monitor, December 4, 2018 - [link:](#)

Ephemera:

Hemingway in Turkey: The Influence of His Turkish Experiences on His Writing - Neriman Kuyucu, 2013 - [link:](#)

New websites:

Arcadian Library Online: (Europe and the Ottoman World module) - [link:](#)

Sébah & Joaillier photos - [link:](#)

Open Jerusalem - [link:](#)

Istanbul urban database - [link:](#)

The Feriköy Protestant Cemetery Initiative - [link:](#)

Latest Website additions

Submissions:

John Freely obituary, Professor Süheyla Artemel: [link:](#)

[The Cedars and the George Baker House](#), Gillian Leavitt Mueller, 2018

Photo galleries / analysis:

1804 St Maria Catholic Church Smyrna listing: [link:](#)

La Centrale School, Smyrna: [link:](#)

Databases:

Bornova old and new street names table - Frances Clegg, 2018 – [link:](#)

[Our Facebook page:](#) | [Our Youtube channel:](#) | [Our Mission Statement:](#)

The newly formed LHF Academic Advisory Committee

In order to better tailor our energies and resources for our future activities and how we connect with a wider pool of researchers and disseminate the findings and proceedings in an academically more rigorous manner we are in the process of composing the members and mission statement of the LHF Academic Advisory Committee, some of whose members are listed [here:](#) If you wish to learn more or support us in this networking please contact the group via advisory-board@levantineheritage.com.

Subscription to this newsletter and other LHF communications

If you wish to no longer receive our future newsletters and communications please let us know by writing to contact@levantineheritage.com. We hold your personal data securely for the purpose of providing you with information on LHF research, events, publications and membership. We will not share your personal data with 3rd parties.

Contribute to our newsletter

Next newsletter is scheduled for 20 February 2019, contact us if you wish for an entry / announcement.

Craig Encer

General Secretary – secretary@levantineheritage.com

The Levantine Heritage Foundation



Hoping all our members and friends had a good year and wishing you all a successful Christmas and New Year to come!

The Levantine Heritage Foundation is a non-profit association with a constitution prepared and adopted according to the guidelines of The Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Trustees: Quentin Compton-Bishop, Dr Philip Mansel FRHS, Dr Axel Corlu, Dr Kalliopi Amygdalou, Zeynep Cebeci Süvari, Jonathan Beard, Nuri Çolakoğlu