



Research - Education – Preservation

Newsletter no: 28 Autumn- 2025

Welcome to our latest newsletter where we reflect on our upcoming campaign to find a secure and accessible home to the Levantine library whose core was provided by the late Jacques Caporal. If you would like to know more, assist us financially or through depositions to build this resource of over 1,600 volumes, please get in touch. More details below.

Our activities

Upcoming LHF Events

7 October 2025, 6 pm (UK time)

Hybrid presentation: 'Suleyman the Magnificent', Christopher de Bellaigue – [flyer:](#) - [registration:](#)

10 November 2025, 6 pm (UK time)

Online presentation: 'Protestants, Gender, and the Arab Renaissance', Dr. Deanna Ferree Womack – [flyer:](#) - [registration:](#)

18 November 2025, 6 pm (UK time)

Hybrid presentation: 'Samuel Crawley (1706–62), British Consul at Smyrna', Ann Hudson – [flyer:](#) - [registration:](#)

Recent LHF Events

29 July 2025, 6 pm (UK time)

Hybrid presentation: 'Lives Between the Lines: Reflections on Levantine culture and its meaning today', Michael Vatikiotis – [flyer:](#) - [video:](#) - [interview:](#)



The speaker Michael Vatikiotis in white shirt post presentation.

29 September 2025, 6 pm (UK time)

Online presentation: 'Continuity and change in the British diplomatic service in the Levant: The 'Levantine' question and the lure of antiquities', Lucia Gunning – [flyer:](#)

Recent Website additions

Submission:

'Help us lift Smyrna from its grave': Archbishop Vallega letter from 1922- (Kathimerini [in Greek](#)), Noelle Barkshire, 2025 – [link](#):

Galleries:

Padova Freres postcards (updated) – [link](#):

Advertising boards (updated) – [link](#):

Zonaro paintings – [link](#):

The former Caravan Bridge cemeteries of Smyrna (updated) – [link](#):

The Italian School of Alsancak, Izmir – [link](#):

Interviews:

Michael Vatikiotis, Sept 2025 – [link](#):

Julian Evans, Sept 2025 – [link](#):

Current research

If you are seeking help with research, please write to Craig Encer who will endeavour to point you to sources of material or connect you with people in the LHF network who may be able to help. Additionally, we can post requests for assistance in our newsletter.

Researching the human history of the British Seaman's Hospital of Galata, Istanbul

My name is Check King. I am currently working on the history of the British Seamen's Hospital in relation to urban development in Galata between 1855 and the hospital's transfer into the Turkish Red Crescent in 1924. I am reaching out to ask if anyone knows of diaries, postcards or photographs relating to anyone who might have stayed or worked there. If so, I would love to hear from you at ck11925@gmail.com.

Mini interview – Achilleas Chatziconstantinou, trustee LHF

- 1- Do you think the Levantine Heritage Foundation should have a wider mission than recording the past through testimonies, archives and publicising ongoing research?

Absolutely, given the fact that the very term *Levantines* is relatively young, LHF has the obligation to create not just a thesaurus of archive material but also a knowledge base that will describe its meaning and content in a precise yet cohesive manner. A cooperation with an academic institution in a 101 type of course regarding the Levantine communities embedded in a Middle-East oriented syllabus, could help towards this direction. Given its expertise, material, previous conferences, multiple academic references, affiliated researchers and trustees, etc, LHF has arguably become the leader in the field and should promote or even directly exercise and its educative role in any way it can, through the support of PhD theses and academic textbooks on the subject. Furthermore, the creation of an LHF digital museum where the history of the Levantine communities is illustrated via means of multimedia and virtual reality tools, could give us the opportunity to present a selection of LHF material as exhibits, in a fascinating way that would definitely attract the attention of wider audiences from all over the world.

- 2- So the idea could be exploring ways in which we bridge more from the past to the present and create a deeper relevance to a region we focus on in seemingly endless convulsions? What could be the contribution of past heritage to present communities and interactions? Could the LHF find ways to engage a wider, younger audience who may not be just interested in their own history and family ancestors but seek answers to present day communities in stress and strife?



Awareness on the Levantine heritage is a key issue here. In many war-torn or heavily urbanized places in the Middle East (Turkey included), the remnants of the Levantines, intact or ruined, appear as 'islands' of a glorious cosmopolitan past that although it is not always perceived in its true dimensions, yet, people feel nostalgic and proud about and are strongly in favour of preserving it. The danger here is failing to connect the remnants with their history, thus creating just an ornated hollow scenery, prone to propaganda and misconceptions that tend to rewrite the past. In most of the cases, these are properties abandoned for decades, so, LHF should work closely with local authorities as a partner, in order to provide information regarding the past owners, photographs etc. The discussion should also include all those individuals of the Levantine world that today are mostly forgotten, shedding light on their contribution as public figures of the places they once lived: scientists, merchants, political or public figures, artists, athletes, philanthropists and so on. The true heirs and keepers of the Levantine world are mainly the communities where the Levantines thrived, not just the few descendants still surviving. Since the extents of this world are questionable, I suggest that it is better to focus on cities with Levantine presence rather than countries. It is equally important to take into consideration the different conditions under which Levantines lived, in cities such as Constantinople/Istanbul, Salonica/Thessaloniki, Smyrna/Izmir, Aleppo and so on.

3- Considering some of our past speakers and themes covered there is often political background in the subject areas the LHF covers but this never is the focus of the discussion. Do you think there are dangers in being more political or even a 'think tank' or do you think being overly cautious also means we remain irrelevant to present day discussions in the eyes of others? Is there a possible safe middle-ground?

In my opinion the greatest danger is Levantines becoming victims of revisionism, from those manipulating the past in order to promote a political agenda that turns people against a manufactured enemy. Unfortunately, over the decades the term Levantine has indeed acquired a negative connotation in both East and West for different reasons in each one. LHF has the duty not to deny or overlook this reality, but to explain why, when and how this came to be and above all, to give the complete picture. What is not the LHF's duty is to engage in debates such as the one that applies the 19th century political framework, ethnic tensions and circumstances to the present-day situation in the region, thus implying history can not only be repeated but rather relived. On the contrary, focusing, for example, on the Levantines as a catalyst and a driving force that brought underdeveloped regions into the Industrial Era will highlight their significance in a positive way.

4- The Levantines clearly had an oversized effect on political thoughts, reform and modernisation in late Ottoman society. Can we talk about 'Levantinisation' of communities as well, so other minorities in the big cities of the Ottoman world, also were affected and maybe inspired by the energy of this small European origin population in terms of language, business acumen, and perhaps a rise of the intelligentsia of Greek / Armenian communities almost in competition with those institutions of Levantines, be it clubs, schools, enterprises? Or do you think the cause – effect was more a direct result of the *Tanzimat* reforms?

The late Ottoman empire was a vast country consisting of largely self-governed regions. Especially the western provinces across the Aegean and Mediterranean had a strong presence of Christian and Levantine communities that were also self-governed. So, applying the reforms should be seen more as an act of providing a legal framework that allowed these communities to organise themselves in every aspect of civic and private life. The crucial role of Levantines was acknowledged both by the valis who realised that could not rule without the representation of these communities in regional committees consulting them and by the other communities that treated them as carriers of western civilization, modernization and of course, wealth. What might have started as an imitation, the introduction of the western lifestyle, became far more effective when the ottoman communities chose to closely affiliate with Levantines and vice versa. The Levantine way of life on one hand, especially when adopted by local population (Greeks, Armenians, Muslims) is in fact a hybrid that evolved over centuries of co-existence with the Levantines themselves on the other. This is why it is crucial to separate the two entities, Levantines vs Levantine way of life, in order to comprehend them.

5- Levantines came from different regions of the Western world at different times and from all different socio-economic strata. One thing in common is most stayed on for a while or a few generations as they found the ground in the East favourable and some made huge fortunes and often in a short space of time. Do you think it is 'lazy' to label this success down to capitulation privileges?

Capitulations should be seen as a powerful instrument utilized alongside the broader reforms' framework. Needless to admit that the Levantines much profited from this status and its abuse but not all of them became super rich and also that some non-Levantines acquired an equally privileged status too. Addressing the issue is far more complex and involves examining parameters such as proximity to the centre of administration, ability to draw capital from the West, historical circumstances, risk taking, ingenuity, using unorthodox means to succeed and to fight competition and so on. Of course not all stories had a happy end. Cases of fortune losses due to economic disasters or other reasons are often overlooked but were also true. Having said that, treating negative events as opportunities for a fresh start instead of giving up is a characteristic typical of the Levantine businessmen. Moreover, it should be stressed that those Levantines who amassed huge wealth, did so by following a totally different path than the Western colonial powers in parts of the Earth where they were present exploiting indigenous populations.

6- There are long and hard-held misconceptions and negative stereotypes of Levantines and the word itself and hopefully the LHF is gradually eroding some of that long-held mistrust in the East. Do you think we could do more such as explaining better that Capitulations and other trade treaties were never conducted with a victor / loser scenario and Ottomans always got something in return? Or could going down this deep rabbit hole create its own problems?

My previous comment addresses exactly this point. What is perhaps more productive is to highlight how the Levantines behaved in times of trouble such as when the Ottoman Empire was at war with the West, by distancing themselves, highly ignoring this reality and carrying on with their lives regardless of the various obstacles and hardships, expressing their solidarity to one another. This attitude not only highly contradicts the notion that they were the 'enemy within', but, at some extent is related with the formation of distinct identities based on qualities rather than ethnicity, such as the *Smyrniot* with its unique linguistic, culinary or other aspects.

7- Do you think LHF should consider a series of book publications on narrow themes by contributors to explore specific themes, perhaps including some of those contentious ones outlined above?

As I already stated, the publication of textbooks or even illustrated dictionaries that provide general knowledge on the Levantines and their world is essential, in a way that will not alienate non-academics. Specific themes such as their role in the transformation of the Ottoman Empire are also welcomed and, of course, all points of view should be included along with their references. Avoiding the misuse of present-day political terminology, setting the right questions in an unbiased manner and in-depth research will eventually lead to getting well-documented and enlightening answers. Personally, I am also fascinated by history of families, genealogical trees and biographies of individuals that lived in those times. LHF has been proven an invaluable source for all researchers that wish to engage in similar publishing tasks.

Community activities

Chios diaspora gathering in London, 20th September 2025



A talk by Christopher Long for an invited audience of descendants of the Chiot and Phanariot diaspora dispersed throughout Europe following the Massacres of Chios in 1822 - The Hellenic Enclosure, West Norwood Cemetery, London - [link](#): - [video](#): - [surnames listing](#):



Mark Giraud in the centre at the end of his presentation on his digital historical map project of Bornova (Taşların hafızası: Bornova Kentsel Miras Haritası) [Memories of stones: Bornova civic heritage map] at Dramalılar Köşkü, Bornova, Izmir 21 March 2025 – [poster](#): - [gallery](#): - [website](#):

External activities

External Upcoming Events

28 October 2025, 6 pm (UK time)

Hybrid presentation: 'Brotherhood Across the Mediterranean: Italian Freemasonry and the Ottoman Mission of 1910', Luis Miguel Selvelli - Anglo-Turkish Society – [flyer](#):

2 December 2025, 6 pm (UK time)

Hybrid presentation: 'Diplomacy before Archaeology: Charles Thomas Newton on Lesbos, Rhodes and the Crimean War 1852-56', Dr Debbie Challis- Anglo-Turkish Society – [flyer](#):

Recent Publications

İzmir'de Bira ve Birahaneler [Beer and Pubs in Izmir], Erkan Serçe & Akım Erdoğan – Sakin Kitap, 2025 – [link](#):

İstanbul'un Mazisinde Kalmış Kitabevlerinin Hikâyeleri [Stories of Bookstores in Istanbul's Past], Rifat N. Bali, Libra Kitap, 2025 – [link](#):

«Türk» Lakaplı Hollandalı Bir Subay: Raymond Westerling [A Dutch Officer Nicknamed the "Turk": Raymond Westerling] , Rifat N. Bali, Libra Kitap, 2023 – [link](#):

Courtly Mediators: Transcultural Objects between Renaissance Italy and the Islamic World, Leah R. Clark - Cambridge University Press, 2023 – [link](#):

Istanbul and the Ottoman Empire in Romantic and Victorian Culture: The Sultan's City, 1800-1876, Piya Pal-Lapinski – Bloomsbury, 2025 – [link](#):

Becoming Ottoman: Converts, Renegades and Competing Loyalties in the Early Modern and Modern Ages, Yavuz Köse, Petr Kucera, Tobias Völker – Bloomsbury, 2025 – [link](#):

Upcoming Publications

The I.B. Tauris Handbook of the Late Ottoman Empire: History and Legacy, Hans-Lukas Kieser, Khatchig Mouradian – Bloomsbury, December 2025 – [link:](#)

Italo-Ottoman Relations in the Age of the Congress of Paris: Mirroring the 'Other', 1856-1871, Giorgio Ennas – Bloomsbury, January 2026 – [link:](#)

New External digitisations

Ottoman Orientalism, Ussama Makdisi – American Historical Review, 2002 – [link:](#)

'Exit from the Unbeloved Empire': Ottoman Passports and Mass Emigration from Mount Lebanon, Dr Fergus Nicoll Moving Stories Research Associate, 2024 – [link:](#)

W. E. Gladstone and British Policy towards the Ottoman Empire, Fahriye Begum Yildizeli, 2016 – [link:](#)

Cultural Consequences: The Experiences English Merchants and Travelers in the Ottoman Empire during the Early Modern Period - April M. Donahue, 2014 – [link:](#)

The role of protestant missionaries during the Great Arab Revolt in Jerusalem and South Palestine (1936-1939) – towards humanity? - Karène Sanchez Summerer and Inger Marie Okkenhaug, British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, 2025 – [link:](#)

The Port Fortress of Izmir or Saint Pierre Fortress of Smyrna, Its Lost Inscription - Mustafa Üzel, 2025 – [link:](#)

Venice and the Ottoman Empire: A Cross-Cultural Exhibition - Fine Art Today, July 2025 – [link:](#)

Inextricable: Venice And The Ottoman Empire – Antiques and The Arts Weekly, 20 May 2025 – [link:](#)

Luigi Storari and the 1857 Izmir Guide – Cenk Berkant, Hafıza Izmir, September 2025 – [link:](#)

In the shadow of rivalry and intrigues : diplomatic relations of Genoa and Florence with the Ottoman Empire during the Sixteenth-century - Fatma Özden Mercan, 2017 – [link:](#)

Women in Diplomacy in Late Eighteenth-Century Istanbul - David Do Paço, Cambridge University Press, 2021 – [link:](#)

Cotton, Finance and Business Networks in a globalised World: The Case of Egypt during the First Half of the Twentieth Century - Akram Beniamin, 2019 – [link:](#)

Space, Representation, and Practice in the Formation of Izmir during the Long Nineteenth Century - Fatma Tanış and Carola Hein, 2020 – [link:](#)

New Podcasts

Alexandria: The Library – Natalie Hayes stands up for the Classics, BBC Radio 4, 2-8-2025 – [link:](#)

Alexandria: The City - Natalie Hayes stands up for the Classics, BBC Radio 4, 26-7-2025 – [link:](#)

Echoes of History: The Fall of Constantinople – Dr Gemma Mason, 30 December 2024 – [link:](#)

New Videos

The Journal of voyage made to the Levant by 3 warships 1750-51, Bruno Cianci - King's Maritime Seminars, 21 March 2025 – [link:](#)

Venice and the Ottoman Empire Opening Conversation – Frist Art Museum, 30 July 2025 – [link:](#)

Ephemera

Ottoman Nufus Registers (1879-1917): An introduction and guide by Philip Trauring – Genealogy.org 2019 – [link:](#)

Frenk Mahallesi'nde Bir İtalyan: De Virgili – 1846 [An Italian in the Frankish Quarter: De Virgili - 1846], Muharrem Belge, 35Punto, 23-12-2023 – [link:](#)

Bornova'da Tarihi Bir Panayır [A Historical Fair in Bornova], Bedri Cumhuri Doğu, 35Punto, 3-12-2024 – [link:](#)

İzmirli Bir Levanten Edebiyatçı: Dominique-Alexandre Parodi [A Levantine Literary Artist from Izmir: Dominique-Alexandre Parodi], Muharrem Belge, 35Punto, 25-7-2025 – [link:](#)

The fascinating history of Damascus University, Sami Moubayed, Al Majalla, 23 June 2023 – [link:](#)

Magnificent Images of Egypt by Zangaki Brothers, 1870-1890 – Rarehistoricalphotos.com, 22 July 2024 – [link:](#)

60s filmstar Claudia Cardinale honored in Tunisian birthplace – Arab News, 29 May 2022 – [link:](#) (Cardinale died 23 Sept 2025, aged 87)

Mamluks, 1250-1517- Exhibition 30 April – 28 July 2025, Louvre, Paris, France – [link:](#)

Upcoming exhibitions

Henry VIII's Lost Dagger: From the Tudor Court to the Victorian Stage – Strawberry Hill House and Garden, 1 November 2025 - 15 February 2026 – [link:](#)

Turbans, Carpets, and Rembrandt: Persian, Ottoman and North African Presence in Dutch Art - Museum Rembrandthuis, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 25 September 2026 - 3 January 2027 – [link:](#)

Passion and Politics: Sissinghurst and Greece, 18 October 2025 - 29 March 2026 – [link:](#)

News of upcoming events by partners

Confirmed exhibition: 'Levantines of Istanbul, Istanbul of Levantines' – LKMKD, 2026

We would like to inform you about the next initiative of the Association Levanten Kültür ve Mirasını Koruma Derneği ([LKMKD](#)), the 'Levantines of Istanbul, Istanbul of Levantines' Exhibition that will take place on 8 October – 7 November 2026 at the exhibition hall of the Beyoğlu Municipality on İstiklal Street.

This exhibition will showcase the Levantine community's cultural, social, and economic impact between 1850 and 1950, offering the first holistic narrative of its heritage. The exhibition will highlight key contributions to the community in the fields such as architecture, art, commerce, and diplomacy, culminating in a meaningful historical story.

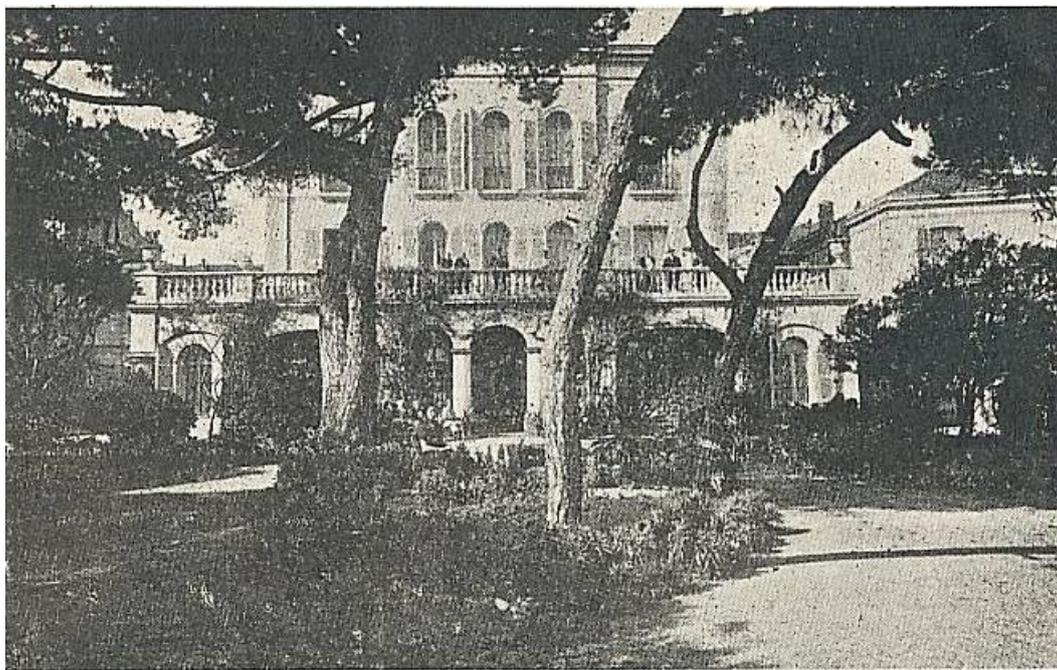
This exhibition also lays the groundwork for the next project, the "Levantine Library & Museum".

The association is in the phase of inventory collection. Anyone who is interested in sharing information about documents, photographs, objects, etc. that can contribute to this exhibition, either in digital or physical form, can contact the exhibition project team by sending an e-mail to levanten@levanten.org.

News of past events by partners

New Art Center 'Arkas Göztepe' opens in Ayşe Mayda Mansion in Izmir, Nathalie Ritzmann, Lepetitjournal.com, 15 Sept 2025 – [details in French:](#)

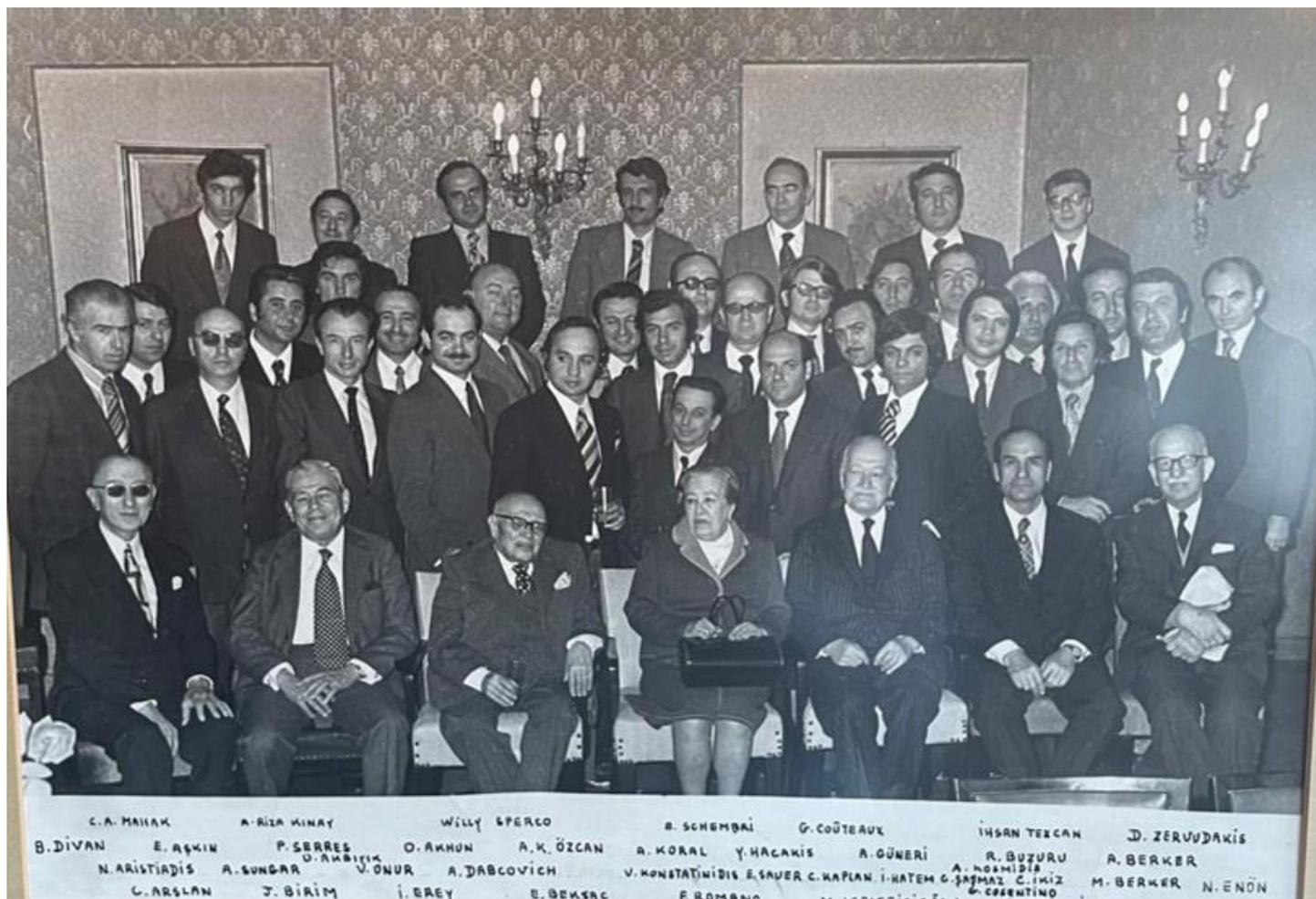
Mystery image



PENSION BOURNABAT - Promenade du Midi - MENTON

This image from c. 1927 shows a pension in Menton, South of France with a name suggesting some connection with the owners with the traditional Levantine neighbourhood of Bournabat, Smyrna, but this is just a conjecture. We welcome any additional information.

Request for additional information on group photo



This image from c. 1960s? shows the grouping of members of the Istanbul Maritime Chamber including a number of Levantines such as the shipping agent [Gabriel Cou̇teaux](#) (born 1896) as well the veteran author and journalist [Willy Sperco](#) (born Smyrna 1887, died Rome 1978), the shipping broker [Alex Dabcovic](#) ([interview in Turkish](#) from 1997).

Additional information on persons and possibly other similar group photos would be most welcome.

Current sponsored project: Documenting the British Footprints in Late Ottoman and Early Republican Istanbul (1868–1945)

With Researcher: Assist. Prof. Bengi Su Ertürkmen, Ph.D. (Gazi University)

We are currently undertaking a research project aimed at documenting and sharing with the public the historical legacy of the British community in late Ottoman Constantinople and early Republican Istanbul.

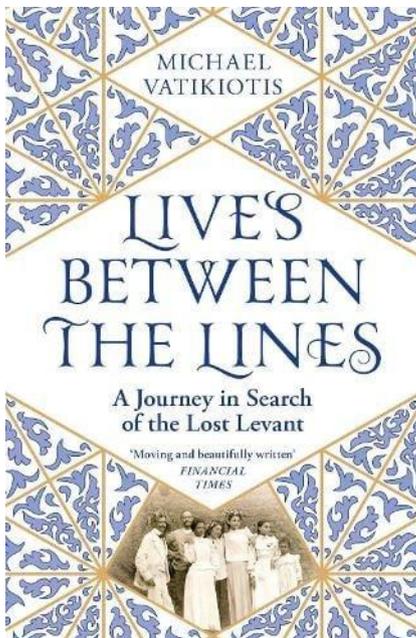
This project seeks to shed light on the significance of British individuals and institutions that shaped the city's economic, cultural, and social landscape. Rather than presenting a generalized portrait of the community, our aim is to build a narrative centred on real individuals, focusing on their biographies, networks, and spatial traces. We are particularly interested in those who were not only active in commerce and diplomacy but also contributed to fields such as architecture, sports, journalism, literature, education, the military, and other areas of public and cultural life.

The project will begin by compiling a lexicon, a biographical dictionary, based on individuals identified primarily through trade yearbooks such as *Annuaire Oriental*. This lexicon will serve as the foundation for developing in-depth narratives around selected figures who played prominent roles in the city's intellectual, cultural and public life. The lexicon, which will be made accessible through the website of the Levantine Heritage Foundation, will be progressively enriched and updated as new information emerges throughout the research process.

If you would like to contribute or learn more about the project, feel free to reach out or share any materials with us at: bsuerturkmen@gmail.com - [read more](#): - See the [current focus pdf file](#) containing the list with only the names and nationality information.

The Levantine Heritage Library & Archive - Recent Additions

Here are a few of the books added to the Library recently.



LIVES BETWEEN THE LINES

A Journey in Search of the Lost Levant

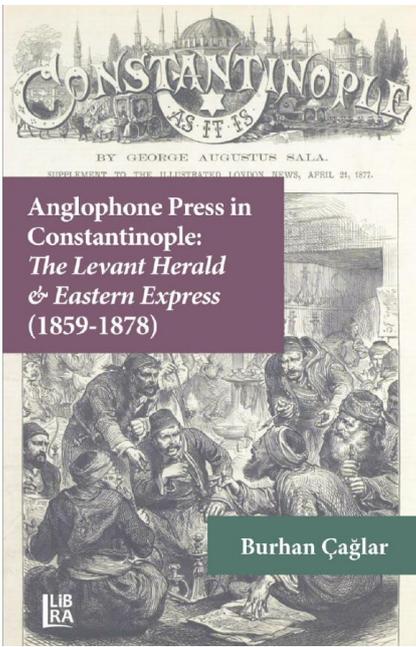
Michael Vatikiotis

Weidenfeld and Nicholson, hardback, £20

A brilliant personal exploration of Vatikiotis's Levantine heritage with a fascinating mix of origins, interconnections and places. The account takes us to Livorno, Alexandria, Cairo, Jerusalem, Haifa, Hydra and Wimbledon. See also Philip Mansel's review <https://www.the-tls.com/world/travel/lives-between-the-lines-michael-vatikiotis-book-review-philip-mansel> .

We were fortunate to have Michael Vatikiotis give a talk to the LHF about his family heritage and insights gained from his journey of discovery. You can also see the LHF's interview with the author

<https://www.levantineheritage.com/michael-vatikiotis-interview.html>



ANGLOPHONE PRESS IN CONSTANTINOIPLE

The Levant Herald & Eastern Express (1859-1878)

Burhan Çağlar

Libra Kitab, paperback, TL1400

The author starts by describing the evolution of the press in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. With a multiplicity of communities and languages, many newspapers were bilingual. Constantinople boasted more newspapers and periodicals than in many capital cities and cultural centres of Europe.

Çağlar's focus is on The Levant Herald which attained an international readership. Its second owner, Edgar Whitaker, was in near constant battles with the censorious officials of the Sublime Porte, occasionally having to publish his newspaper under different names, such as the Eastern Express, when its licence was suspended. A former British Vice-Consul in the Dardanelles, Whitaker married Alice Victoria Abbott of the well-known Levantine Abbott family.

Please consider making a donation to the LHF Library's Acquisitions Fund to enable us add books and other publications and photographs of significance.

If you have a collection, records, images or other items you wish to gift or leave as a legacy in your will to the Levantine Heritage Library, or if you wish to make a financial donation to support the establishment of a permanent home for our collections, please contact Quentin Compton-Bishop, chairman@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

These newsletters are published every 3-4 months; contact us if you wish to contribute an article or place an entry / announcement. Newsletters [archive page](#):

Craig Encer

General Secretary – secretary@levantineheritage.com

The Levantine Heritage Foundation - www.levantineheritage.com

[Our Facebook page](#): (3.3K followers) | [Our Youtube channel](#): (959 subscribers) | [Our Twitter channel](#): (871 followers) | [Instagram](#): (814 followers) | [Bluesky](#): (7 followers)

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 Vera Constantini, Dr Axel Corlu, Zeynep Cebeci Süvari, Jonathan Beard, Nuri Çolakoğlu, Achilles Chatziconstantinou, Dr Michael Cottakis, Miguel Selvelli