

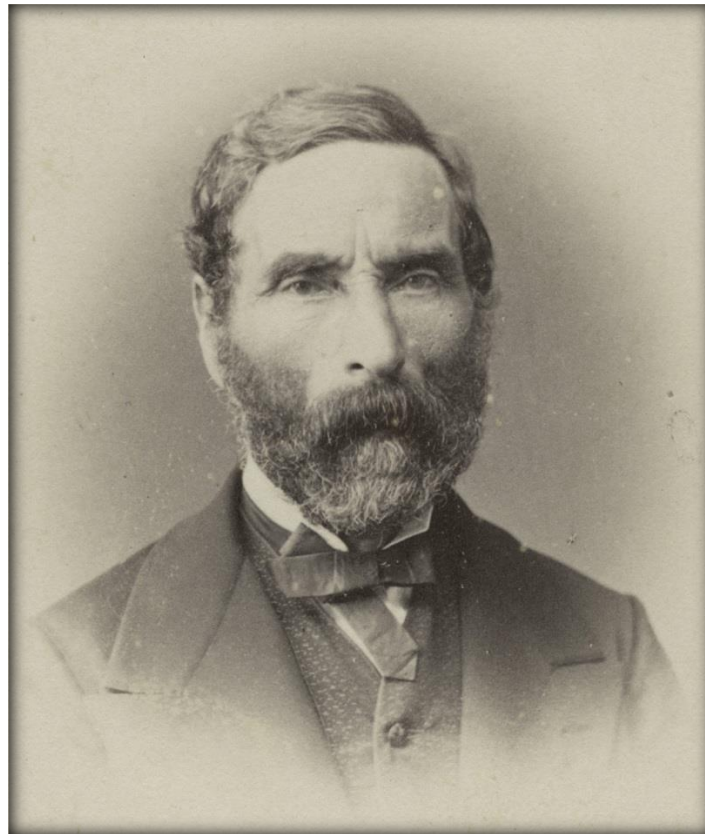
The Tears of Chios: a Greek family's story of Diaspora

In December 1983, the speaker's cousin, the historian and publisher Peter Calvocoressi, presented a paper to an Anglo-Greek symposium held jointly by King's College, London and the Institute of Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki, at Thessaloniki in northern Greece.

An expanded version of Peter's paper, entitled 'From Byzantium to Eton: A Memoir of a Millennium', was published in 1984 by the Centre of Contemporary Greek Studies at King's College, London (Occasional Paper 2).

In the ensuing forty years, more information has come to light about the slaughter, enslavement or flight of approximately three-quarters of the population of Chios in 1822. The speaker's great-great grandfather, Matthew Calvocoressi, then in his eighties, dictated a first-hand account to his grandson which has only recently been transcribed and translated into English. Eye-witness accounts of the tragic events on Chios are rare, especially by one who, as a teenager, was enslaved and subsequently escaped.

The speaker traces his family's origins in the period when Chios was a prosperous merchant colony under Genoese rule to its reinvention post-diaspora as traders working in Liverpool and London for the hugely successful Anglo-Chiot firm of Ralli Brothers, of whose Indian branch his grandfather became director. The speaker's great-great grandfather was born on Chios, his great-grandfather in Constantinople, his grandfather in Liverpool, his father in Calcutta, and the speaker himself in Kent: 150 years of gradual migrations.



The speaker's great-great grandfather, Matthew Calvocoressi, who, as a teenager, was enslaved by the Ottomans in Asia Minor following the Massacre of Chios in 1822 but escaped to tell the tale. The photo shows him in his early sixties in Constantinople, where the family settled after the massacre, before coming to England.



Richard Calvocoressi is an art historian who has spent nearly fifty years in the art world: first as a curator, then director, in national collections of modern art (Tate, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh); then as director of an artist-endowed philanthropic charity (Henry Moore Foundation); and latterly as a senior curator in a private, commercial gallery (Gagosian, London). He has published widely on modern and contemporary art, curated numerous exhibitions, and has served on the boards of various charities and public bodies.

2nd October 2024, 6 pm

in association with the Centre for Hellenic Studies at King's College,
Council Room (K2.29), KCL Strand Campus, London WC2R 2LS

Talks are free for but booking essential:

Booking: <https://richard-calvocoressi-presentation.eventbrite.co.uk>

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