

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL LEVANTINE CONFERENCE IN ISTANBUL

### LEVANTINE HERITAGE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES “THE LEVANTINES: COMMERCE AND DIPLOMACY”

MONDAY, TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY 3 - 5 NOVEMBER 2014

The first international conference focused on the Levantine communities of the Eastern Mediterranean will take place in Istanbul, November 3-5. The venues hosting the conference are the British Consulate—General in Istanbul (Pera House, Monday and Tuesday) and the Italian Institute of Culture in Istanbul (Wednesday). Titled “The Levantines: Commerce and Diplomacy,” the conference features keynote speeches by prominent scholars Philip Mansel, Caglar Keyder, Richard Wittmann, and Paolo Girardelli. The conference has attracted more than thirty international scholars who will be arriving in Istanbul to present papers.

Quentin Compton-Bishop, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Levantine Heritage Foundation (LHF) quoted: “The Ottoman Levant comprised most of present-day Balkans, Greece, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt, and its influence extended far beyond the borders of those countries. The Ottoman Empire was made up of many different ethnic groups, including Turks, Arabs, Greek, Armenians, and Jews. They were joined over the centuries by traders and diplomats from every part of Europe, from England to Slovenia, both Catholic and Protestant, many of whom settled in the region and intermarried with the local population. In recent years, it has become common to refer to these European settlers in Ottoman lands as Levantines. However, research into the cosmopolitan world of the Levantines is still in its infancy, and much remains to be discovered about their way of life and their legacy.”

“From the date we first announced the call for papers to the deadline for submissions, the Foundation has been inundated by proposals and abstracts from senior lecturers and academics from all over the world; more than could be fitted into a three—day event. The conference will host presentations and debates on subjects such as: European and Levantine diplomats in the Ottoman Empire, Levantine social and cultural interaction with the Ottoman Turks, Greeks, Armenians and Jews, Levantine architecture, Levantines and the Turkish Republic, Levantine families and kinship groups, Levantine schools and churches, Levantine companies and business enterprises, Levantine culinary traditions, Levantine clubs, taverns and cafés, as well as Levantine sports.”

“The conference proceedings will open in the grand ballroom of the British Consulate-General in Istanbul, which is itself a historic Victorian landmark, and will continue with further meetings and exhibitions in the British Crimean War Memorial Church and the Italian Institute of Culture in Istanbul, located in the historic former Casa d'Italia building, which also served as the diplomatic mission of the Kingdom of Sardinia earlier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the Pera district of Istanbul.”

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THE LEVANTINE HERITAGE FOUNDATION (UK) is a non-profit membership association which

promotes research, preservation and education in the heritage, arts and culture of the different ethnic and religious communities of the wider Levant region of the Ottoman Empire between the 17th and 20th centuries. (For more information, please visit [levantineheritage.com](http://levantineheritage.com) or [levantineheritagefoundation.org](http://levantineheritagefoundation.org))