



Guest Lecture

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**A Late-Ottoman family's Exile in the National Era:
Networks of Property, Relatives, and Belonging in the
Interwar Period**

UCD School of History/Scoil na Staire UCD

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The importance of a global micro-historical approach is, counterintuitively, perhaps most powerful when deployed to analyze moments of acute macro-level change. The period during and after World War I in the Mediterranean world is one such era of flux, when the “unmixing” of peoples resulted in homogenization at the newly ordained nation-state level. In the lands of the former Ottoman Empire, the upheaval from multi-ethnic empire to nation-state domination was particularly traumatic. The “national” cultures that emerged in the interwar period were at their worst dogmatic in their inability to tolerate difference. At their best they promised—although struggled to deliver—national liberation as they pursued policies that suppressed the multicultural fabric of prewar society. The micro-historical approach helps us to understand what these large-scale changes felt like on the individual level. Despite the zeal of nationalist discourse, the newly anointed citizens often experienced being confined to their “natural” homelands not as the laudatory apotheosis of nationalist imagining, but rather as disappointment or simply out of necessity, even if they rarely could say so publicly. For some, especially, those whom Mostafa Minawi refers to in *Losing Istanbul* as inhabiting “the small world of itinerant global elites of empire,” national citizenship felt like a shattering exclusion from the places and relationships they had inhabited for decades. Drawing on previously unexamined archive of the descendants of the late-Ottoman military officer and statesman Bağdatlı Mehmed Hâdî Pasha, this paper follows the strategies pursued by his family as they navigated the new national scene in Albania, Iraq, and cities like Paris and Vienna. When Hâdî Pasha was sent into exile by the Turkish Republic due to his having led the Ottoman delegation that signed the Sèvres treaty, imperial privilege gave way to national survival. Hâdî Pasha and his descendants adjusted to the new dispensation by drawing on their networks of relatives and property as well as skills both linguistic and adaptive.

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