

Philip Mansel is a historian of France and the Middle East. He has lived in Paris, Beirut and Istanbul, and has frequently visited Aleppo. In 2012 he won the London Library Life in Literature award, and in 2013 became a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres. His most recent publication is *The Eagle in Splendour: Inside the Court of Napoleon* (2015). *Aleppo: Rise and Fall of a Syria's Great Merchant City* is his third book on cosmopolitan cities of the Middle East, after *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire* (1995), on Istanbul; and *Levant: Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean* (2010), on Smyrna, Alexandria and Beirut.



Front image: The citadel in Aleppo, poster advertising the Simplon-Orient-Express, July 1927 (colour litho), Neziere, J. de la (fl. 1916) / Private Collection / Archives Charmet / Bridgeman Images
Back flap: The author in front of the citadel, Aleppo, 1999; photo by Aouni Abdul Rahim
Jacket by e-Digital Design

'Philip Mansel, our greatest authority on the civilisation of the Levant, has written a concise and elegant elegy to one of the oldest, grandest and most cosmopolitan cities of the region. As tragic as it is timely, this book succeeds magnificently in showing why we should mourn the fall of Aleppo.'

William Dalrymple

'A compelling portrait of one of the Middle East's greatest cities, by one of the finest modern historians of the Levant. Mansel's *Aleppo* reminds modern readers of the loss to world heritage inflicted by Syria's tragic civil war. An important and outstanding book.'

Eugene Rogan, author of *The Arabs* and *The Fall of the Ottomans*

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ALEPPO THE RISE AND FALL OF SYRIA'S GREAT MERCHANT CITY PHILIP MANSEL



ALEPPO

THE RISE AND FALL OF SYRIA'S
GREAT MERCHANT CITY



PHILIP MANSEL

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'Every time gardens welcomed us, we said to them, Aleppo is our aim and you are merely the route.'

al-Mutanabbi

Aleppo lies in ruins. Its streets are plunged in darkness, most of its population has fled. But this was once a vibrant world city, where Muslims, Christians and Jews lived and traded together in peace. Few places are as ancient and diverse as Aleppo – one of the oldest, continuously inhabited cities in the world – successively ruled by the Assyrian, Persian, Greek, Roman, Arab, Ottoman and French empires. Under the Ottomans, it became the empire's third largest city, after Constantinople and Cairo. It owed its wealth to its position at the end of the Silk Road, at a crossroads of world trade, where merchants from Venice, Isfahan and Agra gathered in the largest souk in the Middle East. Throughout the region, it was famous for its food and its music. For 400 years British and French consuls and merchants lived in Aleppo; many of their accounts are used here for the first time. In the first history of Aleppo in English, Dr Philip Mansel vividly describes its decline from a pinnacle of cultural and economic power, a poignant testament to a city shattered by Syria's civil war.