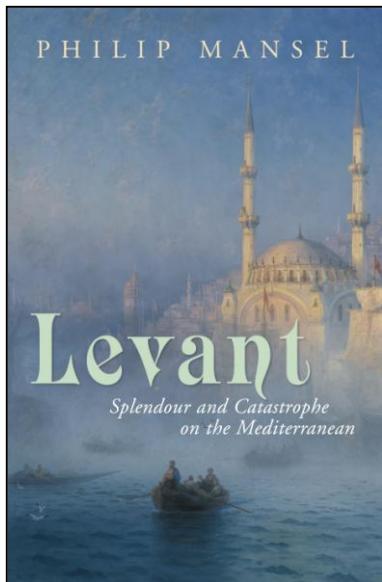




From the author of *CONSTANTINOPLE* and *LOUIS XVIII*



# Levant

*Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean*

by Philip Mansel

Published by John Murray

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**As pivotal centres for trade and commerce the three ports of Alexandria, Beirut and Smyrna** played a key roll in the rise, and fall, of the Ottoman Empire. For five centuries these cities provided a window between East and West, unifying races and religions, and bringing together ideas and cultures in a collision of people and minds. These cities became hubs of indulgence and extravagance, as well as political battlefields for nationalism, cosmopolitanism and foreign incursion. Welcome to the world of *Levant*.

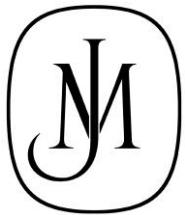
**In *Levant*, Mansel maps these three iconic ports to explore the history of the Middle East.** Using unpublished family papers to gain a personal perspective, Mansel describes the colourful and unexpected history of these three great cities. Charting their story, from the beginning of the French alliance with the Ottoman Empire, to today, *Levant* is the first English-language history of these fascinating cities.

**Levant has an undeniable relevance to the present day.** Both as an exploration of cultural and political integration and as a commentary on the origins of the Middle East, the book has lessons and warnings for us all. In detailing how Muslims, Christians and Jews lived together in these cities – putting deals before ideals and pragmatism before ideology – Mansel’s social commentary brings to life an important piece of history that is as engrossing as it is enlightening.

**Philip Mansel** is a historian of France and the Ottoman Empire. He has written histories of Constantinople and nineteenth-century Paris, as well as biographies of Louis XVIII and the Prince de Ligne. He writes for the *Art Newspaper*, the *Times Literary Supplement* and *The Spectator*. While writing *Levant*, he lived in Beirut and Istanbul. He is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society and member of the committee of the Chateau de Versailles research centre. To learn more about the author visit [www.philipmansel.com](http://www.philipmansel.com)

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## Praise for LEVANT

*"The strengths of the book are colossal. Mansel's knowledge of the history and culture of these places is encyclopaedic... To anyone who has read Mansel's *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire*, it will be sufficient to say: read this one too. To anyone who has not, I can only say: read both of them."*

**Sunday Telegraph**

*"Highly recommended."*  
**New Statesman**

*"...Instead of composing an elegy on a once powerful civilisation, Mansel has given the Levantine world its chronicle, and restored its weight in history..."*

**Spectator**

*"Highly enjoyable and intricately worked account of three great Mediterranean ports"*

**Economist**

*"I could scarcely put down this magnificent book, with its galloping narrative, its worldly analysis, sparkling anecdote..."*

**Financial Times**

*"With sober judgement but passionate feeling, Mansel has produced a work of formidable scholarship and subtlety, rich in colour, sights, personalities and horrifyingly abundant incident."*

**TLS.**

## Praise for *CONSTANTINOPLE: City of the World's Desire, 1453-1924*

*'The victory, the defeat, the magnificence, the squalor, the cruelty and the tolerance of the Ottoman years are all recorded there, Constantinople is one of those cities to which I always long to return, and the longing grows on every page'*

**The Sunday Telegraph**

*'Marvellous ... the experience of the whole city grows with the book ... you always feel close to the beat of Constantinople's raffish and mysterious heart'*

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*'A happy blend of scholarship and panache ... If you have visited Constantinople, read it: if not, buy it before you go'*

**The Evening Standard**