

The Grand Tour in the Ottoman Empire: Power, Pleasure and Ruins: Philip Mansel

10 May 2022, 6 pm

The Nomad's Tent, 21 St Leonards Lane, Edinburgh, EH8 9SH

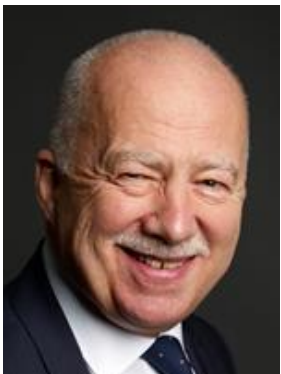
Philip Mansel shows that large numbers of European travellers, including Casanova, Byron and Disraeli, continued their Grand Tour, by sailing on from Italy, accompanied by artists and interpreters, to Constantinople, Syria and Egypt. Their motives were power, pleasure and desire to see classical ruins. The English ambassador, Lord Winchilsea wrote from Constantinople in 1663: **'this city I hold much better worth seeing than all Italy.'** Country houses acquired ceilings copied from Athens or Palmyra, portraits in Ottoman dress, and cedars from Lebanon. The Ottoman Empire was particularly attractive during the Napoleonic wars, when the rest of Europe became a battle field. This talk will be illustrated by over 150 pictures of the cities and sites of the Ottoman Empire, including Constantinople, Ephesus, Athens, Baalbek, Palmyra and Alexandria.



Jan Van der Steen Panorama of Constantinople c 1770 (Rijksmuseum). This view was frequently painted by European travellers, and was said by an Ottoman poet to make heaven itself gasp with envy.



Jean Baptiste Hilair. Camel Caravans in Palmyra c 1785. (Artcuriel) Since 1691 western travellers had begun to draw the ruins of Palmyra.



Philip Mansel's books include *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire* (1995); *Levant* (2010), on Smyrna, Alexandria and Beirut; *Aleppo* (2016); and *King of the World: the life of Louis XIV* (2019), whose agents scoured the Ottoman Empire for antiquities, manuscripts and rare plants. He is a founding committee member of the Society for Court Studies www.courtstudies.org and the Levantine Heritage Foundation www.levantineheritage.com
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