



Anglo-Turkish Society / Levantine Heritage Foundation hybrid lecture, 12 December 2023, 6.00 pm (UK time)

Speaker: Dr Philip Mansel

Venue: Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy St, Fitzrovia, London W1T 5BT

Title: 'The Grand Tour in the Levant, from Athens, via Constantinople and Aleppo, to Cairo: Power, Pleasure and Scholarship'

The English ambassador, Lord Winchilsea wrote from Constantinople in 1663: 'this city I hold much better worth seeing than all Italy'. Many European travellers did indeed continue their Grand Tour, by sailing on from Venice or Naples, accompanied by artists and interpreters, to Greece, Constantinople, Syria and Egypt. Their motives were interest in the power and ceremonies of the Ottoman Empire; and desire to find classical antiquities, rare plants and, in the case of Casanova and Lord Byron among others, sexual adventures. Travellers' houses acquired ceilings copied from Athens or Palmyra, portraits in Ottoman dress, and cedars from Lebanon. The Ottoman Empire was particularly appealing during the Napoleonic wars, when the rest of Europe was a battle field, and Ottoman authorities like Ali Pasha of Janina and Mohammed Ali in Egypt needed foreign allies. This talk will be illustrated by over 150 (often unpublished) pictures of the Ottoman Empire, showing Athens, Constantinople, Ephesus, Baalbek, Palmyra and Alexandria, and many other sites.

Booking essential: <https://p-mansel-presentation.eventbrite.co.uk>

Contact: contact@angloturkishsociety.org.uk



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



Dr. 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). Louis XIV was an ally of the Ottoman Empire, which his agents crossed in search of antiquities, manuscripts, rare plants, and topographical information. He is a founding committee member of the [Society for Court Studies](#) and the [Levantine Heritage Foundation](#), and is currently writing a history of nineteenth-century Europe.

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