



# Alexandria: City of Memory

*Michael Haag*

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## **Alexandria: City of Memory** Michael Haag

This is a literary, social and political portrait of Alexandria during the first half of the twentieth century, a high-point in its history. Drawing on diaries, letters and interviews, Michael Haag recovers the lost life of the city, its cosmopolitan inhabitants and its literary characters. Located on the coast of Africa yet rich in historical associations with Western civilization, Alexandria was home to an exotic variety of people whose cosmopolitan families had long been rooted in the commerce and the culture of the entire Mediterranean world. Alexandria famously excited the imaginations of writers, and Haag folds intimate accounts of E. M. Forster, Greek poet Constantine Cavafy and Lawrence Durrell into the story of its inhabitants. He recounts the city's experience of the two world wars and explores the communities that gave Alexandria its unique flavour: the Greek, the Italian and the Jewish. The book deftly harnesses the sexual and emotional charge of cosmopolitan life in this extraordinary city, and highlights the social and political changes over the decades that finally led to Nasser's Egypt. 'Michael Haag's 'Alexandria' is a remarkable achievement. Not merely a composite biography of Forster, Cavafy and Durrell, or their relations with the city, it is also a history of Alexandria, full of fascinating detail.' Professor Sir Frank Kermode Michael Haag is a writer, photographer and publisher. He published and provided the afterword and notes to the first British edition of E. M. Forster's 'Alexandria: A History and a Guide', and he is the author/photographer of 'Alexandria Illustrated' (The American University in Cairo Press).

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