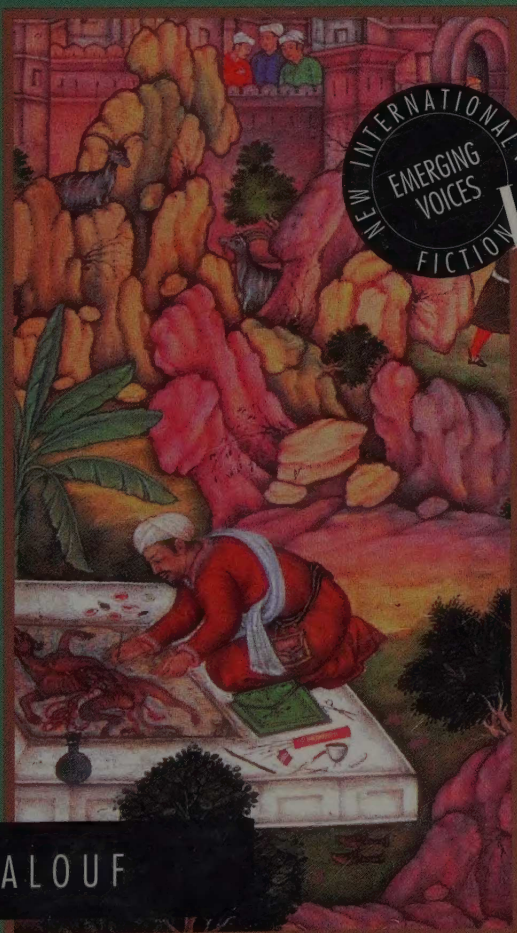


E M E R G I N G V O I C E S

# The Gardens of Light



NEW INTERNATIONAL  
EMERGING  
VOICES  
FICTION

Lebanon

"...a master  
storyteller..."  
—*Sunday Telegraph*  
(London)

AMIN MAALOUF

TRANSLATED BY DOROTHY S. BLAIR

*The Gardens of Light* tells the life story of Mani, painter, doctor, and prophet born in Mesopotamia — modern-day Iraq — in the early third century of the Christian era. He advocated “The Gospel of Light” — a religious system which was a mixture of Gnostic Christian beliefs, ancient Persian Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and some pagan elements. This came to be known as Manichaeism and attracted vast numbers of disciples.

The mystic exercised a powerful attraction over his disciples — rulers and scholars, itinerant merchants, shippers, baptists and sages who inhabited the shores of the Tigris — and was hated by the Magi, the high priests of Zoroastrianism who eventually had him imprisoned, tortured and killed in 276 AD.

Amin Maalouf brings life and color to the character and times of Mani. In the pages of *The Gardens of Light*, Mani’s cry for tolerance can be heard echoing across the centuries of our times.

SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9094 01885 3232

APR 1999  
**WITHDRAWN**



Praise for  
AMIN MAALOUF  
Winner of the 1993 Prix Goncourt  
and  
*The Gardens of Light*

"One of the best European writers to have emerged in the last decade."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Maalouf skillfully weaves the threads of contemporary history into his fictional narratives... In each of his books, he takes a historical figure about whom few facts are known, puts him in the context of his time and place and adds a myriad of invented but historically plausible details. The finished portraits have the intricate richness of oriental tapestries."

—*International Herald Tribune*

"Maalouf is as eloquent as ever... [He] weaves tapestries of intrigue that illuminate a broader historical moment... Maalouf, in his engaging prose, goes a considerable way towards restoring Mani to us."

—*The Times (London)*

"A compelling tale... the poignant story of a man born before his time... the character of Mani is carefully and warmly drawn."

—*Times Literary Supplement (London)*

"Maalouf has a rare gift of bringing the past to life... [He] re-creates the life of this fascinating and little known mystic from his relatively humble birth on the banks of the river Tigris, through his rise to fame and his tragic fate."

—*The Good Book Guide (London)*

## Praise for Amin Maalouf's

# *Samarkand*

### Winner of the Prix des Maisons de la Presse

"A rich historical romance... that exudes a distinct *Arabian Nights* flavor... Mysteries and their solutions are deployed with masterly authority in this accomplished novel."

— *Kirkus Reviews*

"Remarkable... Maalouf has written an extraordinary book."

— *The Independent (London)*

"Maalouf is a strong storyteller... Throughout the novel, the reader is treated to lovely set pieces that evoke medieval and early modern Central Asia."

— *New York Times Book Review*

"Prop up an extra pillow against your head. Pop open a drink. You are in for a sumptuous read... Amin Maalouf is an artful writer who can bring the story into your bedroom like IMAX with Surround Sound, but who never allows the momentum to bog down the details. You'll find yourself wide open to the poetry and history along with the white-knuckle adventure."

— *Small Press Magazine*

"This is a splendid novel... structured as a thriller... brings together love, intrigue, tyranny, creativity, and the timeless power of the word..."

— *Choice*

"Maalouf has blended the lives of all the different characters — some living more than 800 years apart — into an engrossing work of fiction... [A] fine historical novel."

— *San Francisco Chronicle*

"... lucid and compelling..."

— *World Literature Today*

# *The Gardens of Light,*

A Novel by

**AMIN MAALOUF**

translated by Dorothy S. Blair

**INTERLINK BOOKS**

An imprint of Interlink Publishing Group, Inc.

NEW YORK

**SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

First American edition published in 1999 by

**INTERLINK BOOKS**

An imprint of Interlink Publishing Group, Inc.  
99 Seventh Avenue • Brooklyn, New York 11215 and  
46 Crosby Street • Northampton, Massachusetts 01060

Copyright © by Editions J.-C. Lattès, 1991, 1999  
Translation copyright © by Dorothy S. Blair, 1996, 1999

Originally published in French under the title

*Les Jardins de Lumière.*

First published in English by Quartet Books Limited, U.K.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publisher.

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publications Data**

Maalouf, Amin.

[Jardins de lumière. English]

The gardens of light / Amin Maalouf.

p. cm. — (Emerging voices)

ISBN 1-56656-247-3 — ISBN 1-56656-248-1 (pbk.)

I. Title. II. Series.

PQ3979.2.M28J3713 1998

843—dc21

98-23334

CIP

Printed and bound in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Cover image: By permission of the British Library  
Khamsa of Nizami, ms OR 12208, detail f. 262b

## CONTENTS

<i>Translator's Note</i>		vii
<i>Prologue</i>		1
PART ONE	<i>The Palm Grove of the White-clad Brethren</i>	17
PART TWO	<i>From the Tigris to the Indus</i>	71
PART THREE	<i>Closeted with Kings</i>	131
PART FOUR	<i>Banishment</i>	185
<i>Epilogue</i>		241

