



ISTANBUL A Tale of Three Cities by Bettany Hughes

Published on 26 January 2017 by Weidenfeld & Nicolson in hardback at £25, as ebook at £12.99 and also as an audio book

"I first travelled to Istanbul 30 years ago - and was immediately enraptured. Istanbul reveals what it takes to make a city. This metropolis has been a cornerstone of the most powerful of civilisations - and has fuelled and dashed the dreams of women

and men across millennia. For good reason the place known simply as "The City" was also described as the world's desire - as a diamond between two sapphires. As Istanbul races up the modern political agenda, new archaeology is allowing us, for the first time, to piece together the full story of a brilliant and a brutal, history-making settlement, inhabited since 6000 BCE. ' - Bettany Hughes

Bettany Hughes has delivered a ground-breaking history of this world-class city from its very beginnings in the Neolithic – for the first time giving us a complete narrative up to the present, through 8,000 years of human habitation.

Istanbul has always been a place where stories and histories collide and crackle, where narrative and perception is as potent as hard, historical fact. From the Qu'ran to Shakespeare, this city with three names - Byzantium, Constantinople, Istanbul - resonates as an idea and as a place, and overflows its boundaries - real and imagined. The gateway between the East, West, North and South it has served as the capital of the Late Roman, Byzantine, Latin and Ottoman Empires. For much of its history this cosmopolitan settlement was known simply as The City, but, as Bettany Hughes reveals, Istanbul is not just a city, but a story.

HELEN RICHARDSON Group Publicity & Communications Director

T: 020 3122 6828 | E: helen.richardson@orionbooks.co.uk

THE ORION PUBLISHING GROUP, Carmelite House, 50 Victoria Embankment, London, EC4Y 0DZ
www.orionbooks.co.uk

In this epic new biography, Hughes takes us on a dazzling historical journey through the many incarnations of one of the world's greatest cities – exploring the ways that Istanbul's influence has spun out to shape the wider world.

Based on meticulous research gathered over a decade and brand new archaeological evidence, this captivating portrait of the momentous life of Istanbul is visceral, immediate and scholarly narrative history at its finest.

Note to editors - January 2017 is the 500th anniversary of the establishment of the Ottoman caliphate in Istanbul. In AD1517, the Ottoman Sultan Selim I ruled swathes of Europe, Asia and North Africa as Caliph – as his descendants would continue to do well into the 20th century.

About the Author



Bettany Hughes is an award-winning historian, author and broadcaster. Her previous books - HELEN OF TROY: GODDESS, PRINCESS, WHORE and THE HEMLOCK CUP: SOCRATES, ATHENS AND THE SEARCH FOR THE GOOD LIFE - were published to great critical acclaim and worldwide success.

Bettany is a Research Fellow of King's College London, a Tutor at Cambridge University's Institute for Continuing Education and a Visiting Professor of History at the New College of the

Humanities and has been honoured with numerous awards including the prestigious Norton Medlicott Medal for History.

She has made a number of documentaries on history, culture and philosophy for the BBC, Channel 4, PBS, National Geographic, Discovery and The History Channel, including 'Byzantium Unearthed'. Her programmes have now been seen by over 250 million worldwide. Her recent series for Radio 4 'Ancient Ways' tracked the old Roman Road, the Via Egnatia, from Albania to Istanbul.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06qms9p>.

Bettany lives in London. www.bettanyhughes.co.uk / @bettanyhughes

Bettany Hughes is available for interview.

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PRAISE FOR *ISTANBUL*

'History which is astonishingly alive told with the rigour of a scholar and the vigour of a storyteller...magnetically erudite' - **BBC ARTS WEBSITE**

'This is historical narrative brimming with brio and incident' - - Justin Marozzi,
GUARDIAN

'The complexity of the city's story is revealed in mesmerising detail in Bettany Hughes's new book. At times her writing feels like a love letter, or a eulogy to what has been lost. Her compassion for the city and its millions of inhabitants, past and present, comes across from the very first pages. It is quite rare to read a historical book that weaves research and insight with understanding and love: here is a book written as much with the heart as the mind...Here is an important book that must be translated into many languages - and especially into Turkish.' -
Elif Shafak, THE SPECTATOR

'She is a wistful and impassioned cosmopolitan who has produced a challenging story for 2017' - Peter Stothard, **FINANCIAL TIMES**

'A particular stroke of genius.....It is a story well worth telling as the region continues to implode' - Richard Spencer, **THE TIMES**

'With a broadcaster's delight, Bettany Hughes...throws herself into the gargantuan task of capturing the history of a city that spans 3,000 year...Her scholarship is impressive...her enthusiasm radiates...Her subject...is irresistibly rich' - Louise Callaghan, **SUNDAY TIMES**

'Bettany Hughes' history of Istanbul through the ages is richly entertaining and impeccably researched...It is a loving biography of a city that never stands still, never mind never sleeps...Hughes has written an important book that brings the past of this glorious city to life' - **Peter Frankopan, THE OBSERVER**

'A magisterial new biography...Bettany Hughes transports the reader on a magic-carpet-like journey through 8,000 years of history....the quintessential historical overview of a city racing up the modern political agenda' - **THE LADY**

'Fiery and magnificent new biography of Istanbul...Hughes does a fantastic job of cramming all this history into a fluid and engaging narrative. A gripping and erudite book' - Stav Sherez, **CATHOLIC HERALD**

'A riveting biography of a brilliant, bloodied city' - Madeleine Keane, **SUNDAY INDEPENDENT (IRELAND)**

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'A glittering mosaic of a history, packing the stories of three cities - Byzantium, Constantinople and Istanbul - into one volume, from their earliest settlement in 6000BC, to the 20th Century' - Caroline Sanderson, **THE BOOKSELLER**

'Impressive' - **ECONOMIST**

'One of the pleasures of wandering the city today - whatever you call it - is in recognising that its layers of history are so enfolded with one another that they are impossible to separate. This is also the pleasure of Bettany Hughes' highly readable jaunt through its past 2,500 years..Istanbul is still living history' - Sameer Rahim, **DAILY TELEGRAPH**

'This heroic work...is the perfect read if - having noticed that Istanbul is increasingly in the news these days - you wish to know its place in the scheme of things, and what light it may cast on the uncertain future we shall most certainly share' - **Maureen Freely, NEW STATESMAN**

'Ground-breaking...There has been no recent large-scale history of the city with many names (Byzantium, Constantinople, Istanbul), which makes this colossal undertaking a notable achievement, coming at yet another turbulent moment in its long existence.' - Roger Crowley, **LITERARY REVIEW**

'Hughes succeeds triumphantly...and produces a cogent, passionate survey...bolstered by staggeringly wide-ranging research...[a] captivating book' **Jon Wright, GEOGRAPHICAL, The Royal Geographical Society magazine**

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