



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 knew then that I was in love. This city has been a cornerstone of the very greatest 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 metropolis, inhabited since 6000 BCE. ' - Bettany Hughes

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 and the West, and between the North and the 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.

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. As the longest-lived political entity in Europe, Istanbul has absorbed a mosaic of micro-cities and cultures all gathering around the core. Thracians, Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Genoese, Venetians, Jews, Vikings, Romanians, Arabs, Azeris, Armenians and Turks - with many more - all called a patch of this earth their home.

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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' and a recent series for Radio 4 'Ancient Ways' where she 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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