

Download Istanbul: A Tale of Three Cities Online eBook

Book details:

Author: *Bettany Hughes*

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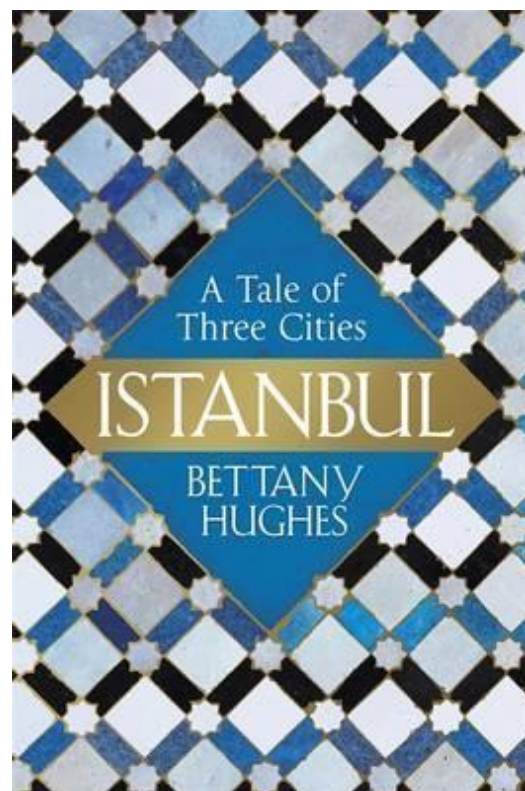
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Plot:

Istanbul explores a city which stands as a gateway between the east and west, one of the indisputably greatest cities in the world. Previously known by the names Byzantium and Constantinople, this is the most celebrated metropolis in the world to sit on two continents, straddling the dividing line of the Bosphorus Strait between Europe and Asia. During its long history, Istanbul has served as the capital of the Roman, Byzantine, Latin and Ottoman Empires. Its architecture reflects these many cultures, including the Hagia Sophia (Byzantine), the Blue Mosque (Ottoman), the Valens Aqueduct (Roman), the Topkapi Palace (Ottoman), and more modern Art Nouveau avenues built in the 19th and 20th centuries - many of which are UNESCO World Heritage sites. With the founding of the Republic of Turkey by Ataturk in 1923, Istanbul was overlooked and Ankara became the capital. Over the next 90 years, Istanbul has undergone great structural change, and in the 1970s the population of the city rocketed as people moved to the city to find work, turning Istanbul into the cultural, economic and financial centre of Turkey. Events there recently have again brought Istanbul to the forefront of global attention. Indeed, while writing this book, Bettany was caught with her daughters in the crossfire of Taksim Square. Bettany Hughes has been

researching and writing this rich portrait of one of the world's most multi-faceted cities for over a decade. Her compelling biography of a momentous city is visceral, immediate and sensuous narrative history at its finest.

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Review quote

The English historian's sprawling study of one of the world's great capitals covers 3,000 years. It has witnessed enormous flux in that time - not all of it for the better - but Hughes' biography will likely make those who've never visited want to book a plane ticket. * IRISH INDEPENDENT * With a broadcaster's delight, the historian Bettany Hughes throws herself into the gargantuan task of capturing the history of a city that spans 3,000 years, and whose story has been woefully neglected compared with other great urban centres...Impressive -- Louise Callaghan * SUNDAY TIMES * Hughes guides us round a city that is majestic, magical and mystical, leaving few stones unturned. It is a loving biography of a city that never stands still, never mind sleeps. Hughes has written an important book that brings the past of this glorious city to life. It is filled with charming vignettes and is snappily written. -- Peter Frankopan * THE OBSERVER Paperback of the Week * She populates her three cities of Byzantium, Constantinople and Istanbul with a rich cast, in a book that brims with brio and incident. -- Justin Marozzi * THE GUARDIAN * She deserves enormous credit for managing to traverse swathes of time (right down to the present day) with such aplomb. Rarely have I read a book in which I learnt more things that I really should have already known. -- Jonathan Wright * CATHOLIC HERALD * I can't think of a city with a more extraordinary history than Istanbul, and in Bettany Hughes it has its ideal biographer. -- Simon Shaw * MAIL ON SUNDAY * This scholarly work by television historian Bettany Hughes tells the city's story in rich and compelling detail * SUNDAY BUSINESS POST * Majestic and immensely enriching...It's a journey through conquest and greatness from Roman to Ottoman times and it reminded me of why I love the city. -- Roula Khalaf * FINANCIAL TIMES * Istanbul has endured an awful run of terrorist attacks and political disorder over the past few years so Bettany Hughes' ebullient homage to the city is a welcome reminder of its long and fascinating history. * i NEWSPAPER * Historian and broadcaster Bettany Hughes has pulled off the feat of wrting about three empires in one book: the Roman empire of Constantine, the Byzantine empire which ended with the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and the Ottoman empire which lasted

into the 1920s * THE OLDIE * Bettany Hughes's sprawling, 600-page love letter to one of the most inspiring cities on earth was a decade in the making, as befits a book covering millennia's worth of history in impressive detail. -- Alev Scott * PROSPECT * A witty and lavish account of a shimmering city caught between heaven and hell -- Noonie Minogue * THE TABLET * Istanbul has many inhabitants yearning to nurture their grand but asphyxiated city. In this tome - which begs a Turkish translation - Hughes gives them the time that Istanbul's pace, developers and officials do not. Her quiet confidence in the city's hard-earned cosmopolitanism soothes this concerned Istanbulu -- Sarah Jilani * ART REVIEW ASIA * 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 * 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 * Undoubtedly timely, because, as Hughes argues, Istanbul is once again central to the European narrative, as a postreligious secularism confronts a resurgent religious movement. -- Michael McLoughlin * IRISH TIMES * It is a delightful book for those who know Istanbul, but what a treat for those who do not, and are considering a visit. [Hughes] is an excellent, informed and good-natured guide...she gets under the skin of the great city. -- Adrian Spooner * CLASSICS FOR ALL * Hughes succeeds triumphantly...and produces a cogent, passionate survey...bolstered by staggeringly wide-ranging research...[a] captivating book...Istanbul, a place where the past is impossible to miss...and few have told its enchanting story with Hughes's blend of precision and panache. -- Jon Wright * GEOGRAPHICAL, The Royal Geographical Society magazine * Hughes...wishes to show how the city's topography shaped the civilisations that grew from it - and how the many peoples that have passed through its walls went on to shape the lands and seas and trade routes of their known world...The thrill the author takes in her discoveries is infectious...Keen as she is to identify a past that is still omnipresent, she does not just like the city to a "historic millefeuille": time and again she proves it...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 * Istanbul's newly revived status as

perhaps the major centre of Sunni Islam in the non-Arab world, and a pivot to the current Middle East imbroglio, is underlined by Bettany Hughes in the introduction to her sumptuous urban biography. -- Robert Fox * EVENING STANDARD * Bettany Hughes transports the reader on a magic-carpet-like journey through 8,000 years of history...[this is] the quintessential historical overview of a city racing up the modern political agenda. -- Richard Tarrant * THE LADY * The research is immaculate, as is the telling of it. * CHOICE * Bettany Hughes' history of Istanbul through the ages is richly entertaining and impeccably researched. Hughes' ebullient book is an ode to three incarnations of the city...[she] guides us round a city that is majestic, magical and mystical, leaving few stones unturned. 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. It is filled with charming vignettes...snappily written...plenty here to entertain those who know something about the city and to enthrall those who don't. -- Peter Frankopan * THE OBSERVER * 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. Perhaps the most moving moment in the book comes when Hughes goes looking for the song of the Janissaries...Hughes tracked down one of their descendants...Could he remember one of the Janissaries' famous old songs? "Yes he could - and out came a fluid, mellifluous prayer, a song from the religion of the road, a song of hope and revolution, of piety and of cosmopolitan human heartedness. It could be the city's anthem. -- Sameer Rahim * DAILY TELEGRAPH * For all its colourful drama, the city's history can be hard to narrate in a way that is coherent and gripping...Bettany Hughes [takes] up that challenge and...the result is impressive. In 'Istanbul: A Tale of Three Cities' Ms Hughes plays intriguing, sophisticated games with time and space...by making unlikely connections between well-described locations and events separated by aeons, she gives voice to those witchy, diachronic feelings in a spectacular fashion. * ECONOMIST * A scholarly narrative, but Hughes isn't averse to heating it up with the salacious stories that dot the city's past -- Sameer Rahim * SUNDAY TELEGRAPH * Sweeping across eight millennia in its 800 pages, this glinting mosaic of a book is divided into short, vivid, episodic chapters...With 2017 marking the 500th anniversary of the Ottoman caliphate in Istanbul, this sumptuously produced history book is as timely as it is enthralling. -- Caroline Sanderson * SUNDAY EXPRESS * Over its 6,000 year history, Istanbul has been home to Phoenicians, Genoese, Venetians, Jews, Vikings and Azeris, and been the cornerstone of the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman empires...Hughes traces the history of one of the world's greatest cities. * GUARDIAN * Ten years in the researching and writing,

it's 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 * Award-winning historian Bettany Hughes pieces together the history of Istanbul in a riveting biography of a brilliant, bloodied city. -- Madeleine Keane * SUNDAY INDEPENDENT (IRELAND) * Fiery and magnificent new biography of Istanbul...Hughes does a fantastic job of cramming all this history into a fluid and engaging narrative. She also possesses a great turn of phrase, such as when she describes Hagia Sophia as seeming "to be suspended by a golden chain from heaven"...A gripping and erudite book. -- Stav Sherez * CATHOLIC HERALD * A magisterial new biography...Bettany Hughes transports the reader on a magic-carpet-like journey through 8,000 years of history...in a vivid narrative dotted with colourful characters and fascinating tangents...the quintessential historical overview of a city racing up the modern political agenda. -- Richard Turner * THE LADY * With a broadcaster's delight, Bettany Hughes...throws herself into the gargantuan task of capturing the history of a city that spans 3,000 years, and whose story has been woefully neglected compared with other great urban centres...Hughes reconstructs Byzantium, Constantinople and Istanbul as living, breathing landscapes...her scholarship is impressive...her enthusiasm radiates...Her subject...is irresistibly rich. The place known simply as "The City", Hughes notes, has long lived a "double life - as a real place and as a story"...The tale she tells of the metropolis at the crossroads of the Earth is textured, readable and often compelling. -- Louise Callaghan * SUNDAY TIMES * Her latest book, Istanbul: A Tale of Three Cities, is a particular stroke of genius...Over the years the city has had three names - Byzantium, Constantinople and Istanbul so in a vivid rattle she hurls Xerxes, Alcibiades, Constantine, Justinian, Theodora, Suleyman the Magnificent and a sometimes overwhelming cast of thousands before us...It is a story well worth telling as the region continues to implode, the final or at least latest lashings out of the Ottoman Empire's collapse...The book is littered with historical echoes that...are impossible to ignore...there are wonderful anecdotes...She concludes with an encomium to Istanbul as a world city - literally, a cosmopolis - where faiths and ethnicities are brought together by learning or trade...not an original thought but one that in this particularly troubled moment, for bomb-hit Istanbul and the rest of us, bears repeating. -- Richard Spencer * THE TIMES * Bettany Hughes' Istanbul is built deliberately on what is passing as well as past. It is a story of numerous overlapping names, changes that often happened more slowly than the guidebooks tell us. Her subject is the city that was Byzantium for some 900 years, Christian Constantinople for another 1,000, Islamic Istanbul, then Istanbul - while also being New Rome, a Diamond Between Two Sapphires and The World's

Desire...assiduous...passionate...there have been swirling tidal shifts around Istanbul since she began this book 10 years or so ago. She is celebrating citizenry of the world at a time when that idea is in retreat, damning the "otherness" that the west has bestowed upon the east when throughout the world there are more and more "others"...She is a wistful and impassioned cosmopolitan who has produced a challenging story for 2017. -- Peter Stothard * FINANCIAL TIMES * This is historical narrative brimming with brio and incident. Hughes's portraits are written with a zesty flourish ... Istanbul is a visceral, pulsating city. In Bettany Hughes's life-filled and life-affirming history, steeped in romance and written with verve, it has found a sympathetic and engaging champion' -- Justin Marozzi * GUARDIAN *

About Bettany Hughes

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. Hughes has made a number of factual films and documentaries for the BBC, Channel 4, PBS, National Geographic, Discovery, The History Channel and ABC. She is a Research Fellow of King's College London and has been honoured with numerous awards including the Norton Medlicott Medal for History.
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Review Text

This is historical narrative brimming with brio and incident. Hughes's portraits are written with a zesty flourish ... Istanbul is a visceral, pulsating city. In Bettany Hughes's life-filled and life-affirming history, steeped in romance and written with verve, it has found a sympathetic and engaging champion' Justin Marozzi GUARDIAN