

Ancient Turkey escorted small group history tour

Reading List

Rebel Land

by Christopher de Bellaigue

In 2001, Christopher de Bellaigue wrote [a story](#) for *The New York Review of Books*, in which he briefly discussed the killing and deportation of half a million Armenians from Turkey in 1915. These massacres, he suggested, were best understood as part of the struggles that attended the end of the Ottoman Empire. Upon publication, the *Review* was besieged with letters asserting that this was not war but genocide. How had he gotten it so wrong? De Bellaigue set out for Turkey's troubled southeast to discover what really happened. What emerged is both an intellectual detective story and a reckoning with memory and identity. *Rebel Land* unravels the enigma of the Turkish twentieth century—a time that contains the death of an empire, the founding of a nation, and the near extinction of a people. Turkish author and Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk calls it "A finely written, brave, and very personal book"

My Name is Red

by Orhan Pamuk (trans. Erdag M. Goknar)

At once a fiendishly devious mystery, a beguiling love story, and a brilliant symposium on the power of art, *My Name Is Red* is a transporting tale set amid the splendor and religious intrigue of sixteenth-century Istanbul, from one of the most prominent contemporary Turkish writers. (Pamuk was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2006). The Sultan has commissioned a cadre of the most acclaimed artists in the land to create a great book celebrating the glories of his realm. Their task: to illuminate the work in the European style. But because figurative art can be deemed an affront to Islam, this commission is a dangerous proposition indeed. The ruling elite therefore mustn't know the full scope or nature of the project, and panic erupts when one of the chosen miniaturists disappears. The only clue to the mystery—or crime?—lies in the half-finished illuminations themselves. Part fantasy and part philosophical puzzle, *My Name is Red* is a kaleidoscopic journey to the intersection of art, religion, love, sex and power.

A *New York Times* review notes how the book "brush[es] up against our own tradition's questioning of the place of art". Read Richard Eder's review [here](#).

Istanbul: A Poetry of Place

by Ates Orga (ed.)

This is a pocket-sized collection of poetry of Istanbul, one of the world's most remarkable cities. Istanbul, capital of two great empires, confluence of Asia and Europe, has called forth poetry throughout her long history, from paupers and sultans, natives and visitors alike. When Mehmed the Conqueror first wandered through the ruins of the Byzantine palace, it was with the words of the Persian poet Ferdowsi on his lips: "The spider spins his web in the Palace of the Caesars/An owl hoots in the towers of Afrasiyab". Since then the silhouette of thousand-year-old domes and tapering minarets, the sunsets reflected nightly in a thousand palace windows and the bustle of her markets have inspired Sultan Suleyman, W B Yeats and Nazim Hikmet, amongst others, to salute one of the world's most remarkable cities.

From Jason and the Argonauts to the fans of Galatasaray in their stadium, both visitors to and residents of Istanbul are immortalised in this collection. The exquisite love poetry of the Ottomans, the epic sagas of the Turkish nationalists, the epigrams of sultans, and the romantic couplets of visiting diplomats are contrasted in thematic chapters. A cosmopolitan city from its earliest history, this collection includes poetry by and about Turks, Jews, Kurds, gypsies, Armenians, Greeks, and Russians. Featuring: W B Yeats, Sergei Esenin, Nazim Hikmet, Charles Kingsley, Lord Byron, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Bedri Rahmi Eyuboglu, Orhan Veli, Vita Sackville-West and Suleyman the Magnificent.

The Silk Road in World History

by Xinru Liu

The Silk Road was the contemporary name for a complex of ancient trade routes linking East Asia with Central Asia, South Asia, and the Mediterranean world. This network of exchange emerged along the borders between agricultural China and the steppe nomads during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E.-220 C.E.), in consequence of the inter-dependence and the conflicts of these two distinctive societies. In their quest for horses, fragrances, spices, gems, glassware, and other exotics from the lands to their west, the Han Empire extended its dominion over the oases around the Takla Makan Desert and sent silk all the way to the Mediterranean, either through the land routes leading to the caravan city of Palmyra in Syria desert, or by way of northwest India, the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea, landing at Alexandria. The Silk Road survived the turmoil of the demise of the Han and Roman Empires, reached its golden age during the early middle age, when the Byzantine Empire and the Tang Empire became centres of silk culture and established the models for high culture of the Eurasian world. The coming of Islam extended silk culture to an even larger area and paved the way

for an expanded market for textiles and other commodities. By the 11th century, however, the Silk Road was in decline because of intense competition from the sea routes of the Indian Ocean. Using supply and demand as the framework for analysing the formation and development of the Silk Road, the book examines the dynamics of the interactions of the nomadic pastoralists with sedentary agriculturalists, and the spread of new ideas, religions, and values into the world of commerce, thus illustrating the cultural forces underlying material transactions. This effort at tracing the interconnections of the diverse participants in the transcontinental Silk Road exchange will demonstrate that the world had been linked through economic and ideological forces long before the modern era.

Birds Without Wings

by Louis de Bernieres

In his first novel since *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, Louis de Bernieres recreates a world, populates it with characters as real as our best friends, and launches it into the maelstrom of twentieth-century history. The setting is a small village in southwestern Anatolia in the waning years of the Ottoman Empire. Everyone there speaks Turkish, though they write it in Greek letters. It is a place that has room for a professional blasphemer; where a brokenhearted aga finds solace in the arms of a Circassian courtesan who isn't Circassian at all; where a beautiful Christian girl named Philothei is engaged to a Muslim boy named Ibrahim. But all of this will change when Turkey enters the modern world. Epic in sweep, intoxicating in its sensual detail, *Birds Without Wings* is an enchantment. de Bernieres insists it exceeds its better-known predecessor. Discover for yourself. *The Guardian* called it "a Turkish take on War and Peace". Read their [interview with Bernieres here](#).

A Traveller's History of Turkey

by Richard Stoneman

Throughout the millennia Turkey formed the core of several Empires--Persia, Rome, Byzantium--before becoming the center of the Ottoman Empire. All these civilizations have left their marks on the landscape, architecture and art of Turkey--a place of fascinating overlapping cultures. A Traveller's History of Turkey offers a concise and readable account of the region from prehistory right up to the present day. It covers everything from the legendary Flood of Noah, the early civilization of Catal Huyuk seven thousand years before Christ, through the treasures of Troy, Alexander the Great, the Romans, Seljuks, Byzantines and the Golden Age of the Sultans, to the twentieth century's great changes wrought by Kemal Atatürk and the strong position Turkey now holds in the world community.

Turkey: A Short History

by Norman Stone

In *Turkey: A Short History* the celebrated historian Norman Stone deftly conducts the reader through the fascinating and complex story of Turkey's past, from the arrival of the Seljuks in Anatolia in the eleventh century to the modern republic applying for EU membership in the twenty-first. It is an account of epic proportions, featuring rapacious leaders such as Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, the glories of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, and Kemal Atatürk, the reforming genius and founder of modern Turkey. For six hundred years Turkey was at the heart of the Ottoman Empire, a superpower that brought Islam to the gates of Vienna and stretched to North Africa, the Persian Gulf, and the river Volga. Stone examines the reasons for the astonishing rise and the long decline of this world empire and how for its last hundred years it became the center of the Eastern Question, as the Great Powers argued over a regime in its death throes. Then, as now, the position of Turkey—a country balanced between two continents—provoked passionate debate. Stone concludes the book with a trenchant examination of the Turkish republic created in the aftermath of the First World War, where East and West, religion and secularism, and tradition and modernization are vibrant and sometimes conflicting elements of national identity. 11 illustrations

The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East

by Eugene Rogan

By 1914 the powers of Europe were sliding inexorably toward war, and they pulled the Middle East along with them into one of the most destructive conflicts in human history. In *The Fall of the Ottomans*, award-winning historian Eugene Rogan brings the First World War and its immediate aftermath in the Middle East to vivid life, uncovering the often ignored story of the region's crucial

role in the conflict. Unlike the static killing fields of the Western Front, the war in the Middle East was fast-moving and unpredictable, with the Turks inflicting decisive defeats on the Entente in Gallipoli, Mesopotamia, and Gaza before the tide of battle turned in the Allies' favor. The postwar settlement led to the partition of Ottoman lands, laying the groundwork for the ongoing conflicts that continue to plague the modern Arab world. A sweeping narrative of battles and political intrigue from Gallipoli to Arabia, *The Fall of the Ottomans* is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the Great War and the making of the modern Middle East.

Turkey Unveiled: A History of Modern Turkey

by Nicole and Hugh Pope

In this "deeply revealing guide to modern Turkish culture and politics" (The New York Times Book Review), Hugh and Nicole Pope provide a glimpse into a culture that has long been misunderstood. *Turkey Unveiled* is the only book in many years to attempt to fill a gap in perception with regard to this extremely complex country, and this paperback edition includes an epilogue that brings the book totally up to date, with coverage of the most recent developments in Turkey. Throughout the last generation Turkey has opened up to the outside world, increasingly revealing a pluralistic and dynamic society. The authors, who speak fluent Turkish and have reported from Turkey for over a decade, provide a rich mosaic of contemporary Turkey and its formative past. The strengths and weaknesses of the Ottoman Empire, the Armenian tragedy, the ongoing Kurdish struggle, and the controversial legacy of the brilliant but autocratic founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, are all here. They also provide portraits of new leaders who have broken taboos and ushered in new freedoms at a time when other forces attempt to pull Turkey back into the Middle Eastern vortex. Hugh and Nicole Pope, combining analysis with understanding, make recent developments in Turkey intelligible for both the general reader and the millions of visitors welcomed by a burgeoning tourist industry.

A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East

by David Fromkin

The Middle East has long been a region of rival religions, ideologies, nationalisms, and ambitions. All of these conflicts—including the hostilities between Arabs and Israelis, and the violent challenges posed by Iraq's competing sects—are rooted in the region's political inheritance: the arrangements, unities, and divisions imposed by the Allies after the First World War. In *A Peace to End All Peace*, David Fromkin reveals how and why the Allies drew lines on an empty map that remade the

geography and politics of the Middle East. Focusing on the formative years of 1914 to 1922, when all seemed possible, he delivers in this sweeping and magisterial book the definitive account of this defining time, showing how the choices narrowed and the Middle East began along a road that led to the conflicts and confusion that continue to this day. A new afterword from Fromkin, written for this edition of the book, includes his invaluable, updated assessment of this region of the world today, and on what this history has to teach us.
