



The Sultan of Byzantium

Selçuk Altun , Clifford Endres (Translation) , Selhan Endres (Translation)

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Fighting the Ottoman invaders in Constantinople, Emperor Constantine XI was killed—his body never found.

Legend has it that he escaped in a Genoese ship, cheating certain death at the hands of the Turks and earning himself the title of Immortal Emperor.

Five centuries after his disappearance, three mysterious men contact a young professor living in Istanbul. Members of a secret sect, they have guarded the Immortal Emperor's will for generations. They tell him that he is the next emperor in line and that in order to take possession of his fortune he must carry out his ancestor's last wishes.

What follows is his journey to the heart of a mystery of epic historical significance.

Selçuk Altun was born in Artvin, Turkey in 1950. He is a retired banking executive, a bibliophile and philanthropist. His novels, *Songs My Mother Never Taught Me* and *Many and Many a Year Ago*, were listed amongst the top one hundred translated crime fiction by the International Association of Crime Writers. He lives in Istanbul, Turkey.

The Sultan of Byzantium Details

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From Reader Review The Sultan of Byzantium for online ebook

Eng. Mohmad ali says

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Cathy says

This was a fascinating book. I ordered after hearing a report about it on NPR. It is the fictional (I think?) story of a man tapped to become the exiled emperor of the Byzantine. Throughout the book, he is exposed to "challenges" that inform the reader of rich Byzantine history. And throughout the book, you'll learn of amazing landmarks...like the monastery built in the side of a mountain (Sumela Monastery). I learned so many things in this book and do believe -- that when things settle down -- a trip to Turkey needs to put on my bucket list. This review doesn't even begin to speak of the intrigue and learnings I garnered from reading it.
Link to the Sumela Monastary site: <http://www.sumela.com/>

Laurie says

The Sultan of Byzantium is ostensibly a work of fiction but it reads more like a memoir of a young man's journey into his deep past. The cultural richness of Constantinople and the legacy of the last Byzantine Emperors is brought to life through the protagonist/narrator's search through the art, architecture and archive of the heirs to the Roman Empire. On a year long quest to fulfill the last item of the will of Emperor Constantine XI; which if our protagonist/narrator (who doesn't reveal his name until near the end of the book) completes, will earn him the title of Emperor of Byzantium-in-Exile and a hefty income, travels through various parts of modern Greece, Turkey, Italy and even the U.S. to gain knowledge and understanding of his heritage. Truly an adventurous tale and a love-song to the greatness of Byzantium.

Jan Khorrami says

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LAPL Reads says

Halâs is a professor, book collector, poetry lover, inquisitive reader of history, with a well-ordered but

lackluster life. All of this changes when he is approached by several men from the mysterious Nomo organization who offer him a challenge that will verify if he is the heir apparent to the ancient Byzantine Empire. Initially dismissive, his interest grows as he seeks to unravel the answers to a set of questions. Each individual answer has a clue that leads to the next question, with the story taking on a whirlwind pace and tour through districts in Istanbul, cities and regions in Turkey, and cities in Europe, the United States, and South America.

Altun has created an homage to the Byzantine Empire with a plot as intricate as the former realm. Throughout the novel, the answers to the questions are linked to parts of the ancient history of modern Istanbul, which in today's world frequently are overlooked and/or ignored: the Doge of Venice, the Crusaders, and the ancient Greeks and Romans. Sometimes the reader and the protagonist are thrown off track with a few red herrings. And for good measure, the author Selçuk Altun makes several appearances in the novel as an acquaintance of Halâs. Sardonic cheekiness, the love of history and especially of poetry are interlaced with quotations from poems, aphorisms, many of which are clues leading to the answer why Halâs was chosen. Along the way, he uncovers the missing pieces to the history of his American father and Turkish mother, and gets involved in an unexpected romance, which are all part of the solutions to the puzzling questions.

The novel is set within a vivid portrayal of Istanbul, formerly Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire, once center of the western and eastern worlds. It is the only city to straddle two continents, Europe and Asia, not only geographically, but in other ways through politics, religion, culture, history and the arts. The ironical title alludes to this very rich split: the Ottomans were ruled by sultans who overran the Byzantines who were ruled by emperors.

Reviewed by Sheryn Morris, Librarian, Central Library

Jonathan Fryer says

An intriguing tale of a man who learns he is heir to the Byzantine throne, centuries after it was vacated. He is set a series of challenges to be successfully completed in various parts of the world, while at the same time increasing his knowledge of the history and culture of Byzantium (and enjoying high-end prostitutes, usually two at a time). This doesn't blind him to the prospect of love, however, and a suitable partner is chosen and pursued. The author has an attractively accessible style, though he is not above a few vainglorious tricks, such as giving himself a tiny walk-on part in the narrative (rather like Alfred Hitchcock in his own films). But there is lots of interesting detail about locations past and present, and not for the first time I came away from the book lamenting the loss of the multicultural nature of the Ottoman Empire.

Argos says

Aslında 3 yıldız? hak eden bir kurgu roman ancak yazar Selçuk Altun kitapta f?rsat buldu?u her yerde kendinden, ne kadar bilgili oldu?undan, estetik, bibliyofil ve mükemmel İngilizce bildi?inden bahsetmeseydi bir yıldız? kırpmayacaktım. Megalomanik yazar?na katlanabiliyorsanız kolay ve hızlı okunan biraz tarihi bilgi turu yaptır?an dedektiflik öyküsü bu kitabı okuyabilirsiniz.

Ana V says

A long walk on the amazing Byzantine park and hopefully the beginning of a new interest in that long lived empire.

Grant Barber says

I'd read a previous book by Altun. Similar narrator/protagonist--male, tending toward middle age, somewhat socially isolated, on a quest. What's to like? Authorial voice. Guaranteed unique, imaginative plots. In this novel there are some byzantine affairs underway. Extra pay-off: I know want to know more about Byzantine empire. Wears the erudition in this book lightly though. Here's one test this book passed: at some point in novels such as this I'll flip to the back and read the last couple of pages (bad habit, I know). Sometimes what I read lets me/makes me set it aside, with intervening pages unread. This book--didn't matter. AND reading through the last half made the ending I already sort-of knew al the more satisfying.

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Sezgi Akbas says

Selçuk Altun'un Cumhuriyet Kitap ekinde düzen(siz) ç?kan "Kitap Eki" bölümlerinin hastas?y?z. Lakin S.S.E.'den sonra Bizans Sultan?'nda da tatmin etmeyen bir ?eyler vard? beni. Evet, Bizans benim inan?lmaz ilgi duydu?um bir alan ama, "serendipity" u?runa, kurguyu güçlendirmek yerini niye her sayfada 3-4 at?f, gezilecek yer, kitap, heykel, albüm vs. sanat eseri önerisine b?rak?yor anlam?? de?ilim. Kendisinin s?k? takipçisiyim o ayr?, önerdi?i her unsura kulak kabart?yorum o da ayr?...Lakin, ?u güzelim kitap ve konu yine de ba?ka güzel olabilirdi. Cogito'nun Bizans say?s? var idi yanl?? hat?rlam?yorsam, y?llar sonra tekrar bulup o say?lar? okuyas?m, öncelikle Ayasofya'ya, Kapadokya'ya tekrar gidesim geldi.

Selçuk Altun'u seviyoruz.

Sara says

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Miloš says

This seems like two books forcefully mixed into one. First, we have admiration for great Byzantine Empire which is just fine. On the other hand there is, sloppily written, mash-up of mystery, romance and personal crisis of main character. When you put that together, this is what you get. Two stars, and second one's there just because Byzantine trivia this book's full of.

Cevdet Suner says

What a treat by Selcuk Altun.

The last prospective emperor of Byzantium has to solve many puzzles and travel the seven seas before he can claim the throne and the fortune which is his birthright and he risks his life many times in the process.

Talk about serendipity. The Sultan of Byzantium is a treasure hunt in which the reader also finds many treasures while the protagonist goes ahead with his quest. There are many leads in the book to follow up by the curious reader which makes the book a must read for anyone who has had a brush with Turkey, Istanbul and the history of the region.

Hana says

I had forgotten the date when I picked this book up last night. I finished it this morning, May 29. Rather spookily, it turns out that today is the anniversary of the fall of Constantinople and the death of the last Emperor of Byzantium. Very weird!

As was the book. Weird, funny and rather clever, The Sultan of Byzantium is a fantasy tale about an odd, thirty-something Turkish professor who is told by three mysterious strangers that he is the descendant of Constantine XI. To earn his place on the throne of Byzantium-in-exile, Professor Asil must solve a sort of geocaching puzzle that takes him to the far reaches of the ancient empire. Think of it as Indiana Jones meets A Short History of Byzantium. With a lot of poetry and long speeches instead of action. I found it very entertaining, but you've gotta like Byzantine history to get through it.

Content rating PG: It's pretty clean except for the professor's penchant for prostitutes, preferably two at a time. Fortunately the encounters were entirely behind closed doors!
