



NAXOS

AudioBooks

NON-  
FICTION  
UNABRIDGED



**Edward Gibbon**

THE DECLINE AND FALL  
OF THE  
ROMAN EMPIRE

Read by

**David Timson**

VOLUME VI

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**Edward Gibbon**

THE DECLINE AND FALL  
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VOLUME VI

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1034–1041

MICHAEL V, Kalaphates: 1041–1042

CONSTANTINE IX, Monomachus:  
1042–1055

THEODORA: 1055–1056

MICHAEL VI, Bringas: 1056–1057

ISAAC I, Comnenus: 1057–1059  
(abdicated)

CONSTANTINE X, Doukas: 1059–1067

ROMANUS IV, Diogenes: 1068–1071

MICHAEL VII, Doukas: 1071–1078

NIKEPHOROS III, Botaneiates: 1078–1081

## **Dynasty of the Comneni**

ALEXIOS I, Komnenos: 1081–1118

JOHN II, Komnenos: 1118–1143

MANUEL I, Komnenos: 1143–1180

ALEXIUS II, Komnenos: 1180–1183

ANDRONICUS I, Komnenos: 1183–1185

## **Dynasty of the Angeli**

ISAAC II, Angelos: 1185–1195  
(dethroned)

ALEXIOS III, Angelos: 1195–1203

ISAAC II (restored): 1203–1204

    With Alexios IV, Angelos: 1203–1204

ALEXIOS V, Doukas: 1204

Capture of Constantinople by the Fourth  
Crusade and establishment of Latin  
emperors in the city

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## Latin Emperors of the East

BALDWIN I: 1204–1205

HENRY: 1206–1216

PETER OF COURTENAY: 1216–1217

ROBERT: 1221–1228

BALDWIN II: 1228–1261

With John of Brienne: 1229–1237

## Eastern Emperors in Nicaea

THEODORE I, Laskaris: 1204–1222

JOHN III, Doukas Vatatzes: 1222–1254

THEODORE II, Laskaris: 1254–1258

JOHN IV, Laskaris: 1258–1261

With Michael VIII, Palaiologos:

1259–1261

Recapture of Constantinople and re-establishment of the Eastern emperors there

## Dynasty of the Palaiologoi

(Seven-year civil war: 1390, 1391–1425, 1425–1448, 1449–1453, 1453)

MICHAEL VIII, Palaeologus: 1261–1282

ANDRONIKOS II, Palaeologus: 1282–1328

With Michael IX: 1294–1320

ANDRONICUS III, Palaeologus: 1328–1341

JOHN V, Palaeologus: 1341–1376

With John VI, Kantakouzenos:

1347–1354

With Andronikos IV, Palaeologus:

1354–1373

ANDRONIKOS IV, Palaeologus: 1376–1379

JOHN V, Palaeologus (restored):

1379–1390

JOHN VII, Palaeologus: 1390

JOHN V, Palaeologus (restored): 1391

MANUEL II, Palaeologus: 1391–1425

JOHN VIII, Palaeologus: 1425–1448

CONSTANTINE XI, Palaeologus:

1449–1453

Capture of Constantinople by Mohammed II

## End of the Roman Empire

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## THE LIFE OF EDWARD GIBBON

*It was at Rome, on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefoot friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind.*

*Memoirs of My Life and Writings, 1796*

Gibbon was born at Putney, Surrey, on 8 May 1737, into a comfortable, though not particularly wealthy, family. At the age of ten, his mother died and he was brought up by an aunt. During childhood he was always sick and of a weak disposition. This interrupted any regular attendance at school and led to his being privately educated at home, where he had access to his father's extensive library. This developed the natural scholar in Gibbon at an early age.

At age 15, he went to Magdalen College, Oxford, and he 'arrived with a stock of erudition that might have puzzled a doctor' (Gibbon, *Memoirs*).

Ever curious, Gibbon challenged the Anglican clergymen who were his tutors

as to the true faith. His inclination was towards the Roman Catholic faith, and after consultation with a Roman Catholic student, he converted to Catholicism. It was a rash decision, for by English law, Roman Catholics were excluded from public office and ostracised from many rights available to their Anglo-Catholic brethren.

When Gibbon's father learnt of his son's actions he was furious and insisted that his son should be sent to Lausanne, Switzerland, which was a centre of Calvinism, to be re-indoctrinated to the Protestant faith.

Gibbon studied there under the Calvinist minister Daniel Pavilliard for nearly five years (1753–1758). During this time he renounced his conversion, became fluent in French and Latin, had a meeting with Voltaire, and for the one and only time in his life, fell in love, with a beautiful and highly intelligent girl, Suzanne Curchod. Once again, Gibbon was thwarted by his father who would not countenance 'this strange alliance', and Gibbon reluctantly returned to England. Reflecting on this in his *Memoirs*, Gibbon wrote:

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'I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son.'

With the advent of the Seven Years War in 1760, Gibbon dutifully joined, with his father, the local militia, which was assembled in response to the possibility of a French invasion. He does not seem to have shone as an officer. At the end of his term of service he embarked on a grand tour of Europe, an obligatory experience for educated young men in the 18th century. Arriving in Rome early in October 1764, he was overwhelmed by its magnificence and antiquities, and as he said in his memoirs it was here he first began to conceive his *magnum opus*, but it would be nine years before he began to write it. The first volume of *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, shortened here to *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, was published in 1776. It was an instant success and quickly ran into three editions. Volumes II and III appeared in 1781, with equivalent success. In the same year, Gibbon was elected as an MP for Lymington, but despite a dead end job in the board of trade in Lord North's declining government, his parliamentary career was uneventful.

Resorting to his true vocation, he moved back to Lausanne and shared accommodation with an old student friend, George Deyverdun, and completed the last three volumes of his *Decline and Fall*, which were all published in 1788, to coincide with his 51st birthday.

In 1793, when the effects of the French Revolution began to intrude on his Swiss idyll, he returned to England. His health had begun to fail, an enlarged scrotum caused him considerable pain and despite several unsuccessful operations, he died in his sleep on 16 January 1794, at the age of 56.

### **A NOTE ON THE TEXT**

The text used in this recording of Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is the standard Everyman edition of 1910. It is a clean text unabridged and unedited, and in six volumes it reflects the division of chapters of the original edition of the 1780s.

### **Notes by David Timson**



**David Timson** has made over 1,000 broadcasts for BBC Radio Drama. For Naxos AudioBooks he wrote *The History of Theatre*, which won an award for most original production from the Spoken Word Publishers Association in 2001. He has also directed five Shakespeare plays for Naxos AudioBooks, including *King Richard III* (with Kenneth Branagh), which won Best Drama award from the SWPA in 2001. In 2002 he won the Audio of the Year award for his reading of *A Study in Scarlet*. He has read the entire *Sherlock Holmes* canon for Naxos AudioBooks.

## Credits

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Edited and mastered by Sarah Butcher

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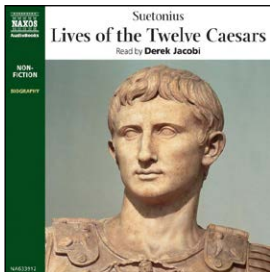
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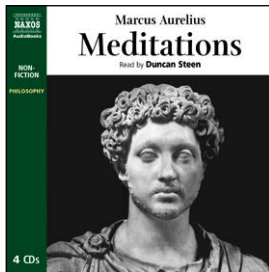
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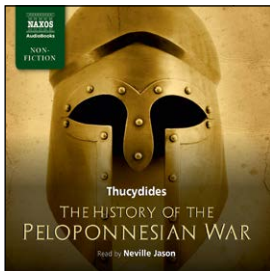
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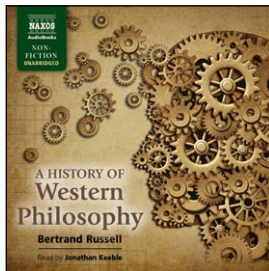
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**Edward Gibbon**

THE DECLINE AND FALL  
OF THE  
ROMAN EMPIRE

VOLUME VI

Read by **David Timson**

*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* has always maintained its initial appeal to both the general public and scholars alike. Its sheer scale is daunting, encompassing over a millennium of history, covering not merely the Western Empire from the days of the early emperors to its extinction in AD 476, but also the Eastern Empire, which lasted for another thousand years until the Turks vanquished it in 1453. But Gibbon's style, part historical fact and part literature, is enticing, and the sheer honesty of the man, who endeavours to be scrupulously impartial in his presentation, endears him to the reader. In this recording, David Timson incorporates the most salient of Gibbon's footnotes.

In *Volume VI* (Chapters LVII–LXXI), Gibbon ends his masterful history by charting the rise of the Turkish nation and the birth of the Ottoman Empire, which becomes an unstoppable force as it eventually captures the remains of the Eastern Empire. Weakened under the continuing schism of the Greek and Latin Christians, the strategically important site of Constantinople becomes an easy target for Sultan Mohammed II – much to the consternation and apathy of the West.



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