



NAXOS

AudioBooks

NON-  
FICTION  
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**Edward Gibbon**

THE DECLINE AND FALL  
— OF THE —  
ROMAN EMPIRE

Read by

**David Timson**

VOLUME III

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**Total time: 21:04:44**



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**Edward Gibbon**

THE DECLINE AND FALL  
OF THE  
ROMAN EMPIRE

VOLUME III

**SUMMARY OF THE CONTENTS**

**Chapter 26**

Natural phenomena interpreted by superstition • The tribes of Scythia and Tartary • Their diet, habitation and exercise • The structure of Tartar and Scythian government and society • Progress of the Huns, from China to Europe • They attack the Goths who flee to seek the protection of the Roman Empire in the East • The entire nation is transported across the Danube and settled in Thrace by Valens • Abuse by Romans provokes a Gothic war, involving Gratian and the Western Empire • Defeat and death of Valens • Gratian invests Theodosius, son of Theodosius the general, with the Eastern Empire (379) •

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**Chapter 27**

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- His defeat and death
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- Valentinian II falls under the influence of Arbogastes, commander of the Army
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- Its effects on the army

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- The Christians convert temples to sepulchres and replace pagan statues with relics of Christian martyrs
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## **Chapter 29**

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- Their calamitous reign
- Arcadius undermined by the ambition of Rufinus to rule
- The character and achievements of Stilicho, general of the West
- His influence over Honorius
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- The revolt of the Moor Gildo in Africa and his defeat by Stilicho
- Honorius's weakness leaves Stilicho master of the West

## **Chapter 30**

Revolt of the Goths, led by Alaric

- The weakness of the Eastern Empire
- They over-run and plunder Greece
- The invasion of Italy by Alaric
- They are repulsed by Stilicho
- Honorius takes up residence in Ravenna
- A description of this fortified town and palace, the future home of succeeding emperors
- Description of the Chinese and Huns at this time
- Tribes fleeing from the Huns over-run Germany
- The Germans, led

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Honorius's sister • The Goths evacuate Italy and occupy Gaul • Fall of the usurper Constantine • The state of Spain before the reign of Honorius, and its fall to the Goths • An alliance is made between the Goths inhabiting Gaul and Spain, and the Romans • Withdrawal of troops from Britain leads to its independence • Reorganisation of Britain after the Romans depart

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### **Chapter 35**

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### **Chapter 36**

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• Majorian elected Emperor (457–461) • His character and reign • Sack of Rome by Genseric, king of the Vandals • His naval attacks • Majorian successfully resists Genseric but is betrayed by Ricimer • Elevation of Libius Severus (461–465) and Anthemius, a Greek (467–472) • Genseric continues his attacks by sea • Ricimer appeals to Leo I (457–474), Emperor of the East, for help • The combined forces attack Genseric and the vandals at sea • They are vanquished by Genseric, which heralds the total extinction of the Western Empire • Uprising of Gaul • Succession of the last emperors of the West: the senator Olybrius (472); the soldier, Glycerius (473–474); the king of Dalmatia, Nepos (474–475); and the last emperor Romulus Augustulus (475–476) • Reign of Odoacer, the first Barbarian King of Italy

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## EMPERORS OF ROME

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TIBERIUS: 14–37

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CLAUDIUS I: 41–54

NERO: 54–68

GALBA: 68–69

OTHO: 69

VITELLIUS: 69

VESPASIAN: 69–79

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DOMITIAN: 81–96

NERVA: 96–98

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    With Lucius Verus: 161–169

    With Commodus: 177–180

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    With Caracalla: 198–209

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With Licinius: 307–311  
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HONORIUS: 394–423  
VALENTINIAN III: 423–455  
PETRONIUS MAXIMUS: 455  
AVITUS: 455–456  
MAJORIAN: 457–461  
LIBIUS SEVERUS: 461–465  
(No Emperor: 465–467)  
ANTHEMIUS: 467–472  
OLYBRIUS: 472  
GLYCERIUS: 473–474  
JULIUS NEPOS: 474–475  
ROMULUS AUGUSTULUS: 475–476

## **End of the Western Empire: Odoacer, King of Italy**

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## **EMPERORS OF THE EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE**

CONSTANTINE I: 306–337  
CONSTANTIUS II: 337–361 (sole emperor after 350)  
JULIAN: 361–363 (sole emperor)

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JOVIAN: 363–364 (sole emperor)  
VALENS: 364–378

### **Dynasty of Theodosius**

THEODOSIUS I, the Great: 379–395  
(sole emperor after 392)  
ARCADIUS: 395–408  
THEODOSIUS II: 408–450 (Anthemius,  
regent: 408–414)  
MARCIAN: 450–457 (married to  
Pulcheria, daughter of Arcadius)

### **Dynasty of Leo**

LEO I, the Thracian: 457–474  
LEO II: 474  
ZENO: 474–491  
ANASTASIUS I, Dicorus: 491–518

### **Dynasty of Justinian**

JUSTIN I: 518–527  
JUSTINIAN I: 527–565  
JUSTIN II: 565–574 (Sophia, regent)  
TIBERIUS II, Constantine: 574–582  
MAURICE: 582–602  
PHOCAS: 602–610

### **Dynasty of Heraclius**

HERACLIUS: 610–641  
CONSTANTINE III: 641  
CONSTANS II: 641–668  
CONSTANTINE IV: 668–685  
JUSTINIAN II: 685–695 (banished)  
LEONTIUS: 695–698  
TIBERIUS III: 698–705  
JUSTINIAN II (restored): 705–711  
PHILIPPICUS: 711–713  
ANASTASIUS II: 713–715  
THEODOSIUS III: 715–717

### **Syrian or Isaurian Dynasty (the Iconoclasts)**

LEO III, the Isaurian: 717–741  
CONSTANTINE V, Copronymus: 741–775  
LEO IV, the Khazar: 775–780  
CONSTANTINE VI: 780–797 (blinded and  
murdered by mother Irene, wife of Leo IV)  
IRENE: 797–802  
NIKEPHOROS I: 802–811  
STAUACIUS: 811  
MICHAEL I, Rhangabe: 811–813  
LEO V, the Armenian: 813–820



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## Phrygian or Amorian Dynasty

MICHAEL II, the Amorian: 820–829

THEOPHILUS: 829–842

MICHAEL III: 842–867

## Macedonian Dynasty

BASIL I, the Macedonian: 867–886

LEO VI, the Wise: 886–912

ALEXANDER: 912–913

CONSTANTINE VII, Porphyrogenitus:  
913–959

    With Romanus I, Lekapenos: 920–944

ROMANUS II: 959–963

BASIL II: 963–1025

    With Nikephoros II: 963–969

    With John I Zimiskes: 969–976

CONSTANTINE VIII: 1025–28

ROMANUS III, Argyros: 1028–1034

MICHAEL IV, the Paphlagonian:  
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 Palaiologi

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

MICHAEL VIII, Palaiologos: 1261–1282

ANDRONIKOS II, Palaiologos: 1282–1328

With Michael IX: 1294–1320

ANDRONICUS III, Palaiologos: 1328–1341

JOHN V, Palaiologos: 1341–1376

With John VI, Kantakouzenos:

1347–1354

With Andronikos IV, Palaiologos:

1354–1373

ANDRONIKOS IV, Palaiologos: 1376–1379

JOHN V, Palaiologos (restored):

1379–1390

JOHN VII, Palaiologos: 1390

JOHN V, Palaiologos (restored): 1391

MANUEL II, Palaiologos: 1391–1425

JOHN VIII, Palaiologos: 1425–1448

CONSTANTINE XI, Palaiologos:

1449–1453

Capture of Constantinople by Mahomet 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, with additional notes by Oliver Smeaton. 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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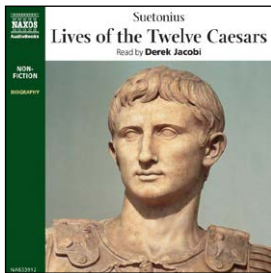
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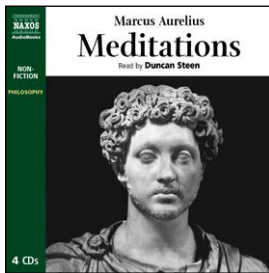
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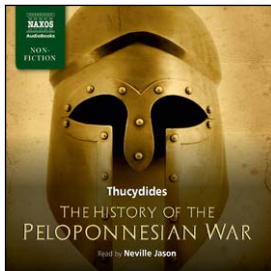
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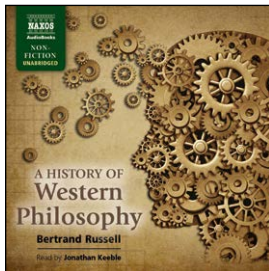
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OF THE  
ROMAN EMPIRE

VOLUME III

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 *Volume III* (Chapters XXVII–XXXVI), Gibbon charts the fall of the Western Empire. Starting with the reign of Emperor Gratian (d. AD 383), his survey moves to political and religious issues in the East and West before covering the increasing military power of the Barbarians. Occasionally a great Roman general emerges to stem the tide, but internecine power struggles see the Western Empire weakened, until Gaul, Britain, Spain and other territories find themselves, as the 5th century advances, unable to rely on Rome for defence.



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