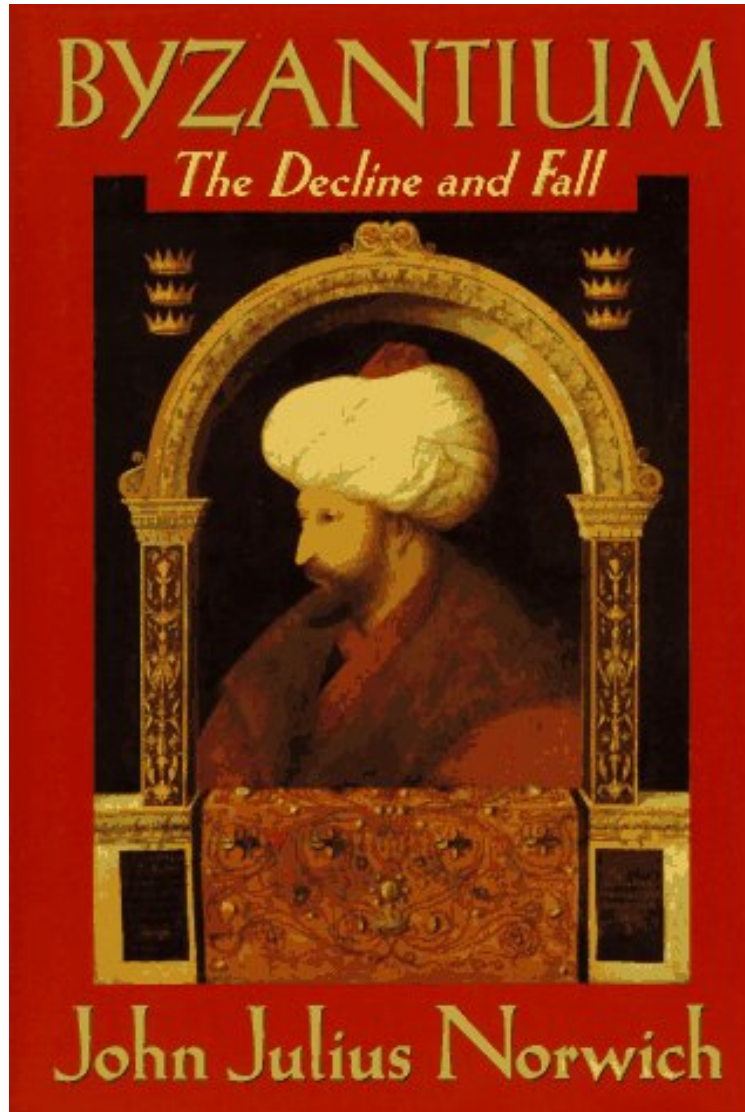


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Byzantium: The Decline and Fall

John Julius Norwich

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John Julius Norwich : Byzantium: The Decline and Fall before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Byzantium: The Decline and Fall:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Making History Palatable By Travelhound Proof that history books can stand the test of time, this 1988 publication is rich, evocative and a joy to read. The Novocaine for potentially ponderous subject matter is the author's engaging style. Where less skilled writers might have drowned in tiresome detail, Norwich occasionally conjures a breezy, even amusing touch to keep the story moving and the reader involved. He delineates but never wallows in the hideous brutality and endless internecine squabbling of the era, while breathing

life into this long-dead, often ignored Christian empire that lasted an incredible thousand years. This first volume of a trilogy covers the birth of Byzantium, sired by Constantine out of the collapsing Roman Empire, and ends with the emergence of Charlemagne at the end of the 8th Century. Research, as one would expect with Norwich's impressive credentials, is impeccable and includes copious footnotes. In addition to color and bw photos is a list of Byzantine monuments surviving in Istanbul, thoughtfully rated by degree of deterioration.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Blood and destruction : The real thing
By CustomerEnjoy "Game of Thrones "? Well, the history of Byzantium out-does it for real! Byzantium : The Early Centuries outdoes fiction in the succession of battles, blindings, castrations and massacres over the first 600 years of the Byzantine Empire. Of particular note is the way Constantine the Great selected the site, protected by the sea on two sides. Another site would not have lasted 1100 years as a political entity because of lack of protection from prolonged siege. An interesting (and disquietening) side of this saga are the numerous incidents of overweening ambition and the depths many rulers have fallen to over the centuries to gain and hold political power, and how often gaining this power caused nothing but misery for their subjects, and often assassination for themselves. Who in their right mind would want to be Emperor ?

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Superb book on a sadly neglected subject.
By JB1976Norwich has here filled in a gap in the body of work for the general reader. Byzantium was an important element in world affairs for a millenium and a half yet this is the only book to deal with it as a whole for the non-specialist. Thankfully, he does it well. His style is engaging and he does a good job of condensing all of the information. My only objection is that he could have related campaigns more thoroughly and the changing methods of warfare more than he did. He could have done this by putting less emphasis on building projects and architecture. This only a personal preference however. I strongly recommend all three volumes.

Third volume in the series. With 32 pages of illustrations and 10 maps and tables.

From Publishers Weekly
With this volume, Norwich completes his magisterial narrative history of Byzantium. As in the earlier volumes (*Byzantium: The Early Centuries*, LJ 3/1/89; and *Byzantium: The Apogee*, LJ 1/92), he seeks to rectify the negative impressions perpetuated by 18th-century historian Edward Gibbon. Norwich records the history of a brilliant civilization that endured for over 11 centuries. From the founding of Constantinople (capital of Byzantium) by the first Christian Roman emperor and Byzantium's first flowering, to its fatal weakening after the treacherous attack on Constantinople by Western knights in the Fourth Crusade in 1204 and the valiant death of the last Byzantine emperor in 1453 at the hands of the conquering Turks, Norwich has told Byzantium's story in elegant and moving prose. This last volume in the three-part history of an unfairly neglected European civilization is highly recommended for public and academic libraries.

Robert Andrews, Duluth P.L., Minn.
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From the Inside Flap
Third volume in the series. With 32 pages of illustrations and 10 maps and tables.