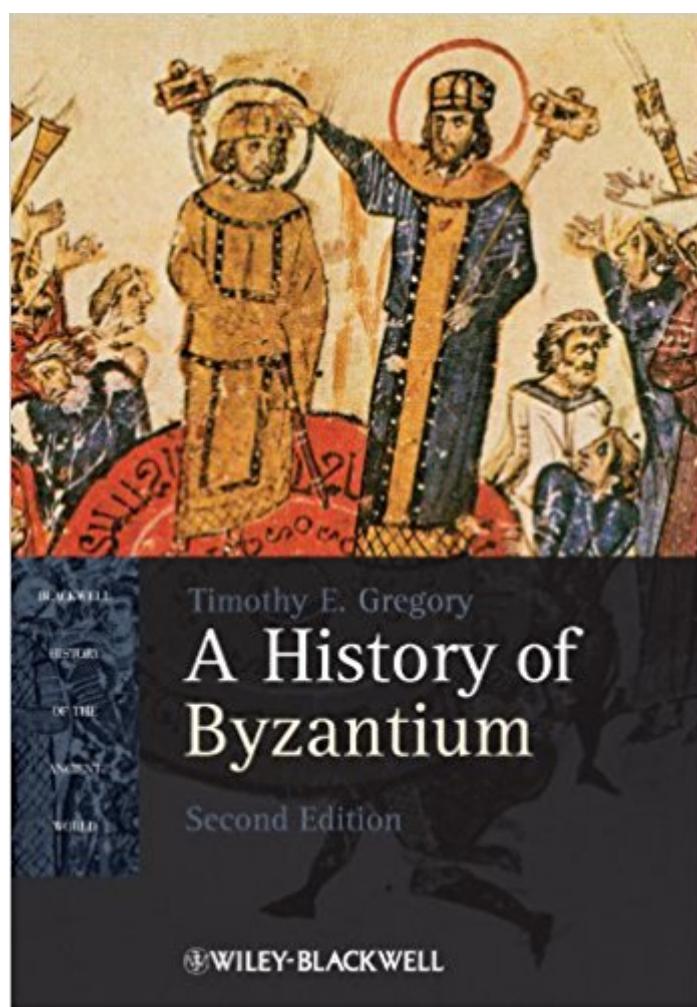


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A History Of Byzantium (Blackwell History Of The Ancient World)



Synopsis

This revised and expanded edition of the widely-praised *A History of Byzantium* covers the time of Constantine the Great in AD 306 to the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Expands treatment of the middle and later Byzantine periods, incorporating new archaeological evidence. Includes additional maps and photographs, and a newly annotated, updated bibliography. Incorporates a new section on web resources for Byzantium studies. Demonstrates that Byzantium was important in its own right but also served as a bridge between East and West and ancient and modern society. Situates Byzantium in its broader historical context with a new comparative timeline and textboxes.

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Customer Reviews

It's difficult to do justice in a few short lines to a book like this which has such a staggering scope in every conceivable measure - time, geography, personalities, socio-economic trends; one can probably best characterize it as an enormous wine cellar - taste it in small sips to fully savour the taste rather than go in for a weekend binge. The author brings the Byzantine empire to life in the course of this book - starting from the introduction itself where 2 of his sentences caught my eye immediately - firstly that the Byzantines were basically the unbroken continuation of the Roman

Empire of Antiquity and secondly that they viewed themselves as God's own Holy kingdom, as the community of believers setup on Earth till Christ himself would come and establish his glorious rule. With these two sentences in the back of my mind, I could get a better grasp of how and where the Byzantine empire fits in the annals of world history and gave me a better understanding of some of the driving forces behind the social and political trends in Byzantine society. The author starts his story more than a century before the founding of Constantinople - with the crisis of the 3rd century afflicting the Roman Empire and how it spurred the chain of events that led to the Eastern half of the empire as an administrative entity that later became the Byzantine Empire and ends it soon after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 to the army of Mehmet II. In between, the reader is taken through a tour de force comprising everchanging dynasties (the Isaurians, the Amorians, the Macedonians, the Komnenoi, the Palaeologans among others), religious movements (iconoclasm, iconophilism, monasticism, the Photian schism, the union..), major battles (Adrianople, the Arab siege and Greek fire, Pliska, Varna, Manzikert) and a cast of emperors, empresses, patriarchs, monks and layfolk who tried their best to live a temporal life with in an imperfect world while trying (in their own minds) to adhere to the high principles of Christian living. It'll be difficult for any beginner to understand, much less retain the nuances of the Byzantine empire in just one reading of this book, but one will retain enough to get a broad picture of the life of this most extraordinary of Empires. The book by itself is fantastic - the author covers almost all important aspects and provides sufficient emphasis where necessary without yielding to too many dry details so that the book reads more like a novel and less like an academic tome. I'm deducting one star because I felt at times there was too little detail about some of the changes happening around the Byzantine empire and a straightforward section on the same would have been useful (for example, where did the Bulgars come from and how did they establish a kingdom to the North of Byzantium? What about the Slavs? How did the Magyars suddenly setup the kingdom of Hungary)

I am reading and re-reading this excellent book. Every repeat I discover more gems I missed before. I am not a teacher or writer but am only a fan of the Roman Empire. So after immersing myself in the part that ends with "the fall of the Roman Empire" in 476 AD, I went looking for more on what happened in the East. I found the answer in this book which gives an excellent lead up to the period before 476 AD, when the Eastern part became defined separately from the Western while remaining unified. This leads smoothly into the transformation of the remnant in the east into the Byzantine Empire after the disintegration of the West. A fascinating coverage of the "rest of the story" so to speak, which is incredibly eye-opening, for us in the West who have been led to believe it all ended

in 476 AD. In fact it kept going for another thousand years. And every bit of this story is contained in this well written and easy to read book. I find the focus boxes to be invaluable in gaining perspectives in special nooks and crannies of the big picture. Illustrations are also very helpful and enjoyable, especially for types like me who agree that a picture is worth a thousand words. My one main wish would be for a little more detail in the time lines, especially for those that begin each section, but also for the consolidated one at the end of the book. In any case this could be your one source if that is what you are looking for.

Too repetitive, the big picture is not very clear

The way the book is organized is easy to read and Gregory did a goRod job in maintaining my interest.

Easy reading. Am truly enjoying this book. Sitting in on a class in Byzantine history.

Finally, the Eastern Empire is starting to make sense. I have had too much focus on the late Western Empire.

This is a great book! I am using it, along with others, for a college project in my Ancient/Medieval History Class! So far the information in the books I bought have helped me out tremendously! No regrets ;)

I am thoroughly enjoying this textbook. It's very clear and well-written and explains a particular period in history that has been difficult to understand. I highly recommend this book to anyone beginning a journey in the Byzantium.

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