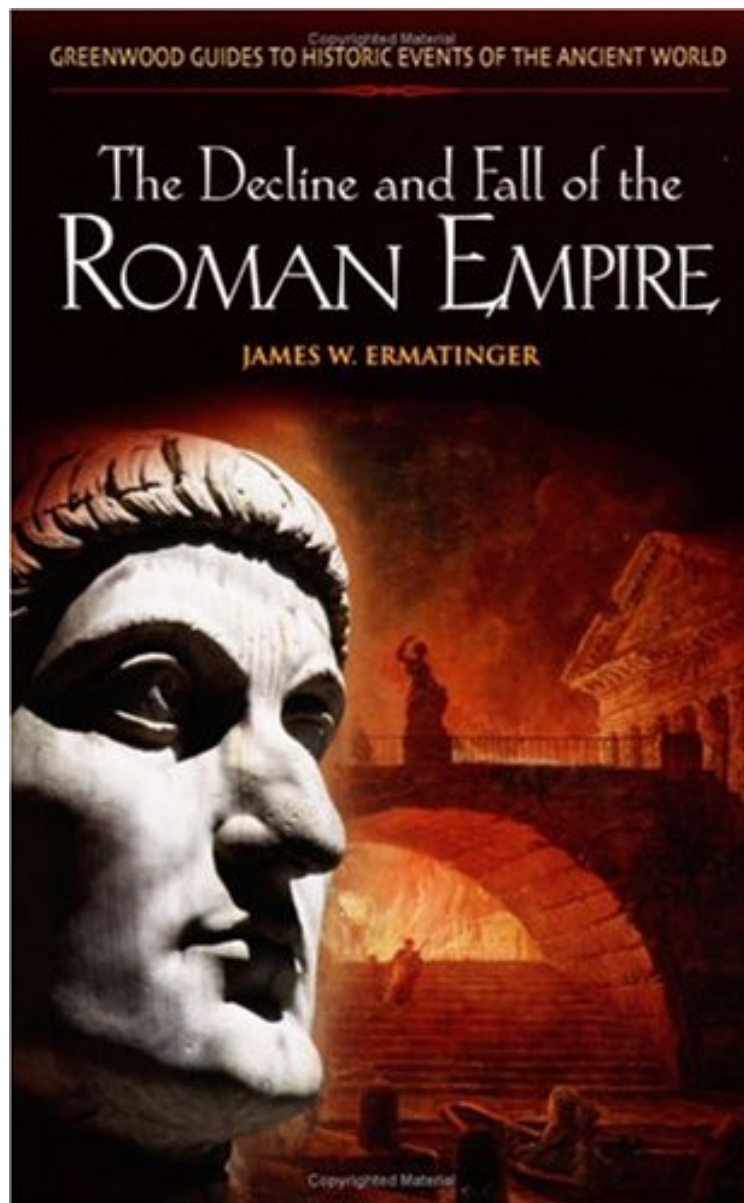


[PDF] The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (Greenwood Guides to Historic Events of the Ancient World)

## The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (Greenwood Guides to Historic Events of the Ancient World)

Von James W. Ermatinger

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Von James W. Ermatinger : The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (Greenwood Guides to Historic Events of the Ancient World) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (Greenwood Guides to Historic Events of the Ancient World):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Rome wasn't built in a day... Von FrKurt Messick...nor did it fall in a day. For a long time, the standard-bearer for the history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire has been the monumental work of Edward Gibbons, written in the eighteenth century. While it is a very worthwhile and interesting text, it suffers from two primary flaws: first, it is of a different historical period than our current one, where the standards for writing (particularly in history) were rather different, and much historical and archaeological research available today was not present; second, it is very long, and filled with Greek and Latin references generally untranslated. It is not a book for the historically or linguistically uninitiated. However, the period of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire is a pivotal time in history, and worthy of study and consideration even by non-historians. To meet this need, the Greenwood Guides (fast becoming one of my favourite general history series) enlisted the aid of scholar James Ermatinger to provide an accessible text covering the same period. In response to this, Ermatinger has supplied a very suitable and interesting text. The Roman Empire's history stretches for many centuries (and, depending upon how one defines things, a few millennia). The Roman Empire grew out of Republican/expansionist times to reach a period of monarchical rule during the same century as the beginning of Christianity; Augustus and Jesus were contemporaries. For all their power, the emperors were rarely a secure and stable lot; as the centuries progressed, the effort to keep up a unified empire under one rule became too much to bear. Even under such leaders as Diocletian and Constantine, the stress of single leadership was too great for stability for any length of time. Ermatinger introduces the subject with a timeline showing the key events, beginning with the year 230 and ending with the 526. It might have been nice to extend the timeline to include Justinian, so that this book would link more directly to the companion volume in the Greenwood Guides series on Justinian. Ermatinger's text begins with a brief discussion of this context for the decline and fall. Rome was not just a city or an empire, but rather an ideal and a culture. Ermatinger quotes the character of Maximus from the recent film 'Gladiator' saying this; he might just as well have quoted the character of Crassus from the earlier film 'Spartacus', who said that Rome was in fact an eternal dream in the mind of God. Certainly the influences of Rome from imperial times continue to be felt in many ways around the world to this day. But Rome as a city and centre of the Empire was not destined to be eternal. Ermatinger begins in earnest in the middle of the third century, looking at the aspects of culture, economics, social order, religious influences and conflicts, and political/military issues in the decline and fall. The dating continues to be controversial. Ermatinger cites arguments for the year 284 (with the accession of Diocletian), the year 312 with the victory of Constantine, the year 337 with the purge of the imperial family, the year 378 with the defeat of the legions at Adrianople, the year 410 with the sack of the city of Rome itself, and finally the year 476 (which holds the greatest symbolic sway among historians) when the Western Roman emperor Romulus Augustulus was displaced and not replaced (the Eastern emperor was sent a message informing him that the West did not need an emperor any longer). Ermatinger argues for seeing 324, not as the date of the fall, but as the pivotal year leading to the decline; while in this actual year the future for Rome looked bright, in fact all the forces were in motion that would coalesce into the fall. Ermatinger's essays make up the first 75 pages of this text. There are dozen or so pages of pictures and maps, and then a biographical section of about 30 pages, with entries akin to an encyclopedia of the major figures of the late Roman imperial times. These include major emperors, enemies of Rome, literary and scientific figures, church figures, and more. There are a few missing pieces here (for example, one might expect a bit on Pope Leo the Great, Clovis or Odoacer), but generally it seems complete. There is a section of primary documents illustrating late Rome (in English translation) which includes letters, excerpts from histories and speeches, and church documents. Ermatinger concludes with a useful glossary, a very helpful annotated bibliography, and an index that is well done. Overall, this is an interesting, accessible volume for a little-studied time period. Bella Vivante states in the series foreword that knowing the past is essential to knowing the present, and gives good reason for studying time periods such as late antiquity. James Ermatinger's style of writing is easy to follow and helps show these histories in context for modern relevance.

KurzbeschreibungIn the 250 years between 250 and 500 C.E., Rome found itself transformed from a mighty global empire into a limited collection of Germanic kingdoms. The aspiration exhibited in these kingdoms (as well as in Constantinople and later in the person of Charlemagne) to recreate and reclaim the glory of the Roman Empire persists to this day, and an examination of this time is critical to anyone interested in politics or history. James Ermatinger's multifaceted account allows the reader a unique opportunity to view through various lenses the many and complex elements that contributed to the demise of this once-vast empire, investigating, among other things: the general religious and political issues of the age, the cultural and economic climate, the nature of the imperial household, and the role of the Germanic invaders. In so doing, he paints a vivid picture of a dying dream. This volume is ideal for use in the classroom, as well as for use in school and public libraries. Designed as an accessible introduction to this critical period, *The Decline and Fall of Rome* offers readers and researchers an appealing mix of descriptive chapters, biographical sketches, and annotated primary documents. An overview of the period is presented in the introduction,

and is followed by chapters on late Roman culture, society, and economics in late antiquity; religious conflicts in Christian Rome; enemies of Rome; and why and when Rome fell. The narrative chapters conclude with a section placing Rome's fall in modern perspective. An annotated bibliography and index are included.

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Recommended. Lower-division undergraduates and two-year technical program students; general readers.

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