



NAXOS

AudioBooks

NON-
FICTION
UNABRIDGED



Edward Gibbon

THE DECLINE AND FALL
— OF THE —
ROMAN EMPIRE

Read by

David Timson

VOLUME I

CD 1

1	Chapter 1	9:25
2	But the superior merit of Agricola...	10:54
3	The terror of the Roman arms added weight...	9:24
4	Nine centuries of war had gradually introduced...	9:21
5	The camp of a Roman legion presented the appearance...	10:04
6	Ancient Gaul, as it contained the whole country...	10:36
7	Such was the state of Europe under the Roman emperors.	10:43
8	Chapter 2	8:46

Total time on CD 1: 79:17

CD 2

1	Notwithstanding the fashionable irreligion which prevailed...	9:08
2	Till the privileges of Romans had been progressively extended...	7:33
3	So sensible were the Romans of the influence of language...	8:54
4	Hope, the best comfort of our imperfect condition...	7:47
5	It is natural to suppose that the greatest number...	11:11
6	We have computed the inhabitants, and contemplated...	9:38
7	Whatever evils either reason or declamation have imputed...	7:08
8	But it is no easy task to confine luxury...	11:44
9	Chapter 3	6:08

Total time on CD 2: 79:14

CD 3

1	Amidst this confusion of sentiments...	9:08
2	Although Augustus considered a military force...	8:09
3	By declaring themselves the protectors of the people...	10:39
4	I: The death of Caesar was ever before his eyes.	9:49
5	Nerva had scarcely accepted the purple...	10:09
6	If a man were called to fix the period in the history...	12:44
7	Chapter 4	9:31
8	One evening (A.D. 183), as the emperor was returning...	8:44

Total time on CD 3: 78:58

CD 4

1	The rank of Consul, of Patrician, of Senator...	9:46
2	Elated with these praises, which gradually extinguished...	8:38
3	The measures of the conspirators were conducted...	9:18
4	To heal, as far as it was possible, the wounds...	7:52
5	Chapter 5	9:59
6	It was now incumbent on the Praetorians to fulfil...	11:01
7	The country of Pannonia and Dalmatia, which occupied...	10:22
8	The first cares of Severus were bestowed on two measures...	12:05

Total time on CD 4: 79:06

CD 5

1	Yet, in the contest between Niger and Severus...	8:05
2	Although the wounds of civil war appeared completely...	8:53
3	Chapter 6	9:34
4	The parallel would be little to the advantage...	9:42
5	The crime went not unpunished.	9:47
6	It was impossible that such a character...	10:38
7	In the management of this necessary reformation...	10:32
8	As the attention of the new emperor was diverted...	12:15

Total time on CD 5: 79:31

CD 6

1	It was impossible that such a reconciliation should last...	8:53
2	The simple journal of his ordinary occupations...	11:22
3	The lenity of the emperor confirmed the insolence...	10:19
4	History has never, perhaps, suffered a greater...	11:24
5	Such a tax, plentiful as it must prove...	8:25
6	Chapter 7	10:30
7	The circumstances of his death are variously related.	8:30
8	The procurator of Africa was a servant worthy...	10:01

Total time on CD 6: 79:29

CD 7

1	'Conscript fathers,' said the consul Syllanus...	9:45
2	After the senate had conferred on Maximus and Balbinus...	9:04
3	The emperor Maximus, who had advanced as far as...	10:32
4	When the senate elected two princes...	9:00
5	We cannot forbear transcribing the ingenious...	8:32
6	Chapter 8	10:04
7	The great and fundamental article of the system...	9:08
8	Had Zoroaster, in all his institutions...	12:45

Total time on CD 7: 78:56

CD 8

1	Under the reign of Marcus...	9:54
2	Our suspicions are confirmed by the authority...	8:13
3	Chapter 9	10:34
4	Such rational doubt is but ill suited with the genius...	10:26
5	If we contemplate a savage nation in any part of the globe...	9:54
6	Civil governments, in their first institution...	8:44
7	Although the progress of civilization...	11:31
8	Such was the situation, and such were the manners...	8:57

Total time on CD 8: 78:18

CD 9

1	The general conspiracy which terrified the Romans...	5:17
2	Chapter 10	10:14
3	Notwithstanding the mysterious obscurity of the Edda...	10:22
4	The Goths were now in possession of the Ukraine...	9:33
5	A magistrate, invested with such extensive powers...	9:03
6	But the Romans were irritated to a still higher degree...	9:58
7	The Romans had long experienced the daring valour...	9:18
8	III: We have already traced the emigration of the Goths...	8:16
9	The second expedition of the Goths...	6:46

Total time on CD 9: 78:53

CD 10

1	But this exploit, whatever lustre it might shed...	8:38
2	The loss of an important frontier...	11:06
3	The emperor Gallienus, who had long supported...	9:19
4	The lieutenants of Valerian were grateful to the father...	6:03
5	Such were the barbarians, and such the tyrants...	8:26
6	Chapter 11	9:17
7	The siege of Milan was still continued...	8:18
8	The event surpassed his own expectations...	8:22
9	The reign of Aurelian lasted only four years...	8:50

Total time on CD 10: 78:26

CD 11

1	The emperor was almost at the same time informed...	8:50
2	But whatever confidence might be placed in ideal ramparts...	10:53
3	After a successful expedition against the Gothic...	9:51
4	In his march over the sandy desert...	8:38
5	Since the foundation of Rome, no general had more nobly...	8:03
6	The arms of Aurelian had vanquished the foreign....	8:49
7	Chapter 12	10:47
8	The reluctance of Tacitus...	6:36
9	Whilst the deceased emperor was making preparations...	7:01

Total time on CD 11: 79:33

CD 12

1	The peasants of Illyricum, who had already given...	7:24
2	But the most important service which Probus rendered...	8:17
3	Among the useful conditions of peace imposed by Probus...	11:15
4	But in the prosecution of a favourite scheme...	9:25
5	The threats of Carus were not without effect.	8:17
6	The only merit of the administration of Carinus...	8:50
7	In the midst of this glittering pageantry...	8:48
8	Chapter 13	6:21
9	The first considerable action of his reign...	10:28

Total time on CD 12: 79:11

CD 13

1	Their patience was at last provoked into despair.	9:57
2	He beheld, with anxious terror, the opposite shores...	8:49
3	While the Caesars exercised their valour...	9:15
4	When Tiridates appeared on the frontiers of Armenia...	10:34
5	As soon as Diocletian had indulged his private resentment...	9:53
6	As soon as this difficulty was removed...	11:21
7	The dislike expressed by Diocletian towards Rome...	8:13
8	From the time of Augustus to that of Diocletian...	10:57

Total time on CD 13: 79:05

CD 14

1	Notwithstanding the severity of a very cold and rainy...	10:56
2	Though Constantine, from a very obvious prejudice...	9:06
3	Chapter 14	8:00
4	I: The fame of Constantine has rendered posterity...	10:30
5	The children of Constantius by his second marriage...	8:50
6	Rome, according to the expression of an orator...	10:30
7	The news of his promotion was no sooner carried...	10:39
8	Among so many crimes and misfortunes...	10:21

Total time on CD 14: 78:58

CD 15

1	Maxentius, who considered the Praetorian guards...	9:30
2	The army of Gaul was drawn up in two lines...	9:27
3	In the use of victory, Constantine neither deserved...	10:29
4	The vanquished emperor left behind him two children...	10:16
5	The first battle was fought near Cibalis...	10:31
6	As the crime was of a public kind...	8:38
7	Instead of embracing such an active resolution...	10:08
8	Chapter 15	10:31

Total time on CD 15: 79:34

CD 16

1	The conquest of the land of Canaan...	7:50
2	The history of the church of Jerusalem affords a lively...	7:32
3	While the orthodox church preserved a just medium...	11:04
4	In consequence of this opinion...	8:47
5	The writings of Cicero represent in the most lively colours...	9:55
6	When the promise of eternal happiness was proposed...	10:31
7	The condemnation of the wisest and most virtuous...	8:56
8	The miracles of the primitive church...	7:15
9	IV: But the primitive Christian demonstrated his faith...	6:53

Total time on CD 16: 78:49

CD 17

1	There are two very natural propensities...	7:06
2	It was with the utmost difficulty...	5:50
3	V: But the human character, however it may be...	8:46
4	Such was the mild and equal constitution by which...	10:24
5	The progress of the ecclesiastical authority...	10:40
6	II: It is the undoubted right of every society to exclude...	8:31

Total time on CD 17: 51:23

CD 18

1	In the course of this important, though perhaps tedious...	10:06
2	The rich provinces that extend from the Euphrates...	8:05
3	A perpetual stream of strangers and provincials...	9:46
4	From Edessa the principles of Christianity...	7:39
5	And yet these exceptions are either too few in number...	8:09

Total time on CD 18: 43:49

Total time on CDs 1–18: 22:40:30

Edward Gibbon

THE DECLINE AND FALL
OF THE
ROMAN EMPIRE

VOLUME I

SUMMARY OF THE CONTENTS

Chapter 1

The legacy of the first emperor Augustus (27 BC–14 AD) in the age of Nerva (96–98), Trajan (98–117), Hadrian (117–138) and the two Antonines (138–180) • The state of the Empire, its extent, including the acquisition of Britain, and the Empire's military strength, including the construction of the army and navy

Chapter 2

The Roman Empire at a time of peace and security • The inheritance of beneficial laws, toleration of different religions, acceptance of foreigners in Rome to encourage union with the provinces, the

treatment of slaves and their contribution to industry • Architecture of the age, roads etc. • Agriculture • The internal prosperity of the Age of the Antonines

Chapter 3

The Constitution of the Roman Empire in the Age of the Antonines • Development, originally by Augustus, of the power of the senate, officers of state, control of the army etc. • Beneficial rule of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (161–180)

Chapter 4

The seeds of decay as exemplified in the cruelty and follies of Commodus (180–192) • His opposition to the senate • The murder of Commodus • The election of

Pertinax as emperor (192–193) and his attempts to reform the State • Affection of the people and disaffection of the Praetorian guard • The assassination of Pertinax by the Praetorian Guards

Chapter 5

The Praetorian Guard abuse their power and publicly sell off the Empire to Didius Julianus (193) • In Britain, the general Clodius Albinus plots to avenge Pertinax and succeed to the throne himself • Pescennius Niger in Syria, and Septimius Severus in Pannonia, also declare against the murderers of Pertinax and seek election • Civil wars and victory of Severus over his rivals • Severus declared emperor (193–211) • His cruelty and scorn of senate • The relaxation of discipline in the army leads to threat of military despotism

Chapter 6

War in Britain (208) • The declining health and death of Severus • The tyranny of his son Caracalla (211–217) • The assassination of Caracalla and usurpation of Macrinus (217–218) • Discontented army supports Elagabalus (218–222) •

Corruption, vice and follies of Elagabalus • Virtues of his cousin Alexander Severus (222–235) who is elected by Praetorian guard after the massacre of Elagabalus • New emperor's lenity leads to licentiousness in the army • The general state of the Roman finances

Chapter 7

The elevation of the ambitious barbarian Maximinus by the army • Death of Alexander Severus (235) • Maximinus's bloody tyranny (235–238) • Rebellion in Africa and Italy, supported by Gordianus and the senate • Civil Wars and Seditions • The violent deaths of Maximinus and his son (238) • Deaths of Maximinus and Balbinus (238), and of the three Gordians (238) • Usurpation of the Praetorian Philip (244) • He revives and solemnises the Secular Games

Chapter 8

The State of Persia after the restoration of the Monarchy by Artaxerxes (240–254) after servitude under Macedonians and Parthians • The theology of Zoroaster and the power of the Magi • Artaxerxes seeks

to expand Persia by conquest, challenging the power of Rome

Chapter 9

The State of Germany till the invasion of the Barbarians, in the time of the emperor Decius (249–251) • The geography and climate of Germany • The ignorance and savagery of the inhabitants • Their warlike nature • The resilience of their women • Their primitive religion

Chapter 10

Calamitous reigns of the emperors Decius (249–251), Gallus (251–253), Aemilianus (253), Valerian (253–259) and Gallienus (253–268) • Decius encounters the first attack of the Goths (250) • Their history • Gallus pays them tribute • Civil wars involving rivals for the throne • Valerian and Gallienus rule as father and son (253–268) • The general eruption of the Barbarians against the Roman Empire • The Persians attack • Weakness of Gallienus encourages a crowd of usurpers, known as the Thirty Tyrants

Chapter 11

Reign of Claudius II (268–270), general and chief of the Illyrian frontier • He reforms the army • His defeat of the Goths • Aurelian (270–275), a general, succeeds after premature death of Claudius II • Treaty with the Goths • Success against barbarian invasions • Defeats domestic rival claimants • Challenges and defeats Zenobia, Queen of the East • His Triumph • Death of Aurelian

Chapter 12

Conduct of the army and senate after the death of Aurelian • The reluctant but productive reign of Tacitus (275–276) • Probus, General of the East, succeeds (276–282) • He delivers Gaul from the barbarians, subdues the Germans, repatriates some of the barbarians and falls victim to the discontent of the Roman army • Carus, Praetorian prefect, elected by legions (282–283) • His premature death prevents attack on Persia • Weak and luxurious reign of his sons, Carinus and Numerian (283–284) • Description of the Circus entertainment

Chapter 13

The reign of Diocletian (284–305) and his three associates, Maximian (286–305) Galerius, and Constantius (305)

- Diocletian's prudent character
- Insurrection in Britain
- Revolt in Africa
- War with Persia, victory and triumph
- Armenia, Rome's ally
- The new form of administration
- Reduction of powers of the senate
- Increase in ostentation of court
- Abdication and retirement of Diocletian and Maximian

Chapter 14

Troubles after the abdication of Diocletian • Contrasting characters of Constantius and Galerius • Death of Constantius in Britain • Elevation of Constantine (306–337) • His origins • Maxentius elevated to rule with Constantine (306–311) • Six emperors at the same time • Conflicts and death of Maximian (305) and Galerius (311) • Victories of Constantine over Maxentius (312) and Licinius (324) • Reunion of the Empire under the authority of Constantine

Chapter 15

The Progress of the Christian Religion, its success derived from:

1. The zeal derived from the Jewish religion
2. The appealing doctrine of a future life after death
3. The miraculous powers attributed to the primitive church
4. The pure and austere morals of Christians
5. The union of a Christian republic within the Empire

Gradual separation of individual sects: Nazarenes, Ebionites, Gnostics, Manichaeans etc. • The abjuring of pagan idolatry by Christians • The sentiments, manners, numbers and condition of the primitive Christians, including the separation of laity and clergy • The introduction of Synods • The punishment of apostasy by excommunication • The structure of the Roman Empire facilitates the spread of Christianity

EMPERORS OF ROME

AUGUSTUS: 27 BC–14 AD

TIBERIUS: 14–37

CALIGULA: 37–41

CLAUDIUS I: 41–54

NERO: 54–68

GALBA: 68–69

OTHO: 69

VITELLIUS: 69

VESPASIAN: 69–79

TITUS: 79–81

DOMITIAN: 81–96

NERVA: 96–98

TRAJAN: 98–117

HADRIAN: 117–138

ANTONINIUS PIUS: 138–161

MARCUS AURELIUS: 161–180

 With Lucius Verus: 161–169

 With Commodus: 177–180

COMMODUS: 180–192

PERTINAX: 193

DIDIUS JULIANUS: 193

SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS: 193–211

 With Caracalla: 198–209

 With Caracalla and Geta: 209–211

CARACALLA: 211–217

 With Geta: 211

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ELAGABALUS: 218–222

ALEXANDER SEVERUS: 222–235

MAXIMINUS THRAX : 235–238

GORDIAN I & GORDIAN II: 238

PUPIENUS & BALBINUS: 238

GORDIAN III: 238–244

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DECIUS: 249–251

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AEMILIANUS: 253

VALERIAN: 253–260

 With Gallienus: 253–260

GALLIENUS: 260–268

CLAUDIUS II: 268–270

QUINTILLUS: 270

AURELIAN: 270–275

TACITUS: 275–276

FLORIANUS: 276

PROBUS: 276–282

CARUS: 282–283

CARINUS: 283–285

 With Numerian: 283–284

DIOCLETIAN: 284–305

 With Maximian: 286–305

 With Galerius 293–305

GALERIUS: 305–311

 With Constantius I: 305–306

With Constantine I: 306–311
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CONSTANTINE I: 311–337
With Maxentius: 311–312
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CONSTANTINE II, CONSTANTIUS II &
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CONSTANTIUS II: 340–361
With Constans: 340–350
JULIAN: 361–363
JOVIAN: 363–364
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With Valens: 364–375
With Gratian: 367–375
VALENS: 364–378
With Gratian and Valentinian II:
375–378
THEODOSIUS I: 379–395
With Gratian: 379–383
With Valentinian II: 379–392
With Arcadius: 383–395
With Honorius: 392–395

Emperors of the Western Empire after Theodosius I

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

EMPERORS OF THE EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE

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

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

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

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

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:

'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.

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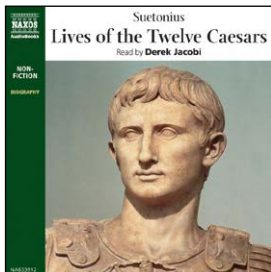
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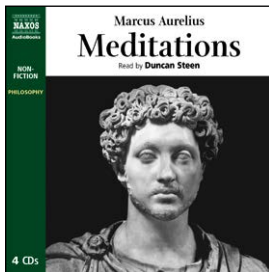
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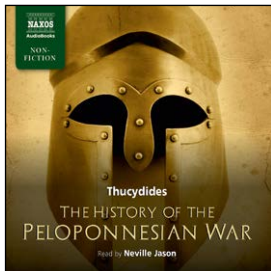
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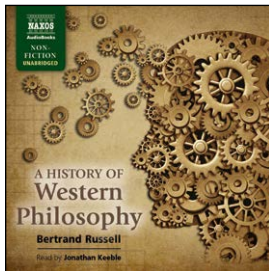
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