



BYZANTIUM

Giles Morgan

new title

SALES POINTS:

- The phenomenal success of the Da Vinci Code has generated a great deal of interest in history and religion
- Continuing interest in the Medieval period and the Crusades in particular as demonstrated by the success of the Pocket Essentials Knights Templar
- Public interest in the history of the growth and development of Islam
- The first accessible popular guide available on the subject

MARKET:

Popular history, Religion

DESCRIPTION:

Today it is Istanbul, the modern city which stands at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. For centuries in the past, it was Constantinople. But before that it was Byzantium and it gave its name to an ancient empire.

Ancient Greeks, led by a man named Byzas, founded the city in the 7th century BC. A millennium later, it was re-founded by the Roman emperor Constantine the Great, the controversial ruler who played a crucial role in making Christianity the official religion of the Empire. When the Roman Empire in the West collapsed under the impact of wave upon wave of Germanic invaders, it was Byzantium that kept the imperial idea alive. For century after century, increasingly surrounded by hostile neighbours, Byzantium remained a Christian city at the heart of a Christian empire. As the new religion of Islam expanded, it was Byzantium and the Byzantine Empire that stood on the frontline of the confrontation between two faiths. When, in 1453, the city fell to the Turks and its last emperor died in a failed attempt to defend his capital, the world was changed forever.

The Byzantine Empire lasted for over a thousand years. Until recently historians and scholars tended to dismiss its achievements and innovations but increasingly there has been an acknowledgement of the unique nature of Byzantine culture and its role in linking the ancient world with the medieval period. The Byzantine Empire created remarkable art and architecture and a lasting cultural and religious legacy.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY:

Giles Morgan is the author of the Pocket Essentials on *The Holy Grail* and *Saint George*.

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