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Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire

By Judith Herrin

Penguin Books Ltd, United Kingdom, 2010. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 198 x 129 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. For a thousand years, an extraordinary empire made possible Europe's transition to the modern world: Byzantium. An audacious and resilient but now little known society, it combined orthodox Christianity with paganism, classical Greek learning with Roman power, to produce a great and creative civilization which for centuries held in check the armies of Islam. Judith Herrin's concise and compelling book replaces the standard chronological approach of most histories of Byzantium. Instead, each short chapter is focused on a theme, such as a building (the great church of Hagia Sophia), a clash over religion (iconoclasm), sex and power (the role of eunuchs), an outstanding Byzantine individual (the historian Anna Komnene), a symbol of civilization (the fork), and a battle for territory (the crusades). In this way, she makes accessible and understandable the grand sweeps of Byzantine history, from the founding of its magnificent capital Constantinople (modern Istanbul) in 330, to its fall to the Ottoman Turks in 1453.



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