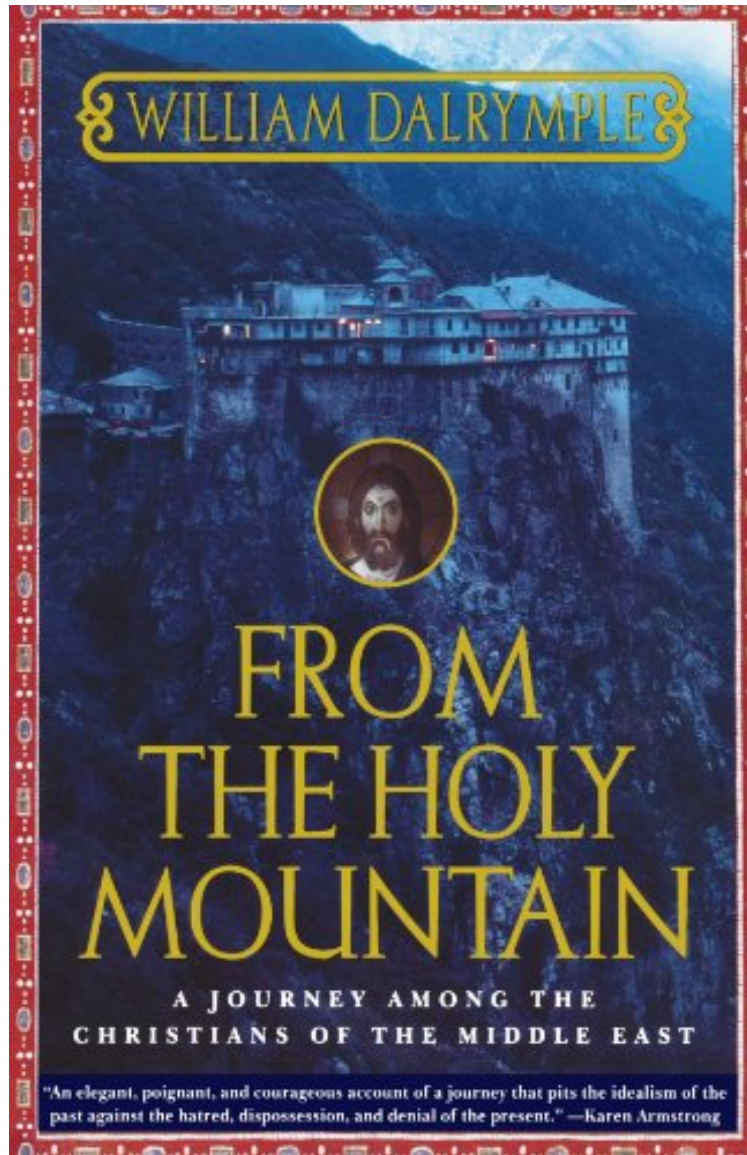


(Download free pdf) From the Holy Mountain: A Journey among the Christians of the Middle East

From the Holy Mountain: A Journey among the Christians of the Middle East

William Dalrymple

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William Dalrymple : From the Holy Mountain: A Journey among the Christians of the Middle East before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised From the Holy Mountain: A Journey among the Christians of the Middle East:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Endangered ChristiansBy JC DavenportWhat an unexpectedly

profound, exciting and important book this turned out to be for me. Before I read this book, I knew it was based on the Byzantine journeys of John Moschos chronicled in "The Spiritual Meadow" - a book I recently read and recently hated. Therefore any mention of John Mochos by the author automatically triggered for me . . . daydreams of a tacky ancient TV show entitled "Lifestyles of the Poor, Reclusive and Famous" . . . hosted by your favorite author for hire . . . JOHN MOCHOS!!! But then this book is real. William Dalrymple is searching for Christians. Well ok he is searching for Christian descendants of ancient Christians . . . in the places John Moschos visited . . . 1400 year ago. The major point of the book seems to be that Christian History in the Middle East is literally vanishing . . . both physically though the deterioration and destruction of churches, monasteries and sacred sites . . . and culturally through the persecution, extermination and exportation of Christian people groups. So William (the author) goes to those places that John Moschos went to. It turns out, the places were real. And that there are real stories to tell from real Christians living in real places in "Bible Land" which in modern terminology means Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and . . . Egypt. Those places in this book are mainly monasteries. The last of the remaining monasteries. The common theme in the interviews with monks, pious laity and cab drivers seems to be that twenty years is the estimate for years left for remaining Christians in the Middle East. Imagine that . . . 20 years left after 2000 years. . . and this was in 1994 . . . almost 20 years ago . . . As an "American Christian" layman there was a considerable learning curve for me here. However I can't help feeling awful about the different Christian people interviewed in this book who said something like . . . "no Christians helped us . . . we were alone." I can't help thinking that as American Christians . . . we are pretty oblivious to what is going on in the world . . . if it isn't a situation of complete charity . . . well dang . . . it's too complicated . . . say how did our ball club do tonight!?!? Anyway this is a great read, by an unassuming author that inspired Bruce Feller (Walking the Bible) and I suspect Peter Hessler (River Town . . . other China nonfiction). Unlike Feller, this author begins to pray (p. 287) for the remaining Mideast Christians. I think we should be praying for them too . . . 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Elegant, insightful British travel writing in the tradition of Peter Fleming and Patrick Leigh Fermor By The Late Buddy Ryan William Dalrymple a fearless reporter, a charming stylist and a sympathetic observer of a vanishing civilization the ancient Christian communities of the Middle East from Mount Athos to Alexandria. In From the Holy Mountain, he's following in the footsteps of John Moschos, a 5th/6th c. Byzantine monk who wrote an account of the spiritual life of Syria, Palestine and Egypt in the years before the irruption of Islam that still read today. Dalrymple's observations on the more recent history of the region (through 97), though focusing on the Orthodox and Maronite communities, provide a deeper understanding of its deadly sectarian rivalries than any current journalism; much of his journey would be impossible today. Entertaining and informative; highly recommended. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. History, spirituality, and politics all in a great adventure story By Jean Elliott William Dalrymple is great writer. This story of a journey of through the entire Byzantium world, its history, geography and politics is compelling reading. Dalrymple is writing about the dying civilisation of the eastern Christian world, falling beneath the might of Islam. The incidents, the brilliant pictures of places he visits and the people he meets, are illuminating, most of it news to me. An extraordinary man, brave, hugely observant and objective. This is what reading is for.

In 587 a.d., two monks set off on an extraordinary journey that would take them in an arc across the entire Byzantine world, from the shores of the Bosphorus to the sand dunes of Egypt. On the way John Moschos and his pupil Sophronius the Sophist stayed in caves, monasteries, and remote hermitages, collecting the wisdom of the stylites and the desert fathers before their fragile world finally shattered under the great eruption of Islam. More than a thousand years later, using Moschos's writings as his guide, William Dalrymple sets off to retrace their footsteps and composes "an evensong for a dying civilization" --Kirkus Reviews, starred review

From Booklist As a writer and as a traveler, Dalrymple treads the now-faint trail marked out by sixth-century monk John Moschos, who wandered the world of Eastern Byzantium, visiting the scattered Christian monasteries and hermitages and recording the rituals he saw and the preaching he heard in a book called *The Spiritual Meadow*. Unlike its predecessor, Dalrymple's account of his journey through the same regions leads, not to meditations upon the eternal God, but, rather, to insights into a dying culture. For whether among Surianis in eastern Turkey, Armenians in Syria and Israel, or Coptics in Egypt, Dalrymple finds only remnants of the Christian culture from which Moschos drew inspiration. The author cannot stop the often-violent persecution or the steady immigration, which are pushing Christianity to extinction in the land of its birth. Yet he can preserve the voices of the steadfast souls who guard the last sparks of a besieged faith. Thus, this book stands--like the chapels, monasteries, and tombs visited during the journey--as a monument to what once was. But Dalrymple also points the way to a better future by repeatedly stressing the similarities in origin and practice linking Christianity and Islam and by documenting real (though all too rare) instances in which mutual respect and tolerance bring the Muslim and the Christian together in prayer. Travel literature of real substance. Bryce Christensen From Kirkus sA memorable historical journey through the twilight of Eastern Christianity in the Middle East, heartfelt and beautifully told. Dalrymple (*The City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi*, 1994) has carved an unorthodox niche for an English travel writer: He is following in the 1,400-year-old path of an

Orthodox monk. In 587, Friar John Moschos and a young student trekked across the Middle East, collecting precious relics and manuscripts from obscure monasteries, from present-day Turkey to Egypt. Dalrymple's quest is similar; he is preserving the stories of the last generation of Orthodox Christians in the Middle East. Retracing Moschos's steps, Dalrymple finds once glorious Christian communities on the brink of extinction. One Turkish village that had 17 Syrian Orthodox churches now has only one [Christian] inhabitant, its elderly priest. In Turkey, Armenian Christianity has been more systematically erased, with cathedrals renovated into mosques, gravestones obliterated, and any mention of the Armenian presence in Turkey censored from publications, turning their existence into a historical myth. In one town, Dalrymple interviews a superannuated survivor of the Syrian Christian resistance of 1915, when Syrians witnessed the genocide of the Armenians and knew that they were next to be deported. Today, however, the descendants of Orthodox Christians in Turkey and elsewhere are emigrating as quickly as they can. Old churches stand abandoned or are employed for other purposes in Istanbul, for example, Dalrymple is denied entrance to a famous basilica because there is a Turkish beauty contest going on inside. Dalrymple is a talented writer, with a subtle wit, a keen eye for historical irony, and a relish for architectural detail. If his treatment of Eastern Orthodoxy is somewhat romantic, ignoring centuries of internecine conflict among various ethnic groups, it is understandable given his urgency to record the plight of this last generation of Orthodox practitioners in Muslim-dominated areas. An evensong for a dying civilization. (24 bw and 8 color photos, not seen) -- Copyright 1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. Elegant, poignant . . . courageous . . . pitting the idealism of the past against the hatred, dispossession, and denial of the present. Karen Armstrong, author of *History of God* This splendid book should take its rightful place on the same shelf as Chatwin's *In Patagonia*. [It is] rich with the poetry of antique places and transports the fascinated reader smoothly into a vanishing world . . . There are, finally, innumerable wonderful stories in *From the Holy Mountain*. Michael Dirda, *The Washington Post Book World* Dalrymple is a born travel writer, with a nose for adventure and a reporter's healthy skepticism. His quirky, exhilarating mosaic will appeal to readers of all faiths. *Publishers Weekly* (starred review)