

The GLOBAL CHURCH

THE FIRST EIGHT CENTURIES



FROM PENTECOST THROUGH
THE RISE OF ISLAM



DONALD FAIRBAIRN

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

ZONDERVAN ACADEMIC

The Global Church—The First Eight Centuries

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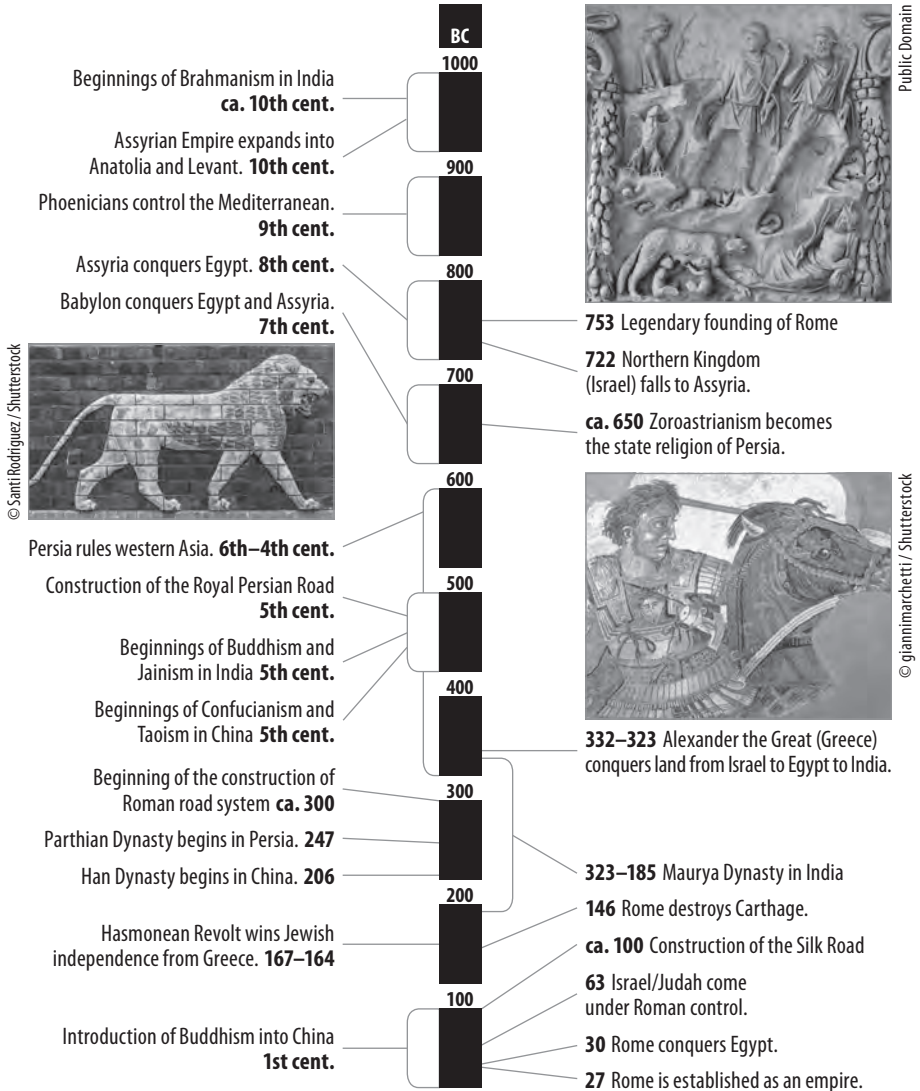
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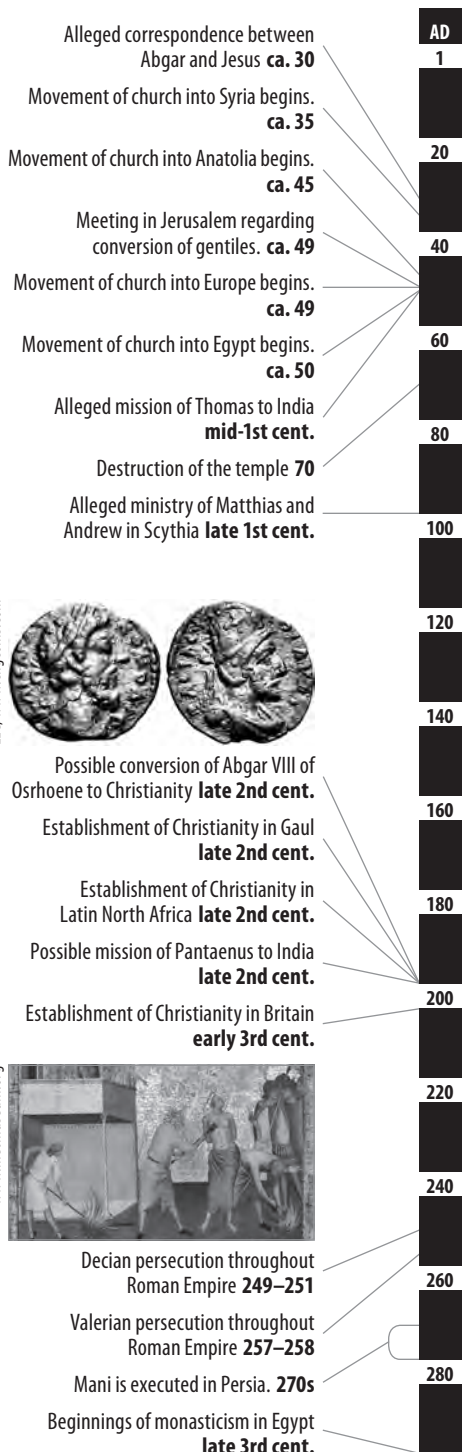
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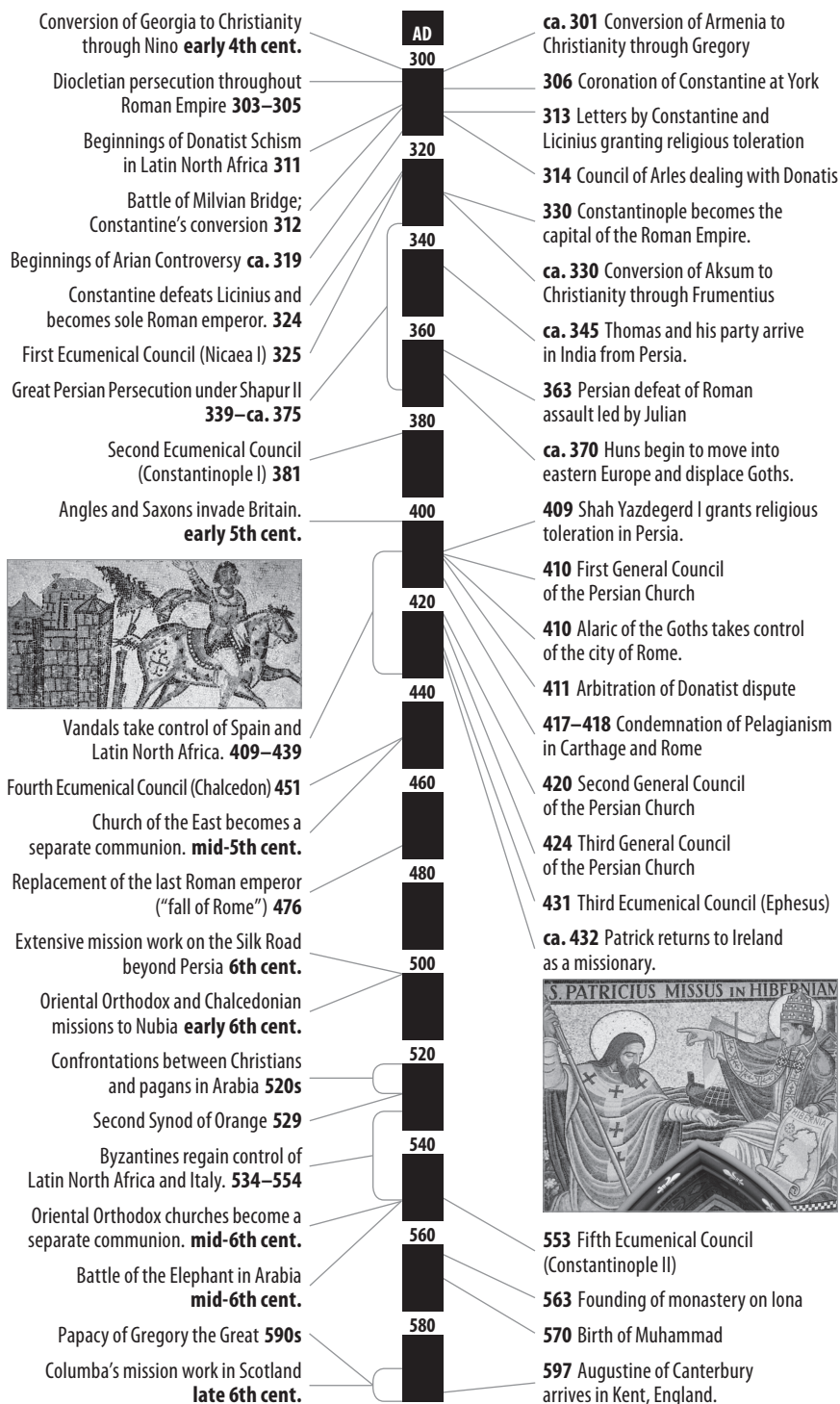
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Columbanus's mission work in the Alps
early 7th cent.

Muhammad's qur'anic revelations
610–632

Byzantine Syria and Sassanid
Persia fall to Arabs. **ca. 636**

Jerusalem falls to Arabs. **ca. 638**

Byzantine Egypt falls to Arabs. **ca. 641**

Founding of the Da Qin
monastery in China **ca. 650**

Damascus becomes the seat of
the Muslim caliphate. **661**

Sixth Ecumenical Council
(Constantinople III) **680–681**

Arabs take control of central Asia and
northwestern India. **early 8th cent.**

Boniface's mission work in Germany and
the Low Countries **early 8th cent.**

Byzantines ward off Arab siege
of Constantinople. **717–718**



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Dialogue between Timothy and Mahdi
ca. 781

Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicaea II)
787

Conclusion of Iconoclastic Controversy **843**



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AD

600

604 Gregory the Great dies.

620

618 Beginning of T'ang Dynasty in China

622 Hijrah to Medina
(year 1 in the Muslim calendar)

640

632 Death of Muhammad

635 Alopen begins mission work in China.

660



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680

700

ca. 702 Latin North Africa falls to Arabs.

720

710s Spain falls to Arabs.

726 Beginnings of Iconoclastic Controversy

740

732 Franks defeat Arabs
at Battle of Tours.

751 Arabs defeat the Chinese
at Battle of Talas.

760

754 Iconoclastic Council of Hiera

762 Baghdad becomes the seat
of the Muslim caliphate.

780

781 Erection of Xi'an Stele telling
the story of Chinese Christianity

800

800 Pope Leo crowns Charlemagne
as Roman emperor.

820

840



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860

880

Chapter One

IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME

The World of the First Century



FIGURE 1.1. *The empire of Alexander the Great*



FIGURE 1.2. *The Persian Empire with the Royal Persian Road*

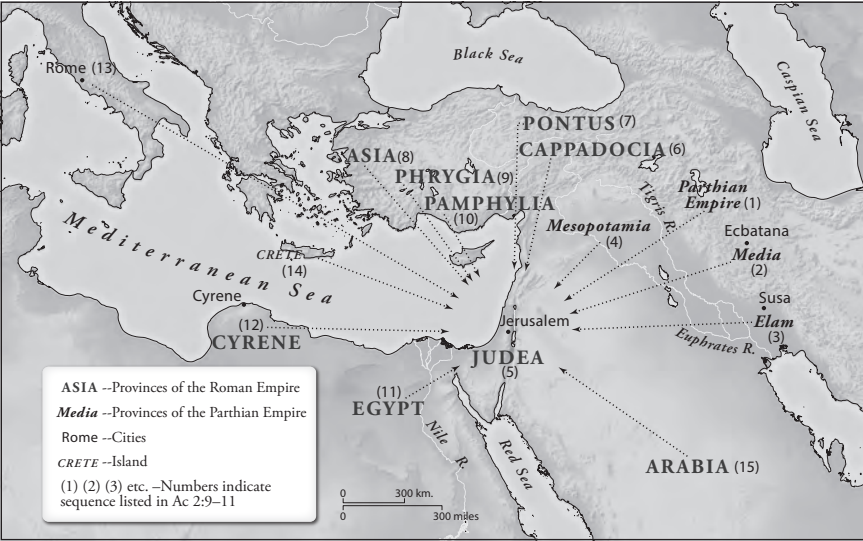


FIGURE 1.3. *The nations mentioned at Pentecost*

Chapter Two

TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

Early Christian Expansion

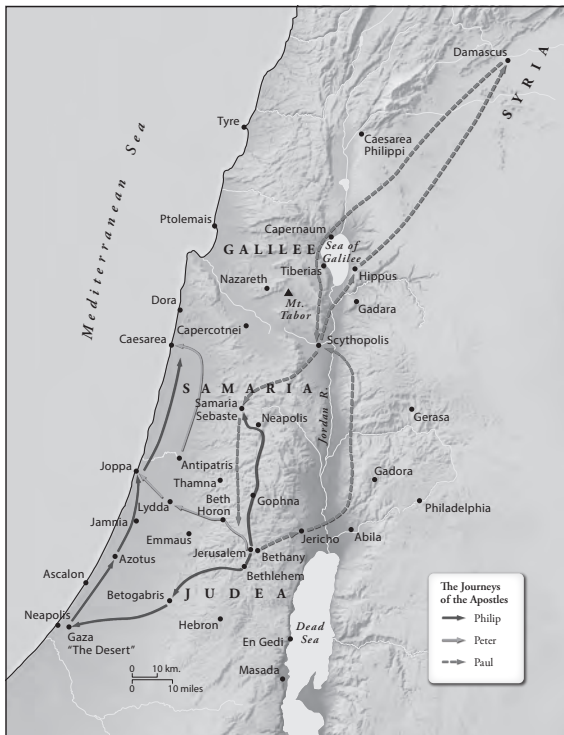


FIGURE 2.1. *Early expansion of the church from Jerusalem to Samaria to Syria*



FIGURE 2.2. Paul's first missionary journey



Photo: OeAW-OeAI / Niki Gail

FIGURE 2.3. Fresco at the Grotto of Saint Paul near Ephesus, depicting a scene from a second-century book, Acts of Paul and Thecla, in which Thecla listens from a window to Paul preaching and commits herself to a life of virginity and prayer. Theocleia, Thecla's mother, is shown disapproving on the right side of the fresco (ca. 5–6th century).



FIGURE 2.4. *Paul's second missionary journey*

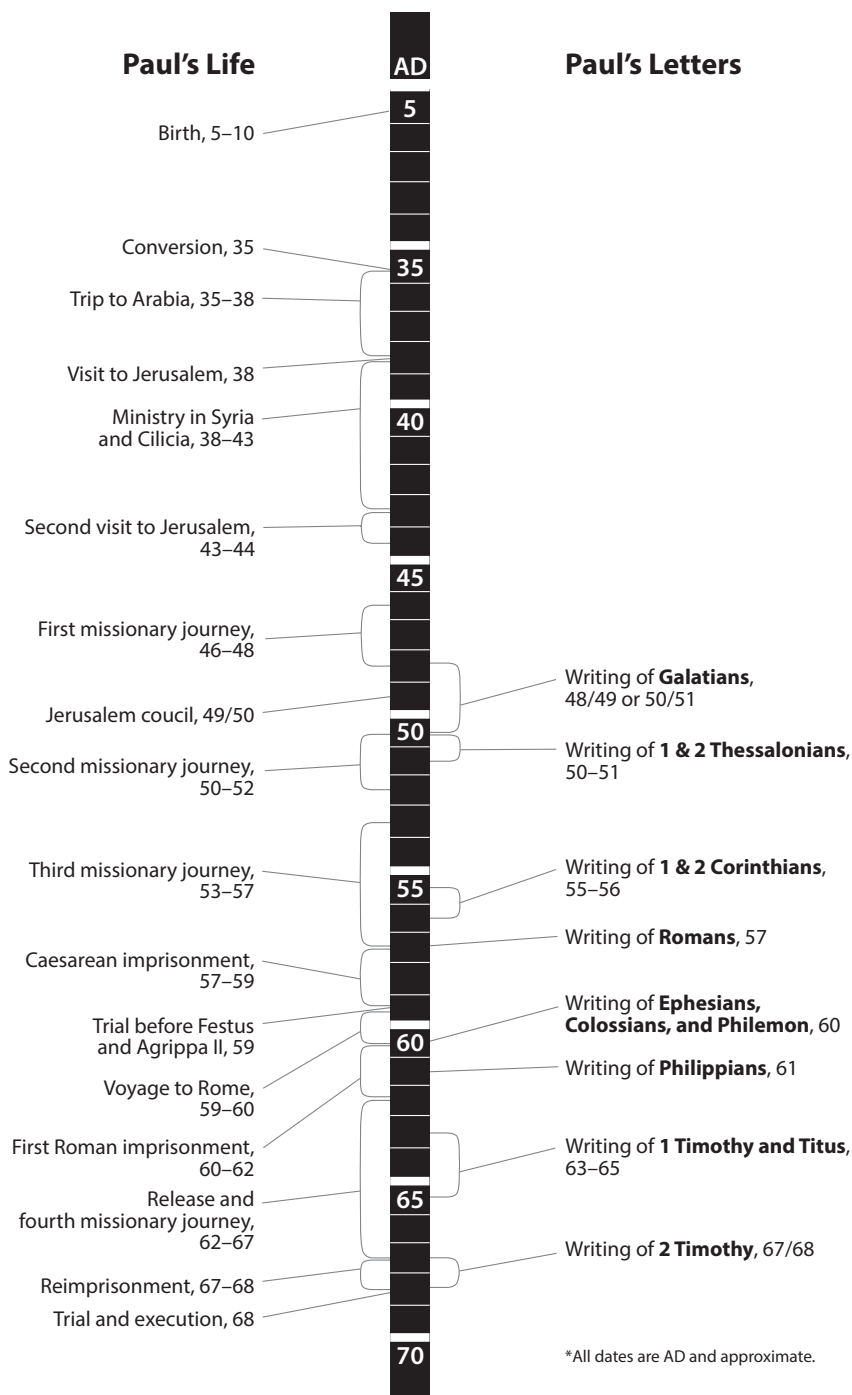


FIGURE 2.5. *Timeline of Paul's life and ministry*



FIGURE 2.6. *Christianity in the first and second centuries*

Chapter Three

FOREIGNERS AND EXILES

The Church and Its Surrounding Societies



FIGURE 3.1. *The Roman Empire at its greatest extent in the early second century*



FIGURE 3.2. *Parthian Persia*



FIGURE 3.3. Gold coin celebrating Trajan's capture of the Parthian capital at Ctesiphon, near modern Baghdad. Bust of Trajan on the obverse, and the reverse shows two Parthian captives seated on the ground with their hands on their heads. Below them the inscription reads *PARTHICA CAPTA*. Minted AD 116, Rome.

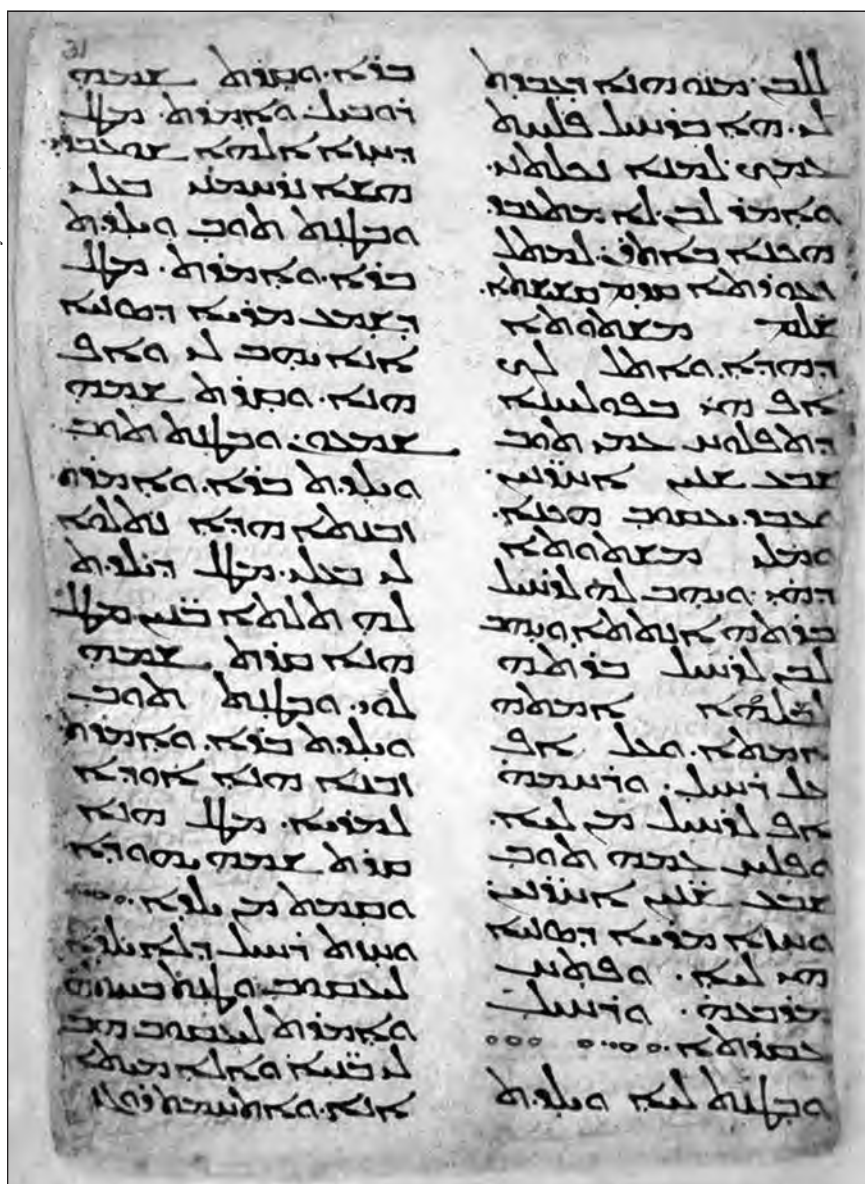


FIGURE 3.4. *A page from the Pentateuch
written in Syriac, dated AD 463–64*

Chapter Four

THE RHYTHMS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

Early Christian Worship and Practice



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FIGURE 4.1. *Fresco of a baptismal scene
from the Catacombs of San Callisto,
Rome, Italy, dated to the third century*

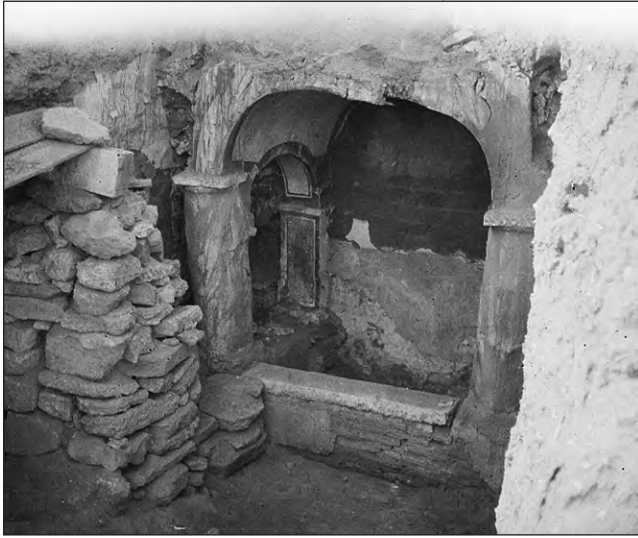


© A. Dagli Orti / De Agostini Picture Library / Bridgeman Images

FIGURE 4.2. *Baptism of Christ on a tombstone from the third century, Museum of Roman Civilization, Rome, Italy*



FIGURE 4.3. *Burial painting in the catacombs of San Gennaro, showing three people in the orans ("praying") posture, dated to the fifth century*



© Yale University Art Gallery,
Dura Europos Collection

FIGURE 4.4. *Archeological remains of a baptistery in a house church at Dura Europos, Syria, dated to the third century*

Chapter Five

A LONG OBEDIENCE

Episcopacy, Creed, and Canon

© The Walters Art Museum, CC0



FIGURE 5.1. *A detailed Byzantine tile depicting Bishop Ignatius of Antioch, holding a gospel book. Istanbul, Turkey, dated to the tenth century*



FIGURE 5.2. *French manuscript on the articles of the faith dated to the thirteenth century, depicts the twelve apostles writing the creed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Medieval French inscription below translates as "How the apostles are making the creed."*

Chapter Six

CONFESSING THE ONE GOD

Early Heresies and Christian Doctrine



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FIGURE 6.2. *Lithograph of Tertullian*

FIGURE 6.1. *Papyrus page 17 of Codex I from the Nag Hammadi codices, containing part of the Gospel of Truth, a text that may be the same as the Gospel of Valentinus*

Chapter Seven

THE FIRST CHURCH SCHISM

Novatianism in the West



FIGURE 7.1. *Roman coin with bust of emperor Gallus, who made no significant efforts to continue the persecutions. This coin was minted in Milan, 251–53.*

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FIGURE 7.2. *Painting of Cyprian by Master of Meßkirch, the anonymous German Renaissance painter, State Gallery in Stuttgart, Germany (ca. 1535–40)*

Chapter Eight

GOD AND COUNTRY

The Rise of Christian Kingdoms



FIGURE 8.1. *Armenia and Georgia in the north and Ethiopia in the south became the first long-lasting Christian kingdoms.*



FIGURE 8.2. *A page from The Four Gospels in Armenian written in 1166 by an Armenian monk named Simeon*



FIGURE 8.3. *One of the oldest churches in Vagharshapat (Etchmiadzin), Armenia, Saint Hripsime Church, dates to the seventh century and features a raised dome and the shape of a cross at its base.*



FIGURE 8.4. *Jvari monastery built on a cliff that overlooks the town of Mtskheta, Georgia (ca. late sixth to early seventh century). Georgian architectural style was similar to the Armenian churches of the period.*



FIGURE 8.5. *The Chapel of the Tablet next to the Church of St. Mary of Zion, Aksum, Ethiopia, where the ark of the covenant is allegedly housed and guarded by monks to the present day*



FIGURE 8.6. *Terracotta oil lamp, dated fourth to fifth century, with a chi-rho or Christogram that features the emblem Constantine may have seen*
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Chapter Nine

STILL FOREIGNERS AND EXILES

*The Church in Realms That Did
Not Become Christian*



FIGURE 9.1. *Coin with bust of Shapur II from
the Sasanian Kingdom, dated AD 309–79*

Reproduced by permission from Parviz-Pars
Coins, www.vcoins.com/parscoins



FIGURE 9.2. *Archeological ruins of a Sassanian public building known as Tāq Kisrā of Kosrov (sometimes called the Arch of Ctesiphon), Seleucia-Ctesiphon, within present-day Iraq. Photo taken in 1932.*

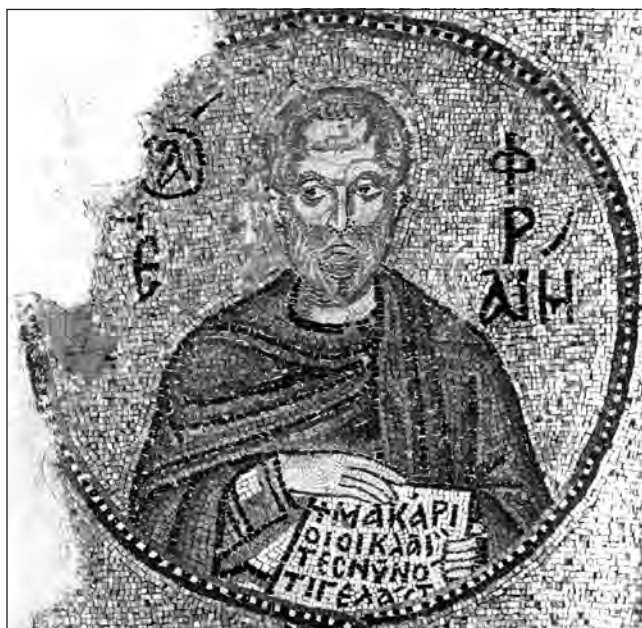


FIGURE 9.3. *Mosaic of Ephrem the Syrian, ca. eleventh century*



The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland 7, no. 2 (1843). Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain

FIGURE 9.4. Facsimile of the Kollam Plates that include legal and trade transactions in four languages. These copper plates date to 849 and refer to a land grant to a Christian church in southern India.



FIGURE 9.5. *India*

Chapter Ten

THE SECOND CHURCH SCHISM

Donatism in Latin North Africa



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archaeologyillustrated.com

FIGURE 10.1. *An artist's reconstruction of the acropolis
at Carthage during the Roman period*



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FIGURE 10.2. Saint Augustine
in His Study, *Botticelli, 1480*

Chapter Eleven

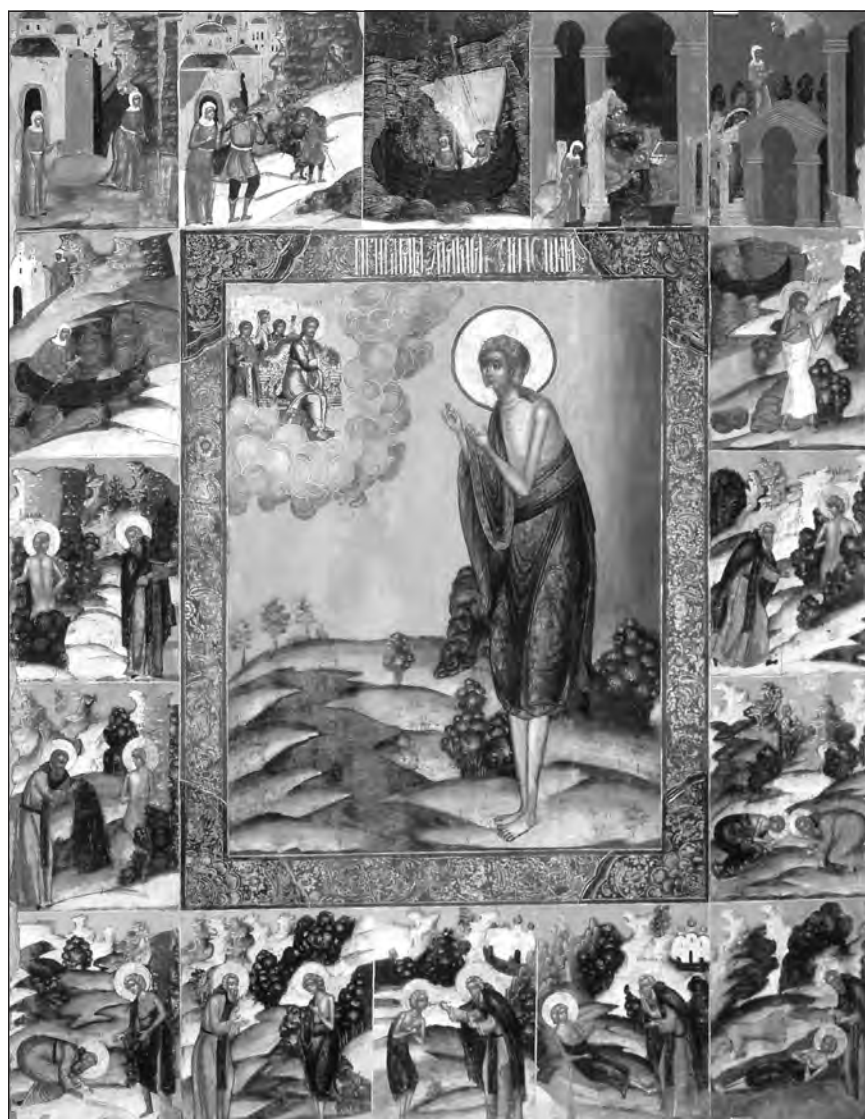
TO THE DESERT

The Rise of Monasticism



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FIGURE 11.1. *One of the earliest paintings by Michelangelo is The Torment of Saint Anthony (ca. 1487–88). This vivid painting was inspired by the scene described by Athanasius in the Life of Antony.*



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FIGURE 11.2. *Russian icon dated to the seventeenth century depicting events from the life of Mary of Egypt*



FIGURE 11.3. *Illuminated image of desert mother Melania the Younger from the Menologion of Basil II, a liturgical book dated to the eleventh century that includes summaries of the lives of saints*

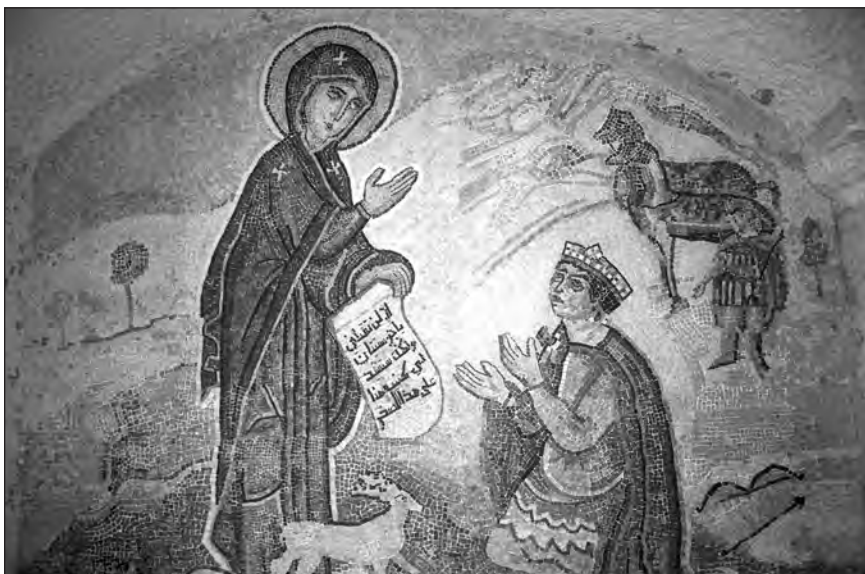


FIGURE 11.4. *Mosaic depicting the establishment of the Convent of Our Lady in Saidnaya, Syria. According to legend, Roman troops were in the Syrian desert led by Justinian I when he said he saw a gazelle and chased after it. When he reached the gazelle, it transformed into an icon of the Virgin Mary, who addressed the emperor by saying that he should not kill her but that he should build her a church on the hill.*



FIGURE 11.5. *Statue of St. Macrina among the statues at St. Peter's Square, Vatican City, Italy*

Chapter Twelve

THE TRINITARIAN FAITH

From Crisis to Consensus

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FIGURE 12.1. *Byzantine icon of the First Council of Nicaea, Hilander Monastery, Mt. Athos, Greece*



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FIGURE 12.2. Icon of *Athanasius* dated to the end of the seventeenth century, Sozopol, Bulgaria



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FIGURE 12.3. Byzantine painting of *Gregory the Theologian* by Andrei Rublev, dated 1408, Assumption Cathedral, Vladimir, Russia

Chapter Thirteen

FOR US AND FOR OUR SALVATION

Grappling with the Incarnation

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FIGURE 13.1. *Early Byzantine mosaic of John Chrysostom from the Cathedral of Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey*



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FIGURE 13.2. *Painting of Cyril of Alexandria at Chora Church, Istanbul, Turkey*



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FIGURE 13.3. *A painting depicting the debate between Nestorians and the Latin-speaking West, dated 1290*

Chapter Fourteen

THE GREAT ANCIENT SCHISMS

Christological Fracturing



FIGURE 14.1. *Gold coin
with a depiction of Emperor
Justinian I holding the orb
and the cross, ca. 538–65*

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FIGURE 14.2. *Mosaic of Theodora holding a cup of communion, Basilica of Saint Vitalis, Ravenna, Italy*



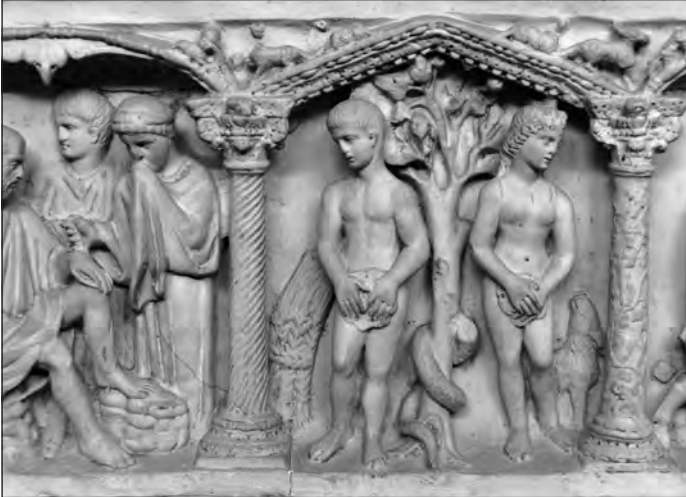
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FIGURE 14.3. *Christ Pantocrator, dating to the sixth century, located at St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt. Notice the difference between the two sides of Christ's face. The painting intentionally portrays the two natures in the person of Christ.*

Chapter Fifteen

DRIFTING APART

Prelude to Another Great Schism



© Todd Bolen / BiblePlaces.com

FIGURE 15.1. *A detailed relief from the Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (359) portraying the original sin of Adam and Eve with symbols of work in the background*



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FIGURE 15.2. *Highly detailed engraving of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, consecrated in 324 by Pope Sylvester. Notice the long, rectangular nave, supported by columns, that ends with an apse.*

© iStock.com / ZU_09

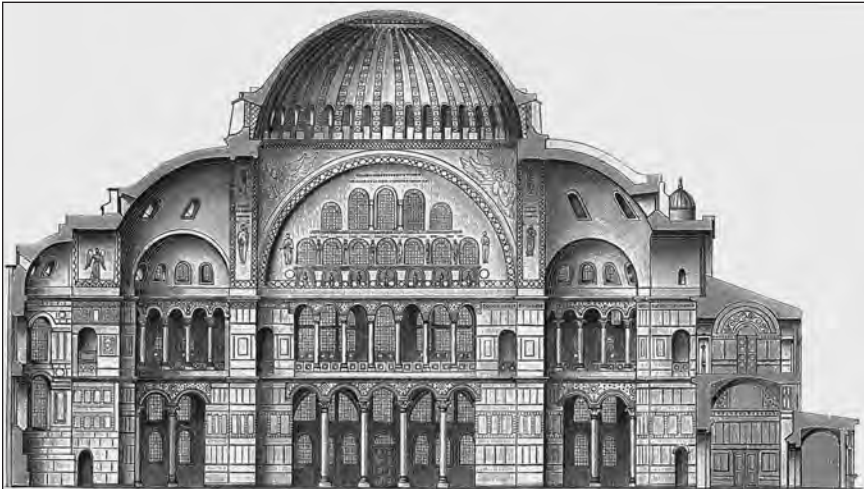


FIGURE 15.3. *Hagia Sophia was truly innovative. This new style was more square than rectangular, consisting of a dramatic central dome, resting on piers that were supported by half domes.*

Chapter Sixteen

TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH (AGAIN)

Monastic Missions

© The British Library Board, Gospel Book, Imperfect
(Vulgate version, Irish textual family), f. 50



FIGURE 16.1. *This illuminated page from a gospel book features an interlace initial. Ireland, ca. eighth to ninth century.*

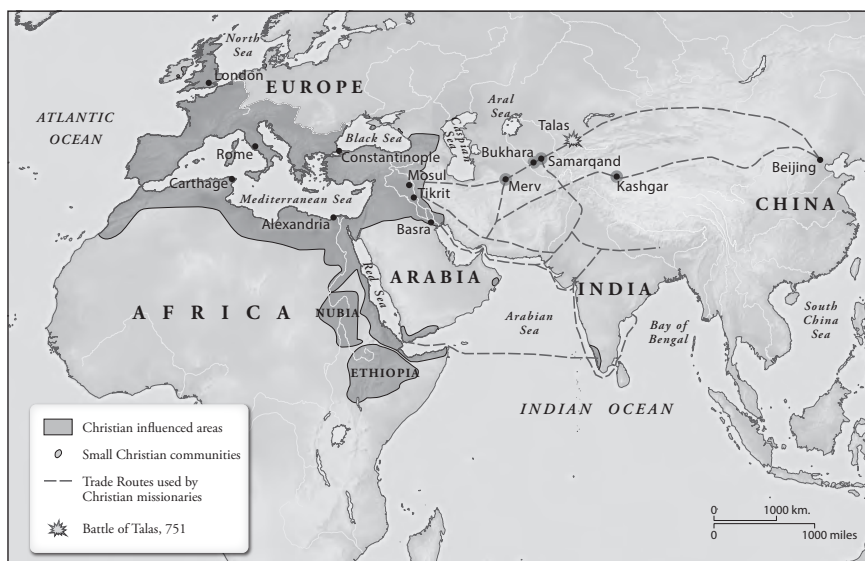


FIGURE 16.2. *Christianity in the sixth century*



FIGURE 16.3. *The Xi'an Stele, dated to 781, was discovered near Xi'an, China, and tells of the arrival of Christianity in China from Persia. This photo was taken in 1907.*

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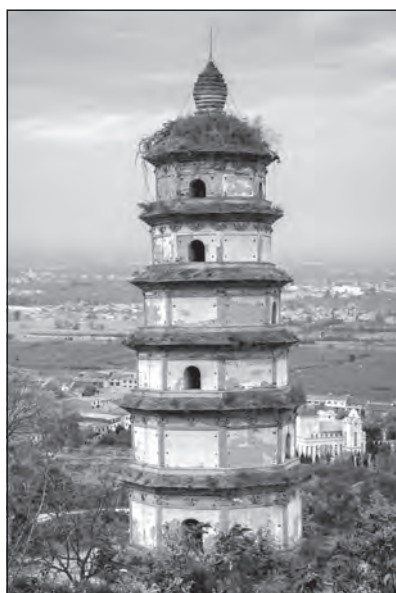


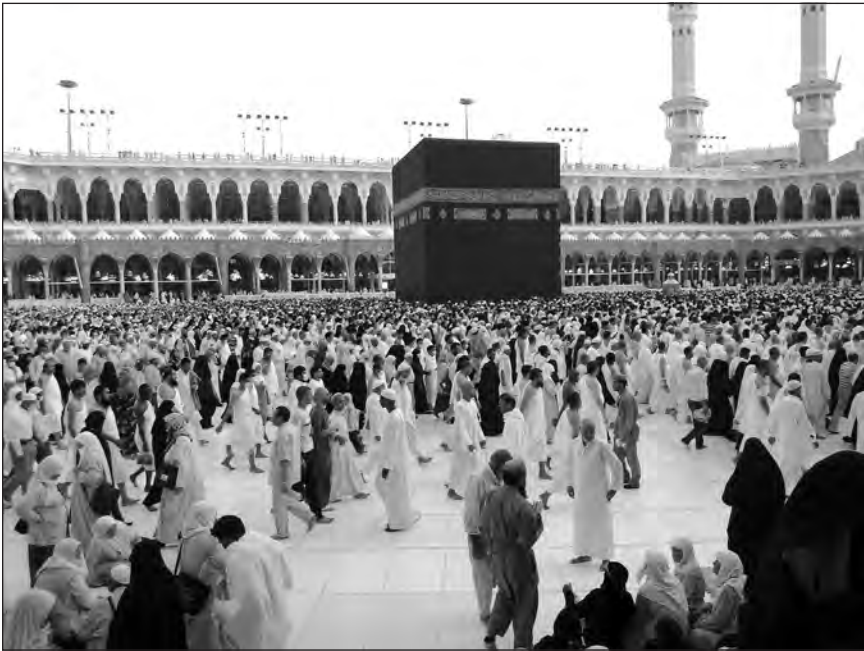
FIGURE 16.4. *The pagoda from the Ta Qin monastery, founded in the seventh century.*

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Chapter Seventeen

THE CRESCENT ON THE HORIZON

The Rise of Islam



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FIGURE 17.1. *The Ka'bah, a cubical structure made of granite, surrounded by pilgrims in present-day Mecca*



FIGURE 17.2. *An early double folio of a Qur'an, written in bold Kufic script, dated to the late ninth or tenth century*

Chapter Eighteen

REDRAWING THE MAP

The Arab Conquests



FIGURE 18.1. *The spread of Islam*



FIGURE 18.2. One of the oldest mosques in the world, the Al-Omari Mosque in Bosra, Syria, was founded by Caliph 'Umar and completed by Caliph Yazid II (eighth century). Renovations to the mosque were made between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Al-Omari Mosque has suffered significant damage from the conflicts in Syria.



FIGURE 18.3. A vivid twelfth-century depiction of the sea battle near Constantinople with the Greeks employing a flamethrower ("Greek Fire") against the Arabs

Chapter Nineteen

UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES

Christians in Muslim Societies



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FIGURE 19.1. *The Dome of the Rock resides in the middle of the Temple Mount in present-day Jerusalem. This iconic structure was designed to supplant Christian churches as the dominant feature of the Jerusalem skyline.*



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FIGURE 19.2. *St. Catherine's Monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai in South Sinai, Egypt, holds the second largest collection of manuscripts and codices, including the Apology for the Christian Faith in Arabic.*



© Artur Bogacki / Shutterstock

FIGURE 19.3. Known in Spain as Mezquita-Catedral, the Great Mosque of Cordoba is an architectural treasure from the eighth century. The highly-detailed wall with the horseshoe arch indicates the location of the mihrab or prayer niche, the place in a mosque that faces Mecca. And high above is a gold dome, constructed with crossing arches.

Chapter Twenty

BEYOND THE REACH OF ISLAM

The Edges of the Christian World

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FIGURE 20.1. *This wall painting depicts Christian priests in a Palm Sunday procession from Qocho, China, dated to the seventh or eighth century.*



© Ralph Rainer Steffens / Bildarchiv Steffens / Bridgeman Images

FIGURE 20.2. *St. Boniface monument by Ubbo Enninga, Fritzlar, Germany. Boniface standing on a large stump with an axe in his left hand and a church in his right, symbolizing the defeat of the Scandinavian god Thor.*

FOR FURTHER READING

PART 1: PRIMARY SOURCES CITED IN THIS BOOK

The entries below supply bibliographical information for a printed edition of an English translation for each primary source that I cite or quote in the text of the book. When the work is present in a well-known series, I list only the series abbreviation, volume number, and page numbers. Otherwise I give full publication information. In some cases multiple printed editions of the same work exist, and virtually every work I cite is also available more conveniently online.

SERIES ABBREVIATIONS

ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
<i>ANF</i>	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
FC	Fathers of the Church
<i>NPNF</i> ¹	<i>Nicene-and Post-Nicene Fathers</i> , Series 1
<i>NPNF</i> ²	<i>Nicene-and Post-Nicene Fathers</i> , Series 2
PPS	Popular Patristics Series

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PART 2: SECONDARY LITERATURE THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST

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