

INSTITUTUM PATRISTICUM AUGUSTINIANUM

HISTORICAL  
ATLAS  

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OF ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY

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EDITED BY ANGELO DI BERARDINO IN COLLABORATION WITH GIANLUCA PILARA

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# Introduction

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**T**HE GOSPEL OF MARK BEARS AT ITS conclusion a command of Jesus given before the Ascension: “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature” (16:15), and adds as a comment: “They went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs” (16:20). This observation reflects the situation of the first generation of Christian missionaries. Not all the missionaries went in the same direction, but rather they set off into different regions. For this mission of theirs into lands “far” from their normal horizons, they must have had notions of the geography of the time, of the sea routes, of the interconnecting roads, and of the cities to evangelize. Jerusalem was a privileged observation point for gathering information, because pilgrims flowed there from many regions, even from beyond the Roman Empire. The *Acts of the Apostles* offers a geographic cross-section of people present in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost: “Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. . . . Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God” (2:5-11).

Therefore, Christianity, in its birth and in its long history, is closely connected to geography. The study of any kind of history must take into account ancient physical and human geography to understand the circulation of missionaries, of ideas, of texts, of liturgical traditions, of the routes through land, river, and sea, and the concomitant voyages and communication which occurred between various churches.

My intent is to provide a tool useful for understanding better the ecclesiastical geography of the first periods of Christianity up to the eighth century, both within the realm of the Roman Empire and beyond its boundaries by means of a historical, geographical treatment of the various areas, and with maps. The purpose is to offer a great deal of information in a tightly focused space. The sixty maps, which also reflect different centuries, intend to be historically precise with the most valuable information at our disposal.

Today there exists no atlas dedicated to Christian antiquity, with particular reference to the Fathers and to ancient Christianity. At the end of the 1800s a very useful atlas was made by Kiepert; it had wide success. In 1958 a specific atlas was made by Christine Mohrmann and Van der Meer in Dutch translated into English, German, and French. This has been out of print since 1970. Today the most important atlas in print is the one edited by Jedin, translated also into Italian; this concerns the whole history of the Church, with several maps on ancient Christianity; every map is preceded by a historical comment.

The division of the present atlas is as follows: 1) a historical-geographical treatment, according to the organization of the Roman

Empire, with a historical exposition of the political, social, cultural, and religious evolution that occurred. Special attention is given to the boundaries and to the names of cities (both ancient and modern names are given). Then follows a detailed exposition of the spread of Christianity in the region, of its growth, its principal centers, its Christian writers, its principal saints as the case may be, along with sanctuaries and pilgrimage centers. In other words, a brief history of Christianity in the relevant territory. 2) 59 geographical maps. Many are of an interregional character; the others are on single provinces of the Roman Empire according to a chronological trajectory leading to the 8<sup>th</sup> century. 3) Included also are maps and treatments of Christians outside the Roman Empire (Persia; India; Georgia; Ireland, Scotland, Gothia, etc.). 4) Illustrations: principal Christian monuments in the various geographical areas; some inscriptions illustrative of the region (e.g. the Abercius inscription, etc.); iconography of a Father. Illustrations regarding the values and the environment in which they lived are included; there are also famous ancient monasteries (in Egypt, in Syria, etc.). 5) The monuments (or other illustrations) that concern the cities most important for the Christians: e.g. Madaba; Hippo; Carthage; Rome; Constantinople; Qalat Seman, etc. In such a case, there is included a brief illustration of the city, of who lived in that city and any Christian ruins. 6) An ample, essential, and international bibliography for further research. 7) The names of the cities, rivers, etc., are all in Latin. 8) Indices at the end: a) An index of all the names with the coordinates matched to the respective maps; b) An index of the ancient names and their respective modern names: e.g. Hippo Regius = Annaba; Hispalis = Seville; Lugdunum = Lyon; c) An index of modern names and their respective ancient names; d) an index of the names, with their modern equivalents, which are included on the map that is located on the inside of the front and back covers. The name equivalency indexes are especially useful for the scholar, because we are used to saying “the Council of Serdica,” which corresponds to Sofia; Basil of Caesarea, which corresponds to Kayseri; Isidore of Seville (= Hispalis); Victorinus of Poetovio (= Ptuj).

I am deeply grateful to all those who have contributed with their advice and suggestions. In particular: Gianluca Pilara, Alberto Camplani, Massimiliano Ghilardi, Giorgio Otranto, Giovanni Nigro, Emanuele Castelli, Ewa Wipszycka, Boghos L. Zekiyan, Alessandro Bausi, Lucrezia Spera, Elena Malaspina, Paolo Dinia. The basis for the present atlas is the one produced for the third volume of my *Dizionario Patristico e di antichità cristiane* published in 1988 (= *Encyclopedia of the early church*, New York 1992), on which numerous scholars had already collaborated, among them C. Lepelley, R. Pillinger, Nenad Cambi, Pedro de Palol.

ANGELO DI BERARDINO



# Foreword

THE *ATLANTE STORICO DEL CRISTIANESIMO Antico* was first published in Italian in 2010. Even before it was published, there were discussions with the editor, Fr. Angelo Di Berardino, on developing a historical atlas on early Christianity for the English-speaking world that could build on the work he had done for the *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*. The *Historical Atlas of the Ancient Church* is the product of those discussions. Previous atlases, such as *The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (pub. 2000), as well as those mentioned in Fr. Di Berardino's introduction, have largely focused on the classical world of late antiquity. Such a focus has its place and the present atlas does not pretend to replace these important resources.

Nonetheless, there are a number of things that set the present atlas apart. The focus in the present atlas explores both the history and the geography of the ancient *Christian* world and how these interacted. (1) It is a historical atlas that provides a geographical and historical context for the key events, people and trends of the ancient Christian church. (2) Geography often played an important role in the outcome of certain theological issues and developments, and the ancient Christian figures were products of their own environments, just as much as we are today. This atlas will help the reader delve deeper into the world of the early centuries. (3) Key roads and travel patterns influenced the development of the church's evangelization and sometimes even its conciliar decisions. Bishops needed to travel to these ecumenical

meetings sometimes along hazardous ways; others were exiled to remote places. (4) The many pictures and illustrations provide the reader with a glimpse into the environment those early Christian leaders shared and lived. These provide another valuable tool for those who wish to teach, those who want to learn, and anyone interested in what life during the earliest period of the church's history may have looked like. In this English edition there are a few differences from the Italian edition. The layout is a bit different. We have also provided additional photographs and pictures and some images have been rearranged. There is also an extra map that has been added depicting the barbarian invasions and an extra index of the map that is located on the inside front and back covers.

This atlas provides key evidence regarding the existence and distribution of episcopal sees in various geographical areas and how this growth and development was affected by forces inside and outside the church such as the Roman or Byzantine government or the barbarian invasions. It is our hope that this *Historical Atlas of Ancient Christianity* will serve as a gift both to the church and to the academy for those desiring to study the ancient Christian period in its historical as well as its geographical and ecclesiastical context.

JOEL ELOWSKY  
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY WISCONSIN





# Maps

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3. Palestine (Monasteries) (V-VI century)
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MAP 1. Palestine (I century)





MAP 57. Roman and Christian Britain (II-IV century)





MAP 58. Britain and Ireland (V-VIII century)