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978-0-521-69750-7 - The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature

Edited by Frances Young, Lewis Ayres and Andrew Louth

Frontmatter

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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

The writings of the Church Fathers form a distinct body of literature which shaped the early Church and built upon the doctrinal foundations of Christianity recently established within the New Testament and by oral and ecclesiastical tradition. Christian literature in the period c. 100–c. 400 constitutes one of the most influential textual oeuvres of any religion. Written mainly in Greek, Latin and Syriac, patristic literature emanated from all parts of the early Christian world and helped to extend its boundaries. The works of Irenaeus, Origen, Hippolytus, Eusebius, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, John Chrysostom, Ephrem, the gnostics, the Montanists and the Cappadocians are among the best-known examples of an extensive set of texts grappling with the theological issues at the heart of early Christianity – many of which still lie at its heart today. This *History* is the first systematic account of that literature and its setting for many years. The work of individual writers in shaping the various genres and forms of Christian literature is considered, and the volume also offers three general essays covering distinct periods in the development of Christian literature. These pieces survey the social, cultural and doctrinal context within which Christian literature arose and within which it was used by Christians. The book is intended for use by theologians and historians, providing a landmark reference work for scholars, teachers and students.

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*

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Contents

List of contributors page ix
Editors' preface xi
List of abbreviations of patristic and other texts xiv
List of other abbreviations xix
Chronological table of early Christian literature xxii
Map: The Roman Empire in the late fourth century AD xxvi

PART ONE

THE BEGINNINGS: THE NEW TESTAMENT TO IRENAEUS A · LITERARY GUIDE

1 · Introduction: the literary culture of the earliest Christianity 5
 FRANCES YOUNG

2 · The apostolic and sub-apostolic writings: the New Testament
 and the Apostolic Fathers 11
 RICHARD A. NORRIS, JR.

3 · Gnostic literature 20
 RICHARD A. NORRIS, JR.

4 · Apocryphal writings and Acts of the martyrs 28
 RICHARD A. NORRIS, JR.

5 · The Apologists 36
 RICHARD A. NORRIS, JR.

6 · Irenaeus of Lyon 45
 RICHARD A. NORRIS, JR.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-69750-7 - The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature

Edited by Frances Young, Lewis Ayres and Andrew Louth

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Contents*

B • CONTEXT AND INTERPRETATION

7 • Social and historical setting 55

JOHN BEHR

8 • Articulating identity 71

RICHARD A. NORRIS, JR.

9 • Christian teaching 91

FRANCES YOUNG

10 • Conclusion: towards a hermeneutic of second-century texts 105

FRANCES YOUNG

PART TWO

THE THIRD CENTURY

A • LITERARY GUIDE

11 • The Alexandrians 117

RONALD E. HEINE

12 • The beginnings of Latin Christian literature 131

RONALD E. HEINE

13 • Hippolytus, Ps.-Hippolytus and the early canons 142

RONALD E. HEINE

14 • Cyprian and Novatian 152

RONALD E. HEINE

15 • The earliest Syriac literature 161

SEBASTIAN P. BROCK

16 • Concluding review: the literary culture of the third century 172

FRANCES YOUNG

B • CONTEXT AND INTERPRETATION

17 • Social and historical setting: Christianity as culture critique 181

KAREN JO TORJESEN

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-69750-7 - The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature

Edited by Frances Young, Lewis Ayres and Andrew Louth

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Contents*

18 • Articulating identity 200

RONALD E. HEINE

19 • Christian teaching 222

JOHN DAVID DAWSON

20 • The significance of third-century Christian literature 239

FRANCES YOUNG

PART THREE

FOUNDATION OF A NEW CULTURE: FROM
DIOCLETIAN TO CYRIL

A • LITERARY GUIDE

21 • Classical genres in Christian guise; Christian genres in classical
guise 251

FRANCES YOUNG

22 • Arnobius and Lactantius 259

OLIVER NICHOLSON

23 • Eusebius and the birth of church history 266

ANDREW LOUTH

24 • The fourth-century Alexandrians: Athanasius and Didymus 275

ANDREW LOUTH

25 • Palestine: Cyril of Jerusalem and Epiphanius 283

ANDREW LOUTH

26 • The Cappadocians 289

ANDREW LOUTH

27 • Fourth-century Latin writers: Hilary, Victorinus, Ambrosiaster,
Ambrose 302

DAVID G. HUNTER

28 • Jerome and Rufinus 318

MARK VESSEY

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-69750-7 - The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature

Edited by Frances Young, Lewis Ayres and Andrew Louth

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Contents*

- 29 • Augustine 328
HENRY CHADWICK
- 30 • John Chrysostom and the Antiochene School to Theodoret of
Cyrthus 342
ANDREW LOUTH
- 31 • Cyril of Alexandria 353
ANDREW LOUTH
- 32 • Hagiography 358
ANDREW LOUTH
- 33 • Ephrem and the Syriac Tradition 362
SEBASTIAN P. BROCK
- 34 • The literature of the monastic movement 373
ANDREW LOUTH
- 35 • Women and words: texts by and about women 382
SUSAN ASHBROOK HARVEY
- 36 • Conciliar records and canons 391
ANDREW LOUTH
- B • CONTEXT AND INTERPRETATION
- 37 • Social and historical setting 399
R. A. MARKUS
- 38 • Articulating identity 414
LEWIS AYRES
- 39 • Christian teaching 464
FRANCES YOUNG
- 40 • Retrospect: interpretation and appropriation 485
FRANCES YOUNG
- Bibliographies* 495
Index 531

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-69750-7 - The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature
Edited by Frances Young, Lewis Ayres and Andrew Louth
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

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Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-69750-7 - The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

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Edited by Frances Young, Lewis Ayres and Andrew Louth

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Editors' preface

The excellent Cambridge Histories have not so far included a scholarly compendium on the literature of early Christianity. This volume seeks to fill that gap, while taking note of new developments in the field, which make it particularly appropriate to undertake the production of such a volume at this time.

This literature has traditionally been studied by students of Christian theology and Christian scholars with an interest in the doctrinal and organizational development of the Church. It has commonly been described using the adjective 'patristic', since these authors were considered the 'Fathers' of the Church, and introductory handbooks have been known as 'Patrologies'. It is not intended to ignore the concerns of this clientele, though it is hoped that a wider readership may also turn to this volume as a standard work of reference. Increasing historical interest in the late Roman and early Byzantine worlds has made the subject much more interdisciplinary. Indeed, it could be argued that this material is simply a subclass of the literature of late antiquity, and a reference work should include the whole range of material. However, this would consign the material in this volume to a small section, and since it is a substantial and historically significant subclass, there is a case to be made for examining it in its own right, as long as the wider historical context, and the sharing of perspectives and concerns with non-Christian contemporaries, are made clear.

This greater interdisciplinary focus has been particularly important, however, since it has meant that the material is now studied with a broader range of issues in mind. Feminists have challenged the designation 'patristic', and questions of social identity and social level have become important, together with issues such as the parting of the ways with Judaism, and the process of Christianization. 'Heretics' have been re-habilitated, and their motivations and ideas studied with greater sympathy, especially as they were history's losers. New material, such as the Nag Hammadi find and the Tura papyri, have

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-69750-7 - The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature

Edited by Frances Young, Lewis Ayres and Andrew Louth

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Editors' preface*

occasioned more intensive research. This material can no longer be presented simply as sources for the history of the development of Christian doctrine, important though that project remains.

At the same time the hermeneutical questions raised in relation to New Testament interpretation have hardly begun to touch the field, so that questions of appropriation are ripe for consideration. Conversely, there has been an awakening interest in early Christian interpretation of Scripture, as perspectives other than the historical have opened up in biblical studies. These questions are of particular interest to the editors, and attention to them should have a considerable place in a volume of this kind. The adoption of the canon and the formative place it held in Christian thinking, as interpreted by the exponents in the Church, also have their background in the ancient veneration for literature and the place of rhetoric and literary study in the educational system.

It is hoped that, given this overall context, this work will provide a major volume of reference, distilling the present lively developments in the subject area and essaying some pioneering directions. The policy adopted has not been to provide a comprehensive encyclopedia or dictionary, of which there are already recent worthy representatives, such as *Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane* (1983–8), edited by Angelo di Berardino, translated into English as *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* and published in 1992, or *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, edited by Ferguson and others, and published in 1990. Instead of brief introductory articles in alphabetical order by an enormous variety of scholars, an attempt is made to provide a coherent focus, and to concentrate on the literature, its interpretation and significance, and its context, historical, social, philosophical. The work takes account of heterodox as well orthodox, heretic as well as bishop. It provides essays on the major figures and authors, and assesses the major schools of Alexandria, Antioch, Edessa and Nisibis. It discusses the major controversies, not abstracting the important Christological struggle from a context in which other issues were at stake, such as Origenism and asceticism. It embraces feminist and sociological approaches to the material.

In some respects this work may replace the *Patrologies*, now thirty to forty years old, though without adopting the same style or pretending to offer comprehensive bibliographies. Some overlap in material and approach with Frances Young's volume, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, may justly be suspected, but this should be complementary to that work: the A sections cover the literature of a much broader period and geographical location in relatively briefer compass, with the additional advantage of engaging a team of contributors

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Editors' preface

with varied expertise, while the B sections of each Part enable the generation of a greater sense of perspective than was possible in a series of essays on individual authors, as well as giving an opportunity to explore new hermeneutical questions.

This is meant to be a reference work, not necessarily a book to be read consecutively from cover to cover. Sections A and B are deliberately set up as different approaches to approximately the same material and some degree of overlap is to be expected, though in each period the A sections deal simply with extant material, surveying the literary deposit which has come down to us, while the B sections explore the contexts into which that material needs to be placed if it is to be understood in an informed way, including reference to significant works which are no longer extant and such fragmentary sources as contribute to reconstruction of those contexts.

This is not simply a general history, but a literary history, seeking to take questions concerning the genre and rhetoric of the texts seriously. It is also meant to be not just a contribution to the study of the past and its 'objective' reconstruction – the long-standing project of modernist historiography – but also a contribution to the interpretation and present appropriation of texts from the past; in other words, a resource for theological thinking that goes beyond the simple repetition of formulae or the use of past labels for present controversies.

This volume has been long in gestation. Its 'onlie begetter' was Frances Young, who designed the shape of the volume and commissioned the contributors. Soon, however, she was overwhelmed by the burdens of university administration, and the other two editors were invited to see the project through to completion. (In the final stages, the assistant editor, Dr Augustine Casiday, one-time research student at the University of Durham, proved invaluable in helping draw up the bibliography, preparing the chronological table, and compiling the index.) The final state of the volume is the responsibility of all three of us.

Abbreviations of patristic and other texts

- AcPT* = *Acta Pauli et Theclae*
AcJ = *Acta Justini*
Ad Nov. = *Ad Novatianum*
Adol. = *Ad Adolescentes de legendis libris gentilium*
Ad Phil. = *Ad Philippense*
Ad Serap. = *Ad Serapionem*
Afric. = *Epistula ad Africanum*
AH = *Adversus Haereses*
An. = *De Anima*
APet. = *Acta Petri*
Apol. = *Apologeticum* or *Apologia*
Apol. c. Hier. = *Apologia contra Hieronymum*
Apol. c. Ruf. = *Apologia contra Rufinum*
Ar. = *Contra Arianos*
Autol. = *Ad Autolyicum*
Bapt. = *De Baptismo*
Barn. = *Epistula Barnabae*
Bibl. Cod. = *Photius, Bibliotheca*, cited by codex
Bon. = *De bono mortis*
BPud. = *De Bono Pudicitiae*
Carn. = *De Carne Christi*
Cast. = *De Exhortatione Castitatis*
Cat. = *Catechesis*
Cels. = *Contra Celsum*
CG = *Contra Gentes*
Chron. = *Chronicon*
I Clem. = *Prima Epistula Clementis*
II Clem. = *Epistula Secunda Clementis*
Coet. = *Oratio ad sanctorum coetum*

List of abbreviations of patristic and other texts

- Comm. in Mt.* = *Commentarius in Matthaicum*
CommPs. = *Commentarius in Psalmos*
Conf. = *Confessions*
Cor. = *De Corona*
CTheod. = *Codex Theodosianum*
Dan. = *in Daniele*
Dec. = *De Decretis*
Dem. = *Demonstratio Praedicationis Apostolicae*
Demetr. = *Ad Demetrianum*
Dial. = *Dialogus*
Did. = *Didache*
Diog. = *Epistula ad Diognetum*
EcProph. = *Eclogae Propheticae*
Enn. = *Enneades*
Ep(p). = *Epistulae*
Ephes. = *Ep. ad Ephesios*
ETh. = *Ecclesiastica Theologia*
Eun. = *Contra Eunomium*
Fug. = *De Fuga*
Graec. = *Oratio ad Graecos*
Greg. = *Ep. ad Gregorium*
Haer. = *Refutatio omnium haeresium* or *Haereticarum fabularum compendium*
HE = *Historia Ecclesiastica*
Herac. = *Disputatio cum Heracleida*
Herm. = *Adversus Hermogenem*
HExod. = *Homilia in Exodum*
Hom. in Jud. = *Homilia in Iudices*
HR = *Historia Romana*
Idol. = *De Idololatria*
Idola = *Quod idola dñi non sint*
Ieiun. = *De Ieiunio*
Il. = *Ilias*
In Eph. = *In Ephesios*
In Rep. = *In Rempubicam*
Inst. = *Institutiones* or *Institutiones Divinae*
Inv. = *De Inventione*
Io. = *Commentarius in Ioannem*
Ira = *De Ira Dei*
Laps. = *De Lapsis*

List of abbreviations of patristic and other texts

- Laus.* = *Historia Lausiaca*
Leg. = *Legatio*
Magn. = *Ad Magnesios*
Mand. = *Mandata*
Marc. = *Adversus Marcionem* or *Contra Marcellum*
Mart. = *Exhortatio ad Martyrium* or *De Martyribus Palestinae*
Med. = *Meditationes*
Mon. = *De Monogamia*
Mort. = *De Mortibus Persecutorum*
MPol. = *Martyrium Polycarpi*
Nat. = *Adversus Nationes*
NHC = *Nag Hammadi Codices*
Noet. = *Contra Noetum*
Od. = *Odysseas*
Opif. = *De Opificio Dei*
Or. = *De Oratione* or *Oratio*
Paed. = *Paedagogus*
Paen. = *De Paenitentia*
Pan. = *Panarion*
Pan. Or. = *Panegyrica in Origenem*
Pass. Perp. = *Passio Perpetuae*
Pass. Scil. = *Passio Sanctorum Scillitanorum*
Philad. = *Ad Philadelphenos*
Polyc. = *Epistula ad Polycarpum*
Praescr. = *De Praescriptione*
Prax. = *Adversus Praxean*
PrEv. = *Praeparatio Evangelica*
Princ. = *De Principiis*
Procat. = *Procatechesis*
Pud. = *De Pudicitia*
Q. = *Quaestio*
Ref. = *Refutatio Confessionis Eunomii*
Rep. = *Respublica*
Res. = *De Resurrectione Carnis*
Rom. = *Ad Romanos*
Ruf. = *Adversus Rufinum*
Scap. = *Ad Scapulam*
Scorp. = *Scorpiace*
Sim. = *Similitudines*

List of abbreviations of patristic and other texts

- Smyrn.* = *Ad Smyrnaeos*
Spect. = *De Spectaculis*
SpS = *De Spiritu Sancto*
Strom. = *Stromateis*
Syn. = *De synodo* or *De synodis*
TestDom. = *Testimonium Domini*
Tom. ad Ant. = *Tomus ad Antiochenos*
Trall. = *Ad Trallianos*
Trin. = *De Trinitate*
Ux. = *Ad Uxorem*
Val. = *Contra Valentinianos*
Virg. = *De Virginitate*
Vir. Ill. = *De Viris Illustribus*
Vis. = *Visio*

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Other abbreviations

These abbreviations are used in the notes, and in the bibliographies, where publication details can be found.

ACO:	<i>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</i>
ACW:	Ancient Christian Writers
AGLS:	Alcuin/Grove Liturgical Studies
ANF:	The Ante-Nicene Fathers
ANRW:	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
BGL:	Bibliothek der Griechischen Literatur
BLE:	<i>Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique</i>
BMus:	<i>Bibliothèque du Muséon</i>
CAH:	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>
CCSG:	Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca
CCSL:	Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina
CHLG:	<i>Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy</i>
CSCO:	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSEL:	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CPG:	<i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</i>
CPL:	<i>Clavis Patrum Latinorum</i>
CSS:	Cistercian Studies Series
CWS:	Classics of Western Spirituality
DCB:	Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines
DEC:	<i>Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils</i>
DLT:	Darton Longman and Todd
DSp:	<i>Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique, histoire et doctrine</i>
ECF:	Early Church Fathers
EEC:	<i>Encyclopedia of the Early Church</i>
ET:	English translation
FC:	Fathers of the Church

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Edited by Frances Young, Lewis Ayres and Andrew Louth

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*List of other abbreviations*

GCS:	Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller
Greg:	<i>Gregorianum</i>
GTS:	Grazer Theologische Studien
HeyJ:	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
HeyM:	Heythrop Monographs
HTR:	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUT:	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
JAC:	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
J ECS:	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JNST:	<i>Journal for the Study of New Testament</i>
J SOT:	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JTS:	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCC:	Library of Christian Classics
MGH:	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
OCA:	Orientalia Christiana Analecta
OCP:	<i>Orientalia Christiana Periodica</i>
ODCC:	<i>Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church</i>
OECS:	Oxford Early Christian Studies
OECT:	Oxford Early Christian Texts
PG:	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
PIOS:	Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum (now, Pontificio Istituto Orientale)
PL:	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
PO:	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
PPS:	Popular Patristics Series
PTS:	Patristische Texte und Studien
RBen:	<i>Revue Bénédictine</i>
RechSR:	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
REL:	<i>Revue des Études Latines</i>
SA:	<i>Studia Anselmiana</i>
SBAW:	Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie des Wissenschaften
SBL:	Studies in Biblical Literature
SC:	Sources chrétiennes
SCH:	<i>Studies in Church History</i>
SEA:	<i>Studia Ephemeridis <<Augustinianum>></i>
SecCent:	<i>Second Century</i>
SP:	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
ST:	Studi e Testi
SWGS:	Schriften der wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft in Strassburg

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

List of other abbreviations

TCH:	Transformation of the Classical Heritage
ThH:	Théologie Historique
TRE:	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i>
TS:	Texts and Studies
TTH:	Translated Texts for Historians
TU:	Texte und Untersuchungen
VigChr:	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
ZAC:	<i>Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum/Journal of ancient Christianity</i>
ZKG:	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>
ZNW:	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

Chronological table of early Christian literature

Featuring key writers, works and events

Writers	Works	Events
Philo of Alexandria (fl. c. 30–45)		
Clement of Rome (fl. c. 95)	<i>The Shepherd of Hermas</i> (90–150)	Domitian's persecution? (95–96)
Ignatius of Antioch (fl. c. 100–115)	<i>Didache</i> (100–150)	Trajan's proscription of Christianity? (112)
	<i>Apocalypse of Peter</i> (c. 125–150)	
	Aristides of Athens, <i>Apology</i> (c. 120–138)	
	Papias, <i>Explanation of the Sayings of the Lord</i> (c. 130)	
	<i>Epistle of Barnabas</i> (130–131)	
Valentinus at Rome (c. 136–165)	Justin Martyr, <i>Dialogue with Trypho</i> (c. 138)	Bar Kochba's revolt (138)
Marcion at Rome (fl. 144–?)	Justin Martyr, <i>First and Second Apologies</i> (148–161)	
Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215)	<i>Acts of John</i> (150–180)	
Bardaisan (154–c. 222)		
Tertullian (155–c. 220)		
Polycarp (d. 156)		Polycarp's martyrdom (156)
Justin Martyr (d. 165)	<i>The Acts</i> (= Martyrdom) <i>of St Justin and his companions</i> (165)	
	Melito, <i>Peri Pascha</i> (c. 167–168)	

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-69750-7 - The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature

Edited by Frances Young, Lewis Ayres and Andrew Louth

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Chronological table**(cont.)*

Writers	Works	Events
Irenaeus (<i>fl.</i> c. 175–180)	Tatian, <i>Discourse to the Greeks</i> (c. 165–180) Athenagoras, <i>Supplication for the Christians</i> (c. 177) Theophilus of Antioch, <i>To Autolycus</i> (180)	
Origen (185–253)	<i>The Acts of the Martyrs of Scilli in Africa</i> (180) <i>Gospel of Peter</i> (before 190) <i>Acts of Paul and Thecla</i> (before 190) <i>Acts of Peter</i> (before 190) <i>Acts of Thomas</i> (c. 200–250)	The Martyrs of Scilli in Africa (17 July 180)
Cyprian (200/210–258)		Septimius Severus' persecution? (c. 202–212) The martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity (7 March 202)
Hippolytus (<i>fl.</i> 212–235) Callistus, pope of Rome (<i>regn.</i> 217–222)	Origen, <i>On first principles</i> (c. 220–230) Origen, <i>On prayer</i> (233–234) Origen, <i>Exhortation to martyrdom</i> (235) <i>Apocalypse of Paul</i> (c. 240–250) Origen, <i>Against Celsus</i> (246)	
Novatian (<i>fl.</i> 250–253)		The Decian persecution (250–253)
Antony the Great (250–356) Arius (256–336)		The Edict of Valerian (257–260)
Paul of Samosata (<i>fl.</i> c. 260–268)		Cyprian of Carthage's martyrdom (14 September 258)
Eusebius of Caesarea (263–339/340) Athanasius (295–373) Lactantius (<i>fl.</i> 303–317)		Diocletian's persecution (303–305)

(cont.)

Chronological table

(cont.)

Writers	Works	Events
Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306–373)	Arnobius of Sicca, <i>Against the pagans</i> (c. 311)	Donatism (311–411)
Didymus the Blind (313–398)	Eusebius of Caesarea, <i>Church History</i> (c. 312–325)	The ‘Edict’ of Milan (313)
Pachomius (fl. 320–346)	Eusebius of Caesarea, <i>Preparation for the Gospel and Proof of the Gospel</i> (c. 314–315)	
Constantine (regn. 325–337)	Athanasius, <i>On the Incarnation</i> (c. 320)	Council of Nicaea I (325)
Basil the Great (330–379)		
Gregory of Nazianzus (330–389/390)		Dedication of Constantinople (330)
Gregory of Nyssa (335–394)		
Ambrose (c. 340–397)	Aphraat, <i>Demonstrations</i> (c. 337–345)	
Jerome (340/342–420)		
Evagrius Ponticus (c. 345–399)		
Rufinus (c. 345–410)		
Cyril of Jerusalem (fl. 348–386)		
John Chrysostom (344/354–407)		
Hilary of Poitiers (fl. 350–368)		
Victorinus Afer (fl. 353–362)		
Augustine of Hippo (354–430)	Athanasius, <i>Life of St Antony</i> (c. 356)	
John Cassian (c. 360–435)		
Julian the Apostate (regn. 361–363)		
Diodore of Tarsus (fl. 362–394)	Basil, <i>Hexaemeron</i> (before 370) Basil, <i>On the Holy Spirit</i> (375)	
	Epiphanius of Salamis, <i>Panarion</i> (377)	Death of Valens at Adrianople (378)

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[More information](#)*Chronological table**(cont.)*

Writers	Works	Events
	Gregory of Nyssa, <i>Life of St Macrina</i> (379)	
	Gregory of Nazianzus, <i>Five theological orations</i> (380)	
	Didymus (?), <i>On the Trinity</i> (c. 381–392)	Council of Constantinople I (381)
	Theodore of Mopsuestia, <i>Catechetical Homilies</i> (c. 388–392)	
Theodore of Mopsuestia (fl. 388–428)	Gregory of Nyssa, <i>On the life of Moses</i> (c. 390–392)	
	Nemesius of Emesa, <i>On the nature of man</i> (c. 392–400)	
	Augustine, <i>On Christian doctrine</i> (397–426)	
	Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> (c. 400)	
Theodoret (c. 393–458)	<i>Doctrine of Addai</i> (c. 400)	
	Palladius, <i>Dialogue on the life of St John Chrysostom</i> (c. 408)	
	Augustine, <i>City of God</i> (413, Bks 20–22: 426)	Alaric enters Rome (the 'Fall of Rome') (410)
	Palladius, <i>Lausiaca History</i> (419–420)	
	Philostorgius, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> (425–433)	Council of Ephesus (431)
Cyril of Alexandria (fl. 428–444)	Cassian, <i>Conferences</i> (426–429)	
Nestorius (fl. 428–450)	Socrates, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> (c. 440)	
	Sozomen, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> (c. 439–450)	
	Theodoret, <i>Religious History</i> (c. 440)	
John of Apamea (fl. c. 450)	Theodoret, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> (448–449)	
Jacob of Sarug (451–521)		Council of Chalcedon (451)

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