

SAINT THEODORUS

The name of two Coptic martyrs. One is surnamed Stratelates (“the General”) and the other “Anatolius” (though, as we shall see, understanding this as equivalent to “Eastern” is not correct). The sources concerning them are sometimes common to both, so that we shall deal with them together, while pointing out the distinction between them.

The Coptic tradition on Theodorus Stratelates is directly derived from the Greek tradition, which in turn had a complex development (Delehay, 1922). The relatively ancient, invented text of the Passion of a Theodorus, a soldier who refused to offer sacrifice and who set fire to a pagan temple, was expanded until Theodorus became a general and battled a dragon near the city of Eucaita.

The Coptic tradition took up this last version, perhaps adding other details of its own, especially concerning the events leading up to the dragon episode. The basic text is that of the Passion, which is found in at least three codices, two in Bohairic (National Library, Turin, now lost; Vatican Library, Rome, Copti 66, fols. 172-98, ed. Hyvernat, 1886-1887, part 1, 157-81) and one in Sahidic (Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M 586), and consists simply of the story of his encounter with the dragon and his martyrdom. An Encomium attributed to ANASTASIUS OF EUCAITA adds a story concerning the saint’s family before describing the battle with the dragon. An Encomium attributed to one Theodorus, bishop of Antioch, adds not only the story of the saint’s family but also that of a journey he made to Egypt, where he apparently met Theodorus Anatolius before his martyrdom.

Last, we have two texts describing miracles performed by the [relics](#) of the saint in his shrines; one is attributed to Theodorus of Antioch and the other is anonymous (Vatican Library, Rome, Copti 66, fols. 199-210, ed. Hyvernat, pt. 1, pp. 182ff.).

Theodorus Anatolius is a character from the hagiographico- fictitious Cycle of the family of BASILIDES the General. It is difficult to say whether he was in some way suggested by the existence of the other Theodorus; it is certain that the actions attributed to him are quite different. Theodorus is described as the son of one Sotericus, a royal prince, and he apparently received the surname ANATOLIUS from an uncle of this name.

His Passion has come down in a number of codices (Vatican Library, Rome, Copti 63, fols. 28-54, ed. Hyvernat, Vol. 1, pp. 34ff.; Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M 583, 584, 613) and includes the stories of Diocletianus-Agrippida and of Bishop Gaius of Antioch, the traitor as well as the description of his martyrdom. This text is the basis of the Encomium attributed to Theodorus of Antioch found in a Sahidic codex (British Library, London, Or. 7030).

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