

Irenaeus of Sirmium

I. was a Bishop of Sirmium (present day Sremska Mitrovica in Serbia), one of the most important cities in the Roman province of Pannonia.¹ His martyrdom during the persecution under Diocletian and Maximian is described in the *Passio Sancti Irenaei episcopi Sirmiensis*², which is preserved in Latin³, Greek⁴ and Armenian⁵. Nevertheless, due to the lack of further studies in this area,⁶ it is open to debate whether the Greek or the Latin version should be considered the original.⁷ It is also unclear whether the *Passio* constitutes a document of historical value⁸ or not⁹. According to the *Passio* I. had a wife and children. He was arrested by Probus, the prefect of Pannonia, for refusing to obey the imperial command to sacrifice to the pagan gods.¹⁰ After Probus had interrogated him and had him tortured, I. was finally beheaded on April 6th, 304, on the *Pons Basentis*, and his body was thrown into the River Save.¹¹ In the Byzantine,¹² Armenian¹³ and Ethiopian¹⁴ Synaxarium, I. is commemorated on August 23th, whereas the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*¹⁵ and the *Breviarium Syriacum*¹⁶ refer to his anniversary on April 6th. The *Martyrologium Romanum*¹⁷ however, probably taking over a mistake (*VIII Kalendas Aprilis* instead of *VIII Idus Aprilis*) from the Martyrologium of Lyon¹⁸, gives March 25th¹⁹ as the date for his commemoration. A basilica from the 4th/5th century A.D., dedicated to I., as well as his tomb, have been found in the area of Sirmium.²⁰

¹ Cf. Burian, 2000; Caldwell, 2012, 95–102.

² = CPL³ 2058a.

³ = BHL 4466. The *editio princeps* has been done 1668 by Bollandus in the *Acta Sanctorum* [= Bollandus, 1865, 554–555] which is criticized by Dolbeau, 1999, 209, as “sans valeur”; the text offered by Ruinart in the *Acta primorum martyrum sincera et selecta* in 1689 is more reliable [= Ruinart, 1859], which is reproduced by Gebhardt, 1902, Knopf/Krüger/Ruhbach, 1929 [= ⁴1965], Ruiz Bueno, 1951 [= ³1974], and Musurillo, 1972, 294–301; an overview concerning manuscripts, editions and translations as well as a new critical edition of the Latin text is provided by Dolbeau, 1999, 209–213.

⁴ = BHG³ 948–951. Cf. e.g. Bollandus, 1865, 19*; Latyšev, 1911, I 281–283.

⁵ = BHO 537.

⁶ Cf. Dolbeau, 1999, 206–207.

⁷ For discussion cf. Simonetti, 1955, who refers especially to Tillemont, 1698, and Mazzocchi, 1755. Simonetti has some preference for an initial – now lost – succinct Greek version which underwent a Latin as well as a Greek redaction. Both are preserved until today in the shape of the two versions mentioned above.

⁸ Cf. e.g. Frutaz, 1959.

⁹ Cf. e.g. Simonetti, 1955, 73; Herzog, 1989, who considers a liturgical employment of the text.

¹⁰ Cf. Caldwell, 2012, 99.

¹¹ Cf. Musurillo, 1972, xlv.

¹² Cf. Delehaye, 1902.

¹³ Cf. Bayan, 1971.

¹⁴ Cf. Guidi/Grébaut, 1971.

¹⁵ Cf. Delehaye, 1931, 177.

¹⁶ Cf. Mariani, 1956.

¹⁷ Cf. Delehaye *et al.*, 1940.

¹⁸ Cf. Dubois/Renaud, 1976.

¹⁹ Cf. Amore, 1966, 899; Aubert, 1995, 1480; Frutaz, 1959; Maritano, 2007, 2621.

²⁰ Cf. Aubert, 1995, 1480; Herzog, 1989.

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