

INTRODUCTION

Information concerning St.Expeditus can be found only in martyrologies, so we cannot obtain precise details about his existence.

From the Geronimian Martyrology:

18th April: "Romae Eleutheri episcopi et Anthiae matris eius et Parthenii, Caloceri, Fabii, Proculi, Apollonii, Fortunati, Crispini, EXPEDITI, Mappalici, Victorini, Gagi."

19th April: "In Arminia Militana civitate Hermogeni, Gagi, EXPEDITI, Aristonici, Rufi, Galatae una die coronatorum."

As we can see, St.Expeditus is commemorated in the martyrology on April 18th and on April 19th, but the first date seems to be a mistake (mistakes were very common in martyrologies). **The only facts that seem to be certain concern the day (19th April) and the place of his death (Melitene - nowadays Malatya, Turkey);** nothing can be said about the circumstances and the time of his martyrdom (someone states that he died under Diocletian, but this hypothesis is not demonstrated).

HYPOTHESES

There are many theories which try to deny the existence of St.Expeditus. According to Delehay, the word Expeditus is a wrong reading of Elpidius; someone has stated that Expeditus is only an adjective referred to a person and not a name of person; others have stated that this adjective was referred to St.Minas. **All these theories are not proved, especially the ones which try to identify St.Expeditus with another saint.**

LEGENDS

According to a legend, St.Expeditus was the commander of the legion called "Fulminante", but **this story is totally invented.**

There are also many versions of another legend, according to which the name Expeditus is recent and derives from the writing "Spedito" on a box containing relics of an unknown saint. Obviously, **these stories are completely false:** in fact, the name Expeditus was already contained in the Hieronymian Martirology (5th century).

THE VENERATION OF ST.EXPEDITUS

The name Expeditus has probably caused puns, so he has become the saint of the rapidity. He is the patron of dealers, sailors, students, examinees; he is also invoked for urgent causes and prayed for the success in lawsuits.

He is portrayed like a soldier (the latin word "expeditus" was also the name of a category of soldiers) and, under his foot, has a crow with the writing "cras" ("tomorrow"). In Germanic countries, the saint indicates a clock, whereas in the rest of the world (especially in recent representations) he has a cross with the writing "hodie" ("today") in his hand.

Contrary to what is usually said, the veneration of this saint is not quite recent (the cult was not born in Germany and Sicily in the 18th century): it was already developed in Turin in the Middle Ages. At the beginning of the 20th century, some bishops did not succeed in abolishing the cult of St.Expeditus.