

The martyrdom of Potamiaena and Basilides (Eus. HE, VI, 5)

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The story about young woman Potamiaena, who lived in Alexandria, and the warrior Basilides was told by Eusebius of Caesarea in Church History (6, 5) and Palladius in Lausiaca History (3). There're some differences between these versions in the dating and circumstances, and Palladius said nothing about Basilides. Despite Palladius' indication of the IV century, we think that both authors reported on the same Alexandrian martyr of the beginning of the 3rd century. These events could occur between 206 and 210; this is indicated by the name of the prefect of Egypt. The cruel execution of Potamiaena — her body was burned with boiling tar — although not characteristic for early martyrdoms, but it is not impossible. Neither Potamiaena nor Basilides were directly connected with Origen, but Eusebius included this story in his narrative about the youth of Alexandrian theologian. Particular attention was paid to the history of Basilides' conversion and its comparison with a similar story in the Martyrdom of Perpetua. The history of Basilides' conversion under the influence of a dream, when Potamiaena appeared to him, looks quite organic not only for the Christian, but also for the pagan tradition of that time. The voluntary confession of Christianity by Basilides wasn't indicate of Montanism. This story is the first significant testimony of the martyrs of Alexandria and one of the few authentic narratives of the persecution of Christians before the start of the persecution of Decius.



Key words: [early Christianity](#), [hagiography](#), [persecutions](#), [Alexandria](#), [Eusebius of Caesarea](#)

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