

NABRAHA, SAINT

A fourth-century confessor who was tortured under DIOCLETIAN but survived, was sent into exile, and became an ascetic (feast day: 8 Abib). He is not in the Copto-[Arabic](#) SYNAXARION, and his Passion has survived only in a damaged Sahidic codex of the ninth century in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Hamuli E.), published by H. Munier (1918). He is one of the very few [confessors](#) who survived until the reign of CONSTANTINE.

The text opens with the edict of Diocletian sent to the perfect [ARIANUS](#) in Egypt instructing him to force the Christians to sacrifice to the [pagan](#) gods. Nabraha comes forward confessing his [faith](#) and refusing to sacrifice; he is therefore sentenced to death. The devil appears and tries to discourage him. Then follows his confrontation with the [prefect](#) and subsequent tortures. Both heavenly apparitions (Raphael, Jesus) and diabolical ones appear during his tortures. At a certain moment, Arianus has to leave for the south, and he decides to take Nabraha with him to Antinoopolis.

During the journey, Nabraha performs a miracle aboard the ship they are traveling on. In prison at Antinoopolis, he cures the warden's son of an ailment. In the law court, in the course of renewed tortures, once again he has the vision of Jesus, who makes it clear to him that a sanctuary will be erected in his name. This seems to be the main reason for which the text was written. At last [Arianus](#) decides to send Nabraha to exile. The text ends with the death of Diocletian and Maximianus and the accession of Constantine to the throne, leading to the release of Nabraha from prison. Thereafter he becomes an ascetic until his death.

The [writing](#) of the text is very careless and it must be dated toward the end of the original Coptic hagiographic activity (the eighth century; see HAGIOGRAPHY). Moreover, it must have been conceived in a suburban area, since it does not belong to any cycle and, as we said before, it has not been accepted in the Synaxarion.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Munier, H. "Un Nouveau martyr copte, Saint Nabraha." *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Archéologie orientale* 14 (1918):97-190.

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