

I, 35 *Abu 'l-Barakāt's Widow Purchases a Share in Two Stores*

Fustat, June 1143

TS 16.146 + TS 12.176

The upper-right side of the document is in TS 16.146, the lower-left side in TS 12.176. Between these two pieces, most of text has been preserved.

A physician had bought from his two nephews one sixth of two adjacent stores, *dakān*, belonging to them, one of which served one of them, also a physician, as *sukn* (office, or domicile, or both).¹ The price for this sixth was 53 3/4 dinars. The uncle had volunteered to give his nephews the right to buy this sixth back at the same price during a certain period (how long is not spelled out in the very large document). Naturally (but not mentioned), rent had to be paid for the share sold.

Now Abu 'l-Barakāt's widow, Sitt al-Sāda ('Mistress over the lords'), daughter of Abū Naṣr al-Tinnīsī,² also a physician, purchases that sixth for the same price and under the same conditions granted by the seller. This clearly was a form of investment.³ Whether also veiled interest was involved, no one can tell.⁴

¹ {As suggested in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:286, it is likely that the physician is not the same as one of the nephews, though both are called Abu 'l-Barakāt. A doctor's office was also called *dukkān*, 'store'; see Goitein, *ibid.*, 2:253.}

² Family name, derived from the port-city and great center of linen industry Tinnīs on the northeastern corner of the Nile Delta.

³ {See Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 4:83, 372, n. 8, referring to this document.}

⁴ See I, 23, especially page 232, n. 6.

I, 36 *The Engagement of Sitt al-Khāṣṣa d. Abu 'l-Barakāt*

Fustat, November 7, 1146

Bodl. MS. Heb. d. 66 (Cat. 2878), fols. 48 and 47 (in this order)

Ed. Goitein, "Three Trousseaux," 86-92, 97-103, 104-6.¹ See discussion in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, 3:84-85; revised translation *ib.*, 4:317-21.

Although her father was dead, the position of Sitt al-Khāṣṣa ('Mistress of the Elite') was very strong, as evidenced by the conditions detailed in this long engagement contract. The wedding was fixed for a full year later, but the future husband, the son of a 'perfumer,' had to deposit 40 dinars, the first installment of the nuptial gift, with a third party, although it was usual to present it at the wedding. The later installment, due in the event of a divorce or the demise of the husband, was 100 dinars, a large sum rarely promised for that purpose. Sitt al-Khāṣṣa was given five of twenty-four shares of the house of her grandfather Joseph Lebdi² and one half of her father's house, but "the rent of her properties is hers, she may spend it for whatever purpose she prefers; he (the groom) has no say in this matter." Moreover "she may choose the place and the domicile where she wishes to live." Her dowry, worth 500 (exactly: 496) dinars—real ones; the number was not doubled in her honor—consisted of 25 pieces of jewelry, headed by a gold tiara inlaid with pearls, worth 70 dinars, 44 items of clothing, and numerous pieces of bedding, copper, utensils, and toiletries.

The contract shows that Sitt al-Khāṣṣa's family belonged to the Jewish upper middle class, but in her trousseau I looked in vain for Indian silks, ornaments or bronze lamps that one would expect in the outfit of the daughter of an Indian trader.

¹ On page 106, first line, read *ṣdr* for *ṣrr* (*d* and *r* are hardly distinguishable in Hebrew script) and translate on page 91, line (36) 'a front (*ṣadr*) and two side curtains.'

² The house was known as that of Ibn al-Lebdi, but was shared with Abu 'l-Surūr b. Binyām (Arabic form of the name Benjamin), known as having traveled from Aden to Fustat, see II, 11a, line 37, and verso, line 6. I assume that Lebdi had sold fourteen shares to this fellow trader. {As noted in I, 34b, n. 1, he married—or at least betrothed—Joseph Lebdi's daughter, Sitt al-Ahl.} The remaining ten shares were equally divided between brother and sister, as was the house of their father.