

4. Partnership between Two Washers of the Dead,
 Father and Son, and a Newcomer
 (Jan., 1061)

Washers of the dead, like other funeral personnel, were appointed by the community, but from the economic point of view were on their own, like a modern undertaker.

The background of this partnership certainly was that the old man had held the original license, wherefore he and his son received a larger share than the new partner.

INA D 55, f. 8

(see ENA NS 22, § 262, ll 5-6)

Sulaymān b. Husayn and his son Ishāq appeared before the court in the synagogue of the Palestinians and so did Dā'ūd b. Hasan, nicknamed Curly. They took upon themselves to perform their service of the washing of the dead to the complete satisfaction of the community, day and night¹, not to be late, or to impose conditions on the family of the deceased, or to threaten to leave them.² The symbolic purchase was made from them in full concerning this undertaking in the prescribed manner.

Subsequently, Sulaymān b. Husayn and his son Ishāq contracted with the said Dā'ūd a partnership on these conditions: When one of them will be charged with a ^{job} case, all will perform that service together with complete dedication and pure intention, one cooperating with the other. Of whatever God will grant, little or much, one quarter will go to Dā'ūd and the rest to Sulaymān and his son. When, in response to a claim of them, money will be brought to Sulaymān, one quarter of it will be given to this Dā'ūd and none of them will oppose the other. A strict symbolic purchase was made from them on this in the prescribed manner.

Written on Thursday, Shevat 25th,³ of the year 1372 of (the Era of) the

Documents in Fustat, Egypt, which is situated on the Nile river.

(Signatures)

Eli La-Levi, son of A[mram⁴

Samuel, son of Abraham m(ay he see the) d(ays of the) m(essiah)⁵

[] son of Hasan. Surūr, son of Ḥayyīm Ibn Sabra, m. E.⁶

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NOTES

- 1) Text: "night and day", for in the oriental calendar, Jewish, Christian, or Muslim, a day begins with the nightfall of the preceding day.
- 2) Ar. yataqā'adū bihim, which has a meaning slightly different from the usual 'anhum.
- 3) In this order, which is absolutely exceptional.
- 4) Signed six documents between 1049 and 1066. Not to be confused with his namesake and contemporary Eli b. Amram, head of the congregation of the Palestinians (who was not a Levi). The tiny letters visible above his signature, expressing his "motto", can be identified by a comparison with fragment of a marriage contract, TS 16.29, where they are clear. They are: s, w, g, kī, h, presumably, but not necessarily, an acrostic of a Bible verse.
- 5) Signed as first also TS 16.79 (Nov., 1050; edited; see Stahed, Bibliography, p. 66), where he used, however, a broader pen. Then, too, his father was already dead.
- 6) A member of the ramified Ibn Sabra family, see No. 13, below. Signed and, as here, on the left end, TS 20.23 (Spring, 1049) and Bodl. MS Heb. a 3 (Cat. 2873), f. 43 (Fall, 1059). Several letters addressed to him have been preserved. None of the four signatories was prominent as scholar. They formed a court dealing with communal affairs.