

Wills

Will of a Dying Woman, Freeing Her Two Maiden Slaves and Providing for Them for the Rest of Their Lives

T.-S. 13 J 22, f. 2

(This lady was the wife of the judge and prominent public figure, Nathan b. Samuel, whose signature appears on many Geniza documents written in Old Cairo during the years 1122-1154. He bore the title "Diadem of the Hāverin," meaning, approximately, "the most excellent scholar," which was abbreviated, as in this document, to "the Diadem." He was normally addressed by this title (see p.).)

Our incomplete document is not a formal will, but a memo written down by a person in whose presence the dying lady made ^h her last dispositions. As this was done on a Saturday, when writing is forbidden according to Jewish religious law, it was not possible to record the main points of the will in the presence of the testator, as was usual.

In 1145, a "maid-servant," *wagifa*, three years old and bearing the name Dhahab, "Gold," the same as the first of the two girls mentioned here, was given by the widow of a prominent scholar in Fustat to her brother. The relevant document, T.-S. 12,140, was written and signed by the judge, Nathan b. Samuel, and the persons involved must have been close friends or acquaintances of his. It stands to reason, therefore, that the same person is referred to in the two documents (especially as no other instance of the occurrence of the name Dhahab is known to the present writer from the twelfth century). If so, the background of