

1. 10. 1967

# COUNTRY PEOPLE BEFORE THE COURT IN THE CAPITAL

TS 20.93, sec. A 1

This short entry in the records of the rabbinical court of Fustat was written on the top of a large ~~piece~~<sup>sheet</sup> of paper, composed of two pieces glued together. As the contents of the document show, the scribe expected that there would be a sequel and left therefore much space free. The space was used, however, for a testimony on a transaction taking place on June 22, 1094. Our entry presumably was written only a few days before that date, for it is made out under the authority of the Nagid Mevōrākh, who regained the leadership of the Egyptian Jews only around that time, Abraham b. Isaac, the Scholar, is known from ~~dated~~ documents dated 1050 through 1093. The judge Manasse, mentioned at the end of the document, most probably is identical with Manasse b. Saadya<sup>hū</sup>, the judge of <sup>n</sup>Subāṭ, who presumably had dealt with the matter in the district court of Sunbāṭ -Malīj and now accompanied the litigants to the capital. Manasse wrote the letter TS 13 J 6, f. 21, and Bodl. MS Heb. e 44, f. 99 (Cat. A).

Since the complaint is directed against three brothers and their grown up sons, its object, I assume, was economic competition. The family had opened a workshop or a business or had received a contract of taxfarming detrimental to established interests recognized by the Jewish community of Malīj. <sup>The rendering of the contents by</sup> E. Ashtor, Zion 30 (1965), 65, should

~~xxxxx~~ be corrected in accordance with the translation given below. See also TS 13 J 16 f. 21\*

and refers to al-Malik al-Afdal, who succeeded his father in spring, 1094.

Thus, for the time being, this entry would be the latest datable item from his hand.

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TS 20.93, sec. A

[The following occurred before us, the court appointed by ]  
our lord Mevōṭrākh, the Prince of Princes, the wise Allūf<sup>1</sup>  
the Scholar (of the Yeshiva), the great Sanhedra<sup>2</sup>, the  
Strength of the House of Israel, son of his honor etc.  
Saadya, the Pious - the memory of the righteous is blessed -:  
Our coreligionists of Malīj presented themselves, asking help  
against Manṣūr b. Manasse and his son, Fuḍayl b. Manasse and his  
son and Ṭarīf b. Manasse and his son, and submitted relevant documents,  
witnessed by various people from Malīj. The president of the court  
addressed them (the accused) concerning this matter, whereupon  
boorish talk and much shouting against the president and the  
occurred on their side.  
(others) present ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~. They also said: "We shall  
apply<sup>3</sup> to our lord al-Afḍal - may God give him glorious victory."  
They also threatened to apostate to Islam several times.  
(Addition in the hand of the judge signing below: Ṭarīf also said:  
"This was <sup>a damned thing</sup> ~~only a scandal~~!"<sup>4</sup>) They also shouted upon the judge  
Manasse and upon one of the elders who ~~xxxx~~ upbraided them<sup>5</sup>  
and tried to put them in their right place.<sup>6</sup>

We have written down that which happened in our presence,  
have signed it and given it to their complainants so that it should  
be for them a testimony and title of right.

Abraham, son of Isaac, the Scholar - may he rest in Paradise.

TS 20.93, sec. 1

#### Notes

- 1 This was a title given by the academies of Baghdad.  
(honorary)
- 2 For synhedrion, Council, meaning/mem~~ber~~ber or head of the yeshiva.
- 3 Literally: "Go out", i.e. we shall leave Jewish jurisdiction and shall apply to the Muslim authorities. The reference is to the viceroy al-Malik al-Afdal (in office 1094-1121).
- 4 Text: mayshūma (for mash<sup>3</sup>ūma, see Dozy, Supplement, II, 853a, who renders the meaning as sinistre, mechant, abominable. Obviously, this word could not be used in good society.
- 5 The verb nawwab of the text stands for annab, see Dozy II, 731a.
- 6 See Denizeau, Dictionnaire, s.v. kassar 'alā, noted as Syro-Palestinian usage.

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