

Wills

Will of a Dyer, Before Going on a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Fustat, April 13, 1216

(In Hebrew)

Mosseri Collection A 11

Text in AfaS, p. 172

On Monday, the twelfth day of the month of Iyyār, in the year 4975 of the Creation, which coincides with the year 1526 of the era of the Documents, according to which we are accustomed to date here in Fustat, Egypt, which is situated on the Nile river, under the jurisdiction of our lord, the Nagid, our Master and Teacher Abraham^a)...the following occurred:

M. Abraham, the dyer son of ^oUllā - m(ay his) R(ock preserve him) - appeared before us and said to us: "Be witness to my obligation and contract an agreement with me, write it down, sign it, and hand it over to Ḥalfōn, my partner in a workshop in which we have together invested one hundred and fifty Egyptian dinars^b) and where we are engaged in dyeing. For I am setting out to the Holy Land and do not know what the day will bring forth. Should anything - God forbid - happen to me on this journey which I am about to undertake, I appoint this man, my partner Ḥalfōn b. R. Yeshū^oā, as trustee over all I possess, to administer my house, and to do all that is proper with it.

If he should hear that anything had happened to me during the next three months, and my wife demands thirty Egyptian dinars from him, out of the sum which we have invested in the workshop, she is to give an

oath, whereupon she may take that sum from him. However, if she makes that claim after the lapse of three months, she may take thirty dinars without an oath.^{c)}

As to the rest of my share in our partnership, one-third shall be given to my daughter and two-thirds to my son. However, these sums shall be given to them only after they will have attained maturity.^{nd)}

(There follow legal phrases to the effect that R. Hålfön accepted the trust and that everything was done according to the correct procedure.)

Notes

- a) This is Abraham, the son of Maimonides, who was Head of the Jews of Egypt from 1205 to 1237. A number of honorific epithets follow in the text.
- b) Literally: "My partner, between whom and myself there are 150 dinars in the workshop." The phrase could hardly mean that each of the two had invested 150 dinars.
- c) The dyer's wife had a right to this sum of thirty dinars according to her marriage contract. The oath is to the effect that she has not taken anything from the house which does not belong to her. If she grants her husband's partner a respite of three months, the oath is remitted.
- d) As in many other cases, the will is made in accordance with the Muslim law of inheritance, which assigns a female one-half the share of a male in the same relationship (see p.).