

2. TAXES on fish: Seelence ~~of~~  
or the taxes from the lessors. 15,1100  
the (Seelence, Jan. 15, 1100)

B, I, 2

2 Sublease Granted by a Farmer of Taxes on Silkwork

(Damietta, January 15, 1106)

Oxford, Bodl. Ms. Heb. d 66 (Catal. 2878), f. 8

(The actual collection of the dues from the silkworkshops must have required much personal supervision. Therefore, we find here three elders subleasing in partnership the farming of the taxes on silkweaving and dyeing in a small place.)

We, the witnesses signing beneath this document, testify that the following has occurred in our presence. M. Musāfir b. Eli, m(ay his end be) b(lessed), the farmer of the taxes on silkwork and dyeing in Damietta, appeared before us and said: "Give witness and arrange with me for the symbolic purchase, valid from now on...<sup>a)</sup> that I have subleased all my rights to the tax-farming of silkwork in Abawān,<sup>b)</sup> which I hold by a rescript from the sovereign - may God increase his highness and exaltedness - to the honorable M. and R. Joseph, the judge, "The Delight of the Academy," the man of Israel,<sup>c)</sup> son of Abraham, m(ay he rest in) E(den), and to the two brothers M. and R. Daniel and Ḥalfōn, the sons of the cantor Isaac, m.E., for the duration of one full year, twelve consecutive months,<sup>d)</sup> beginning with the middle of the month of Shevat (January/February) of the year four thousand, eight hundred sixty and six of the creation of the world, and ending with the middle of the month of Shevat of the year 4867 of the creation,<sup>e)</sup> for a total of twenty-four dinars, to be paid in monthly instalments of two dinars. I undertake to support them with every means at my disposal, if they incur any difficulty or meet any opposition."

The three aforementioned elders also appeared before us and said to us: "Please arrange for the symbolic purchase from us...to the effect that we

have subleased from M. Musāfir b. Eli all he has previously mentioned. We, on our side, undertake to pay him two dinars every month without any delay or evasion.

We made the symbolic purchase from all concerned in the form prescribed by the sages and wrote three<sup>f)</sup> copies, which we handed over to them... This was done on Monday, the eighth of the month of Shevat, in the year four thousand, eight hundred and sixty-six of the creation of the world in the city of the island of Caphtor,<sup>g)</sup> which is situated both on the great sea and on the Nile River.

(Three signatures, among them that of Peraḥya b. Halfōn "the candidate," whose grandson Obadiah became Nagid, or head of the Jews, of Palestine and Syria under Saladin (cf. MJ I, p. 257 and II, p. 312).)

Notes

- a) Legal phrases in Hebrew to the effect that the declaration was made by the free will of the person concerned.
- b)
- c) This strange epithet, Biblical in wording, means perhaps that the judge protected his fellow religionists in an hour of danger.
- d) As 7 years in a 19 year cycle of the Jewish calendar have 13 months, this specification was not superfluous. The year in question was, of course, not a leap year of 13 months.
- e) Like our scribe, many others preferred variety. Thus he writes the numbers first in words and then in numerals; he expresses the notion "creation of the world" in Aramaic in one line, and in the next in Hebrew; and the name of the town Damietta is rendered above in Arabic and below with its Hebrew epithet.
- f) The two brothers obviously received only one copy.
- g) One of the Biblical epithets of the town of Damietta in the Middle Ages (cf. Jeremiah 47:4). It was chosen, because Damietta is situated on a peninsula formed by the Nile and the sea.

M<sub>0</sub> II 313

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0000 *James B. ...*

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