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Agreement Between a Woman About to Give Birth, Her Husband and Her Mother

Cairo, September-October 1137

PER

Wienna, Ershersog Rainer Collection, Heb. 89

(The background of this rather complicated document may be reconstructed as follows: The woman's husband had children from a provings marriage, and she was, therefore, particularly eager to safeguard the future of the child she was expecting. This had already been done to a large extent in her marriage contract, where it was stipulated that the dowry which she brought, as well as all payments due to her, would go to her children, to the exclusion of other heirs of her husband. In addition, she now wants half of a house, given by her to her mother prior to her marriage, to revert to her future child. The other half belonged to her, and both she and her busband were eager that the whole should become the property of the expected members. The old lady, however, had earmarked sixty per cent of her share for her brother and misces and forty per cent for charitable purposes. In view of this, our document stipulates that the gifts intended by the old woman will be made by her somin-law in cash after her death, while the half of the house referred to will be registered as property of the newborn.

The document should be understood in its historical context. The expecting mother belonged to one of the leading families of her community, as her grandfather was the "Head of the congregations" Mevorakh, a man

prominent in the politics of the community about the middle of the eleventh century (cf. MJ I, pp. 146-7). On the other hand, her uncle, the judge Mathan b. Solomon, signatory of many documents in Fustat during the years 1122-1148, was a refugee from Palestine, which was occupied at that time by the Grusaders. It stands to reason that her mother, too, had come from Palestine and has, therefore, no possessions of her own in Cairce. This explains why she was given, in her old age, one-half of a house by her daughter, who had inherited or received it as a gift from her father's family, or perhaps from a former husband. For one gets the impression from our document that the expecting mother was a fully mature, resolute woman, and not too young any more herself. This tallies well with the fact that her grandfather already appears as an influential man in a letter dated 105% almost a full hundred years before our document

We, the undersigned, know the following for certain and bear witness to it. We called on Sheikh Abu 'l-Faraj, M. and R. Yeshil's, the elder, som of M. and R. Judah, the honorable elder - m(ay he rest in) E(den), known as "the son of the sparrow," in the presence of his wife Sitt al-Ahl, d) the daughter of our Teacher Zadok, m.E., son of M. and R. Mevērākh, the Head of the Communities, m.E., who said to us:

"I am a woman about to give birth, and I do not know what will happen

be written down in a document, so that none of us can annul or renounce it. We agreed that I should buy for him, from my mother, half of the house which I gave her as a gift before I married him, and ask her to respect fall, (Cf. sell it to him for a hundred dinars, forty of which will be given to the hidden poor of Cairo and Fustat, fifteen to the three daughters of my maternal aunt, five dinars to each of them, and the rest of the hundred dinars, which is forty dinars, whall belong to my maternal uncle, the Have, our Teacher Mathan ha-Kohen, member of the Great Court - ma(y his) Ro(ek preserve him) - to do whatever he likes with it, making having any right to interfere or to have voice in the matter.

All this will be done in the event that I have a child from this husband of mine, and that the child will be alive at the time of the purchase of the half of that house, which I promised to acquire from my mother after her death; and an condition that my husband registers it for the child - whether male or female - in addition to everything else due to the child on the basis of my marriage contract, to the exclusion of his children, who are not from me, and of anyone else."

The elder Abu '1-Faraj agreed to this and undertook to fulfil her stipulations.

Then her mother, called Basana, g daughter of our teacher Solomon

ha-Kohen - o(f blessed) m(emory) - came in and she informed her of the

agreement made between her and her husband and asked her to sell him the half of the house, of which she had made her a gift before her marriage, for one hundred dinars, the purchase to become into effect after her death, on condition, eto. h)

Finally, when the elder Abu 'l-Faraj had accepted all these conditions and undertaken to carry them out, the above mentioned Hasana sold him the complete half of the house which had been given to her on condition, eto, and on condition that he pay the price of the house in each, not in installments and without asking for respite, that is to say, sixty to the three daughters of her maternal aunt and to her maternal uncle, the Häver, while the remaining forty will be paid in stallments to the poor, two dinars per ments.

(The document reiterates that the purchase will be valid only if the child survives, and concludes with the usual reference that the symbolic purchase necessary for validating any transaction had been made in the correct form. The date given is: Tishri 1449 of the era of the documents in al-Ma^Gissiyya al-Qāhira, the official name of Cairo at that time. The lower part of the sheet which contained the signatures is out away. The document is in the handwriting of the famous scribe Halfon b. Manasse halevi (of. p.).

Notes

- a) Details about him in the present writer's Introduction to the Study of the Cairo Geniza Documents (in preparation).
- b) Cf. MJ II, p. 169, Note 1, where 1037 is a misprint for 1039. The father of the lady, Zadoq, appears in various undated Geniza fragments which were written by scribes who flourished shortly before or after 1100.
- This sobriquet was borne by the father, Judah, as is proved by ms.

 T.-S. 12-94, line 4, which deals with another son of his, Moses.

 The word "sparrow" (in the feminine) has no article which suggests that the sobriquet had become a family name: ben Gusfüra ("sparrow-son").
- d) "The mistress of the family."
- e) Needy people of good family, who do not accept alms in public.
- f) Hebrew haver, serving almost as a proper mane of the person bearing it (see below and p.).
- g) "The fair," the female equivalent of Basan, but not at all as common as the latter.
- h) The conditions and stipulations are repeated here in full-
- 1) See Note g.

Comments

l. Text: baod caining, later on twice; baod hayat caining, "after her substance," or "after the life of her substance (has ceased)."

1 אלדי בעלפה אני תתופי מסה ונחקה ונסחד בת אנגא חברנא ענד אלשיך אבן אלפרב פרן"ר ישועה הזקן 2 בר סרור יהודה הזקן הנכבר נ"ע דידיע בן עצפורה ותצרה זובתה כת אלאהל בח דבנ צדון נע בר(פרור 3 מבורך רצי הקהלות נייע וקאלת לנא אעלמו אנני אפראה מקרבת ללולאדה ומא אעלם מא יכון 4 פני זקד חקרר ביני ובין זוגי תקריר ואנא אשתחי יכתב בינוא בה שטח חתי לא יקצר אחדנא יחיד 5 ענה ו א יעוד ען שי מנה ידאך אנני אועדתה אנני אטתרי לנ מן ואלדתי בשף אלתי כנת 5 להא מחנה קבל אתצאלי אליה ראסאלהא חביעה לה במאיה דינאר, מנהא ארבעין דינ חכון 7 ללפניים אלמסותרין אלתי באלקאתרה ימצר יכמסה עשר דינ" לבנאת כאלתי אלחל(א)תה, לכל יאתרה סנהם כסטה דנאניר וכא יבקא כן אלפאיה דינ" יהו כספה ואבקי דינ" תכון לכאלי אלחבר רבנא 9 נתן הכהן התבר בסנהדרין גדולה ישבי יפעל פיהא כא יראה לא יכון לאחד עליה פ" דלך אעתראץ ולא נשר ודלך גמיעה יכון ממפא בחית יכון לי מן זוגי דנן ילד מ" קד אלהיאה פי יקת צחה ביע חדא אלנצף דאר אלדי אועדתה כאן אטתריה לה כן נאלדתי בעד עינתא ובחית איצא יכתב דלך 11 יאלולד 12 אלדי יכון לי מנה מע במיע מא הו ליא מן במיע פא חהיה כתובתי באן אלולד דבר או אנהי ולא יעדל 13 בשי מן(דלד אלי) אולאדה אלדי לים מני אלה לגירהם ווקע אלרצא מן אלשין אכן אלפרב דוגהא 14 דלך ואלהום בה יקבלה פלי נפסה יענד דלך אמצרת ואלדתהא הנקראת מסנה בת רבנה שלמת הכהן ז"ל אעלם הא גמיע מא חקבר בינהא ובין זוגהא וסאלחהא אן חביעה בעף אלדאר אלד" בחבתה 15 16 להא טתנה קבל זי בהתא יה במאית דיב" בעד תיאה עינהא בשרם אן יכון אלולד אלד" מ" תאכל בה 17 פ" קיד אל תיצה ככד עינהא ובשרט אן יכתב לה איצא במיף מא מתויה כתובתהא וכא הו 18 כארו ענה: פאן יכון ענד דלן אלבין צחים פ' דלך אלרקת וממצא פלמא קבל דלך אלשיך 19 אבן:אלרג ואכרסה יעלה נפסה ואלמום בה חיניד שבאעתה תסנה הנוכרה בפיע אלנצף דאר 20 שלפדכור אלפוהבב להא בפחנה מן אבנחחא במאלה דיני בעד חיאה עינהא 21 בחית מצח בסיע אלטרים אלמדכורת מנה ולא ינקד שי סנהא ידלך אן יכון אל מולוד אלדי לה 22 מן בנתהא יעיש דלך אלוקת ויכתב לה אלוצף דאר יבפיק

מנהא ידלך אן יכון אל מולוד אלדי לה 22 מן בנתהא יעים דלך אלוקת ויכתב לה אלבדף דאר יבמיק
מנהא ידלך אן יכון אל מולוד אלדי לה 22 מן בנתהא יעים דלך אלוקת ויכתב לה אלבדף דאר יבמיק
מא הו לואלדתה פי כתובההא 23 וכאב ענהא מטבי פרומה ולעילא יבחית יקום באלמאיה דינ" תמן
אלנבף דאר נקד פן גיר 24 תקסים ולא מראפעה מן דלך מתין לחלתה כאלא ולכאלהא אלתבר ישצו
ואלרבעין אל 25 באקיה מן דלך יקום בהא ללעניים מקסמה דינאין כל מהם ובחית איצ"א לא יצח הדא
ביע אלא ענד ומאה אלבאיעה בעד אן יכון לאבנההא ילד יעים פי דלן אלוקת ויכון קד 27 תבת
לה מן ואלדה במיע אל שרום אלד" קד תקדם דכרהא ואד לם יכון הם דלך אליקת 28 ילד לא יצח ביע

小の事情就要感情也不不住 二次八名 名を下す

ולא ילום כי שי מנה מלוס, ואקנינא בן במיעהם עלי דלך קנין עמור 29 המור בכלי הכעד לקנות בו מעמשיו בביטול כל מודעין ותנאין ודלך פ' חדש תשרי30 טנת א תומ ש לפנין שמרות באלמעזיה אלקאהרה

以前の後のでは、大きない、のはないながらないないないできないというです。 かいへ 書き

הסכוכה לפנשאט מדנהא