

10. TYRIAN GLASS SENT TO EGYPT
A POWER OF ATTORNEY GIVEN IN TYRE, LEBANON, JAN., 1011

The famed glass industry of Phoenicia continued to flourish in Islamic times and during the occupation of the Lebanese coast by the Crusaders. Around 1140, we have an order for "red Beirut glass" sent to Fustat from Aden.¹ About Tyre in Crusader times (ca. 1168) Benjamin of Tudela reports this: "The Jews own sea-going vessels, and there are glass-makers among them who make that fine Tyrian glass ware which is prized in all the countries".² The ^{Hebrew} document translated below reveals a similar situation about one hundred and sixty years earlier.

The commercial relations between Tyre and Fustat were strengthened by family ties: the attorney in Fustat happened to be the father-in-law of the Tyrian representative of the merchants, who had sent glass ware to Egypt. Another document from Tyre, translated in vol. II, shows that such arrangements were carefully planned.³ They were indeed ubiquitous in the Mediterranean area, see Med. Soc. I, p. 48.

13 J 33, f. 5⁴

This happened before us, the Court⁵ and the elders, whose signatures testify at the bottom of this document, on Thursday, the 18th Shevat, in the fourth year of the

Week⁶, of the year 4771 of the Creation (Jan., 1011)
in the city of Tyre, which is situated on the coast of
the great sea that stretches towards sunset.

Khalaf b. Moses b. Aaron, the representative of
the merchants in Tyre, known as Ibn Abi Qida, appeared
before us and said to us: "Be witnesses to the symbolic
purchase⁷, write the document in expressions conveying full
rights, sign and send it to my father-in-law Solomon
b. Rabi⁸ in Misraim (Fustat) to serve him as a title of
right and proof. For I have willed, out of my free will,
without being coerced, or forced, or being mistaken,
but being in full capacity and acting freely, to give
him four cubits of land belonging to me⁹ as a complete,
irrevocable, and valid gift and together with them I have
appointed him as my attorney¹⁰ with full powers in all
law suits which I might have against anyone and, in
particular, my claims against Caleb b. Aaron, the repre-
sentative of the merchants in Fustat, known as Ibn al-[[...]].

This Solomon b. Rabi⁶ will go to this Caleb and
claim from him the money he owes me, namely the price of
thirty-seven baskets of glass, which I sent to him with the
order to sell them, namely: Twenty-four baskets, marked as
mine exclusively. Eleven baskets, marked as joint con-
signment of myself and Abraham b. Habashi¹¹, of which one
half, five and a half baskets, were mine. Fifteen

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baskets, marked as joint consignment of myself and Aaron b. Jacob, known as Ibn Abi Raghif¹², of which one half, seven and a half baskets, were mine. Total: thirty-seven baskets.

I empower herewith my father-in-law Solomon b. Rabi^c to claim their price from the said Caleb, to receive them from him, and to do with them as he sees fit. But if the said Caleb tarries to pay, the said Solomon has the right to sue him in any court he wishes,¹³ to have a summons issued or canceled, to pronounce a ban against him in his presence or absence, or to have him give an oath. No one has the right to interfere with his actions, for his power and competence to release and to acquit are like mine. Whatever he does is acceptable to me and my heirs after my death and I am not entitled to say to him: "I have appointed you to serve my interests, not to damage me." I and my heirs after my death accept full responsibility for this power of attorney, as is equitable and has been instituted by the sages in accordance with the law. This is not an undertaking not meant seriously¹⁴ or a mere formulary.

We have made the symbolic purchase in the proper manner from the said ^KWhalaf b. Moses b. Aaron for the said Solomon b. Rabi^c with regard to all that is written and stated above. All secret depositions and

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conditions have been annulled. We wrote and signed this
and sent it to Fustat to serve Solomon as a title ~~or~~^{of}
right and a proof. Confirmed. (Signatures:)

Hubaysh¹⁵ ha-Kohen, ^{son of} ~~h.~~ Joseph, (may his) s(oul)
r(est in peace)

Solomon ha-Kohen, son of ^R ~~h.~~ (abbi) Aaron, the pure¹⁶
Kohen.

Jacob ha-Kohen, ^{son of} ~~h.~~ Na^mzaman, (May his) s(oul) r(est
in peace).

Joseph ha-Kohen, son of ^R ~~h.~~ (abbi) Jacob, the scribe
(may he) r(est) i(n) E(den)¹⁷

Elhanan, son of ^R ~~h.~~ (abbi) Moses, member (of the
academy in Jerusalem).

NOTES

1. Westminster College, Frag. Cairens. Misc. 9,
India Book 50.

2. Benjamin of Tudela, ed. Adler, p. 18.

3. TS 13 J 25, f. 20^{*}, ed. S. Assaf, (Isaiah
Press Jubilee Vol.), Yerushalayim, 1953, pp. 106-107,
issued by the same judge as our document.

4. Ed. S. Assaf, Tarbiz, 9(1938), 196-¹⁹7. See
ibid., 15-16. The document is in excellent Hebrew and
is beautifully written (style of script identical with
that used at the Jerusalem yeshiva). Several words are
effaced through water damage.

5. Meaning the presiding judge, who was a
professional and member of the yeshiva of Jerusalem. See
n. 17, below.

6. Of the sabbatical cycle, see Leviticus,
chap. 25. Only places following Palestinian custom kept
numbering the years of these weeks.

7. All legal actions were confirmed in Jewish
courts by a symbolic purchase, see Med. Soc., II, p. 329,

and p. , above. (Introduction)

8. "Spring rain" (a symbol of blessing), very rare in the Geniza documents, but still in use today.

9. See p. , above. (Introduction)

10. Heb. Ḥntylr, which is Greek entolarios, used in documents following Palestinian custom.

11. "Abyssinian", "swarthy", not to be confused with the family name al-Habashī, which probably refers to Birkat al-Habash, a suburb of Fustat.

12. "The man with a loaf of bread". Many different situations could account for this nickname, which became a family name.

13. Mostly it is said expressly: both Jewish and gentile.

14. A so-called asmakhtā, see Jastrow, Dictionary, I, p. 94b.

15. "Little swarthy", a name, unlike Habashī, see n. 11, common among the Jews of the Geniza period.

16. Text: kāshēr ("kosher"). A Kohen, that is, a Jew of the clan of the biblical Aaron the High priest, is not permitted to marry a divorcée. If he does, the marriage is valid, but, in some communities, he was regarded as an ex-Kohen and not permitted, for instance, to pronounce the priestly blessing during the service. Special circumstances must have induced this Kohen to underline his purity.

17. This was the professional judge known from several other documents signed by him. The abundance of Kohens in Tyre might find its explanation in the nearness of Galilee, an ancient refuge of priestly families. Minuscule letters are written above and beneath this and the next signature, but they are only partly preserved.