

2-3. Two Cairene Partnerships in which Main Investors  
and Workers Share Profit and Loss

TS 10 J 27, f. 3c (July, 1107), see Med. Soc. I, p. 363, sec. 6.

TS 13 J 3, f. 19 (Jan., 1207), see Med. Soc. I, p. 384, sec. 66.

These two partnerships, which are exactly a hundred years apart in time, but both concerned with Cairo, show some strange affinities. In both, the ratio of the sums <sup>contributed</sup> <sup>investor</sup> /invested/ by ~~capitalist~~ and worker is 10:1; in both profit and loss are shared (in the second case, in equal parts, in the first at a ratio of 2:1); and in both the amount of work to be done by the investor is not defined.

The document of 1107 was issued in Cairo, not in Fustat, as is said expressly. Besides, it is in the handwriting of Abraham b. Nathan <sup>Av</sup>, then the Jewish judge of Cairo. His handwriting was sufficient as witness, wherefore only one other witness signed the record, namely Solomon b. Mevōrākh, a notable, known inter alia, from a huge commenda contract with three India traders, dated Jan., 1116 (India Book 159). The statement is an entry in the record book of the rabbinical court, <sup>and</sup> not one of the copies handed over to the parties. After having copied it, the court clerk crossed it out, as the clerks of merchants did when they had copied an account from a ledger.

The contract of 1207 was issued in Fustat, but stipulated: "We shall commute<sup>1</sup> between Fustat (called, of course, Misr) and Cairo, and Cairo and Fustat, and sell and buy articles of 'itr (spices, perfumes, drugs) for the duration of six<sup>2</sup> months".

The first document is provided here in full translation.

TS 10 J 27, f. 3c

Nethanel, // m. b.<sup>3</sup> // son of Tiq<sup>v</sup>a ("Hope"), m. b., and Eli, son of

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Mevassēr ("bringer of good tidings"), m. b., after having asked God, the exalted, for guidance, have concluded a partnership. The said Eli put down 1 dinar and the said Nethanel - 10 dinars, ~~as the business progresses~~ and when the business gets moving, he will add <sup>[to his investment]</sup>. They will sell what they will buy and what Eli will tailor. From whatever God will apportion them from the clothier's shop and the tailoring, two thirds will go to Nethanel, and one to Eli, both profit and loss. Done on the 25th Tammuz of the year 1418 in Cairo. We have made the symbolic purchase from them on this in the prescribed manner. Fixed and valid.

The keys of the store will be in the hand of the said Nethanel.

(Signature)

Solomon, son of Mevōrākh, m. i. E.



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NOTES

- 1) Text: natarakkad. The root rkd is well known as designating an itinerant merchant, see Med. Soc. I, p. 156, but this form, describing a commuter, has not been found by me elsewhere.
- 2) After "six" an almost illegible word is written, which I took in Med. Soc. I, p. 384, as meaning "one half." But I see now clearly that it is nothing but muttasila, "consecutive," a common expression in such a context.
- 3) The blessing "m(ay his end be) b(blessed)," in this period normally used for dead persons, was perhaps written over the line erroneously.