

two years. This was the interest on the loan, and it equaled 709.5 kuruş, precisely 29.6 percent of the loan.⁴²⁵

Interest rates did vary, of course. The orphaned daughter of a Dhikrīn villager from the al-Şūş family lent 1,614 kuruş to a family relative from the village. The “gift” he arranged for the orphan, the price of a silver watch (242.25 kuruş) was exactly 15 percent of the loan.⁴²⁶ Familiarity may have played a role in the lower interest rate. However, when a shaykh of the al-Ḥasāsneh family of the village of Shuyūkh borrowed, through the offices of the Orphans’ Fund (*şundūq al-aytām*), 2,348.5 kuruş from the orphaned children of a relative of his from their village in 1911, his interest, in the form of *Tanqīḥ al-Ḥāmidīyya*, a book of fatwas “purchased” from the court judge for a period of three years, cost him 750 kuruş, equal to 32 percent of the loan.⁴²⁷ These few, representative examples serve to demonstrate that the moneylending system was an integral part of local society, that its procedures and parameters were well established, and that people from all strata of Hebron urban and rural society regularly took loans on credit on fairly similar terms and did so through official channels, in these cases, the sharia court.

⁴²⁵ HR 4/ 129 / 88 (12 al-Q’ada 1312 / 7 May 1895). Mahmoud Yazbak has noted the purchase of fictional objects – books, watches, etc. – as interest in the sharia courts of Nablus and Jerusalem. See his “Muslim Orphans and the Shariaa in Ottoman Palestine According to Sijill Records”, JESHO 44/2 (2001): 130-3). Iris Agmon likewise observed the same frequently in the Haifa and Jaffa sharia courts of the turn of the twentieth-century. Personal communication (2012).

⁴²⁶ HR 3 / 96(?) / 235 (Ghara Ramadan 1286 / 9 September 1869) .

⁴²⁷ HR 22 / 47 / 79 (16 Dhu al-Hijje 1329 (AH) / 24 Tishrīn II 1327 (*maliyye*) / 7 or 8 December 1911). The full title of the book by Hanafite Muhammad Amīn b. ‘Amr b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, known as Ibn ‘Ābdīn, is *al-Uqūd al-Dariyya fī tanqīḥ al-fatāwa al-ḥāmidīyya*.