

In Hebron, the Zionist Organization's Anglo-Palestine bank, forerunner to the Israeli Bank Leumi, was established in the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>431</sup> According to the International Banking Directory of 1920, it was still the only bank in Hebron in the early years of British rule, whereas there were by then six banks operating in Jerusalem,<sup>432</sup> including the Imperial Ottoman Bank, which had opened a Jerusalem-branch building in 1904.<sup>433</sup> Additionally, agents of the Ottoman Agricultural Bank, established in 1888, were appointed to work in district (*kaza*) centers.<sup>434</sup> As will be discussed below, Shaykh Ahmad al-Ja'abri fulfilled this role in Hebron at the turn of the twentieth century.

Documentary evidence found at the ISA indicates that the Ottoman credit-banking system was operating in Palestine and used by at least some Hebron-district residents at the end of the nineteenth century. The two earliest Ottoman loan registers archived in Israel include Hebron city and village borrowers. These are the *Ikrāzāt-i cedide defters* (New Loans)

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<sup>431</sup> "Jewish Colonists Redeem Palestine", NYTimes, 13 October 1912; V. Necla Geyikdağı, *Foreign Investment in the Ottoman Empire: International Trade and Relations 1854-1914* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011): 103.

<sup>432</sup> *International Banking Directory of 1920* (New York: The Bankers' Publishing Company), p. 519.

<sup>433</sup> "Osmanlı Bankası Tarihçesi" (History of the Bank), found on the Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi (Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre) website: <http://www.obarsiv.com/ob-tarih.html>. Christopher Clay adds that the bank's management decided to open in Jerusalem instead of Jaffa due to the city's prestige, despite its lesser commercial importance. See his article, "The Origins of Modern Banking in the Levant: The Branch Network of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, 1890-1914", *IJMES* 26/4 (November 1994): 603.

<sup>434</sup> Bunton (2007): 103, 107.