forfeited his or her property if s/he remained unable to repay the loan.[413] Based on evidence from Hebron, it would appear it would be more accurate to say that while such incidences did occur, they were the exception, not the rule. Moneylending was a functioning economic mechanism. The sheer number of loan cases heard in the Hebron court regularly over the

[413] Mahmoud Yazbak, *Haifa in the Late Ottoman Period 1864-1914: A Muslim Town in Transition* (Leiden: Brill, 1998)*: "*The term for deals made in this way was *bay' wafā'*, and entailed that the debtor would sell a piece of property to the lender equal in value to the amount borrowed, for an agreed period of time after which the loan was discharged … The system on the whole was designed to circumvent the *sharī'a* prohibition on taking interest. It also entailed that debtors who proved unable to pay up their loan at the end of the agreed-upon period simply forfeited their property to the lender." (185)

Kenneth Stein, *The land question in Palestine 1917-1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984): "Fellaheen debt was not a phenomenon of recent origin. For at least three-quarters of a century prior to the British civil administration, the fellaheen had borrowed for seeds, new plows, fresh horses, donkeys, mules…and repayment of other debts, taxes, or private loans. Local landowners, moneylenders, and merchants charged anywhere from 10 percent to 50 percent per annum interest. … Usually the fellah was unable to repay the loan; sometimes he took out a larger new loan. Creditors of the indebted fellah found it easy to acquire the debtor's land as compensation for the outstanding loan." (19)

Nahla Z'ubi in her "The Development of Capitalism in Palestine: The Expropriation fo the Palestinian Direct Producers" (*Journal of Palestine Studies*, 13/4 (Summer 1984): 88-109) argues: "The tithe imposed on these *fellaheen* which, according to M.F. Abcarius, 'represented approximately 35% of the net yield[…]' added to possibilities of crop failure. This, coupled with the growth in the rural population, made it increasingly difficult for the *fellah* to produce enough on his land for his and his family's needs. The only alternative he had was to borrow money from the moneylender, who was either the head of a rich *hamula* or an urban merchant/usurer. The high interest rates claimed by the moneylenders, which exceeded 40 percent and very often reached 100 percent, made the burden of the *fellah* unbearable. … As a result, by the 1920s, large areas of *miri* land had been transferred to urban and rural 'notables' or landlords who, in many cases, were themselves the moneylenders." (95)

The "Our History" page of the Turkish Ziraat Bankası site writes ,of the loan system in the Ottoman Empire before the creation of the bank, that "There was a large community of farmers from the agricultural segment of society…who were continually dependent on personal loans… . These loans were provided by professional moneylenders and by various professionals and tradesmen… . These personal loans at high interest were called 'usurer loans'. At that time interest was calculated daily, resulting in annual interest rates of up to 900%." http://www.ziraat.com.tr/en/OurBank/AboutUs/Pages/HistoryOfOurBank.aspx .