

years of this study indicates that this mortgage/loan system was routinized, legally sanctioned, and an important cog turning the wheels of the local economy.

This point needs to be emphasized *because* there is such a sizable and widespread body of literature in which moneylending is presented matter-of-factly as the domain of the usurious, corrupt urban elite, who unscrupulously contributed to the financial ruin of the countryside. In this regard, it is worthwhile to recall here in full the major findings of Ronald Jennings' pioneering study of loans and credit in the Empire, based on 1,400 cases registered in sharia court *sijillat* between 1600 and 1625 in Ottoman Kayseri, Karaman, Amasya and Trabzon.

1. The use of credit was widespread among all elements of the urban and rural society.
2. The supply of capital available for credit was fairly abundant and hence not the monopoly of any small clique of money lenders.
3. Loans and credit were very much the domain of the Muslim Turkish inhabitants
4. Interest was regularly charged on credit, in accordance with the sharia and kanun, with the consent and approval of the kadi's court, the ulema, and the sultan.
5. A 'commercial' or 'mercantile' mentality and profit motive permeated all the elements of Kayseri society, not just the people of the bazaars but the rural ağas, the Ottoman military class, and the ulema as well.⁴¹⁴

Amos Nadan, who has studied what he calls the informal credit market in (northern) rural Palestine during the Mandate period, has found that urban merchant moneylenders

⁴¹⁴ Ronald C. Jennings, "Loans and Credit in early 17th Century Ottoman Judicial Records", *JESHO (Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient)*, 16/2-3 (1973): 169.