

## Chapter Two

### Claiming Property I: The Villages in the *Esas-ı Emlak* register

This chapter begins to examine the outcome of the property-value and property-tax assessment registration in rural Hebron. It seeks to determine, first, the extent to which the register reflected reality. Secondly, it aims to identify characteristics that defined rural society in Hebron through an examination of the building-scape and population of the villages.

#### **The District of Hebron in 1876 (and not 1875 and not 1877)**

A perusal of secondary literature in search of the size and composition of the Hebron district in the late nineteenth century will yield a confusingly wide range of numbers.<sup>142</sup> This is attributable to the problematic attribution of what is ephemeral data to a stretch of time.

While a number of studies investigating settlement patterns over time in Palestine have

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<sup>142</sup> Compare the range of estimates on the number of villages in the Hebron district in the late-Ottoman period in Alexander Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation 1856-1882, Studies in Social, Economic and Political Development*, trans. William C. Young and Michael C. Gerrity (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992), 188; Mas'ud Amīn Abu Bakr, *Qadhā al-Khalīl 1864-1918* (The District of Hebron 1864-1918), (Amman: Committee for the History of Bilād al-Shām), 34; Suad Amiry, 'Imārat Qura al-Karāsī min tārikh al-Iqtā' fī Rif Filastin fī al-qarnayn al-thāmin 'ashr w'al-tāsi' 'ashr (Architecture of the Throne Villages from the time of the *iqta'* in the Palestinian countryside in the 18th-19th centuries) (2003) 210; and Johann Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine: Politics and Society in the District of Jerusalem 1872-1908* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 196.