

Part One: The Sellers

Due to the large number of villager petitioners involved in this case – nineteen people – the court session was not convened in Hebron. The court scribe, Hebronite ‘Abd al-Qādir Effendi Ḥammouri-zade, was sent to Bayt Kāhil. He convened the legal hearing in the village mosque’s courtyard.³⁹⁵ Present with him in Bayt Kāhil were two Hebronites, Shaykhs Ahmad and Khālid, sons of Shaykh Darwīsh al-Ja’abri. Shaykh Ahmad would, in a few years’ time, have a son he named Muhammad ‘Ali. Shaykh Muhammad ‘Ali al-Ja’abri would, as an adult, establish Hebron University and serve as long-time mayor of Hebron (1940-1976).³⁹⁶ Shaykhs Ahmad and Khalid’s role in the case, according to the court record, was to confirm the identity of the nineteen villagers. It is pertinent here to note what were likely already their professions. Ten years later, in Hebron’s population registry, it was recorded that Ahmad was then serving the municipality and employed as an agent of the Bānq Ziraat (Ottoman Agricultural Bank) and the land-registry offices. His younger brother, Khālid, who could read

³⁹⁵ Recall, similar procedure took place in the Taffūḥ case. Hebron court registers indicate that the court was in a number of cases willing to hold a court session at its clients’ abodes, if the case involved notable families in Hebron or the villages, for example, or in cases like these, where it was deemed to be the most convenient arrangement for the large number of people involved.

³⁹⁶ Michael R. Fischbach, “Ja’bārī, Muhammad ‘Alī”, in Philip Mattar, ed. *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians*, revised edition (New York: Facts on File, 2005), 255. See also ‘Imād al-Bishtāwī, *al-Shaykh Muhammad ‘Alī al-Ja’abārī wa Dawruhu fī al-ḥayā al-‘āma 1900-1980* (Shaykh Muhammad ‘Alī al-Ja’abri and his role in the Public Life 1900-1980) (Hebron: Dār Usāma, 2007), 26, 198.