

state, usufruct rights were given to the body responsible for these properties (al-Murr,1924:11).

Under Ottoman rule, all Waqf land was exempted from taxes. Consequently, the state's rights over the Waqf were nominal rather than real. Returns from Waqf land remained in the hands of the Waqf's administrators. Egyptian Pashas who held land under Waqf Sahih (i.e., whose lands were not used for religious purposes) were also exempted from taxes (Barakat, 1975).

Waqf land in Palestine occupied a very small area. Hence, throughout the Ottoman period, this category was not particularly significant (2). The importance of control over this land began to emerge only under the British rule, partly because of the diminishing quantity of land under the control of indigenous Palestinians and partly due to the specific political prestige which became associated with those who controlled Waqf land. Yet the real significance of this category was realized only under Israeli rule, as a result of the state's seizure of all indigenous Palestinian lands including parts of the Waqf, which was considered to be the most sacred (Fourani,1984:22).

Matruka Land

Literally, this term means unclaimed land. Part of it was used by the state for public purposes (i.e., roads, buildings, etc.), yet the most common use of this land was made by the direct cultivators themselves. Usually uncultivated, it was used for grazing, wood gathering, grain storage and as a water source. No individual could claim this land. However, every large village or a group of smaller villages had access to such lands, normally located on the outskirts of the village's cultivated fields (al-Murr,1924:52).