

and adopted a communal system of cultivation whereby they could defend themselves as a community against the raids (Firestone,1975).

Firestone's geographical reasoning was, however, rejected by other writers, who argued that geography alone cannot explain a particular form of production. Instead, it is suggested (Owen, 1981) that one should look at the structure of production in that region in order to find out why it, in particular, developed the Musha'a form. An examination of the structure of production in the Marj suggests that an important reason for the emergence of Musha'a there lay in the mode of cultivation employed in the area. The predominant crop produced in the Marj was cereal. Peasants relying heavily on this type of crop were often in need of places for storage, of water when rain fall was short as well as other supplementary requirements such as grazing land and grain mills. In the absence of private property in this area, it is logical to conclude that the peasants would adopt a collective system whereby all of them could gain access to such facilities. The Musha'a, in other words, can be seen as a supplementary source of income employed by peasants in grain-producing areas.

Nevertheless, despite its presence in this area, Musha'a in the Marj never stood as an obstacle to the regions's development. On the contrary, when objective conditions for the development of capitalism ripened, the Marj was the first, after the Maritime Plain, to develop capitalist forms of production.

To sum up, production relations on Amiri land, including the land use of the Matruka category, were to a large extent organized around the village commune, with the head of the village/Hamula assuming full responsibility over the distribution of land and the collection of