

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a socio-historical statistical study of the implementation and adoption of Tanzimat-era land-tenure reforms in the Palestinian countryside. It addresses three main questions: (1) what was the character of rural property tenure in mountainous regions of Palestine; (2) to what degree were modernizing property-reform measures adopted by the rural populace; and (3) how did the reform affect rural property-tenure and economic well-being?

The 1858 Land Code was one of a series of Tanzimat reforms that together formalized individual title to property and land tenure. Yet, due to the dearth of accessible documentation, little is known about the implementation of these reforms. Among historians of Palestine, in the absence of proof to the contrary there is broad consensus that the reforms failed. It is widely argued that villagers evaded land registration *en masse*, either because they did not understand the significance of the reform or feared that increased taxation or conscription would result from property registration.

This study brings to light and analyzes a property-value and property-tax assessment register (*Esas-ı Emlak*) compiled in 1876 (1292 *maliyye*) for the villages and rural agricultural lands of the large Halilürrahman (Hebron) district, south of Jerusalem. It permits, for the