

every city, town, and village in the empire and record each and every property, the name of its owner(s), its size, its location, and its monetary worth – have rarely been available for study. This lament is widespread among Ottomanists studying every part of former Ottoman lands.² Few of these registration books have been located and analyzed by Ottoman scholars. Michael Provence was granted a brief permission in 1999-2000 to study property registers of the Damascus rural region, then held at the Syrian Ministry of Agriculture in Damascus.³ Martha Mundy, Michael Fischbach and, more recently, Richard Saumarez Smith have studied land registers and tax registers for Ottoman ‘Ajlun.⁴

² See, for example, Yücel Terzibaşoğlu, “Struggles over Land and Population Movements in North-Western Anatolia, 1877-1914” in Mohammad Afifi, Rachida Chih, Brigitte Marino, Nicolas Michel, and Işık Tamdoğan, eds. *Sociétés rurales ottomanes/ Ottoman Rural Societies* (Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 2005), 299; Birgit Schaebler, *Practicing Musha’: Common Lands and the Common Good in Southern Syria under the Ottomans and the French*, in Roger Owen, ed. *New Perspectives on Property and Land in the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2000), 248.

³ He found that the earliest property surveys were conducted in the 1890s. See his “Ottoman and French Mandate Land Registers for the Region of Damascus”, *MESA Bulletin*, 39/1 (June 2005): 32-43. These records have since been relocated from this archive. Personal communication with Michael Provence, May 2015.

⁴ Michael Fischbach, *State, Society, and Land in Jordan* (Leiden: Brill, 2000). This study grew out of his PhD dissertation, “State, Society and land in ‘Ajlun (northern Transjordan), 1850-1950”, PhD dissertation (Georgetown University, 1992). Since the 1990s Martha Mundy has been studying late-Ottoman tapu registers, tax registers, court cases, and oral history to examine issues of property, land tenure, administration, and production in Ottoman and modern Jordan. Since the beginning of the present century, she and Richard Saumarez-Smith have been collaborating on some of this research. Their most comprehensive work to date is *Governing Property, Making the Modern State: Law, Administration and Production in Ottoman Syria* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007). Anthropologist Saumarez-Smith’s first book, *Rule by Records: Land registration and village custom in early British Panjab* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996) examined British colonial construction of knowledge through its department of land registration.