

However, the copious historiographical attention that Tanzimat-era land reform has received in histories of Palestine has comparatively little to do with the implementation of the reform through land-survey and ownership-registration commissions, or with Ottoman contingencies, tax reform, and the innovation of registering urban and village-area garden-plots, buildings, and structures for the first time. A narrow approach has characterized studies of Ottoman land-tenure reform in Palestine. It has been analyzed almost exclusively in terms of its “success” or “failure”. This two-dimensional parameter has been evaluated according to one standard above all others: the tapu certificate, more specifically, the number of people who could produce one to prove their land tenure. This study will propose a broader approach and an examination of other sources, in order to better evaluate the degree to which property-tenure reforms were implemented. The following sections three sections review the development of historical knowledge on Tanzimat land-tenure reform in Palestine.

### **The Historical Creation of a Historiographical Paradigm: the Early Years**

The simultaneous spread and non-development of the paradigm is best understood through excerpts from the literature. It is important to observe that the same arguments have survived *almost verbatim* from work to work on the implementation of land reform, without

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*Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Middle East*, NY: SUNY Press, 1991, pp. 123-133; and contributions by Huri Islamoğlu, Martha Mundy, Denise Jorgens and Martin Bunton in the section on “The Transformation of Property Relations Following the 1858 Land Law” in Roger Owen, ed. *New Perspectives on Property and Land in the Middle East*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.