

numerous avenues available to them to carry it out and used a variety of them, depending upon time and circumstance, after carefully weighing the relative advantages of each.

Before proceeding to examine the *Esas-ı Emlak* register data in the following two chapters, in this final section of this chapter we will describe the registration itself. In the next section, we discuss the commissions that were tasked with compiling the *defters*.

Property Registration Commissions in Palestine

Surmising that voluntary property registration was ineffectual in Palestine, scholarly attention has tended to focus on tapu certificates and the commissions that went from village to village and town to town registering lands and issuing them. However, as observed at the beginning of this chapter, firm evidence about these commissions, when they commenced and how their work progressed in Palestine, has been absent from the scholarly discussion. On their beginnings and development, the lengthy *Survey of Palestine* drawn up quickly during December 1945 and January 1946 for the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry states,

The land registries in Palestine were apparently opened between the years 1867 and 1873. The procedure was that a *yuklama* (roll call) was held in each village. ...only a small proportion of transactions was recorded, and these chiefly concerned elderly persons, females, foreigners and those sufficiently influential to be able to avoid military service. ... Nor was there any survey. Areas were sometimes expressed in the quantity of seed