

were exposed to 'exactions from all sides'. In the highlands, however, the presence or absence of land-equalizing schemes depended primarily on the political organisation of peasant clans. In areas where a tradition of powerful potentates existed and a rebellious peasantry resisted fiscal impositions by the state, land-equalization was either weak or absent. Musha' villages predominated, on the other hand, in areas with a factionalized peasantry, weak clans, and recently sedentarized farmers (Firestone, 1981:23ff.). Thus, instead of being seen as the residue of an archaic system (e.g. as in Granott, 1952), musha' organization is now viewed as a 'sophisticated set of adjustments evolved by peasant communities in response to the heavy exactions of fiscal feudalism' (Firestone, 1981:27).

With the destruction of the iltizam system, and the prolonged dissolution of musha' organisation in the village, cash crops and regional specialization began to play a more crucial role in Palestinian agriculture. Subsistence crops continued to co-exist with marketed crops, both in marginal lands and in areas of intensive agriculture throughout the period under review. A survey of agriculture in late Ottoman Palestine showed an amazing versatility of subsistence and export crops cultivated. It revealed the dominance of wheat and barley in the Maritime Plain and northern valley of the Jordan, olive orchards in the Nablus and Jerusalem mountains, vineyards in the Hebron mountains, citrus (for export) in the coastal plains, tobacco in the Galilean plains, and vegetables in the Lydda and Ramlah area and in the irrigated valleys in Jebal Nablus (Reilly, 1981:2-3, 5). It was this versatility in the production of cash crops that saved Palestine from substantial peripheralization in the European economy and allowed it to contribute significantly, despite its size, to the region's food supply and to the positive balance of Syrian trade (Scholch, 1982:55).