

advantaged position. With the expansion of the village, these differences widened, and spread to effect cousins, uncles, second cousins and other remote relatives.

Differences in wealth had always characterized the structure of the Hamula in Palestine. In part, these differences arose from the different specialization in agriculture present in various regions in the country. Some villages, for example, those located in the hills of Nablus, Jerusalem and the Galilee, specialized in the production of oil and its extracts. Other villages, located in the valleys, such as Marj Ibn-Amer (Esdrealon) [hereafter, the Marj] were known for their cereal and vegetable growing. And along the Maritime Plain, most villages were primarily involved in the production of cash crops such as citrus and grapes.

These regional differences undoubtedly undermined the independence of each village/Hamula and fostered a relation of interdependence among them. This relationship also enhanced mobility between the villages. Socially and economically, the Palestinian village was not an isolated entity. In this context, Owen observed that the village communities in Palestine were not "independent communities", but rather an integral part of the economic and political arrangements of the society of which they formed a part (Owen, 1981:41). Moreover, the internal structure of the village/Hamula itself gave rise to differentiation among its family members. The hierarchical structure of the Hamula, which placed the head and his immediate family on top of this structure, was itself a potent force for social and economic differentiation. However, the full extent of this potential came to realization only during British colonization, with massive