

cultivator and two shares taken by the land owner) which also emerged during this period, were in fact a product of changing production relations. These arrangements reflected a new economic reality in which the peasants were becoming more and more dispossessed.

The system of Muhasasa or share-cropping which corresponded to the Mulk forms of land tenure began to assume independent characteristics only toward the middle of the 19th century. Prior to this, Mulk land in general was said to exist only to a very small extent in Palestine, and share-cropping was used as a supplementary source of income by small Amiri holders (al-Qanooni, 1936:38).

### Socio-Economic Changes in 19th Century Palestine

Already in the early 19th century, differentiation within the Hamula began to emerge on a large scale. These differences were largely stimulated by the socio-economic changes within the Empire which in turn led to the promulgation of new land laws.

Palestine's geographical location in the Middle East has historically accorded to it a central position in international trade. The ports of Jaffa and Acre have always served as central trading points for ships passing through the Mediterranean Sea (Scholch,1982; Kayyali,1970; Amin,1980). Not all products traded were locally produced. In addition to large quantities of cotton produced in Egypt, commodities like silk, sesame, and oranges produced in many parts of Greater Syria including Palestine, were shipped through these ports. However, "external trade", to use Amin's words, was not the only trade movement in Palestine (Amin,1980). By the mid-19th century, agricultural production in Palestine began to respond in large measure to international market demands placed on the economy by the expanding