

of production was no more than titular owners, just as the Ottoman Sultan was the titular owner of all of the Ottoman soil. Marx refers to a parallel case concerning the Highland Celts in which land ownership was in name only "Just the same as the Queen was the titular owner of the national soil" (Marx,1978:681). In fact, the actual owners of the land were the cultivators who for many years inherited and cultivated this land. Cultivation in the Marj was organized around the village. In addition to the village land, peasants from the surrounding villages commonly used and owned the mills, the wells and the grazing land. Even from the legal point of view, it must be stressed here that the law which governed the act of sale was not the natural or the customary law under which cultivation took place, but rather a capitalist law known to, and accepted by, the colonial power only.

Moreover, in various villages in the Marj, similar property rights held by the Sursuks were also held by other peasants. In one instance, for example, it was mentioned that "at least 10,000d. belong to the peasants". (21)

In addition, the Sursuks owned only a share of the mills while the rest were commonly owned by the villagers. In fact they had no rights over the grazing land since under the Ottoman Land Code grazing land was considered common land hence, exempted from taxes. Even the British colonial state recognized peasants' property rights in the villages of Nuris and Maa'lul when, in 1923, it ruled that at least 7000d. be left to the villagers there. (22)

The claim that in accordance with the initial contract the land was eventually transferred without cultivators is baseless. The fact