

Secondly, this study also argues that the villagers had considerable freedom to *choose* how they registered their lands with the tax commission. Chapter 3 explores these various types of ownerships and their meaning in the reform era – individual private ownership, partnerships, village-wide community ownership, and *musha*. Thirdly, this study further argues that one generation after the implementation of reform, the new language of tenure was well-integrated into the vocabulary and society of rural Hebron. Finally, this study argues that evidence shows that throughout the reform as well as the post-reform years the Ottomans permitted various channels *in addition to* the tapu certificate to prove ownership of property. The implication of this, I argue, is that the accepted methodology of studying land-tenure in Ottoman Palestine must be broadened beyond its current narrow focus. Along the way, this study also aspires to add qualitatively to Ottoman and Palestinian rural studies by examining Ottoman village society in the Hebron region from the bottom-up.

Significance of this Study

The importance of this study is threefold. First, it uses a rare source to bring needed empirical evidence to the table of scholarly discussion on the implementation of Ottoman-era land-tenure reform in Palestine. This study examines more than isolated cases; it looks at an entire district, as well as its parts.

Secondly, it opens a new avenue to the study of land tenure. Scholarly literature has been overly concerned with tapu. As Haim Gerber observed when he studied land cases that came before the Jerusalem district administrative council (*meclis-i idare*) in the first decade