

replaced by the central government if seen as incompetent or ineffective.⁸ This system of land administration and surplus appropriation was necessitated in part by the need for a standing army dictated by the omnipresent possibility of war and the need to provide security in conquered lands. Moreover, given the shortage of silver in the empire, the state could only levy taxes in kind, and thus the *sipahis* could only be paid similarly, which meant assigning them to different parts of the empire.⁹

By the latter part of the sixteenth century, this system began to disintegrate because of a combination of factors. First, there was the government's need for more revenue in part to satisfy the increasing costs of its standing army. The increased costs were in large measure because of the rise in prices resulting from the influx of American silver into the empire. Second, there was the increasing pressure from merchants and others to have administrative access to land so as to benefit from the increase in the prices of agricultural products. Third, there was the decreased military significance of the *sipahis* after the introduction of firearms to the infantry. Fourth, there was the tendency on the part of the *sipahis* to turn their *timars* into private property given the opportunities for gain because of the

⁸In Palestine, *ziamets* were relatively few in number, and *timars* were preponderant. For estimates of the number of *timars* and *ziamets* in different regions of Palestine at different time periods, see Amnon Cohen, *Palestine in the 18th Century: Patterns of Government and Administration* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1973), 293-9; and Alexander Scholch, *Palestine in Transformation* (Washington, DC: Institute of Palestine Studies, 1993), 176.

⁹Halil Inalcik, "Land Problems in Turkish History," *The Muslim World* 45 (1955): 221-8.