

### 2.3 Economic Structure

This section traces, in brief, the major changes in the sectoral structure of the economy of Palestine. This will provide the background with which we can better discern any changes in the social structure and the social relations of production.

Given the lack of detailed statistics, the emphasis is on general trends. Obviously, the lack of complete data prevent us from drawing any precise conclusions on relative changes in the structure of production nor, given the increase in population, on the relative distribution of the population among the three sectors.

#### 2.3.1 The Primary Sector

This section is confined to the agricultural branch, the mainstay of the Palestinian economy. There was limited mining. As for fishing, an activity practiced from ancient times, it does not seem to be a substantial branch or an exclusive occupational category for a large number of people. Nonetheless, we lack any useful information on it.

In Palestine, as well as the surrounding regions, the most important change in agriculture was the substantial expansion of cultivated areas, and of production.<sup>41</sup> Primarily, this was because of improved security with the strengthening of central government control enforced by an increased military

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<sup>41</sup>Scholch, 91; Owen, *Middle East*, 264; Issawi, *Economic History*, 258.