

this institutional intervention aimed at improving taxation records and “the collection of increased fees” from registration.⁶⁹ By the end of April 1947, the area settled by title amounted to 5,243,000 *dunums*, and the area actually registered by the end of December 1946 was 4,746,000 *dunums*⁷⁰ (i.e., about 62 percent of the cultivated area of 7,713,180 *dunums*).

Thus, by 1923, a government return showed that *musha'a* constituted 56 percent of land.⁷¹ In 1929, another government return based in 104 villages showed 46 percent of those lands held in *musha'a*.⁷² By 1940, one estimate puts *musha'a* held land at only 25 percent.⁷³ Even if these estimates are only roughly close to reality, they reflect an extremely fast pace in the breakdown of *musha'a* tenure. On the other hand, the slow pace of the breakdown in *musha'a* prior to WWI, besides being because of the more limited impact of market forces as compared to the Mandate period, can also be sought by highlighting a major difference between the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 and the British Land (Settlement of Title) Ordinance of 1928: Whereas the 1928 ordinance explicitly aimed at dissolving the *musha'a* by assigning title to specific pieces of land in

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 234.

⁷⁰*Supplement*, 29.

⁷¹Hope-Simpson Report, 33.

⁷²*Ibid.*

⁷³Patai, “*Musha'a* Tenure,” 441. Warriner offers the same figure for the mid-forties, Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1948), 67.