

the rise and consolidation of power by *ayans* (“notables”) and local dynasties.<sup>13</sup> This power, both economic and political, was determined by the extent of the *iltizam* acquired and the military power of this group. This power, in turn, determined the amount of taxes that could be collected from the peasants<sup>14</sup> and the amount remitted to central government, if at all. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the government attempted to increase its revenue and reduce the taxes collected from peasants by awarding the iltizams a *malikane* (i.e., for life). This measure, however, failed.

This situation continued into the first decades of the nineteenth century, after which the government attempted to reassert its power in the provinces, both by force and the institution of different reforms (*tanzimat*). In the sphere of land tenure, the reform attempted to undermine the power of *iltizam* holders and regulate the collection of taxes. However, it was not until 1856 that tax farming was formally abolished.<sup>15</sup> In Palestine, however, some *iltizam* survived until the 1890s in the hilly areas of the country because of the strength of local chieftains.<sup>16</sup>

In 1858, a Land Code was adopted. However, before we look at the impact of this code and the big changes it helped bring about, it is useful to provide an

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<sup>13</sup>For an overview of the rise of the *ayans*, see Kerpat, 76-82.

<sup>14</sup>Owen, *Middle East*, 14.

<sup>15</sup>Gabriel Baer, “The Evaluation of Private Land Ownership in Egypt and the Fertile Crescent,” in Issawi, *Economic History*, 82.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 82-3.