

AMNON COHEN  
BERNARD LEWIS

Population and  
Revenue in  
the Towns of  
Palestine in the  
Sixteenth Century



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**Population and Revenue  
in the Towns of Palestine  
in the Sixteenth Century**



*Amnon Cohen and Bernard Lewis*

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## NOTE ON TRANSCRIPTION

THIS study, dealing with an Arabic-speaking area under Turkish administration, and based on both Turkish and Arabic sources, involves special problems of transcription. Both Arabic and Ottoman Turkish are written in the Arabic script, and Turkish also uses a large number of Arabic loanwords. Many of these are however pronounced and sometimes used differently in the two languages (rather as “revolution,” common to English and French, is differently pronounced and understood). In the Arabic script these differences do not appear; in transcription they cannot be avoided.

In transcribing Turkish and Arabic names and terms in the following pages, we have used two different systems, based on those commonly used by Turkish and Arabic scholars. Broadly speaking, we have used the Turkish transcription for Turkish books, records, etc., and for the technical terms of Turkish administration; Arabic for Arabic books, classical Islamic terms (e.g., *shaykh*, *shari‘a*, *kharāj*, *jizya*, *bayt al-māl*, *mujāwir*, *mukhallafāt*), and place names. Many Ottoman terms are a mixture of Turkish, Persian, and Arabic words and grammatical forms. In these we have followed the dominant, usually the Turkish, pattern. Where a word or name has already passed into English usage (e.g., *kadi*, *sanjak*, *waqf*, or the names of the six towns discussed in this book) we have used the accepted form.

The main differences between the two systems are as follows:

Turkish	Arabic
c	j
e	a
ğ	<u>gh</u>
h̄	<u>kh</u>
ķ	ķ or q (here ķ only)
s̄	<u>th</u>
ş	<u>sh</u>
v	w
<u>z</u>	<u>dh</u>
z̄	d

In addition, Turkish uses some letters unknown to Arabic. The most important are:

ç	ch as in <i>church</i>
ı	i something between <i>i</i> as in <i>will</i> and <i>u</i> as in <i>radium</i>

In the *siyākat* script used in Ottoman finance registers, diacritical dots are commonly omitted; the reading of names and terms is therefore often difficult without previous knowledge, and sometimes conjectural even then. In the enumeration of the city quarters beginning page 81 below and in a few other places, we have as far as possible reproduced the original text in Arabic script, and given our own reading in transcription.

## PREFACE

THIS book has a long and somewhat disturbed history. It begins in 1949 when I was given permission to work in the Prime Minister's Archives (*Başbakanlık Arşivi*) in Istanbul, and elected to study the registers of land, population, and revenue relating to the countries of the Fertile Crescent during the first century of Ottoman rule. My intention was not to attempt a general history of the area in this period but rather to make a series of studies in detail at selected points—soundings in the registers, dealing with limited topics and related to specific areas. I decided to begin with Palestine, which offered the richest documentation from outside sources and also, at that time, some advantages of access. For these reasons it seemed the most promising starting point for what was then a venture into virtually unknown territory. After a preliminary study on “the Ottoman archives as a source for the history of the Arab lands,” published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* in October 1951, I began to prepare a series of articles, the first of which was published in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* in 1954, under the title “Studies in the Ottoman Archives—I.” This presented a picture of Palestine in the early Ottoman period and was intended as an introduction to the material as a whole. My plan at that time was to follow it with a documented analysis of the quarters, population, and taxation of the six towns in Palestine, and then after that to do further studies on selected rural and urban areas in Syria and Iraq. The second of the articles, dealing with Jerusalem, was already written, and a Hebrew version was published in the Israeli periodical *Jerusalem* in 1956; transcripts and drafts on the other cities of Palestine were in various stages of preparation.

At this point my work was interrupted by the news that a further supply of registers, relating to the same period and area, was to be found in the archives of the Survey and Cadastral office in Ankara (*Tapu ve Kadastro Müdürlüğü*). My studies hitherto had been based exclusively on registers in the archives in Istanbul. The material in Ankara was of the same type and although, as it later emerged, it was not very considerable in quantity, it nevertheless promised important additional material, particularly on the later years of the period. For some time it was impossible to obtain the necessary permission and facilities to consult these registers, and

in the circumstances I could not proceed. To work with incomplete documentation is difficult, but possible. To work in the knowledge that further relevant information is extant but not yet accessible is quite another matter. There seemed every reason to hope that in a not too distant future the registers in Ankara, like those in Istanbul, would be made accessible to scholarly research; until that time there was no choice but to set this task aside, and to turn to other matters.

In due course the archives at the Survey and Cadastral Office in Ankara were indeed partially opened to scholarship, and some measure of access was permitted. By that time however I was otherwise engaged, and was not able to resume my long interrupted studies.

A fortunate encounter with Dr. Amnon Cohen of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem provided a solution to the problem. Dr. Cohen had published an important monograph on Palestine in the eighteenth century, as well as a number of articles on other aspects of Palestinian history in the Ottoman period. In response to my invitation, he agreed to join with me in completing the study of the relevant documents and the preparation of the resulting book. The reading of the Ankara registers, as well as of some additional material which subsequently came to light in Istanbul and Jerusalem, is entirely due to Dr. Cohen, to whom I am also indebted for a great deal of local, topographical, and other knowledge which would have been beyond my own resources. What follows consists of my own original drafts, amended and amplified by Dr. Cohen, and new matter written by him; the final text was seen and revised by both authors.

There remains the pleasant task of expressing my thanks to the various institutions that have helped in the preparation of this work—first to the directors and the administration of the Prime Minister's Archives in Istanbul and of the Survey and Cadastral Office in Ankara; then to the trustees of Mishkenot Shaananim in Jerusalem, who by inviting me to stay there in 1973–1974 as their guest, provided me with the leisure and opportunity to carry out an important part of this work; finally to the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London, to Princeton University, and to the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, all of which have contributed in various ways toward making this book possible. A special word of thanks is due to Mr. Ehud Tolodano, for his help in preparing the typescript for the press.

Princeton, 18 August 1975

BERNARD LEWIS

FOR an Israeli (then Palestinian) born student of the Middle East it is natural, perhaps, to be attracted by the history of his own country. Having spent some time and much energy on research of Ottoman Palestine in later periods further accentuated my interest and created yet another stimulus for an attempt to figure out the formative years of that rule during the sixteenth century.

Professor B. Lewis's suggestion that we combine my interest with his knowledge in an attempt to study and analyze the Ottoman *tahrir* registers was first mentioned to me during the International Congress of Orientalists in Canberra, Australia. I regarded it not only as a compliment but also as a challenge, which in spite of my doubts I could not decline. In retrospect, the academic year of 1972–3 which I spent in London turned out to be not only most pleasant but also very instructive from many respects. For this I would like first and foremost, to thank Professor B. Lewis for the guidance and inspiration he offered me throughout our joint enterprise. My stay in Great Britain was facilitated by the hospitality and kindness of the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. The British Council was generous in financing another part of that year in London. To both institutions I am most grateful. Last but not least may I thank Carta, Jerusalem, for drawing the town-sketches, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for its own contribution to the creation and the completion of this work.

Jerusalem, 8 October 1975

AMNON COHEN

**PART I**  
**POPULATION AND REVENUE**



## THE TAHRİR REGISTERS OF PALESTINE

THE Ottoman *tahrİR* was the latest form of an institution which can be traced back to classical Islamic times and beyond, to the bureaucracies of the ancient Middle Eastern empires. The term denoted the work of commissions sent to survey tax-paying population, lands, crops and revenues in the towns and villages for fiscal purposes. The data collected in this way was then recorded (*tahrİR*—writing down, recording in writing) in registers. In early Islamic times this was known as the *kānūn*, and fragments of such registers have survived among the Egyptian papyri. There are frequent references to them in the Arabic sources of the Mamluk period, and also in those of the Seljuq and Mongol rēgimes, though few examples, and those fragmentary, are known.<sup>1</sup> The Ottoman state is the only one of the classical Islamic empires which survived into modern times—the only one, therefore, whose records, when no longer required for practical administrative purposes, were not scattered and destroyed like those of earlier, vanished Empires, but preserved, thanks to the enlightened care of a generation of scholars and officials who realized their value.

The commission which carried out the *tahrİR* was called *tahrİR heyeti*, and produced registers (*defter*), known as *Tapu<sup>2</sup> defterleri*. The series as a whole was sometimes called the Imperial Register—*Defter-i Hāḳānī*.<sup>3</sup> These registers are of three main kinds:<sup>4</sup> (a) *Defter-i Muḩaṣṣal* (“detailed register”), which are the most interesting and valuable; (b) *Defter-i İcmāl* (“synoptic inventory”) which give a summary based on the *muḩaṣṣal*, omitting details like names of

<sup>1</sup> Lewis, “Daftar,” *EP<sup>2</sup>*, vol. II, pp. 79–81.

<sup>2</sup> “*tāpū*”, an abbreviation of “*tāpū senedi*”—land certificate accepting the conditions of service. Originally “an act of homage” it is used to designate both the title-deed and the fee payable for it, for the holding of a landed estate (*Ménage*, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (BSOAS)*, vol. XXXVI (1973), p. 658; Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon*, s.v; Fekete, *Die Siyāqat-Schrift*, p. 218, n. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Barkan, s.v., *EP<sup>2</sup>*, vol. II, pp. 81–3; I. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve bahriye teşkilatı*, pp. 95–110; Fekete, *Die Siyāqat-Schrift*, pp. 75–84.

<sup>4</sup> Lewis, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (JRAS)* (1951), pp. 146–9.



## POPULATION AND REVENUE

taxpayers/inhabitants and giving the taxes only in lump-sums for each territorial unit; (c) *Defter-i der dest* ("register of [matters] in hand") and *Defter-i Rūznāmçe* ("daybook"), respectively records of incoming information and deeds of grant (*berāt*) copies as they occurred.

As far as we know the usual procedure was to make these in two copies.<sup>5</sup> One was kept in the central registry (*Tapu, Defterhâne*); the other copy went to the province, to be kept together with the *sijill* registers in the *sharī'a* court. The only sample of these that has come to light in Palestine is a *mufaṣṣal tahrir* dated 997/1588–9, of the sanjak of Jerusalem. Identical with the copy left in the capital, it was kept intact (and because of its length was not copied like other official documents) at the *sharī'a* court of Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup>

Most of the surviving registers for sixteenth-century Palestine are in Istanbul, a few of them damaged, the rest intact.<sup>7</sup> In the course of the classification of the *Maliyeden müdevver* (i.e., transferred from the Archives of the Ministry of Finance) series in the *Başbakanlık* archives in Istanbul, during the last few years, some additional defters have come to light. There may have been others which existed and are now lost. Some registers, mainly dating back to the second half of the century, are in the Cadastral Office in Ankara.<sup>8</sup> This study is based mainly on *mufaṣṣal* registers, with some complementary information from the available *icmāls*, most of them in Istanbul. Of the registers kept in Ankara we were able to use only nos. 515–516 (Jerusalem), 545 (Gaza) and 549 (Nabulus).

There is conflicting evidence with regard to the frequency with which *tahrirs* should have been, or actually were, carried out in the Ottoman Empire. Luṭfi Paşa, who under Süleymān the Magnificent reached the post of Grand Vizier, and who previously served

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Fekete, *Bellekten*, vol. XI (1947), p. 302.

<sup>6</sup> *Sijill* registers of the *sharī'a* court in Jerusalem, vol. LXX. It should, however, be noted, that although dated 997 A.H. it was actually identical with the *tahrir* of 970 A.H. This is the only available copy which, to our knowledge, actually remained in a local court in this area. It is clear from its phrasing that this was only a copy, while the original was kept in Istanbul: *şuret-i defter-i cedid-i mufaṣṣal-ı livā-i Küds-i Şerif budur ki nakl olundu tahriren fi evāsit-i Rebī' ül-āhır sene 977.*

<sup>7</sup> A descriptive list of these registers is found in B. Lewis, *JRAS* (1951), pp. 154 ff.

<sup>8</sup> For Palestine: *mufaṣṣal* registers as listed below, pp. 13–14. Volumes of other categories are as follows: Jerusalem: waqf no. 514 (539) for 970/1562–3; *der dest* nos. 518–519. Safed: *mufaṣṣal* no. 541 (72) for 955/1548–9; *icmāl* no. 542 (312) (n.d.); Gaza: *icmāl* no. 547 (337) (n.d.); Nabulus: waqf no. 548 (546) for 1005/1596–7; *icmāl* no. 550 (320) (n.d.); Lejjūn: *mufaṣṣal* no. 535 (181) for 1005/1596–7; Ajlūn: *mufaṣṣal* no. 532 (185) for 1005/1596–7; *icmāls* nos. 533–4 (269–352) (n.d.).

## THE TAHRİR REGISTERS

in many provinces, including Syria, was very specific about it: "A *tahrİR* should be carried out [once] in [every] thirty years."<sup>9</sup> The same figure<sup>10</sup> is repeated in the following century by another high-ranking official, Sarı Mehmed Paşa.<sup>11</sup> It is on this evidence, apparently, that Barkan speaks of "les recensements de la population et de l'impôt, recensements qui étaient faits tous les 30 ou 40 ans, suivant une ancienne tradition administrative."<sup>12</sup> An undated firman cited by Barkan adds formal support to the above-mentioned quotations from authoritative but informal "advice for rulers": "The *tahrİR* of the Empire is a very necessary thing. [The carrying out of a] *tahrİR* of the Empire once every thirty years is a *ķānūn*. It should be regarded as binding in this matter."<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, Muştafā Nūrī, in *Netā'ic ūl-vuķū'āt* stresses the importance of carrying out a *tahrİR* after the conquest of a province,<sup>14</sup> but adds that it was "usually" accomplished once every century, and was in any case discontinued after the time of Selīm II.<sup>15</sup> There is even a version reducing the interval between the *tahrİrs* to an impossible one year.<sup>16</sup> Barkan<sup>17</sup> not only found a *tahrİR* made in Murād III's time, i.e. after the death of Selīm II, but seems to have traced the reason for this administrative-fiscal initiative back to the inauguration of every new Sultan as part and parcel of the issue of new (or reaffirmed) official decrees and nominations. *Tahrİrs* were still made at a comparatively late date for newly acquired provinces, e.g. seven registers compiled during the reigns of Aĥmed III (1115–43/1703–30), and Maĥmūd I (1143–68/1730–54) of the new provinces added to the empire as a result of the Ottoman intervention in Persian affairs at that time.<sup>18</sup>

Kaldy Nagy seems to disagree with Barkan's assumption, noting that only once did he find in the Hungarian provinces that

<sup>9</sup> Luţfi Paşa, *Aşaf-nāme*, p. 41 : otuz yılda bir tahrİR olunup. For Luţfi's biography see p. IX.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Makrİzī, *Khİṭaṭ*, who mentions every thirty years in Egypt ("Daftar," *EI*<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>11</sup> Wright, *Ottoman Statecraft*, p. 74 text, p. 119 (translation).

<sup>12</sup> Barkan, *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient (JESHO)*, vol. I (1958), p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> "TahrİR-i memleket gayet lâzimidir. Otuz yılda bir kere tahrİR-i memleket kanundur. Bu hususa tekayyüd lâzimidir" (Barkan, *İstanbul Üniversitesi, İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası [IFM]*, vol. II (1941), p. 12, n. 14).

<sup>14</sup> (Vol. I, p. 143) "feth-i memālik vākī' oldukça erāzisi tahrİR ettirilip."

<sup>15</sup> Muştafā Nūrī, *Netā'ic ūl-vuķū'āt*, vol. I, p. 145.

<sup>16</sup> Ahmet Rasim, cited in Tunçer, *Toprak hukuku*, p. 77.

<sup>17</sup> Barkan, *IFM*, vol. II (1941), pp. 14–17.

<sup>18</sup> Lewis, in *Mélanges Massé* (Teheran, 1963), pp. 259–63.

## POPULATION AND REVENUE

a new register was compiled on the accession of a new sovereign.<sup>19</sup> On this occasion the new *tahrir* was ordered by the Ottoman authorities only nine years after the previous one, a much shorter interval than that indicated by Luṭfî or the undated firman. The view that a *tahrir* is determined by a specific cause rather than a fixed time-limit, is partly shared by Inalcık. A *tahrir* was made, he says,<sup>20</sup> either upon the conquest of a new province of the Empire or upon the advent of a new Sultan or when substantial changes with regard to income occurred (the introduction of revenues previously extraneous to the register, fiscal reforms or unforeseen changes). In this respect Inalcık reflects Barkan's interpretation of the *tahrirs* as attempts made by the central administration to bring its existing information up to date, and in particular to increase its potential income by reappraising the yields of a given area in the light of its development. It was "in any case for the advantage of the State"<sup>21</sup> that frequent *tahrirs* were carried out in the heyday of the Empire. This explanation seems more plausible than Luṭfî's arbitrary assertion: "The dead and the sick being omitted there should be a re-registration and a comparison with the old register; the [number of] *re'âyâ* should not be smaller than [it was in] the old register."<sup>22</sup> This oversimplified presentation can hardly be substantiated by the evidence in our registers. Although the copy of the previous register was given to the *tahrir*-takers,<sup>23</sup> it did not serve, as far as we can deduce from our registers, as anything more than an important reference book. The firmans authorizing the *tahrir* are very explicit on this matter. In the Sanjak of Gaza, for instance, the *tahrir* was to be very carefully compiled as a "revised (*teddid*) version of the old registers" after those responsible have "meticulously investigated<sup>24</sup> . . . the yields of that province" in accordance with both the *Sharî'a* and the *Qânûn*. Similar terminology is used in the firman concerning the *tahrir* of the Sanjak of Safed.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Kaldy-Nagy, *Acta Orientalia academiae scientiarum Hungaricae*, vol. XXI (1968), pp. 186-7.

<sup>20</sup> Inalcık, *Defter-i sancak-i Arvanid*, p. xviii.

<sup>21</sup> Barkan, *IFM*, vol. II (1941), p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> "Mürde ve marîzi çıkıp tekrâr yazılmak gerek ve eski defter ile tatbik olunup *re'âyâ* eski defterden nokşân üzere olmamak gerek" (*Âşâf-nâme*, p. 41).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Kaldy-Nagy, *Acta Orientalia*, vol. XXI (1968), p. 193. For further details see Gökbilgin, *Edirne ve Paşa livası*, p. 103 passim.

<sup>24</sup> Register 304, p. 23, *kemâ hû haqquhu taḥkik ve tedkik olunmağın*, dated 1 Rajab 964.

<sup>25</sup> Register 300, p. 6. A *qânûn* of Süleymân the Magnificent indicates it very clearly: "efrâd-i nâsdan bir ferd ve ebvâb-i mahsulâtтан bir habbe cüz'î ve külli harici-ez-defter nesne kalmayub" (Barkan, *IFM*, vol. II [1941], p. 21). For a similar description

## THE TAHRIR REGISTERS

What, in fact, can the historian hope to learn from these registers? Their value obviously lies in two fields, the demographic and the economic, in both of which they provide considerable quantities of detail, statistics and information extending over a significant period of time. Their value, however, in both respects, has been very differently assessed by modern scholars. For Barkan they offer "en un mot, tout ce qu'il faut à un historien économiste."<sup>26</sup> For Kaldy Nagy, on the other hand, they "register the taxes and tithes which, as we believe, were not yet actually collected at the time of the census" and exhibit "the estimated income" as opposed to an account of the actual receipts.<sup>27</sup> Cook's assessment of their value for historical demography is even more negative: "the demographic interest of this material is severely limited. It is in general totally uninformative as to the age and sex structure of the population. It does, however, purport to list the overwhelming majority of the adult male population, and to indicate which of them were heads of households. By comparing such lists for given areas at different times it is possible to derive crude indices of changes in population size."<sup>28</sup>

Our own study of the defters relating to sixteenth-century Palestine lead us to adopt an intermediate position in both respects. Certainly they cannot be regarded as an "ideal form" as was once suggested.<sup>29</sup> The figures given for the individual taxes represent global estimates of what is expected rather than statements of the amounts actually collected, and are moreover stated in a money of account. Often the global figure represents the purchase price agreed with a tax-farmer, and even with taxes directly collected by government commissioners the figure is notional rather than practical.<sup>30</sup> In addition there are numerous technical deficiencies, such as faulty spelling of names (places and quarters as well as people), inconsistent terminology and usage (Arabic and Turkish forms interchanging, different names given for apparently the same taxes, variations in the grouping of revenues with a single total figure for several taxes) inaccurate

see Muştafâ Nürî, *Netâ'ic ül-Vuķū'ât*, vol. I, p. 143; Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve bahriye teşkilatı*, pp. 97, 102.

<sup>26</sup> Barkan, *JESHO*, vol. I (1958), p. 12. Tunçer, *Toprak hukuku*, p. 76 uses even higher superlatives.

<sup>27</sup> Kaldy-Nagy, *Acta Orientalia*, vol. XXI (1968), p. 183; vol. XIII (1961), p. 32.

<sup>28</sup> Cook, *Population Pressure*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>29</sup> Tunçer, *Toprak hukuku*, p. 76.

<sup>30</sup> On the difference between the sums pledged and those actually collected in the eighteenth century see: Cohen, *Palestine in the eighteenth Century*, pp. 197-9.

## POPULATION AND REVENUE

transliteration, incomplete statistics, mistakes of arithmetic, and sometimes a time-lag behind the pace of events.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, despite these defects, the registers remain a most interesting and valuable source for certain aspects of the history of Palestine during almost the whole of the first century of Ottoman rule. The value of this information can be seen all the more clearly when we contrast it with what is available for earlier and even for later centuries. On the matters with which they deal, there is no period in the history of Palestine on which we have better information, until the time when historical study is facilitated, if that is the right word, by the bureaucratic activities of the modern state. It is sufficient to contrast the registers with the fragmentary and contradictory scraps of information gathered from European consular reports and travellers' accounts to see how valuable they are.

On the economic side some of the information in the registers is factual in that the figures given are related to amounts actually collected and remitted.<sup>32</sup> Even when the figures are notional they are of value, and represent the latest development of a long bureaucratic tradition. Already in classical Islam, both in theoretical and documentary evidence, a distinction appears between *aşl* and *istikhrāj*, the first representing the initial assessment and estimate, the second the amount actually collected.<sup>33</sup> The figures, therefore, represent a genuine stage in the process of financial administration and not random fantasy. The fact that we have a sequence of registers over a period of time, and some outside evidence to serve as control, enables us to use these figures to document the processes of development and change. They tell us little of events or individuals, for the movements they reflect are at a deeper level, and at a slower rhythm. Through them we can achieve some insight into the social and economic patterns of the time, the structure and movement of society and administration, the evolution of groups and institutions. More

<sup>31</sup> To quote two examples: the earthquake in Jaffa in 1546 is said by European travellers to have caused considerable damage in Palestine. This is not reflected in the defters (Lewis, *Necatî Lugal Armağanı* (1969), p. 443). Similarly, the expulsion of the Frankish monks from their convent on Mount Zion in the years 1551–2 is not referred to in the relevant register and entry as one would have expected (cf. below, p. 87, n. 36). Cf. "The surveys do not state the case for a bad year, a year of war or famine," McGowan, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, vol. I (1969), p. 147.

<sup>32</sup> The *tahrir* registers are thus basically different from the *mühimme defterleri* in that they contain what in modern parlance is called statistical matter—statements and tabulations of data on the existing situation in various fields of administration. For the differences between these two sources see: Heyd, *Ottoman Documents*, pp. xv–xvii; Halasi Kun, in *Türk Dili ve Tarihi hakkında Araştırmalar* (1952), pp. 82 ff.

<sup>33</sup> Bosworth, *JESHO*, vol. XII (1969), pp. 123–4; "Daftar," *EI*<sup>2</sup>, vol. II, pp. 79–81.

## THE TAHRIR REGISTERS

particularly we can draw both detailed information and more general conclusions on topics like numbers and distribution of population, taxation, land-tenure, religious minorities, towns, villages, and nomads. Any given register provides a general as well as detailed, though static, picture of these and other aspects at a given moment; the series of registers for the districts of Palestine, though sometimes incomplete, covers virtually the whole country and almost the whole century.

The same considerations apply to the demographic as to the economic data. For the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth century, not to speak of earlier times, the evidence available to us makes it impossible to answer (except by guesswork) even such simple and obvious questions as the number of inhabitants and their religious and ethnic distribution. While the registers cannot answer the modern demographer's questions on such matters as family size and age and sex structure, they nevertheless give useful indications on the composition and distribution of population, on the rise and fall of numbers, within regions and within identified groups, and also on the movements of nomadic groups from one place to another. These data are more difficult to extrapolate than age and sex structure, and the information provided is correspondingly more valuable. Even estimates and still more assessments are usually done with some reference to reality, and their recurrence or modification is always meaningful. When compared with each other and tabulated for the whole century they provide an indication of the major fiscal and demographic trends of development in this period.

A word may be pertinent at this stage with regard to the term Palestine. This term had already ceased to have any political or administrative significance before the arrival of the crusaders; it was revived with the establishment of the British Mandate, when it was officially adopted as the name of the country. It has, therefore, no precise geographical connotation but is here used to cover the western or cisjordanian part of the state set up under British Mandate, after the partition of Ottoman Syria. Under the late Mamluks this area was divided into the *niyābas* of Safed and Gaza, both under the authority of the Mamluk viceroy in Damascus. After the Ottoman conquest the country was divided into the four sanjaks (in Arabic, *liwā'*) of Jerusalem, Gaza, Nabulus and Safed, the last-named including part of what is now southern Lebanon. In the earliest Ottoman period the central area around Jenin constituted a separate entity known as the *ikṭā'* of Ṭurābāy and enjoying a special status. Later this was abolished and this area incorporated in the ordinary Ottoman system most of it in the Sanjak of Lejjun.

## POPULATION AND REVENUE

The fifteen<sup>34</sup> *mufaṣṣals* used in this work fall into six groups corresponding to six separate surveys conducted in the sixteenth century in Palestine. The dates of these surveys, with the sanjaks covered in the registers consulted are:

- |                       |                                |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. 932/1525–6         | Jerusalem, Gaza, Safed         |
| 2. ca. 945/1538–9     | Jerusalem, Gaza, Safed, Nablus |
| 3. 955/1548–9         | Gaza, Nablus                   |
| 4. 961–4/1553–7       | Jerusalem, Gaza, Safed         |
| 5. 970–ca. 975/1562–7 | Jerusalem, Safed               |
| 6. 1005/1596–7        | Jerusalem, Gaza, Nablus        |

Unfortunately, the series is far from complete and even some of the available volumes are defective and lack important sections. The surviving registers from the first years of Ottoman rule in Syria suggest that *tahrirs* were carried out at very frequent intervals.<sup>35</sup> The distribution of registers as tabulated above could mean that each date represents a year in which a general *tahrir* was conducted in the province of Damascus, including the four sanjaks with which we are concerned. If this is so, then *tahrirs* were carried out at far greater frequency than either prescribed by Luṭfi or suggested by Barkan and Inalcık, and the evidence relating to the *tahrirs* for Palestine imposes some qualification of the explanations cited above. They were not undertaken immediately after the occupation, but rather about seven years later, no doubt because of the unstable conditions prevailing in the early years. It may well be that *tahrirs* were commissioned by newly invested Sultans, and in point of fact we have examples of *tahrirs* dating from the reign of Süleymān, Selim II, Mehmed III; in the last two cases the *tahrirs* available were carried out a short time after their accession. But this was by no means the only occasion, nor was the ten year interval of Hungary<sup>36</sup> applicable to our case: sometimes, as shown by the above table, the interval was substantially shorter. It seems that the pace of events, economic development (due, no doubt, to such factors as greater security, better administration, Jewish immigration, and the advantages of incorporation in a large and thriving empire) was the main reason which dictated the frequency of *tahrirs*, though one should not exclude the possibility that reshuffles in

<sup>34</sup> The ten registers listed in Lewis, *JRAS* (October 1951), pp. 154–5, plus register 17738 *Maliyeden müdevver* in Istanbul, and four registers from Ankara (see p. 12).

<sup>35</sup> For a detailed list of registers in Istanbul see Lewis, in *JRAS* (1951), pp. 149–55.

<sup>36</sup> Kaldy-Nagy, *Acta Orientalia*, vol. XXI (1968), pp. 186–7.