

“establish a form of peasant ownership against the tribal sheikh’s.”²² They maintain that the Land Code was primarily concerned with the registering of titles as a way to reassert the government’s control over land and that there was no interference with the acquisition of large tracts of land as long as taxes were paid.²³

Another point of contention among historians is whether the acquisition of large estates was a result of the Land Code. Sluglett and Farouk-Sluglett correctly point out that these preceded the Land Code, although there was a quantitative increase in these acquisitions after the enactment of the code, and thus what we have is continuity and not change in this phenomenon.²⁴ However, what the code provided was a qualitative change in the sense that it established a legal basis for the acquisition of large-landed property. This basis, combined with the increased demand for cash crops from the regional and European markets, to be discussed later, accelerated and intensified the scramble among wealthy and influential families to accumulate more land.

The rise of large-landed estates, excluding those of the European settlers, took place in a variety of ways. These included grants by the *sultan* of tax-farming

²²Warriner, “Land Problems,” 73; Peter Sluglett and Marion Farouk-Sluglett, “The Application of the 1858 Land Code in Greater Syria: Some Preliminary Observations,” in *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East*, ed. Tariff Khalidi (Beirut: The American University of Beirut, 1984), 413.

²³Sluglett and Farouk-Sluglett, 413.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 415.