

## **Çiftlik Formation by Title-Deeds in the Pre-Tanzimat Period in the Ottoman Black Sea**

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This paper aims to contribute to the discussion on the meaning and formation of çiftlik by analysing an important and rare source, the survey of estates in Canik (Canik çiftlikat defteri), which would be considered as the register of çiftlik-ized state-owned lands. The importance of the çiftlik survey lies in the fact that it provides us a picture of the transformation of usufructory and ownership rights over the state-lands in the first decades of the nineteenth century.

The summary of title-deeds (tapu) as well as the explanations (şerh) attached to it sheds light not only on the forms of appropriation of land by the çiftlik-owners in the early nineteenth century but also the inheritance and transfer patterns regarding the çiftlik land. This paper will first of all outline the certificate dates, the identity of title-deed holders and the inheritance and transfer of the land as well as the actors who sealed these certificates of ownership by paying an attention the different patterns between the eastern and western parts of Canik.

Through showing the process of çiftlik formation by obtaining the title deeds sealed by actors such as sipahis, tax-farmers and sultanic or other wakf officials, it will elaborate on the history of relationship between the tax-collection by local notables and the extension of usufructory and ownership rights over the land by reference to other Ottoman archival materials. Thirdly, this paper will discuss how the ambiguity of the borders of the çiftlik-ized lands as well as the blurring of the boundaries of different land tenures in the region (state-owned lands, endowed freehold property, abandoned and vacant lands and reclaimed lands) contributed to the illegal appropriation of land within the framework of legal mechanisms.