

## **Land Ownership and Inequality in Ottoman Bosnia**

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This study aims to investigate the patterns of land ownership and inequality in Ottoman Bosnia over time. Historical patterns of land distribution are worth studying to understand the pre-industrial origins of inequality, as agriculture was the main economic factor then. The motivation for this study also stems from the interest in the methods of conquest employed by the Ottomans, which has been extensively studied in modern Ottoman historiography. Scholars, including Halil İnalcık, have characterized the Ottoman approach to integrating conquered territories as gradual, flexible, and pragmatic, suggesting that the central authority respected existing institutional structures to facilitate assimilation. Cadastral surveys provide evidence of Christian timar holders in the Balkans, particularly during the initial decades of Ottoman rule. Christian voynuks were included in the military-administrative class as timar holders in Bosnia. Landed elites, granted hereditary lands (*bashtina*) by Bosnian kings, maintained their status on these lands until the twentieth century. The timar system began to weaken in the late 16th century, with timar being transferred through inheritance within families. Although this privatization of land was particularly prevalent in Bosnia, timar lands existed until 1869, indicating that estates under private ownership (*çiftlik*s) did not completely replace the timar system but rather coexisted with it. Austria-Hungarian sources after the Treaty of Berlin indicate certain socio-economic disparities. For instance, most Christians were serfs, while Muslims were more likely to be free peasants. Using Ottoman tax registers and Austria-Hungarian censuses, the main objective of this study is to explain how the early modern transformation of land ownership contributed to such disparities.