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*Pencho Penchev**, *Hristiyan Atanasov***

From an Empire to a Nation State: Land Property and its Guarantee in the Balkans. The Case of Bulgaria

(Abstract)

The article makes a comparative analysis of the status of land property in the Ottoman Empire (within the period from 1839 to 1878) and Bulgaria after the Liberation (1879–1912). The findings indicate significant discrepancies. While in the Ottoman Empire land property (*rakaba*) ideally belongs to the state, in practice the immediate agricultural producer feels a full-right owner and landlord, according to the traditional understanding of private property law. The owners' rights are protected by a high-class procedure on issuing land ownership documents, cadaster starts to be kept (in the 1860s) and practically there is no data of social tension concerning the land status and property ownership – the state manages to cover and protect it. Contrary to this, in the Principality of Bulgaria, the newly introduced Constitution guarantees private land ownership but in practice the state administration cannot provide for it. Due to this fact, there is a lot of information on infringement and insecurity in land ownership.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, Principality of Bulgaria, land property

* *Pencho Penchev* is Professor of Economic History at the University of National and World Economy (8-mi dekemvri Str. 1700 Sofia Bulgaria), <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7542-162>; Scopus Author ID: 35275649000; Web of Science ResearcherID: Y-2942-2019, e-mail: p.penchev@unwe.bg.

** *Hristiyan Atanasov* is Associate Professor at University of Library Studies and Information Technologies (ULSIT, Bulgaria, Sofia, address: Boulevard "Tsarigradsko shose" 119, 1784) and chief archivist at National Library "St., St. Cyril and Methodius" (Bulgaria, Sofia, address: bul. "Vasil Levski" 88, 1504 Doktorska Gradina), Web of Science Researcher ID: AAW-6367-2020, e-mail: h.atanasov@unibit.bg.